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THE SA NAVY AND AN AFRICAN RENAISSANCE

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The Honourable Mr Joe Modise, Minister of Defence

INTRODUCTION

It gives me great pleasure and pride to open this historic conference on *The South African Navy and an African Renaissance* here in Simon's Town. This year has indeed been an outstanding year for the Navy. The 75th anniversary celebrations provided an opportunity for President Mandela to take the salute at a magnificent International Fleet Review in Table Bay – in honour of the democratic South Africa and the SA Navy – in April of this year. There were representatives of 37 countries, 14 of whom sent a total of 22 ships and 3 maritime patrol aircraft, to take part in this illustrious event.

The Fleet Review made an indelible impression on the President, who later said in his opening address for the President's budget debate: "*Few can have been unmoved by the sight of ships and sailors from nations across the world, gathered in Table Bay to pay tribute to the navy of our new democracy. And fewer still would have failed to appreciate the requirements of the defence force for modern equipment, within the context of the Defence Review under way.*"

During these celebrations President Mandela stated that the Defence Review would lead to the "*Renaissance of the South African Navy*" – the regaining of its capabilities. Later in the year, the Navy provided the SAS Outeniqua to assist the President in brokering vital peace negotiations during the crisis in the former Zaire.

The significance of this event is underscored by Deputy President Mbeki, who has remarked that wherever he travels, African leaders and heads of state have expressed support for the role South Africa is playing, and have been moved to comment on their pride that the SAS Outeniqua is an 'African ship'. The Navy has always responded promptly and professionally to calls of assistance from Africa, and has built respect in many other ways.

Last year, the Navy provided vital humanitarian assistance in the form of diving teams, to Tanzania after the terrible ferry disaster. In fact, within 24 hours of the request for assistance, South African divers and equipment were in place at Lake Victoria. Before that, the Navy assisted with the transportation of relief aid for Rwanda to Kenya. More recently, the SA Navy has been playing a key leadership role in the Standing Maritime Committee (SMC) of the Inter-State Defence and Security Committee (ISDSC).

REINFORCING THE AFRICAN RENAISSANCE

There is clearly a new spirit in the air and a marked change in attitude towards South Africa as a result of our new democracy. South Africa is now able to become fully involved in Africa,

and the continent looks to us to extend a helping hand. Former President Julius Nyerere – the Lion of the Independence Struggle – has re-emphasised a theme he has previously expressed during his recent visit to South Africa: South Africa must take up its responsibility, particularly in Africa south of the Sahara. Clearly, this mood is reflective of what our President and Deputy President have identified: a great revival and re-awakening in Africa – what Deputy President Mbeki has called an African Renaissance.

Some might question the paradoxical role that defence has to play in this grand vision, since a Renaissance brings to mind the burgeoning of new ideas and values, the flowering of art and culture, the progress of science, and the growth of technology, productivity and prosperity. But, defence reinforces this Renaissance by guaranteeing peace and security, and, historically, has always acted as a driver in developing technology. These are clearly the prerequisites for a successful rebirth and an age of enlightenment.

Africa is a continent which has been ravaged by the scourge of colonial conquests, and in Julius Nyerere's words, "*neo-colonial domination*", which has left behind a legacy of poverty, conflict, military *coups*, and foreign economic domination. The vital lesson in an unpredictable world is that African states must be able to protect the people, resources, and the sovereignty of the countries on the continent. This security, therefore, has to be ensured by the capacity of Africa's own defence forces, which need to be developed and strengthened. The South African National Defence Force (SANDF) can be among the champions of this Renaissance, jointly performing a role as guardians of peace, guarantors of stability and standard bearers for the ideals of democracy and progress.

