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Contested Regionalism: Southern and Central Africa in the Post-Apartheid Era[1]

Tandeka C. Nkiwane *

Introduction: Southern Africa and Central Africa

The politics that are reshaping the African continent need to be captured from an historical perspective, integrated with an understanding of the contemporary realities which provide the "push" and "pull" factors tugging at the African social fabric. Regional politics clearly are a manifestation of both the old and the new, with a particular salience in Southern and Central Africa. An intriguing aspect of regionalization is that regional blocs are formed often as an attempt to create a political framework for a variety of forms of economic activity.

Regionalization has both an external and an internal logic. First, a region in international relations can be a phenomenon imposed from the outside. Regions have formed, for example, in the Cold War context shaped by military or economic alliances. In Africa the external imposition and composition of regions is a phenomenon shaped by the colonial experience, but reinforced during the post-colonial period. The notion of a region usually implies some form of territorial contiguity, although regions in Africa have also been delineated along linguistic lines. This arbitrary definition of regions generally has Africa divided into five: East, West, North, South, and Central. Of course the boundaries of these regions do overlap, and it is the troubling and growing spectre of conflict in Central and Southern Africa with which this paper is concerned. The Southern African Development Community (SADC) as a political and economic project will be examined in this context, as well as the evolving notions of security in Southern Africa. The contested boundary between Central and Southern Africa is of particular concern in this paper, focussing on the military intervention of Angola,

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Namibia and Zimbabwe in the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the newest member of the SADC.

Notions of Security in Southern Africa

The political and foreign policy landscape in Southern Africa has changed dramatically in the past half decade. A geo-strategic focus on military security and destabilisation pitted *apartheid* South Africa against the Frontline States of Southern Africa, in a politico-military confrontation which had enveloped the foreign policy debates from the mid-1970s until the mid-1990s. Freed from the main obstacle to building cooperative regional mechanisms, namely *apartheid* South Africa, new and expansive agendas have dominated the discourses in the region bringing to the fore a complex set of competing interests and actors, not necessarily of the politico-military sphere. Following the demise of white minority rule and the holding of democratic elections of April 26-29, 1994, South Africa has been integrated into the African whole, with a variety of inferences in the foreign policy realm. Two contending perspectives have emerged with respect to the broader foreign policy questions related to security. One perspective has argued that the removal of the security threat posed to the region by apartheid South Africa would launch a new degree of regional cooperation in the sphere of peace and security. This perspective, which certainly has dominated the discourse in recent Southern African scholarship advocates the creation of new avenues of political cooperation to replace the Frontline States.[2] This position is reflected in the 1992 Treaty on the Establishment of a Southern African Development Community (SADC). The counter-perspective, often associated with those from a realist persuasion, has argued that while a black majority government may reign in South Africa, the South African state remains dominant in the region, and will persist in its external relations as a regional leader.[3] In this scenario, therefore, there would be no impetus for South Africa to suddenly change its foreign policy dictates given its geo-strategic position.

Outside the realm of security, a number of intriguing foreign policy concerns have emerged. Questions related to economic integration and trade, shared water resources, constitutionalism and democracy, border disputes, and the recognition and involvement of non-state actors in the foreign policy decision-making process, have surfaced, representing new challenges to the nation-states of Southern Africa. Increasingly, non-military threats have come to represent major foreign policy concerns, widening the area of cooperation and conflict. The foreign policies of a variety of states are in the process of evolution, reflecting a change in political leadership and changing political elites. The retirement of President Ketumile Masire of Botswana on March 31, 1998 and of President Nelson Mandela of South Africa in 1999 represent the withdrawal of powerful regional figures associated with the foreign policies of their respective countries. In the multi-party "wave" of

the early 1990s, new presidents were installed in Zambia, Lesotho, Tanzania, and Malawi, with the leadership of Swaziland currently under constitutional debate. Of the post-independence generation of leaders, Presidents Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, Joaquim Chissano of Mozambique, Jose Eduardo Dos Santos of Angola and Sam Nujoma of Namibia remain; but a number of these have shuffled their foreign ministers in recent years.

