



# **Southern Africa**

**Exploring a peace dividend**

**Peter Vale**

## Southern Africa: Exploring a peace dividend

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### Introduction

**A**s the 20th century draws to an end, Southern Africa is at last emerging from its bloody, apartheid-devastated past. The region is a patchwork of colonially constructed nation states, dominated by one economy. All roads lead to the golden south. And the region remains haunted by the colonial 'founding bargain' whereby white settlers were given a share of the spoils and, crucially, the necessary firepower to defend British interests. The wealth was kept out of the reach of the people. Piecemeal decolonisation did not fundamentally change the terms of the bargain, but the region's states struggled, more or less together, to survive the enmity of South Africa, the economic centre which saw blacks as a threat to its power. Now, with the fall of the apartheid regime, all is set for change. But the years of conflict have left the idea of nation state, buttressed by military might, deeply embedded in the minds of the ruling elites. There are signs that the region's people are tentatively reaching for a new security which reaches beyond borders and beyond guns — and redefines 'the bargain'.

The debate over the direction of regional foreign policy, security and development and the links between them is beginning. CIIR publishes this piece by Peter Vale as a contribution to what should become a lively debate.

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## Abbreviations

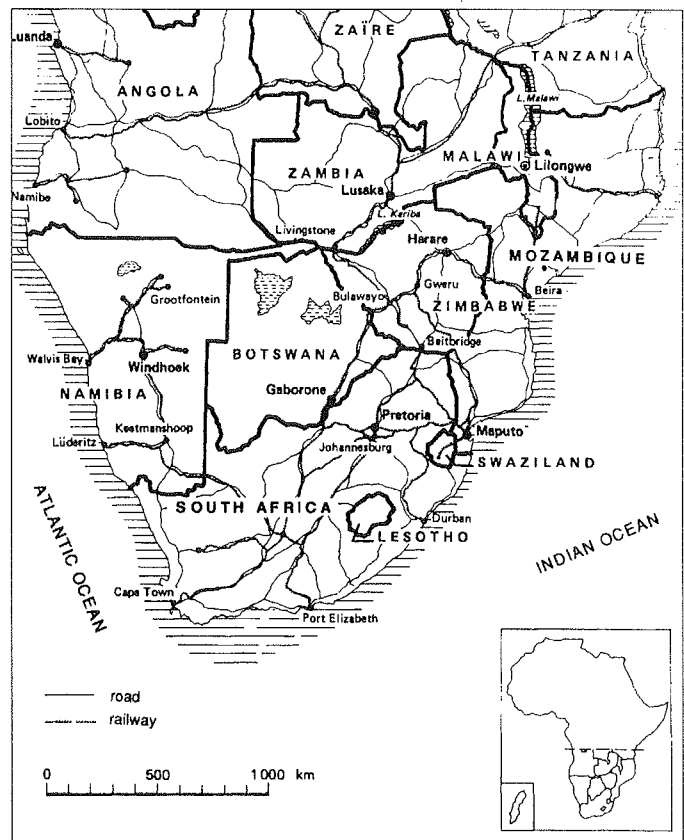
|         |  |
|---------|--|
| ACP     | The African, Caribbean and Pacific countries   |
| ANC     | African National Congress  |
| ASAS    | Association of Southern African States   |
| ARMSCOR | Armaments Development and Production Corporation (now often called Denel, although that is really the selling arm) |
| BLS/N   | Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland/Namibia (SACU members)  |
| COMESA  | Common Market of Eastern and Southern Africa (formerly PTA)  |
| EU      | European Union   |
| FLS     | Frontline States   |
| FRELIMO | Mozambique Liberation Front  |
| GATT    | General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (now WTO)   |
| IFP     | Inkatha Freedom Party  |
| IMF     | International Monetary Fund  |
| ISDSC   | Inter-State Defence and Security Committee   |
| MMD     | Movement for Multiparty Democracy  |
| MPLA    | People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola   |
| OAU     | Organisation of African Unity  |
| PTA     | Preferential Trade Area (now COMESA)   |
| RENAMO  | Mozambique National Resistance   |
| SADF    | South African Defence Force  |
| SACU    | Southern African Customs Union   |
| SADC    | Southern African Development Community   |
| SADCC   | Southern African Development Coordination Conference   |
| SWAPO   | South West African People's Organisation   |
| TNS     | Total National Strategy  |
| UDF     | United Democratic Front  |
| UNITA   | National Union for the Total Independence of Angola  |
| WB      | World Bank   |
| WTO     | World Trade Organisation   |

## After the destruction

The independence movement in Africa hit the buffers in Southern Africa in the 1960s. The British high commission territories became Botswana, Swaziland and Lesotho painlessly enough. Riot rather than revolution toppled the ill-fated Central African Federation and led to the independence of Malawi and Zambia. Of the old federation, only white-ruled Southern Rhodesia remained a British colony. The settler population bitterly resisted a democratic constitution and went into revolt against the crown sooner than accept majority rule, sparking a black nationalist war of resistance.

Elsewhere in the region, the Salazar dictatorship in Portugal would not countenance the independence of its African provinces, Angola and Mozambique. And South Africa, the regional superpower, had quit the Commonwealth and

### Southern Africa



Map from *Southern Africa After Apartheid: Regional Integration and External Resources*, Bertil Odén, ed. Uppsala: The Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 1993.

Table 1. Southern Africa: Demographic information, 1990

| Country      | Population ('000) | Average annual growth (1980-90) % | Infant mortality rate (/1000 births) | Adult literacy rate (%) | Economically active population ('000) |
|--------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Angola       | 10,020            | 2.64                              | 137.0                                | 41.7                    | 4,081                                 |
| Botswana     | 1,304             | 3.75                              | 67.0                                 | 73.6                    | 446                                   |
| Lesotho      | 1,774             | 2.85                              | 100.0                                | 78.0                    | 808                                   |
| Malawi       | 8,754             | 3.54                              | 150.0                                | 47.0                    | 3,495                                 |
| Mauritius*   | 1,100             | 5.6                               | 18.0                                 | n/a                     | n/a                                   |
| Mozambique   | 15,656            | 2.61                              | 141.0                                | 32.9                    | 8,437                                 |
| Namibia      | 1,781             | 3.15                              | 106.0                                | 40.0                    | 537                                   |
| South Africa | 38,051            | 2.58                              | 49.0                                 | 70.0                    | 12,768                                |
| Swaziland    | 788               | 3.42                              | 118.0                                | 72.0                    | 306                                   |
| Tanzania     | 27,318            | 3.77                              | 106.0                                | 65.0                    | 12,597                                |
| Zambia       | 8,452             | 3.95                              | 80.0                                 | 72.8                    | 2,644                                 |
| Zimbabwe     | 9,709             | 3.14                              | 66.0                                 | 66.9                    | 3,921                                 |

Source: Development Bank of Southern Africa, except \* World Development Report 1994, World Bank.

turned its back on world opinion while rapidly developing its apartheid system, savagely suppressing internal opposition and reinforcing itself militarily. In Namibia, the mineral-rich former German colony that South Africa was mandated to protect following the First World War — a mandate revoked by the United Nations because of Pretoria's exploitative racist rule — the liberation movement SWAPO (South West African People's Organisation) had launched a guerrilla campaign to achieve independence.

The decade of the 1970s dawned with much of the region engulfed in civil strife. But in 1974 the Salazar dictatorship fell and the Portuguese territories gained independence. And South Africa, faced with the steady advance of black rule — or a communist onslaught as Pretoria chose to present it — turned its considerable firepower on its neighbours.

The 1980s in particular was a decade of terrible destruction for Southern Africa. It was also a period of resistance and struggle: efforts to form a united regional front opposed to apartheid power produced the Southern African Development Coordinating Conference (SADCC) in 1980, a formal attempt to work across national boundaries. Things are very different now. Apartheid has

ended, and there is much enthusiasm among the countries of the region for the creation of new institutions to underwrite lasting peace in Southern Africa. SADCC has become SADC (Southern African Development Community), which is soon to convene its first parliament with delegates from the 12 member countries, and has proposed a regional Organ for Politics, Defence and Security.

This regional concern for peace and cooperation explains why, when Lesotho experienced a constitutional crisis in August 1994, three presidents — South Africa's Nelson Mandela, Botswana's Quett Masire and Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe — swiftly agreed a course of action which helped to return the elected government to power. This exercise is just one of many joint undertakings by Southern African governments that have helped to build mutual confidence. It has also encouraged them to anticipate conflict; in February 1996, faced with a deteriorating political situation in Swaziland, regional leaders discussed the possibility of launching a Lesotho-type rescue initiative.

