

Continental-Africanism:

South Africa's "African Agenda"¹

By Chris Landsberg

Director: Centre for Policy Studies;

Research Professor: University of Johannesburg

1. Introduction

In foreign policy, as in domestic policy formulation, agenda setting is a key element of the process. Agenda setting in policy formulation essentially refers to the priorities, the key strategic goals, the main concerns and ambitions, which governments set for themselves. Agenda setting thus refers to "the ability to structure policy debate by controlling which issues are discussed or establishing a priority amongst them"¹.

When South Africa was elected to serve on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) for a two-year period starting on 1 January 2007, the African National Congress (ANC) led government was at pains to stress that its foremost priority would be to try and ensure that the UNSC supports the "African Agenda"². On the eve of the President's departure for Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to attend the African Union (AU) summit, the Department of Foreign Affairs released a statement saying that "President Mbeki will attend this summit within the context of South Africa's commitment to consolidate the African Agenda..."³. When President Thabo Mbeki released a statement on 12 March 2007 to commemorate Commonwealth Day, he made the point that the Commonwealth Heads of State and Government Meeting (CHOGM) meeting that will take place in Uganda in November 2007, will be an "... opportunity to advance the African Agenda"⁴. The "African Agenda" has indeed become the cloak under which South Africa's continental African strategies are covered.

So, what is South Africa's African agenda? How does it try to set and influence a continental African Agenda? Is South Africa's continental African agenda necessarily the same as the agendas of other African states and actors like the African Union (AU), or are their crucial divergences?

As the "Grand Debate" about what integration trajectory the continent should follow, the Pan-Africanist United States of Africa (USAf) concept is pitted against a Continental-Africanist paradigm. While the Pan-Africanist United States of Africa (USAf) notion places emphasis on moving towards a single continental entity based on an eventual federalist model, the Continental Africanist paradigm places emphasis

¹ This paper forms part of the CPS research project on the "African Agenda" funded by the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA).

on norms development, building political and economic governance institutions, and consolidating Regional Economic Communities (RECs) as the building blocks of African integration, and "strict adherence" to such normative framework. South Africa has advanced an "African agenda" in favour of the latter: Continental-Africanism. The key rationale underscoring South Africa's African Agenda could be summed up simply here: the search for continental *order* in Africa⁵. When we talk here of order, we are referring to the need to bring predictability and stability to African politics by negotiating norms and rules, and establishing institutions, and using diplomacy to persuade and encourage African states to live by commonly agreed-upon rules, respecting and honouring such rules, and respecting sovereignty of African states, but also agreeing norms and rules for intervention the continent⁶.

South Africa has advanced this agenda by engaging in deft and carefully calibrated geo-strategic diplomacy in the continent, and even abroad. It cultivated partners and strategic allies to sign up to, and support this agenda. It identified key allies in all sub-regions of the continent, and identified supporters and allies in North Africa; West Africa; East Africa and the Horn; Central Africa; and Southern Africa. South Africa should strengthen ties with countries like Algeria, Nigeria, Ghana, Tanzania, Mozambique, Botswana, and others.

We will argue here that South Africa's African Agenda, motivated by the overall aim of order, rests essentially on five legs: a search for security and stability through the African Union; a search for development through the New partnership for Africa's development; a search for effective governance through mechanisms such as the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), a search for co-operation through international partnership pacts; and an anchoring of Regional Economic Communities (REC's) – or sub-regional bodies – as the building blocs of continental order.

2. Understanding the "African agenda"

A key goal informing the new African agenda is to position the country in a way that allows it to become a critical player in shaping the development agenda of the continent. The "African Agenda", in a nutshell, is based on the "understanding that socio-economic development cannot take place without political peace and stability are prerequisites for socio-economic development". South Africa was key in the founding and establishment of the African Union (AU), and was pivotal in negotiating the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

Through the "African agenda", South Africa has positioned itself as a special "middle ranked" power, with its status deriving from its geographic, geo-political and geo-strategic role in Africa. The rubric of an "African Renaissance" remains a central tenet of this "African agenda".

