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The Pivotal State: Post-Apartheid South Africa

EDWIN S. COCHRAN

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In April 1999 Thabo Mbeki became the second democratically elected President of the Republic of South Africa. Mbeki succeeded Nelson Mandela, whose own election in 1994 marked the climax of the most important political transition in the history of modern Africa. For his countrymen, the majority of whom were voting for the first time, Mandela's election signified the end of 46 years of white minority rule under South Africa's increasingly oppressive apartheid government.

Instituted by the South African Nationalist Party in 1948, apartheid ("separateness") sought the "separate development" of South Africa's races. Apartheid provided the policy framework for the maintenance of minority rule through the institutionalized social, economic, political, and legal segregation of South African whites, blacks, Indians, and "Coloreds" (people of mixed race). Prior to Mandela's election, internal resistance to apartheid had driven South Africa to the brink of civil war, and regional and international opposition to South Africa's racial policies had left the country a pariah state, largely isolated from the rest of the international community.

Since the end of apartheid South Africa has made significant progress toward overcoming the legacy of this politically and economically fragile race-based system which denied full rights to the majority of its people. Six years after Mandela's election, South Africa is by far the most advanced democracy in Africa. The end of apartheid also has allowed South Africa to end its previous international isolation. The country's new government aspires to both a position of regional political leadership and one of influence in international organizations. South Africa also has emerged as one of Africa's leading trading nations and a key center of foreign, including US, investment in the region. South Africa's economy alone accounts for 40 percent of Sub-Saharan Africa's total gross domestic product (GDP). Excluding oil imports, South Africa accounts for 60 percent of US trade with Africa and one-quarter of US capital investment in the region.[1]

South Africa's demonstrated commitment to democratic governance and peaceful political change and its level of industrial and economic development in comparison to other African states, along with its military capabilities, mark it as Sub-Saharan Africa's "pivotal state." A pivotal state is one which is:

so important that its collapse would spell transboundary mayhem: migration, communal violence, pollution, disease, and so on. A pivotal state's steady economic progress and stability, on the other hand, would bolster [its] region's economic vitality and political soundness and benefit American trade and investment.[2]

South Africa's emergence as Sub-Saharan Africa's pivotal state is of strategic importance for the United States. During its tenure the Clinton Administration has made an unprecedented effort to foster engagement with the nations of Sub-Saharan Africa, a region that has traditionally been of only peripheral strategic interest to the United States. "For too much of this century," President Clinton said, "the relationship between the United States and Africa was plagued by indifference on our part." [3] One aim of President Clinton's March 1998 visit to Sub-Saharan Africa was "to persuade an American audience with few notions of the continent that Africa not only exists, but matters." [4]

The broad outlines of a new US policy approach to Africa began to emerge in May 1993 when, in a speech to the African-American Institute, Secretary of State Warren Christopher announced that the United States sought a "new relationship with Africa." Unlike during the Cold War, when US "policies toward Africa were . . . determined not by how they affected Africa, but whether [they] brought advantage or disadvantage to Washington or Moscow," American relations with African states would now be "based upon our common interests and shared values." The United States,

said Christopher, "will provide strong and visible support for the movement to freedom in Africa." It would also "work with the nations of Africa to address the health, economic, and population issues that threaten lives and imperil sustainable development." Finally, said Christopher, the United States would also "help Africa build its capacity for preventive diplomacy and conflict resolution.[5]

In the years since Christopher's speech, American policymakers have continued to refine US policy objectives in Africa. The 1999 National Security Strategy states that the overall objective of US Africa policy is "to increase the number of capable states in Africa; that is nations that are able to define the challenges they face, manage their resources to effectively address those challenges, and build stability and peace within their borders and sub-regions." [6]

A review of the National Security Strategy, along with the contents of other policy documents and statements by US policymakers, provides the following list of subsidiary political, economic, and security objectives of US policy in Africa:

