SOUTH AFRICAN FOREIGN POLICY IN A POST-APARTHEID, POST-COLD WAR ERA: A CASE OF HUMAN RIGHTS VERSUS NATIONAL ECONOMIC INTERESTS

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ABSTRACT

The clash between South Africa's dual need of a new political identity and economic viability reflects not only the difficulty in conducting a traditional foreign policy with a strong ideological overlay but also has spurred the debate over whether her foreign policy is to be conducted on the basis of expediency or principle. This study argues that although the shift to a post-apartheid society has created the context for South African foreign policy to be shaped by a new culture of human rights, it remains an interest-based pragmatic activity rather than an exercise in the projection of ethical values or ideological principles. It seems that the African National Congress (ANC)-led government has not yet resolved the basic contradictions that have bedevilled its international thinking since it came into power. Faced with this dilemma, South Africa is often reduced to straddling the fence by half-heartedly supporting principles on one occasion (as in its relationship with the Republic of China), and on another pursuing its economic interests (as her intention to sell arms to the People's Republic of China attests). The government's basic goal of developing fruitful political and economic linkages without sacrificing the principles which underpin wider policy has proved elusive. The central proposition of this study is that the defining parameters of South African foreign policy have remained largely indeterminate because of the realities of the conflicting interests posed by its domestic and external concerns. In essence, the inability to reconcile primary foreign policy goals (preservation of national economic interest) with new foreign policy aspirations (promotion of human rights and peace through the pursuit of justice and fair-play) reflects a tense ambivalence in the founding principles of post apartheid South African foreign policy.

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DEDICATION: For my mom (the idealist) and my dad (the realist)

DECLARATION

This study presents original work by the author and has not been submitted in any other form to another university. Where use has been made of the work of others, it is duly acknowledged in the text.

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Introduction

How can I pierce the impenetrable blank of the future?
I feel thy ominous greatness, evil as well as good;
I watch thee, advancing, absorbing the present, transcending the past;
I see thy lighting and thy shadows shadowing, as if the entire globe;
But I do not take to define thee - hardly to comprehend thee... (Marshall, 1960: 268)

Anyone who has ever dealt with foreign policy would appreciate these lines from Whitman. As technological advances reinforce the idea of a 'global village' in an increasingly interdependent world, foreign policy assumes new significance: the values and principles that we promote through foreign policy will not only determine our survival and prospects in the international arena but also will shape our relationships with other actors. In this sense, the values and principles that drive foreign policy are especially critical to a South Africa which has reclaimed its position on the international stage after a period of apartheid isolation.

Whilst apartheid paralysed the scope and dimension of South Africa's foreign relations, democracy has opened the world to her. South Africa began her new incursion into the international arena in the enviable position of having the goodwill of every other country in the world. Amongst other things, this was reflected by the resolution adopted by the United Nations (UN) in December 1995 to write off South Africa's debt to the organisation (Minty, 1996: 25). The new democracy was touted as possessing substantial moral capital, a rather precious commodity in present world politics. In this regard, South Africa had the wherewithal to bring leadership to individual issues such as human rights. There were high hopes that she would draw on her domestic experience to help chart new directions in the international relations of the twenty-first century.

Writing in 'Foreign Affairs', Nelson Mandela spelt out "four pillars" of the future foreign policy of South Africa (Mandela, 1993: 2, electronic version). Of these, the greatest attention was paid by Mandela to the issue of human rights and to the promotion of South Africa's economic interests. However, subsequent developments have proven that these two criteria are not easy to combine. South Africa has been slow to take advantage of all the opportunities that her new political dispensation has accorded her. This is due, in part, to her

new responsibilities (both external and internal) which appear antithetical.

Nonetheless, the talks aimed at the extension of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty held in New York in early 1995, showed the potential that South Africa's foreign policy possessed (Bischoff, 1995: 10). The occasion gave South Africa its first major chance to occupy a diplomatic high ground. The resource she brought to the meeting was her stature: she was the first UN member state to shed her nuclear weapons unilaterally. Unfortunately, South Africa did not capitalise on her new role. At the very moment of opportunity, visionary liberation rhetoric was jettisoned in favour of policies that were more cautious and pragmatic. The naive assumptions which guided South African foreign policy from the advent of the transitional process in 1990 to the election of 1994, including the purported influence of the so-called 'Mandela factor,' were for the most part dispelled and later replaced by a more realistic assessment of South Africa's position in the world. South Africa came to appreciate the dilemma of foreign policy decisions which confront governments that emphasize the importance and intrinsic value of human rights, a dilemma which is exacerbated when the reality on the ground includes the challenge to promote national economic interests.

It will be argued that although the shift to a post apartheid society has created the context for South African foreign policy to be shaped by a new culture of human rights, it remains an interest-based pragmatic activity rather than an exercise in the projection of ethical values or ideological principles. It seems that the African National Congress (ANC)-led government has not yet resolved the basic contradictions that have bedevilled its international thinking since it came into power.

Faced with moral choice and values of general human interest on one side and particular national interests on the other, the South African government finds itself between a devil and a hard rock. By selling out to the devil it loses its integrity and moral standing, by chipping at the hard rock it risks losing the support of the people who voted it into power. There is a sense of de javu; a cruel irony denoted by the fact that as in the past, bread and butter domestic issues continue to frustrate and complicate foreign policy (albeit in a new way). The clash between South Africa's basic needs of political identity and economic viability

reflects the difficulty in conducting a traditional foreign policy with a strong ideological overlay and has spurred the debate over whether her foreign policy is to be conducted on the basis of expediency or principle. The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) alludes to its vision as the "effective promotion of South Africa's national interests and values abroad" (www.gov.za/dept/index.html). How do we carry out our new role as a humane example and champion of justice in a world in which national interest is often the final arbiter? How do we reconcile ends and means, principles and survival? How do we keep secure both our existence and our values? Faced with this dilemma, South Africa is often reduced to straddling the fence by half-heartedly supporting principles on one occasion (as in its relationship with the People's Republic of China), and on another keeping its hands off altogether (as the handling of the Zimbabwean crisis attests). The government's basic goal of developing fruitful political and economic linkages without sacrificing the principles which underpin wider policy has proved elusive.

It becomes evident that if South Africa is to hold onto what little moral influence she has, she will have to move away from a mercantilist-orientated foreign policy laced with narrowly defined economic considerations. However, a foreign policy which champions human rights in absolutist terms is also not feasible in the present competitive international arena. So where does this leave South African foreign policy? My central proposition is that the defining parameters of South African foreign policy have remained largely indeterminate because of the realities of the conflicting interests posed by its domestic and external concerns. In essence, the inability to reconcile primary foreign policy goals (preservation of national economic interest) with new foreign policy aspirations (promotion of human rights and peace through the pursuit of justice and fair-play) reflects a tense ambivalence in the founding principles of post apartheid South African foreign policy. In this study, my primary aim is to assess South African foreign policy by contextualizing this ambivalence.

Chapter One

Defining Foreign Policy

Some analysts view foreign policy as an instrument through which a country and its government structures conduct relations with the rest of the world - politically, economically and socially. It is the art of building for the long term, the careful nurturing of relationships, the elaboration of policies that enhance available options while constraining those of potential opponents. In this sense, it is the "output of the state into the global system" (Russet and Starr, 1992: 179). Foreign policy implies a "conscious image of what is or ought to be the country's place in the world, or some general guiding principles or attitudes determining or influencing decisions on specific issues" (Wallace, 1971: 11). Whilst some regard foreign policy as a set of actual measures taken by leaders representing national entities with specific interests and needs, many others consider it the pursuit of universal purposes in a global field of human relations. Moreover, there are those who regard it as a "boundary" activity (Evans and Newnham, 1990: 123). They suggest that those who engage in the making of policy straddle two environments: an internal/domestic environment and an external/international one. Policy makers and the policy system itself stand at the juncture between the two and must therefore seek to mediate between them (Evans and Newnham, 1990: 123).

The analysis of foreign policy involves an understanding of both the domestic and international environments and the relation of one to the other. This presents a particular challenge; in Rosenau's words, "the foreign policy undertaking is the most delicate of political actions and the most fragile of political relationships" (Rosenau, 1971: 93). The domestic environment forms the background context against which policy is made and reflects factors such as prevailing ideology and national interests. The international environment is where policy is actually implemented.

In essence, we can deduce that any country's foreign policy represents how its domestic values and priorities are translated onto the international stage. It is the link between activities inside a state and the world environment outside it. James Rosenau notes that "the analysis of foreign policy is a bridging discipline that takes as its focus of study the bridges

that whole systems called nation-states build to link themselves and their subsystems to even more encompassing international systems of which they are a part" (Rosenau, 1987: 1). The ambiguity that characterizes South African foreign policy, more or less, can be attributed to her inability to reconcile both her external and internal interests.

Foreign policy, in Morgenthau's famous formulation, is about the "national interest defined in terms of power;" therefore, its proper or 'normal' conduct requires the virtual exclusion of variables such as ideological values or moral principles (Morgenthau, 1951: 242). 'Normal' states conduct their policies with due regard to geo-political realities and maximise their gain potential by eschewing potentially divisive and, therefore, weakening, internal ideological considerations (Evans, 1991: 7). In foreign affairs all is relative - relative to one's own needs, position, dangers, hopes and purposes. In essence, the making of foreign policy is founded on ego-centricity: given the character of the contemporary international system, of sovereign states and the conventions upon which they rest, foreign policy can only make sense in so far as it is calculated to advance, or at least to defend, the interests of the state concerned. Even where foreign policy is projected in moral or social terms of general relevance and validity - such as peace, human prosperity and political democracy - and even where it entails some sacrifice or surrender on the part of the society in whose name it is advanced, it must be fundamentally self-seeking to be politically tenable. For example, it has been argued that peace in Zimbabwe (and Southern Africa in general), is in the interest of peace in South Africa.

Furthermore, it should also be noted that economic needs are an important motivating factor in a state's foreign policy. There are strong pressures generated in the state's political system to satisfy individual or group economic needs through foreign policy. In addition, the economy of a state is fundamental to its capabilities and, therefore, to its power vis-a-vis other states, i.e. its ability to get other states to do what it desires. Another source of foreign policy is the cultural, psychological and/or ideological need of the state for prestige and status in the world.

One may conclude that foreign policy is a multidimensional set of policies, objectives,

principles, strategies and plans which cannot easily be packaged into a neatly described 'formula'. It is indeed questionable whether there is such a thing as a single, coherent and rational foreign policy. It may be argued that we are really dealing with a series of disjointed, finite and often mutually conflicting policies emerging from different governmental levels and divisions that are responding piecemeal to their own narrowly-focussed problems (Couloumbis and Wolfe, 1990: 115). In this sense, the ambiguity that characterizes South African foreign policy is not necessarily pernicious.

Whatever the case it should be noted that states do not make foreign policy, governments do. In foreign policy, as in domestic policy, they take their decisions under pressure from a number of different sources including events and even time (these external influences are discussed in chapter 3) and make their plans within certain frameworks. South African foreign policy will be assessed in terms of the traditional realist - idealist dichotomy and it is to a discussion of this framework that we now turn.

Chapter Two

South African Reality or 'Rainbow Nation' Rhetoric: Realism verus Idealism in South African Foreign Policy

The history of modern political thought is the story of a contest between two schools which differ fundamentally in their conception of the nature of man, society and politics (Morgenthau, 1960: 246). Politics operates in a world of states but it is also a world of human beings, and it will often be difficult to reconcile the demands and claims of both. Previously, idealism /realism was a battle of the mind, fought by and large outside the political arena (Wolfers, 1967: 81). Not until Woodrow Wilson set out to transform utopia into reality did it become a political issue of the first magnitude. Nowhere does the contradiction between professed ethical principles and actual behaviour appear so patent and universal as in the conduct of foreign relations; and human rights is an arena in which the intellectual challenge for the two worlds, the one of ideas and the other of implementation, is at its most compelling. A 'tug of war' between 'realists' who were concerned with attracting foreign investment, and 'idealists' who wanted South Africa to take the moral high ground would become a steady feature of South African foreign policy. The following section analyses the merit of both realist and the so-called idealist paradigms and attempts to understand South African foreign policy within this dichotomy.

