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**New Powers for Global Change?**

**South Africa's Global Strategy and Status**

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## Executive Summary

How did post-settlement South Africa's foreign policy executive perceive its post-Cold War international and regional roles, and what have been South Africa's dominant foreign policy agendas – or concerns over the past dozen years?

Unlike the apartheid decades in which South Africa's foreign policy was characterised by major estrangement between itself and the international community, South Africa's post-1994 foreign policy is a story of growing accommodation with the community of states. With the onset of democratic rule, the new liberationist rulers were determined to prove that the Republic has broken with its apartheid past, and that it was bent on becoming a "good world citizen". By the end of the first five years of political liberation, South Africa did serious introspection, seeking to become confident about the Republic's place and role in the world, and they emphasised the need for foreign policy to become "predictable". Twelve years after democracy's dawn, South Africa's foreign policy has indeed become foreseeable, and is in the main driven by security and economic considerations as interests, and fundamentally seeks to bring about a redistribution of power between North and South.

The Mandela government (1994-1999) pursued highly ethical and normative considerations in foreign policy, including placing emphasis on international principles such as the centrality of international law, democratisation of the global order, the importance of human rights and democracy in foreign policy, a commitment to multilateralism and regional integration. Foreign policy also had a clear sense of economic interests as it sought to attract foreign direct investment and trading opportunities so as to create jobs at home. The Mandela government viewed the country as an international bridge-builder as it sought to cultivate strong ties with the industrialised north, while at the same time reaching out to, and speaking on behalf of, African and southern states.

The assessment of the Mbeki government was that the Republic needed to cultivate positive ties with both North and South, with the two-fold aim of burden sharing in the area of development, and bringing about a redistribution of power between these global blocs. Pretoria-Tshwane consciously sought to become an international negotiator and mediator through which it would actively negotiate international pacts in favour of a new developmentalism that brings greater equity for Africa and the South. This new developmentalism stresses the inter-relationship between development, peace and security, democratic and "good" governance, and high levels of sustained growth.

The South-South co-operation strategy emerged as a bold expression of solidarity and commitment to development. The strategy's main preoccupations are market access and trade and investment benefits for

developing countries. Issues of "Third World" debt relief are a major element of attempts to bring about international redress between North and South. The country continues to see itself as a spokesperson for Africa, even defender of African interests in an unfriendly world order. Foreign policy positions South Africa as a leading voice within fora like the Non-aligned Movement (NAM), the Africa-Asia Strategic Partnership, the India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Tri-lateral Forum, and others.

In its attempts to bring about a redistribution of power globally, North-South dialogue strategies have emphasised the need to craft a strategic partnership between the industrialised North and the developing South. This partnership should be based on mutual responsibility and mutual accountability where both sides in the partnership – North and South – would have rights and responsibilities.

Assertive multilateralism occupies a huge place on the country's foreign policy radar screen, and there is constant emphasis on the idea of "collective security", and a "rules-based" global order in which the UN remains the ultimate repository of global order. For South Africa, the UN Charter should be the guide to the management of global order.

Pretoria was steadfast in criticizing the Bush administration's policy of aggressive unilateralism and go-it-alone tactics. Following attacks on the World Trade Centre in New York and the Pentagon in Washington D. C. in September 2001, the South African government asserted that the Republic should respond to the fight against terrorism, preventive strikes, and the unilateralism versus multilateralism debate with "confidence and creativity"<sup>1</sup>.

The best way to describe South Africa's global strategy is to sum it up as standing on five legs: (1) consolidation of the African agenda; (2) South-South co-operation; (3) North-South dialogue; (4) strengthening bilateral relations; and (5) a global agenda with the aim of promoting global governance in the areas of political and security issues, and socio-economic issues. We ask the question whether South Africa can muster the wherewithal, capacity and resources to manage and sustain such an intricate foreign policy agenda.

It is indeed a highly ambitious and confident foreign policy agenda, and Africa now enjoys pride of place and importance in South Africa's international strategy. The question remains whether South Africa can sustain such an ambitious foreign policy agenda beyond 2009 when the current president, Thabo Mbeki, essentially a foreign policy executive, will step down.

<sup>1</sup> A point made during the South African Department of Foreign Affairs Heads of Mission Conference, Cape Town, 17-21 February 2005.