- *Support for the growth and development of democratic governance in the region.* "In Africa as elsewhere," states the National Security Strategy, "democracies [have] proved stronger partners for peace, stability, and sustained prosperity." In contrast to the Cold War, when support for specific African rulers constituted part of a larger global contest, the State Department's *U.S. Strategy for a New Era in Sub-Saharan Africa* states that US policy now "focuses on supporting broadly democratic processes and institutions, not personalities or specific political outcomes." In keeping with its core objective of increasing the number of "capable" African states, the United States seeks the development of "stable, functioning democratic governments" in Africa that are "able to represent the wishes of their citizens" and which can serve as "responsible partners in solving pressing global problems." [7]
- *Sustainable economic development and Africa's full integration into the global economy.* The White House *Comprehensive Trade and Development Policy for the Countries of Africa* declares that economic growth in Africa is "manifestly in the US national interest." Stronger African economies will contribute to regional social and political stability, as well as create more export opportunities for US goods and services. Economic growth in Africa is also expected to "reduce costs to the US of emergency humanitarian assistance as [African] countries become better equipped to manage their own emergencies." [8]
- *Reform of African economies and greater opportunities for US trade and investment.* The National Security Strategy describes Africa as one of the world's "largest basically untapped markets." The United States enjoys only a one-seventh market share in Africa. Although exports to the region account for only one percent of US foreign trade, these support an estimated 100,000 American jobs. In June 1996 President Clinton announced the creation of the Partnership for Economic Growth and Opportunity in Africa, whose purpose is to "spur African nations to implement significant market reforms" in order to achieve sustainable growth and development. By supporting African economic reform efforts, the partnership seeks to create opportunities for US companies to trade with and invest in Africa, create jobs, and further "mutual prosperity." [9]
- *Maintenance of regional stability through the development of indigenous conflict management mechanisms and peacekeeping forces.* The *US Policy for a New Era in Sub-Saharan Africa* states that conflict resolution and peaceful change in Africa:

are primary US goals since the degree of success in achieving them is the basis of progress in all other areas. The United States actively supports the nascent efforts of African nations to take the lead in resolving conflicts and peacekeeping efforts in the region. However, it is also willing to play the role of catalyst, technical advisor, and honest broker to resolve conflicts. [10]

Since 1996 the United States has sponsored the African Crisis Response Initiative to work with African armed forces to enhance their capabilities to conduct effective peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance operations. Training emphasizes communications, leadership, and basic military skills, and is geared toward helping African units achieve

United Nations standards for peacekeeping and humanitarian relief practices. By 1999 units from Senegal, Ghana, Uganda, Malawi, Mali, and Benin had received ACRI training, and ACRI-trained units have participated in peacekeeping operations in Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau, and the Central Africa Republic.

In 1998 the United States established the African Center for Strategic Studies, a senior-level program for African civilian and military leaders. This center is intended to provide both academic training and to serve as forum for engaging African military leaders in a substantive dialogue on policy planning, civil-military relations, and defense resource management in democracies.[11]

- *Eradication or containment of a broad range of transnational threats emanating from Africa.* These include state-sponsored terrorism, international crime and narcotics trafficking, environmental degradation, infectious diseases (particularly HIV/AIDS), and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.[12]

Sub-Saharan Africa: The Strategic Environment

The strategic environment in which the United States seeks to achieve these policy objectives is complex, challenging, and offers only limited opportunities for productive engagement. Sub-Saharan Africa, 48 states with 600 million people who speak a thousand different languages, is one of the most fragmented regions in the world. Politically, most African states are the products of European colonialism, which began with the Portuguese voyages of discovery during the 15th century and reached its zenith in the "scramble for Africa" during the late 19th century. Africa continues to bear the burden of its colonial past.

European colonial boundaries in Africa were often arbitrarily imposed without regard for ethnic composition, and hardly anywhere did these boundaries coincide with the territorial limits of indigenous population groups. This process of colonial apportionment effectively destroyed Africa's previously existing ethnically based political institutions. Today, Africa has an externally imposed, artificial state system that does not reflect the region's ethnic realities. Most European colonies in Africa also were demarcated based on the assumption that they would not become independent states. The small size and limited resources of many states formed in this manner continue to discourage both effective production and foreign investment.[13]

European colonial rule, which typically combined the centralization of political and economic power with the suppression of indigenous political expression or dissent, left African colonies unequipped for democratic governance when most received their independence in the 1960s. Further, these emerged into the bipolar international system of the Cold War in which competition between the United States and the Soviet Union produced aid and, to a limited extent, influence for new African states. As long as they were supported by one of the two superpowers, actual methods of governance were of little consequence.[14] Not surprisingly, post-independence political regimes emerged across Africa under the personal rule of "big men," and characterized by widespread ethnic favoritism and nepotism, corruption, and abuse of human rights. Most of these new African governments also adopted "statist" economic systems based on high levels of protectionism and public ownership.

