

# DEFENCE DIPLOMACY & NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY

## Views from the Global South

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# South Africa's Defence Diplomacy in Africa

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## Abstract

South Africa's defence posture in Africa changed radically between 1950 and 2018. From a garrison-minded state mired in diplomatic isolation, the country 'returned to Africa' following its negotiated transition to democracy. As South Africa's relations on the continent evolve, so too does the country's use of various instruments of foreign policy. This chapter primarily considers the military instrument in foreign policy, and in particular the country's policy and practice of defence diplomacy. Shaped in part by the presidential styles of Nelson Mandela, Thabo Mbeki, and Jacob Zuma, the interplay between foreign policy and defence has required South Africa to ensure it is not perceived as a hegemon by its neighbours in Africa, but as a declared partner – albeit often as the dominant partner. Even so, expectations continue that South Africa should extend its role in the African Union (AU), and through the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) it helped to establish. As the chapter notes, significant gains have been made in advancing South African interests through defence diplomacy, but real limitations exist and these should be considered rationally before unrealistic demands or inflated expectations are uncritically accepted.

## Introduction

Under apartheid policy (1948-1994), the quest to impose internal control required a complementary external policy. South Africa's defence posture therefore created an intolerant and aggressive power on the continent, and while confident of its policies, the Pretoria regime fundamentally misjudged the evolving international setting. In the years to come, its actions were based on a fundamental strategic flaw, misreading both developments in and reasons for conflict in southern Africa – both within South Africa, and in the region.

For decades, South Africa acted both as an exporter of armed conflict and as an economic destabiliser in the region, particularly in the neighbouring frontline states (Ispahani, 1984). This was ultimately an untenable defence posture. The People's Armed Forces of Liberation of Angola (FAPLA) and its Cuban allies forced the South African Defence Force (SADF) to a standstill in Angola, and eventual withdrawal from Angola and Namibia. Namibia became independent in March 1990 under United Nations (UN) Resolution 435, and in February 1990, the African National Congress (ANC), the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC),

and the South African Communist Party (SACP) were unbanned and restrictions were lifted on internal political organisations, such as the United Democratic Front (UDF) and the National Forum (NF). The negotiated transition that resulted in constitutional democracy in South Africa allowed the country to re-enter world politics and the socio-politics and economy of the African continent, as a potentially constructive actor and peace multiplier. With this transformation and demilitarisation of security policies, a new posture saw South Africa framing its role as peacemaker and agent for change towards reconstruction, development, growth and, to an extent, democratisation. Thus, between 1990 and 2000, South Africa arguably transformed from an imposing hegemon to a relatively benevolent partner on the continent.

However, one should be cautious of over-simplifying this transformation. The dichotomous approach, understanding South Africa's defence and foreign policy as neatly divided between the apartheid-era and a post-apartheid era, risks being too simplistic. The primary shortcoming is that by focusing on South Africa's own political trajectory, this perspective does not adequately take into account the changing context of African security and African development. Neither does it account fully for the rapidly changing macro-political international context. In order to appreciate South Africa's defence diplomacy in Africa more completely, it is essential to consider public policy as having an internal trajectory as well as being a response to changes in the regional and international political and security environment. We begin in the next section by setting out the historical context, using the example of South Africa's involvement in Namibia and Angola, and the use of the military instrument in foreign policy. The subsequent section looks at the transition to a democratic dispensation and explains the broader policy context under the 1996 Constitution. The discussion is structured around the country's Foreign and Defence policy under the Mandela, Mbeki, and Zuma presidencies, in terms of their principles, policy formulation, and implementation.

It is within the wider spectrum of policy choices in the deployment of soft power that the concept of peace diplomacy becomes relevant. Peace diplomacy is not a frequently-used concept, despite the use of 'peace' and 'diplomacy' as central to the study of international relations (Van Nieuwkerk, 2012), and one may also choose to refer to conflict management (Van Nieuwkerk, 2012). Our use of the term follows closely that of Van Nieuwkerk, where peace diplomacy refers to 'the activities associated with peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding' and thus in the South African case, as the government's 'involvement in continental peacemaking (diplomatic interventions in the form of mediation or negotiation processes), United Nations mandated peacekeeping operations (also known as multidimensional peace support) and peacebuilding (in line with the AU

framework for post-conflict reconstruction and development)' (2012:84). It is important to note that multiactor coalitions and policy implementation entities are involved (Van Nieuwkerk, 2012).

The remainder of the chapter looks at SA defence policy, and structural and organisational changes since 1994; the principles on defence engagement through multilateral institutions like the UN, the AU, and the Southern African Development Community (SADC); bilateral relations with countries with whom defence agreements have been signed on training, VIP protection, joint operations, or peace missions; South Africa's role in the region, including its involvement in (southern) African peacekeeping; South Africa's role in the African Standby Force and the African Command, and the relationship with the current APSA; and South Africa's defence policy and the challenges of defence diplomacy in the medium term.

### **From apartheid to transition and transformation**

From being a well-regarded actor on the international stage under the rule of Field-Marshal Jan Christiaan Smuts, South Africa's image deteriorated after the electoral victory of the National Party in 1948. Apartheid policies were implemented at all levels of society, based on a system of racial discrimination which was underpinned by racial classification, largely benefiting the white population. Black South Africans had no voting rights, and hence no right to citizenship, and the voting rights of so-called coloured people were scrapped. The policy of apartheid, including rigid racial separation, the withholding of full citizenship rights, discrimination, and the displacement of the internal population along racial lines, was coupled with increasing repression, particularly from 1963. This repression was first carried out by the police and later by military structures, enforcing the whites-only minority regime and resulting in the militarisation of state and society. Thus, the apartheid system and its grave social injustices was clearly a form of structural (state) violence imposed in an authoritarian way.