I) THE REALIST ARGUMENT

At the normative core of realism is the quest for national security and state survival. Any government, whether democratically controlled or not, will pursue such interests in, what power-politics theorists see as, the anarchic world of "each against all" (Russet and Starr, 1992: 187). States have one primary goal; first and foremost, to preserve themselves and here the end often justifies the means. Therefore, the central proposition of realists is that the purpose of statecraft is national survival in a hostile environment and the acquisition of power is regarded as the proper, rational and inevitable goal of foreign policy. To seek power in order to promote one's interests is to follow the basic dictates of the 'laws' of nature (Couloumbis and Wolfe, 1990: 7).

Realist theory also stresses the role of national interest in determining state behaviour. In realist thought humans are characterized as being preoccupied with their own well-being in their competitive relations with each other. There is no global 'nationalism,' no state of mind in which "the supreme loyalty of the individual is felt to be due to mankind" - loyalty to one's nation proves to be superior to loyalty to such abstract and distant concepts as humanity or the human race (Duchacek and Thompson, 1960: 30). It is argued that each state must act with a single mind and single will and in this respect, they resemble the princes of the Renaissance about which Machiavelli wrote. Like them, states are supposed to be completely separate from each other, with no affinities or bonds of community interfering in their egotistical pursuit of power. They are competitors for power, engaged in a continuous and inescapable struggle for survival. This accords with the 'pure power' model of realists which maintains that when countries are engaged in a race to enhance their power, they could be expected to align themselves in disrespect of earlier friendships or ideological affinities. For example, the South African government abandoned its ties with a democratic Taiwan – which had contributed to its first election campaign as well as a number of development programmes – in favour of relations with China which could be a powerful ally in terms of both its global political and economic might.

A government's foreign policy may concern itself with values of justice and fairness only to the extent that it is in harmony with the national interest and does not interfere with the power objective. Realists posit that the moral rules that apply to individuals do not apply to states whose relations should be governed by considerations of national interest not of morality (*The Economist*, 4 December 1997: 2, electronic version). For instance, Machiavelli and Machiavellianism have stood for a doctrine that places princes and sovereign states under the rule, not of ordinary morality, but of the 'reason of state' which is considered an amoral principle peculiar to the realm of politics (Wolfers, 1967: 48). Realists assert that regardless of the moral constraints that bind our interpersonal behaviour, international politics is so anarchic that mere self-preservation requires the abandonment of moral inhibitions (Russet and Starr, 1992: 360). In addition, for most of the newer nations, the margin of their resources, even broadly conceived, is barely sufficient for national survival. Consequently, the pursuit of a common good is a luxury they cannot afford to strive for with profound

commitment. The basic point is that for many countries which lack the means to conduct these crusades of 'global meliorism,' the abandonment of their own interests in the service of others may not only be expensive but also prohibitive.

Realists maintain that the nation's interests, dispassionately perceived, should guide statesmen (Wolfers, 1967: 35). They posit that it would be disastrous if countries sought to build their foreign policies on the quicksands of emotion, especially today when emotions are at the mercy of the mass media. One arrives at the cynical conclusion that morality has no place in international politics: all sovereign states are compelled by the 'system' to play the evil game of power politics. As a consequence, the main springs of state action and behaviour revolve around considerations of power and national interest rather than ethics and universalism. It is believed that excessive emphasis on abstract principles rather than stark realities leads to an inability to comprehend and control international events. Realists contend that idealistic rhetoric remains outside the gates of practical application: "it is one of the very few truisms of world politics that neither ideological affinity nor emotional attachment will preserve special interests for long unless they are firmly grounded in a bedrock of mutual interest" (Evans, 1991: 12). They insist that policies based on such 'fallacies' are bound to fail because "these supposedly absolute and universal principles were not principles at all but the unconscious reflections of national policy based on a particular interpretation of the national interest at a particular time" (Wolfers, 1967: 36).

The idea that power politics is beyond morality is not new. It is interesting to note that all successful statesmen from Richelieu to Churchill have made the national interest the ultimate standard of their policies, whereas none of the great moralists in international affairs has attained his goals (Russell, 1990: 103). This leads one to conclude that realists are immune from human rights concerns, except as a possible lever against an adversary state. Nevertheless, it would be as difficult to argue that Woodrow Wilson was acting on behalf of specific American interests when he struggled to get the Covenant of the League of Nations into the Versailles Treaty or that Lenin, after becoming head of the Russian government, placed its power and prestige exclusively in the service of national (as opposed to world revolutionary, at the time, Communist) objectives (Wolfers, 1967: 80). Although Lenin and

Wilson were motivated to an exceptional degree by revolutionary or ideological fervour and were able to inject a universalist element into the policy of their respective countries, events in their own lifetimes demonstrated the persistent predominance of the concern with strictly national interests. Indeed, it was not long before the Soviet Union, following its Czarist predecessors was to struggle to keep the Dardanelles open to Soviet shipping and before the United States was to refuse to join the League of Nations (Wolfers, 1967: 80). Is South Africa doomed to the same fate?

Scholars of international relations have been wary of moralising because of their awareness of the diversity of beliefs within the system (Vincent, 1994: 219). They aver that it is hubristic to try to export western ideas of freedom to places with different traditions and levels of development (an important point to bear in mind when it comes to China). This is tantamount to arguing that we have no interest in Bosnia, so let them slaughter one another. Indeed, it is easier to see human rights as necessarily undermining rather than reinforcing the international system which is built on the sovereignty of states rather than the rights of individuals. Realists contend that the internal affairs of other states are not the proper business of foreigners. Once that rule is broken, they say the door is opened to all sorts of unnecessary disputes. There is no reason to argue with another country if it presents no threat to your security and is prepared to exist with you peacefully.

However, a sophisticated realist would acknowledge that decisions in foreign policy have to take moral considerations into account although it would be argued that the moral dimension should not be allowed to dictate policy. Indeed, if the utility of every trade agreement had to be measured in terms of an abstract standard of human rights, then relatively few of South Africa's potential trading partners would pass, and in a global system based on a hierarchical ordering of economic development, the drive for growth by developing countries has often taken precedence over human rights and democracy building. It has been argued that South Africa's philosophy on international relations has evolved over time and there are no compelling reasons for the country's foreign policy to be ideologically inspired (Dietrichsen, 1994: 213). It is common for a country's foreign policy and all related policy issues to be based on the interests of that country and South Africa should be no exception.

The ANC, in the transition from liberation movement to government, will have to cast off the rhetoric and ideological preferences built up in the days of Cold War politics, and embrace a political and economic pragmatism which would have been an unthinkable deviation in the late 1980's (Evans, 1991: 11). The demands of its own internal constituency, reinforced by its understandable fear of being overtaken by events, combine to place the organisation under great duress with respect to sustaining traditional foreign policy perspectives. The difficult trek down from the moral high ground of exile politics is in part motivated by an urgent need to meet the minimal expectations of those whose demands and votes have brought the present government to power. South Africa has a limited capacity to pursue additional higher activities due to daunting social needs and budgetary constraints which influence priorities at home. The moment contributions to international and other organisations grows and humanitarian ventures begin to involve domestic political costs, the pressure to curtail them is likely to be overwhelming. In the end, what South Africa does cannot be determined by principle alone.

Nevertheless, it has been difficult for realists to adapt to an interdependent world system. The more transnational politics becomes, the less relevant (and effective) are policies based on one-sided promotion of the national interest.

II) *THE IDEALIST ARGUMENT*

Idealists posit, contrary to realist assumptions, that states are not unitary actors with a single purpose; there are certain core values (such as peace and prosperity) or goals that most citizens across borders share to some degree (a harmony of interests may be temporarily obscured by the atavism of power politics in general). Idealists maintain that although power and national interests matter, so do common norms and institutions. States are important, but so are human beings. Idealism is a horizontal approach, shifting attention away from the vertical divisions of human society which are symbolised by the sovereignty of states, towards the various strata of social need which cut across national dividing lines (Duchacek and Thompson, 1960: 609). President Woodrow Wilson envisioned and declared that in the new age, "national purposes have fallen more and more into the background and the common purpose of enlightened mankind has taken their place..." (Niebuhr, 1960: 210). According to

Immanuel Kant:

> the rights of men must be held sacred, however much sacrifice it may cost the ruling power. One cannot compromise here and seek the middle course of a pragmatic conditional law between the morally right and the expedient...All politics must bend its knee before the right... (Kant, 1957: 46).

Nevertheless, idealists are criticised for their utopian conception of events and actions; it is argued that they do not understand the realities that constrain human choice (Viotti and Kauppi, 1994: 583). Idealists would respond that although the immediate needs of self-preservation place limits on the extent to which the pursuit of higher goals are rational under given circumstances, having no other guide but opportunism makes for a dangerous situation (Wolfers, 1967: 76). Pursuing one's own fulfilment at the expense of others would lead to chaos and anarchy. No one can escape the fact that we are a single humanity and that all countries have some interest in ensuring that tomorrow's world is not plunged into flames against which no one's house is fireproof (Goodwin, 1974: 24).

Despite the continued strength of nationalist sentiment in all parts of the world, there is no reason to assume that people only value national benefits. They often attach a great deal of value to a good record of international collaboration and applaud a leader who takes risks for the goodwill, the amity, or the interests of other nations. In his first speech to the US Senate, President Harry S. Truman declared that "the breaking of peace anywhere is the concern of peace-loving nations everywhere"(Niebuhr, 1960: 188). Therefore, to say that the field of international politics is reserved for selfishness, brutality, self-righteousness, or unrestrained ambition for power is not only cynical but manifestly unrealistic.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was proclaimed as universal precisely because the founders of the UN organisation and the nations of the world who joined hands to fight the scourge of fascism, understood that our human world was an interdependent whole (Nelson Mandela's address at the 53rd UN General Assembly, 1998). A human rights basis to foreign policy is arguably demanded by international law principles. Just as a country's accession to the UN Charter (which SA signed in 1945) imposes a legal obligation on states to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, there is corresponding legal obligation on states not to encourage or condone the actions of others in violating those human rights

(Seymour, 1996: 14). The problem is that it is merely an obligation; it remains in the realm of pious but unenforceable wishes.

The problem with realism is that it stresses foreign policy's limits rather than its magnitude. One wonders whether South Africa's leaders will have the vision and the courage to defy the inertia of orthodox prescriptions regarding foreign policy or whether they will maintain that "the values of the market are supreme and its instruments and mechanisms, an ineluctable force, in the face of whose power all those who aspire towards human dignity must bow in respectful obeisance"(Nelson Mandela's address at the XII NAM Summit, 1998). It is interesting to examine the extent to which the South African foreign policy establishment is capable of taking its cue from theories of 'complex interdependence' rather than 'political realism' as guiding paradigms in confronting the new operational environment opening up before them.

President Mandela's address to the US Congress in 1995 challenged realist notions of international relations:

> In an age such as this...much revision will have to be done of ideas that have seemed
> as stable as the rocks, including such concepts as sovereignty and national interest.
> What we speak of is the evolution of the objective world, which inexorably says to
> all of us that we are human together or nothing at all (Seymour, 1996: 4).