In recent years the region has taken substantial steps towards multiparty democracy. The long conflict in Namibia ended when South Africa and Angola accepted a peace plan underwritten by the United States and the Soviet Union. This led to

Table 2. Southern Africa: Economic indicators

| Country      | Real GDP growth (%) | Inflation (%) | Population growth (%) | External debt (US\$ billions) | % share of GDP from manufacturing |
|--------------|---------------------|---------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Angola       | -22.6 (1993)        | 3700.0 (1995) | 2.0                   | 10.9 (1993)                   | 4                                 |
| Botswana     | -0.7 (1993)         | 14.3 (1993)   | 3.5                   | 0.545 (1992)                  | 5                                 |
| Lesotho      | 2.5 (1993)          | 13.9 (1993)   | 2.6                   | 0.472 (1994)                  | 15                                |
| Malawi       | -9.4 (1994)         | 40.5 (1994)   | 3.0                   | 1.82 (1994)                   | 14                                |
| Mauritius *  | 6.2 (1980-92)       | 5.6 (1980-92) | 1.1                   | 5.1 (1992)                    | 23                                |
| Mozambique   | 5.8 (1993)          | 50.0 (1994)   | 2.7                   | 5.3 (1993)                    | n/a                               |
| Namibia      | -2.2 (1993)         | 8.6 (1993)    | 3.0                   | 0.350 (1993)                  | 6                                 |
| South Africa | 2.0 (1994)          | 9.7 (1994)    | 2.5                   | 1.7 (1993)                    | 26                                |
| Swaziland    | 1.0 (1993)          | 12.9 (1993)   | 2.2                   | 0.240 (1993)                  | 18                                |
| Tanzania     | 1.6 (1992)          | 0.4 (1993)    | 2.8                   | 6.7 (1992)                    | 6                                 |
| Zambia       | -5.4 (1994)         | 55.0 (1994)   | 3.7                   | 6.79 (1993)                   | 20                                |
| Zimbabwe     | 3.5 (1994)          | 22.5 (1994)   | 3.2                   | 4.2 (1993)                    | 26                                |

Source: Economist Intelligence Unit (various reports), except \* World Development Report 1994, World Bank.

Table 3. Southern Africa: GNP, 1992

| Country      | GNP total (US\$ thousands) | GNP per capita (US\$) |
|--------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| Angola       | 6,000                      | 620 **                |
| Botswana     | 3,797                      | 2,790                 |
| Lesotho      | 1,090                      | 590                   |
| Malawi       | 1,896                      | 210                   |
| Mauritius*   | n/a                        | 2,700                 |
| Mozambique   | 1,034                      | 60                    |
| Namibia      | 2,502                      | 1,610                 |
| South Africa | 106,019                    | 2,670                 |
| Swaziland    | 930                        | 1,080                 |
| Tanzania     | 2,561                      | 110                   |
| Zambia       | 2,580                      | 290                   |
| Zimbabwe     | 5,896                      | 570                   |

Source: Esterhuysen, P, ed. South Africa in Sub-Equatorial Africa: Economic Interaction. Institute of South Africa, Pretoria, 1994, except \* World Development Report 1994, World Bank. \*\* 1989 figures.

Namibia's independence (1989) and the installation of a democratic government under the leadership of SWAPO's president, Sam Nujoma.

As the 1980s closed, FRELIMO ended one-party rule in Mozambique and relaxed state control of the economy. In 1992, FRELIMO and the rebel group, RENAMO, signed an accord which formally ended their conflict. Free elections followed in October 1994; FRELIMO's Joaquim Chissano won the presidency, and his party won control of parliament. In November 1991, Kenneth Kaunda, Zambia's president since independence, was defeated at the polls by Frederick Chiluba's Movement for Multi-party Democracy (MMD) in the country's first multi-party elections for 20 years. And in June 1993, a combination of rising internal dissent and the decision by Western donors to conditionally suspend aid, forced a referendum over the future of the one-party state in neighbouring Malawi. Almost a year later, the country's citizens overwhelmingly voted to end one of Africa's longest running dictatorships. Finally there was South Africa's own transition which culminated in its first democratic elections and the inauguration of African National Congress (ANC) leader Nelson Mandela as State President in May 1994.

Clearly, the ending of apartheid rule closed a destructive chapter in Southern Africa, but significant corners of the region are still at war, to a large extent a legacy of the old Pretoria regime's policy of destabilisation. In Angola, despite the formal cessation of hostilities and an internationally certified election, fighting continues between the MPLA government and Jonas Savimbi's UNITA, formerly backed by apartheid South Africa. In South Africa's province of Kwazulu-Natal, localised but bloody conflict continues between Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi's Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) and the ANC, a conflict which had long been carefully stoked by the apartheid government's security establishment to derail the ANC's popular drive for power. Whether the new mood of regional reconciliation can deliver peace to these areas is not clear. Decades of strife have left both mistrust and misunderstanding; as economic circumstances deteriorate and with small arms readily to hand, prolonged (and renewed) conflict appears inevitable.

Despite mounting evidence that much of the conflict is due to socioeconomic problems which go beyond national boundaries, the countries in the region have found it difficult to let go of the idea that security should be equated with state power. Militarised states have been the building blocks around which the idea of community in Southern Africa has been fostered. Namibia, Zimbabwe and the former Portuguese territories fought bitter wars for their liberation. But strong measures do not necessarily build robust and tolerant polities. Indeed, the opposite is more likely, as has happened in Southern Africa. So even though regional governments recognise the importance of these new security issues, they seem to be unable to meet these by deepening day-to-day cooperation across the region. For all their anticipation of a region characterised by harmony as opposed to conflict, the states of the region remain caught by a border-bound nationalism and the security concerns which it pre-determines.

Changing times have shifted thinking on security issues away from traditional military ones; issues such as 'illegal' migration, cross-border arms flows, drug smuggling, banditry, and cattle rustling have been included in the regional security basket. These problems are compounded by deepening regional poverty, rising unemployment and increasing competition for resources such as water. The impact of global economics is to increase the

**At a time of great political flux in the region, support for regional integration is all the more difficult to muster. In South Africa the tendency is to turn inward and deal with issues of domestic integration in the post-apartheid era rather than regional issues. In other Southern African countries, political leaders have yet to appreciate that their prospects for mutually advantageous interaction with South Africa are better through regional multilateral arrangements than through bilateral ones. For regional integration to succeed, it needs a political constituency among political leaders, technocrats, opinion-makers and the public at large.**

African Development Bank 1994

gap between rich and poor, and all the countries in the region are vulnerable to the programme requirements of international donors and finance. But it is also being acknowledged that many of the key problems being looked at under a security rubric, such as migration, cannot be solved in national isolation. Regional development is crucial to longterm prosperity for all countries, and there are tensions between the need to promote integration and the development of independent liberalised economies.

While the efforts of leaders can help to change the mood of the region, without the active engagement of Southern Africa's people in the areas where their security concerns are immediate the region cannot know lasting peace. To achieve this will require great tolerance by governments which, until now, have known mostly conflict. Politicians will have to show the facility to work with the mood of the times looking beyond immediate national concerns and building for the next century.

To deliver lasting security will require a radical reinterpretation of the region's history away from narrow nationalism and focusing instead on the organic economic and social ties which have bound and continue to bind the region together. In addition, visionary leadership will need to explore innovative ways of discussing issues which affect the lives of ordinary people across the region most acutely — like poverty, disease, the environment. No programme to bring peace to the region can be effective unless it begins with the interests and capabilities of the poor: not just in one country but

across the entire sub-continent. But this will not be easy: there seems to be a credibility gap between Southern African leaders and the region's people. The people are experiencing the sharp end of economic restructuring, a process which has continued for a decade and, despite all political change, shows no immediate signs of ending. As a result, they sense that states will not deliver on their promises particularly in areas such as health, job creation and education.

Why is it that governments which seem to have taken great risks to democratise are caught in such a cruel dilemma? The answer lies in the paradox which underpins the search for security in Southern Africa. Although divided into 12 states, the region has a single dominant economy; this is located in the strongest country, South Africa. But the sheer size and power of South Africa is a cause for regional insecurity because, while rhetorically committed to the region, it is a hesitant partner in the building of a vibrant self-assertive region which is not completely subservient to the dominant international economic system.

The states of the region are finding it difficult to follow the leadership of the OAU which, as early as 1990, defined security as 'an all encompassing concept that enables the people of Africa to live in peace and harmony and to have equal access to resources and to participate fully in the process of their governance'. To understand why, we must appreciate the power that the region's past has on its present and on its future. ♦

## The founding bargain: an economic prize

Whatever the history books teach, the evolution of Southern Africa as a regional sub-system was driven primarily by economics, not politics. It was the fusion of British mining capital, American technology and African muscle which drew an agrarian backwater into the deepening complexity of late 19th century colonialism. The immediate prize was diamonds and gold in South Africa, but the discovery of mineral wealth elsewhere in Southern Africa also concentrated the colonial mind. This commenced a march towards modernity, and was simultaneously to draw the region together.