A military role commensurate with Africa's Renaissance will see South Africa's new constitutional vision for defence influencing the continent, with the democratic policies formulated in the White Paper on Defence and the Defence Review impacting on military thinking, in the region and beyond. It will see such principles as civilian control of the military and a new, democratically inspired culture, informing Africa's defence community and promoting co-operation for the common security and well-being of Africa's people. We must, therefore, have the ability to fly our flag proudly when projecting peace in this way. The SA Navy can play a major role in this respect. It can assist peace support operations through the transport of personnel and equipment, the securing of ports and sea lanes, and the landing of peacekeeping troops when and where necessary.

THE WHITE PAPER ON DEFENCE AND THE DEFENCE REVIEW

There has been, as is well known, quite a sharp but healthy debate in the country since the 1994 elections about defence expenditure. This is thrown into critical relief by the fact that we must focus on the socio-economic advancement of our people. Through the White Paper on Defence and the Defence Review process – with its unparalleled inclusivity and consultation – we have been able to formulate a balanced response that has been endorsed by Cabinet and Parliament. This approach addresses both security and socio-economic upliftment 'guns and butter, houses and corvettes', defence needs and development.

Government can now focus on implementing the Review, in particular, on the acquisition of major items to replace ageing equipment in the defence inventory, and after years of neglect, key requirements for the Navy. Priorities include, among others:

- modern deep-sea naval patrol vessels and submarines;
- maritime helicopters and long range patrol aircraft;
- missiles and air-defence systems;
- secure communications systems;
- state-of-the-art computer technology; and
- hi-tech command and control systems.

In this regard, many countries are offering South Africa attractive defence procurement packages that enable the country to acquire military hardware while creating jobs, training and education opportunities for our work force – and other benefits, possibly including the development of harbours, shipbuilding capacity, and ship-repair facilities.

Far from defence being a drain on the country's resources, these agreements will enormously benefit the GEAR Strategy by giving our economy and industry a major boost. The scope of

these packages clearly extends beyond conventional defence funding as provided for in our current budget, but this does not mean that the procurement process is unaffordable or will be put on hold, as some have mistakenly suggested. What must be understood, is that the relevant funding for these packages is at the discretion of Cabinet following its endorsement of the Defence Review. A very strong case has been put forward through the Defence Review whereby Cabinet and Parliament have accepted that essential equipment requirements can be linked to strategic defence and trade co-operation programmes with major partners abroad. And in the words of Deputy President Mbeki, it is possible "*to handle these acquisitions outside the national budget.*"

THE SA NAVY'S ROLE

The Navy's primary role is to protect our seas and access to these seas. We are a trading nation, and trading nations need a navy. We are an island economy, with most of our trade conducted by sea, and we have clear maritime interests to safeguard. If we consider that more than 80 per cent of the value of our trade with the rest of the world, and over 92 per cent of its volume pass through our ports, it is clear that more suitable combat vessels than our ageing strike craft and Daphne submarines are necessary to patrol our sea lanes, to ensure the safety of international maritime traffic, and to allow secure access to our ports of entry for those who wish to do business with us. Potential foreign investors are a hard-nosed group, and they want to be sure of long term security and stability. The presence of an effective naval capacity is therefore the guarantor of a country's capability to secure these vital sea lanes for trade and communication during peacetime and war.

Moreover, and in terms of our national economy, we need to guarantee the integrity of our new 200-mile maritime Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), including that around Marion and Edward islands – which is the same size as the land mass of our country, and which is rich in fish and untapped mineral resources beneath the seabed. Although our navy is designed to fulfil its primary role of defending the nation, it is also capable of assisting in the maritime policing task, and should do so to help earn its keep. The central point to bear in mind is that South Africa, in fact, cannot afford both a navy and a coast guard, and it would be a downright waste of resources not to utilise our naval capability for peacetime purposes.

The answer lies in mutual support between existing agencies – for example, the Navy supporting Sea Fisheries, just as the Army and Air Force support the Police on land – with all state departments working together to avoid duplication of capabilities. If we have managed to keep poaching and other illegal activities in our EEZ within constraints, it must surely point to the Navy as being a deterrent – quite unlike the situation in the waters of our neighbouring states where poaching is rampant. The very fact that there is not yet a major problem in our waters is surely proof of the Navy's success in its support for Sea Fisheries.