A key aspect of South Africa's foreign policy over the past decade has been that of assuming the role of peacemaker and negotiator in Africa, and being a champion of Africa's interests abroad – interests as South Africa sees it. Under the banner of "the African agenda", the country wishes to be a progressive agent for change. This agenda roots the Republic firmly in Africa, and South Africa's African strategies have gradually become so ambitious and elaborate that the Republic has come to punch above its weight. The Thabo Mbeki government (1999-) is pursuing a largely

pragmatic foreign policy with a core concern which is the articulation of an ambitious African posture, officially dubbed "The 'new' African agenda", in search of development, peace and security, governance and economic growth. Under the banner of the "African agenda", South Africa sees its own future as inextricably linked to that of the African continent. Just as South Africa is committed to peace, stability, democratisation and social development at home, so the African agenda commits it to the same in Africa. Indeed, the values to which the country aspires at home are the same values it hopes for in the rest of the continent.

The "African agenda" stresses "good neighbourliness" and "non-hegemonic" relations with fellow African states. Policy openly states that South Africa would use its relative strength for mutual benefit, and not as an attempt to run roughshod over neighbouring states as the rogue apartheid regime use to do through its destructive policies of destabilisation. A specific element is that South Africa seeks "strategic partnerships" with African states in order to promote peace, stability and development. South Africa makes use essentially of diplomatic means and suasion to achieve its African agenda objectives⁷. It also does not hesitate to spend economic largesse and engage in expansive peacekeeping operations so as to win confidence in, and support for, the African agenda.

A major theme running through the African Agenda strategies is the promotion of "democratic peace"⁸, the idea that democracies do not go to war with one another, that democracy is fundamentally more pacific than other forms of government. The idea is that the "building of stable democratic systems... and make a contribution to the challenge of peace, democracy, development and stability in the rest of our continent"⁹, and "the dream of peace and stability, of democracy and human rights" are all intertwined, and rejecting one party rule and personal dictatorship. Mbeki even suggested that Africans must "rebel" and "resist all tyranny."¹⁰ In Africa, says Tshwane's African Agenda, governments should "derive their authority and legitimacy from the will of the people," as well as become fully representative of women¹¹.

The "African agenda" is clear that Africa needs accelerated economic growth, and the private sector should play a key role in generating such growth. But the market should also be guided so as to ensure that social goals of equity and addressing poverty are addressed.

3. The Domestic Sources of South Africa's "African Agenda"

President Mbeki once opined that, caused by decades of apartheid and centuries of white minority domination and supremacy, South Africa has been turned into a country of "two nations" and "two economies". Driving much of South Africa's engagement with the rest of the African continent are fundamental domestic objectives. A 2005 strategic foreign policy document stressed that "constructive and innovative ways" should be explored to "... deal with its two economies, the rich, technologically driven first economy and the poor, underdeveloped second economy"¹². That strategic document went further and asserted that the Republic's "national interest is, therefore, defined in terms of achieving the aspirations and meeting the challenges of the second economy"¹³. In short, both at home and in the rest of continent, the African Agenda seeks to significantly reduce poverty,

underdevelopment and unemployment. Indeed, just like many African states are confronted with the challenges of poverty and inequality, so South Africa faces these imperatives within its own borders, and increasingly has defined its policy position as a Developmental state addressing the needs of the 'second economy' while allowing the first economy to act as economic driver.

Similarly, poverty alleviation and overcoming Africa's marginalisation have led the Mbeki government to engage with its continental allies to place this developmental challenge at the centre of the Continent's and the World's agenda. Out of these strategic alliances, have emerged institutions such as NEPAD, tasked with developing the policy and implementation framework driving this agenda.

The Developmental state addressing the marginalisation of the 'second economy' from a national, continental and global perspective, goes hand in hand with seeking to unlock trade barriers and encouraging foreign direct investment into the economy. From a continental perspective, this has meant that the Government has sought to facilitate the entry of South African business interests into the remainder of the Continent. This it has done through Bi-national Commissions, Joint Co-operation Commissions, Partnership Forums and other mechanisms.

A consequence of this has been a dramatic increase in South African exports into other African markets, as well as increasingly free-flowing goods and services in the SADC region. Exports of goods, and the direct investment by South African companies into West and East Africa, as well the SADC countries, has increased significantly. Offsetting the harm that unequal trade relations could cause has been the gradual but significant lowering of trade barriers and the granting of preferential access to goods imported from regional trading partners. This is beginning to create greater equalisation in the trade balances with these countries.