It was observed that South Africa's foreign relations would be based on "our belief that human rights should be the core concern of international relations, and we are ready to play a role in fostering peace and prosperity in the world we share with the community of nations" (Mandela, 1993: 6, electronic version). Foreign policy beckons South Africa's people to international service so that the country may fulfill its calling as a responsible global citizen and it summons all South Africans to think beyond the immediate (Dietrichsen, 1994: 220). In this sense, the focus on idealism requires the government not to give up its sovereignty but to acquire benefits for citizens which were hitherto unavailable beyond its own borders. Such conduct would not necessarily reduce the government's power to defend its citizens; rather it would expand their competence to serve them. It may well be something of an exaggeration to say that in South Africa's post-apartheid, post-Cold War period "Kant may have the edge on Machiavelli," but the fact remains that in a political culture characterized by the disutility of force and a heightened awareness of communal, internationally-respected

norms of behaviour, collectivist notions of reciprocity and restraint, have a longer security shelf-life than individualistic preferences for concepts of power and self-help (Mills, 1994: 152).

III) *RECONCILING THE ARGUMENTS*

Up till today the common interest of mankind in its own sheer survival has not forced national interests to recede or take a back seat. Citizens continue to identify with the interests of their immediate environment rather than with such a distant and abstract concept as humanity. The idealist falls victim to world-embracing ideals which, because of their vagueness and generality, can provide no national guidance for resolving concrete political problems (Russell, 1990: 100). It seems unlikely that policy makers would sacrifice the less inclusive national community to the wider, but chimeric, world community. More often than not, "the blood of national security considerations may run thicker than the water of ideological sympathy"(Wolfers, 1967: 128). Even such international doctrines as Communism (with its stress on one communist world) have not succeeded in solving some dramatic clashes between the interests of individual communist states, such as Yugoslavia, and the interests of the communist whole. It becomes apparent that the planes of utopia and reality never coincide - the ideal cannot be institutionalized nor the institution idealized (Carr, 1981: 100).

In addition, goals appearing to be of a self-transcending kind have revealed themselves as the most ambitious goals of self-extension. For instance, attacking human rights abuses in other countries is an attractive option for those who wish to legitimise their policies, distract from domestic difficulties, and/or create a negotiating advantage with an adversary. This ethically compromised nature of statecraft (the invoking of abstract moral principles to justify concrete national interests) was noted by the ancient Greek Philosopher, Plato, who referred to the 'noble lie': "our rulers will probably have to make considerable use of lies and deceit for the good of their subjects" (cited in Jackson and Sorensen, 1999: 78). In this sense, moral principles are not realized in the real world of conflicting interests by moral fervour alone, but instead by a pragmatic calculation of the means to an end or by a rational anticipation of the actual consequences of a given action (Russell, 1990: 241). This alludes to the reality that

human rights and other noble aspirations do not actually determine policy, but are really sugarcoats designed to make policies acceptable. When the 'national interest' is replaced with 'humanitarian interest' or the interests of the 'international community,' it is cynically concluded that foreign policy becomes a vehicle for social work and the kind of flag-waving seen under Ronald Reagan (Vincent, 1994: 34). Incorporating human rights into foreign policy is thus aimed more at creating a certain impression to satisfy the needs of donors and investors.

Although moral interests such as human rights may be no less real than material interests, they are often less tangible and policy tends to be made in response to relatively tangible national objectives. The perennial issue between the realist and utopian schools of thought over the nature of politics might well be formulated in terms of concrete interests versus abstract principles. Rhetorical acceptance is both insufficient and glosses over the real objections to human rights violations, particularly when it conflicts with free market ideals. A central problem is the gap between usage and observance. Although the language of human rights has entered the common parlance of interstate diplomacy, this does not mean that the rights are observed. Indeed, codification of rights does not translate into adhesion to rights. While it is easy to articulate a commitment, finding a way to effectuate it is a whole other ball-game. Such commitments have normative strength but procedural weakness, that is, they are composed of widely accepted, substantive norms but very limited implementation.

South Africa requires carefully defined foreign policy goals and priorities, rather than the ambitious wish-list articulated at present. With its long list of guiding principles, based more on rhetoric than matters of real substance, there is a danger of South Africa developing a self-image as a benign foreign policy godmother. Already, the much vaunted 'new diplomacy' has been accused of being cut from the same cloth as President Bush's somewhat fraudulent 'new world order' of the late 1980's (Evans, 1991: 4). In South Africa, desire and intent often overshadow the real results. Whether consistent and substantial official South African support for universal human rights exists, is debatable. There is broad consensus that although the rhetoric is there, actual practise shows that the government is influenced quite substantially by old friendships on the one hand, and pragmatism (often brought on by

economic imperatives) on the other. Nevertheless, the duality of our foreign policy is not really at war with reality - in international politics, our morality and power should not be antithetical.

Principles, such as a commitment to human rights, should not necessarily be seen as idealistic; rather, the identification of such principles should be seen as an essential part of defining the national interest. Morgenthau concurs that "the choice is not between moral principles and national interest devoid of moral dignity, but between one set of principles divorced from political reality and another set of principles derived from political reality" (Russell, 1990: 140). It shows that morality and realism are not necessarily incompatible. As such, to treat them as if they are can harm not only a state's human rights policy but its broader foreign policy as well. As Carr pointed out:

> Any sound political thought must be based on elements of both utopia (i.e. values) and reality (i.e. power). Where utopianism has become a hollow and intolerable sham, which serves merely as a disguise for the interests of the privileged, the realist performs an indispensable service in unmasking it. But pure realism can offer nothing but a naked struggle for power which makes any kind of international society impossible (Carr, 1962: 93).

It becomes apparent that both realists and idealists possess important but limited truths about the world. In chapters five and six, South African foreign policy will be analysed with reference to case studies to see which prevails. For now, we will examine South African foreign policy to disaggregate the practical manifestations of competing influences as represented by realism and idealism. Specifically, we will look at how human rights concerns and the imperatives of national economic prosperity are shaped by both the external environment and domestic factors, which interact to impose choice dilemmas on South African policy makers.

Chapter Three

South African foreign policy and the 'new' world order: promotion of human rights or preservation of national economic interests?

Foreign policies are not made in a vacuum. They are made in relation to other bodies similarly acting in the global arena. One may deduce that the external situation can determine the course of policy or, at least, severely limit the options open to the policy maker - thereby restricting or enhancing his/her freedom to manoeuvre. "The eternal experience of Ministers is to find that their choices are predetermined, above all, by the intractable facts of international life. Effective freedom in foreign affairs...is the capacity to choose between relatively few options" (Wallace, 1971: 17). We need to take cognizance not only of the external environment that shaped South Africa's foreign policy but also her strategic options since her first democratic elections in 1994 if we are to truly appreciate the decisions that were made. Two of the most powerful political images of recent times are projected by the fall of the Berlin Wall (1989) and the release of Nelson Mandela (1990). The end of the Cold War and the triumph of human rights constituted the broad framework within which South Africa's foreign policy was moulded.

A. EXTERNAL INFLUENCES

I) *POST APARTHEID SOCIETY AND THE RISE OF HUMAN RIGHTS ON THE INTERNATIONAL AGENDA*

The importance of human rights and its ascendancy as a legitimate concern of the international community is connected with some very important social changes inherent in the history of our age. Urbanisation and the spread of literacy has produced the phenomenon of mass political awakening. It is simply a fact of life today that people can no longer be treated as passive objects; this fact itself dictates the increased salience of human rights. As Louis Henkin put it, "human rights is the idea of our time, the only political moral idea that has received universal acceptance" (cited in Vincent, 1994: 31). In this century, the systematic genocidal slaughter of Jews in Nazi Germany, the disappearance of Chileans under the Pinochet government, and the racism of apartheid South Africa have all stimulated demands for human rights observance and the idea now characterizes relations between states

and their responses to international events. Concurrent with this internationalisation of morality was the emergence of anti-colonialist sentiment and a desire for self -determination. The new stress on human rights encouraged a broad (albeit uneven) world movement towards democratic rule and reflected a change in international mores. It becomes apparent that the general concept of human rights represents an attempt to move beyond thin globalism and recognize a set of worldwide, overarching values to be respected in their own rights. As Thabo Mbeki pointed out, "the language of human rights is indeed becoming a universal language and it is increasingly becoming the standard against which the world judges countries and countries judge the world." (Statement on International Human Rights Day, 10 December 1998)

International responsibility for the universal protection of human rights has gained wider acceptance over the past half century. This is reflected in the growth of the UN human rights machinery, international institutions of justice, and the number of durable conventions in which the universality of human rights has been enshrined. The UN Charter which came into being in 1945, is the first international mechanism to incorporate human rights as a concept and to make the promotion and protection of these rights one of the purposes of the individual and collective obligations of states (Langley, 1999: xi). In 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the UN (Langley, 1999: xi). It was later refined into two 1966 covenants, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Langley, 1999: xiv), and reflects a duality which has become important in safeguarding human rights world-wide. These two covenants and the declaration house the core of human rights norms and have come to constitute what is now known as the International Bill of Human Rights. Additional rights, pertaining to special categories of persons such as children, the disabled, minorities, and refugees have also been expanded in recent years. They are further supplemented by conventions ranging from the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against women and the 1997 Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights (Langley, 1999: xv). There have also been numerous debates such as the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights (Langley, 1999: xvii). The commitment to human rights is also reflected at a regional level. The 1950 European Convention on Human Rights, 1969

American Convention on Human Rights, the 1975 Helsinki Accords for Eastern Europe, the 1981 African Charter on Human and People's Rights (Langley, 1999: xv) and the Declaration of the Basic Rights of the ASEAN Peoples and Governments adopted in 1983 (Langley, 1999: 149) attest to this. All that notwithstanding, much of the surge of interest in human rights in the last two decades can be traced to the catalysing effect of President Jimmy Carter's efforts during his Presidency (1977-1981) to make international human rights an objective of US foreign policy (Art and Jervis, 1992: 514).

It is interesting to recall that when the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was put before the UN General Assembly in1948, there were no votes against it but there were eight abstentions (including South Africa) (Goldstone, 1997: 416). It is obvious that the projection of human rights as an element in foreign policy requires support. Supporting human rights may mean anything from armed intervention to a statement in Parliament. The effort will not always succeed, but it is unlikely to be wholly ignored. For instance, autocrats are usually defensive when they are accused of failing to respect human rights, as is exemplified by China's outraged protestations every time she stands accused. Pressures for human rights discomfits oppressors, encourages their victims and, in the long run, makes the world a safer and more peaceful place. In addition, the seemingly inescapable ideological appeal of human rights in the post-Cold War era is an important element in the rise of international human rights regimes. Indeed, human rights have become the genuine historical inevitability of our times (Brzezinski, 1996: 2, electronic version).

The universal claims of all mankind for a better life place heavy burdens on all countries, especially South Africa. South Africa's past has compelled her to attempt to fill a leadership vacuum in the quest towards preserving or enhancing human rights world-wide. Given the past importance of international support for the ANC (both through formal international institutions and through the transnational anti-apartheid movement), Nelson Mandela was expected to replace the isolationism of the past in favour of a bold new internationalism. Indeed, Aziz Pahad, South Africa's deputy foreign minister, describes the increasing pressure on South Africa to take a stand on human rights abuses all over the world as 'understandable:' "because with the majority of South Africans having come through the

experience of apartheid and the battle for democracy in the most confrontational way, the issue of human rights is fundamental to people's thinking"(Pahad, 1996: 9).