During the early 1990s, changes in the international and regional political climate appeared to be supportive of democratization in Africa. These included the end of the Cold War, the demise of apartheid in South Africa, and the determination of many Western governments to link developmental aid to political and economic reforms. The "big men" who had ruled most African states since independence were now perceived as being replaced by a new generation of leaders more favorably disposed toward democracy and capitalism.[15]

Since 1990, elections have taken place in 40 African states. In addition to South Africa, there have been peaceful governmental transitions in Namibia, Cape Verde, the Comoros, Mali, Mauritania, Sao Tome and Principe, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, and Senegal. Despite much rhetoric concerning the apparent "wave of democratic revolutions sweeping Africa," however, democratic reform in the region has in fact had mixed results and faces an uncertain future. Opposition parties and political leaders in many African countries maintain that the practice of multiparty politics is a sham, largely devised to placate Western donors who now impose political conditions on aid. Analysis of election results in African countries during the past decade suggests that most have served to confirm the power of already entrenched rulers, many of which originally came to power through military coups.[16] In addition, civil wars

(in Angola in 1992 and Congo in 1997) or military coups (in Burundi and Sierra Leone in 1996, and in Cote d'Ivoire in 1999) have invalidated the results of at least five African elections during the past decade.

Attempts to introduce Western-style democracy in African countries have created problems for both voters and political leaders with no experience in operating in open and competitive political systems. The "excessive emphasis" on voting in particular is based on false assumptions concerning the nature of African political institutions. Voters in most African countries are far more likely to cast their votes based on cues from village "big men" or ethnic brokers, rather than on a government's performance.[17] Most African political leaders, meanwhile, "remain extremely suspicious of popular participation and even more so of party politics." [18] Some, such as Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, have instituted "single-party democracy" to justify their continued personal rule. This, combined with Mugabe's declared intention to confiscate and redistribute white-owned farms, brings into further question the nature of democratic governance and rule of law in Zimbabwe. Yoweri Museveni, who considers multiparty democracy to be "unacceptably confrontational and divisive," has instituted a "no-party system" in Uganda.[19]

The economic policies adopted by most African states at independence have since failed to deliver sustained increases in prosperity. Levels of capital investment and manufacturing remain low, and transportation and communications infrastructures in Africa, most of which date from the colonial era, are poorly developed. Poor management and heavy borrowing have left many African states with external debts larger than their annual GDPs. Meanwhile, economic growth rates in Africa slowed progressively from 4.7 percent in 1996 to less than 2.5 percent in 1998-99, and are expected to achieve only 3.3 percent over 2000-01 under the most favorable conditions.[20]

Africa's role in the global economy is primarily that of a producer of raw materials for industrialized nations. The economies of most African nations are dependent on agriculture and extractive industries, particularly oil and mining, and Africa's annual \$65 billion in exports consists primarily of raw materials. Africa produces up to 45 percent of the world supply of such major mineral commodities as chromite, cobalt, diamonds, gold, manganese ore, crude petroleum, phosphate, and uranium. For most African states, their strongest economic ties remain to former colonial metropolises, for whom they remain sources of inexpensive raw materials and virtually guaranteed export markets for manufactured goods. Former French colonies, in particular, continue to serve as major outlets for French trade, investment, and employment. Africa is France's third largest export market, after Europe and North America, and a critical source of raw materials for French industry. US economic relations with Africa also reflect the continent's global role as a source of raw materials. The United States obtains 14 percent of its crude oil imports from African sources. Nigeria is the fifth leading US oil supplier, with Angola, Gabon, and Niger among the top 20 suppliers of crude oil for the United States. Most of the \$10 billion US annual trade deficit with Africa accrues to oil-producing states. Largely dependent on the export of raw materials, the economic well-being of most African states is now dependent on fluctuating world market prices and foreign aid.[21]

This combination of weak, authoritarian governments and fragile national economies produces social conditions in Africa--war, poverty, hunger, environmental degradation, and disease--worse than those in other developing areas. Let us look briefly at each of these characteristics.

Africa has more wars than any other continent. These include large-scale wars with more than 1,000 battle deaths per year in Angola, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC, formerly Zaire), Ethiopia, Eritrea, Rwanda, Somalia, and Sudan. To these are added low-intensity but no less brutal conflicts in Burundi, Chad, Djibouti, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Uganda. Several other countries are experiencing internal instability that could erupt into greater sectarian violence. Nigeria, for instance, suffers from widespread corruption and economic inefficiency, as well as deeply rooted ethnic and political conflicts that threaten its continued existence as a unitary state.[22]

The nature of Africa's wars, many of which are rooted in ethnic conflicts reflecting the artificial nature of the African state system, and the personal rule exercised by many African political leaders hamper the development of effective conflict management institutions in Africa. Sub-Saharan Africa lacks the bases upon which effective, voluntary security cooperation has been founded in other parts of world. There is no clear distinction between "free" and "unfree" nations, or between market-based or centrally planned economies, on which to premise an alliance or security system. Nor is there a grass-roots base of informed citizens to support such a system. The character of most African armed forces is also a complicating factor in the establishment of effective security systems. Few African nations have

military cultures that readily accept the supremacy of civilian or parliamentary authority.[23]