Initially, Pretoria sided with the (perceived Christian) West and the capitalist states. Aligned with the Allied Forces during World War II, South Africa participated in the 'Berlin Lift', the air-relief operation in Germany (1948-1949), and in the UN-mandated multinational operation in the Korean peninsula from 1950. Though nominally supported as a bulwark against Communist expansion in southern Africa, South Africa's political stance was increasingly questioned at the UN. South Africa had argued from the start that its government policies fell within the country's domestic jurisdiction, and as a sovereign state, it need not subject itself and its domestic affairs to international scrutiny. However, this defence proved baseless and apartheid was labelled as a crime against humanity by General Assembly Resolution 2202 A (XXI) of 16 December 1966. Strong opposition to

apartheid came from most of the developing countries in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, and Latin America. Even in Europe, voices of protest rose, starting in the East European countries and social-democratic states such as the Scandinavian countries, and eventually from some members of the Security Council (Pampallis, 1991:278). Sanctions were to become a large part of the anti-apartheid struggle. On the African continent, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) helped bolster a broader 'Third World' voice through the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) bloc within the UN General Assembly. In the face of an international anti-apartheid movement, and especially from the 1970s onwards, South Africa's defence posture was driven by a siege mentality. The dominant ideology of the political leadership was that of a garrison state, perceiving itself to be under a 'total onslaught' from Soviet/Chinese Communism, a hostile Africa (through which the disconcerting winds of change of independence were blowing), and an increasingly unappreciative West.

One can draw parallels between South Africa's internal and external policies. Internally, the government used strong-arm tactics and ignored the feelings of the majority of South Africans. Externally, this was mirrored in the government's disregard of international criticism, including criticisms voiced at the General Assembly. 'South Africa [provided] a dramatic illustration of the internationalisation of a domestic situation' (Pampallis, 1991:205). Heavy-handed domestic policies and repressive actions inside the country reflected a diplomatic but hard-fisted foreign and defence policy. Pretoria's policies led South Africa to international pariah status, aptly described as 'diplomacy of isolation' (Geldenhuys, 1984).

## **Namibia**

South Africa's treatment of the Namibian people should be considered alongside its domestic record of repression. Mandated after World War I by the League of Nations to protect German West Africa (later South West Africa – SWA), neither the Smuts government nor the apartheid government saw fit to withdraw from Namibia. The South African political elite and their followers started referring to Namibia (still called SWA) as South Africa's 'fifth province', but in spite of this, the Namibian people persevered in their attempts at independence, combating superior armed forces from South Africa who believed SWA was rightfully theirs (UN, 1974). In this, the Namibians, and specifically the South West African People's Organization (SWAPO), were supported in their international efforts by persistent objections at the UN from India, Liberia, Mexico, and numerous others that joined the call for Namibians to choose their own destiny, an opportunity denied them ever since the brutal German colonial occupation during the 1880s (Liebenberg, 2015:17-34, 2018:16).

As in South Africa, territorial segregation between 'ethnic' groups was envisaged and South African legislation, including security laws, was applied in the territory (Seegers, 1996:135). The Odendaal Commission (1962-1964) made it clear that 'a policy of differentiation must be followed' and 'ethnic groups are basic units of development' (Seegers, 1996:22-24). In the eyes of many, this was a clear attempt to structure Namibia along apartheid lines. This all took place despite the visit to Namibia by a UN Special Committee for South West Africa, to which Pretoria reluctantly agreed. Members of the Committee pointed out that the Pretoria government was intent on the subordination of the people of Namibia to their own likes. Pretoria obstinately forged ahead (Seegers, 1996:21) and requests to solve the tensions around segregationist policies and the issue of Namibia fell on deaf ears (Frankel, 1984:278, 279; Pampallis, 1991:278; Geldenhuys, 1984:205). Despite resistance and protest, Namibia's status remained that of a mandate (UN, 1974). In 1961, the UN General Assembly asked for collective action against South Africa, and by November 1962 the Assembly called for specific diplomatic and economic sanctions against the apartheid government (Geldenhuys, 1984:206).

For a brief period in 1966, South Africa's mandate over Namibia seemed confirmed when the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruled that Liberia and Ethiopia did not have any legal rights or interest in the matter of SWA. In a way, many Namibians felt that their long struggle for self-determination since the 1880s had been betrayed by this ruling, and it affirmed their need to pursue an armed struggle. In response, South African authorities introduced emergency regulations, security operations, and detentions, while maintaining its position in the face of international criticism. The UN Security Council revoked South Africa's mandate in Namibia, and by 1971, the ICJ re-affirmed that South Africa's occupation of Namibia was in contravention of international law. In his special report for 1973, the Secretary-General of the UN, Kurt Waldheim, emphasised the 'special responsibilities of the international community towards the Territory and the people of Namibia', and urged the UN organs, and the Security Council in particular, 'to seek effective approaches to bring about a solution based on the inalienable rights of the Namibian people to self-determination, national independence, and the preservation of the unity and territorial integrity of Namibia' (Geldenhuys, 1984:42).

Following a Resolution by the UN General Assembly, governments from Scandinavia, Eastern Europe, the NAM, and other countries recognised SWAPO as Namibia's sole representative (Geldenhuys, 1984:14ff.; Du Pisani, 1986:6ff.). When the UN adopted Resolution 435 in 1978, the so-called Western Five – the US, UK, West Germany, Canada, and France – temporarily agreed that Namibia should be granted independence and that a UN Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) was to assist in ensuring free and fair elections. However, covert support to South Africa continued, notably from the US, UK and France

(Stockwell, 1978:272-273; Jaster, 1985:92, 114; Namibia Support Committee, 1988:698-701; Liebenberg, 2011:72-73).

## Angola

South Africa invaded Angola in 1975 to bolster the 'anti-communist' forces amongst the rebel movements. After the coup in Portugal against the Caetano government in 1974, three liberation movements in Angola vied for power, but only one was a legitimate liberation movement: the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA). The Union for the Total Liberation of Angola (UNITA) was implicated in earlier dealings with Portuguese security forces, while the leader of the third, the National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA), was hardly on Angolan soil, having chosen Kinshasa in Zaire as his headquarters, and was in the pay of the USA's Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). In contrast, the MPLA had significant support in urban areas, including trade unions, and since 1954 had demonstrated its ability to mobilise in towns and the countryside, and to fight and survive in the field, despite setbacks (Liebenberg, 2008:66-68). South Africa's support for Jonas Savimbi's UNITA, and supply of hardware and advisors to Holden Roberto's FNLA guerrillas, escalated the regional cycle of violence, and both Namibia and Angola were to suffer for decades from the destabilising conflicts that they experienced. Even if they had combined their resources, the frontline states could not match the military power of South Africa, as the consistent build-up of South African forces led to an arms race in southern Africa. South Africa's aggressive posture forced the frontline states to spend money on arms, rather than much-needed development, all while South Africa deliberately destabilised the frontline states through punitive economic steps.

