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Myths and realities in South  
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GRAHAM IEVANS

It is tempting to hope that the state is in a position, South Africa: mu  
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to some quhe Inulqer-Ierm issues in South Africa's imnjl'n'cign polity.

Much of the recent writing on South Africa has concentrated on matters  
relating to the domestic character of political, economic and social of the post-  
apartheid state. The dominant issue has been What will South Africa look like  
during, and especially after, the period of internal reconstruction? The  
negotiating process itself, and, assuming it gets off the ground, the character of  
the new South Africa that emerges are the key concerns. Because of this  
preoccupation, comparatively little attention has been directed at a no less  
important issue (at least for outsiders), which is, what will South Africa look like  
in the future? How will it behave in local, regional and global politics? It, the  
Republic really has embarked on an irreversible course towards radical and  
perhaps revolutionary change. to what extent has debate about the  
precise delineation of the new political dispensation been extended to external  
affairs? Has the new thinking, about domestic arrangements spilled over into  
foreign policy matters? In particular to what extent have the actors involved  
in formulation and conduct of foreign policy either formal and informal utilised  
the new in a systematic re-examination of traditional assumptions  
and policy perspectives? Is foreign policy in "hold", or can we expect  
fundamental changes in alignments, orientations and attitudes in the foreseeable  
future?

This article attempts to examine some of the myths enveloping current  
South African foreign policy. It was prepared for a symposium held by the African Society of the UK. London  
1 June  
1991. A revised version will appear later in "South African Occasional Paper (if the South  
African Institute  
of International Affairs publishes it) - 1991-1992  
South African Occasional Paper 67: 4 (1991, 709-721, 709  
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Graham Evans

thinking, and to challenge the official uncertainties about the future of this volatile and highly complex area (of international relations).

#### I. The pre-post-apartheid period

The first and most immediately relevant myth to be dispelled is a deceptively simple one. Before we begin to indulge about a post-apartheid South Africa and the exciting policy opportunities upon to it, we must first get through a critical and highly contingent transitional stage - a 'between' period, in 1990 South African writers phrase it - which may well last a number of years and which will be of crucial importance in determining South Africa's own policy preferences, as well as the plan: it can reasonably expect to aspire to in the international community.

The idea that the end of apartheid will automatically usher in a new South Africa is misleading. The transitional, pre-post-apartheid period is likely to be a prolonged one. Change is unlikely to be sudden and dramatic; in fact President de Klerk's new dispensation is as much an attempt to control the pace of change as it is an indication of a willingness to redistribute the spoils and prepare for a majoritarian state. Moreover, the decisions that are taken during this period - the policy initiatives undertaken regarding South Africa's regional role, for example - will effectively tie the hands of any future post-apartheid administration. It is therefore vital, not to say prudent, that decision-makers cast their nets as widely as possible in the search for a broad domestic consensus over the likely foreign policy choices - both for their own sakes, and for parties outside South Africa that have identifiable interests in the Republic's development. Bilateral, unilateral and multilateral commitments entered into during this period will condition South Africa's role in Africa and the wider world, and so the management of this intermediate stage will be a critical phase in the overall development of South Africa's international relations. It is worth asking, then, how the transformation is actually being perceived and acted upon by policy planners in Pretoria.

Further, the traditional military and security issues that have held centre stage for over 40 years in world politics are now increasingly giving way to a new awareness of wealth/welfare/environmental concerns that render earlier orthodoxies about how to promote the 'national interest' and 'national security' at best irrelevant and at worst downright dangerous. To what extent is the South African foreign policy establishment capable of taking its cue from theories of complex interdependence<sup>2</sup> rather than 'political realism' as guiding paradigms in confronting the new international environment opening up before them?

The phrase is John Barratt's in his '(International constraints and opportunities in South Africa's foreign policy and diplomacy' (paper presented to the 'Oleeroint on South Africa's choices for the 1990s).