And if a foreign power, for example, were to attempt to settle a fishing dispute in our seas in their favour, by means of a naval demonstration, our Navy would need to act simultaneously in a defensive and a policing role. Those with the responsibility of defending our sovereignty cannot afford to rule out such an eventuality. Examples of even democratic countries at loggerheads with one another over scarce resources cannot be ignored, as in the recent case of Canada and Spain, or the 'Cod War' between Britain and Iceland. And given the intense competition over these scarce resources, who can guarantee that such confrontation will never occur in our waters?

South Africa is strategically placed to render assistance both to the South Atlantic littoral states, such as Namibia and Angola, and to those on the Indian Ocean Rim, such as Mozambique and Tanzania, among others. In this regard, we have been approached by the President of Mozambique, and the Defence ministers of Tanzania and Namibia, for assistance in guarding their maritime interests from poaching and plundering. We can play a significant role in helping to build their naval capability and maritime interests for the common benefit of our entire region. The Navy could be at the leading edge of any such a policy by providing a non-threatening focus for co-operation. This can be accomplished through:

- joint training, and the provision of logistic support to our neighbours in policing their EEZs;
- search and rescue; and

- marine conservation.

Clearly, if there is to be an African Renaissance, then we must be able to guard our marine wealth, assist our neighbours in this respect, and co-operate with the navies of our continent.

THE NAVY'S NEEDS

Following the Defence Review, we need to critically evaluate the Navy's share of the budget. This is of particular importance in the light of the fact that it has been the stepchild of the armed forces, owing to the apartheid state's myopia, isolation, and concentration on landward forces. The Navy's share of the total defence budget is a paltry 8,8 per cent – and has been well below ten per cent for many years. This needs to be critically re-examined, particularly since the Navy has a leading role to play in this new era of Africa's Renaissance.

CONCLUSION

In capturing the spirit of the times, I believe this conference will serve as a significant milestone in the promotion of maritime awareness in South Africa. The contributions of your eminent participants will, through stimulating informed discussion, further the debate on the role of the Navy in the African Renaissance.

I would like to conclude with the words of President Mandela from his address to the International Fleet Review at the celebration of the 75th anniversary of the South African Navy: "*The sea is a vital national interest and that is why we maintain the Navy. Just as we believe that all people should be free, so too as a nation we believe in the freedom of the seas. That is a matter of national strategic interest. We are a maritime nation trading all over the world. We accept our obligation to combine with other maritime nations to uphold the freedom of the seas and to protect our national interests through naval power.*"

The South African Navy as Part of the African Renaissance: Setting the Pace for the Future

Vice Admiral R C Simpson-Anderson, Chief of the South African Navy

INTRODUCTION

As the world approaches the next millennium, it is necessary to reflect on what Africa's place will be in the next century, both as a continent and as the collection of individual states that comprise Africa. For the pessimists, Africa is destined to remain a third world entity, doomed to its future by the actions of the past – a sad relic of a combination of inter-ethnic and inter-tribal warfare, colonial exploitation, and Cold War superpower intervention. On the other hand, the optimists predict that the next century will be the 'African century', where Africa as a continent will finally reach its true potential and will join the other continents as a power base in its own right. One such optimist is Deputy President Thabo Mbeki, who has encapsulated a vision of Africa's future in his concept of an African Renaissance.

Certainly, if one studies the history of Africa to learn from the mistakes of the past, and analyses the present potential in most African countries, there is hope for the future. Although the continent is presently the poorest in the world, with many of the world's poorest countries within its borders, there is the potential for that to change. Africa accounts for 32 per cent of the world's gold production, 45 per cent of its diamond production, and 54 per cent of its platinum production. In addition, Africa supplies twenty per cent of the world's coffee market and pumps ten per cent of the world's oil supplies.¹ From a geopolitical perspective, and in particular a maritime one, Africa controls, or at least borders on three of the world's most strategic sea routes – the Straits of Gibraltar, the Suez Canal, and the Cape sea route. And lastly, and most importantly, the people of Africa are hungry for change, for a chance to improve their conditions, and for a chance to silence the African pessimists once and for all.