4. Functionalism and the Strengthening Regional and Continental Institutions

4.1 African Union (AU)

Central to Tshwane's African agenda is the idea that African states and continental institutions should not rush into a United States of Africa (USAF) project; instead, Africans should go about establishing order in a measured fashion by building and consolidating institutions on the basis of common norms and principles, and cajoling states into living by commonly defined rules. South Africa's African Agenda thus subscribes to a functionalist approach to African political development, placing as it does a huge emphasis on norms creation, institution building, and building a community of society of African states, where such states live by common norms and values. Indeed, since 1999, South Africa has been a key actor in establishing the AU, and in 2002 became the first African state to chair the AU, the successor to the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). The AU makes provision the establishment of some 18 new organs entrusted with maintaining order in African politics. These key institutions include executive organs, accountability structures, and representative institutions. For Tshwane, it is important to strengthen all these bodies. The executive, accountability and representative institutions of the AU, recognised by Article 5.1 of the Constitutive Act of the Union, include:

1. the Assembly of the Union;
2. the Executive Council (that is the Ministers Council);
3. the Pan-African Parliament (PAP);
4. the Commission, which has some executive power and own authority of initiative;
5. the influential Permanent Representative Committee (or committee of Ambassadors in Addis Ababa);
6. the Peace and Security Council;
7. the Court of Justice and the African Court of People's and Human Rights;
8. the Specialised Technical Committees –that would work closely with the PAP;
9. the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC); and
10. the Financial Institutions.¹⁴

With South Africa's influence, the AU moved to place an emphasis on the need to strengthen capacities and actions in conflict prevention, management and resolution, and governance. South Africa wishes in particular for institutions like PAP, ECOSOCC, the African Union Commission, and the African Court of Human and People's Rights to be strengthened.

4.2. SADC as a Building Block

Given its commitment to ending Africa's international marginalisation, the "African agenda" builds on a strong policy in defence of regional integration and development. Regional Economic Communities (REC's) are the building blocks and implementing agents of the AU. Policy openly states sub-regional bodies like ECOWAS, SADC, IGAD, ECASS, the Mahgreb Union and others should be strengthened to promote the goals of regional integration, democratisation, peace and security, and accelerated economic growth. As such, and as a REC, a commitment to achieve regional economic development, and to building the Southern African Development Community (SADC) forms key pillars of South Africa's "African agenda". South Africa's vision for SADC is one "of the highest possible degree of economic cooperation, mutual assistance where necessary and joint planning of regional development initiatives, leading to integration consistent with socio-economic, environmental and political realities."

South Africa has long favoured a "cautious and step-by-step" approach towards regional development in southern Africa, and there is a huge stress on regional co-operation. Policy is based "on the principles of equity and mutual benefit", a denunciation of domineering and bossy postures towards the region and the belief that an emphasis on partnership and fairness would more effectively realise foreign policy goals. Over the past seven years, much effort and energy went into restructuring SADC¹⁵, and Pretoria pushed for the articulation of protocols, but also stressed the implementation and operationalisation of protocols, particularly those on free trade, Politics, Defence and Security Co-operation.¹⁶ A great deal of focus was placed on boosting international investor confidence and attracting Foreign Direct Investment to the regional economy. This is in line with the commitment to create a free trade area, and a customs union, with the aim of establishing a SADC common market. SADC wishes to establish a Free Trade Area by 2008; negotiations for the completion of a SADC Customs Union by 2010; completion for a SADC Common Market by 2015; sustained economic growth of about 5% across the board, and an increase in intra-

SADC trade to at least 35% by 2008; and an increase in manufacturing as a percentage of GDP to 25% by 2015. The chances of these targets being met, however, are rather limited.

South Africa is in favour of, and pushing for negotiating Free Trade agreements between SADC and MERCOSUR – Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay; and SACU is expected to continue with negotiations with the USA. South Africa also promised to begin preparations for negotiating a SACU-China Free Trade Area. A challenge for the “African agenda” is the regional trade balance in favour of South Africa; it is often said that this economic and trade dominance undermines South Africa’s position in the region. It is vital that South Africa strives for a trade regime and trade balance that addresses this inequity and disequilibrium.