Leicester University. March 1990): and the point discussed here forms the central theme of his paper,

2. For the contrast between the two approaches see Ruggie 1993. Kuperman and Justh St. Nyst. v. arr. um!

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It is clearly urgent that during this transitional period Hohhesian Or  
Verwoetdian notions of security and interest are redefined--and are seen to he  
erCFlnCd'\_SO as to embrace not only a multiracial South African polity, but  
also a multi-issue international agenda. Nnn-Cnld War and essentially non-  
statist issncswmigration, poverty, disease, hunger. drought. econmnic depri-  
vation and ecopoliticsiwnow compete for attention as essential components of  
threat-perurptimi3 with the more Familiar security concerns (if traditional  
Afrikancr realpolitik. ()licnurse old habits die hard, and any threat analysis that  
did not include sueth traditional high political issues as the civil war in Angola  
and Mozambique. the continuing friction with Zimhahwe. the uncertain  
futures anamihia, Zamhia, Zaire and Lesnthu and (especially) the continuing  
civil unrest within the Republic itself would not he realistic m' credible. But the  
fact remains that to a large extent\_a and this is a reneetion ofgluhal changes no  
less than local ones-rJlligh' and ilow' politics are now beginning to change  
places, or at least to merge. Ideological or theoretical straitiat'kets moulded in  
the European states system and refined globally hy the (ink! War and locally  
by the "I'ntal National Strategy' are no longer serviceable in the quest for  
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national security, with their familiar emphasis on national inclusiveness and  
military preparedness are giving way to broader conceptions of defence in  
which security is seen largely in terms ofinterdependenee and Imn-adversarial  
community concerns."

The question that arises for our purposes is therefore how far the Smith  
African decision-making community has altered its ancestral mindset to  
encompass these new and quite. radical inputs into policy formulation. Is the  
psychological environment in which policy is made in Pretoria capable of  
perceiving. and acting upon, a new definition ()Fthe situation? How new is Neil  
van Hcerden's much-vaunted i New Diplomacy ,?5 Is it cut From the same Cloth  
as President Bushis somewhat fraudulent iNew World Order'? Is it mere  
rhetoric (what's new? which world? whose order ?) or does it contain matters  
of real substance?

No one can doubt that the official utterances from Pretoria during uggosm

suggest at least an awareness of structural alterations in the external environment. Whether or not this leads to what Mr van Isleerden has called 21 significant change in the quality of South Africa's international relations" is still an open question. The record shows that the quantity of South Africa's international relations has increased, For example with the opening up of semi-diplomatic ties with Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union, and at least 15 African states.<sup>3</sup> See M. Hamlgh. 'National security and strategic doctrine in the RSA I' Pumlm. Oct. 1990. p. 54.

i For a broader discussion of these issues see especially Peter Mangold Nulimml. *International Relations of South Africa* (Lundnn: Routledge. 1990)

5 Neil van Heerdeii. *South Africa: A Country Study* (Washington DC: Einhassv Of South Africa. 1990). p. 17; also Neil van Heerden. *Developments in South African Foreign Policy* (Johannesburg: South African Institute for International Affairs, Dec. 1990). (working paper. r' As noted s.

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states over the past twelve months, but this in itself falls short of what one might reasonably expect from the promise of 'new thinking' and the qualitative changes this implies.

It could also be argued that this sudden emergence from isolation is as much due to external factors unrelated to events within South Africa as it is to any fundamental reappraisal of policy goals by Pretoria. The collapse of communism and the release of 'Southern Africa from Cold War politics.

combined with a worldwide weariness with Africa and a consequent reordering of Western political and economic priorities,<sup>7</sup> leads one to suspect that South Africa's reorientation is basically reactive rather than proactive. Quite simply, over the past two years, structural adjustments in the external environment have caused walls to fall and doors to swing invitingly open.

It may be telling that the Director-General of Pretoria's Department of Foreign Affairs speaks of New Diplomacy, not 'new foreign policy'. The difference is important.<sup>8</sup> Diplomacy, though it is often used as such, is not a synonym for foreign policy, Foreign policy can be described as the substance, aims and attitudes of a state's relations with others, but diplomacy is only one of the instruments employed to put these into effect. Mr van Heerden's New Diplomacy, then, suggests that the changes he envisages refer only to the enabling vehicle, not to a change in the composition of the passengers, the purpose of the journey or, significantly, the eventual destination. This vehicle change from an armoured-plated Casspir to a lead-free, user-friendly bakkie reflects a change in style rather than substance. It is important not to confuse the two if we are to assess the intentions of the South African government during this transitional period.