Elites in the Foreign Policy Process

Foreign policy making is dominated by political elites. But it is equally true that, "however strategic and self-interested they may be, elites are not socially disembodied; virtually by definition they represent and draw upon collective groups …".[4] In this regard, Gabriel Almond notes four distinct groups in relation to the broad foreign policy process. These are the general public, the attentive public, the policy and opinion elites, and the legal and official policy leadership.[5] This analysis is applicable to the Southern African context, where the political elites have traditionally represented social movements, liberation movements, trade unions, classes, ethnic groups, and a host of others. Furthermore, it is significant that the political and military elites of the liberation movements in Southern Africa later assumed key leadership positions in their respective countries while maintaining old networks of co-operation in the region. Similarly, political elites who were in conflict during the early period have either persisted in their mutual hostility, or struck new alliances.

Almond's categorisation is useful in the discussion of the foreign policy processes in Southern Africa. Although dominated by what he would describe as the legal and official policy leadership, increasingly other groups play a prominent role in the process of foreign policy making. The political elites who are involved in this process, usually comprising the president, his key ministers and top civil servants in the ministries of foreign affairs, defence and security, rely increasingly on input from a wide range of groups outside such official circles. Non-governmental organizations, academics, representatives of regional think tanks, and representatives of the private sector generally represent such groups. The general and the attentive public are also concerned with issues of foreign policy, questioning the formulation, application, and rationale of decisions, which directly affect them. This is particularly true in the larger cities, and the border areas of Southern African states.

Another pertinent distinction that Almond makes is between the political elites on the one hand, and the administrative and bureaucratic elites, on the other.[6] This delineation is however less stark in a number of Southern African states; but it certainly raises interesting questions with respect to South Africa. This is particularly so regarding several foreign policy disputes within South Africa, and between South Africa and its neighbours where the competing agendas of a stratum of the bureaucracy associated with, and often carried over from, the *apartheid* regime and

the new political elites have become evident. While there may be cooperation at the highest political levels, "sabotage" has been alleged at the bureaucratic levels of foreign affairs and defence departments in the South African state, posing an intriguing question about where the power lies with respect to both foreign policy decision making and implementation.

Throughout the 1970s South Africa systematically used force or the threat of force as well as economic sanctions as foreign policy instruments in the Southern African region. In 1975 the South African Prime Minister Johannes Vorster proposed the establishment of a Constellation of African States. He later elaborated this foreign policy strategy to include both military and economic measures. P.W. Botha, who took over from Vorster in 1977, expanded upon this agenda for security in the sub-region to mean a policy of "Total Strategy". The concept of 'total strategy' was based on South Africa's claim of a "right to intervene" in any African state south of the equator. This, of course, was part of *apartheid* South Africa's flagrant policy of destabilisation and refusals to comply with treaties and norms of international law. In pursuit of this policy of aggression against its neighbours, the allocations for defence rose dramatically from 692 million rands to 4.27 billion rands bewteen 1975 and 1985 during which military incursions and destabilisation of its neighbours, including Lesotho, Mozambique, Angola, and Botswana and Zimbabwe also increased.

As a political response to *apartheid* South Africa as well as colonial rule in Southern Africa, the Frontline States were formed in 1974. It was spearheaded by Tanzania and Zambia, and included Congo-Brazzaville, Zaire (Congo-Kinshasa) and Botswana. The fall in 1975 of the Portuguese colonial regime drastically altered the regional balance of forces, leading to the withdrawal of Zaire and Congo-Brazzaville from the Front-line States grouping, and an increased effort by South Africa to block the efforts of the sub-region to free itself from political and economic dominance. One of South Africa's first foreign policy acts in 1994 after Nelson Mandela's democratic government came into office was to join the Frontline States. Until 1995, this organization comprised eight member-states; namely, Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe (excluding Lesotho, Swaziland, and Malawi).[7]

Admittedly, states may face severe threats of a non-military nature. Economic and political threats are often as severe as military threats. When economic or political threats occur, self-seeking behaviour on the part of a neighbouring state can be profoundly destabilizing just as unilateral actions may weaken an already unstable economic, political or military order. In order to combat threats of destabilisation, states are often willing to give up some freedom of action to a consultative process, that could later become institutionalised. This appears to be the only realistic means of combating non-military threats when existing strategies prove ineffective. In the Southern Africa region, non-military threats transcend

borders. Economic instability, environmental problems and social movements cut across boundaries, and as such often demand a regional or sub-regional response. Equally important, many of the political crises occurring in the region in recent years have had potentially serious repercussion for the entire region, and have, consequently, demanded a regional response. The rest of this paper is devoted to exploring some of such peace and security imperatives that have confronted the region.

The SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security

The Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC) was in essence the economic offshoot of the Frontline States. It was formed in April, 1980 following the Lusaka Declaration entitled *Southern Africa: Towards Economic Liberation*. A key objective of SADCC was to harmonise development among the countries of Southern Africa (excluding South Africa and Namibia), and to reduce economic dependence on South Africa. The Declaration and Treaty establishing the Southern African Development Community (SADC) was signed in Windhoek, Namibia in August 1992 with a more comprehensive mandate to promote the integration of the sub- region. The new mandate included the political integration of the sub-region. The mandate also called for the development of a common foreign policy in the region. SADC comprised Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe at its formation. In 1994 SADC admitted South Africa following democratic multi-racial elections; in 1995 Mauritius was admitted following a year of controversy about its candidature; and in 1997 Seychelles and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) were admitted. When the Southern African Development Community was formed in August of 1992, it was committed to the formation of, "a framework and mechanisms to strengthen regional solidarity and provide for mutual peace and security".[8] This signified broadening of the objective of the former Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC) in the light of a number of positive changes in international arena as well as the sub-region. This culminated in a workshop in Windhoek in July of 1994, which recommended SADC co-operation in political, human rights and security spheres. The deliberations at the Windhoek meeting formed the basis for the decision at the SADC Gaborone Summit in August 1994, to establish a formal SADC sector on "Political Co-operation, Democracy, Peace and Security." The new proposals, in particular the formation of a Human Rights Commission within SADC, were endorsed by the region's non-governmental organisations (NGOs). It was further agreed that the Frontline States would disband, and all its operations would be integrated into this SADC sector. As with all SADC sectors, one country would be responsible for co-ordinating its operations.

Whereas the larger international community, or even the African community of

nations may be wary of getting involved in a particular crisis, a country cannot ignore the potential repercussions of a conflict in a neighbouring country. The potential for national conflicts to transform into regional conflicts is an ever-present threat, therefore governments are always keen to prevent conflicts in neighbouring countries. This is the logic of the behaviour of governments in the SADC region where countries continue to experience a huge flow of refugees across common borders, the fomenting of armed insurgencies inside their borders, and numerous security threats. It is such developments within the region that make co-operation in the sphere of politics and security not only a desirable option, but a pressing necessary.

The logic behind the establishment of a common framework stemmed from both a short-term commitment to co-operate and a long-term drive towards the development of a common defence policy. This commitment centred on both exogenous integration (or the process of military co-operation developed in the face of an explicit external or internal threat) and endogenous integration (or the process of eventually developing a political and economic union) imperatives. A common security framework was formed in anticipation of a number of potential advantages. First, SADC is an intergovernmental organisation and operates on this basis, therefore a more institutional approach towards co-operation is probably the most functional. Second, and more important, SADC was established to facilitate the creation of an economic and political community, which was regarded as a logical means to realise progress in the security sphere.

The establishment of another framework was discussed. This is the proposed Association of Southern African States (ASAS) as a successor to the Frontline States. At a meeting held in Harare on March 3, 1995 to harmonise the two proposals, it was agreed that ASAS be established as the political arm of SADC, with conflict prevention, management, and resolution as the major area of focus. It was to be a new-look Frontline States, informal and flexible. It was further proposed that ASAS be supported by two committees, one on political matters and the other on defence and security matters. As with its predecessor, The Frontline States, the foreign ministry of the country that would chair it would assume the responsibility of servicing the ASAS. And most important of all, the Chairmanship of ASAS would rotate among member states every two years. The ASAS proposal was taken to the 1995 SADC Summit in Johannesburg and eventually the matter was deferred, the stated reason being that the ministers of foreign affairs needed more time to consult their ministers of defence and security.[9]