This leads to the following question: where does South Africa, and in particular the SA Navy, fit into this picture of a better Africa, of an African Renaissance? Do we have a role to play

and, if so, what is that role? Asked more broadly, what contribution can we and other African navies make to achieve this future vision? This paper will attempt to answer these questions. In so doing, I will be looking at those interests that are common to Africa, briefly what the African Renaissance vision entails, and then taking a more detailed look at what the SA Navy's contribution could possibly be.

COMMONALITY OF AFRICAN INTERESTS

Before looking at the specifics of South Africa's involvement, it is important to understand why a country acts the way it does in the international and/or regional arena. The concept that summarises these actions is that of 'national interests'. Firstly, this term is used at the highest level of international debate and is the basis from which all national, or grand strategies flow. A country's national interests are the most important wants and needs of that country, and are generally considered to be non-negotiable. These interests underpin all policies that a particular government advocates: overarching national policies being at the apex of the triangle, going down into national security policies, through foreign policies, and ultimately leading into defence policies.² As such, national interests are usually stated in terms of a nation's survival and long term well-being, and are generically put into one of four categories:

- defence of the homeland;
- economic well-being;
- favourable world order; and
- promotion of values.

For example, a workshop to discuss foreign policy, held in Gauteng during September 1996, concluded that South Africa's national interests encompassed:

- the security of the state and its citizens;
- the promotion of their social and economic well-being; and
- the encouragement of global peace, regional stability and development.

The very nature and the level of the debate concerning national interests involve a certain degree of ambiguity and interpretation. A useful way to further classify national interests is to look at the different levels of intensity inherent in each one, which can then be used to determine what stake a nation has in a particular interest. The following four levels of intensity can therefore be used:

- survival – when there is an imminent, credible threat of massive destruction, that is, the situation is critical;
- vital – when there is more time to respond to a threat and when a nation's leadership refuses to compromise beyond a point that it considers tolerable, that is, the situation is dangerous;
- major – when an issue is important but not crucial, that is, serious; and
- peripheral – when an issue does not seriously affect the well-being of a nation as a whole, even though it may be detrimental to the private interests of those citizens conducting business abroad, that is, the situation is bothersome.³

Assuming that national interests can be 'extrapolated' to a regional level, and with the above discussion as background, it is useful to reflect on what would constitute continental and/or regional interests for Africa. Before one could do that, however, it is fair to question whether there is enough common ground among the 54 independent African states to regard a 'continental/regional interests' approach as feasible.

I would argue that there is. Although there are vast differences among the various African states, there are also many recent strategic and historic similarities. Firstly, most of the continent suffered the shock of rapid colonial expansion between the 1870s and the 1900s, when European influence expanded from isolated coastal enclaves to include the entire continent. Secondly, most countries gained their independence at the height of the Cold War tensions. This meant that they were thrust into the international arena when they were politically at their most vulnerable, a situation that was exploited by the super powers for their own strategic advantage. This, in turn, allowed despots to thrive and further exacerbate their countries' economic and political woes. Thirdly, from an international perspective, Africa is often viewed as a single entity by world powers and the international media, so that a negative event in one region is seen as being representative of the entire continent. This effectively means that Africa, as a whole, is judged by the catastrophic events in countries such as Somalia, Rwanda and Sierra Leone, to name but a few. With this in mind, the

following points are put forward as a reasonable representation of Africa's vital continental interests:

- assured security for the 21st century – both from internal strife, and against external exploitation; similar to a defence of the homeland interest;
- economic growth – vital to facilitate the easing of the vast social problems that need to be addressed, such as huge unemployment, escalating crime and corrosion of traditional family values; similar to an economic well-being interest; and
- political stability – for regional and international credibility, and necessary for investor confidence and hence economic growth; similar to a favourable world order interest.