John Burt Foster has identified the overall goal of South Africa's foreign policy in the apartheid period as one of trying to ensure the security, status and legitimacy of the state within the international system against the background domestically of preserving a white-controlled state.<sup>9</sup> In the absence of any tangible evidence to the contrary, and assuming that Mr van Heerden is fastidious in his choice of language (and precision with language is one of the most important tools of the diplomats' trade), the indications are that though the means are diversifying, the ends of policy are still essentially the same. The questions that Pretoria ought now to be addressing are, Whose security? Whose status? Whose legitimacy? Although the means can frequently eat away at the ends of policy, unless and until South Africa as a matter of deliberate policy planning begins to broaden out or redefine these concepts so as to include the interests and aspirations of groups other than those of the hitherto dominant political elites, the contradiction between substance and form that lies at the heart of South Africa's external relations will remain.

<sup>7</sup> For an interesting perspective on this, see Christopher Clapham, 'Experiencing Southern Africa in the

twenty-first century'. In *International Affairs* (vol. 2, April 1991, pp. 281-92).

" As John Burt Foster has pointed out: Foster, 'Current constraints', pt 2.

John Burt Foster, *Current constraints*, p. 4. This theme forms the conceptual framework of James Barber and

John Burt Foster's seminal study. See: *Africa's Foreign Policy: 1945-1988*

(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

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The extent to which the previous formulation of South Africa's international issue of goals and objectives is not likely to change - this is a disinvestment of momentum until it is very little of a policy objective making merger of the Defence Force and given the uncertainty it would indicate is not selective.

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The extent to which the decision-making community is willing and able to co-opt previously excluded interest groups into the process of policy formulation and conduct will be crucial in this pre-post-apartheid phase. Sooner rather than later, there must be a conscious effort to integrate the ANC's Department of Foreign Affairs with Pretoria's. Absorbing elements of the ANC's international section would of course involve some movement on the issue of goals and objectives, but since perceptions of the national interest are not likely to be radically different at least not on matters of high politics-this is a practical possibility. Once the issue of sanctions and disinvestment are out of the way (and there are indications that this has a momentum of its own, regardless of attempts by internal actors to manipulate it). very little of real moment by way of irreconcilable differences in foreign policy objectives remains. As a matter of practical politics a foreign policy-making merger would be a far easier task than integrating the South African Defence Force with Umkhonto we Sizwe (the military wing of the ANC), given the uncertainty still surrounding the policy of the armed struggle, and it would indicate to the ANC that the government's new political dispensation is not selective. but that it really is top-down as well as bottom-up. Another South African writer has recently argued that the liberation of foreign policy-making from the coterie of white officials who have thus far been involved is now an imperative." If the present government wants a controlled evolution towards normalizing its foreign relations. the requirements of the emerging internal and external order dictate collaboration and a declared willingness to seek out areas where genuine bipartisanship can be effected. In this regard the transitional period needs to involve a reappraisal of content as well as packaging-neither old wine in new bottles nor new wine in old bottles will suffice. It is true that South Africa cannot simply walk away from its history', " but it can make an effort to swim with the tide rather than against it. '

At the moment, though, despite reassuring noises from Pretoria, there is no unambiguous signal that a fundamental re-evaluation of the foreign policy

means/ends formula is under way. The indications are that the new political dispensation has not, so far, spilt over into the foreign policy realm.

## 2. Normalizing, foreign policy

Another common assumption by policy-makers and observers concerns South Africa's rehabilitation in the international community. Most commentaries on post-apartheid foreign policy assume that once a non-racial, majoritarian state has been established. South Africa can return to 'normalcy' in its external relations. Most Pretoria-watchers point to South Africa's role in the negotiation to Peter Vale, in 'Points of re-entry: prospects for a post-apartheid foreign policy' (paper presented to conference on South Africa's (hoirs for the logos, Leicester University. March 11)(1). p. H).

n Vale. 'Points of re-entry', p. 11.