Undoubtedly South Africa is the most powerful country in the sub-region. Its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is three times that of the other SADC countries combined. Its military establishment, comprises 137,900 regular troops, a part time reserve force of 475,000, commandos totalling 76,000 and an active citizen force reserve of 275,000. With an army, navy, air force, paramilitary force, and a now

latent nuclear arsenal, South Africa unquestionably has the most sophisticated and most powerful military establishment in Sub-Saharan Africa.[10] Therefore, post-*apartheid* South Africa has in many ways become the most dominant political player in the sub-region. It is actively redefining its post-apartheid foreign policy. It has joined the SADC, OAU, and UN; and it has been keen to project itself as the primary advocate of democracy and reconciliation throughout the continent. In October 1995, during the UN 50th anniversary celebrations, South Africa indicated that it would lobby for a permanent seat on the Security Council should the UN reform process allocate one to Africa.

On the other hand, Zimbabwe's foreign policy can be described as activist, with much of its effort being concentrated on African affairs. Like the foreign policies of small states, Zimbabwe's foreign policy encompasses a vision strongly associated with its leader, Mugabe. When the FLS was formed it was decided that the Chairmanship would rotate according to "seniority". Hence, it began with Nyerere who later passed on the baton to Kaunda. The next in line, according to the seniority principle, was Jose Eduardo dos Santos of Angola, who because of the civil war in his country decided to pass the mantle on to Mugabe. Today, Mugabe considers himself the senior statesperson in Southern Africa.

On January 18 1996, SADC Ministers responsible for Foreign Affairs, Defence, and SADC Affairs met in Gaborone to decide on the best option for the SADC region with respect to peace and security. The compromise position that emerged is what was termed a "SADC Organ on Politics, Defence, and Security". The SADC organ, as proposed, would be an institutional structure of SADC, operating only at Summit (Heads of State and Government) level, on a *troika* (three-member) basis, and independent of other SADC structures. It was proposed that the Chairmanship of this organ would rotate annually, and that the powerful Inter-State Defence and Security Committee (ISDSC) would become one of the arms of the organ. On June 28, 1996, at an extraordinary Summit in Gaborone, the SADC Heads of State formally established the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence, and Security, with the objective of evolving common political institution among the 12 member-states. It was also to fashion a common foreign policy in areas of mutual interest. SADC is expected to develop a protocol on peace, security, and conflict resolution, and also to develop a collective security capacity and a mutual defence pact for responding to external threat. It was further agreed that the development of a regional peacekeeping capacity was desirable and would be pursued for the benefit of the sub-region and for Africa as a whole. President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe was elected the first Chairman of this SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security.

The decision to establish the organ had its strengths and weaknesses. Perhaps its greatest strength is the inclusion of ISDSC as an agency of the organ. The inclusion of the principle of the *troika* was also a major strength. But the rotation

of the Chair of the organ is still cause for concern. The extent to which non-governmental actors in the region could get involved in SADC structures is also unclear. International NGOs, in particular Amnesty International, have criticised the formation of the SADC Organ, on the ground that it merely pays lip-service to their commitment to democracy and the promotion of human rights. No formal institutional arrangements have been established to implement the spirit and letter of the 1994 Windhoek Declaration.

At the September 1997 SADC Summit, with President Mandela as Chairman of SADC, and President Mugabe as Chairman of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defense and Security, things fell apart. In a startling revelation, the following was acknowledged.

"Although the organ was established in May, 1996, its functions, structure, operating procedure, and relationship with other SADC institutions have not been discussed." [11] President Mandela, in a surprise announcement, threatened to quit as SADC Chairman unless the institutionalization of the SADC Organ was accomplished. President Mugabe equally maintained his position that the various components necessary for the maintenance of peace and security in the sub-region must not be over bureaucratized. The position of the organ in the overall SADC structure still remains unresolved, with subsequent summits (including the one held in Maputo on March of 1998) ending inconclusively, and the decision to form a ministerial working group on the matter being left in limbo. It appears that it will remain a critical foreign policy issue in the Southern Africa region for some time, reflecting not only struggles for power but also the scope of the formalised common foreign policy agenda.

In the rest of this paper we discuss a number of security concerns that have forcefully brought the issue of regional security to the forefront of regional politics.