4.3 NEPAD as the African Development Blueprint

The “African agenda” posited a pivotal role for South Africa in crafting a socio-economic development plan for the continent. South Africa’s foreign policy elite therefore has been instrumental in articulating several development plans for the continent. Foreign policy actors sought to promote people-centred development. In 1999, South Africa, Nigeria and Algeria articulated the Millennium Development Recovery Programme (MAP), and later on, together with Senegal, these countries developed the New African Initiative (NAI). In 2001, these countries developed the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD). South Africa and its NEPAD partners view themselves as interlocutors and were key in negotiating a new partnership between Africa and the outside world. NEPAD hopes to spur Africa’s development after decades of failures as a result of the legacies of colonialism, the Cold War, bad governance, unsound economic policies and management and destructive conflicts.¹⁷ It is based on democratic values and principles. The NEPAD plan of action identified five critical issues as essential to bolstering Africa’s development chances. These are:

1. democracy, governance and peace and security
2. economic and corporate governance
3. infrastructure and information technology
4. human resource development (notably health and education)
5. agriculture and market access.¹⁸

South Africa is host to the NEPAD Secretariat, and commits significant resources to NEPAD programmes and the Secretariat. In an effort to transform NEPAD into a truly developmental plan, South Africa and its partners worked hard to articulate NEPAD sectoral development programmes: agriculture; science and technology; industrialisation; transport; environment; and regional economic integration. These sectoral strategies promote self-reliance; conflict prevention, management and resolution; political, economic and corporate governance; and the protection and promotion of democracy and human rights.

South Africa took almost exclusive responsibility for promoting NEPAD internationally as Africa’s socio-economic development plan. In 2002, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution accepting NEPAD as the official development plan for Africa. Also in terms of international promotion of NEPAD, South Africa promoted it amongst MERCOSUR, the Gulf Co-operation Council states (GCC), the

Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Japanese development Initiative for Africa (TICAD), the China-Africa Co-operation Forum (C-ACF), and the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

4.4 The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) as a Governance model

The promotion of 'good governance' occupies a central position in Mbeki's African Agenda. African Agenda policies promoted adherence to democratic benchmarks and governance indicators set up by Africans and for Africans in order to benefit from the renewed focus on African ownership. It had for example been instrumental in setting up an African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) to promote democratic conduct in Africa.¹⁹ Given its commitment to democratisation as part of its Africa policy strategies, South Africa and its NEPAD allies introduced the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). The APRM is an instrument to which African member states sign up voluntarily and commit to comply with the principles, priorities and objectives of the AU Constitutive Act and other decisions of the AU and NEPAD. It is a mechanism for mutual learning and socialisation. It promotes democracy and good governance as "hot political issues", and the APRM openly encourages adherence to these. South Africa is firm in the view that the APRM should make a link between governance, democracy, peace and security and development. For Tshwane-Pretoria, African member states should comply with the APRM's provisions, and all African states should ideally sign up to the APRM.

South Africa should be careful about contradictions in its continentalism. Because South Africa was such a key player in the articulation of Africa's emerging governance architecture, there were great expectations for the success of its own Peer Review process in 2005/2006²⁰. Given that South Africa and other pivotal states like Nigeria, Mozambique and others have invested so much in the process, the very success and credibility of the APRM depends, to a great extent, on the review of these states. In September 2005, the Mbeki administration officially launched South Africa's year-long Peer Review Process. But the South African process started off with great animosity and tensions between the government and local civil society actors.

Many South African NGOs were critical of what they saw as the "controlled" nature of the South African process, charging that government, and the executive in particular, was seeking to dominate and dictate the process²¹. In the end, the government took these criticisms seriously, reaching out to as many stakeholders as possible; it opened itself to dialogue and engagement on the process. South Africa's government commissioned four base study papers on political governance and democracy; corporate governance; economic governance; and socio-economic development. It also convened public meetings throughout the country and encouraged the citizenry to participate actively in the process²². South Africa's parliament convened its own peer review process, and also stressed the need for public participation.

But while civil society has a pivotal role to play in this process, some of these groups can also be criticised for the manner in which they cast aspersions on the APRM process, labelling it an exercise in "self congratulation" and "legitimation."²³ This conduct only served to polarise South African politics. Civil society cannot expect merely to sit in judgement over government through this process. While the APRM

has accorded NGOs rights and privileges, these groups also have a major responsibility to help consolidate South Africa's APRM process and to address the enormous political, socio-economic, and developmental challenges faced by South Africa and the broader African community of states. Civil society actors must "dirty their hands" and engage both the state and its citizens – especially the poor – to gauge their views on the state and health of democracy and governance twelve years into South Africa's liberation. NGOs and the broader civil society community should themselves promote a "holistic approach to development" which "requires systemic attention"²⁴.