Graham Evans

process leading to Namibian independence during the 1989-90 period as marking a watershed in this quest.<sup>2</sup> The very public success of this effort, combined with de Klerk's internal initiatives and the worldwide collapse of communism, has led many to believe that 'normal' state-to-state relations are just around the corner; that South Africa's period of solitary confinement is about to end, and a forgiving international community is eagerly awaiting its first steps into the sunlight. But the questions that should be asked here are. What are 'normal' international relations, and can South Africa properly aspire to any such thing? .

I have already argued that discussions of the post-apartheid state are (quite reasonably) obsessed with the problems of internal or domestic reconstruction and tend to assume that as a matter of course, once the problem of domestic order and legitimacy has been resolved, questions relating to foreign policy will more or less slot into place and will naturally reflect the interests of the prevailing balance of forces within the new Republic. On this view, foreign policy is seen as a second-order problem that can be relegated to the outer edges of any discussion of what post-apartheid South Africa might look like. This separation of the internal and external aspects of state behaviour is a common-and mistaken--assumption not merely of South African crude political realism, but also of mainstream Western international thought. The old British adage that 'politics ceases at the water's edge' is not exclusively about the practical desirability of a bipartisan approach to the outside world. It also expresses a tacit belief that external relations are qualitatively different from the domestic variety, and may not in fact be worthy of the epithet 'politics' at all. Foreign policy then becomes a discrete and segregated area of concern which is empirically and analytically distinct from the processes and structures of internal politics.

The argument amounts to saying that adding an 's' to the word 'state' involves crossing a conceptual boundary into a realm where the concept of a monolithic and objective 'national interest' reigns supreme. 'Continuity' therefore becomes at once a key value and a rational goal. As long as the 'national interest', security, survival and prosperity in an anarchic and potentially hostile environment is deemed to be an objective entity existing above, beyond and distinct from domestic issues involving resource allocation, the separation of the two realms is complete. Foreign policy, in Morgenthau's famous formulation, is about 'the national interest defined in terms of power'; it therefore its proper or 'normal' conduct requires the virtual exclusion of such variables as ideological values or moral principles. On this view, the extent to which matters 'domestic' impinge on matters 'external' is a measure of a state's abnormality. 'Normal' states conduct their policies with regard to geopolitical realities, and maximize their gain-potential by eschewing '2 Barratt. '(Current constraints', p. 12. Also Andre du Pisani, "The role of new states in the region: the

Namibian example' (paper presented to (conference on South Africa's choices for the future, University of Cape Town, March 1991).

<sup>1</sup> See Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations* (5th edn. New York: Knopf. 1973). Also in *Journal of International Relations*

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potentially divisive (and therefm'e weakening) internal ideological consider-  
ations.

On this view, South Africa began its descent into abnormality in 1948. with  
the erection of the apartheid state, since from that (late the dividing line  
between internal and external affairs became blurred. Apartheid began to eat its  
way into the body politic. to the extent that the state's external projection  
became totally conditioned by its internal structure.'4 From 1948 onwards  
South Africa assumed the role of pariah dud deviant, since the overriding  
Objective of foreign policy was an essentially domestic matter. the preservation  
ofa white-cohtmlled state. All other considerations were subordinate to this."  
On this reading. innrmalizing' South Africa's role in world politics is  
directly related to the demise of apartheid. South Africals reappearance On the  
international scene is conditional on apartheidl's departure. It is not merely that  
having abandoned the icrime against humanity' South Africa can now  
legitimately re-enter the eomity of nations, but that its Foreign policy  
perspectives are nnw presumed to be freed From the debilitating baggage of  
domestic concerns.

In fact it is no secret that lafter decades ofsevere diplomatic limitations... the  
mood in South African foreign affairs circles is very upbeathm The main reason  
for this is a belief that once apartheid has gone. the foreign policy establishment  
'will be free to get on with the job they imagine they were trained to d0-to  
pursue their considered vision of the national interest unencumbered by  
ideological and essentially domestic concerns.

But though the removal of apartheid will bring South Africa in from the  
cold in world politics. this does not mean that domestic affairs will be a static  
variable in foreign policy Formulation. As Peter Vale has pointed out, foreign  
policy is essentially contested ground in South African politics,'7 and it is likely

to remain so throughout the transition period and beyond.