Environmental and Border Disputes

An issue that has gained prominence in the realm of foreign policy in Southern Africa has been the dispute between Botswana and Namibia over the Sidudu/Kasikili Island. This is a dispute over the ownership of a small island in the Linyati/Chobe river. This is also one of the few foreign policy disputes in which regional mediation has failed, and both countries subsequently submitted the case to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for resolution. What makes this dispute intriguing is that the 3 sq. km. island in question is not considered a "strategic" asset by either country, and does not possess any known resources. Namibian farmers have been using the island only for small-scale agricultural production. Botswana claims ownership; and has therefore deployed military personnel to evict the Namibian farmers. This action has prompted the allegation that Botswana was, in fact, preparing to pursue an aggressive expansionist policy in the region. In support of this view, its acquisition of sophisticate military hardware and the construction

(by the United States) of an air force base in its territory have been cited. Following a failed effort at resolution by a bilateral commission and a failed attempt at mediation by President Robert Mugabe in 1995, both countries informed the ICJ on May 29, 1996 of their intention to submit the dispute for arbitration.

An important, security issue that is emerging is the right over water resources in the region. Rivers traverse national boundaries. In a drought prone region such as Southern Africa, the struggle for control of such water resources is bound to be keen. In recent years such contestations have intensified making it a major foreign policy question. SADC Heads of States and Government in 1995 signed a protocol on shared watercourse systems, and in 1997 a formal SADC sector responsible for water was established under the auspices of Lesotho. In Southern Africa there are 11 shared water systems. The Zambezi river is the largest, and is shared by 8 countries.[12] The Zambezi river basin has two large hydroelectric dams, one at Kariba on the border between Zimbabwe and Zambia, which is currently a source of dispute. The other is at Cabora Bassa in Mozambique. Munyaradzi Chenje and Phyllis Johnson note that, "the mean annual renewable water resources for Southern Africa are about 1870 cu kms per year, of which 80 percent is available in the Congo basin. Much of this is outside the SADC region".[13] When DRC was admitted as a member of SADC, that country's rich water resources became a central foreign policy concern despite the fact that the DRC is physically located outside the Southern African region as traditionally defined.

Trade Concerns

During a greater part of this decade the issue of trade has emerged as a major foreign policy concern in the region, and is likely to remain on the foreign policy agenda into the next millennium. SADC has adopted a trade protocol in order, "to further liberalise intra-regional trade in goods and services on the basis of fair, mutually equitable and beneficial trade arrangements".[14] The *raison d'être* of SADC drives this trade protocol. This pertains to the establishment of a "fortress Southern Africa" with a common external tariff. Up to date, only two countries have ratified the trade protocol. In May 1995, South Africa was allocated the Trade and Investment portfolio of SADC, and made responsible for promoting both intra-regional and external trade on behalf of the organisation. But very little progress has been made towards achieving the goal of the protocol. In recent times, a major foreign policy debate has centred on access to South Africa's market by its neighbours. Several states, notably Zimbabwe, Zambia and Mauritius, complain about the huge trade deficit they have with South Africa, alleging unfair trade practices by South African business in connivance with their government. Trade disputes are not limited to South Africa. In March of 1997 a "cement war" broke out between Zambia and Zimbabwe, after the latter unilaterally increased the import duty on cement from Zambia.

The extent to which trade has become a major foreign policy issue became clear in 1996, following the circulation of the SADC Annual Report for the annual consultative conference. The Zimbabwean government through its foreign minister, Stan Mudenge referred to the Finance and Investment Sector Annual Report as a, "conspiracy,"[15] designed to undermine both Zimbabwe and SADC. The report, among other matters, alleged that Zimbabwe's GDP in 1995 had declined by 10%, an allegation which was angrily denounced by Mudenge. The representatives of Angola, Botswana, Zambia, Swaziland, Lesotho and Namibia all demanded an explanation, following which a formal apology was delivered to the Zimbabwean government the next day by South African Foreign Minister Alfred Nzo, South African Finance Minister Chris Liebenberg and SADC Executive Secretary Kaire Mbuende. A formal inquiry into the report was subsequently instituted and followed by a further apology. Given such controversies, the issue of trade is bound to remain a central foreign policy concern for some time.