Over a decade into the new order, South Africa still faces major challenges with regard to institutional transformation and in making the new state responsive to the needs of a post-apartheid society. This is why the black-led government has stressed "good governance": efficiency, effectiveness, clean and uncorrupt government, and strengthening the capacity of the state to deliver services to its citizenry, with a focus on institutional design and processes. Also important in the "new" South Africa is the importance of democratic governance – state-society relations – and the participation and representation of the public in political, policy, and governance processes. The government and non-state actors must address substantive governance and democracy issues as well as issues of participation in public life. Unless these issues are addressed more seriously, tensions between government and major pockets of civil society will increase. South Africa is in the grip of a serious policy debate: selling a new governance paradigm of developmental democracy and a developmental state. This is one of the most important debates in South Africa's post-settlement era, and all key stakeholders – including government, civil society, NGOs, labour, the private sector, political parties, and other organs of state such as the national parliament – have a major opportunity to help shape the future political and development trajectories of the country. The outcome of this process will have a great impact on South Africa's ability to continue to promote its African Agenda.

5. Peace, Stability and Security

South Africa's African Agenda goes by the mantra that "there can be no peace without development, and no development without peace". A key goal of the African Agenda is to achieve "sustained and sustainable peace in the Continent". Post-settlement South Africa has therefore been an active proponent of peaceful resolution of conflicts on the African continent and elsewhere. Tshwane has adopted the view that the Republic's own experience of emerging from a seemingly intractable apartheid conflict situation and out of that creating a progressive democratic state makes it well placed to assist others in similar conflict situations; it is determined to apply the negotiation settlement solution as a means of addressing conflicts.

A dominant mode of South Africa's African Agenda strategy has been to push for Negotiated Solutions and Inclusive Governments – read: the Government of National Unity (GNU) option. So, South Africa's African Agenda is heavily influenced by the experience of its transition from apartheid to democracy, and its agenda remains predisposed towards quiet diplomacy and preventive diplomacy, notably the settlement of disputes through negotiations. Both the Mandela and Mbeki governments emphasised the need for regional reconciliation following decades of tension and destabilisation by the apartheid state.

South Africa continues to rule out the military option in international affairs and its preferred strategy continues to be that of brokering peace pacts amongst belligerents in conflict situations; military action is only to be taken under a multilateral umbrella, and only in very select instances, namely to engage in 'responsibility to protect missions', justified in instances of gross violations of human rights, genocide, instability in African states which threatens broader regional stability, and unconstitutional changes of government (read: *coups de 'tat*). More importantly, military action should only be undertaken with a clear United Nations and African Union mandate.

As early as 1994, Pretoria sought to promote peace in Angola by borrowing heavily from the country's own "miracle, as President Mandela sought to broker an "inclusive" peace deal in Angola's two decades-old civil war and he urged president Dos Santos to seek an "accommodation" with the rebel leader and declared warlord, Jonas Savimbi, from UNITA (União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola). Mandela tried to encourage Savimbi to accept the government under Dos Santos, instead of seeking to topple the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA).

In the mountain kingdom of Lesotho, the Mandela government joined Botswana and Zimbabwe in a preventive diplomacy effort to encourage elections and stave off a constitutional crisis in 1994. When South Africa engaged militarily in "Operation Boealeas" on 22 September 1998, when it and Botswana deployed 8 000 troops to roll back a mutiny against the government, it stressed that this action was under taken under a SADC umbrella.

Consistent with the African Agenda's preference for the peaceful settlement of disputes, Tshwane engaged in a "peacemaker" role when Thabo Mbeki (then South Africa's deputy president) played an active role in seeking an end to the rebellion against Zairian dictator, Mobutu sese Seko in 1997-98. Mbeki's approach involved an intriguing application of inducement strategies (i.e.: a combination of carrots and sticks), to try and nudge the parties to a settlement. He applied conditionalities, while also suggesting that in exchange for an agreement South Africa would take efforts to help rebuild the war-ravaged country through substantial post-conflict reconstruction.

Again, in a display of its inclination towards negotiated solutions to conflicts, and a denunciation of military options, South Africa refused in 1998 to send military troops to fight alongside any of the two blocs of parties: the Mugabe-Angola-Namibia-Kabila axis and the Museveni-Kagame sponsored rebels. Pretoria pursued an independent line by refusing to side with any of the two blocs in the conflict and instead opted for a peacemaker role.²⁵ Foreign Affairs Minister at the time, Alfred Nzo said at the time that South Africa's policy was to encourage the Congolese to "sit around a table and determine the future of their country."