Foreign policy is a boundary' activity in that those making policy straddle two environments—an internal or domestic one and an external or international (one). Policy-makers and the policy system stand at the juncture between the two and seek to mediate between the various milieus. The domestic environment is the background context against which policy is made: thus factors such as the state's resource base, its position geographically in relation to others, the nature and level of development of its economy, its demographic structure and its ideology and fundamental values will form the domestic or internal milieu. This is the context in which policy is formulated, as opposed to the external environment where it is implemented. Pretoria may want to assume that the domestic inputs form part of a unified whole and are essentially non-contested, but this is of course far from being the case. Even if the organizational perspective of today's decision-makers leads them to wish to construct their own, for example, J. E. Spence, *Republic under pressure* (London: Oxford University Press, Chatham

House Essays No. 9, 1965)!

'5 Barber and Ilarratt, *South African foreign policy*, pp. 1412.

Barratt, 'Current constraints', p. 6. '7 Vale, *Points of re-entry*, p. 16

Graham Evans

external reality\_their definition of the situationewwithout much regard for internal considerations. the fact remains that the domestic environmente particularly issues relating to the nature and level of- interest articulation. economic development. demographic structure and especially ideology or fundamental values\_is crucial to the success of the lnormalization ' process. In other words, South Africa's Foreign policy will not be lnornial' merely because apartheid has disappeared. Normality is notjust a matter ofaspiring to full diplomatic recognition by the international community. It is also concerned with seeking a basic consensus on aims and objectives within the domestic context. There appears to be little efTort so Far to begin this process. The South African foreign policy establishment has made no movement towards co-opting or even consulting the ANC and other excluded interest groups. The ideology and the fundamental values remain those of the dominant white groups.

On another level, given its turhulent history, can South Africa ever have lnornial ' state-to-state relations with its neighbours? How long does it take to forget the past? An important input into foreign policy is the inherited memories that surround it and to a certain extent shape it. It is a mistake to assume that these can be exorcised overnight, that South Africa in the post-apartheid period can begin all over again with blank sheet. South Africa will not be a lncw state, in world politieism Its foreign policy will to a large degree be conditioned by its own past and by perceptions of this on the part of'other key actors. It will still, for example, be a lower middlc-ranking power with a strong regional presence. Its relations with its neighbours will inevitably reHect this.

It may well be that lnormalization' is a false God, except in the limited sense of South Africa aspiring to full diplomatic recognition by the wider international community. If, through the notorious perversity ofinternational politics, recognition precedes full integration on the domestic level, it will be a grave error to suppose that the normalization process is complete. A lnormal ' state is not one which seeks to separate foreign and domestic policy, as many South African policy-makers would have us believe, but one where the domestic context of policy formulation has become fully integrated into the policy system itself. The New Diplomacy, in so far as it is in essence a response to external stimuli, is ominously silent on these matters. and this does not augur well for the future.

3. The region, and South Africans role in it

An aspect of lnornalization' that has been a central concern of the New Diplomacy is South Africa's role in the region. It is a common assumption. especially among Machiavellians enthralled with what Deon Geldenhuys has v 19

called lgiantism , that South Africa as the economic superpower will

"I See chi Pisani, 'The role of new states'i

in See. for example. Simon Baynham. 11)efcnce and security issues in a transitional South Arrira'

International Affairs Bulletin 14: 3 (1990), p. 6.

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South Africa's foreign policy inevitably play a (dominant) and self-willed role in shaping the contours of security, cooperation and development throughout much of the southern African region. On this view, whoever formulates policy in future, geopolitical and economic realities dictate that South Africa will automatically gravitate towards its 'natural' role as regional hegemon, that of the giant in a small room. Overlying this thesis is the belief that the giant will be a gentle one. The new South Africa will be a beneficial and benevolent force in the neighbourhood. Once apartheid, has been replaced by 'togetherness' the bully-boy on the bloc will be transformed into the genial policeman-cum-social-worker, maintaining order and dispensing largesse and aid in equal measure to all and sundry without fear or favour.

