



South Africa's changing foreign policy in a multi-polar world

The influence of China and other emerging powers

Ross Anthony, Paul Tembe and Olivia Gull

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Preface

In recent years, critics of the South African government have accused it of increasingly abandoning its commitments to human rights and democracy in its international engagements. In addition to this being viewed as a turn toward an ‘African agenda’, the growing geopolitical influence of the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) grouping has also been attributed to this perceived shift. As South Africa’s largest trading partner, China in particular has been singled out as exerting influence on relations with other countries. This mini-report discusses certain evidence related to this shift, including South Africa’s engagement with issues of human rights as well as its relationship with China. South Africa’s changing behaviour needs to be grasped within the context of broader geopolitical shifts and how a shared experience of colonialism unifies these new partners.

1. Introduction

In the past decade, South Africa's foreign policy has been influenced by a number of developing countries. The BRICS grouping (Brazil, Russia, China India and South Africa) - an acronym for the association of five major emerging national economies - has been credited with forging a new geopolitical identity seeking to challenge what is perceived as a western-dominated hegemony of the global economic and political system. Underlying this new influence has been exceptional economic growth amongst South Africa's BRICS partners, with a model of state-driven market adaptation substantially underlying performance. The most spectacular economic trajectory has been that of China, whose influence has been felt on a global scale. China has been South Africa's largest trading partner since 2010, with a total trade volume of ZAR 270 Billion in 2013¹; economic growth has been accompanied by a cementing of relations between governments, formalized in a host of agreements.

Despite a wide array of political dispensations, such as the fact that Russia and China are authoritarian while South Africa, Brazil and India are democratic, there are certain factors which unify these countries in such a way that offer potential opposition to Euro-American dominance. In particular, they take aim at what is perceived as dominance of the post-World War II Bretton Woods global financial system, in which institutions such as the United States- led World Bank and the European-led International Monetary Fund (IMF) are viewed as using their financial power to influence domestic politics in the developing world - particularly in the realms of governance, transparency, democratic reforms and human rights. Structural adjustment reforms introduced by these institutions in the 1980s and 1990s, which encouraged developing world markets to embrace international trade while enabling more accountability and transparency, are today largely disregarded. Additionally, there is a perception that in the post-colonial world, former colonial powers have continued to exert undue influence over the global political system; a persistent criticism has taken aim at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) which, despite its membership of Russia and China, does not adequately represent countries of the Global South – a grouping referring to Africa, Central and Latin America, as well as large parts of Asia. Such grievances are situated within the broader context of Western European colonization of much of the developing world, as well as post-World War II United States' global hegemony; in this sense, such institutions are perceived as contemporary extensions and adaptations of colonial control.

An economic rationale which dovetails with these sentiments is the notion of a state-driven, developmental model of economic growth. Typified by the Chinese mode of engagement, and active to a lesser degree in Brazil, India and Russia, State Owned Enterprises (SOEs) play a vital role in both the domestic economy as well as in international ventures. Financially backed by powerful policy banks, such as China's Exim Bank, state and private companies offer assistance to predominantly developing world countries in the form of infrastructure development, technology transfer, trading zones, medical and

educational assistance. This engagement is forwarded as a more sustainable model of development for several reasons. China's numerous state and provincial enterprises are able to implement projects relatively quickly and at prices with which western countries cannot compete. This, it is argued, has enabled a far more intense infrastructural presence, which has become one of China's flagship development initiatives, which helps integrate hinterland populations into national and global markets and increasing regional integration and communication. A crucial political dimension to this economic engagement is the 'no-strings attached' approach, highlighted in Beijing's 'non-interference' policy in the affairs of other countries. China in particular is often at pains to point out that its financial assistance is not tied to any pressure for a given African country to reform its domestic political arrangements.

The rise of these new partners offers developing countries such as South Africa both new economic opportunities as well as increased geopolitical power. Neither of these elements, however, necessarily entails a distinct shift away from the Euro-American sphere. Despite China's growing economic influence, the European Union and the United States continue to be significant trading and development assistance partners with South Africa.

It has been argued that South Africa has increasingly adopted an economically 'pragmatic' approach to international relations²: namely scaling back on its earlier promotion of western style democracy and human rights so as to facilitate more improved economic interactions with new actors. Nevertheless, South Africa's voting record at the United Nations, certain statements by the administration, recent moves against International Criminal Court (ICC) rulings and accusations of being beholden to China (particularly over the Dalai Lama's inability to travel to South Africa), have led some to suggest South Africa is in the process of reorientation in its foreign relations.