Even Nigeria, which had been in the vanguard of the African anti-apartheid offensive, became a target of South Africa's international public policy objective of democratisation. Pretoria preferred a "quiet diplomacy" posture vis-à-vis Nigeria. President Mandela and then Deputy President Mbeki, fought the Abacha regime for the release of jailed leader, Olesegun Obasanjo (who has subsequently become

president in July 1999), as well as the lives of Ogoni leader, Ken Saro-wiwa and nine others.

South Africa hoped that its missions in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Burundi would bolster its image as peacemaker.²⁶ Since 1999, Pretoria was instrumental in efforts to try and end the violent conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and invested in an Inter-Congolese Dialogue (ICD), which commenced at Sun City in February 2002, a mini-version of the Convention for a Democratic South Africa, which convened in South African from 1991-1994. Instead of military action and peace enforcement, South Africa instead contributed troops to the United Nations Mission in Congo (MONUC). Pretoria played a key role in negotiating the interim government arrangement in the Congo. It has continuously called on the international community to help implement and bolster the peace process, and has co-ordinated these efforts closely with the UN.²⁷ This call for international support speaks to another element in South Africa's African Agenda: the quest for partnership with the industrialised powers and global multilateral agencies.

In Burundi South Africa sought to strengthen the Arusha Process and Deputy President Jacob Zuma played a key facilitation role in backing the efforts of Julius Nyerere and Nelson Mandela. One of its key policies was to ensure the cease-fire of June 2004, and the referendum to usher in a new government in 2005. South Africa provided specific training to Burundi to provide an internal protection unit for members of the interim government, while soliciting support for the deployment of an international peacekeeping force.²⁸

The Zimbabwe question forced itself onto the agenda before 1999 and South Africa has consistently opted for a strategy of "quiet diplomacy" vis-à-vis Harare. Mbeki also tapped into his strategic relationship with Nigeria's Olesegun Obasanjo to try and cajole Robert Mugabe in the direction of a negotiated end to the Zimbabwe crisis. Pretoria encouraged peaceful, free and fair democratic elections in March 2002 through participation of election observers under the auspices of the SADC Parliamentary Forum and the multi-sectoral South Africa Observer Mission (SAOM). South Africa also assisted both a political rapprochement between the MDC and ZANU-PF in order to ensure peace and stability, as well as an economic recovery in Zimbabwe. In 2006, Mbeki even supported the idea former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan play a facilitating role to end the crisis in Zimbabwe. Very little came of that initiative and in March 2007 Mbeki welcomed the initiative by SADC to formally appoint him as the facilitator to try and end the impasse in Zimbabwe. The fact that the endorsement came from SADC, gives Mbeki legitimacy, a currency Mbeki believes counts for a lot in Africa.

Foreign affairs officials stressed the importance of realising the Horn of Africa UN Settlement Plan for Western Sahara and South Africa again supported multilateralism by defending the IGAD-led peace process to try and bring an end to the 18-year old Sudan civil war. As the chair of the AU, Mbeki participated in negotiations to end the civil war in Liberia, which resulted in the departure into exile of former President Charles Taylor in August 2003.²⁹

In addition to military support, South Africa has contributed other significant support in the search of peace and stability on the continent. South African negotiators, both

governmental and non-governmental, have played important mediation and facilitation roles in Burundi, the DRC, Sudan, Ethiopia-Eritrea, Rwanda, Côte d'Ivoire and others. It has also provided electoral assistance in the DRC through bilateral relations between the IEC of both countries.

South Africa policy emphasised efforts to stem out trafficking of light weapons, anti-personnel landmines, child soldiers and human security. This issue of human security is an interesting one: in its foreign policy, and through the AU and NEPAD, South Africa's policy-makers emphasised the need for African actors to move away from strict notions of militarily defined state security to a greater emphasis on human security and social justice.