Both Mr van Heerden and Mr Mbeki,<sup>2</sup> secretary of the ANC's International Department, share this idealistic vision of harmonious and non-exploitative relations with their neighbours. Mr van Heerden's inspiration derives from liberal ideas about the 'harmony of interests' doctrine, which assumes that rational calculation of interest within an overall framework of market economics ensures that 'the national interest' and 'the international interest' become one and the same.<sup>22</sup> Thabo Mbeki has reached the same general conclusion through a Marxist/Leninist prism, maintaining that the downfall of imperialism will usher in a society of 'like-minded states that will be free from conflict because there is general agreement on matters of ideology, resource allocation and development. Pretoria and the ANC agree that the region can be made safe for democracy and that the new South Africa will play a crucial role in the process.

Are these assumptions justified? Will South Africa emerge as the engine-room for regional development and growth? If so, how will it treat its neighbours?

It can well be argued that, contrary to popular belief, a post-apartheid South Africa is likely to be a net recipient of aid rather than a more or less benevolent donor of it.<sup>23</sup> Given the present parlous state of its economy and bearing in mind the awesome costs of internal reconstruction, the pressing priority for any government must be to redress the imbalances created by over a century of colonialism and apartheid. A major foreign policy aim of future governments would thus be to restore South Africa's investment attractiveness to the West and to open up credit facilities with the IMF and World Bank.

The rationale that this entails would inevitably involve regional cooperation in trade and resource development, but it is difficult to envisage that its primary purpose would be anything other than domestic economic uplift and nation-building. Even the ANC must now recognize that honouring the promises made to neighbours in the wilderness of exile will of necessity be subordinated

<sup>2</sup> The term 'IKJ' (the 'Holidays in Hell' (London: Picador, 1989), p. 86.

<sup>2</sup> Van Heerden, 'In the new South Africa: Thabo Mbeki, domestic and foreign policy of a new

South Africa', *Review of African Political Economy*, No. 11 (Jan, April 1978).

<sup>2-2</sup> For a robust critique of the 'harmony of interests' doctrine, see lit. 11. (Irr. 'I' Iu- Iu'ruly ymm' mm.

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Graham Evans

to satisfying the minimum basic demands of the majority of South Africans. Another South African has pointed out that in the transition from liberation movement to government the ANC will have to cast aside the rhetoric and ideological preferences built up in the days of Cold War politics and embrace a political and economic pragmatism that a mere two years ago would have been an unthinkable deviation. The demands of its own internal constituency, reinforced by its understandable fear of being overtaken by events, combine to place the ANC under great duress with respect to sustaining traditional foreign policy perspectives?

Further, putting one's own house in order while simultaneously acting as good neighbour will inevitably be complicated by such threatening cross-boundary issues as migration and AIDS. Indeed these two factors could well become the overwhelming security dilemma of the new South Africa. In which case, open-door policies connected with concessionary or affirmative regional economic cooperation would be the first casualty of the ANC's difficult trek down from the moral high ground of exile politics. No one doubts that South Africa is the natural regional hegemon, and in the long term this may perhaps be beneficial to its neighbours, especially with regard to technological transfer and resource development. But in the short term, despite probable membership of SADCC (the Southern African Development Coordination Conference) and the OAU (the Organisation of African Unity), preoccupation with the demands of internal reconstruction is likely to orientate foreign policy towards covert forms of manipulation and dominance. Despite a presumption in favour of equality with its neighbours, a new majority-rule government, perhaps after a brief honeymoon period, would be unable to resist the obvious benefits of being the key player in local balance-of-power politics. This would not preclude regional cooperation or the creation of an integrated trading bloc, but it would be on South African terms. In the absence of an external force the role of 'manipulating 'balances' seems preordained, whoever occupies the Union Buildings in Pretoria.

The National Party has sought to lock the neighbouring states into Pretoria's orbit since 1948--this after all was the purpose of the 'constellation of states' (CONSAS) strategy--but was prevented from doing so by a combination of regional and global pressures. The disappearance of apartheid and the absence of compellence from outside now make this goal a realizable one. It is extremely unlikely that a reconstructed ANC in office would be able to resist the temptation to lord it over the neighbouring states, who for all their sound 2' Sipho Shezi, 'The African National Congress's approach to foreign policy' (paper presented to conference on South Africa's choices for the 1990s. Leicester University. March '99:), pp 254:.

The twin issues of migration (economic and political) and AIDS may not be unconnected, and ask

Spence has suggested. they should not be seen exclusively as problems of African threat perception.