2. Positioning South Africa

In recent years, critics have asserted that South Africa's increasing engagement with these emerging powers has begun to exert an influence on South African foreign policy. Under the Mandela administration (1994-1999), South Africa explicitly championed itself as a defender of human rights and democracy in Africa and beyond.³ This was sustained by a general optimism surrounding the country's transition to democracy and dovetailed well with the kinds of liberal foreign policy forwarded in Europe and America. As a 'regional hegemon',⁴ South Africa would promote these values across the African continent. During the Mbeki period (1999-2008), South Africa's foreign policy aspirations in Africa were mechanized in the form of governance initiatives. Mbeki was a strong champion of African development in the face of what was viewed as outdated global governance architecture.⁵ It was particularly during the Mbeki period that the idealism of the Mandela era collided with issues of African solidarity, as witnessed in Mbeki's 'quiet diplomacy' toward Mugabe's Zimbabwe. This relationship was to put strain on South Africa's relations with many in the Euro American world insofar as South Africa has been perceived to

choose 'African solidarity' over principles of democracy and human rights. This tension has continued in subsequent years, particularly in terms of South African support toward the African Union's indictment of particular rulings in the International Criminal Court (ICC).

Thus, the foreign policy arena that president Zuma entered in 2009 was one in which South Africa was increasingly embracing a South-South co-operation and consolidating the African agenda⁶, and one which increasingly valued economic diplomacy with new rising powers. The Zuma administration has pursued this, in part, within the context of South Africa's BRICS membership, which it joined in 2010. The attractiveness of South Africa as an ideal entry point to the rest of the continent, as well as the need to include an African representative within the BRICS body, led to lobbying by China for the inclusion of the former. The 2010 addition of South Africa into BRICS provided it with a robust platform to success in the two struggles that had previously evaded it; first, to establish itself as a sub-Saharan regional leader and secondly, an ability to demand and take to task some international multilateral organizations such as the United Nations and the IMF. As part of solutions for respective member states and regions they represent, BRICS reiterated the 2012 directive to respective Finance Ministers to examine the feasibility of setting up a New Development Bank (formally agreed to in July 2014) which will function outside and beyond the aegis of IMF and the World Bank.⁷ On 21 July 2015, the New Development Bank (formerly referred to as the BRICS Development Bank) opened its Shanghai headquarters. In contrast to the World Bank, which assigns votes based on capital share, the New Development Bank will assign each participant country with one vote, and none of the countries will have veto power.⁸

2.1 Shifting Patterns in International Relations

One area of potential foreign policy change which has been identified within this new context has been South Africa's behaviour in its international affairs. South Africa's voting patterns at the United Nations have shifted,⁹ deviating sporadically from earlier voting behaviour which tended to follow Euro-American patterns. It has been suggested that BRICS allies Russia and China in particular, who hold permanent seats on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), have exerted influence over South Africa's voting patterns. South Africa has served as a non-permanent member of the UNSC, from 2007-2008 and 2011-2012, aimed to promote an African agenda.¹⁰ South Africa, along with other BRICS countries, have singled out the UNSC for reform, arguing that the bulk of resolutions centre on Africa, making an African addition to the UNSC urgent and necessary.

South Africa's voting position on other African countries has raised the ire of western powers: for instance, in November 28, 2006, South Africa voted against a resolution to bring justice to those responsible for Darfur genocide.¹¹ On July 11 2008, South Africa voted against imposing sanctions on Zimbabwe that included arms embargo, a travel ban and financial freeze against President Robert Mugabe. China and the Russian Federation vetoed the passing of the resolution, thus it was defeated.¹² Voting patterns have also taken a turn in the broader international arena. On 12 January 2007, South