To remain profitable South Africa's mines increasingly drew upon the cheaper migrant labour from the regional hinterland. In doing this, it reinforced a feature of pre-modern Southern Africa: prior to the mid-19th century, the region was patterned by the movement of its people. Although parcelled into 'political' entities, the region, in the minds of its indigenous peoples, was free of borders. The migrant labour system burgeoning after the discovery of minerals therefore strengthened an instinctive understanding that the region belonged to all its people.

This perception of a common region was strengthened by the patterns of life which modernisation introduced. Economic growth was crucial. The development of the region's railway system, for instance, directed economic activity southwards through South Africa and onwards to the markets of the world.

The creation of the region's political system was of secondary importance. When it came, it was driven by the fear that South Africa's assertive Afrikaner community would use, as it periodically promised to, the European idea of a 'nation state' to secure control over the region's wealth by the Dutch or the Germans. Britain however was determined to defend its primacy in the region. A way out was to augment the idea of a separate political arrangement by creating a staunchly pro-British state dedicated to protecting British interests. The creation of modern South Africa in 1910 launched the idea that states were a distinct possibility in British colonial Africa.

The region's first fully European-style state rested, therefore, on a bargain struck between South Africa's white community and the British Empire after the Anglo-Boer war (1899-1902). Like most successful bargains, each side anticipated a gain, and each had something to lose if the deal crumbled. The protection of colonial business interests was at the core. South Africa was to undergo capitalist modernisation under their control. But South Africa was a long way from Britain. In return for being armed and being able to control and defend the South African polity, the local whites were allowed to build an industrial base, to enjoy the spoils of local commerce and access to capital markets in the metropole — unlike the usual colonial practice in the rest of Africa. In that way the whites had a stake in the defence of the Empire in order to provide the protection of larger scale British economic and commercial interests in exchange.

The region's indigenous peoples were excluded from the deal; this meant they could never enjoy its rewards, and so began the long history of violent suppression and deprivation designed to keep them 'in their place'. Three crucial points follow: these have set the basis for all discussions of security since that time. First, states became the chief vehicle for the determination of security in a region which was, as we have seen, effectively an economic unit. Second, the bargain which created South Africa turned on a principle of inclusion and exclusion — whites were the privileged insiders, the black majority the deprived outsiders. This principle has been at the nub of the political debate in Southern Africa from that time. Third, all understandings of security in Southern Africa would be subservient to the economic interests of the colonial capital.

Thus both the theory and practice of regional security in Southern Africa legitimised the minority's hold on power, in the name of the dominant imperial power, for nearly a century. As the tragic history of apartheid attested, South Africa's armed security machinery was mainly directed against the country's own people ostensibly, at first, in defence of 'Christian values' and later in the defence of capitalism. All efforts to challenge this were seen as deeply subversive and destabilising because they threatened the pay-offs of the beneficiaries of the founding bargain. Preserving the status quo in Southern Africa became an article of faith in security circles because it was part of the deal which created the region's

first state.

During World War II, the idea of independent majority-ruled states in Southern Africa began to take root. A short 15 years later, they were a reality — Tanzania became independent in 1961. Despite the euphoric expectations of the people, the early independence process failed to dislodge the regional status quo. The movement of labour to South Africa continued, and South Africa's railways provided the cheap routes for the export of primary products to international markets. In addition, South Africa's increasingly robust capital base was to augment foreign capital in large scale infrastructural investment projects (like the Cahora Bassa Dam in Mozambique, built in the 1970s) intended to help secure individual states and, through them, foster regional economic development. These states were weak. Poorly rooted in indigenous society, and resting on unstable socio-economic systems, they were unable, and not very willing, to rupture the region's integrated economy which provided a framework for their own security, in what a generation of scholars described as 'neo-colonial' independence.

For all the sense of continuity, an important symbolic change took place with the independence of states like Tanzania, Zambia and Malawi. The acceptance and nourishment of African nationalism provided tangible hope to the region's majority that minority domination was not a permanent condition. The creation of these 'new' states — or states other than South Africa — showed that the preponderant external powers had no fixed view of the region's future. Pressure, persuasion and politics played a role in their democratic process and these could affect Africa. All features of political life in colonial Southern Africa — nationalism, communism, capitalism, apartheid, states — could be reshaped by changing political discourse. The only condition seemed to be that the founding bargain in Southern Africa, the economic pay-offs, would not be threatened by change.

This helps explain the restraining hand of 'security interests' in preserving the status quo. With simple logic, these interests were fashioned by reducing complex social constructs to simple juxtapositions: good versus bad; white versus black; capitalist versus communist. The justification underpinning these constructs was shaped by the selective understandings of those whose interests were at stake and who used them to determine



policy outcomes.

So, whatever the arguments put in favour of fundamental political change in the region, and however potent their moral force, they met the counter argument that the regional status quo served wider security interests. Locally empowered to reinforce these interests, South Africa's white middlemen underpinned a broader bargain around regional security. For these reasons, early international efforts to isolate South Africa through economic sanctions were largely ineffectual. The narrow security logic of South Africa's role in the development of the region was unassailable: its power was the pivot; its governors defended it; without both, Western 'security interests' were destined to falter.

Unwilling to risk confrontation, the region's newly independent states accepted the situation. Their own vision of regional security was of a pan-African community of states bound together by goals of peace and economic development; but two things were plain — neither singly nor together were they a match for South Africa's power in the region, and they understood the continued importance of outside interests in the region as a hedge against South Africa.

As the independent states defined their own interests, the regional status quo was strengthened. It provided a licence for elites first to form, then reform and finally sustain a hold on the instruments of national power. The one-party democracy allowed little difference of opinion to emerge. In Malawi — and to a lesser extent, Zambia — opposition voices were silenced by imprisonment. Tanzania's innovative *ujamaa* (African socialism) virtually eliminated local community structures. Swaziland's attempts at constitutional reform reinforced, rather than challenged, the grip of the royalist faction. In Lesotho, a near-tradition of constitutional crisis, fine-tuned by South African interference, opened the way for two decades of authoritarian rule. Once again, throughout this period, the security concerns of ordinary people were secondary to the broader project of nation building.

The 1970s dawned with little evidence of change to the regional status quo. South Africa remained firmly in control of Namibia. The determination of Rhodesia's white minority to cling illegally to power enhanced South Africa's position as the anchor of external interests in the region. To east and west, the Portuguese seemed determined to hold on to their Southern African

colonies (Angola and Mozambique) at any cost. This resolve strengthened the hegemony of the apartheid state.

Although immediate concerns were set by efforts to change minority rule and apartheid, the rhythm of the region quickened as a result of the Cold War. US interest in the region was ignited by the impact on Portugal, an Atlantic ally, of the deepening wars in its African colonies. President Nixon's Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, became convinced that a change in the region's status quo would unsettle US interests in a strategically important corner of the world. The region's white minority governments, sensing a changing international mood, encouraged these ideas: this encouraged them in alliance with ideological partners in the West to undertake a strategic crusade to reinforce the status quo in the region.

So it was that guerrilla wars in Angola and Mozambique became entangled in the Cold War, both reflecting that struggle and drawing in the opposing sides. South Africa's Angola campaign in 1975-76 proved to be the test case of Southern Africa as a Cold War security issue. The United States in a periodic (but essentially silent) alliance with South Africa took one side in this war, the Soviet Union the other. It was however, the involvement of the Cubans which, by introducing an intrusive force into the region, fundamentally challenged the regional status quo. This primed the white minorities to wage their bitter, destructive inter-state conflict, known as destabilisation, which marked the region's affairs throughout the 1980s.

The freedom struggles, particularly in Zimbabwe, but also in Namibia and South Africa, took great inspiration from South Africa's reversals during the Angolan War. Increasingly their rhetoric was marked by radical new interpretations of the region and its history, and, although the vehicle was nationalism, they issued a wider message which aimed to overturn the regional status quo in the name of all its people. This was a period of great expectation for political and economic change in the region.