In summary, as the examples of Namibia and Angola show, South Africa's isolation forged a unilateral foreign policy to ensure regional hegemony. This 'total strategy' led to the country's militarisation, and the destabilisation of its neighbours. The primacy of the military as an instrument of foreign policy saw the SADF engaging in cross-border conflict and a geopolitics of war, in the face of pressure from the international community.

## A new era dawns

South Africa's negotiated transition (1990-1996) marked a significant advance in the country's political development, and a clear break in how it sees and is seen by its neighbours. The anti-apartheid struggle was an international one, and South Africa was subsequently welcomed into a new world that, at least temporarily, had left behind the bipolar Cold War schisms (Dyer, 2009:186, 198).

As South Africa returned to the international community, there was a wide range of international actors with whom to interact, and the country engaged broadly with other nations and continents through both bilateral and multilateral agreements. However, it

is clear that, rather than being swayed to join a specific power bloc, South Africa could act from its position as an emerging middle power. For example, South Africa returned to the British Commonwealth, yet was also a leader of the NAM; it deepened relations with European countries, the EU, and with the US (particularly under Clinton), but simultaneously further enhanced long-standing connections with Libya and Cuba, and acted independently in its relations with countries like China, India, and Iran. Van Wyk argues that 'South African scholars predominantly evaluated the Mandela presidency as a period of (new) foreign policy-making, the establishment of new relations and the continuation of old relations' (2012:277). South Africa thus was able to forge a balanced stance, arguably based on moral principles, yet asserting that the new democracy also identified its own interests.

South Africa developed a new diplomatic orientation and stepped out of its self-declared alliance with the West and close association with military regimes in Latin America and aggressive pariah states such as Israel, preferring a 'foreign policy of peace' and multilateral international participation and engagement. South Africa demonstrated its solidarity with the developing world and became a member of the NAM, as well as being involved with what was to become the AU, initiating the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), despite initial differences on how to unify Africa and on what economic pathway to follow to ensure sustainability and stability. Within the southern Africa subregion, South Africa entered the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC), the precursor to SADC. Thus, South Africa moved from a destabiliser to a cordial beneficiary and partner in solidarity on the continent, at least in the new political elite's view. Recognised as a regional economic core and possessing a relatively strong military, this leadership role seemed a natural position, but the challenge was how to be a benevolent partner, rather than a selfish hegemon. Any hegemonic enterprise reminiscent of apartheid power policy would rightly invite scepticism from other African states.

### **South Africa's policy context**

Partly as a result of the Cold War, there was extensive armed conflict on the African continent during the 1960s, 70s and 80s. The year 1991 also saw widespread conflict, both globally and on the African continent, but Cilliers (2014) observed that this was followed by a steep decline in conflict occurrence, which reached low levels from 2002 to 2005. However, since 2009 there has been a rise in armed conflicts, especially in Africa, partly because of the so-called War on Terror and intervention by Western core states (Cilliers, 2014).

For South Africa, the end of the Cold War required an adjustment of foreign policy within a changed international environment, from one based on Cold War rivalry to a post-

Cold War global order. This international context provides a necessary but incomplete understanding of the setting of South Africa's foreign policy, which requires consideration of the context of South Africa's transition, which we will address below.

### **Foreign policy**

The new South Africa's foreign policy and diplomacy closely echoed its expressed domestic values. Achievements in the domestic domain, such as being able to successfully find a negotiated resolution to long-standing conflict and formalise a commitment to peace, reconciliation, and democratisation of state and society, understandably shaped how the country saw itself internationally. The new Constitution (Act 108 of 1996), based on a Bill of Rights and principled constitutionalism, envisaged a democratic non-racial society that focused on peace and conflict resolution internally and externally. Van Nieuwkerk argues that 'the link between foreign policy and peace diplomacy (as an instrument of foreign policy)' created the image of South African presidents, especially Mandela and Mbeki, 'as foreign policy actors and peacemakers' (Van Wyk, 2012:277). This approach saw a shift from hard power to soft power, entailing an opportunity for defence diplomacy.

This domestic context can be seen in the light of the personalities of the leaders who made the democratic transition possible. Under presidents Mandela and Mbeki (1994 to 2008), South Africa's experience of resolving national conflict through negotiation strongly influenced the formulation of foreign and defence policies shaped by a commitment to values, and not just interests. With their global presence, these leaders were influential in carrying out foreign policy themselves, perhaps under-utilising their foreign ministers, and ultimately failing to ensure the development of diplomatic expertise at the departmental level.

Under presidents Mandela and Mbeki, South Africa embarked on a range of bilateral and multilateral agreements, diplomatic, political, economic and cultural, with SADC, the rest of Africa, and countries on other continents. Foreign policy under these presidents was consistent with attempts to: (1) advocate South Africa's negotiated transition as a model of conflict resolution; (2) stress South Africa's commitment to the region and the African continent; (3) affirm South Africa's relationships with past supporting nations outside of and including the NAM (i.e. Russia, Cuba, Libya), and with friendly nations on the European continent such as the Scandinavian countries and The Netherlands; and (4) re-orientate South African engagement with states outside South Africa's normal ambit, such as Brazil, China, Iran, and others. The foreign policy approach also demonstrated that South Africa was ready and willing to work with Western core economies such as Germany, the UK, and the US, and subsequent bilateral agreements testified to this. However, despite the diplomatic projection reflecting re-alignment with Africa, affirmation of old friendships

and a willingness to act as peacemaker on and off the African continent, foreign policy under Nelson Mandela to an extent remained ad hoc. Some would even argue that it was greatly reliant on Mandela as president, his international profile, personal actions, and preferences.

When Thabo Mbeki assumed the presidency, foreign policy was still thoroughly influenced by the executive branch of government, and it has been argued that under Mbeki, the role of Parliament diminished (Van Wyk, 2012:279). Along with this, the Mbeki administration organised government functions into 'clusters', as coordinating mechanisms of integrated governance (Alden & Le Pere, 2004). This applied at cabinet ministerial level (policy), but also at the Director-General level (implementation), and foreign policy and defence policy are considered together within the International Relations, Peace and Security (IRPS) Cluster. The cluster included the South African National Defence Force (SANDF), the externally-directed intelligence agency (the SASS), and Foreign Affairs who led the work of policy formulation and implementation (Africa, 2011). The cluster approach underlines the primacy of political action through diplomatic channels, and the necessity to engage peaceful instruments of foreign policy before considering military engagement.