Africa voted against the draft resolution on the situation in Myanmar, which aimed to cease military attacks on civilians and promote democratic transition.¹³ China and the Russian Federation vetoed the passing of the resolution, thus it was defeated. On 19 July 2012, South Africa abstained from voting in favour of extending the United Nations Supervision Mission in Syria (UNSMIS) and threatening sanctions on the country.¹⁴ China and the Russian Federation vetoed the passing of the resolution, thus it was defeated.¹⁵ In March 2014, South Africa abstained from voting in favour of condemning Russia's violation of Ukrainian territorial integrity,¹⁶¹⁷ alongside BRICS members India, China, Brazil. Additionally during this period, South Africa abstained from voting in favour of the Office of the High Commissioner to investigate human rights abuses by both parties in Sri Lanka.¹⁸ South Africa abstained while¹⁹ China and the Russian Federation vetoed the passing of the resolution, thus it was defeated.²⁰ The decision by four out of five BRICS countries was seen as a move towards political mutualism.²¹ In a March 2014 session at the UN, South Africa, along with Russia, Ethiopia, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and China, sought to weaken a resolution regarding the right to peacefully protest²². In March 2015, South Africa, along with China, Russia, Cuba, Venezuela, Iran, Sudan and Pakistan, opposed non-governmental organization Freedom Now²³, from being granted special consultative status at the United Nations.

The questions of to what degree these voting patterns are autonomous decisions and to what degree they may be influenced by emerging powers, is a matter of speculation. While from the above, we often see the South African vote correspond with China and Russia's decisions on the Security Council, South Africa justifies these votes with its own reasoning. For instance, in the Syria case, certain commentators have argued that South Africa was swayed by China and Russia, while South Africa argued that the resolution favoured the rebels over the Assad regime. In the Myanmar instance, South African abstained due to being a mediator in the Sri Lanka reconciliation process. Bolstering such accusations has been a number of additional decisions made by the South African government which have increasingly alienated Euro-American partners. In June 2015, Sudanese leader Omar al Bashir, wanted by the ICC for war crimes, was invited to attend an AU event in South Africa. As a 1998 signatory to the Rome Statute, South Africa was obliged to arrest Bashir; an emergency High Court order issued to prevent his departure did not prevent him from leaving the country on June 15. The government argued that he was invited under the auspices of the AU, and therefore he had immunity from the Rome Statute. This debacle has occurred within the broader context of South Africa joining a chorus of African leaders in urging the ICC to defer charges against sitting Kenyan President, Uhuru Kenyatta, and his deputy, William Ruto. Within the ANC's top echelons, calls were made to withdraw from the ICC, with ANC secretary General Gwede Mantashe claiming that it 'is a tool in the hands of the powerful to destroy the weak and it is a court that is focusing on Africa, Eastern Europe, and the Middle East'.²⁴ South Africa has subsequently announced its intention to review its membership with the ICC.

Another high profile international relations event has been South Africa's position regarding visits by the Dalai Lama. The Dalai Lama visited South Africa in 1996, 1999 and 2004. In March 2009 the Dalai Lama

was refused entry to South Africa. The official reason for not granting the Dalai Lama an entry visa to South Africa was to prevent Tibetan politics from overshadowing the 2010 Soccer World Cup. The refusal sparked a political debate within South Africa about the country's political and business interests with China, with some accusing the government of 'selling out' sovereignty. In 2011 the Dalai Lama was invited to attend and give a lecture at the 80th birthday of Desmond Tutu in October. The Dalai Lama's staff accused the South African government of delaying consideration of his visa application because of Chinese pressure, but the government denied such pressure and counter accused the Dalai Lama of not submitting any visa applications. Three days before Tutu's birthday the Dalai Lama announced that he would not attend the event as he did not expect to be granted a visa. In 2014, the Dalai Lama was again unable to enter South Africa when he was invited to attend the 14th World Peace Summit along with other Nobel Laureates. The Dalai Lama was asked by national government to withdraw his application for a visa to visit SA for reasons 'in the national interest' so as to avoid embarrassment by his visa being officially rejected. The refusal to issue a visa to the Dalai Lama had the mayor of Cape Town, Patricia de Lille stating that, South Africans often forget that to the rest of the world, peaceful transition is seen as a miracle and that it remains a great source of inspiration to other nations. The opposition parties, Nobel Prize Laureates, Archbishop Desmond Tutu and his foundation closed ranks to lobby and appeal to the government to grant a visa to the Dalai Lama to no avail.