THE AFRICAN RENAISSANCE VISION

Moving on to the issue of the African Renaissance, the question can be asked: What exactly is this renaissance all about and what does it mean for the continent, in general, and South Africa, in particular? The best person to quote on this matter is the Deputy President, Mr Thabo Mbeki, who is credited with coining the phrase, as well as being the driving force behind the concept. Quoting from an interview with Mr Mbeki that appeared in the Sunday Independent on 13 July 1997, the African Renaissance can be summarised as follows:⁴

- Firstly, it is seen as the 'catchwords', as it were, for Africa's salvation; for Africa's revival across all spheres of public and private life.
- Secondly, there are two main dimensions to this revival – a democratic one and an economic one. One of the fundamental conditions of this renaissance is the establishment and maintenance of democratic systems. The other fundamental condition is sustainable economic development involving strong institutions and management, together with a growing entrepreneurial class.
- Thirdly, the key to this vision is that Africans should take charge of their own destiny. Mr Mbeki has stated that Africa will succeed or fail in the long term due to its own efforts, and should not attempt to place any future blame on anyone else. Although the support and involvement of the major powers are necessary, their involvement must be limited to a truly authentic African agenda.
- Lastly, the African Renaissance is not just a concept for governments to follow, but must be something that ordinary men and women can be enthusiastic about and identify with.

From the above discussion it is clear that the concept of an African Renaissance and that of Africa's vital 'continental interests' are closely linked. By actively supporting the African Renaissance, the SA Navy can go a long way in addressing the continent's vital interests, thereby playing a major role in promoting peace and prosperity in Africa.

SOUTH AFRICA AND THE SOUTH AFRICAN NAVY'S CONTRIBUTION: THE TRADITIONAL ROLE OF NAVIES

Before considering the specifics of the SA Navy's involvement, it is necessary to briefly reflect on the traditional roles that navies play in international affairs. Since time immemorial, the sea has been used as a great highway, linking littoral nations through their trade routes across this "*wide common*", to quote Mahan.⁵ Due to the inherent and unique nature of navies, especially when compared to other military forces – namely flexibility, sustainability and reach – they have traditionally been used as one of the primary instruments of states in supporting foreign initiatives. This is as true for the SA Navy today as it has always been for the great maritime powers: one has only to think of the SAS Outeniqua's role in President Mandela's peace initiatives in the former Zaire earlier this year. In times of conflict it is often navies that hold the key to success or failure. Consider, for example, the crucial role played by the various navies in the epic sea battles of the Atlantic and the Pacific during World War Two. In fact, it is a sobering thought, and one that bears considerable reflection, that leading sea powers have won, or at worst drawn, all their major conflicts with leading land powers in modern times.⁶ This fact highlights the influence that navies could have over the course of events on land in Africa.

One of the great strengths of naval forces is the relative ease with which they can be used in coalition or multilateral scenarios. This co-operative ability allows ships to be deployed at short notice to participate in combined operations at sea with navies from other states. This 'co-operative' trend appears to be on the increase, as noted by Prof Eric Grove, who has the

following to say concerning sea power in the 21st century: "*International naval co-operation is an increasing trend. This allows national naval forces to respond to the increasingly powerful dynamics of complex interdependence ... Naval forces are often the best forces to use for coalition building because of their utility for development with limited commitment.*"⁷

One also has to consider the policy signals that are sent by the port visits of naval vessels in their normal line of operational tasking. Consider, for example, the messages of goodwill and intent that were sent to the South African public at large by the visits of the 22 foreign warships, from 13 different countries, during the SA Navy's 75th Anniversary International Fleet Review in April this year. Or the other 38 visits to South African ports, by vessels from 16 different countries, since April 1994.

CONTINENTAL/REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES

From a continental and/or regional perspective, most African navies are relatively small, with many littoral states having no credible naval forces at all. With one or two exceptions, these navies appear to be unable to look after themselves, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. This means that many African countries have no control over their maritime resources and are at the mercy of unscrupulous actors who can exploit the situation with impunity. It also means that non-African maritime powers are able to occupy this vacuum with ease, and by offering their naval or maritime services, where possible, are able to promote their own national interests ahead of those of the continent.