Mbeki's vision of an African Renaissance saw South Africa push for the AU, for its economic programme NEPAD, and for internal accountability through the APRM. Although not everyone accepted Mbeki's views on the future continental strategy, especially in the economic realm, South Africa pushed for greater regional integration between West, East and Southern Africa (Ngwenya, 2012) with the AU as the foundation stone for continental cooperation and, perhaps, closer integration.

Under Jacob Zuma, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) was renamed the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) to help enhance 'public diplomacy' and 'facilitate domestic constituency engagement'. There was a shift from conflict resolution to economic diplomacy (Vickers, 2012), which was emphasised in 2011 in the Draft White Paper on Foreign Policy (Masters, 2012:27-28).

### **Soft power**

South Africa sought to internationalise itself with a new more inclusive approach, presenting principled aptitude to furthering peace, reconstruction, and development. The promotion of human rights, derived from the experience of apartheid and the attainment of a liberal constitution, played an important role in the early years of South Africa's foreign policy orientation (Masters, 2012:145; Neethling, 2012:479-482), and some observers argue that soft power from 1994 until 2012 was the very essence of South Africa's foreign policy (Smith, 2012:69). The use of soft power stems partially from South Africa's value-laden approach (involving conflict prevention, conflict resolution, preference for negotiation,

and democratisation) and partially from the realisation of the limits of their economic and military power. In reality, there are limits to what a middle power such as South Africa can do, despite its relative strength in a region (Hughes, 2001).

South Africa embraced multilateralism as a way to solve diplomatic challenges, and its foreign policy emphasises the importance of working through multilateral institutions. Ten years after independence, Nathan (2005) summarised that, 'South Africa promotes multilateralism in the international system as the best means of maintaining global order, addressing global problems, mitigating the domination and unilateralism of powerful states, and empowering weaker countries.' However, more than just participating in international institutions, the idea was to actively promote a reformist programme in these institutions (Alden, 2014). 'South Africa embraced multilateralism as an approach to solving the challenges confronting the international community ... it took up a leading role in various multilateral forums' (Monyae, 2012:139). South Africa promoted peace and security with a definite emphasis on Africa and developing nations in general, and attempts were also made to improve interaction with, and cooperation between, the UN Security Council and others (Monyae, 2012). Some even talked about these activities as an 'evolving doctrine of multilateralism' by South Africa, as a 'realist middle power' and a 'pluralist middle power' (Monyae, 2012:139, 141, 142).

South Africa entered African politics as a regional power on the continent and an aspiring middle power internationally (Hughes, 2001), and it changed from regional hegemon to benevolent partner – at least in terms of its discourse. However, there were on one side those who advocated a stronger role, and on the other side those who dreaded such a possibility.

### **Defence policy**

The South African Constitution (Act 108 of 1996), the White Paper on Defence (May 1996) subtitled 'Defence in a Democracy', and the Defence Review (April 1998), and the Defence Act (Act No. 42 of 2002) collectively set the direction of the Department of Defence (today the Department of Defence and Military Veterans, DOD) and the SANDF. Though the main issues were the transition to democracy and the transformation of the DOD, the White Paper also set out a foreign policy and defence posture based on a principled preparedness to engage constructively with states in the region. The policy foresaw armed forces with a primarily defensive orientation, and thus envisaged a change from animosity to friendship with South Africa's neighbours. The process of publishing 'Defence in a Democracy' can itself be seen as a necessary change from the past, as it was a relatively transparent and inclusive process, with extensive domestic consultation

across Ministries and other government departments, but also with academic experts and broader civil society (Africa, 2011). The second Defence Review was less inclusive, but did not deviate much from its predecessor in terms of defence posture, force projection, and South Africa's role in Africa with regards to peacekeeping operations. The latest defence review also raised some concerns, such as the need to rejuvenate the SANDF and to update and replace obsolete equipment, including the need for modernised aerial troop transport, and a highly-educated officer's corps. Ignoring these issues may impact on South Africa's obligations and defence diplomacy, but so far very little has been done by the DOD to implement their obligations in terms of the 2015 Defence Review.

A clear philosophy was reflected of constructive involvement in preventive diplomacy, peacebuilding, peacemaking, development based on pro-active resolution of conflict, and moral leadership. Peace Missions were defined as including 'participation in Preventative Diplomacy, Peacemaking, Peacekeeping Operations, Peace Enforcement, Peace Building, Humanitarian Assistance and Humanitarian Intervention' (Department of Government Communications and Information Systems (GCIS), 2003). South African policy also reflects the change in how international peacekeeping is carried out under UN mandates, in particular the increased attention of Peace Support Operations (PSO) on post-conflict reconstruction, security sector reform, and humanitarian assistance (GCIS, 2003). On paper, this orientation is consistent with a foreign policy based on liberal humanitarian principles.

However, if South Africa expected to play a larger role in regional stability and international peace missions, then the SANDF force structure and modernisation plans needed to accommodate this new role. Granted, the primary role of the armed forces remains defence of the homeland, but even as a secondary mission, external deployment to enhance regional stability requires proper training, preparation, and equipment. It is in this light that one must understand the arms acquisition process, or Strategic Defence Procurement (SDP), commonly referred to in South Africa as the Arms Deal, announced in September 1999. The acquisition of submarines, frigates, helicopters, fighter jets, and training aircraft for the air force and the navy indicate an orientation towards traditional conventional threats, contradicting the stated defensive posture of the SANDF, and contributing little to South Africa's peacekeeping role on the continent. The exclusion of any significant procurement for the army at the time highlighted these contradictions, and still raises questions about operational readiness. Moreover, investigations into the irregularities of the Arms Deal, which led to charges of corruption against members of parliament and the executive, including Jacob Zuma, significantly eroded the public perception that the military could be trusted by broader civil society. Put another way, the

fallout from the Arms Deal controversy and corruption has prevented a clear picture of anything good being done by the civilian and military leadership, resulting in an increasing civil-military relations gap.

South Africa's defence policy should be understood in its multilateral policy context, and specifically the regional dimension, through the common security arrangements for the SADC region. 'South Africa has not flinched from active engagement, both within its own region and on the global stage' and this against a background of high expectations from the international community about [South Africa's] role' (Sidiropoulos, 2007:1; DOD, 2009).