2.2 The Influence of China

The Dalai Lama debacle in particular has had a particularly strong impact on galvanizing South African public opinion on its relationship with China. The South African media, accused by the ruling party and other critics as a vocal, liberal class of largely white South Africans which disproportionately dominate the South African media landscape, are viewed as having a generally anti-China stance. This, it is asserted, creates the illusion of public 'consensus' on issues while in fact it only represents the views of a minority of the population. The South African media is perceived to be influenced by 'Western' media, which generally gives negative coverage of China. While South Africans acknowledge the importance of China to South Africa,²⁵ this sentiment is countered with domestic pressures, such as the effect of China's hyper-competitive manufacturing base on local industries. Within South Africa, the effects of this have been felt particularly within the textile industry.²⁶ South Africa's Union Federation, COSATU, which is in a formal alliance with the ANC (African National Congress) has challenged China on issues of labour²⁷ and has been in favour of tariffs increases, warning of a 'tsunami of cheap Chinese goods' stifling local industries and wiping out jobs²⁸. At present, there have also been discussions that the negative effects on labour can also be felt in South Africa's steel industry. The current crisis in the steel industry, which can potentially result in the demise of the local steel industry, is partially derived from a global oversupply based on excess capacity in China's steel production. It was reported that the South African government will introduce tariffs on Chinese steel imports in order to save approximately 50,000 jobs in the short term.²⁹ Similar criticism has been extended to BRICS more generally, with COSATU warning of these powers having the potential to become part of the 'undemocratic monopoly club of the powerful'.³⁰

Given their expanding economic size and increasingly active diplomacy, the BRICS countries are gradually gaining greater influence over the international decision making process. Also the BRICS grouping itself is formed to secure each member's best interests (individually). Managing the influence of these emerging powers will become decisive issues for the South African government. Opposition parties have also issued statements against China. The Economic Freedom Fighters have been critical of China *vis-a-vis* their broader opposition of what they view as government collusion with the international mining industry³¹, as well as over land issues.³² The South African main opposition, the Democratic Alliance (DA), has also issued concerns with South African engagements with China, although these focus more on issues of China's control over its media and issues of human rights.³³ Within the broader context of China's engagement in Africa, South Africa's domestic opposition to engagement with China is relatively mild, when compared to more serious episodes in Zambia and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).³⁴

The ANC's relationship with the Chinese Communist Party, while shaky at first, has become increasingly cemented in recent years. Mandela's switch from official relations with the Republic of China (ROC), or Taiwan to the People's Republic of China, took several years. This, and his meeting with the Dalai Lama, put a certain strain on ties. China and the ANC did not share much in the way of a united struggle history. While during the Cold War the global South's liberation movements drew on support from the socialist bloc countries, the Sino-Soviet split (1959) and their hostility towards each other during the Cold War, entailed that African liberation groups supported by the USSR could not receive simultaneous support from Beijing. Beijing supported the Pan-African Congress (PAC); this was because the USSR had already secured relations with the ANC, thus precluding closer ANC-China relations. Despite this, China was never a supporter of the Apartheid regime. Beijing's foreign policy was, and continues to be, dictated by an 'anti-hegemonic' approach, particularly with regard to African states. This dovetailed with the general ethos of the ANC as a party of liberation struggle, not to mention that both countries' ideologies were informed by strong socialist traditions.

Within the past decade and a half, the relationship has been cemented with various high-level agreements. In April 2000, the Pretoria Declaration established a bi-national commission, the expansion of trade and investment as well as co-operation in the fields of security and promoting a more equitable international order. In June 2004, the relationship was elevated to 'Strategic Partnership' status; in August 2010, this was up-graded to the level of 'Comprehensive Strategic Partnership', otherwise known as the Beijing Declaration, aimed to strengthen co-operation through concrete measures, politically commit to United Nations/FOCAC joint efforts and economically enhance balanced/value-added trade. 2013 also saw the establishment of a joint inter-ministerial working group on China-South African Co-operation, which includes bi-annual meetings at ministerial level. China and South Africa have also engaged in a number of security related issues, such as expanding peacekeeping missions and coordinating UNSC-AU military co-operation. In addition to the deepening of state ties, party-to-party relations have also strengthened in recent years, with the ANC sending members of its National Executive Committee to Beijing for three

weeks of management and organizational training.³⁵ The South African government has sent several delegations to China to study their SOE model so as to aid in South Africa's reindustrialization programme. The most recent of these saw Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa, accompanied by the Public Enterprises and Higher Education as well as other deputy ministers, senior government officials, business leaders and SOE executives. It was announced in 2014 that the ANC will be building a Party institute, funded by China and modelled on the China Executive Leadership Academy in Pudong, Shanghai, where Party members are trained.³⁶