## 1 Introduction

This paper is prepared as part of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung programme on "New Powers for Global Change?". The paper will essentially answer four broad questions: (1) How does South Africa perceive its current role in international and regional politics? (2) What motives and interests guide South Africa's foreign policy in shaping the international order? (3) What foreign policy strategies does it pursue and where do South Africa's foci lie? (4) What does South Africa's foreign policy strategy mean for the international order? In short, we will answer the question: how does South Africa perceive its current international and regional interests and roles?

Since 1994, South Africa's foreign policy, like its domestic politics, has radically changed. No longer constrained by the vice-like strictures of ostracism, South Africa's post-apartheid political leaders have pursued a highly ambitious foreign policy that would allow it "innovative ways" to play the role of "an active agent of progressive change" in global affairs.

The goals of foreign policy have become equally grand: to bring about world re-organisation and a redistribution of power between global North and global South. Just like the country has sought a new unifying ideology at home, so the two post-settlement administrations searched for an international ideology, and started experimenting with the idea of becoming a "progressive state" pursuing a "progressive" foreign policy agenda, committed to the decolonisation and democratisation of world affairs. It pushes for greater equity in world affairs that would give greater voice to Africa and the South.

Two questions linger, however. Does the country have the capacity to manage and sustain its ambitious foreign policy agenda, and will this agenda survive the succession of "foreign-policy-president" Thabo Mbeki?

## 2 South Africa's global status

What is South Africa's objective status in world affairs, as opposed to the international prestige it seeks? In 1998, Garth le Pere opined: "South Africa is variously classified along with a range of developing countries that have the characteristics of being pivotal states, middle-level or

emerging powers"<sup>2</sup>. This gives us an idea of South Africa's rank in global affairs: a middle rank state in global terms, but a great power in African terms.

South Africa is a "global reformist" that seeks to play the role of "progressive agent of change". Embedded in the idea of a progressive foreign policy is the notion of pushing for incremental global change, by using negotiations and diplomacy as the most important tools of policy, and to stitch together partnerships and coalitions with like-minded states, with the aim of reforming the global order. Adekeye Adebajo is more on the mark when he asserts that "Post-apartheid South Africa is neither messiah nor a mercantilist. It is simply an aspiring middle power seeking to punch above its weight in global politics through making strategic alliances with other countries, and by providing its unmatched technological and infrastructural resources to an impoverished continent"<sup>3</sup>. So South Africa can be depicted as an African power, pursuing an essentially South-oriented strategy, with the goal of bringing about a redistribution of global power, through which Africa and the developing South will gain greater equity in global affairs. In short, South Africa is a middle ranked power in Africa punching about its weight.

## 3 Global reformist for a "better Africa" in a "better world"?

A key aim of South Africa's foreign policy is to alter global power relations by challenging unilateral tendencies by some and promoting a rules-based global order anchored on multilateralism. During the September 2006 Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Summit, for example, president Mbeki warned that South Africa and its NAM partners would not hesitate to adopt a more "aggressive" stance in their efforts to alter global power relations and challenge unilateralism<sup>4</sup>. The present "unjust global order" and its built-in "imbalances", said Mbeki, are in need of "overhaul"<sup>5</sup>. Prior to 1999, the Mandela government expressed similar positions when it stressed the need for a "more just" world order,

<sup>2</sup> Garth le Pere, South Africa – an 'emerging power'?, in *Global Dialogue*, vol. 3 no. 1, Institute for Global Dialogue, March 1998, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> See Adekeye Adebajo, *South Africa in Africa: Messiah or Mercantilist?* Unpublished paper, September 2006, p. 11.

<sup>4</sup> Report on SABC TV news, 17 September 2006.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

and Mbeki saw great merit in working for a "new" and "more equitable" one. Mandela stressed the need for international law to be taken seriously, Mbeki emphasised that the world needed a political and economic overhaul in favour of poor countries, the bulk of which are found in Africa. In the words of President Mbeki, there was a need to "... create a new international political and economic order"<sup>6</sup>.