Within SADC, South Africa aimed at a new security orientation, and seemingly committed itself to future conflict resolution, mediation, and conflict management through the creation of the SADC Organ on Peace, Defence and Security Cooperation. The SADC Organ has a strong security mandate, as it is endowed in Article 2 of the Protocol with the power to 'consider enforcement action' as a last resort to prevent, contain, resolve inter- and intra-state conflict (Hammerstad, 2005). In theory, SADC has power to intervene in the domestic affairs of member states, but this has not been the case in practice. The discourse on regional security in SADC arguably hinged on differing interpretations: Zimbabwe, Angola and Namibia preferred a mutual defence pact with a military response to conflict, while the camp led by South Africa preferred a common security regime based on conflict resolution and political solutions (Nathan, 2005:42). The SADC Standby Brigade, as part of the AU's African Standby Force, can be seen as an effort driven by South Africa to create coherence between the subregional and continental security architecture.

The Future SA Army Strategy (Strategy 2020) was released in 2009 and includes reference to the army's role in peacekeeping and peace enforcement on the continent. The primary role, constitutionally defined, remains protection of national sovereignty and territorial integrity, but there was recognition from army planners that peacekeeping operations will dominate in the future (Baker, 2009:12). The Defence Review 2015 indicates the broader role of the SANDF within a developmental state, and re-affirms South Africa's African focus and its role in post-conflict reconstruction and development (PCRD), while the country's role in 'regional and continental processes to respond and resolve crises' is stressed (Neethling, 2012:474-479). Some theorists saw the Draft Defence Review 2012 as a positive development, 'given the demands placed on the SANDF in the field of post-conflict reconstruction and development' (Neethling 2012:472), arguing that this may impact positively on the evolution of developmental peacekeeping. Most recently, the Minister of Defence formulated a Directive on 'Execution of Defence Diplomacy Policy in the DOD'. The challenge, as revealed in the Annual Report 2016/17, is that there needs

to be synchronisation between the Ministers' Directive and the DIRCO policy, as set out in 'Anchor State Document on Defence International Engagements' (DOD, 2017).

This policy background therefore demonstrates the gap between acquisitions and the conceivable external deployment missions of the SANDF. Some illustrative examples will be useful, and the chosen cases are Lesotho, Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Sudan, and Central African Republic (CAR), each demonstrating a particular aspect of South Africa's use of the military as defence diplomacy in Africa. First, it is necessary to briefly consider the range of bilateral agreements on defence issues.

## Defence diplomacy engagement

Defence dialogue and cooperation are inherent in defence diplomacy arrangements, and aim to avert misunderstandings and ease mistrust by promoting transparency. In practical terms, this can be done through exchange of defence attachés, and exchange of information on a number of topics, such as defence budgets, force structure, modernisation plans, and deployments. A second feature of defence diplomacy is establishing bilateral and multilateral agreements, as well as participating in multinational organisations, such as the UN, the AU and SADC (especially in the Interstate Defence and Security Committee) (GCIS, 2017). Bilateral defence diplomacy and cooperation take place at a number of political levels and institutions, although as Blake reveals, there is a dearth of information on South Africa's defence cooperation generally, and his position as a military practitioner means his study provides useful insights (2016). At a deeper level of connection, states may participate in military education and joint military exercises. Following the framework of Cottey and Forster (2004), defence diplomacy engagement can be divided into a number of areas of activity:

**High-level political ties:** The Bi-National Commission (BNC) is a forum for dialogue at the presidential level. The BNC is usually chaired by the South African President, and includes the Minister of Defence and Department officials. In contrast, a Joint Commission on Cooperation (JCC) is chaired by the Minister of DIRCO, but usually includes other government ministers, including the Defence Minister, and other senior officials. The Minister of Defence chairs meetings at the Joint Permanent Commission on Defence and Security (JPCDS), which are annual bilateral meetings with representatives of states contiguous to South Africa. At the level of Secretary for Defence (equivalent to a Director-General), meetings are held as a Defence Committee (DC) with senior departmental officials in attendance (Blake, 2016).

**Military-to-military contacts:** As set out in the Defence Review 2014, the relationship with other armed forces is carried out through a DOD Foreign Relations Strategy. Defence International Affairs (DIA) formulates and provides policy advice on Defence Foreign Relations, which administers support to the SANDF defence attaché offices abroad and to foreign military dignitaries (DOD, 2015).

**TABLE 6.1 SA defence diplomacy involving SADC states (2011-15)**

SA defence diplomacy involving SADC states (2011-15)	Total
Defence dialogue:	125
▪ Bilateral meetings	61
▪ Multilateral meetings	64
Defence agreements	8
Defence ties at diplomatic level	11
Defence cooperation programmes:	33
▪ Exercises	10
▪ PSO	7
▪ Training	2
▪ Anti-Piracy Operations	4
▪ HADR	2
▪ Border Liaison Forums	4
▪ Conference and Symposia	1
▪ Other	3

SOURCE: Developed from Blake (2016)

## Defence diplomacy in South Africa's continental peacekeeping operations

### Lesotho

South Africa moved beyond its stated preference for diplomatic conflict resolution with its first foreign deployment of the military to Lesotho in 1998. The post-election constitutional crisis in that country resulted in Prime Minister Mosisili requesting assistance to prevent a possible coup. Peaceful diplomatic solutions had been tried, including through the SADC Troika, but Mandela's preventive diplomacy efforts and calls for constitutional reform were not sufficient to avoid the crisis following the disputed general election of April 1998. The crisis was compounded by members of the Lesotho Defence Force (LDF) staging a mutiny in September 1998, and an increase in civil disorder and public violence which led to internal instability. The SANDF deployed under Operation Boles to prevent an unconstitutional take-over of power and secure law and order, a military action that Du Plessis called the 'intrusive use of the military instrument in the form of military intervention' (2003:130). South Africa maintained that it was a peace operation under a SADC mandate and not an invasion, as the Botswana Defence Force (BDF) had been involved.