They will loom large in First World threat-assessment exercises in the near future. However, the

problem is likely to be especially acute for South Africa since in all probability the post-apartheid state

will act as a magnet for the best and brightest of the region. If this does occur, the ANC in particular

will face difficult choices over 'loose' policies versus tight immigration controls.

We may not

have heard the last of the 'bitter almonds' in South Africa's history, though this is time it

may derive from a hitherto unsuspected source

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and fury regarding the white-ruled state invariably regarded their own  
particular interests as paramount. The ANC is unlikely to forget that even in  
intra-Af'rican international organizations like the OAU it was never accorded  
the status it sought. that of sole authentic representative of South Africaf'';  
Special consideration may for a time be given to the needs of some of its  
neighbours"-pethaps Zambia, Tanzania, Angola, Mozambique and Nam-  
ibia-but these relationships are unlikely to he sustained on sentiment alone.  
Like all states, the new South Africa will in the final analysis base its  
international relations on interest, capability and reciprocity. After all. it is one  
of the very few truisms of world politics that neither ideological ailinity nor  
emotional attachment will preserve lspecial relationshipsi for long unless they  
are firmly grounded in a bedrock of mutual interest.

4. Some foreign policy options

So far I have questioned a number ofeonnnonly held assumptions about Smith  
Africa's foreign policy in the post-apartheid period: in particular the extent to  
which the lnew politiml dispensation' has an external as well as internal  
dimension. The ninth vaunted New Diplomacy is neither partienlarly new. nor  
does it involve a significant deviation from South Alirieais traditional regional  
and international objectives. The transitional period, which is likely to be a  
lengthy process, has not yet witnessed any sustained or Coherent re-examination  
of prevailing foreign policy assumptions or perspectives, even though  
developments during this critical phase are likely to have long-term eTects for  
the region as a whole and South Africa's place in it. The competitive model of  
national security retains its appeal for Pretoria, despite high-sonnding rhetoric

about greater interdependence and neighbourly cooperation. In addition, the concept of the national interest has not been extended to include interests other than those of the dominant white elite, and the decision-making community is still an exclusive one. Before South Africa can 'normalize' its international relations (assuming that such a thing is possible), then, there must be structural changes in orientation and agenda formation.

At a time when the West is more and more preoccupied with what might be called 'out of Africa' affairs, it is vital that Southern Africa as a whole restores its investment attractiveness and moves towards the creation of a coherent, self-contained regional trading bloc. South Africa's role in this will obviously be crucial.<sup>27</sup> Building enough of a consensus on foreign policy to achieve at least this broad objective will involve significant shifts in orientation on both sides. So far this does not appear to be happening. Mr van Heerden's all-see-Srutt Thomas. "The imperialism of liberation: the international relations of the African National

(Congress of South Africa, 1960-1994)', unpublished DPhil thesis, University of London. Oct. 1994).

Discussing the impact on Africa of a post-apartheid South Africa. Peter Vale quotes General (M)asegn

(M)asegn's observation that Africa was rapidly becoming 'the Third World's Third World' (Vale.

'Points of re-entry' p. 14), This phrase was popularized by V. S. Naipaul in 1973 when he used it to

refer to the plight of the (Mediterranean) states. See Peter Worsley. 'How many worlds? Thin! H'm'l

Quarterly 1: 2. April 1979. p. 14.

Graham Evans

New Diplomacy is revealed on closer examination as little more than power politics in disguise. The ANC is still wedded to a Marxist/Leninist vision of international relations and has not yet adjusted to the profound structural changes that have occurred throughout the international system. On this evidence, a consensual or bipartisan approach to foreign policy still awaits an internal settlement.

For the best part of 30 years South Africa has projected itself globally in two distinct and disparate directions. Up until recently the ANC's international policy was arguably more effective than that of the regime (certainly South Africa's pariah status internationally has much to do with effective lobbying on the part of the ANC's International Department). The reversal of fortunes during this transitional period in which the government has taken the initiative away from the opposition, especially over sanctions and extending diplomatic contacts, has for the moment at least thrown the ANC into disarray and confusion.