The anti-apartheid campaign was the most important human-rights crusade of the post-World War II era. In part the product of this far flung, global effort aimed at extending and intensifying the respect for human rights, the new South Africa has its own moral and political obligation to participate in the ongoing drive to secure and extend the respect for individual and collective forms of human rights elsewhere. The ANC government, conscious of this debt, feels the need to contribute morally, politically and, in part, financially to the improvement of the international human rights situation. It is submitted that our new democracy offers an anvil to cast a foreign policy supportive of human rights (Seymour, 1996: 10). Born of its dramatic transformation from pariah to paragon, South Africa is in a unique position to lead, not just by example, but by deed. Consequently, South Africa has resolved to not being indifferent to the rights of others: the country will reciprocate the global anti-apartheid movement and show solidarity to people who suffer under regimes which do not respect international human rights (Mandela, 1993: 2, electronic version). In essence, South Africa wants human rights to be the light that guides her foreign affairs (Mandela, 1993: 2, electronic version). South African foreign policy makers admit that "some of the steps we will take are symbolic but in our efforts to canonise human rights in our international relations we regard them as far more than this (Dietrichsen, 1994: 223).

Dr Alan Sharpe, former chief director of social affairs at the DFA, points out that South Africa knows that by pursuing these rights internationally, it does not stand to benefit in terms of its own national economic interests (Sharpe, 1996: 26). However, rights not defended are rights easily lost and rights lost can lead to instability and violence as the situation in Zimbabwe (lack of socio-economic, specifically land, rights for indigenous Zimbabweans) attests to. South Africa is concrete proof of the positive results that accrue from a belief in human rights: human rights and the rule of law provided the basis of South Africa's successful transition, as illustrated by its carefully negotiated constitution.

II) *POST-COLD WAR CHALLENGES AND THE PROTECTION OF NATIONAL ECONOMIC INTERESTS IN THE INTERNATIONAL ARENA*

Under pressure of the human rights provisions of the wide-ranging Helsinki accords of 1975, communist governments were forced to tolerate dissident movements (Russet and Starr, 1992: 5). The end of the Cold War (1989) marked a number of landmark events such as: the free elections which ousted communist governments in most of Eastern Europe; Gorbachev's limited political and economic reforms in the Soviet Union; and the fall of the Berlin Wall. Those events thoroughly changed the contours of international politics. The basic values of the West -- democratic government and free market economies -- seem to have triumphed; the Cold War which had dominated international relations since the end of World War II ended on terms largely dictated by the capitalist west. History was again, to use Arnold Toynbee's phrase, on the move (Vale and Taylor, 1999: 1, electronic version).

'High' and 'low' politics are now beginning to change places or, at least, to merge. The net result has meant that ideological or theoretical straitjackets moulded in post-Westphalian Europe and refined globally by the Cold War are no longer serviceable in the quest for security, order, development, prosperity, or justice (Evans, 1991: 3). Traditional notions of national security based on military preparedness are now giving way to broader conceptions of 'defence' where security is seen largely in terms of interdependence and non-adversarial community concerns. The altered environment has allowed economists, traders and the business sector to carve a new niche for themselves in the 'new' world order. The end of the old East/West confrontation has brought increased competition for investment funds and markets as well as opportunities to forge new economic partnerships and blocs. For example, as the Cold War geopolitical framework eroded, China's domestic reforms (primarily, the economic liberalization) made possible the breakdown of the partition of Asia for the first time. It is clear that "all nations will have to boldly recast their nets if they are to reap any benefit from international affairs in the post-Cold War era" (Mandela, 1993: 1, electronic version).

Growing interdependence and transnationalism has meant that economic and industrial

diplomacy have become features of international relations since the 1990's. Terms like globalization have come to describe processes in which international economic relations have come to impact to an unprecedented degree on domestic policy options. The laws of the international economy have become like gravity - one cannot defy them (Edigheji, 2000: 34). Global 'economic enmeshing' has proceeded at such a pace that what goes on outside the territorial boundaries of the state often conditions what can be achieved within them (Evans, 1999: 2, electronic version).

During the Cold War, the paradigm that dominated interpretations of international affairs was one of Cold War rivalry. This has been replaced in the post-Cold War era by a culture of interdependency where "changes or events in any single part of a system will produce some reaction from or have some significant consequence to other actors of the system whether they like it or not" (Russet and Starr, 1992: 439). Increased interdependence and increased awareness of interdependence means that governmental decision makers have to think about and take into account the effects their internal policies have on foreign relations with other states. The complexity of the world has come to include the interconnectedness of our problems as well as our collective well-being. The traditional notion of individual states seeking their own special or national interests is now counterproductive in a shrinking world which leads toward more cooperation among states as they are brought together. The 1994 UN Development Report posits that "the end of the Cold War presents an opportunity for a radical rethink of international relations, based on new priorities and principles"(Seymour, 1996: 3). An alternate approach to international relations is supported by academics such as Ken Booth who urge scholars to pay less attention to interstate relations and instead concentrate on what he calls 'global ethics' (Booth, 1995).

Nevertheless, it can be argued that a nation which dares indulge in altruistic pursuits and constantly allows its interests to be sacrificed cannot survive in a competitive global system. For example, the communist states often made sacrifices to promote party doctrine and the idea of world communism. The fate of such communist states serve as a warning to South Africa not to ignore national interests in the pursuit of universal values such as human rights. However (as discussed earlier), greater interdependence erodes arguments about national

interest. Increasingly, decision-makers act on behalf of clusters of nations as well as their own. They identify their own interests as inextricably tied to the welfare of the region and /or continent. Interdependence limits the nation-state's ability to conduct business without reference to any other country's interests. It becomes apparent that there is no place for "patriotic snobbery" in the 'new' world order (Duchacek and Thompson, 1960: 23). In an interdependent world economy, South Africa's prosperity could be hostage to decisions made in countries whose idea of justice, human rights, etc. may not necessarily be compatible with ours. One country can only neglect human rights abuses in another country at its own peril. Nations are not islands sufficient unto themselves; suffering in one country may cause pain in others. As Nelson Mandela noted, "the great challenge of our age is to answer the question; given the interdependency of the world, what is it that we can and must do to ensure that democracy, peace and prosperity prevail everywhere..." (Sharpe, 1996: 26).

However, the development of norms concerning international protection of human rights and humanitarian law is seen as an infringement of sovereignty in that they challenge the principle of non-intervention, especially the right of states to govern their citizens free from outside interference (Jackson and Sorensen, 1999: 263). In 1992, Boutros Boutros-Ghali claimed that "the time of absolute and exclusive sovereignty ...has passed. Its theory was never matched by reality" (cited in Jackson and Sorensen, 1999: 263). This can be problematic because although increasing global interdependence has opened up new opportunities, these have been accompanied by new threats as inequalities in international relations become more accentuated. For example, while economically powerful countries such as China enjoy a pre-eminent position in the new world order despite an atrocious human rights record, the countries singled out for bashing are often those like Myanmar which offer few economic opportunities and have little power to hit back.

The post-Cold War era has witnessed the creation of a community of mutual dependence, but not one of mutual trust and respect. In the foreseeable future, members of the present international community will continue to be sovereign though interdependent; the hope is that as they come to better appreciate the implications of their interdependence they can be weaned away from their traditional bellicosity in favour of peaceful collaboration towards a

world of peace, progress and justice (Goodwin, 1974: 46). Without a higher integration, advancing technology tends to sharpen economic rivalries - they change the ocean barriers of yesterday into the battlegrounds of today (Niebuhr, 1960: 124).

South Africa re-entered the world community and began transforming its foreign policy precisely at a time when countries were grappling with the demands of the post-Cold War world. The fundamental challenge that faced South Africa was described as the need to "adapt its economy and social system to the norms of a given external reality whilst striving to become a 'winning nation' in a fiercely competitive world" (Davies, 1995: 1). A truly ideologically-driven foreign policy after 1994 was probably prevented by the necessity of adaptation to the new post-Cold War environment. Minister Alfred Nzo, in September 1995, described the global environment and its impact on South Africa in the following terms:

> ...Ideological conflict has to a large extent been replaced by economic competition...It is our primary task to secure and promote the sovereign integrity of the South African state, as well as the security and welfare of its citizens. These are considerations which ultimately determine everything we do in the conduct of our foreign relations. (South African Foreign Policy Discussion Document, 1996: 8).

Africa's global position has been acutely affected by the ending of the Cold War - the continent and the destiny of its people are no longer subject to the vagaries of superpower rivalry and conflict. This has grave implications for the further marginalisation of the continent. According to Pierre Biarnes, "Africa has lost invaluable leverage with the end of the Cold War. Now for an indeterminate period, Africa will have no global strategic importance..." (cited in Suttner, 1997: 350). It is astutely pointed out that the emerging world order will not fully serve South Africa's interests and the country needs to contest the rules as they emerge (Shubin, 1995: 7). In this regard, the strategic importance of China's position in the UN Security Council should be duly noted. Although it is up to South Africa to work towards redefining and reshaping the world order in a manner that is equitable and just, the release of Southern Africa from Cold War politics combined with a world-wide weariness with Africa and the reordering of western political and economic priorities leads one to suspect that South Africa's foreign policy reorientation is basically reactive rather than pro-active (Evans, 1991: 4).

B. DOMESTIC IMPINGEMENTS

The last section alluded to the external environment which shaped South Africa's foreign policy. This chapter attempts to rationalize the duality that plagues South Africa's foreign policy in terms of internal constraints.

I) *NATIONAL INTERESTS*

The concept of national interest has a dubious place in history. Adolf Hitler justified his policies in the name of Germany's national interest. Joseph Stalin destroyed and/or displaced Russian farmers in the name of the Soviet Union's interests. Lyndon B. Johnson was convinced that the interests of America and the Western World were at stake in the historic Indo-China confrontation. In South Africa, apartheid was defended by the Nationalist Party government on the grounds that it served the interests of South Africa's mining and manufacturing industries by providing cheap migrant labour. One wonders what role national interest plays in democratic South Africa's foreign policy. Does South Africa's new stress on human rights mean that narrow national interests are taking a back-seat or are human rights simply a means to realize national interests based on considerations of prestige, reputation and domestic reaction?

'Objectivists' assume national interest can be objectively determined. These analysts posit that the best interest of a nation is a matter of objective reality and by describing this reality one is able to use the concept of the national interest as a basis for evaluating the appropriateness of the policies which a nation pursues (Rosenau, 1974: 187). Hans Morgenthau contended that "interest is the perennial standard by which political action must be judged and directed" (Morgenthau, 1954: 9). Although he emphasized that the objectives of a foreign policy must be defined in terms of national interest, he recognized that "the kind of interest determining political action in a particular period of history depends upon the political and cultural context within which foreign policy is formulated" (Rosenau, 1974: 188). In contrast, 'subjectivists' argue that national interest is a pluralistic set of subjective preferences that change whenever the requirements and aspirations of the nation's members change (Rosenau, 1974: 188). They allude to the fact that goals and interests are value-laden and that people differ on what constitutes the most appropriate goals for a nation. In the case of South Africa, the concept of national interest was abused in political usage. For much of the past 45 years, South Africa's foreign policy has served and been

defined by narrow sectional interests of its white citizens.

Logically, countries must not only concern themselves with the safety and well-being of the international order of which they are a part but also they must operate within a specific internal order. It is generally expected that any government's most fundamental duty is to provide for the basic needs of its citizens including economic prosperity, welfare, and the provision of individual security. Moreover, the state is the guardian of its citizen's interests - what is collectively termed the national interest - in the international sphere. Hans Morgenthau pointed out that "a foreign policy guided by moral abstractions, without consideration of the national interest, is bound to fail" (Morgenthau, 1951: 33-34). The language of foreign policy is closely linked to the language of nationhood and national purpose: statesmen have commonly talked about their country's 'place in the world' or have boasted or worried about their nation's 'international standing.' For example, the strength of America's moral reputation (a positive image of the nation in the minds of other nations) is an important addition to its capacity to realize its aims on the international scene.