The issue remains whether South Africa gave up on negotiating a political settlement too quickly, deploying the military without a full understanding of how the enforcement action would be viewed. There were also questions about the requirements for regarding a military response as a SADC response since, as Neethling points out, there were no clear guidelines from SADC regarding military responses in internal conflicts (2012). At the time of Mosisili's request, the SADC Chair and the president of South Africa were the same person (Likoti, 2007). Moreover, South Africa had not participated in the August 1998 intervention operation in the DRC after requests from President Laurent Kabila for military assistance, while Angola, Zimbabwe, and Namibia did intervene. In both Lesotho and the DRC, regional security cooperation under the SADC banner in intrastate conflict proved controversial. From an international perspective, De Coning argues that, 'South Africa, Botswana and SADC, appeared to have failed to obtain prior authorization from the UN Security Council as required by Chapter VIII of the Charter' (1998:22), while others hold that, although there is debate about the strict legality of the operation, South Africa's actions were legitimate (Southall, 2006:7). Nevertheless, South Africa was aware that acting unilaterally could be interpreted as hegemonic dominance, and leading up to the 2002 election, they continued to engage Lesotho via SADC.

## Burundi

The Burundi intervention can be seen as one of South Africa's most successful uses of the military in foreign policy in support of diplomatic negotiation and peacemaking (Du Plessis, 2003:126; Southall, 2006:12). Nelson Mandela became involved as the key peace mediator in the OAU peace process after the death of Julius Nyerere in 1999 although, as Van Eck notes, Nyerere's facilitation was flawed as two Burundian political-military movements had been excluded (Van Eck, 2009:168-170). Mandela's diplomatic efforts resulted in the Arusha Agreement of Peace and Reconciliation of August 2000, the basis of which was a three-year transitional government based on power-sharing between Tutsi- and Hutu-dominated political parties.

Given the resistance from the excluded armed movements, the peace process required ongoing ceasefire negotiations, and South Africa was prepared to back up its diplomatic efforts with a military presence. With Jacob Zuma, then the country's deputy president, taking the lead, South African negotiations resulted in armed groups, political parties, and regional neighbours maintaining a fragile peace. South Africa deployed a military force to Burundi in support of the Arusha Peace Agreement, facilitating the return of exiled political leaders and providing protection to those participating in the Burundi Transitional Government. The military deployment of the South African Protection and Support Detachment (SAPSD) was referred to as Operation Fibre, a protective military deployment in the context of a negotiated settlement.

There was also a multilateral track to South Africa's involvement, as the Department of Foreign Affairs had approached the UN for assistance in gaining international support for the deployment (Makwetla, 2012). This support was confirmed in Security Council Resolution 1375 (20 October 2001) which 'Endorses the efforts of the Government of South Africa and other member States to support the implementation of the Arusha Agreement, and strongly supports in this regard the establishment of an interim multinational security presence in Burundi, at the request of its Government, to protect returning political leaders and train an all-Burundian protection force.'

Along with this, South Africa also worked through the newly created AU. The AU Mission in Burundi (AMIB), established in May 2003 as the first AU peacekeeping mission, had a South African as its first Force Commander, and South Africa participated alongside Ethiopia and Mozambique as the major military contributors. It must be pointed out that South Africa had an authoritative role in the creation of the AU, and that a number of initiatives regarding the deployment of the mission were carried out by President Thabo Mbeki in his capacity as AU chairperson (Landsberg, 2012). South Africa also continued to play a major role in Burundi when the UN Operation in Burundi (ONUB) was established in June 2004. South African Major General Derrick Mgwebi was the first ONUB Force Commander, a first for a South African in an international peacekeeping force (Makwetla, 2012).

### **Democratic Republic of the Congo**

The DRC case presents a range of examples of South Africa's use of the military instrument. As noted above, in contrast with South Africa's more pacific approach within SADC, the trio of Zimbabwe, Angola, and Namibia pursued a militarist line. This resulted in their participation in the hostilities in the DRC, and consequently to a cleavage on this issue in SADC and antagonism between SADC states. Nevertheless, the diplomatic initiatives of Thabo Mbeki between 1999 and 2002 promised political stability to the DRC and resulted in the signing of the Lusaka Peace Agreement in July 1999. This paved the way for the establishment of the UN Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), and diplomatic efforts were bolstered by the deployment of the SANDF as part of the internationally-mandated mission. South Africa's participation in MONUC from September 1999 was code-named Operation Mistral.

South Africa's multilateral participation in MONUC increased, particularly after the assassination of President Laurent Kabila in January 2001 placed renewed pressure on the UN to expedite the implementation of MONUC. The UN allocated a number of staff officer posts to South Africa, and SANDF personnel were deployed for 12 months. South

Africa was also requested to deploy its specialist elements, the South African National Defence Force Specialist Contingent (SANDFSPECC), as well as the SANDF Aero Medical Evacuation team. South African Military Police members were also deployed to establish the MONUC Military Police Unit, and in July 2002, the UN DPKO requested that South Africa deploy a Task Force to MONUC.

South Africa entered into the DRC with bilateral or trilateral defence diplomacy agreements. South Africa had signed an agreement with the DRC and Belgium to support security sector reform in respect of the DRC's Armed Forces (FARDC). This deployment of the South African Detachment Assisting with Integration and Training (SADAIT) in the DRC from January 2005 was named Operation Teutonic, and its primary role was to provide assistance with the identification and registration process. This was expanded later in 2005 (Teutonic II) with the deployment of additional personnel to the Eastern DRC to facilitate with training centres.

The situation in the DRC continues to evolve. In July 2010, the UN mission received a new mandate and was renamed the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). The SANDF presence in the DRC in support of MONUSCO consisted of three military observers, 12 staff officers, and a contingent of 1200 members. In 2014, a new mandate was decided by UN Security Council Resolution 2098, which saw South Africa deploying a battalion as part of the MONUSCO Force Intervention Brigade.

## Sudan

The Sudan example sheds light on the deployment of an AU mission, although it was also partly a hybrid AU-UN mission (Khadiagala, 2014). The SANDF launched Operation Cordite in July 2004 with the deployment of staff officers and military observers to Darfur, Sudan. This was in support of the AU Mission in Sudan (AMIS), and to supplement the existing Sudan deployment. An infantry protection company and an explosive ordnance disposal unit were also deployed. AMIS was terminated at the end of 2007 by the UN African Mission in Darfur (UNAMID), becoming the first AU-UN hybrid mission. The South African contingent remained in Darfur in support of this hybrid mission, and the UN requested that South Africa increase the contingent to a standard UN Infantry Battalion-size force in 2008. However, challenges regarding the infrastructure within the mission area made it impossible to comply. By 2012, the contingent totalled 760, including eight military observers and seven staff officers. In assessing South Africa's participation in the AU-led mission, we can nevertheless conclude that 'The mobilisation of the AU Mission in Darfur failed to stem the genocide committed by the Sudanese government

of Al-Bashir against defenceless civilians seeking autonomy for the region' (Khadiagala, 2012:278). A full account of South Africa's participation, beyond the scope of the present chapter, should include Thabo Mbeki's diplomatic role on behalf of the AU/UN and the wider implications of South Africa's changing relationship with the International Criminal Court (ICC).