On coming to power however, the new government in Zimbabwe directed little effort to changing the regional status quo. Constrained initially by the independence settlement negotiated at Lancaster House in London, Zimbabwe was also heavily dependent on foreign aid. Contrary to its rhetoric, the new government did not destroy the

### Region and nations: some economic pointers

The development of capitalism in Southern Africa produced a high level of integration between the different national economies. But interaction in this 'single economy' is uneven. The bulk of production and investment has been inside South Africa with most of the other countries of the region providing service economies of labour reserves, commodity markets, transport links and supply of energy and raw materials. The sheer weight of the South African economy causes an extreme regional imbalance in production, industrial capacity and trade. South Africa accounts for 87 per cent of all sub-Saharan production, a five-to-one export-import ratio with SADC countries and its GDP (US\$90.72 billion - *World Bank*) is more than three times that of the other 10 SADC countries put together (US\$27.20 billion).<sup>1</sup>

Southern Africa, which accounts for half of Africa's economic output, has a population of 130 million; it has precious metals and minerals, oil and natural gas, fisheries and fertile farmland. But it also has some of the poorest countries and people in the world, and is emerging from an era of war which has left some, like Angola, unable to feed themselves.

A battered war economy Angola, with rich resources of oil, diamonds, fisheries, agriculture, has the second highest GDP in SADC after South Africa. Yet it is heavily dependent on food aid with 3.5 million people, almost a third of the population, receiving humanitarian assistance early in 1995. Since the war restarted in 1992, the economy has declined by a massive 25 per cent in 1993, and the agricultural sector from 24.2 per cent of GDP (1993) to 11.9 per cent (1994).

With 8 million landmines left planted in country roads and agricultural land, farming has been devastated. Maize production has fallen from 845,000 tons in the 1970s to 196,000 in 1994. The total 1994

cereal harvest, about 226,000 tons, met less than a third of national requirement (800,000 tons).

At the height of the war, 1,000 people were dying every day. A total of at least 70,000 have lost limbs. Only 20 per cent of the population has access to sanitation, and 30 per cent to clean water. Half the rural population of 6.2 million is sheltering in the cities, and diamond production has dropped 90 per cent because UNITA is occupying the sites.

Migration: 'Taking our jobs' Migration is a controversial 'nation state' issue. With an average income in South Africa of 30 times more than, for example, Mozambique, there will inevitably be substantial economic migration from other SADC countries, particularly into the Gauteng industrial heartland. However, claims concerning the number of migrants (running to 9 million), their impact on local employment opportunities and the costs of dealing with 'illegal' migrants are often exaggerated. Currently, migrant numbers could be estimated at a maximum of 2 million.

The populist scaremongering that 'migrants are taking our jobs; migrants are involved in currency and drugs scams' ignores the benefits that migrants often bring and overlooks the fact that only balanced and sustainable regional development will help overcome the problems of extreme poverty, particularly in societies newly emerging from traumatic conflict.

The poverty trap Despite large populations, the poverty of most SADC states limits their markets. Five of the states are classified as low-income by the World Bank — Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania and Zambia. Only South Africa and Mauritius (a very recent addition to SADC) and Botswana count as upper middle income, and they are together at the bottom of that band. Rates of economic growth in the 1980s were actually negative for Tanzania, Zambia, Angola and Mozambique

(and in Namibia to 1990 and South Africa before 1994). Only in Botswana and Lesotho did economic growth outstrip population growth, and only in the former were there not deficits in the balance of payments. Levels of foreign debt are onerous in Angola, Zambia, Mozambique and Tanzania. South Africa's economy may overshadow the region, but it is one of the most unequal societies in the world, with 17 million below the poverty line.

All 10 'mainland' SADC countries, including South Africa and Zimbabwe, are highly dependent on primary commodity exports. The failure of industrialisation has meant increased pressure by the World Bank and IMF, with whom most countries have structural adjustment programmes, towards primary commodity production. Terms of trade, however, have been falling. By 1989, Mozambique's had fallen to 78 per cent of their 1980 level, Tanzania's to 77 per cent and Angola's to 42 per cent. Structural distortions created in the smaller economies through becoming labour reserve areas has weakened peasant agriculture and left few alternatives for returning migrant workers.

In South Africa and Zimbabwe industry and commercial agriculture did develop. In the latter sector this meant alienation of the peasantry from the best land and exclusion from marketing systems. In the former sector, industry is largely uncompetitive on world markets, and manufacturing is largely foreign-owned. There is also an unstable co-existence of labour-saving modern technology with labour-intensive industry which could mean loss of jobs and markets. This problem could be compounded by the effect on previously protected infant industries of World Bank and IMF structural adjustment measures removing such safeguards. Redistributive or economic restructuring measures which do not conform to current free market liberalism are unlikely to attract donor support, as experience from Zimbabwe and Zambia shows.

1. Figures apply before Mauritius joined SADC.

apparatus by which people were governed; instead, it used it to consolidate state power in the name of a new nationalism.

As the new government assessed its security situation, it turned to Ken Flower, former security boss in the white minority Rhodesian government. As a result, quite orthodox security thinking determined the state's immediate strategies and this, more than anything else, informed their long term planning on regional security.

Given their limited range of political options, Zimbabwe's new government failed to respond to changes in the international system, which was shifting its focus increasingly away from Southern Africa. The result was as predictable as it was depressing. Without sufficient pluralism to challenge their perspectives and largely dependent on foreign aid, in which military assistance was to play an increasingly important part during the years of destabilisation, the security 'concerns' of Zimbabwe became identified with the survival of the country's new elite.

Zimbabwe's independence did, however, greatly challenge apartheid South Africa. To counter its fears, South Africa turned to Cold War tactics. Borrowing crudely from theories of forward defence developed by the US in the 1940s and 1950s, South Africa used the region's porous borders to strike at its neighbours. This strategy was intended particularly to weaken Mozambique and Angola, the region's two overtly Marxist states. The secondary aim of destabilisation was to keep South Africa's own liberation movements, especially the ANC which then also espoused a revolutionary rhetoric, as far from South Africa as possible.

The destabilisation of its neighbours and the economic chaos it caused was used by South Africa to sow the impression that 'blacks can't rule themselves'.

While keeping some states at bay, South Africa used economic power to extract security undertakings from others. Malawi, under the dictator Hastings Kamuzu Banda, formally exchanged ambassadors with South Africa, flouting solemn undertakings in the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) to isolate the apartheid state. Malawi folklore was replete with tales of the central position South Africa played in the region: as a youth Banda was said to have walked to South Africa in search of work and South African employers were widely reported to consider Malawians as 'good docile workers'. So, in return

for quite limited aid, South Africa was able to launch two regional diplomatic offensives in the 1970s, dialogue and détente, with Malawi as the cornerstone.

Other states were very vulnerable, like Lesotho, independent since 1966 and with a land mass of 30,355 sq km compared to South Africa's 1.2m sq km which entirely surrounded it. More than 80 per cent of its workforce depends on South Africa for employment and Lesotho is little more than a labour dormitory for South Africa's mines. Government revenue not garnered from this source comes from the international donor community. Although painfully vulnerable to political and economic pressure from South Africa, Lesotho was not spared direct attack. The position was little different for neighbouring Swaziland, a constitutional monarchy entirely entrapped by powerful clans after independence in 1968.

South Africa's destabilisation of the region in the 1970s and 1980s has left a residue of flashpoints, and any future effort to secure Southern Africa will have to deal with its legacy. Conservative estimates indicate that 1.5 million people were killed; over 10 million people were displaced; and it cost the gross regional product US\$62.45 billion over the 12 years from 1978 to 1990. As with most conflict, however, the heaviest costs have been in lost opportunities in areas like agriculture which affect the lives of ordinary people. The statistics are staggering. A Human Rights Watch report estimates that there are 20 million landmines beneath the soil in Southern Africa: since 1961, these mines have claimed 250,000 victims. Angola is the worst affected in the region, with an estimated 8 million landmines, one of the highest rates of landmines per capita in the world. Out of a

#### **Apartheid's economic legacy**

**South Africa's new government inherited an economy which had not experienced major growth for 20 years, apart from a brief period (1979-81) when gold prices soared. The reasons were the high cost of running apartheid, low world economic growth rates, and inefficient protectionism. Real economic growth averaged only 1.2 per cent in the 1980s — the 1 per cent growth in 1993 was the first positive growth rate since 1988. With population growth, this means declining per capita incomes. Low levels of domestic savings and investment, stagnating employment, declining productivity and a falling exchange rate, leave South Africa much to do, particularly when it needs to work rapidly to overcome the inequalities of apartheid.**

population of 10 million people it is thought to have more than 70,000 amputees, mostly landmine victims.

As affected states try to rebuild, and restructure, they face manifold problems associated with military demobilisation. Demobilised soldiers, with no prospects for employment, often resort to banditry. This weakens prospects for job creation by restricting investment.