Although South Africa's foreign policy in the post apartheid era comprises of a new commitment to human rights, it remains predicated on the pursuit of identifiable national interests, specifically national economic interests. These national interests may be said to be underpinned by the general values enshrined in the Constitution which encompass the security of the state and its citizens, the promotion of social and economic well-being, and the encouragement of global peace, regional stability and development (The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996).

The concept of national interest has served to legitimise a government's external objectives and to cut short domestic debate about these objectives. To say that an action is 'in the national interest' is to label those who oppose it as disloyal. This led Hans Morgenthau, Walter Lippman, and others concerned with the failure of western democracies to avoid the second world war, to surmise that this failure was due to the "policy-makers' neglect of their national interest in favour of mistaken conceptions of international morality" (Wallace, 1971: 31). They attributed the failure to the "incapacity of democratic governments to cope with reality...to defend their vital

interests"and argued that the remedy lay in a proper awareness of the "nature of their country's national interest, and in its steady pursuit" (Wallace, 1971: 31).

If any goal stands out as the one most frequently acknowledged and extolled for nations to pursue, it is the goal of economic development. The reason lies in the intermediate status of this goal: economic development can be given primacy in national and international policy precisely because it is a necessary means to many other goals. As Friedrich Engels pointed out, "economic relations... are those whose action is ultimately decisive, forming a red thread which runs through all the other relations and enables us to understand them...." (*Quoted* in Duchacek and Thompson, 1960: 269). It should be noted that the traditional military/security issue-areas which have held centre stage for over forty years in world politics are now increasingly giving way to a new awareness of wealth, welfare and environmental concerns which "render earlier orthodoxies about how to promote the national interest at best irrelevant and at worst downright dangerous" (Evans, 1991: 3). In today's world, survival as a nation translates into economic survival; the formula for the protection of national interest has come to be practically synonymous with the formula for national economic preservation. The transition from a security to an economic interpretation of national interest is understandable considering the interdependent , competitive global capitalist system.

Since economic issues now stand at the very centre of international relations, it is not surprising that trade and foreign investment issues should be a cornerstone of South Africa's foreign policy. Unless South Africa can attract substantial volumes of foreign investment it appears destined to face economic collapse. This is especially so since South Africa will have to cope with the high capital consumption demand necessary to ensure development. The future of any new South African foreign policy must rest crucially on its foreign financial and trade policies. In this regard, the importance of China (despite her human rights record) cannot be disputed. A Likert Scale (appendix 2) designed to measure ordinal attitudes of staff in the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), indicated a basic, not total, commitment to human rights among those interviewed. However, there was unanimous agreement affirming the statement 'preserving national economic interests should be at the heart

of foreign policy.'[1]

Nevertheless, concessions for the sake of peace may lead to a more modest interpretation of national interest. Moreover, idealistic broad goals such as human rights may be used as a means toward some specific national-interest goal. For example, a nation which sets out to increase its prestige through the advocacy of a visionary foreign policy based on the protection and promotion of human rights may increase its bargaining power in the process. In turn, this can open up greater opportunities such as more investments. The 'harmony of interests' doctrine assumes that rational calculation of interest, within an overall framework of market economics, ensures that 'the national interest' and 'the international interest' become one and the same (Evans, 1991: 10). However, it is maintained that states have no international obligations that come before their national interests - international law and international organisations are merely instrumental considerations in determining the national interest of states (Jackson and Sorensen, 1999: 158). The re-assertion by a DTI official of the familiar adage that "nations have no permanent friends, only permanent interests" seems apt (Interview F, appendix 1).

Morgenthau attempted to harmonize the successful defence of national interest with the promotion of desirable values in foreign policy. The American statesman believed that the principles of morality and the necessities of power are not mutually exclusive categories by which to define the scope and objectives of the national interest. Russell interprets Morgenthau's conception of a responsible foreign policy as beginning "with the practical necessities of survival and the maintenance of a balance of power and, at the same time,

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[1] Aside from a few basic observations it was difficult to draw conclusions from the results of the Likert scale. Although respondents were requested to respond in their official capacity they seemed unable to disentangle personal (often idealistic) beliefs from professional concerns. This resulted in contradictory responses to questions. For example, whilst all the respondents agreed that South African economic interests in Angola should not take precedence over human rights considerations, they, nevertheless, affirmed that preserving national economic interests should be at the heart of foreign policy. The ambiguity in responses does not bode well for the implementation of foreign policy. One could suggest that this is one of the reasons for South Africa's ambivalent position on a number of crucial foreign policy issues (such as China's human rights record).

accommodate the transcendent values of the American people, who insist upon universal moral principles" (Russell, 1990: 3). South Africa's pragmatism produces a penchant for examining issues separately and it is suggested that perceiving human rights as a part of national interest should be the first step in resolving the contradictions inherent in her foreign policy. It is postulated that in every case the interpretation of what constitutes a vital national interest and how much value should be attached to it is a moral question (Wolfers, 1967: 60). According to Russell, Morgenthau would concur that the national interest itself commands a certain moral dignity because it functions as the protector of minimal world values in a world lacking order and moral consensus beyond the bounds of the national state (Russell, 1990: 100).

Danger lies in the illusion that by labelling something we clarify it. Some contend that it is more appropriate to talk of interests rather than of a single national interest, to look for a number of separate and often conflicting objectives rather than for a single overriding operational goal (Wallce, 1971: 13). Furthermore, matters discussed under national interest could very well be discussed under ideology. In addition, we can draw a distinction between narrow and enlightened national interest. As President Nixon observed, "we are not involved in the world because we have commitments, we have commitments because we are involved. Our interests must shape our commitments, rather than the other way around" (Jackson and Sorensen, 1999: 78)

II) *IDEOLOGY, BELIEF SYSTEMS AND LEADERSHIP ATTITUDES*

Values, emotions, perceptions, and personality are a few of the many non-rational aspects of foreign policy making. They are a reflection of psychological and subjective aspects of policy making which highlight the importance of perceptions of, and attitudes toward, leaders. Anyone doubting the impact that single individuals can have on the workings of foreign policy, relations among states, or even the structure of the international system need only examine the career of Mikhail Gorbachev during his tenure as President of the Soviet Union. Decision makers have been conceptualized as "individuals who arrive at their decisions by confronting their values with their image of the environment"(Wallace, 1971: 30). An individual's idiosyncrasies are made up of values, personality, political style, intellect and past experience which work together to create the individual's set of images about the world - the individual's belief system (Russet and Starr, 1992: 269). People evaluate and perceive the world according to what they are concerned

with at the moment. Often, objectives which originated entirely as a means of attaining some distant end become beliefs, take on a life of their own, and become valued for their own sake or because they become intertwined with other goals such as prestige and self-respect (Legg and Morrison, 1974: 196). The quest for human rights is an example of such a phenomenon.

Political leaders, especially in a democracy, live a precarious life in which the demands made upon them always exceed their capacity to satisfy them. They are expected to solve many, often contradictory, social problems - to preserve and promote national interests (for example, economic growth) whilst simultaneously pursuing higher aspirations through a commitment to human rights or a quest for peace and good governance. Statesmen have a national responsibility to their own nation and its citizens; they have an international responsibility to observe and follow international law and respect the rights of other states; and they have a humanitarian responsibility to defend human rights around the world (Jackson and Sorensen, 1999: 55).

However, it is important to note that political responsibility flows in a vastly different vein than ordinary private morality (Jackson and Sorensen, 1999: 79). A political leader does not have the same freedom to do the right thing that a private citizen has; a political leader has far heavier responsibilities. Since the citizens of a country depend on the leader for their security and welfare, the cultivation and protection of the domestic base from which s(he) derives political authority often takes priority over international and humanitarian considerations. Machiavelli's contemplation is enlightening:

> A prince...cannot observe all those things for which men are considered good, for in order to maintain the state he is often obliged to act against his promise, against charity, against humanity, and against religion. And therefore, it is necessary that he have a mind ready to turn itself according to the way the winds of fortune and the changeability of [political] affairs require...as long as it is possible, he should not stray from the good, but he should know how to enter into evil when necessity commands. (Jackson and Sorensen, 1999: 70)

Nonetheless, Nelson Mandela has been described as an "international symbol for the achievement of peace and justice" and epitomises South Africa's status as an international cause celebre (Bischoff, 1995: 6). Confidence in the unique influence wielded by South Africa due to Mandela's 'moral stature' permeated much of the new thinking on South African foreign policy and gave the country a new found authority in the area of human rights. The celebratory rhetoric, centred around the 'miracle' of Mandela's 'long walk to freedom,' is conveyed by the popular

domestic concept of 'Madiba Magic'(Vale and Taylor, 1999: 2, electronic version). According to this narrative, the country is personified in one man and all things are possible if and when he becomes involved. With the inauguration of a democratic government, South African foreign policy became a highly personalized affair with Nelson Mandela's international superstar status overshadowing everything else. Ironically, it meant that South Africa's post apartheid foreign policy would be more constrained than before: Mandela had to assume much wider responsibilities at precisely the moment when he faced the most urgent demands for domestic social and political initiatives. While having a leader of the calibre of Nelson Mandela had its advantages, Aziz Pahad pointed out that it put greater pressure on the country to deliver: "This is something no other country has to wrestle with; our president symbolises everything everyone in the world aspires to, and while we are happy to be called a political miracle, those who create miracles are supposed to deliver on everything - internally and externally." (Pahad, 1996: 10)

It is suggested that while South Africa will remain a symbol of the third world struggle for liberation, human rights, and global economic justice, South Africa's current president, Thabo Mbeki, will be in a better position to determine policies by rational assessment than his distinguished predecessor. Although Mbeki also has a long and honourable place in the struggle against apartheid he, unlike Mandela, does not carry the restrictive burden of being one of the heroes of the 20th century world (Evans, 1999: 4, electronic version). Seen as a man rather than a saint, Mbeki's policy choices are much more amenable to rational cost-benefit assessments and remain comparatively unencumbered by fixed normative principles or by grand populist expectations (Evans, 1999: 4, electronic version). Even his vision of an African Renaissance has a practical economic dimension to it when he theorised that "Africa's renewal" would enable the continent to "achieve sustainable economic development" (Mbeki, 1998: 298).

The Zimbabwe crisis illustrated Mbeki's pursuance of his goals through a combination of quiet diplomacy (private talks with Mugabe and constructive engagement instead of a hard-line position) and assertive multilateralism (campaigns on behalf of Zimbabwe to the IMF). This contrasts with the adventurous or romantic postures of confrontation and defiance adopted by Mandela during the early years of his presidency. While Mbeki has signalled a greater willingness than Mr Mandela to embrace the repertoire of realpolitik, the approach has the

advantage of being sensitive to African development and needs (Evans, 1999: 5, electronic version).

Almost a decade down the road from apartheid, Mbeki is aware that the inescapable priority for South Africa is domestic reconstruction and political stability. Accordingly, South Africa's international profile over the next few years must generate tangible material pay-offs. The priority of the second post-apartheid administration is to foster a dynamic economy that will provide jobs, welfare, security, and sustainable development for the South African people. A decade after Nelson Mandela walked out of prison and South Africa's political revolution started, his successor Thabo Mbeki is launching another revolution -- an economic one. Labelled 'Mbekonomics,' it is geared towards facilitating South Africa's transition from a low-growth, export commodity-driven, protected economy to a fast-growing, diversified, competitive one (*Africa Confidential*, 18 February 2000: 5). It becomes apparent that the leitmotif of Mbeki's diplomacy is interest defined in terms of economic development, expressed with the custodial framework provided by the primacy of domestic politics and a high profile commitment to the Republic's African heritage and destiny (Evans, 1999: 6, electronic version).