While South African presidents, including Jacob Zuma, have criticized China's trading patterns with South Africa in the past, more recently, the signals have been increasingly positive. Statements emanating from the upper echelons of the ANC have not only affirmed commitment to the relationship but have also implied that engagement with China offers a superior alternative to engagement with Western powers. In a speech at Tsinghua University in Beijing in December 2014, President Zuma stated that China 'offers an opportunity to African countries to be able to free themselves from the shackles that are really colonially designed'. While with Europe, Africans are regarded as 'either a former subject or a second and third class kind of a person', with China 'we relate as brothers and sisters to do business together, not because one is a poor cousin.'³⁷ More recently, the international relations section of the ANC's 2015 National General Council (NGC) discussion document, prepared by the ruling party's international relations sub-committee, echoes this sentiment of China (and Russia) as a viable alternative to the United States in what it claims is a new 'Cold War'. The document states that the Chinese economy has 'heralded a new dawn of hope for further possibilities of a new world order', that China 'is gradually redefining the world towards a multipolar order' and that 'the exemplary role of the collective leadership of the Communist Party of China in this regard should be a guiding lodestar of our own struggle.'³⁸ The rhetoric used in the NGC discussion document points to the ANC's belief that the Chinese model of economic development is the best and that Chinese leaders are to be considered as role models for the party. Furthermore, the NGC discussion document lays the foundation for the government to formalise the shift from the United States towards China.³⁹ The ANC has come under fire given the pro-Chinese, pro-Russian and anti-US rhetoric used in the NGC discussion document.⁴⁰ Scholars have expressed concerns over the trajectory of South African foreign policy if the ANC chooses to adhere to this chosen course, so much so that the NGC discussion document has been deemed as a tragedy for South African foreign policy.⁴¹ South Africa's National Development Plan (NDP) has very little to say about international relations and nothing to say about China. Therefore, this points to the fact that the leaning toward China is still at the level of ideology and not necessarily implemented in domestic policies.

3. Navigating new terrain

At a political level, South African behaviour in the realm of international relations in recent years suggests a shift away from western norms. This shift has had costs and benefits both domestically and internationally. Conducting diplomacy has been characterised by Robert Putnam, specifically in relation to

its economic dimension, as a 'two-level game' – one in which states act for reasons of domestic interests, and the other at the level of international negotiation; the aim is to achieve some sort of 'general equilibrium' between the two.⁴² Despite the criticism of the government's engagement with China, it has not had sufficient impact to alter the relationship in any substantial way. Such concerns are largely outweighed by the economic benefits which the engagement has ushered in. Chinese companies are involved in South African mining, telecommunications, transport, manufacturing and financial services; they are also involved in 'soft power' initiatives, such as the setting up of Confucius Institutes and assisting in bringing Mandarin language teaching into South African schools. Internationally, South Africa has also faced reputational risks in terms of certain foreign policy decisions, such as the most recent episode of the Dalai Lama visa debacle: the fact that the visit was for a meeting of Noble Peace Prize laureates, gave it high profile international status. While it is difficult to measure a phenomenon such as 'international reputation', recent events will contribute toward the perception of South Africa as shifting in its foreign relations. This perception may have implications for the way South Africa builds coalitions and alliances as well as its ability to achieve international political objectives.⁴³ There have been many discussions about how beneficial China is to South Africa's development without there bring actual evidence. Ideologically, China is very high on the agenda to the ANC led government, while at the level of media, the trade unions, and civil society, China is regarded with suspicion. Yet, there are so many other variables to consider: i.e. China does not feature in the National Development Plan (NDP); Europe and the United States remain strong partners; South African infrastructure, mining and financial companies compete and partner with China in ways which are not similar in other African states, where Chinese companies dominate or enter into deals with local SOEs. Thus, while there are clear ideological proclivities toward China within the ruling party, it is mitigated by a host of other factors. Often in debates on Chinese influence on South Africa, these other circumstances are omitted, sometimes creating a distorted view of China's influence. This is not to say that China does not exert influence, as discussed above, but it needs to be examined within the broader context.