A modern version of a 17th century pattern of demobilisation is at work. Demobilised South African soldiers have offered their skills (and knowledge of making war in the region) in the marketplace. Faced with threats to their power today, embattled states in the region have hired their services. In Angola, much of the fighting through 1993 and 1994 was associated with the activities of a South African-based mercenary force, Executive Outcomes.<sup>1</sup>

Destabilisation has also left a surfeit of weapons in the region which poses a continuing threat to the security of both individuals and institutions. As illicit weapons cross the region's borders they support and sustain an informal economy which is itself a natural consequence of the region's founding bargain. The arms supply also threatens the formal economy, fuelling localised political conflict and encouraging crime, particularly in developed areas like South Africa itself. There is irony here: a primary instrument in South Africa's destabilisation of Mozambique was the RENAMO movement, an unstructured surrogate force, originally set up by the Rhodesian government and later largely under South Africa's control. RENAMO spread destruction with weapons supplied by South Africa. Today, many of these weapons are being used to kill and maim in South Africa. Again, statistics are staggering: to consider just one, in 1995 alone there were 8,524 vehicle hijackings in Gauteng province.

Apartheid's regional destabilisation has left two paradoxical tendencies in the wider regional security debate. First, it inadvertently demonstrated the inadequacy of military force as a means to deliver regional security: the region's most powerful army, the South African Defence Force (SADF), was unable to secure the survival of apartheid. Second, it reinforced the notion that state security is best defended by armies. A legacy of destabilisation is that many states in the region — Botswana, Angola, and Mozambique — continue to devote large portions of national budgets to military security, at the expense of expenditure on

education, health and agriculture.

Some states have considered lowering their armed force levels, but are constrained from doing so to any significant degree by a lingering fear of South Africa. Determining appropriate force levels is difficult in the absence of agreed common principles on regional security, but these can be achieved with time and deepening processes of confidence-building. A complicating factor, however, is South Africa's residual power in the region and its highly developed arms industry.

Discussion over the future of South Africa's arms industry has intensified since the demise of apartheid. But there seems no immediate enthusiasm within South Africa to reduce or end arms production. Created in the 1970s in the face of an international arms embargo and perfected during the destabilisation period, the industry has a 1 per cent share of the world arms trade and is worth R1 billion (£159.24 million) in exports. Many argue that it is a 'national asset', providing employment opportunities for 50,000 people and offering an area in which South Africa could compete internationally. Creative calls from regional media to place the industry under multinational (ie regional) control, seem to have been ignored by South Africa's security establishment, although the report of the Cameron Commission in March 1996 into the South African arms trade proposed policy changes, especially on arms exports. If arguments of immediate security and economic gain win the day, this would again show how South Africa's weight continues to skew the region's security concerns and makes it impossible for other states to disarm unilaterally.

This highlights a central weakness in the desire to build regional peace around sovereign equality. South Africa's power inhibits the ability of the governments of the region to exercise their self-determination. But limits on their capacity to influence policy outcomes on regional affairs have also come from other directions. The increase in cross-border movements of people, the power of financial flows and the cadence of international communications have acutely affected weak states. These shifts have both offered new perspectives on the question of security, and opened up new areas of political contest — how will they affect Southern Africa? ♦

1. This is a strange echo the 1960s and 1970s when, in a bid to arrest the tide of decolonisation, mercenaries under South African and British command fought in the Belgian Congo (Zaire), Biafra (Nigeria), the Seychelles and Angola.

## Shifting the security debate

It will not be easy to shift the security discourse in Southern Africa. There is no doubt that the ending of apartheid has been an immediate catalyst in the process of change. Taking advantage of the region's 'single economy' hundreds of thousands of people, skilled and unskilled, appear to be crossing the region's borders in an effort to improve their lot — most have moved to South Africa. This has certainly reshuffled the immediate security agenda: all discussions on the region's future are now touched by the migration issue.

South Africa's transition has also encouraged democrats throughout the region to measure their own achievements against South Africa's. It is no coincidence that there have been calls for a truth commission in Namibia, just as South Africa's gets under way. Previously, many threats to security could be attributed to apartheid or destabilisation: today, South Africa's neighbour states have to respond not to a powerful pariah, but to a democratic country. Post-apartheid South Africa has raised new challenges for individual governments throughout Southern Africa.

South Africa's transition has, however, also hampered regional transformation by reasserting the idea of nationalism. The country is in the throes of a powerful nation-building project which has drawn its people together both in celebration and economic reconstruction. At the same time, South Africa has not delivered on its undertakings to strengthen the economy of its neighbours. Instead, as its relations with Zimbabwe suggest, it is thwarting efforts to strengthen regional industrial capacity. An exuberant 'new South Africa' may have distorted rather than balanced processes favouring regional security.

These new circumstances have made South Africa's neighbours understandably nervous, but South Africa is also nervous of its neighbours. The challenge for each is to discover ways to build common approaches to security issues. Can this happen?

The debate on migration in South Africa offers no reason to believe significant progress is possible in the foreseeable future. While leaders like Nelson Mandela publicly endorse the principle of

reciprocal relations between the region's people, influential voices in the country's security establishment have promoted an alarmist response. For them, migration is an 'overwhelming' problem, and reductionist, unsubstantiated statistics are used to argue that South Africa must take tough action. This includes a suggestion to reactivate the 'Snake', the notorious electric fence between South Africa and Mozambique first used to wall off its 'Marxist' neighbour, and then to keep out hungry refugees fleeing the apartheid-sponsored war. Home affairs minister Mangosuthu Buthelezi (IFP) recently suggested South Africa could learn from the US experience with illegal migration from Mexico.

All this suggests that the discourse on migration has not moved beyond the confines of orthodox security thinking. It shows, for instance, little appreciation of the region's integrated economic history; nor of the pressures dislodging the region's people, including the legacy of destabilisation, and recurring drought which forces many to flee the land. Nor is there an understanding of the impact of neo-liberal economic policies which since the mid-1980s have increased income differentials and unemployment in neighbouring states.

Will a tough South African response yield results? The answer was provided recently in a report by the Institute for Democracy in South Africa which noted that it would be 'reasonable to assume that migration to South Africa was not going to stop and that it would be almost impossible to control or contain it'. There is, however, a tentative move in South Africa towards free movement of people in the region with the March 1996 announcement that Pretoria will ease up on forced repatriation of migrants who have stayed illegally. Thousands of migrants were able to vote in the 1994 elections, and unions (eg mineworkers) have backed residence and political rights for migrant workers.

The overwhelming dominance of South Africa has created a transmission effect between countries: a development in one touches others. Borders are not watertight, and political, economic and social dislocations in one country quickly ripple through the region. Recent change has greatly speeded this process; using force to prevent it may have the opposite effect.

This is where the questions which hang over the future of Zaire offer important lessons both to South Africa and the region. Successive ructions in Zaire dating from the Congo Crisis of 1961 have

### **SADCC to SADC: from destabilisation to development**

SADCC originated in the Frontline States organisation (FLS), whose early framework for political cooperation recognised that different sectors might become more integrated across borders at different rates. The Southern Africa Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) was founded in Lusaka in 1980 by nine independent African states: Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Namibia joined in 1990 after winning its independence from South Africa.

The early emphasis of SADCC was on transport and communications, given its aim of increasing intra-regional trade. A key concern was to improve east-west links and reduce the dominance of the north-south axis favouring South Africa. It was no accident that South Africa targeted such links for destabilisation as part of its Total National Strategy (TNS) in the 1980s. TNS aimed to 'persuade' other states in the region to deny bases in their territories to the liberation movements, particularly the African National Congress (ANC). It also promoted client or buffer states to defend apartheid, provided opportunities for economic hegemony, and aimed to sow destruction and division in an attempt to show that African states were incapable of running their own affairs.

In response, SADCC aimed to coordinate development efforts regionally, and reduce external dependence particularly on South Africa. Its initial emphasis was to provide cooperation in different sectors and to pursue development. SADCC also mobilised external resources at a time of political change — Zimbabwean independence. Governments which supported the establishment of SADCC did so for very different reasons: the formally stated aims and objectives were a minimum basis of consensus.

SADC by treaty  
In August 1992 in Windhoek, Namibia, SADCC became the

Southern African Development Community (SADC), signalling several important shifts. Unlike its predecessor, SADC was now based on a legally binding treaty. Its long term objective became the creation of a common market, through development integration rather than the planning and coordination of investment and production. It also gave popular participation greater priority.

The changes were to redress the perceived imperfections of SADCC, mainly:

- a) the lack of a supra-national executive binding authority,
- b) poor governance in several member states,
- c) macroeconomic policies that were not business-friendly,
- d) the pace of progress towards regional cooperation was dictated by the slowest movers,
- e) the lack of popular participation in decision making.