Related to this issue is that of the overlapping organisations that have been formed to deal with trade issues. These include the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) comprising South Africa, Namibia, Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland, and the Common Market of Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA). The SADC/COMESA overlap is one of particular concern to both government officials and many analysts. COMESA, formerly the Preferential Trade Area (PTA) was established in 1981 to promote integration among East and Southern African States, and envisages the establishment of a common market by the year 2000. It comprises 20 member states, with its secretariat in Lusaka. Ten of the SADC states, with the exception of South Africa and Botswana, belong to COMESA. SADC also has a mandate to promote the establishment of a common market by the year 2000. With SADC accounting for 81% of Africa's Gross National Product, 81% of total imports, and 80% of total exports, it is easy to see SADC as the most promising sub-regional organisation, with South Africa as the driving force. This is why South Africa was assigned the Finance and Investment portfolio soon after its admission to SADC membership. A joint SADC/COMESA ministerial committee was appointed to examine the possibility of merging the two organisations in order to rationalise and harmonise trade and investment policies. The recommendations of the ministerial committee which had been endorsed by a majority of its members, was rejected in August 1996 with a call on the ministerial committee to spell out "modalities of co-operation in specific areas between the two bodies".[16] At the COMESA Summit of April 1997, both Lesotho and Mozambique gave notice of their intention to leave COMESA in 1998, with Namibia also threatening to pull out of the organisation due to its overlap with SADC. These moves set the stage for a strengthened and more cohesive SADC.

Evolving Norms, New Actors, and the DRC

Realpolitik, couched in the discourse of constitutionalism and democracy, are part of the evolving foreign policy agendas of Southern African states. This was first demonstrated when in 1994 Botswana, Zimbabwe and South Africa intervened in the Lesotho crisis. Following a political and military crisis in Lesotho throughout 1993 and 1994, King Letsie III suspended the constitution and fired Prime Minister Ntsu Mokhehle in a "royal coup" which sent shockwaves throughout Southern Africa. Determined not to allow a military coup in Southern Africa, the *troika* invoked the *Commonwealth Harare Declaration of 1991* issued by the summit of Heads of State and Government as justification. The Harare Declaration had called for the, "protection and promotion of the fundamental political values of the Commonwealth; democracy, democratic processes, and institutions which reflect national circumstances, the rule of law, and the independence of the judiciary, just and honest government.".[17] Whether the issue of democracy and constitutionalism will be the basis of future political interventions in similar situations is open to question. But this intervention certainly placed onto the centre stage the issue of democratic rule as a norm in foreign policy considerations in the Southern Africa region.[18]

A similar debate has emerged, couched in the discourse of "sovereignty" and the protection of legitimate government, with respect to the ongoing conflicts in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Lesotho in 1998. In May 1997, when the Allied Forces for the Liberation of Congo/Zaire (AFDL) under the leadership of Laurent Kabila ousted Mobutu Sese Seko from power, it was with the overt military assistance not only of Rwanda and Uganda, but also of Angola and Zimbabwe which are members of SADC.[19] The failed attempt by South Africa to mediate a negotiated exit from power by Mobutu in addition led to the reversal of a number of economically strategic pacts in Zaire, particularly by prominent South African multi-national corporations such as Anglo-American that are involved in the mining industry. South Africa's losses were Zimbabwe's gain, which facilitated the rapid movement of the latter's private and public sector companies into the DRC economy to forge bilateral economic arrangements. When Kabila's former allies Rwanda and Uganda, instigated a rebellion uprising in Eastern DRC in August 1998, the DRC, which was now a member of SADC, immediately appealed for help from the organisation.

Announcing the decision to intervene militarily, Mugabe stated,

> "We have considered it our duty to respond to the call of appeal by *one of us* for assistance to be given so that peace and stability can be restored in the Congo and in our region … the people of the DRC are as much our people who constitute our individual population." [20]

The contribution of military personnel by Zimbabwe, Angola and Namibia in

support of President Laurent Kabila which effectively reversed the rebel[21] advance on the capital Kinshasa prompted the South African government to take a public stance against the military intervention; a stance which was publicly altered at the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) summit in Durban in early September 1998. The decision taken in Harare on August 18 1998 by SADC Defence Ministers under the auspices of ISDSC to intervene militarily in the DRC exposed a political fault line in SADC from which it will be difficult to recover.