Poverty and hunger also cripple the continent. Africa's population is the poorest in the world. Africa contains 23 of the world's poorest countries, and an estimated 290 million Africans exist on incomes of less than \$1 per day. Population growth relative to the limited resource base of African countries contributes to the persistence of poverty. Africa's population, growing at an annual rate of three percent, could more than double to 1.2 billion by 2025. This high population growth rate is likely to offset any reductions in poverty and will challenge the ability of African governments to provide even minimal social services for their people. In many parts of Africa population growth has outstripped food production. Average caloric intake in Africa is estimated at about 90 percent of the *minimum* required to maintain health and economic productivity. Additionally, population pressure in many African states is exacerbated by the influx of refugees from neighboring countries. Of the world's 22 million cross-border refugees, approximately 8.1 million are in Africa.[24]

Environmental degradation is also widespread throughout Africa, often as the result of reliance on extractive industries. Deforestation, at a rate of about nine million acres per year, has had a particularly deleterious effect on African ecosystems, destroying watersheds and further reducing limited water supplies. Unconstrained population growth and rapid urbanization have also created air and water pollution, waste disposal, and sewage problems that are expected to intensify. Until recently, one of the overlooked aspects of environmental degradation in Africa has been the effect of large-scale use of landmines. An estimated 20 to 30 thousand landmines have been deployed in at least 18 African states. These continue to kill at least 12 thousand people annually and injure thousands more. In addition to the human costs, minefields also detract from development, particularly in rural areas where they make farmland unusable.[25]

Then there is the specter of disease. It is difficult to overstate the effects of disease in Africa. Of all the world's population groups, Africans have the least chance of survival to the age of five. After that, the effects of malnutrition and disease begin to take a toll. Life-threatening diseases endemic to Africa include HIV/AIDS, drug resistant strains of tuberculosis and malaria, and otherwise normally preventable illnesses such as measles and infectious diarrhea caused by typhoid and cholera. Africa is also the origin of so-called "hot zone" diseases such as the Ebola virus.[26]

The global AIDS epidemic, in particular, has had a devastating impact on Africa. "The numbers," writes Steven Metz, "are simply numbing." [27] Africa accounts for two-thirds of the world's recorded AIDS cases. The UN estimates that 24.5 million Africans now have AIDS or the HIV virus. This means that one in 13 of all Africans between the ages of 15 and 49 will die of the disease. In 1999 alone, 2.2 million Africans died of AIDS, and Africa now has approximately 12.1 million AIDS orphans. In addition to the staggering human costs, AIDS contributes to the cycle of poverty in Africa as survivors sell off assets, surviving children lose time in school to compensate for labor shortages, and the amount of land under cultivation is reduced or simply abandoned. AIDS is also widespread throughout African military and police forces, seriously degrading their effectiveness. In some African countries, three-quarters of the military hospital beds are occupied by AIDS patients.[28]

South Africa: The Pivotal State

During the Cold War, US security strategy in Africa, as elsewhere, was driven by perceptions of the Soviet threat. Soviet involvement in Africa was viewed as a threat to US economic and security interests in the region, usually defined as access to strategic minerals and the security of the sea lines of communication around the Cape of Good Hope. US relations with South Africa during this period reflected a conflicting amalgam of ideological and practical concerns. Ideologically, South Africa's apartheid government was an embarrassment to the United States. Formally committed to racial equality at home, the United States had an interest in the creation of a pro-Western, non-racial democracy in South Africa. For the Soviets, apartheid represented a golden opportunity to advance their own interests in Africa. Newly independent African states and liberation movements sought Soviet aid in their struggles against minority rule not only in South Africa, but also in Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), Angola, and Mozambique. In order to offset Soviet influence in Africa, particularly in Angola and Mozambique, and to safeguard its other interests in the region, the United States afforded varying degrees of accommodation and cooperation to South Africa well into the 1980s.[29]

At the same time, beginning in the 1970s, aspects of US relations with South Africa began to be affected by the latter's racial policies. By 1994 US relations with South Africa had become virtually one-dimensional, focused on the

oppression associated with apartheid. The United States had ceased consulting with South Africa on many issues, and aspects of bilateral relations were allowed to lapse. American trade and investment with South Africa were discouraged by sanctions, and the limited aid South Africa did receive from the United States was delivered only through nongovernmental organizations.[30]

In a speech following Mandela's election in May 1994, President Clinton outlined the nature of US interests in post-apartheid South Africa. "We have an economic interest in a thriving South Africa that will seek our exports and generate prosperity in the region. We have a security interest in a stable, democratic South Africa working with its neighbors to restore and secure peace." And, he said, the United States has a "clear moral interest" in the development of democracy in South Africa. "I am convinced," said the President, " that South Africa can become a model for the entire continent." [31]