The different approaches adopted by Mandela and Mbeki to foreign policy may be attributed to a shift in ideology. Ideology is a coherent and organised set of beliefs (Russet and Starr, 1992: 207). It is argued that ideology is based on false consciousness and manufactured, deliberately or otherwise, to lend political legitimacy and moral energy to a government's foreign policies (Russet and Starr, 1992: 210). This alludes to the use of ideology as a political act which seeks to present a certain policy to voters in terms of moral and political folklore. Moreover, it refers to the ideological wrappings of national objectives: wherever interests are vigorously pursued, an ideology tends to be also developed to give meaning, re-enforcement and justification to these interests. South Africa's foreign policy has largely been determined by her chequered history. In the past, South Africa's foreign policy was strongly predicated on its internal ideology of apartheid. As the need for change became all too apparent, the foreign policy objectives of the dominant party in power, the African National Congress, became the driving force in giving shape to the foreign policy agenda of the post apartheid state. These objectives were initially idealistic, a reflection of the liberation rhetoric. Mbeki's tenure in power has been accompanied

by an extremely pragmatic assessment of the government's objectives which acknowledges that the "honeymoon" is over and that material benefits for citizens take precedence over any other external aspirations.

Nevertheless, there is an element of tactical expediency in the focus on human rights. The issue provided a powerful ideological weapon in the struggle against the Soviet Union and its communist doctrine (Brzezinski, 1996: 2, electronic version). However, this led to human rights claims being met with the politically potent charge of misguided moralism. For example, when Reagan assumed the US presidency in 1981, human rights became the stick with which to belabour the 'evil empire' of the Soviet Union and its allies (Clapham, 1994: 43). Clearly, the pursuit of human rights as a goal of foreign policy must reflect a measure of neutrality, that is, it must be pursued without additional ideological baggage. Moreover, the application of human rights in foreign policy must remain consistent - human rights abuses cannot be condoned on the basis of friendly relations or on the basis of the ideological affiliation of the perpetrator. To do so would be to destroy the idea that human rights have universal application. South African foreign policy makers could do well to heed this. America's credibility in human rights has suffered greatly due to her inconsistent application of such principles throughout the world.

Chapter Four

Rationalizing South African Foreign Policy

From 1994, the post-revolutionary fervour associated with liberation policies resulted in normative and theoretical confusion about proper foreign policy goals and objectives. Faced with the escalating costs of retaining policies drawn from the liberation period, the ANC has shifted between liberation rhetoric and conciliatory pragmatism. However, the organisation has generally followed a foreign policy which puts domestic concerns ahead of internationalist obligations, inverting the formula which had guided other liberation movements after taking power. For instance, in neighbouring Mozambique, Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (Frelimo's) decision to introduce sanctions against Rhodesia contributed significantly to the economic crippling of Mozambique (Alden, 1993: 77).

In spelling out South Africa's foreign policy principles, former South African Minister of Foreign Affairs, Alfred Nzo, averred that the underlying principles which would serve as "guidelines in the conduct of our foreign relations" would include:

- A commitment to the promotion of human rights and democracy

- A commitment to justice and international law in the conduct of relations between nations

- A commitment to international peace and to internationally agreed upon mechanisms for the resolution of conflicts

- A commitment to the interests of Africa in world affairs (includes the promotion and attainment of the African Renaissance)

- A commitment to economic development through regional and international cooperation in an interdependent world." (South African Foreign Policy Discussion Document, 1996: 19)

It becomes apparent that a post apartheid South Africa has distinctive political principles and values that define its national identity and which give a distinctive role to the country in the world. In this regard, the use of the term 'guidelines' is interesting since the very same principles

are described in other speeches and government documents as "the pillars upon which our foreign policy will rest" (Mandela, 1993: 2, electronic version). This flexible application of principles acknowledges the fact that foreign policy has to occur against the background of the real world and the limitations it imposes on us.

In addition, the management of South Africa's foreign policy inheritance needed to be reconciled with a rather complex and unique domestic political dispensation. The primary point of departure for the government was to develop a better life for all by creating wealth, providing security, and promoting the welfare of its citizens. The DFA defined this as its over-arching goal during a conference in 1999 (*The Citizen*, 15 January 1999: 8). It reinforces the adage that administrations might change but fundamental interests do not. South Africa's foreign policy objectives remain essentially an outward projection of its domestic imperatives.

South Africa cannot have a transformation driven by the values enshrined in the new constitution on the one hand, and a different stance when it comes to foreign policy and relations with the rest of the world on the other. Against this background, the government has taken steps to bring its foreign policy in line with its moral standing in the international community. South Africa has committed its foreign policy to help in ensuring that the world is "more secure, peaceful, democratic, humane, equitable, and people-centred" (Sharpe, 1996: 26). In this respect, human rights has become a cornerstone of South Africa's foreign policy.

I) *HUMAN RIGHTS IN SOUTH AFRICA'S FOREIGN POLICY*

Like the US government in the early years of the Carter Presidency, the South African Government has put a premium on the promotion and protection of human rights as a cornerstone of its foreign policy. Even prior to his assumption of the Office of the President, Nelson Mandela stated that "human rights will be the light that guides our foreign affairs"(Mandela, 1993: 2, electronic version). It was later elucidated that "South Africa would not shrink from its responsibility to help resolve conflict and advocate human rights on the continent" (Seymour, 1996: 19) and that "we shall speak out against oppression in all its forms and manifestations of abuse of human rights, injustice, inequality and discrimination" (Dlamini-Zuma, 1999: 205). South Africa's commitment to human rights was further entrenched by the Durban Declaration

tabled by South Africa at the 1998 summit of the Movement of Non-Aligned States:

> ...As we mark the 50th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, nothing should be used as a convenient mask to hide genocide, gross violations of human rights and crimes against humanity...we must seek a world order of compassion for the weak, of human rights and development for all... (Compendium of South African statements during the XII NAM Summit, p7)

But what does this mean practically? How do we get human rights enforced and implemented in the international environment? Although it was regarded as being of equal importance to both wealth creation and security, the difficulty in following a foreign policy dictated by human rights considerations became increasingly apparent to the government. The criticism evoked by South Africa's relationships with countries such as China, Iraq, and Indonesia (all have dubious human rights records) attests to this. The DFA's Rusty Evans points out that "this is the price we will have to pay in many situations in the future, because, as in everyday life, it is never easy for a nation to be morally upright"(Evans,R. 1996: 12).

Morality is a contested principle in foreign relations and the promotion and protection of human rights and democracy is easy to state as an aspiration but difficult to implement. Foreign policy should be formulated against the background of what South Africa can realistically hope to achieve. The Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Aziz Pahad and former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Alfred Nzo, often stated in parliamentary and other speeches that South Africa's initiatives in Africa (in particular) and internationally (in general) should take place within the realistic parameters of her capacity to implement decisions (South African Foreign Policy Discussion Document, 1996: 25). Pahad, intimated that "the problem we face in this regard is the issue of possibilities and limitations on South Africa in the real world...there has to be interaction between theory and practise" (Mills, 1997: 4). In this regard, it is also important to distinguish between promoting human rights and ensuring respect for such rights. Promotion is a broad commitment, manifested for example in South Africa's efforts to facilitate a democratic transition in Nigeria. In the second case, the sale of (or refusal to sell) arms can be guided by whether or not there is respect for human rights in the state wishing to purchase arms.

In many respects, South Africa has limited leverage vis-a-vis other states. However, she appears to have considerable moral power, manifested not only in the enduring stature of Nelson Mandela

but also in the overall international respect for the country's democratic transition. Emerging from a struggle that embraced the extensive moral power of solidarity groups throughout the world, South Africa is now in a position to exert considerable moral influence on others - but how decisive or effective moral power is in the world today is difficult to gauge. In addition, a fundamental question pertaining to human rights policy centres around the degree to which a nation is obligated to impose its values on others. South African policy makers need to analyse their true intentions or risk being subjected to the same criticism as their American counterparts who declared that "the purpose of our foreign policy is not to bring enlightenment or happiness to the rest of the world but to take care of the life, liberty, and happiness of the American people"(Russell, 1990: 209).

Moreover, South African foreign policy should not just be structured to reflect specific values; it should be substantively directed to the promotion of those values in the external environment. South African foreign policy makers boast of the country's involvement in a number of ventures to promote human rights on a multi-lateral level. Among other things, they cite her activities in the UN Commission on Human Rights (South Africa chaired its 54th session in 1998) and her participation in a number of human rights related conventions and protocols such as the UN agreement on Human Rights Defenders (www.gov.za/yearbook/ foreignrelations.htm). However, one has to realize that South Africa does not have a monopoly on morality and there are a number of other countries which have also been involved in similar attempts to promote and protect human rights. South Africa's sudden pro-activeness in the human rights field needs to be understood in terms of a natural process of foreign policy evolution after a long period of apartheid isolation. Indeed, there is still much to be done. For instance, although she signed the Geneva Conventions in 1952, there is still no South African legislation incorporating its provisions (Interview B, appendix 1).

Furthermore, human rights concerns should be extended to South Africa's bilateral relations. Initially, it was averred that South Africa would not be selective nor afraid to raise human rights violations with countries, even when it might negatively affect her own interests. South Africa's own experience shows how damaging policy can be when issues of principle are sacrificed to economic and political expediency. The former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Alfred Nzo,

affirmed that:

> South Africa is not oblivious to human rights abuses in individual countries. South Africa's concerns have been raised in her interaction with leaders of a number of countries, and we have urged them to uphold universally acceptable human rights principles. The message has been reinforced by the way in which human rights concerns influence government decisions on arms sales, the support which South Africa gives to a country's candidacy for posts in international organisations, and the many other ways in which we conduct our foreign relations (Suttner, 1997: 307).

However, this noble position appears to contradict reality and other messages from the DFA. For example, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Aziz Pahad, contends that when it comes to the violation of human rights, South Africa cannot stand as judge and jury. He asserts that

> South Africa recognizes and interacts with countries irrespective of what their ideologies are; if we don't, we may as well put a shield around ourselves and live in total isolation. We have our own understanding of human rights, democracy and good governance, and will continue to use our influence to help achieve that in other countries (Pahad, 1996: 9)

Although South African foreign policy has a human rights dimension, it is flexibly applied, and the degree or level of flexibility appears to depend on who knows who as well as economic and other strategic factors. It leads us to appreciate the fact that the DFA is not the only department which makes foreign policy and shows that no country in the world can have a human rights driven foreign policy without some trade-offs. The past few years have demonstrated that in this sensitive area of human rights, wrong tactics and strategies can undermine the goals that we set for ourselves. South African foreign policy makers claim that "while being more committed than ever to the promotion of human rights, we are much the wiser in how to attain our objectives" (Selebi, 1999: 215).

II) NATIONAL ECONOMIC INTEREST IN SOUTH AFRICAN FOREIGN POLICY

In addition to its commitment to human rights, South Africa has also taken cognizance of the policies adopted by a number of newly industrialising countries such as Malaysia where foreign policy and external diplomacy are primarily economically orientated. Economic development issues are generally at the forefront of the foreign policies of many newer states and South Africa is no exception. The essence of South Africa's foreign policy is to promote and protect the interests and values of its citizens: "we prize our commitment to peace and to human rights in

the far corners of the globe but recognise that the security of our people also lies close to our foreign policy" (www.gov.za/yearbook/foreignrelations.htm).

On the eve of the announcement of the power-sharing arrangement between the ANC and NP in early 1993, a senior member of the ANC's International Department summed up the dramatic transformation of the organisation's approach to foreign policy: "our future relations with the international community will have to be based on economic and trade considerations rather than ideological considerations" (Alden, 1993: 77). Aziz Pahad affirmed that South Africa's international priorities would be dictated by the need to ensure the success of the government's Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) (Alden, 1993: 55). The global economic environment is a fiercely competitive and complex arena in which South Africa is a relatively small economic power. South Africa needs substantial economic growth to satisfy vital needs, to meet at least some expectations of the dispossessed majority. The RDP is the rationale used to justify concentrating foreign policy on the management of economic relations with specific countries (Bischoff, 1995: 8). In this way, the primacy of domestic politics is likely to mitigate against heroic foreign policy postures that do not directly contribute to the amelioration of the social and economic injustices inherited from the apartheid government. It may not be the most ideal solution but higher aspirations will of necessity be subordinated to satisfy the minimum basic demands of the majority of South Africans. In a world where national interests run rampant, there is a danger that the enormity of South Africa's domestic reconstruction may cloud a larger vision.