The prolonged political dispute between South Africa and Zimbabwe on the resolution of the conflict in the DRC, which has since expanded to include other state and non-state actors over the past eight months, has highlighted the larger and more complex issues of integration. In particular, the issues include the sovereignty and territorial integrity of nation-states in the region, as well as those of democracy, human rights and regime legitimacy. It has also emphasised the fact that the inconclusive status of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security has left it open to manipulation, and has intensified jockeying to control it. In September 1998, after a seven-week political dispute over general elections, which were deemed flawed by the SADC-appointed Langa Commission,[22] Lesotho Prime Minister Mosisili requested the assistance of South Africa, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Botswana. South African's military intervention aided by Botswana, which occurred within 48 hours, also raised controversies that are similar to those that followed the intervention in the DRC.

As stated earlier, there is a change in the political decision makers with respect to foreign policy decision-making in Southern Africa. The older generation of political elites, associated with the liberation struggle, is slowly retreating from the centre stage of politics in the region. However, it is the expansion of non-military security and foreign policy concerns that has significantly altered the structure of foreign policy making. The circle of actors has widened beyond the usual departments of state- home affairs, finance, development, social welfare, industry and commerce. In addition, new actors are on the scene such as research organisations, the university community, and several other interest groups that are directly or indirectly affected by foreign policy decisions of the states. The latter groups include those in the border and drought prone areas, private sector and informal trading groups, and groups in areas that are subject to relocation for the good of "greater" Southern Africa. The upshot of all this is a growing trend towards the institutionalisation of the decision-making process in foreign policy.

Currently, the populations of Southern Africa are increasingly becoming vocal with respect to foreign policy matters, and are demanding a place in the structures of foreign policy making and, at times, the implementation of key foreign policy measures. The 1994 Windhoek SADC workshop was the first time that non-state individuals and groups were asked to contribute to the foreign policy debates in Southern Africa on a substantial scale. Regional institutions are also increasingly

demanding a place in the foreign policy decision-making process. The DRC and Lesotho interventions are partly responsible for these changes in the foreign policy-making environment in Southern Africa.

Conclusion: Persistence and Change

In this paper, I have tried to present a paradox of the persistence of an alliance - the SADC – when the historical and political circumstances, which gave rise to the grouping are changing rapidly. It would however seem, that the persistence of non-military security concerns has become the primary driving force sustaining the alliance. Indeed, the litmus test for the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security will be in its ability to respond to this expanding array of foreign policy concerns in a comprehensive manner. The issues and actors may have evolved since the formation of the Frontline States, but the necessity for co-operation to address non-military concerns is now the key issue in the region. In other words, although the frontline no longer exists, the rationale for co-operation in the sphere of foreign policy remains.

It appears that the non-military security threats, particularly those emanating from political or economic instability would continue to be the most prominent in this region's integration project. The millions of cross-border immigrants have caused severe tension both within South Africa, and between South Africa and her neighbours. Disputes over trade policies and practices, and deepening crises dominate the discourse on regional integration. Labour unrest in Zimbabwe, threats to political stability in Zambia, Lesotho and Swaziland, and the cycle of violence and political tensions in South Africa are the new generation of non-military security issues that confront states of this region. The export of civil war from Angola (involving both UNITA and MPLA) to neighbouring states is a most disturbing development, as are the recent secessionist moves in Namibia.

These notwithstanding, the biggest challenge that faces SADC is perhaps the management of the conflict in the DRC with such dexterity as to avoid any major political fallout.

Norms and political elites evolve, and this evolution represents necessary change. For example, the involvement of non-state actors in the foreign policy process is a reflection of a new era in Southern African politics. It is no longer as essential for foreign policy decision making to remain the preserve of certain sectors of the state apparatus. Indeed, the justification for the closed-door *modus operandi* of foreign policy decision making in Southern Africa is giving way to a more consultative process in a variety of states. A vigilant public is increasingly holding foreign policy elites accountable for their decisions and actions. It would therefore appear that there is a growing trend to spread the burden of foreign policy making more widely.