When one considers the worldview of the Mbeki government, welfare and *realpolitik* considerations emerged as key drivers. In 2004, for example, president Mbeki characterised the most critical global problems in three inter-related categories, namely poverty and underdevelopment; peace and security; and global power relations<sup>7</sup>. Whereas the primary concern of the developing countries are issues of poverty and underdevelopment, the developed world is concerned with *realpolitik* issues of peace and security, and of seeking an alteration in the global balance of power between North and South. South Africa has expressed open concern that the most powerful states in the world dominate the international agenda by asserting their interests and priorities over those concerns of the developing countries<sup>8</sup>. This, believes South Africa, should be transformed into a new global order that is based on partnership and shared responsibility and mutual interests<sup>9</sup>.

#### 4 Africa: *Primus inter pares*

Post-1994 governments never faltered to claim an African and South identity. Whereas analysts like Patrick Bond charged the South African government of playing a "sub-imperialist"<sup>10</sup> role in the continent, and whereas Adam Habib openly espouses a "hegemonic"<sup>11</sup> role for South Africa

in Africa, it is instead the idea of "partnership", that of "building strategic partnerships" with African states that defined the thrust of Africa policy.

In a constant effort to win over the confidence of fellow African states, and to convince the world community of its regional power status, the government consistently asserted that "Africa remains the core focus of South Africa's foreign policy"<sup>12</sup>. In 2002 the minister of foreign affairs, Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, stated that South Africa should act "... to articulate and defend the interest of Africa and the developing South in the fora of the developed countries"<sup>13</sup>. In yet another effort to consolidate its African credentials, policy identified "... the principal challenge of transforming our continent economically, socially, politically and culturally". South Africa saw itself as champion for the cause of Africa as it took it upon itself to reversing the image of Africa, away from a pessimistic image, which sees the continent "... as the unfathomable disaster – the netherworld"<sup>14</sup>. South Africa thus saw itself as a promoter of international transformation.

Under the banner of an African Renaissance, policy sought to articulate a coherent vision for the continent, based on the premise that lasting solutions to the continent's challenges "can only come through the promotion of democracy throughout the world"<sup>15</sup>. A philosophical underpinning of policy was the constant subscription to the promotion of "democratic peace"<sup>16</sup>, the idea that democracies do not go to war with one another, and that democracy was fundamentally more pacific than other forms of government. The idea of "building stable democratic systems... and making a contribution to the challenge of peace, democracy, development, and stability in the rest of our continent"<sup>17</sup>, has almost been elevated to an ideological underpinning of the country's foreign policy. "The dream of peace and stability, of democracy and human rights" have been promoted as inter-

<sup>6</sup> President Thabo Mbeki, Address as Chairperson of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), South Summit, Havana, Cuba, 12 April 2000, p. 3.

<sup>7</sup> See address by HE President Mbeki to the United Nations General Assembly, September 2004.

<sup>8</sup> South African Department of Foreign Affairs Heads of Mission Conference, op. cit.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> See Patrick Bond, South African sub-imperialism, paper adapted from his two books, *Looting Africa: the economics of exploitation*, Zed Books and UKZN Press, 2006, and also *Talk Left, Walk Right: South Africa's frustrated global reforms*, Africa World Press and UKZN Press, 2006.

<sup>11</sup> See Adam Habib and Nthakeng Selinyane, "Constraining the unconstrained: civil society and South Africa's hegemonic obligations in Africa", in Walter Carlsnaes and Philip Nel (eds.), op. cit., pp. 175-194.

<sup>12</sup> Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Report back to the people, Annual Report 2001-2002, Pretoria, 2002.

<sup>13</sup> Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Strategic Plan 2002-2005, Pretoria, 2002.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> African National Congress, Foreign Policy Discussion Document, 1994, p. 60.

<sup>16</sup> Chris Landsberg, "Promoting democracy: the Mandela-Mbeki doctrine", *Journal of Democracy*, July 2000.

<sup>17</sup> <<http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/mbeki>>.

twined elements of the Mbeki government's foreign policy, as the idea of transforming southern Africa into a "zone of peace" by means of "building stable democracies"<sup>18</sup> became strategic goal.

The Mbeki government was instrumental in negotiating the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), an initiative aimed at stimulating Africa's development after decades of failures as a result of the legacies of colonialism and the Cold War, bad governance, unsound economic policies and management, and destructive conflicts<sup>19</sup>. The NEPAD plan of action identifies democracy, governance, and peace and security; economic and corporate governance; infrastructure and information technology; human resource development (notably health and education); and agriculture and market access<sup>20</sup> all as prerequisites for development.