In October 1994 President Clinton announced the formation of the US-South Africa Binational Commission. Cochaired by the Vice Presidents of both countries, the Commission was established as "top-down approach intended to restart a moribund relationship." [32] The commission has four broad objectives: to promote the US-South Africa bilateral relationship "through a working partnership at the highest levels of government," to enhance bilateral cooperation by "establishing permanent and vigorous institutional partnerships," to assist South Africa in meeting its reconstruction and development goals, and to enhance the roles played by private investors and nongovernmental organizations in strengthening relations between the two countries. The Binational Commission, which held its sixth plenary meeting in February 1999, includes senior-level working committees for agriculture; conservation, environment, and water; defense; human resource development and education; sustainable energy; and trade and investment. [33]

In terms of both the African strategic environment and US policy toward Africa, South Africa is the pivotal state-- politically, economically, and militarily.

The Political Dimension

The end of apartheid brought fundamental change to both South African domestic politics and foreign policy. The country's new constitution, which took effect in February 1997, explicitly replaced the apartheid-era governing principal of "parliamentary sovereignty" with that of the rule of law based on constitutional supremacy. The new constitution also provided the framework for the creation of new, Western-style executive, legislative, and judicial authorities at the national and provincial levels, and formally reincorporated the so-called "black homelands" into the republic. The constitution's preamble defines its objective as "to heal the divisions of the past and establish a society based on democratic values, social justice, and fundamental human rights" and to "lay the foundations for a democratic and open society in which government is based on the will of the people and every citizen is equally protected by law." [34]

The principal domestic task of South Africa's new government has been to remedy the long-term effects of apartheid, which left the country with one of the most inequitable distributions of wealth in the world. While the white one-seventh of South Africa's population enjoy incomes, material comforts, and health and educational standards equal to those of Western Europe, most of the population continues to endure living conditions comparable to those in the Third World. High levels of crime also threaten the stability of South African society. The violence and pressures of the anti-apartheid movement in the black townships produced almost an entire generation of young people who lack basic education and job skills. In frustration, many have turned to crime as a means of support. Former guerrilla fighters demobilized from the military wings of anti-apartheid groups and former personnel of the apartheid-era South African armed forces also have been implicated in the activities of well-organized and extremely violent criminal groups. South Africa's AIDS infection rate, already estimated at 11 percent, is expected to climb to 18 percent by 2005. [35]

The election that brought Mandela into office in 1994 also created a South African Government of National Unity with the African National Congress (ANC) as its major party. For the majority of South Africans the ANC gained its greatest claim to political legitimacy through its leading role in the struggle against apartheid. The primary challenge for the ANC has been to transform itself from a liberation movement into an effective governing party. In the words of

one former ANC guerrilla, "People can't eat democracy. We desperately need food, hospitals, houses, land, education, electricity, and water." [36] In 1995 South Africa initiated a multi-billion-dollar Reconstruction and Development Program intended to ameliorate the effects of apartheid. Program objectives include poverty reduction and stimulation of economic growth, human resource development, further democratization of the South African state and civil society, and a broad range of urban and rural development efforts. [37]

Shortly before his election Mandela wrote that "charting . . . a new foreign policy for South Africa is a key element in the creation of a peaceful and prosperous country." [38] Prior to 1949, the first full year of apartheid, both South African and Western elites viewed South Africa as a Western state. After the apartheid regime took shape, Western elites gradually excluded South Africa from the Western camp. South Africa's new government regards itself as both nonaligned and distinctly African. In May 1994 South Africa became a member of both the 131-nation Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of African Unity.

South Africa now seeks to fulfill its "African destiny" by playing a leading role in the economic development and integration of Southern Africa. "Southern Africa," wrote Mandela, "commands a special priority in our foreign policy. We are inextricably part of Southern Africa and our destiny is linked to that of a region which is much more than a mere geographical concept." South African political leaders are bound to their neighbors by self-interest as well as a sense of obligation for the support many of these states gave the ANC and other groups during their fight against apartheid. In August 1994 South Africa joined the Southern African Development Community (SADC), promising to provide "the highest possible degree of economic cooperation, mutual assistance where necessary, and joint planning consistent with socio-economic, environmental, and political realities." [39]

South Africa's foreign policy also has a strongly internationalist orientation. "Peace," wrote Mandela, "is the goal for which all nations should strive," and when peace breaks down "internationally agreed and non-violent mechanisms . . . must be employed" for its restoration. In a speech to the US Congress in October 1994, Mandela stated:

In an age such as this . . . much revision will have to be done of ideas that have seemed as stable as the rocks, including such concepts as sovereignty and national interest. What we speak of is the evolution of the objective world, which inexorably says to all of us that we are human together or nothing at all.