This is an excellent example of where the SA Navy can set the pace for the future. By taking the lead on behalf of those African navies that cannot do so themselves, the SA Navy can help to foster a spirit of independence and self-reliance among African countries. As an example, our track record with regard to the upgrading and maintenance of our ships and submarines, most of which are older than many other vessels in Africa, speaks for itself. We are continuously operating rapidly ageing capital equipment under extremely difficult budgetary conditions, and in the process have learned many valuable lessons which can be passed on to other navies.

I must stress that the relatively small size of most African navies does not have to be an issue when it comes to making some form of maritime contribution. No modern-day navy, or aspirant navy, has to claim that it is too small or that it lacks the necessary capital equipment to participate in local, regional or international naval activities. For example, modern navigation equipment has become so affordable and reliable that it is a fairly simple task for any navy, operating a small vessel, to carry out basic hydrographic surveys. Furthermore, many navies have had their humble origins in far less than what is available today. The SA Navy started out with two trawlers and a small survey vessel (a converted minesweeper) in 1922 and has since built up a small but credible navy that has, at its level, a track record that can compare with the best in the world. There is no need to blame size or the lack of financial resources as reasons for not creating a basic capability and a naval and maritime culture.

The SA Navy's leading position in the region has been recognised by the member navies of the Standing Maritime Committee (SMC) of the Inter-State Defence and Security Committee (ISDSC), in itself an organ of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Although the chairpersonship of the ISDSC will be changing shortly, the SMC has unanimously accepted that I remain as Chairperson of this committee until further notice. This is an indication of the esteem in which we are held by the region's navies, and is something that I am honoured to acknowledge. Note must also be made of the vision of the SMC, which is "*to promote peace and prosperity in the region through maritime military co-operation.*"⁸ A unique aspect of the SMC is that it includes landlocked states as full members, thereby promoting the awareness of the maritime potential of Africa among states that would not normally have such access.

SPECIFICS OF THE SA NAVY'S CONTRIBUTION

Following below are some of the specific areas where the SA Navy can contribute to the African Renaissance. The list is not meant to be comprehensive or to constitute a blueprint,

but is rather intended to stimulate thought. As will be seen, some of the suggestions are obviously more ambitious than others.

Utilisation of South African Expertise

An option that should be further explored is the combination of South African expertise with overseas funding. The budget of the SA Navy, and indeed that of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF), is under extreme pressure, probably the worst it has ever been. This pressure is likely to continue for the foreseeable future. Under these conditions it is virtually impossible for the SA Navy to contribute financially to any combined or multilateral ventures involving other African littoral states. However, what we do have are sophisticated, highly skilled naval personnel who can certainly contribute their skills and knowledge to projects within Africa. In this scenario, however, it is imperative that international funding is obtained from donor countries that are willing to support development in Africa. As an alternative, or as something that could run parallel with overseas contributions, partial funding could possibly come from a South African Government-led initiative to improving the security affairs of African states.

By way of example, let me return to the question of coastal surveying, and the fact that the SA Navy is internationally renowned for its hydrographic expertise. To illustrate this point, I must mention that retired Citizen Force Commodore, Neil Guy, was recently honoured by being elected from a field of eight international candidates to the International Hydrographic Organisation's headquarters in Monaco, an appointment that he will hold for five years.⁹ In line with our hydrographic expertise, therefore, a proposal would be that a small, skeleton crew of South Africans, possibly retired naval personnel, could crew a cheap, simple ship together with naval personnel from a specific country, in carrying out surveys of that country's waters. This would obviously be used as a training exercise for such a foreign navy, while carrying out an essential operational task that deals directly with the safety of merchant shipping operating off the African coast.