Continental integration – a new continentalism – has stood out as a key foreign policy goal under the banner of South Africa's foreign policy. South Africa was instrumental in establishing the AU, and pushed for the establishment of AU institutions like the Peace and Security Council, strengthening the AU Commission, the African Court of Human and People's Rights, the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC), responsible for civil society engagement of continental and governance processes. South Africa has been a key promoter of the idea that Africa's Regional Economic Communities (REC's) and Sub-regional Economic Communities (SEC's) are the building blocks of continental development and integration<sup>21</sup>.

In 2003 the Republic became the permanent host of the Pan-African Parliament (PAP), now based in Midrand, South Africa. South Africa is also host to the Secretariat of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM).

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<sup>18</sup> Deputy President Thabo Mbeki, A national strategic vision for South Africa, Address to the Development Planning Summit, hosted by the Intergovernmental Forum, Pretoria, 27 November 1995, pp. 2-4.

<sup>19</sup> D. A. Bekoe and C. Landsberg, NEPAD: African Initiative, New Partnership? International Peace Academy (IPA) Workshop Report, New York, July 2002.

<sup>20</sup> New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), Workshop on Indicators, benchmarks and processes for the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), Cape Town, 7-8 October 2002.

<sup>21</sup> For a perspective on the role and place of REC's, see Harvey Short, Economic Integration in Africa: Overview of Continental Institutional Framework, Unpublished paper presented at the Development Bank of Southern Africa, 27 September 2005.

## 5 Peacemaking and Peace-keeping

Economic and strategic considerations long featured strongly in South Africa's post-apartheid foreign policy, especially in Southern and Central Africa. One of the means South Africa used to bolster its global strategic image was to reinforce a peacemaker and peace-keeper role, notably in Africa, and through this prestigious role it has promoted its economic and security interests. South Africa invested in a lot of political and financial capital in mediation efforts as it sought to bolster its image as an African peacemaker engaged in efforts to spread negotiations and inclusive government, especially in Africa. Both the Mandela and Mbeki governments emphasised the need for African and other states experiencing conflict to resolve such conflicts through negotiated settlements.

The view has long been that the Republic's economic and strategic interests require a stable "near-abroad" – Southern Africa. It is thus not surprising that, as early as 1994, Mandela sought to broker an inclusive peace deal in Angola following two decades of civil war, urging president Dos Santos to seek an "accommodation" with the rebel leader and declared warlord Jonas Savimbi of UNITA<sup>22</sup>. Not only is Lesotho part of the country's "near-abroad" – it is literally encircled by South African geography and have triggered the idea that instability in the mountain kingdom, will necessarily have spill over effects into the Republic. As early as 1994, therefore, the Mandela government joined Botswana and Zimbabwe in a preventive diplomacy effort to encourage elections and stave off a constitutional crisis in the kingdom<sup>23</sup>. In 1998, South Africa even resorted to military force when its quiet diplomacy ventures failed to prevent a coup next door. With these two intercessions South Africa gradually built up its peacemaker image.

As early as 1997, the new rulers identified the Great Lakes region as of significant strategic importance to the country and stability and prosperity in Africa. This prompted Pretoria to engage in another display of South Africa's "peace-maker" philosophy. Thabo Mbeki –

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<sup>22</sup> See Christopher Landsberg, *The Quite Diplomacy of Liberation, International Politics and South Africa's Democratic Transition*, Jacana, 2004, p. 262

<sup>23</sup> See Adekeye Adebajo and Christopher Landsberg, "South Africa and Nigeria as Regional Hegemons", in Mwesiga Baregu and Christopher Landsberg (eds.), *From Cape to Congo: Southern Africa's Evolving Security Challenges*, 2003, p. 185.

then South Africa's deputy president – played an active role in seeking an end to the rebellion against Zairian dictator, Mobutu Sese Seko. Mbeki's approach involved an intriguing application of inducement strategies (i.e., a combination of carrots and sticks), to try and nudge the parties to a settlement.

Also in 1998, South Africa refused to send military troops to fight alongside any of the two blocs of parties, the Mugabe-Angola-Namibia-Kabila axis and the Museveni-Kagame-Rebels. Pretoria pursued an independent line by refusing to side with any of the two blocs of the conflict, and instead opted for a peacemaker role<sup>24</sup>. Foreign Affairs Minister Alfred Nzo said at the time that South Africa's policy was to encourage the Congolese to "sit around a table and determine the future of their country"<sup>25</sup>.