The role of South Africa in the Southern African region is an important question

on the agenda of SADC states. The foreign policy elites in South Africa are trying to balance the need to pursue an active foreign policy, with sensitivity to the fears of neighbouring states of what could be interpreted, and has in some instances been perceived, as unilateral and hegemonic behaviour. It is also in South Africa's interest that its foreign policy should be framed in the context of the region. As was demonstrated by the intervention in the 1994 Lesotho crisis, South Africa does not need to be always self-assertive in regional politics in order to achieve a desired foreign policy objective. The adverse reaction to its unilateral intervention in Lesotho's crisis of 1998 is a contrasting lesson. In this regard, it will be interesting to see the kind of foreign policy vision Thabo Mbeki, the successor to Nelson Mandela as President of South Africa, will construct.

The change of political leadership throughout Southern Africa has affected the foreign policy decision-making domain in a discernible way. In the absence of direct historical linkages and preoccupations, the new elites are obliged to find new and innovative ways of understanding one another and addressing common foreign policy challenges. The final outcome of such changes may take the form of institutionalised processes of foreign policy making, a process that is already on the way. As dictated by the current historical moment, the foreign policy-making process will also require the involvement of a deeper and broader stratum of actors.

Notes

* Doctoral candidate, Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town.

1. An earlier version of this paper was presented as "SADC Divided: Revisiting the SADC Organ on Politics, Defense and Security," at the 9th General Assembly of CODESRIA on the theme — *Globalization and Social Sciences in Africa*, Dakar, Senegal, December 14-18, 1998.
2. See Laurie Nathan and Joao Honwana. *After the Storm: Common Security and Conflict Resolution in Southern Africa.* (Cape Town: Centre for Conflict Resolution, February, 1995).
3. See David Myers (ed.). Regional Hegemons: Threat, Perception, and Strategic Response. Boulder: Westview Press, 1991. Also see Ibbo Mandaza (*ed.*). *Peace and Security in Southern Africa.* (Harare: SAPES Trust, 1996).
4. Stephan Haggard and Robert R. Kaufman, "The Political Economy of Democratic Transitions," in *Comparative Politics,* Vol. 29, No. 3, April 1997, p. 278.
5. Gabriel A. Almond, "The Elites and Foreign Policy," in James N. Rosenau (ed.), *International Politics and Foreign Policy,* (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe Inc., 1961), p. 269.
6. Ibid.
7. For a more comprehensive discussion on the Frontline States see Ronald T. Libby, *The Politics of Economic Power in Southern Africa,* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987).

8. See SADC's 1992 Windhoek Declaration, *Towards a Southern African Development Community.*
9. See SADC Communiqué, Johannesburg, South Africa, August 28, 1995, p. 3.
10. The economic statistic was compiled prior to Mauritius joining SADC. The military statistics are from IISS *The Military Balance 1996 -1997,* (London: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 264-265.
11. See Government of South Africa document entitled: *South Africa as Chair of SADC and Review of the SADC Programme of Action*: Departmental workshop to discuss issues, 20 November 1996, p. 2.
12. Munyaradzi Chenje and Phyllis Johnson (*eds.*), *Water in Southern Africa,* (Maseru/Harare: SADC/IUCN/SARDC, 1996), p. 166.
13. Ibid., p. 189.
14. See SADC Protocol on Trade.
15. See SADC Annual Consultative Conference, Gallager Estate, Midrand, Report 4, p. 1.
16. See statement by COMESA Secretariat, August 6, 1996.
17. Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, Harare, 16-22 October 1991. *Harare Commonwealth Declaration.*
18. For a wider discussion of the 1994 Lesotho intervention see Tandeka C. Nkiwane. *My Brother's Keeper: The Lesotho Crisis in Perspective.* Harare: African Association of Political Science Occasional Paper Series, Volume 1, No. 1, 1997.
19. As well as Eritrea.
20. *The (Harare) Herald,* August 18, 1998, p. 1.
21. The rebel advance was propelled by Uganda and Rwanda; their contribution to the war, whether as an "act of aggression" or supporting a legitimate internal political rebellion, is at the heart of the dispute between Zimbabwe and South Africa.
22. The extent of electoral fraud was a matter (and still is) of dispute. It has been argued quite authoritatively that the Langa Commission report was watered-down at the SADC Summit in September 1998.

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