Providing 'Safe Oceans'

The concept of 'safe oceans' has many aspects to it. The first aspect follows on from the example given above, namely the SA Navy's possible contribution to the improvement of the standard and quality of hydrographic surveying in Africa. This has great importance for the merchant navies of the world that call at African ports, some of which have not been properly surveyed for years. The ability to update the surveying work of the approaches to many African harbours has the potential to attract more merchant shipping. Increased commercial activity would automatically follow. Even without the involvement of other navies, the SA Navy could possibly help to survey the approaches to some of the more vital harbours in the region. Although this would have to fit in with the already overflowing work programme of the hydrographic ship SAS Protea, a long term programme could be considered whereby assistance to other states could be scheduled.

A second aspect concerns the operating environment of the seas around Africa, with specific reference to the containment of piracy. Although this evil is presently concentrated elsewhere in the world, we should not be lulled into a sense of false security. According to the monthly reports of the Maritime Safety Committee of the UN's International Maritime Organisation, the scale, diversity and severity of piracy attacks, coupled to their global reach, are showing an upward trend. There is no reason to believe that Africa will be spared this problem, with all its implications. The attacks on ships off Lagos in the early 1980s inhibited international trade with Nigeria, causing insurance premiums to rise and ship owners were reluctant to send their ships into the area.¹⁰ The SA Navy needs to ensure, therefore, that it and other navies are operationally ready to deal with this problem when and where it arises.

Protection of Maritime Resources

The recent signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with Namibia highlights the importance of the SA Navy in helping to protect the fishing resources of other countries. Namibia, with a coastline of hundreds of kilometres, depends to a large extent on the harvest provided by its fishing industry and the contribution that this industry makes to its economy. But, with no naval forces and only three vessels dedicated to fisheries patrol, it lacks the infrastructure to vigorously prosecute those fishing vessels that plunder its resources. In this

regard, the SA Navy can go a long way in assisting the Namibians, by providing ships on an *ad hoc* basis to help patrol their waters. There are obviously many areas that need to be sorted out, not least of which are the international legal implications of a South African vessel being used in a policing role for the benefit of another state. Also, this assistance would be made available to other states in the region – the Mozambicans have also been asking for help to patrol their waters for some time now.

Of course, the protection of maritime resources is not limited purely to fisheries protection. One has only to think of the many oil tankers that pass through our waters on a daily basis, as well as the huge oil fields and reserves off the Angolan coast, to consider the environmental and commercial implications of an oil disaster off a country's coastline.

Search and Rescue (S&R)

Although the responsibility for S&R lies with the Department of Transport, the SA Navy is an integral part of any maritime S&R mission that occurs. We have built up considerable expertise in this regard over many years (nearly 75 ships have been lost off our coastline due to collisions or strandings since the SA Navy's inception), and this expertise can be shared with other states. These operations have often occurred in distant waters, such as the search for the wreckage of the SAA Boeing Helderberg off Mauritius in 1987.¹¹ It must be remembered that S&R does not necessarily only involve ships. Consider for a moment the crucial role played by the Navy's divers in the recent Great Lakes ferry disaster and, going further back, the Oceanos rescue mission. Also, with the planned acquisition of our new corvettes we will have an even greater ability to conduct sustained operations at longer distances from our home ports. We will then more readily be able to assist other states in carrying out S&R functions in their waters.

Joint Shipbuilding Programmes

One of the more ambitious possibilities that needs to be mooted is that of South Africa entering into shipbuilding programmes with other African countries. Besides the obvious savings brought about by quantities of scale, there are the possible longer term savings for the region – simplifying and unifying logistics requirements, standardisation of equipment and training, and lower maintenance costs brought about by localised maintenance facilities, to name but a few. Ships built under this programme could possibly be an extension of the new corvette programme that the SA Navy is pursuing (an African version of the Anzac frigate?), or smaller craft such as a regional replacement for the Fast Attack Craft that most African navies operate. An increased, viable sea-going capability would help strengthen the regional navies considerably, and in turn strengthen the countries that depend so much on their maritime lines of communication.