It becomes evident that the DFA's new diplomacy is informed by the understanding that the flag would follow trade. Consequently, South Africa's foreign policy now targets specific regions and areas that are of geo-political (there are other issues at stake such as South Africa's quest for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council) and commercial importance. In practice, this translates into "being very nice to the rich and powerful, nice to the potentially rich and powerful, and kind to old friends who are neither" (Debates of the National Assembly, p.931). In the effort to attract substantial foreign investment, 'economic diplomacy' is fast becoming the major focus of the DFA's activities. However, this 'neo-mercantilist' path could have costs in terms of broader external economic relations since there is an increasing linkage between the type of deal

a democratic South Africa will be able to cut with the major trading blocs and the way the country is seen to be conducting itself in the Southern African region (Davies et al, 1993: 61). Unless the country is seen to be playing a positive role in the region, it will probably not be able to secure the best deal possible with the major global economic powers. Already, the handling of the Zimbabwe crisis has had a negative effect.

III) *AMBIGUITY IN SOUTH AFRICAN FOREIGN POLICY*

In 1977, US President Jimmy Carter came out strongly in favour of human rights and completely banned aid and exports to countries accused of violating them (usually in Africa, Asia, and Latin America). Nevertheless, in 1978 he strengthened official ties between the US and the communist government of China (Chomsky, 1997: 2). It is suggested that like the US, South Africa has a twin-track foreign policy. On the one hand, it pursues preferred policies such as the opening of relations with Beijing in preference to Taiwan and the close ties with Indonesia, Cuba, and Libya. On the other hand, and perhaps mindful of the success of its own recent transition, the government outwardly displays concerns over human rights and democratisation elsewhere.

The ANC spent decades appealing to the world's conscience in order to end the morally repugnant system of apartheid. Now that it is in power, this same organisation appears incapable of making moral judgements about who they should deal with and who they should not. The active promotion of South African arms exports to an unstable Middle East, the predominant use of narrow economic considerations to judge whether or not to break off diplomatic relations with Taiwan in favour of new relations with the PRC, and relations with Indonesia and Sudan which remained unaccompanied by any definitive public position on the abuse of human rights, are cases in point. In fact, the relationship with Indonesia led to the subordination of one of the ANC's important political principles -- solidarity with other liberation movements and oppressed peoples (Thomas, 1994: 184). Alluding to its close ties with so-called pariah states, the ANC government maintains that "these countries had contributed enormously to the freedom of other peoples, including that of South Africans and through our relations with these countries, the government has proved that its international relations are based not on political expediency but on principles" (Muller, 1999: 7, electronic version). Indeed, sticking with ones's friends through thick and thin demonstrates a commitment to principles. In

this sense, South Africa's foreign policy is not incongruent with the broad values that she promotes.

Emerging from a political situation that was characterized by armed and violent conflict, the new South Africa inherited an advanced defence industry which many defence analysts argue can contribute considerably towards poverty alleviation in the country (Khanyile, 2000: 25). Nevertheless, it is argued that a state that wishes to pursue a human rights agenda internationally will have to be 'pure' at home (Mills, 1997: 15). This requires a careful handling of issues such as arms sales, especially considering that South Africa is one of the most significant weapons exporters from the South.

Since 1990, when Pretoria announced that it had dismantled one partially assembled and six complete nuclear weapons, South Africa has possessed an unusual status in the international community as one of the few voluntarily disarmed nuclear weapons states (Mills, 2000: 8). This accorded the country a special voice on arms control and disarmament matters. South Africa's strong stance did not mean that she ceased to function as an arms trader. It merely implied that she would act as a responsible arms trader, and this began with the formation of the National Conventional Arms Control Committee (NCACC) and a fixed set of criteria to regulate the arms trade. These criteria included a respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, the internal or regional situation within the recipient country, and the degree to which the sales were supportive of South Africa's national and foreign interests (White Paper on Defence, 1996: sec.3.5.1 - sec.3.5.6).

However, these criteria are often applied flexibly, nullifying its real purpose. For example, one of the criteria for arms sales is that countries buying arms must have democratic and non-repressive regimes (White Paper on Defence, 1996 : sec.3.5). Despite this, South Africa has concluded an arms deal with China (*The Natal Witness*, 6 June 2000). Employees at the DFA coldly point out that taking a high principled position not to export arms only means that someone else will (Interview B, appendix 1). Such evidence of South African arms being supplied in situations where human rights violations occur or might occur raises fundamental questions about the coherence and responsibility of Pretoria's foreign policy. There appears to

be a lack of moral homogeneity as South Africa promotes human rights whilst engaging simultaneously in controversial arms deals that may undermine those very rights.

Following Iraq's stand-off with the UN over weapons inspections, the South African government announced that it was entering into talks around formal diplomatic relations with the country (*Sunday Tribune*, 5 April 1998: 1). Although this was contrary to UN sanctions and Iraq's leader, Saddam Hussein, was notorious for human rights violations, it was argued that the Middle East was South Africa's fastest growing trade partner. South Africa's decision to market tank-firing systems to Syria also raised a storm of protests from those concerned about Damascus's human rights record and the already volatile Middle East peace process (Mills and Boulden, 1997: 1, electronic version). Moreover, in the 1990's South Africa was further criticised for supplying arms to both the Tutsi regime in Rwanda as well as to Hutu rebels; the tragedy in Rwanda is now a matter of public record (Goldstone, 1997: 446, 448). Indeed, speculation about arms transfers to countries with controversial human rights records or unresolved conflicts (including Sri Lanka, Uganda, Indonesia and Sudan) evoked a lot of debate in Parliament in 1997 (Khanyile, 2000: 29).

It becomes evident that there are clear elements of inconsistency, even hypocrisy in South Africa's attempts to foster the cause of human rights around the world. The preceding section highlighted the promotion and preservation of the national economic interest as a central tenet of South Africa's foreign policy. This is an inevitable consequence of the fact that human rights are only one of many foreign policy concerns. In the real world, democratic countries trade enthusiastically with countries like China and Indonesia. They may wince at massacres in Beijing or East Timor, but they will not, in President John Kennedy's words, "pay any price, bear any burden" to promote liberty (*The Economist*, 4 December 1997: 2, electronic version). As Nelson Mandela eloquently put it, "...these values whose honouring in practise should be the purpose of all politics, normally swirl around as unwanted debris in the wake of the turbulent march of a macho world of economic growth and intensely fought power games" (Compendium of South African statements during the XII NAM Summit, 1998: 25).

It becomes evident that there are two patterns of thought that shape the dynamics of South

African foreign policy. The first is based on a crusading foreign policy motivated by universal ideological appeals. The second pattern has a pragmatic thread running through it which emphasizes the nation's interests in terms of its power vis-a-vis other nations. Choosing one above the other may very well unravel the fabric of South African foreign policy. Therefore, it is essential that the country reconcile this duality instead of eliminating it.

In this regard, we need to work out what it means in practise to place human rights, justice, and democracy at the forefront of South Africa's foreign policy. This certainly does not mean that South Africa should refuse to conduct diplomatic and trade relations with countries with unsatisfactory human rights or democracy records. But it should also not mean that when we engage with the governments of such countries, we ignore, marginalise or subordinate these principles and only concentrate on trade and diplomacy. Aziz Pahad, addressing the issue of South Africa's foreign policy priorities, explained that

> although an important consideration, the human rights situation in a particular country is not the only element taken into account when deciding whether to establish diplomatic relations. South Africa's overall national interest (in terms of commercial factors, historical considerations, political ties etc.), the geo-political importance of a country and its influence in world affairs have to be assessed. South Africa may decide to maintain existing or establish diplomatic relations with a country, despite a poor human rights record, because our presence in that country will enable us to promote human rights and democracy (Alden, 1998: 91).

A crucial point is that by trading or concluding diplomatic relations with a particular country, South Africa is not necessarily expressing approval of the domestic policies of that country's government. A high ranking official from the DFA argued that "we have to interact with all types of states and try to nudge them into international norms" (Interview C, appendix 1). It would be paradoxical to go to war with another country over its human rights record - the loss of lives and other hardships that accompany any war fly in the face of such a position. Nevertheless, 'constructive engagement' may not always yield optimal results. South Africa's own democratic transition was, in part, due to the tough economic sanctions imposed by the international community. On the other hand, it is unlikely that a similar position would work for an economically powerful country such as China. In China, the economy is so strong and large that it does not need South Africa; in fact the opposite is true. A DFA official noted that "if South Africa begins to function under autarky and isolate countries like China, she would simply

end up isolating herself" (Interview B, appendix 1). It becomes apparent that reconciling the promotion and protection of human rights with the preservation of national economic interests has to occur on a case by case basis and any criteria governing such decisions would have to be flexibly applied. True, it does not make for a consistent foreign policy but whether this is desirable, given the circumstances, is debatable.

It is interesting to note that the Director General of Pretoria's DFA speaks of a 'new diplomacy' not a 'new foreign policy' (Evans, 1991: 4). The difference is important. Diplomacy is not a synonym for foreign policy. Whereas the latter can be described as the substance, aims, and attitudes of a state's relations with others, diplomacy is one of the instruments employed to put these into effect (Evans, 1991: 4). In this regard, the 'new diplomacy' envisaged refers only to the enabling vehicle and does not encompass a change in the composition of the passengers, the purpose of the journey, or significantly, the eventual destination (Evans, 1991: 4). One may conclude that the vehicle change reflects a change in style rather than substance, in manner rather than matter. It is important not to confuse the two if we are to correctly assess the intentions of the South African government.

Chapter Five

Case Study - People's Republic of China

The debate over whether South Africa should recognise the Republic of China (ROC; Taiwan) or the People's Republic of China (PRC; Beijing) evolved around a cluster of emotive issues that cut to the core of foreign policy making in the new democracy. It centred around the degree to which human rights and economic and development considerations should determine a nation's foreign policy. For the newly empowered ANC, entering government with an explicit mandate to incorporate human rights into South African foreign policy, these concerns posed difficult choices. A state which, in its own departmental profile (1996) on foreign affairs, declared that it has "a duty to show solidarity to people who suffer under regimes which do not respect international human rights" is naturally vulnerable to appeals made on those terms (Alden, 1998: 84).

Identifying a human rights violation determines a country's options (in terms of international law in particular, which generally protects state sovereignty) but not what a country has the capacity to do. In addition, geographical distance further reduces a country's options. A DFA employee noted that "Zimbabwe is our immediate neighbour, our biggest African trade partner and the second largest economy in SADC. You can't act against it in the same way as you would with a country miles away. The British can do that, we can't..."(Interview A, appendix 1). However this argument does not apply to China; it cannot be used to explain South Africa's position toward the country and merely highlights the inconsistency in South African policy. In addition, if the US which is supposedly the champion of human rights and democracy in the world still trades with China actively, what influence is a relatively small country that is miles away going to have? A high ranking official at the DFA observed that "you move an elephant with great difficulty" (Interview C, appendix 1). It is, therefore, crucial that one draws a distinction between identifying the problem and the capacity to act or react.