Since 1999, the Mbeki administration took off where Mandela's government left and singled out peace in the Democratic Republic of Congo as its number one priority. Pretoria-Tshwane was instrumental in efforts to try and ensure a successful Inter-Congolese Dialogue (ICD), which commenced at Sun City in February 2002<sup>26</sup>.

In Burundi, South Africa sought to strengthen the Arusha Process, and former Deputy President Jacob Zuma played a key "facilitation" role to backstop the efforts of Julius Nyerere and Nelson Mandela. One of its key policies was to ensure the cease-fire of June 2004. But under Mbeki, South Africa also got involved in peacekeeping operations, thereby showing a willingness to underwrite its peacemaking efforts.

Even in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, South Africa tried to carve a conflict resolution role for itself when as early as 2001, the Presidency started the Spier Presidential Peace Retreat, a "peace camp" through which government engaged moderates from both sides of that conflict. But its neutrality here has been vigorously questioned by the Israeli's, suggesting that South Africa was biased in favour of the Pales-

tinians. This type of diplomatic intercession, it was the belief, would enhance the country's prestige and global standing.

In a sense, South Africa and Zimbabwe represent the Germany and France of southern Africa. Just like the latter are indispensable for European stability and integration, so the former two are pivotal in the southern African context. The Zimbabwe question forced itself onto South Africa's agenda as early as 1999 and South Africa opted for a strategy of "quiet diplomacy" vis-à-vis Harare. Mbeki tapped into his strategic relationship with Nigeria's Olesegun Obasanjo to try and cajole Robert Mugabe in the direction of a negotiated end to the Zimbabwe crisis. Again, the opposition MDC in Zimbabwe has questioned South Africa's neutrality, suggesting that the Mbeki government sided with Zanu-Pf.

South Africa's interests and self-abnegation considerations were not confined to southern and Central Africa. It stretched throughout the continent, including Sudan. It has been a staunch supporter of the Sudan IGAD peace process and Egyptian/Libyan Initiative; it however favoured the IGAD process<sup>27</sup>. South Africa also spearheaded the post-conflict reconstruction efforts of South Sudan, and is currently actively engaged in state-building initiatives in southern Sudan.

## 6 South Africa's international order agenda

How does the Republic see its relations with the "greater liberal west, and the US dominated international system? Does it have a strategy to balance its hedging roles? What alliances and coalitions does it seek to build in efforts to meet its broader goals beyond Africa? South-South dimensions, as well as North-South considerations features prominently in South Africa's agenda. A strong emphasis is placed on reforming international institutions, as well as engaging the EU and Germany. Germany is singled out in the light of its imminent assumption of the chairpersonship of the G8 in July 2007.

### The North-South and South-South "Bridge-Builder"

#### 6.1 South-South partnership

A major element of South African foreign policy has been its commitment to improve relations between the North and South, driven by the overriding goal of bringing about a restructuring

<sup>24</sup> Claude Kabemba, *Whither the DRC? Causes of the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and way forward, Policy: Issues and Actors*, vol. 12, no. 1, March 1999.

<sup>25</sup> Quoted in Chris Landsberg, "South Africa's policy in the Congo War", in John Clark (ed.), *The African Stakes of the Congo War*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2002.

<sup>26</sup> See Chris Landsberg, "South Africa", in Gilbert M. Khadiaghala, *Security Dynamics in Africa's Great Lakes Region*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2006, pp. 121-140.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

of power relations between these groupings. At the NAM Summit in 1998, it tried to end the 'dialogue of the deaf' (a historical flaw of the organisation) by explicitly creating links between North and South. Indeed, South Africa made history by inviting representatives of the G7 and other industrialised powers to attend a NAM summit for the first time.

Speaking at the opening of the South Summit in April 2000 in Havana, Mbeki – then chair of the NAM – pushed for “a constructive and purposeful relationship between ourselves and other countries of the North”<sup>28</sup>. He campaigned for “the challenge to reinforce the interaction and exchanges amongst ourselves as the countries of the South, to strengthen South-South co-operation.”<sup>29</sup> During the 2006 NAM Summit held in Havana, Cuba, president Mbeki emphasised the need for multilateral agencies such as the UN, the WTO, the World Bank and IMF to be reformed in ways that would give the developing South greater voice and say in these bodies. In 2006, South Africa assumed the position of chair of the UN-based Group of 77 plus China movement, again bearing testimony to the elaborate South-South aspirations it harbours.