7. Speaking Softly

Outside perceptions of the Republic's conduct impacted greatly on how it pursues its African Agenda. A cursory look at official documentation emanating from the DFA in Pretoria would suggest that the ANC-led government is very sensitive about being perceived as a "Western Trojan horse" in Africa; it is similarly very sensitive about being perceived as a domineering, hegemonic power in Africa. Thus, while many outsiders viewed South Africa as some hegemon, some sort of regional superpower in the sub-region and more broadly on the continent of Africa, the ANC-led government was quick to denounce such ideas. Instead, it believed that the Republic's status and prominence in Africa and in world affairs more generally would be enhanced by not reinforcing, but by downplaying such bossy-ness. As early as 1996, therefore, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Aziz Pahad stated that "... we must carry our relations with the region in a way that is not a big brother relationship. This means that because of our relative strength we don't simply impose ourselves."³⁰ Pahad cautioned: "[t]his does not mean that we are not sensitive to the Big Brother or Big Sister syndrome. However, it also means that South Africa cannot afford to sit on the sidelines. There can be no debate about this issue."³¹ African leaders "...have indeed warned that if South Africa continues to hide behind the rhetoric of not wanting to play a leadership role, Africa would indeed suspect a hidden agenda."³²

The approach adopted by South Africa's policy-makers suggested that the best way to gain status and enhance its reputation was to reassure its neighbours that it did not harbour any threatening or aggressive intent. South Africa chose to portray a strategic and defensive non-threatening military posture. The belief was that such a posture is the best route to enhancing security and confidence within southern Africa and beyond. South Africa's defensive military strategy is based on both a strategy of deterrence and effective military capability. That is why, between 1997 and 1999, South Africa entered into arms trade deals of more than R 30 billion. Those deals involved Italy, Britain, Germany and Sweden. It's estimated that, in exchange for purchasing military equipment from these states, they would in turn directly invest in the country to the tune of some R 100 billion. This was thrice the value of the original deals, and more importantly would create jobs that would make some inroads into South Africa's jobless and unemployment rate of 35 %-45 %. The arms deals unleashed a storm of criticism by civil society and parliamentary opposition actors at home. Many critics argued that Pretoria faces no real military threats in the post-apartheid, post-Cold War context; that the overhaul of its military may send the wrong

2005, p. 2.

13 Ibid.

14. Chris Landsberg and Shaun Mackay, 'Is the AU the OAU without the O?', in *South African Labour Bulletin*, vol. 27, number 4, August 2003.
15. Bekoc Dorina A. 'Peacemaking in Southern Africa: The Role and Potential of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Task Force Meeting, International Peace Academy and the Centre for Africa's International Relations. Johannesburg, October 2002.
16. Landsberg Chris. 'Building a regional society in southern Africa: The institutional governance dimension.' *Policy: Issues and Actors*. Centre for Policy Studies, Vol. 15, No 1.
17. Bekoc Dorina A, Landsberg Chris. 'NEPAD: African Initiative, New Partnership?' International Peace Academy (IPA), IPA Workshop Report, New York, 16 July 2002.
18. NEPAD Secretariat. 'NEPAD at Work.' Summary of NEPAD Action Plans. Midrand, July 2002.
19. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), NEPAD workshop on Indicators, Benchmarks and Processes for the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), Cape Town, 7-8 October 2002.
20. See Chris Landsberg. "A Developmental Democracy? Democracy and Political Governance". Discussion paper prepared for Phase One of the South African APRM process, Johannesburg, January 2006, p. 2.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid. p. 3.
23. Such aspersions came from individuals like Ross Herbert from the South African Institute of International Affairs.
24. Chris Landsberg, "A Developmental Democracy? Democracy and Political Governance", *op. cit.*, p. 2.
25. Kabemba Claude. 'Whither the DRC? Causes of the Conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and the Way Forward.' *Foreign Policy Series Johannesburg: Centre for Policy Studies*, 1999, Vol 12, No 1.
26. Landsberg Chris, Mackay Shaun. 'The African Union: Political will and commitment needed for new doctrine.' Centre for Policy Studies. Synopsis. Vol. 7, No 1.
27. Briefing by Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Aziz Pahad, at the GCIS Parliamentary Briefings, Cape Town, 10 September 2003.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid.
30. Interview with the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, interview conducted by Kevin Humphrey, in *Towards Democracy* (1st Quarter 1996): p. 7.
31. See Claude Kabemba and Chris Landsberg, "South African Diplomacy: Ten Lessons from Africa," *Policy Brief 2* (Johannesburg: Centre for Policy Studies, 1998).
32. Landsberg Chris, Kabemba Claude. 'South African Diplomacy: Ten Lessons from Africa.' 3.
33. Ibid.