### **Central African Republic**

South Africa's involvement in CAR signalled a significant change in foreign policy. As has been noted above, foreign policy is shaped by the Presidency, and in the case of President Zuma, there was a significant shift from the policies of his predecessors. However, some argued that there was continuity in both personnel and the vision for an African Agenda in foreign policy (Habib (2009:143). While it is true that the African unity rhetoric continued to underpin foreign policy narratives, Khadiagala (2014:279) characterised the Zuma period as 'muddling through' rather than leadership, and criticised the economic diplomacy in Africa as leading to the 'conflation of national and party interests as ANC elites and Zuma's family members joined in the scramble for economic opportunities'.

It is in this context that one must try to understand the military deployment to CAR. According to some allegations, the CAR involvement may have partially been caused by business interests that included the Zuma family. While all of the facts are not yet in the open, this may change with the initiation of the Commission on State Capture on 20 August 2018. What is known from a briefing by deputy Defence Minister Makwetla is that the original mission to CAR of March 2007, Operation Vimbezela, was primarily comprised of training and engineer personnel. This was in response to a request from the CAR for assistance with training and refurbishment of training facilities. The 2007 bilateral military agreement was signed by then President Mbeki and CAR's president Francois Bozize, and was apparently renewed in December 2012 under Zuma's rule, by which stage Bozize's authoritarian rule was coming under significant pressure from the armed rebel coalition known as Seleka. For reasons that are not entirely clear, South Africa deployed an estimated 200 paratroopers during January 2013. What is clear is that the SANDF troops that were dispatched to CAR were not for training or infrastructure refurbishment, and that they were deployed with neither parliamentary approval, nor coordination with DIRCO (Römer Heitman, 2013). Along with this, neither the AU nor the SADC security organ were consulted.

The rationale of the deployment of forces to CAR remains opaque and thus speculative. We can dismiss the argument that there was a need to defend a national security interest or substantial economic interests, since CAR does not feature as a significant security or commercial partner (Khadiagala, 2014:279). Neither is the argument one based on historical ties, as the CAR leadership was not involved in the anti-apartheid struggle. One reason

offered by Khadiagala is that South Africa's pan-Africanist credentials are strengthened by its involvement in French-speaking Africa, but this view is in reference to Mbeki's 2007 bilateral agreement, not to Zuma's unilateral adventurism. From the perspective of the Seleka rebels, who entered into power-sharing negotiations with the Bozize government in January 2013, the South African troops were propping up the Bozize regime (Khadiagala, 2014:279). Seleka's military offensive to capture Bangui in March 2013 resulted in 13 South African soldiers being killed, with 27 wounded and one missing in action.

This ill-fated involvement in CAR remains controversial. There was domestic criticism because the deployment happened with less parliamentary oversight than was necessary, and because there were inconsistencies in the explanations offered after the deployment ended in tragedy. Similarly, there was insufficient consultation within SADC, of which CAR is not a member, and with the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), of which CAR is a member. This failure of domestic oversight of defence diplomacy has led to media speculation that South African soldiers were deployed to CAR to protect mining companies with links to the ANC, and to protect the financial interests of the Zuma family.

While President Zuma maintained that those killed in Bangui 'died in defence of the country's foreign policy', there were considerable efforts to avoid full accountability (Khadiagala, 2014:285). Instead, Zuma was quoted as saying (Khadiagala, 2014:285):

There must be an appreciation that matters of military tactics and strategy are not to be discussed in public ... No country reveals and discusses its military strategies in the manner that South Africa is expected to do. Those who are engaging in this game should be careful not to endanger both the national interest and the security of the republic.

However, an analysis by two professors of Military Strategy at the South African Military Academy concluded that the CAR deployment is indicative of the deep-seated strategic failures of South African military action on the continent (Vreÿ & Esterhuysen, 2016). Despite the CAR incident as a low point in South Africa's defence diplomacy, expectations continue that South Africa should extend its role in the AU and through the APSA it helped to establish. Significant gains have been made in advancing South African interests through multilateral diplomacy, including in the continental security institutions, but caution is advised.

## Defence diplomacy on the continent

Under Mbeki's diplomatic initiative between 1999 and 2002, South Africa played a key role in transforming the OAU into the AU. The AU's Constitutive Act condemned genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity, and the AU thus has the right to intervene

against military coups and in defence of human rights. With its creation in July 2002 came a framework for APSA, based on a collective security approach from a human security perspective (Hutchful, 2009). The AU's 15-member Peace and Security Council (PSC) is the most important African institution for the management of peace and security issues, authorising peace operations and coordinating conflict management strategies (African Union, 2002). Since 2004, the AU has intended to build its capacity to respond to conflicts rapidly and effectively through the creation of the African Standby Force (ASF), but while initially scheduled for operation by 2010, the delay in creating the ASF reveals the weaknesses of Africa's institutional capacity at the subregional level.

In contrast, SADC declared its new regional military formation, the SADC BRIG, operational in August 2007 (Mandrup, 2009). South Africa was crucial, and described as 'very active in the formation of the ASF, and SADC BRIG', which was modelled on the Nordic Stand-by High Readiness Brigade (Mandrup, 2009:18). South Africa's ambitions were also evident at the AU itself: in 2012, South Africa aggressively campaigned for the candidacy of Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma for the position of AU Commission Chair. This was controversial as it went against the unwritten rule that no major African power should occupy this position. By May 2013, the AU Assembly established the African Capacity for Immediate Response to Crises (ACIRC), based on individual African states deploying troops. South Africa strongly championed ACIRC, but key continental players such as Nigeria, Ethiopia, Egypt, and Kenya expressed reservations (Brosig & Sempijja, 2015:2-3). Some argue that South Africa's push for ACIRC diverted resources and political energy away from finalisation of the ASF (Warner, 2015), while critical observers hold that the AU had been used as a tool of South Africa's foreign policy. Dlamini-Zuma served only one four-year term as Chair.