Equating global interdependence with international responsibility, he continued:

The world is one stage and the actions of its inhabitants part of the same drama. . . . [Therefore] each one of us as nations . . . should begin to define the national interest to include the genuine happiness of others, however distant in time and space their domiciles might be. [40]

In June 1994 South Africa rejoined the Commonwealth of Nations after an absence of 33 years and also resumed full participation in the United Nations, where it has become a leading proponent of restructuring the Security Council in order to afford greater representation to lesser-developed countries. South Africa has since played an active role in regional conflict resolution efforts in the DRC, Angola, and Sudan, and South African armed forces have participated in at least one exercise intended as preparation for peacekeeping tasks on the continent. South Africa's foreign policy also includes a commitment to international nuclear nonproliferation and other arms control regimes. South Africa is unique in that it is the only country to have developed and then voluntarily relinquished its nuclear weapons capability before acceding to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty in July 1991 during the waning days of apartheid rule. While South Africa's apartheid government may have been primarily motivated to do so by its reluctance to transfer control of its nuclear weapons to a majority government, it also set the conditions for the successful negotiation of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone Treaty in 1996. [41]

The Economic Dimension

The South African economy, which is highly diversified, technologically advanced, and capable of generating substantial amounts of investment capital, dwarfs those of other African states. The foundation of South Africa's economy is an industrial infrastructure whose manufacturing industries include automobile assembly, metal-working, machinery and textiles fabrication, and iron and steel production, as well as chemicals, fertilizers, and foodstuffs (South Africa is the only African state that regularly produces a food surplus). South Africa's modern transportation

infrastructure includes 23,000 of Africa's 42,000 kilometers of railway lines; 58,000 of Africa's 87,000 kilometers of paved roads; and 5.1 million of Africa's 6 million motor vehicles. South Africa generates 75 percent of the region's total electrical capacity, and its ports annually handle a tonnage of cargo 16 times greater than that of all others in Africa combined.[42]

The economies of many Southern African states are dependent on South Africa's transportation system, particularly its rail network and port facilities. Copper and other mineral exports from the DRC, Zimbabwe, and Zambia, for instance, are shipped primarily through South African ports. The alternative is a longer, more costly, and less reliable route through Tanzania, whose poorly functioning ports are often clogged with traffic. Mozambique is the only other Southern African state that can easily export goods through its own ports, which are managed by South African technicians.[43]

South Africa also has the world's largest reserves, and is a leading producer, of a variety of strategic and industrial minerals. Its reserves of chrome and manganese ore are the largest found in any single country, and South Africa is the world's leading producer of alumino-silicates, chrome ore, ferrochromium, gold, and platinum-group metals.[44]

Although South Africa's economy grew at only one percent in 1999, it is projected to increase by six percent over the next two years. Approximately half of South Africa's economy depends on trade and, while the United States remains its biggest trading partner (\$5.7 billion in 1998), its volume of trade with other African states expanded 20 percent between 1996 and 1998 to just under \$4 billion. South Africa is the primary source of manufactured goods for many countries in Southern Africa, and the value of South African exports to neighboring countries is four times that of imports. In 1998, South Africa enjoyed a \$2.7 billion trade surplus with other African states.[45]

The end of apartheid and South Africa's membership in SADC have positioned it to serve as the motive force for economic growth in the region. In keeping with its commitment to regional economic integration, South Africa has adopted policies to foster more balanced trade relations in Southern Africa. South Africa seeks to coordinate its trade and economic policies with those of other SADC member states in order to encourage their industrial development and capacity to export manufactured goods to South African markets. In keeping with this objective, South Africa has actively directed a number of foreign investment proposals away from its own economy into those of other Southern African states.[46]

The Military Dimension

Under apartheid South Africa was the dominant military power in Africa, and it remains potentially so today. The technological basis for South Africa's military superiority over other regional actors is a well-developed military-technical base whose capabilities far exceed those of any other African state. Its parastatal Armaments Corporation (ARMSCOR) and largely privatized subsidiaries provide South Africa with a national military research, development, and production capability unique in Africa. The export of military equipment also generates substantial amounts of foreign currency for the South African economy.