In the meantime, the continuing competition between the policies of formal and informal office-holders as to which side is best equipped to deal with the outside world in the run-up to the post-apartheid state is bound to be damaging to South Africa's long-term interests, particularly in the quest to normalize its international relations.

So what are South Africa's foreign policy options for the 1990s? Assuming a reasonably stable transition to majority rule, and allowing for early membership of SADC and the OAU, South Africa is likely to be a powerful regional player in sub-Saharan politics. It is a widespread and not unreasonable assumption that, in its immediate locale at least, South Africa is the 'natural' hegemon; but 'natural', does not necessarily mean 'good'. The removal of apartheid may well become something of a mixed blessing for the neighbouring states, in the same way perhaps as the unification of Germany might not altogether be good news for peripheral West European states like the United Kingdom. Be that as it may, South Africa will continue to be the leading protagonist in the region, and to a large extent it will assume the prerogative of writing the script.<sup>29</sup>

On the global level, it is safe to assume that the new South Africa will not as a matter of deliberate choice opt for a policy of isolationism. South Africa will not exchange enforced isolation for self-willed isolation. Like the old one, the new Republic will desperately seek to play a prominent part in regional affairs as well as to integrate fully into the international community. The precise form or structure that integration takes may be problematic, but all visions of South Africa's future foreign policy roles coalesce around the notion of full participation in international affairs. In this respect there will be continuity (in the sense that the New will have the same basic desires as the Old) and change (in the sense that some of those objectives will now be realizable).

2: See Barratt, 'Current Contradictions', p. 16. 2" I move this point to Andre' du Pisani. '1" For a similar analysis, though with different conclusions, see Deon Geldenhuys, 'South Africa's post-apartheid foreign policy', South African International Law Review 16: 12, Dec. 1990, p. 2. 720

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While South Africa is likely to play active roles in the Commonwealth and the UN, probably as a spokesman for Third World concerns in the areas of wealth and technology transfer, it is not at all clear, despite what some commentators allege,<sup>3</sup> that the Non-Aligned Movement will be its natural home. To the extent that non-alignment was a movement resisting attempts to produce carbon copies of NATO or the Warsaw Pact in the Third World after 1949, the demise of Cold War politics has clearly rendered it anachronistic. Since its rationale is a rejection of the system of competitive groupings established around the Cold War confrontation zones in the post-1945 bipolar system, it is by definition inappropriate in the context of wealth/welfare and North-South issues. In this sense, non-alignment as an orientation is only relevant to military and security questions, and even within that category, to threats posed externally from outside the state by the activities of the superpowers and their allies. Its utility as a policy option has been severely circumscribed by the withering away of Cold War structures, and in so far as it continues to be a relevant approach to world politics, it will, unless radically restructured, revert to being merely a quaint taxonomy or label for a large but very divided group of states. Until its rationale has been reconsidered, then (and South Africa might well play an important part in this), non-alignment is not a particularly gainful international posture.

The same applies to a variant of this idea, *positive neutralism*. Indeed recent experience of the impact of the Gulf War within the Republic suggests that the new South Africa, whatever amalgam of interests its foreign policy might represent, will be hard put to maintain the political and ideological aloofness to global issues that this kind of neutralism implies.

South Africa's future role in world politics in the medium to long term will be conditioned by its success at local and regional levels. Within sub-Saharan Africa and in the southern Atlantic and the Indian Ocean it will obviously be a substantial and probably decisive presence. If it assumes special responsibilities at this subsystemic level, it could well aspire to a leadership role in South-South relations, and perhaps an intercessionary position in North-South encounters. In the short term, though, its foreign policy choices will inevitably reflect the economic costs and social consequences of the quest for growth simultaneously with the redistribution of resources within the state. In this regard, though the absence of a competitive regional counterweight might seem to give it a relatively free hand, the new South Africa does not begin its external life with a diplomatic carte blanche. The inescapable priority will be the search for internal political stability allied to, or growing out of, economic growth. In this way the primacy of domestic politics is likely to militate against adventurous or heroic foreign policy postures that do not directly contribute to tackling the social and economic injustices bequeathed by the apartheid regime.

<sup>3</sup> Geldenhuys. 'South Africa's post-apartheid foreign policy', p. 2. Also Vale. *Implications of re-entry*. p. 31