Tshwane-Pretoria has identified countries like Nigeria, Algeria, Egypt, Brazil, India, and China as key “strategic partners” to consolidate an agenda of the South. It has touted the idea of a G8 of the South in order to develop a co-ordinated approach to globalisation, and to ensure that the developing South plays a more active and meaningful role in global institutions. In June 2003 Brazil, India, and South Africa established the Trilateral Dialogue Forum in an effort to collectively address issues of global concern around development, trade, and global governance<sup>30</sup>.

## 6.2 North-South Dialogue

In terms of the North-South Dialogue, foreign policy strategists long held the view that “engagement with developed countries is premised on the notion of forging partnerships for peace, security and development”<sup>31</sup>. South African foreign policy came to stress a new priority: “fun-

damentally” altering “the relationship between Africa and the North, while strengthening the relationship between Africa and the South”<sup>32</sup>. Its clear goal was to bring about international redress by playing a bridging role between these divided blocs. Pretoria came to promote “global governance” by emphasising the centrality of the United Nations in global affairs; it stressed the need for a strong disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation global regime, and pushed for the restructuring the IMF and World Bank. The conception of a multilateralist posture strongly emerged in South Africa's foreign policy scheme.

By the time of the 2004 elections, South Africa started to feel that its North-South relations had matured, and that it could push for a strategic partnership with the North became consolidated, and the stated position was that South Africa would engage with developed countries on the premise that partnerships should be forged with the aim of bringing about peace, security and development in the South. The country chooses to interact with countries from the North based on mutual accountability and mutual responsibility. Key aims were to reverse “Afro-pessimism” and “donor fatigue”, and to secure sustained interest in the Agendas of Africa and the South. Over the past nine years, South Africa has systematically engaged leaders of the G8 with a specific aim of guaranteeing support for the NEPAD; NEPAD has become a common item on the agenda of the G8. For example, South Africa was an active member of the participating in the British inspired Commission for Africa (CfA) of 2004-2005, established to bolster international support for Africa's development<sup>33</sup>, and to provide a “big push” to NEPAD.

## 7 Foreign policy and international development

The pursuit of international development goals also loomed large in South Africa's global strategies as policy deployed the tactic of openly encouraging countries from the North to attain the objectives, goals, and programmes agreed to at the United Nations Millennium Summit of 2000. In this sense, the country's foreign policy sought to break with old-style *realpolitik*-driven notions of foreign policy, by pursuing a progressive, functionalist approach as it subscribed to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), as

<sup>28</sup> See address by HE President Thabo Mbeki, to the South Summit, Havana, Cuba, April 2000.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> See the special CPS-FES publication on IBSA, Synopsis, July 2006. See in particular: Chris Landsberg, IBSA's Political Origins, Significance and Challenges, CPS Synopsis, Vol. 8, No. 2, July 2006.

<sup>31</sup> South African Department of Foreign Affairs Heads of Mission Conference, op. cit.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> See Commission for Africa (CfA), Our Common Interests, Report of the Commission for Africa, London, March 2005.

well as the commitments enshrined in the World Conference against Racism, Xenophobia and Related Intolerances (WCAR).

South Africa also sought to use its relationship with countries from South to put issues such as free and fair trade on the international agenda. Consistent with its belief that the international financial architecture needed transformation, South African foreign policy has made repeated pleas to the WTO for free and fair trade; as such South Africa wishes to be seen as a voice for the developing world. It made the reintegration of Africa into the global economy a major concern of its strategies, and energetically campaigned for a reduction of Africa's debt burden, and market access for the continent's trading goods in Northern markets. In order to boost the country's African and South credentials, Mbeki in particular has punted a new "global solidarity"<sup>34</sup>.

The specific strategies it deployed were pushing for negotiations over the debt question; negotiations at the WTO for a fairer trade deal; post-Lomé negotiations with the EU; attracting capital from the countries of the North; radically increasing the levels of productive and profitable investment; technology transfers; and the volumes and use of official development assistance. All these, Pretoria-Tshwane believed, could be achieved through establishing "strategic partnerships" with the industrialised North.