## Conclusions and recommendations

South Africa's involvement in Africa via its defence diplomacy aimed to show the country as a potential peace multiplier. However, as this role has expanded, both in terms of geography and complexity, new demands and expectations must be met with realism. On the one hand, South Africa's diplomacy demonstrates a commitment to Africa, its people, and the continent. On the other hand, a lack of reflection or poorly-calculated pragmatism has introduced discrepancies. Despite South Africa's appearance of relative strength, there are real limitations that should be considered rationally before unrealistic demands or inflated expectations are uncritically accepted (Brooks, 2001; Nibishaka, 2011; Dube, 2013; Fabricius, 2013; Schuenemann & Cilliers, 2013). These are the fundamental issues that impact South Africa's defence diplomacy.

As we noted, the 'new' South Africa's approach to conflict resolution on the continent and elsewhere was to advocate its own internal solution to other conflict-ridden societies: that of transition through negotiation and the attainment of constitutional democracy. Promoting peace through advocating negotiated settlement was taken seriously, especially under Presidents Mandela and Mbeki, as South Africa's diplomacy after 1994 moved from a militarist to a moralist approach in its external relations. The country's foreign policy centred on the themes of Africanism, promoting human rights and democracy, a holistic approach to security, pacific forms of conflict resolution, and multilateralism. As Nathan (2005) points out, these five themes have value when they are mutually-consistent, conceptually-linked, and consolidated.

Although Nathan (2005) was referring specifically to the early years of the Mbeki presidency, he also identified significant contradictions. One such inconsistency was an absence of common values in the region, which inhibited collective action and policy consensus. An example of this disconnect between declared democratic commitments and foreign policy in action was the policy towards Zimbabwe. Far from being 'quiet diplomacy', Nathan (2005) shows South Africa's foreign policy as expressing support for Mugabe, even in response to state repression and the undermining of the rule of law. This position on Zimbabwe was also inconsistent with South Africa's stated holistic approach to human security. Nathan (2005) argued that South Africa's foreign policy is constrained by deep political divisions in the region and in SADC, and this chapter demonstrates that this has had an impact on how the country carries out its defence diplomacy, and on the effectiveness of such policy.

Relative to the region, South Africa has both a strong and vibrant economy and a capable military force. Expectations therefore run high for South Africa to be actively engaged in peace missions. Simultaneously, the country also has to guard against the perception of behaving as an imposing hegemon. It has also had to steer clear of involvement with other international actors, such as the US, UK and France, that may be perceived as colonial or neo-imperial powers. Yet the expectation that South Africa, as the regional power in SADC and one of the significant powers in Africa, has to be more involved in a spectrum of peace missions, including peace enforcement, persists (Tlhaole, 2013:13; Williams, 2011:1). South Africa's mission-based approach, including peace-support operations and defence diplomacy, must be seen as selective engagement, depending on force levels, capabilities and resources in support of properly articulated foreign relations (Liebenberg & Mokoena, 2014:8). The challenge is to align expectations with real capabilities, or to align ends and means.

South Africa is currently constrained by having a weak economy, limited capacity for external action, and a number of domestic problems, including poor service delivery. Real limitations exist in the military too, such as the age profile of SANDF staff, the levels of available skills, budgetary constraints, and the state of readiness of equipment, some of which was bought in the 1990s and is now not immediately deployable. These limitations should be kept in mind by political and military leadership, even if South Africa has a coherent foreign policy. The challenge to be able to deliver effectively without promising too much requires a coherent long-term national security strategy. A solid document on a National Security Strategy is required.

Once this national security strategy is properly articulated, South Africa's defence diplomacy as an extension of its foreign policy needs to focus on coordination with its partners. Aside from the greatest obstacle of financing, coordination and leadership are huge challenges. States on the continent have different abilities and capabilities, and how to streamline coordination between the militaries of states, regional organisations and the AU requires continuous attention. As Hughes argues, 'some states must in practice come to take a greater initiative than others' (2001:296), and South Africa would do well to work through the organisations it has been instrumental in creating: SADC and the regional organisations (West, East and in the Maghreb) within the continental realm (AU, ASE, APSA). Responsibilities should be shared and cooperation enhanced through task division that keeps in mind the asymmetric nature of the economic power and relative influence of African countries in the broader partnership. Future success will depend on how well-coordinated, planned and executed operations will be, how cost-effective within a set time-frame, and to what extent states with differing economies in each region and on the continent can contribute to missions.

A fundamental aspect, however, has to underpin all of South Africa's international action and that is its democratic status and respect for the constitutionally-mandated rule of law. Effective civilian oversight is necessary, and political and military leaders must be held accountable for the availability of funding, material capacity, human capacity, and skilled resources. There must be informed debate on the conditions for intervention: When to go and when not to go? Here, capacity, expectations, skills, and finances are of great importance, as timely, rather than reactive, intervention is necessary. Of importance is that the decision for intervention be thoroughly agreed upon by all the actors. Force generation should match cooperation, consultation, entrance, and exit strategies. These are all factors that require military expertise but need to have civilian oversight. In this regard, the recent criticisms can be summarised as: (1) the undue influence of the ruling party on political decision-making, especially under Jacob Zuma; (2) the relatively low

levels of participation by parliament; (3) the relative lack of influence of the Defence Secretariat (Fourie, 2012); and (4) the lack of coordinated policymaking and development of a long-term vision for South Africa's security position and engagements in the region and on the continent. Critical observers also point out that 'parliament's reactive rather than pro-active foreign policy role has often been criticised' (Van Wyk, 2012:279).

Assuming that this is true, a lot of work remains to ensure closer interaction between DIRCO, the Presidency, parliament, the Defence Secretariat (as a significant independent institution), and the DOD. As foreign policy impacts so closely on defence diplomacy, a more integrated approach is necessary, while civilian oversight is simultaneously strengthened. This is a necessary approach as the country combines its soft power and hard power capabilities. The challenges from earlier remain. If South Africa oversteps the line between benevolent strong partner and imposing hegemon, some diplomatic gains will be lost and replaced with underlying tensions. On the other hand, if the benevolent partner overstretches or over-estimates its capacity, it may lead to loss of face and diminished trust between continental actors. There are no easy choices here.

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