Repair Facilities

Connected to the previous point is the fact that the SA Navy can provide much sought-after repair facilities at its excellent bases in Simon's Town and Durban. Not only can these facilities provide a service that is not possible in many African states, due to a lack of infrastructure, but they can also be used as superb training facilities for other African navies to improve their level of technical and engineering expertise. There are not many African navies that can boast of repair facilities such as those found in Simon's Town – a dry-dock that can accommodate 28 000 ton vessels, and approximately 80 000 square metres of workshop, storage and office space.

Training Facilities

South Africa and the SA Navy possess some of the finest educational and training facilities in Africa. We have world-renowned universities and technical colleges that continuously produce men and women of the highest professional and technical calibre. Our naval training system produces officers who, when measured against international standards as set by some of the best educational and training institutions in Europe and the United States, more than hold their own in the international arena. Many African navies send their officers overseas for training that their own countries are not able to provide, usually at considerable cost to the individual navies involved. We can not only match the quality of training offered in

the international arena, but can help to create an African 'centre of excellence' in the educational and training environment – a centre that would help, amongst other things, to create an African sense of identity and common understanding that will strengthen the continental and regional bonds that already exist. As an example, assistance has been given to Malawi in the past in the form of diver training, as well as a Staff Methods Course that was run in Malawi using SA Navy personnel as instructors.

Maritime Research

A great deal of maritime and naval research is done in South Africa, through various companies, universities, and other educational and research institutions. Within the defence community, the SA Navy co-ordinates most of the maritime and naval research that takes place. In particular, the Institute of Maritime Technology (IMT) in Simon's Town maintains a professional scientific capability on behalf of the SA Navy. By entering into bilateral or multilateral agreements with the SA Navy, therefore, the potential exists for research and scientific information to be pooled among the navies in the region.

As mentioned earlier, this list is not exhaustive. The fact is that the SA Navy has actively been involved in Africa for many years now. Starting with the operation in 1990 to upgrade the former Zairian naval river facilities, the SA Navy has conducted 17 separate operations involving other African nations, from Gabon on the west coast to Kenya on the east coast. Eleven African countries' officers have attended courses at our Staff College over the last two years, and several officers have completed attachments with our ships at sea, including recent deployments to Antarctica. Operating in, and with Africa is certainly not new to us.

CONCLUSION

The African Renaissance is a vision – a vision that sees Africa freeing itself from the binding poverty and political deprivation that have gripped the continent for most of this century. It is a vision that sees the continent facing its future head-on and, by its own efforts, creating a better life for all concerned.

There is no doubt that South Africa, and in particular the SA Navy, are at the vanguard of this African Renaissance vision. We have the professional expertise to assist other navies in establishing new capabilities and improving those that already exist. Despite years of budgetary neglect, we have managed to maintain a fleet of ships and a level of professionalism that are acknowledged by the many international navies that we come into contact with. As I stated in my article on *Valuable Lessons for Small Navies* in a recent edition of *The Dawn of a New Era*, every mission over the past five years has been executed successfully, whether in foreign or in local waters.¹² The SA Navy is therefore ideally situated to fulfil its continental obligations in support of foreign policy initiatives.

But just as importantly, by working together navies learn to understand and co-operate with one another. And navies that co-operate tend not to fight one another. Therefore, by promoting this sense of co-operation, by offering other African navies technical and tactical assistance, the SA Navy can actively contribute towards the peace and prosperity of Africa at large. It is appropriate that I end this paper with a quote from Deputy President Mbeki, taken from the interview concerning his vision of the African Renaissance: "*it is our sense as we go around the continent, that there is a spirit which says: Now is our time, let's do something.*"¹³ We, the SA Navy, are ready to do just that!

ENDNOTES

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12. R C Simpson-Anderson, *Valuable Lessons for Small Navies*, *Dawn of a New Era*, 4, Summer 1997, p. 16.
13. Williams & Robertson, *op. cit.*, p. 4.