SADC has also moved to increase economic integration through cross-border trade, investment and payments in all 12 countries, on the basis that integration rather than bilateral agreements is the way forward. But unless SADC acts to overcome divisions, lack of regional integration and popular participation, South Africa's natural tendency to dominate the region will increase.

Without selective, flexible state intervention to guide the process of regional integration, SADC is unlikely to achieve balanced regional development. This is underlined by the country-specific free market policies the IMF and World Bank have imposed on debt-distressed SADC member states in the past two years. The overall effect of these has been to promote market or shallow integration (instead of deeper development integration, to which SADC is formally committed); to reduce the role of the state in the economy; and to undercut popular participation in formulating and implementing development policy.

Achievements and problems  
SADC/SADCC's performance has not always met expectations. But it had to face the intensification of the Cold War from the early 1980s and

the permissive environment this created for Pretoria's aggression, as well as the depth of the regional and global economic crisis in that decade. Its achievements were to:

- help establish a regional identity;
- provide a focus for opposition to apartheid;
- rehabilitate the transport network;
- reorient the transport network (by 1990, 60 per cent of transit traffic from the six landlocked SADCC countries passed through non-South African ports, compared with 80 per cent through South Africa in 1980);
- use the network to overcome the effects of the disastrous 1992 drought;
- attract aid and investment.

Efforts to attain regional food self-sufficiency and food security have not succeeded. In industrialisation, manufacturing's share of regional GDP has remained at around 12 per cent (ie industrial output and income per capita has declined since 1980, with considerable de-industrialisation in Angola, Mozambique and Zambia). And intra-SADC trade is little improved, remaining at about 5 per cent of the total volume between pre-1994 SADC countries and South Africa.

This is due partly to the similarity of the economies of the 10 countries. It also reflects the lack of regional macro-economic planning and the frequent recourse to national solutions, despite the lifting of restrictions on the cross-border movement of labour, capital, goods and services in the 10 SADC countries. A major problem has been lack of reform in the financial sector to boost investment and increase trade and production. Also, in conditions of declining economic performance and structural adjustment, the natural tendency of national economies is to seek nationally-oriented solutions, even though regional solutions could be beneficial.

The SADC countries' dependence on South Africa for food, capital and intermediate goods, and light consumer goods has increased, as has reliance on external funding for SADC projects and programmes.

influenced the security debate in South Africa. Each time, South Africa has sought to use the flight of refugees from that country to argue for an increase in defence spending. But this has not brought a satisfactory resolution of the political crisis in Zaire any closer. Indeed, it may make South Africa vulnerable to political fallout by creating in Zairean minds an image of South Africa as a pool of peace, social stability and economic opportunity.

Further efforts to arm South Africa and make it appear increasingly 'secure' in a region of turmoil may increase perceptions that South Africa offers security. Yet moves to stress the centrality of 'national security' may instead deepen possibilities of insecurity by emphasising the idea of one single state, in this case rich, powerful South Africa, in an interdependent region structured around a common wealth.

South Africa's new government is in danger of contributing to this by attempting to 'manage' its security through a series of bilateral agreements. South Africa and Mozambique signed an agreement in June 1993 to curb arms and drug smuggling and organised car theft. And in 1995, it reached agreement on migration with Lesotho. This approach to the region's security is reminiscent of earlier attempts by the apartheid state to deepen its hold over the region through bilateral deals.

The end of the Cold War showed that few issues in interdependent regions could be solved by exclusion. The region's recent history holds the same lesson. South Africa's successful transition has rested primarily on an understanding that the enduring social and political problems could only be solved by recognising the interests of all its people. The same lesson applies to the region: all groupings, even the most dissident, should be included within the processes which identify and drive towards a common regional purpose. In the region, old enemies are being wooed — Dhlakama (Mozambique), Savimbi (Angola).

Outside the security community, there has been lively discussion on themes which parallel new security issues: trade, infrastructure, transport, water, electricity, labour, food security, agriculture, natural resources, mineral policy, tourism and environmental protection. And in an evolving dynamic, functional ministries concerned with these issues right across the region are drawing closer together. But important as these initiatives undoubtedly are, they will not be able to

offset the narrow, national interest approach of security ministries. The question is, can this change?

Academic discussion on strengthening regional security has trickled in to the regional organisations. Confidence-building measures have been mooted, as well as joint training exercises and shared peacekeeping operations. Other ideas include exchange programmes, information exchange on defence budgets, troop deployment and weapon systems, notification and observation of military activities, verification procedures, communication networks, and mechanisms to deal with unscheduled military activities.

Most hopeful perhaps has been the discussion

### **PTA and COMESA**

**The Preferential Trade Area for Eastern and Southern Africa (PTA) was established in 1981, and originally comprised 20 states, all the then SADCC states, with the exception of Botswana, plus Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Mauritius, Kenya, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda. PTA has now launched itself as the Common Market of Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), but the launch in Lilongwe in early December 1994 was marred by disputes between SADC members and other states to their north, particularly Kenya. COMESA now has 23 members with the latest addition of Zaire.**

**Although the existence of these two separate organisations does not augur well for harmony, and many, especially external donors like the EU, have called for one regional organisation, there were significant differences in the setting up of the PTA and SADC. The former aims to remove barriers to trade between the subregion's members and to promote inter-country cooperation within a framework of comparative advantage. It aims to develop complementarity and specialisation in industrial and agricultural enterprises for export and domestic purposes; an improving and integrated subregional transport and communications system; technical, entrepreneurial and managerial skills; and research into better exploitation, processing and use of domestic minerals and agricultural materials. Its key objective in the early stages is trade liberalisation for the purposes of promoting growth points, leading to coordinated and complementary production and investment across state borders in agriculture, industry, transport, and communications.**

**SADC has achieved more than the PTA where the removal of all tariffs has been postponed twice, latterly to 2034, and arguments over rules of origin have constantly plagued the organisation. Possibly as a result of this, many PTA members have not paid their budgetary contributions for years.**

on common security, premised on the interdependence of nation states and accepting that many security problems transcend national borders. Its proponents have also argued that states are no longer capable of protecting their citizens unilaterally. As a result, states in the region share an interest in joint survival; this would mean organising cooperative security policies which are most effective when formalised. But this perspective has been strongly resisted in the region where it has been pointed out that informal arrangements, like the Frontline States (FLS) grouping, make for more effective diplomacy.

Some of these discussions have been lively and the areas which they have opened up appear to have been welcomed by governments. But there is little evidence that they will be acted upon in any lasting fashion.

The reason for this lies in the lack of an appropriate regional institution to handle security issues. Of the three existing regional structures, SADC, SACU and COMESA, only the first has linked regional economic and development priorities to emerging security issues (for background on these organisations, see boxes on pp13-16). SACU, the customs union agreement between South Africa and its near neighbours Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland and Namibia, has no official brief covering security. And COMESA, the successor to the PTA, is essentially concerned with trade. The three organisations, however, share the belief that regional security based on the principles of sovereign independence and territorial integrity is possible in Southern Africa. In this way, the elites of the national states are arguing that a Southern Africa of equal states is possible; that the region can be woven into a tapestry in which the states are greater than the regional whole. Their history, however, teaches a different lesson.

SADC's efforts have faced considerable counter-pressure from the grouping of Frontline States which was primarily concerned with the region's liberation process. This has been essentially a battle for turf. SADC's predecessor, SADCC, had tried to link security with development, but was primarily concerned with strengthening functional cooperation between the states of the region. Although portrayed (and to some extent self-portrayed) as the heart of the region's desire for a political community, SADCC was a relatively flimsy organisation. Its members were both hesitant to surrender sovereignty to it and reluctant to commit resources to its

### **South Africa joins SADC**

**In August 1994 South Africa became the 11th member of SADC, three months after the ANC's electoral victory and the installation of a Government of National Unity (GNU) under Mandela. Deputy president Thabo Mbeki announced that South Africa wanted a new, non-exploitative relationship with the other 10 states, based on cooperation, democratic decision making and balanced development. But there are difficult political choices to be made that could affect such a commitment: these decisions could indicate 'whether South Africa is joining SADC or SADC is joining South Africa'.**

A risky moment

**There is a risk that, if all trade restrictions are lifted, other Southern African states' economies will be flooded by cheaper South African goods. Northern investors, where they show interest in the region, are interested primarily in South Africa. Without a political commitment to balanced regional development, the 'logic of the market' could intensify existing acute disparities in economic activity.**

**Southern Africa is seeing wide and worsening inequality in the distribution of incomes within and between countries, high inflation, unemployment, low levels of per capita income, low growth rates and very high indebtedness. Even Botswana, which has large foreign reserves and a fiscally prudent government, is beginning to run into problems.**

development. A cynical view would be that its main function was to serve as a bureaucratic coordinating and clearing house for foreign aid.