Within the 21st century, the rise of developing countries, their economic modes of engagement and their discourse of addressing colonial grievances and the continued dominance of the western order, offer new alternatives for African states. Euro-American policy norms, which have dominated international agendas for many decades, need to adjust to this new geopolitical landscape. Roth and Hicks have argued that the recent voting records of democracies such as India, Brazil and South Africa are marked by a deep suspicion of western governments 'double standards and inconsistent approaches toward abusive governments'. Thus, while these countries are 'still debating' the nature of their foreign policy, '[it is clear] that they want it to be different to the West's'.⁴⁴ It is crucial that these actors strive to grasp how colonial and post-colonial relations have contributed toward shaping this new identity, and why it is attractive to developing world states. Additionally, there is a need for policy makers in this realm to better grasp the political rhetoric which drives these new agendas.

While many in the west view countries such as Russia and China as authoritarian states which shun issues of democracy and human rights, these countries, and the BRICS more generally, champion these ideals. For instance, BRICS declarations repeatedly affirm commitment to ‘human rights, including the right to development’. China in particular views development in and of itself as equivocal to human rights development. A key element of the Chinese concept of human rights is the focus on the state to provide capacity for development – referred to in China’s White Paper on Human Rights as ‘the right to subsistence’.⁴⁵ In this regard, China’s shift in economic policies, which has brought over 500 million people out of poverty, is viewed as key instrument in its human rights toolkit. Drawing on the proverb ‘To make a man prosper, build him a road’, China forwards the idea that providing people basic development will enable them to enable themselves to prosper. Critics refer more broadly to this as the ‘East Asian Development Model’ which sees individual rights side-lined at the expense of industrial development. This fits more broadly with China’s view of a stable World Order in which peace and stability are brought about primarily through development.⁴⁶ In this sense, to ask whether a country such as South Africa is abandoning its human rights and democracy stance may be re-positioned as: is South Africa re-defining what it considers democracy and human rights within the context of new global discourses on these topics? If South Africa and other countries are re-conceptualizing the notions of human rights and democracy, then it is of primary importance that policy makers grasp this new idealization as well as its appeal. From the perspective of many developing world countries, western notions of human rights and democracy have been universalized through strong-arming developing countries into adopting these norms. This has been carried out primarily through aid and loans attached to governance reforms. In this vein, the terms ‘human rights’ and ‘democracy’, deployed in this way, signify for countries such as China, a tool of interference in the affairs of foreign countries. Within many African states, this sentiment is also strongly felt. By countries like China and South Africa perceiving human rights differently to the West, i.e. sidelining individual rights, this could be leading to a re-definition of human rights and thus to the end of the concept of universality.

While the data discussed in this report points toward a shift in South African policy, it should be cautioned that there is no single unified bloc structuring this new geopolitical perspective. While critics have argued that the rise of emerging powers challenge the influence of more traditional partners in the Euro-American sphere, it is frequently noted that BRICS countries by no means speak with one voice. India, South Africa and Brazil- already in a pre-existing alliance, IBSA, which forwards traditional notions of human rights and democracy not readily promoted by the likes of Russia or China. India, which has border disputes with China and is concerned over China’s growing presence in the Indian Ocean, has obliged it to also establish stronger ties with Washington.⁴⁷ Additionally, newer global financial institutions, such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) – initiated by China and including most major countries and South Africa (but not Japan or the United States), further complicates the idea of a unified grouping exterior to the current global order. Despite BRICS rhetoric which aims to challenge the existing global economic order, its development bank, according to the Fortaleza

Declaration, 'will supplement the efforts of multilateral and regional financial institutions for global development'.⁴⁸ The economic model of state capitalism forwarded by these states is intricately bound up with the world economy – dramatically demonstrated in the negative effects of global stocks during China's market instability in August 2015.

It is within this context, in which emerging powers are at once integrating into global markets while at the same time fostering a new multi-polar political worldview that South Africa has to navigate its foreign policy. In the past decade, South Africa's 'pragmatic' foreign policy put emphasis on fostering trade relations with both the developing and developed worlds. However, within recent years, numerous policy decisions point toward a potential policy turn toward developing nations at the expense of developed nations. At present, this has not translated into a financial withdrawal from these latter partners; for instance, the European Union still constitutes the bulk of South Africa's trade. From a purely economic perspective, maintaining this diversification of economic partners makes sense. To what degree South Africa's political shift away from developed world partners will translate into a shift away from trade and investment with these partners, hangs in the balance.

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