In contrast to some of the more idealistic tenets of South Africa's post-apartheid foreign and economic policies, the leaders of South Africa's defense establishment have remained firm adherents of political realism. Shortly after he assumed office in 1994, Defense Minister Joe Modise stated, "Peace is the ideal situation, but ideal situations are hard to find in the real world. The chances of lasting peace are very remote." [47] Later, during debate over South Africa's first post-apartheid defense budget, Modise told the South African Parliament:

The absence of an immediate threat does not guarantee peace. We have to accept that the future cannot be determined with any degree of certainty, as international relations are essentially unpredictable [and] are characterized by national interests competing for trade and natural resources, and in some parts of the world the disintegration of states through ethnic or religious war.

Modise went on to stress that the South African armed forces are "the nation's insurance policy and the extent of that insurance depends on what we have invested in it. We do not deserve a second-rate army, navy, or air force." [48]

Under South Africa's new government, the apartheid-era South African Defense Force (SADF) has been reorganized

as the South African National Defense Force (SANDF). Unlike its predecessor, the SANDF is constitutionally mandated to be a strategically defensive force. The primary roles ascribed to the SANDF by the South African constitution are to defend the nation's sovereignty and territorial integrity and to "serve in compliance with international obligations." The SANDF's secondary functions include support to the South African Police Service for the maintenance of internal security and border control; providing and maintaining essential services for South Africa's civilian population when required; and "the preservation of life, health, and property; and support for socioeconomic upliftment." The constitution envisions the SANDF as a "professional, balanced, and modern defense force representative of all South Africans." Whites-only conscription into South Africa's armed forces ceased on 1 January 1994; the SANDF is now a non-racial, all-volunteer force augmented by reserves (South Africa has the only effective reserve mobilization system in Africa).[49]

In March 1995 South Africa created a new Department of Defense in order to ensure both effective civilian control of the armed forces and "transparency in military matters." Establishing a pattern of civil-military relations based on effective civilian control is of particular importance to South Africa's new political leaders. The South African armed forces played a key role in keeping the apartheid regime in power. Military autonomy, domestic oppression, and a wide role in governmental decisionmaking and policy implementation all characterized South African civil-military relations under the apartheid government.[50]

In this respect, South Africa's senior military leadership has made a political transformation that few observers would have previously thought possible. With few exceptions, all have gone to great lengths to demonstrate their allegiance to South Africa's duly constituted civilian government. This commitment to maintaining the integrity of the civilian government was demonstrated by General Georg Meiring's decision in 1998 to retire as Chief of the SANDF after he determined that he had lost the confidence of then-President Mandela. In February 1998 Meiring provided Mandela with an intelligence report indicating that several high-ranking members of the ANC were intentionally working to destabilize his Government of National Unity. A three-member review commission subsequently found the report to be without merit. Upon announcing his resignation Meiring said, "The action that resulted from my giving the report caused certain . . . mistrust. I feel it is my duty to do the honorable thing." [51] Meiring was subsequently replaced by General Sipiwe Nyanda, formerly commander of the ANC's military wing and, most recently, Chief of the South African Defense Staff.

The restructuring of South Africa's armed forces also required the integration of all former opponents of the apartheid government into the SANDF. This contentious process required the integration of 85,000 personnel from the South African Defense Force with 28,000 from the military wings of the ANC and other anti-apartheid groups, as well as an additional 10,000 drawn from the so-called "homelands" armies. After screening and "bridging training" under the observation of a British Military Advisory and Training Team, about 16,000 non-SADF personnel became members of the SANDF regular force.[52]

Under South Africa's constitution the President appoints the Chief of the National Defense Force, who exercises operational control over the nation's armed forces. The Chief of the SANDF is responsible to the Defense Minister for the execution of South Africa's defense policy as stipulated by the Cabinet. The chiefs of South Africa's four military services (army, navy, air force, and a separately organized medical service) are directly subordinate to the Chief of the SANDF. Each SANDF component has a role, mission, and functions similar to those of the US military services.

As in the United States following the end of the Cold War, the end of apartheid fostered expectations of a "peace dividend" in South Africa. High levels of military spending were also incompatible with the government's initial budgetary priority of funding the Reconstruction and Development Program. The SANDF currently has a strength of 79,700 regular personnel augmented by 386,000 reservists. Current plans envision the reduction of SANDF active-duty strength to 71,500 over 2001-02. South Africa's 1997 Defense Review proposed an eventual SANDF force structure of 22,000 regular personnel and 69,400 reservists, given the absence of any appreciable external threat. The South African Defense budget decreased from \$3.5 billion for 1992-93 (the last full year of apartheid) to \$2.125 billion for 1997-98. The defense budget for 1999-2000 was further reduced to \$2 billion in accordance with the government's goal of limiting defense expenditures to 1.4 percent of South Africa's GDP through at least 2001.[53]

Further reductions in defense spending and force structure are tempered by four factors:

- The requirement to maintain core capabilities which will allow the SANDF to fulfill its primary function. This "core force concept" seeks to maintain the "minimum viable level" of conventional warfare capabilities to meet short-term contingencies, ensure the retention of operational and technical expertise, and provide the basis for future expansion.[54]
- The expectation that substantial numbers of SANDF personnel will continue to augment the South African Police Service in the conduct of border and internal security operations. Modise identified the primary threat to South Africa as "that of the instability around us." [55] This threat is characterized by increasing flows of illegal immigrants, drugs, stolen vehicles, and weapons into South Africa from neighboring states. South Africa has more than 1,200 miles of land border, much of which is porous or entirely unmarked. Illegal immigration is of particular concern to South Africa, whose population has been swollen by an estimated one million illegal immigrants from other African countries. Internally, the greatest threat to South Africa's security is posed by levels of crime and violence that in some areas have risen beyond the capacity of the police to effectively control.
- The requirement to protect South Africa's maritime interests and marine resources. South Africa is essentially a maritime nation, and sea-borne trade accounts for 55 percent of the country's GDP. Its location at the southern tip of Africa gives South Africa a strategic position at a major choke point in the Cape Sea Route linking the Indian and South Atlantic oceans. The Cape Sea Route is a vital artery of world trade. Forty percent of US and 60 percent of European oil imports, as well as 25 percent of European food imports, pass around the Cape. South Africa itself is dependent on the security of the Cape Sea Route for 95 percent of the tonnage and 80 percent of the value of its imports and exports. South Africa also claims an Exclusive Economic Zone extending 200 nautical miles from its coast.[56]
- The expectation that South Africa will play a prominent role in peace operations and regional defense cooperation.[57]

Implications for US Regional Security Strategy

Crafting an effective US regional security strategy for Sub-Saharan Africa presents several challenges. First, from a realist perspective, tangible US interests in the region are extremely limited. US economic interests in Africa are marginal (notwithstanding US oil and mineral imports), and there is no external threat either to these or to the security of the Cape Sea Route. Nor is there as yet an effective US domestic political constituency for Africa. Second, the fragmented nature of the African strategic environment offers few opportunities for productive engagement. Finally, Africans themselves remain mistrustful of foreign involvement in Africa. When outsiders have engaged in the continent at all, they have usually done so either to extract its resources in the interest of prosperity elsewhere or to fight proxy wars in whose outcome Africans had little stake.

Accordingly, post-apartheid South Africa's position as the region's pivotal state offers unique prospects for the attainment of US policy objectives in Africa:

- Support for the continued development of democratic governance and civil society in South Africa should top the list of US political objectives in Africa. In addition to the moral component, South Africa's peaceful transition to majority rule provides an "object lesson for other African states that the reconciliation of fundamental issues is possible without recourse to violence." [58] The election of Thabo Mbeki, who had served as Mandela's Executive Deputy President, to the South African presidency was largely a foregone conclusion. The real test for democracy in South Africa will come in 2004 when Mbeki stands for reelection. By then the ANC, always an umbrella political party composed of disparate groups, is likely to have fragmented and new opposition parties emerged to challenge its political dominance. The ANC's ability to govern in the presence of effective opposition or to peacefully transfer power as the result of an electoral defeat will be the real indicator of the success of South Africa's transition to democracy.
- South Africa's nonaligned and Africanist foreign policy provides further opportunities for engagement. South Africa

can serve as a bridge between the West and the nonaligned nations, and its self-defined "African destiny" now allows South Africa to play a leading role in regional conflict resolution.

- South Africa's continued economic development and its further economic integration with Southern Africa support US economic policy objectives in Africa, where the prospects for sustainable economic development are otherwise dim. With the exception of oil imports, the majority of US trade with Africa is with South Africa and other SADC member states, and Southern Africa already constitutes a regional economic subsystem more than any other part of Africa. Trade relations are relatively extensive, well-developed transportation and communications link the region infrastructures, particularly those of South Africa, and labor has historically migrated from other Southern African states to South Africa.
- The development of regional conflict resolution and peacekeeping mechanisms is unlikely to be fully effective without South African participation. No other African state is capable of deploying and sustaining its armed forces beyond its borders for any appreciable length of time. The SANDF could play a key role in African peacekeeping forces, particularly by providing transportation, communications, and logistical support.

Africa's problems are many, US resources are limited, and opportunities for productive engagement in the region are few. As this analysis suggests, a regional security strategy predicated on furthered, deepened engagement with South Africa as the region's pivotal state offers the most effective means of achieving US policy objectives in Africa. The objective of such a strategy is not the creation of a US "deputy" for Africa, but rather support for a stable, democratic partner capable of exercising regional political, economic, and, if need be, military leadership.

NOTES

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