There is a more positive interpretation of SADCC's achievements: it did, for instance, provide extensive multilateral support to weaker members and was a strong symbol of regional resistance to South Africa's destabilisation. Indeed, given the measure of the apartheid government's antagonism towards SADCC, its very survival was a considerable achievement.

But efforts to reposition SADC in the aftermath of apartheid have been hampered by South Africa's hesitation to be drawn too close to a regional scheme over which it has no immediate control. This has revealed a hard but brutal truth about Southern Africa: the new South Africa as a regional partner is as the old South Africa, a rich and well-armed state which now enjoys, as a result of its successful political transition, the support of the international community. South Africa has already been accused of discriminating against the manufactured products of its neighbours.

Conceivably, this will not last. The old South



**Favouring South Africa**

The Southern African Customs Union (SACU), the longest-standing regional body in Southern Africa, was established under colonial rule in 1910, then comprising South Africa and former British territories Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland (the BLS states). Namibia joined at independence, formerly being part of SACU as a South African colony. SACU was a major factor in polarising wealth within Southern Africa: it allowed tough competition from South Africa in BLS domestic markets, protected inefficient South African industries from cheaper goods outside, and deepened the economic and political dependence of the BLS countries on their neighbour. It also enabled South Africa to counter international sanctions by claiming some of its exported products originated from the BLS states.

SACU decision making and organisation remained firmly in Pretoria's hands. South Africa's

new dispensation has made renegotiation inevitable, but SACU was already under threat from two directions. South Africa was finding repayments to the BLNS countries a burden, and the BLNS resented their inability to control fiscal and industrialisation policy. They were also aware they could buy cheaper products from markets other than South Africa.

SACU now faces the question of how to continue. The revenue-sharing formula, intended to compensate for both the loss of sovereignty and economic and financial polarisation, appears increasingly unsustainable. Renegotiation of the agreement began in 1995. First indications were that decisionmaking would be democratised, with tariff policy no longer being the exclusive preserve of South Africa. Second, a permanent secretariat, staffed by citizens from member states and with a budget provided out of member state contributions, is likely to be established, with headquarters in either Lesotho or Swaziland.

However, South Africa's accession to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) will mean a substantial reduction of the common revenue pool, due to the large tariff reductions demanded by the 1994 Marrakesh GATT/WTO agreement. This would remove the rationale for the current revenue sharing formula, which compensates the BLNS for 'loss of fiscal discretion'. The consensus now is to use a significant proportion of the revenue to promote industrialisation and job creation in the BLNS states — these states will probably receive far less pool revenue than they have thus far.

Suggestions are to restructure SACU within a SADC-wide industrial development strategy. Regional prospects for this will be significantly affected by the future basis of European Union-South Africa relations, and the extent to which these can be harmonised with EU relations with the ACP-SADC countries.

Africa was deeply threatened by the idea of SADC's predecessor and it is now possible that, with time and experience, South Africans will find a rewarding regional experience within the SADC family. And South Africa's president, Nelson Mandela, has stressed the importance his government attached to the deepening understanding with SADC (January 1996).

Despite this new warmth from South Africa, there is a long way to go in the development of a common security between the SADC countries. Many of the complications involved in developing a new regional understanding on security are understood by a discussion of the efforts SADC has made to evolve a defence and security arm.

In August 1992, in line with its objective of closer involvement with security issues, SADC expressed its commitment to expand areas of cooperation and integration beyond economics and towards politics, diplomacy, international relations, peace and security. This opened the way for the creation of an institutional framework to address the region's security concerns.

Two years later, a ministerial discussion 'Workshop on Democracy, Peace and Security' drew together a wide grouping of interested parties — politicians, policy-makers and academics — from across the region. Many commentators regarded this as a major step towards formulating a common political and security regime. Recommendations included the establishment of a regional human rights commission which is to be explored at a conference in Botswana in April 1996; a conflict resolution forum of foreign ministers; a security and defence forum of defence policing and intelligence ministers; and a security research institute.

Nine months later (April 1995) the old tensions between SADC and the Frontline States (FLS) structure surfaced at a foreign ministers' meeting in Harare. A compromise was the establishment of the Association of Southern African States (ASAS), effectively to be the political arm of SADC. It aimed to replace the FLS's cooperative framework as the central mechanism for dealing with conflict prevention, management and resolution in

Southern Africa. ASAS will be independent of the SADC secretariat, but it will report directly to the SADC summit; so although its mechanisms are to be outside the usual SADC structures, it will still be seen to be subservient to the region's leaders at SADC meetings. Essentially, however, ASAS was intended to preserve the key features of the FLS arrangement — informality, flexibility and unimpeded access to the SADC heads of state.

At a parallel meeting, SADC foreign ministers recommended that the Inter-State Defence and Security Committee (ISDSC) of the FLS ought to be retained and that its structures be expanded for broader regional defence and security cooperation. This move was intended to provide ASAS with its own military sub-committee. In this form, the ISDSC would focus on training, intelligence support and early warning systems. However, the division of labour between the ISDSC and ASAS and their links to the SADC system for security do not appear hard and fast in practice and may well bring further confusion.

Several obvious constraints threaten to impede the development of formal mechanisms to enhance transnational security at the regional level: finance, weak national institutions, the fear of larger states (ie South Africa), the disjuncture between national and regional priorities, and, primarily, the reluctance of ministries concerned with defence and foreign policy to surrender sovereignty.

Against this background, there seems little hope for a full, unequivocal endorsement of a SADC ministerial proposal (January 1996) for the establishment of a 'unique institution' to be called the Organ for Politics, Defence and Security which, according to some accounts, aimed 'to ensure a lasting peace on the region'.

Certainly, through focusing on SADC, the countries of the region have displayed a deepening sensitivity to the links between peace and regional development. The key problem remains: to reconcile the competing tensions of national interests with the common regional endeavour. If states take the national route, as the new proposal suggests, they build their own security against, rather than with, a common regional purpose. ♦

## Regionalism from below

As the region's states assess their security interests, they find it difficult to see beyond their borders, and when they look at Southern Africa, they see only the formidable position of South Africa. Faced with these constraints, managing the many pressures which global and regional change has exerted on the lives of Southern Africa's people looks impossible for its governments.

But the region's people have not waited for their governments to respond. A vibrant spirit of regionalism from below has been ignited; this is a parallel search for regional security located below the existing system of states. The people of Southern Africa are on a voyage of discovery, one which has echoes of their pre-colonial history. Freed from the ideology of narrow nationalism, the people are finding new ways of understanding Southern Africa.

A nascent regional civil society is developing a transnational momentum which is rediscovering ancient bonds of kinship, ethnicity and mutual dependence. Examples abound. A near-forgotten Zanzibari diaspora has emerged in South Africa and is rekindling links with the island of origin. Peasants living across borders are discovering the importance of managing access to common supplies of water. Afrikaner farmers have left South Africa to help the agricultural development of Mozambique. Southern Africa's people are in a period of great ferment; to believe otherwise is to look backwards. There is great creativity in art, literature, commerce and politics. Through these processes the region's maps are being redrawn around a common regionalism which its people have known for centuries. As they search for clues to the future, they are looking beyond and below the structures which have determined the region.

The end of the Cold War like the end of apartheid has spawned debate around the notions of regional security: why security? whose, when and how? These questions are part of a deep-seated and far-reaching inquiry rooted in a sense of bewilderment over the pace and direction of change — and resistance to change. As the tragic events around efforts to restore hope to Somalia

and peace to Bosnia suggest, there is little evidence that quick answers can be found to these conflicts. Efforts to secure peace and security seem destined for the long haul; Southern Africa will be no exception.

Transregionalism has opened individuals and communities to an awareness to new threats to their security. The most obvious is health, especially malaria, TB, AIDS. All three are important areas of concern in a region which has inadequate medical capacity. While there is a tendency to emphasise the sensational statistics around AIDS, it is worth remembering that malaria kills more people than AIDS — during the summer months, some hospitals in South Africa's KwaZulu-Natal province admit 30 to 40 malaria patients a day. The outbreak of the Ebola virus in Zaire in 1995 illustrated another face of regional interdependence in the field of infectious diseases.

The environment, too, presents multiple threats. Although rich in mineral resources, Southern Africa is a harsh, unforgiving environment. Its weather patterns are increasingly marked by swings between parching droughts and calamitous floods; it is therefore not surprising that desertification, deforestation and soil degradation are commonplace. But concentrated industrialisation in South Africa is exposing that country, and through it the region, to serious environmental problems. Upon its fragile base, sets of environmental pressures are working: air/water pollution, ground water depletion, pesticide and heavy metal contamination. Managing these problems, and their fallout, will present new points of contact for regional civil society.