During the 2003 trade negotiations in Cancun, Mexico, South Africa formed part of the Group of 20+, which pushed the industrialised powers to make significant shifts in terms of farming subsidies. On the developments at Cancun, Mbeki said that "structural fractures that characterise the architecture of global governance ... need the intervention of these strategic partners acting in concert with many other partners from different parts of the world".

Pretoria encouraged interregional co-operation on issues of mutual concern. As such, co-operation between SADC and the EU, SADC and the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC), and SADC and Mercosur were encouraged. Pretoria-Tshwane now defends a more just trading order, and Africa features prominently as foreign policy promises to devise pacts that would benefit the continent in terms of trade, aid, debt relief and market access.

## 8 Conclusion

We set out at the beginning of this paper to unpack post-apartheid South Africa's global strategy. So what is the scorecard? When the ANC-led government assumed the reigns of power in 1994, South Africa's foreign policy, like domestic policy, made a fundamental break with the apartheid past. The Republic was determined to become a respected global citizen. It set out to transform its image from that of a repressive, apartheid *pariah*, to that of a pivotal state in Africa, determined to become a reliable global player by pursuing a "predictable" foreign policy in pursuit of a progressive agenda, and relies heavily on negotiations, diplomacy and soft power to achieve its goals. Whereas the Mandela government (1994-1999) emphasised international principles such as the centrality of international law, democratisation of the global order, the importance of human rights and democracy in foreign policy, a commitment to multilateralism and regional integration, the Mbeki administration pursued a foreign policy orientation in search of a "progressive" agenda at home and abroad, with developmental goals aimed at bringing about stability by promoting democratic governance, and economic diplomacy with the aim of reducing poverty and inequality at home and internationally.

We argued that Africa looms large in South Africa's foreign policy as the new leaders are determined to imprint an image of the country as a reliable partner, working *with* fellow African states, not some hegemon bent on dictating the terms *to* Africa.

Fully aware of suspicions about its past negative role, when white minority regimes sought to play destabilising roles in desperate attempts to make the southern African sub-region in particular, Africa in general, safe for apartheid domination, post-1994 Africa policy has been very determined to reassure the neighbouring countries. It is primarily for this reason that South Africa has opted to play very visible peacemaking and peacekeeping roles in the continent. The country has played mediation roles in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Burundi, the Comoros, Swaziland, Liberia, and Cote d'Ivoire. The country has also invested massively in peacekeeping operations in the DRC, Burundi and Sudan's Darfur.

But South Africa's foreign policy does have global ambitions beyond the African sphere of influence. Both the post-1994 governments view themselves as international bridge-builders, and

<sup>34</sup> President Thabo Mbeki, Address as Chairperson of the NAM, op. cit., p. 2.



with this strategy, South Africa seeks to cultivate strong ties with the industrialised north, while at the same time reaching out to, and speaking on behalf of, Africa and the global South. Both the Mandela and Mbeki governments were very committed to North-South partnership.

Apartheid South Africa was essentially isolated from the South, in contrast to the strong relations that post-1994 South Africa has cultivated with this bloc in the world community. Today South-South co-operation strategy is largely committed to solidarity and development. The development dimension of South-South strategy promotes the goals of market access and trade and investment benefits for developing countries. Policy stresses the need to "consolidate relations to advance the political agenda of the South", with attention being given to relations with the Pacific Rim, the Caribbean around the ACP and Commonwealth agenda, as well as enhancing India-Brazil-South Africa Trilateral Forum questions, and the Asia-Africa Sub-regional Organisations Conference (AASROC).

The Republic's position on issues such as nuclear non-proliferation, political democratisation,

'Third World' debt relief, market access, continues to be highlighted as strategic priorities, aimed at bringing about international redress between North and South.

As we conclude, we should highlight the continued emphasis global strategy placed on "assertive multilateralism" – the belief that solutions in world affairs can only come through international co-operation. A huge stress was placed throughout the past dozen years there is need for "collective security" and a "rules-based" global order in which the UN remains the ultimate repository of global order.

Will South Africa be able to sustain its ambitious foreign policy agenda beyond the Mbeki presidency in 2009? This is a question whose conclusion is by no means fore gone.

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