The re-emergence of South Africa as a fully-fledged player has shifted the region's political matrix. More and more players are searching for ways to nudge the political and economic agenda in their particular direction. Well-organised social movements have recognised the power of regional links. When, for instance, Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe savaged the common law rights of gays in that country, South Africa's vociferous and confident gay community took to the streets. Their organised protests in Johannesburg during the SADC heads of government meeting almost entirely silenced Mugabe, one of the region's most influential leaders.

But common law activists are not alone. Thousands of traders are ignoring boundaries to bring local economies of scale into play. Fishermen are in search of new waters, while pastoralists are

moving to escape drought and pestilence. Others, like the daily movement of women traders from Zimbabwe to South Africa, represent important new forms of employment in a region desperately short of jobs. Indigenous Christian movements which throughout the apartheid years nervously conducted their business have been given a new lease of regional life. And South Africa's business community has seized the initiative to reach across Southern Africa. These and other groupings are effectively creating new maps of the region quite separate from those used by military forces and the states which they serve. As they do so, they create new forms of association and new identities which expand and supplant national ones.

As the century ends, regional security needs are being redefined by people rather than governments. Informal trade networks, population movements and growing regional links between non-governmental organisations may be laying the basis for a regional civil society. Recent efforts to expand the power of community-based radio in Southern Africa suggest that new and relatively inexpensive means of deepening regional consciousness are operating.

As in other parts of the world, such as Mexico and India, cities can provide important new ways of securing the interests of people and catering for regionwide cultural diversity. Southern Africa's rural population is moving to the region's cities. Rising populations and falling levels of agricultural production are contributing to this push. In some countries of the region, such as Botswana (Gaborone) and Namibia (Windhoek), a single national city grows at an alarming rate while the rest of the country stagnates and is increasingly depopulated.

Throughout the region, South African cities have developed legends of their own; Johannesburg, in particular, has a reputation as a place of gold (Egoli, Gauteng). The lore which surrounds traditional migration from the region to South Africa has been reinforced by the lure of a new life. In this process, Southern Africa is being transformed from an essentially agrarian sub-continent into an urban one. As Zambia has shown, there will be no end to the region's urbanisation.

The momentum of this new voyage of regional discovery has been strongly nourished by the interest and initiatives of South Africa's powerful trades union movement and by community-based politics grouped in the United Democratic Front

(UDF). The thrust towards unionisation in the country in the 1970s — judged by some to be the most significant development of that decade in the struggle to end apartheid — helped to redefine the economic dimension of the colonial bargain. It was South Africa's powerful mineworkers who drew workers from the states around them into their ranks. In post-apartheid South Africa, the unions have been strongly committed to the development of a regional charter for workers' rights. From 1983, alongside the revitalised unions, the UDF provided a community-based democratic alliance of organisations opposed to apartheid. Under severe repression they were an overt focus of opposition until the ANC was unbanned in 1990.

Other anchors are being offered to the emerging regionalism. The premier of South Africa's Mpumalanga province, Mathews Phosa, wants to see an 'economic bloc' with both Swaziland and the southern provinces of Mozambique. In essence, this asserts a series of realities about the region's geography which were previously hidden behind its structure of independent states. For centuries the indigenous people of this fertile triangle of African lowveld have considered themselves united by the bonds of blood, barter and the search for a better life. They speak a common language, the area engages in a rich exchange of goods, labour and contraband, and, as has happened so often in Africa, the border between the states was a powerful growth point. This reinforces a different perspective on the idea of the region's borders: instead of threatening, they present the region with a possible course of restructuring.

By offering solutions to people on the ground, the myths which created the region's current maps are being destroyed; new forms of sub-regionalism are being probed; and the maps which have defined and dominated the lives of the region's people are being challenged. Although painful, each permutation may offer a better basis for delivering security to people in the region. Certainly, these alternatives were always implicit in the region's political configuration, but the ending of apartheid has opened the possibility of changing them.

Will this lead Southern Africa to follow the post-Cold War logic which has witnessed the rise of rampant ethnic nationalism in various parts of the world? Unresolved conflicts and political rivalries, some of which appropriate ethnic connotations, could erupt in various areas of Southern Africa. Unscrupulous political leadership coupled with

legitimate grievances by specific populations may transform conflicts over resources into ethnic conflict as has recently happened in Tanzania, a country which, in important symbolic and practical ways, was a model of ethnic tolerance. This perhaps represents the single most serious political threat to the region's future. States can help by looking beyond narrow interpretations of their interests and defining their and the region's security in creative terms.

But the recent history of Southern Africa shows that it is possible to shift understandings. Consider the physical constructs, the states, around which security issues in Southern Africa have been made. The colonial construction which came to be called 'South Africa' was not preordained — it was a created reality which arose essentially from a coincidence of British money, American machinery and African muscle. Apartheid, that terrible, destructive political system which both dominated South Africa and nearly destroyed the region, was the structured response of white racist intellectuals to the flow of events in the 1930s and 1940s — its use by the South African state rested solely on opportunism and expedience. All these can change, and have done so, as the very idea of South Africanism so powerfully demonstrates. During the apartheid years, to be South African meant to be white, preferably Afrikaner and male; today it means to be part of the 'rainbow nation', the very antithesis of past racist exclusivity.

One key to securing Southern Africa lies in transforming the perception of what the future holds, rather than looking backward. This accepts that the region is a dynamic, evolving entity which will move, despite the best efforts of governments, to its own rhythm. Governments can assist this process by ensuring that functional ministries — those concerned with water, health, the environment, women's affairs — are more closely drawn into debates which determine regional security. Throughout the region, the new democratic impulse in states is engaging citizens in policy-making in these areas; if this can be fused with the interaction between these ministries at the regional level, much will have been achieved in the area of regional security. Here the Nordic experience through which individuals, communities and states have joined together in functional areas should be of particular interest.

Another key lies in liberating the debate on security from its narrow nationalist underpinnings by making it less exclusive and more emancipatory.

Both these are made possible by focusing attention on the common regional purpose which links Southern Africa's people to each other rather than on the states which have confined the regional spirit.

Wider, better nuanced understandings of security constitute a more adequate conceptual 'fit' with the realities confronting Southern Africa as the 20th century closes. At the same time, such conceptions encourage the development of a forward-looking security agenda. Understanding for example the security needs of first-generation city dwellers might be more important than acquiring a new generation of fighter-aircraft.

Any expanded conception needs to be complemented with additional linkages. Northern NGOs and their southern counterparts must be drawn closer together: promising beginnings have been made. The credit access mechanisms furnished to rural women in Tanzania and Zimbabwe with the assistance of northern NGOs have, as comparative experiences show in Bolivia, Haiti and Nicaragua, the possibility of making a real difference to rural women who bear the brunt of existing insecurities — but who, as the United Nations have just recognised, are the best hope for security in the developing world.

But these efforts need to be augmented by assistance in many areas of which children's health is probably most important. This would not only foster North-South contacts but also encourage transfer of skills and expertise. This would enhance the growth of a vibrant civil society throughout Southern Africa, empowering people in the face of the preponderance of state power.

Efforts to bring peace and security to the region must work with, rather than against, the evolving regional dynamic. To succeed, they must be grounded in an understanding that for all its political barriers, Southern Africa comprises a common wealth. This will involve changing the ends to which the discourse on security has been put: the focus will have to shift from the empowered who have used the idea of security to entrench themselves, to the disempowered, who have suffered as a result.

It is certainly true that there have been encouraging signs of progress towards peace in Southern Africa. But democracy and the ending of apartheid, however important, will not be enough. For the region's people although the voyage of discovery is under way, the search for security has only just begun. ♦

## **Southern Africa: Exploring a peace dividend**

**A**s the 20th century draws to an end, Southern Africa is at last emerging from its bloody, apartheid-devastated past. The region is a patchwork of colonially constructed nation states, dominated by a single economy. All roads lead to the golden south. And the region remains haunted by the colonial 'founding bargain' whereby white settlers were given a share of the spoils and, crucially, the necessary firepower to defend British interests. The wealth was kept out of the reach of the people. Piecemeal decolonisation did not fundamentally change the terms of the bargain, but the region's states struggled, more or less together, to survive the enmity of South Africa, the economic centre which saw blacks as a threat to its power. Now, with the fall of the apartheid regime, all is set for change. But the years of conflict have left the idea of nation state, buttressed by military might, deeply embedded in the minds of the ruling elites. There are signs that the region's people are tentatively reaching for a new security which reaches beyond borders and beyond guns — and redefines 'the bargain'.

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