Nelson Mandela's refusal to bring the new South Africa into step with international practise by cutting diplomatic ties with Taiwan was understandable, considering that the country had picked up at least R20 million of its 1994 election bill (Cornish, 1997: 250). Nevertheless, on 1 January

1998, South Africa established full diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China (www.gov.za/yearbook/foreignrelations.htm). The handling of the shift from Taiwan to the PRC left much to be desired. In November 1996, President Mandela assured the Taiwanese vice-Premier, Hsu Liteh, that it would be "immoral" for South Africa to break ties with Taiwan (Burrows, 1997: 103). Only two months later he did just that (the rationalization behind the decision will be explained later). In this regard, South Africa compromised both its commitment to human rights and its sense of fair-play (consider Mandela's reassurance that ties would not be broken and the use of Taiwan to foot part of the election bill). Despite expectations to the contrary, it showed that South Africa's foreign policy would remain embedded in pragmatic thought.

Concerns over the continuing status of South African business interests, not to mention its diplomatic presence, were pivotal in reversing the government's position on official recognition of the PRC. If South Africa did not recognise the PRC, it would have "run the risk of endangering its prosperous ties with Hong Kong" which Britain ceded to the PRC in 1997 (Geldenhuys, 1995: 11). Hong Kong has one of the highest levels of foreign reserves in the world and with R3.6 billion worth of South African trade passing through the port, there were growing fears that South Africa's business and diplomatic interests would be jeopardised once the PRC resumed sovereignty (Alden, 1998: 90). By the end of 1998, South Africa's trade with the PRC, including Hong Kong, had risen to R8, 8 billion (www.gov.za/yearbook/economy.htm).[2] This situation added to the growing costs of retaining the status quo with Taiwan (there was no real reason to offend the PRC since South Africa and Taiwan continued with trade, scientific, cultural and other relations, and Taiwanese investors continue to enjoy full protection under South African law, and all other benefits extended to foreign investors). The decision taken in December 1996 to switch diplomatic recognition from Taiwan to the PRC by the end of 1997, allowed South African business to take advantage of the exciting trade opportunities that the PRC had to offer, with its potential market of 1.2 billion people and economic growth rates averaging about 10% annually but as high as an unprecedented 40% in some of the coastal provinces (Burrows, 1997: 102). China has emerged as a major player in the

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[2]Trade with Taiwan tumbled by 9,2% in 1998 (www.gov.za/yearbook/economy.htm)

world economy with trade totalling $319 billion, of which $182 billion was in exports, making it the tenth largest trading country (Mazibuko, 1996: 15).

Such statistics hint at a potentially rewarding relationship with the PRC. Already, Beijing has announced a major investment deal for South Africa involving a mini city consisting of hundreds of factories, warehouses, shopping malls, a hotel and a casino, which is aimed at creating around 500,000 jobs and which could be worth more than R54, 5 billion in the next two years (*The Citizen*, 27 August 1996). Chinese investments in South Africa are worth more than R500 million while South African companies have invested more than R4 billion in China (*Southscan*, 5 May 2000: 70). China has also become South Africa's fifth largest trading partner. In 1999, South Africa's exports to China were valued at $208 million while its imports from China were worth $686 million (*Southscan*, 5 May 2000: 70). In addition, Merchant Shipping Agreement was signed which aims to lay the foundation for the predicted huge cargo movement between South Africa and East Africa and China, Hong Kong, and Macau (*Southscan*, 5 May 2000: 70). Although the switch of diplomatic allegiance forced the Taiwanese government to withdraw certain economic assistance and SA Airways landing rights in Taipei, the retention of South Africa's landing rights in Hong Kong after the territory's return to the PRC was considered more important and lucrative. Moreover, the PRC has given SA Airways overflight rights over mainland China that will shorten the airline's route to Japan (Cornish, 1997: 252). In addition, the South African armaments industry intimated that the opportunities offered by the Chinese market exceeded those of Taiwan (Alden, 1998: 85).

Any analysis of South Africa's relationship with China should also take into account her ambitions to receive support for an African permanent seat on a restructured Security Council. As a permanent member with veto power, China would be able to block such an initiative. Mandela's decision to abandon diplomatic recognition of Taiwan in favour of China actually came at a time when he was playing a role in helping Africa secure a second term at the helm of the UN.[3]

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[3]It is a reference to the initiatives taken to promote the selection of an African as the UN Secretary General to succeed Boutros-Boutros Ghali (Cornish, 1997: 251)

It is pointed out that "China and South Africa both excuse many of their shortcomings by citing the complexity of the problems they face. Both have made enormous, indeed historic strides since the 1990s. Both will benefit from their new relationship" (Cornish, 1997: 256). The DFA's Deputy Director-General for Asia and the Middle East Region, Thuthukile Mazibuko, cites the China issue as one of her greatest challenges: "the eyes of the world are on China and most countries, including South Africa, are trying to anticipate what China's role will be in the next century. We have to consider how we will be placed when China becomes a major economic power" (Mazibuko, 1996: 15). The decision to regularize relations with the world's most populous country and the world's largest emerging market can only be to South Africa's long term benefit. Indeed, it seems sensible not to deny the de jure existence of a great power with a permanent seat on the UN Security Council, the world's largest population, advanced nuclear capability, and which boasts one of the fastest growing economies in the world. Political, strategic and economic considerations make it imperative that South Africa should follow the lead of the vast majority of nations in extending official recognition to Beijing.

All this is not to suggest that the PRC is an exemplary international citizen. In fact, there are sound moral reasons for countries to keep the PRC at arm's length, treating it as a delinquent state violating universally accepted norms of good conduct. Actually the PRC is something of an anachronism in the post-Cold War era; it is one of the few remaining communist dictatorships in a world that has largely turned its back on this form of government.

China's human rights record also remains problematic to many other countries. With its record of imprisoning political opponents, use of prison labour in the manufacture of goods for export and the widespread use of the death penalty, China is a rich source of material for human rights activists. Not only do vivid memories of the 1989 massacre at Tiananmen Square persist but also many of the principal official actors still hold power in Beijing (Geldenhuys, 1995: 5). In China, 1999 saw the most serious and wide-ranging crackdown on peaceful dissent for a decade (Amnesty International Report, 2000). Thousands of people were sentenced to death and many were executed. In October of 1999, China signed the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Amnesty International Report, 1999). Despite this, torture and ill-treatment of thousands of prisoners of conscience (especially nuns and monks) remain endemic. Many have been sentenced after unfair trials, others are held without charge or trial. The government made

no move to review these cases even though such offences had been abolished in law in 1997 (Amnesty International Report, 1999).

Moreover, whilst the bureaucratic interpretation of China's 'one child' population policy continued to stir controversy, new regulations on registration of social groups and publishing were introduced in October and December of 1999, increasing restrictions on freedom of expression and association (Amnesty International Report, 1999). The parallels with South Africa under apartheid rule are uncanny. The failure to acknowledge Beijing's violation of human rights stands in sharp contrast to the ANC's own foreign policy blueprint:

> ...the ANC will canonise human rights in our international relations.....South Africa should and must play a central role in a worldwide human rights campaign .....South Africa under ANC rule will be neither selective or afraid to raise human rights violations with countries where our own and other interests might be negatively affected... (ANC Foreign Policy Perspective, 1994: 5-8).

On the contrary, South Africa and China have exchanged most favoured nation status (*The Star*, 15 February 1996). In addition, a South African DFA official maintains that should a resolution on human rights in China be tabled at the Human Rights Commission of the UN, South Africa will abstain from voting for reasons pertaining to her economic interests (Interview B, appendix 1).

The violation of human rights is extended to Tibet where China's communist rulers stand accused of committing genocide against the indigenous people. The exiled Dalai Lama serves as a constant reminder of the plight of the captive Tibetan nation. In addition, the PRC and Taiwan came close to hostilities in March 1996 during the Taiwanese presidential elections. In an attempt to intimidate Taiwanese voters, the PRC conducted aggressive missile tests and military manoeuvres in waters close to Taiwan, including a simulated attack on a Taiwan-like island (Burrows, 1997: 90). The communist rulers have openly warned that an independence declaration by Taiwan would justify the use of force to bring the island back into the fold. This readiness to resort to armed force flies in the face of the ANC's own commitment to the peaceful settlement of disputes expounded in its 1994 foreign policy document (ANC Foreign Policy perspective, 1994).

The PRC's belligerent attitude towards Taiwan, its attempt to control large numbers of small

islands in the South China Sea, and its various disputes over land boundaries place it in potential conflict with Russia, India, North Korea, Tajikistan, Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan, Vietnam, Japan, Brunei and the United States (Burrows, 1997: 91). Considering that in the past century alone China has fought no fewer than seven wars, any acquisition of weapons on her part is understandably viewed with anxiety by the region. South Africa's contribution to this (via the sale of arms to China), is a direct violation of her commitment to achieve solutions in a peaceful and humane manner. This turnaround in South African policy amounts to a case of money over morality.

Issues of human rights and trade have been de-linked in China's case. China's geo-political and economic importance often insulates her against any criticism and pressure which only serves to reinforce the maintenance of intolerable situations of human rights abuses within the country. It does appear as if "human rights has become the sacrificial lamb offered up to trade" (Brzezinski, 1996: 6, electronic version). Nevertheless, South African foreign policy makers are adamant that "although it is imperative that we strengthen trade links and attract investment, human rights violations do concern us" (Mazibuko, 1996: 16). It is certainly true that if we sacrifice human rights on the altar of trade with China, fighting for it in places like Myanmar become more difficult. The whole shambles will merely confirm the prejudices of sceptics who think the very notion of linking human rights and foreign policy is tenuous. At the UN Commission on Human Rights session, South Africa distanced itself from both African and non-aligned voting blocs by voting on a European motion to debate the human rights situation in China (Cornish, 1997: 255). However, in June of 2000, Defence Minister Mosiuoa Lekota announced that South Africa will sell weapons to China (*The Natal Witness*, 6 June 2000). Lekota did not specify when and for what purposes China needs the weapons. Rather, he emphasized that China's human rights record would not harm the deal. All this is despite the promise by the former Deputy Minister of Defence, Ronnie Kasrils, that "we would not sell weapons to countries that violate their people's human rights, are involved in civil war, or threaten the sovereignty of their neighbours (*Weekend Argus*, 15/16 October 1994). China practically violates all these principles.

On the other hand, some foreign policy makers (especially those at the Department of Trade and Industry) contend that China is reforming even though western-style democratization is not yet

in evidence (Interviews D, E and F; appendix 1). Attempts to liberalise are slow and the Chinese government institutes change very reluctantly, but this is understandable considering events in the former Soviet Union. In addition, it is important to remember that China has a different history from the West's decentralised democratic systems. Her highly centralised empires were considered the most efficient under the circumstances (How else do you control such a large population?). It is astutely pointed out that the management of power in a country of a billion people could not follow the same pattern as in a traditional nation-state and the challenge of sheer size becomes even more pressing with transnational economic forces pulling apart the old fabric of Chinese society (Interview F, appendix 1). China considers stability in a country of its size as paramount, placing this above individual rights. Opening up the political process to mass democratic participation is viewed as a recipe for chaos. China abuses human rights but what is the alternative? Chinese history shows that without centralised control the country will descend into anarchy. Imagine the implications for the rest of the world. When China was in this position in the 1930's, with every foreign power meddling in the effort to carve out a sphere of influence, the result was the Pacific War which claimed millions of lives (Interview F, appendix 1). The official view of the leadership is that "...during the Tiananmen disturbances, had the Chinese government not taken the resolute measures, then we could not have enjoyed the stability that we are enjoying today" (Cornish, 1997: 254). Presumably, this is the same justification used for current human rights violations.

Defenders of the Chinese reform strategy emphasize that meeting people's basic needs is much more important to human rights in China than introducing western-style democracy. It is often argued that development without democracy is possible, but democracy without development has a very short life-span. China is the reigning world champion of economic upliftment, having pulled some 300 million people from absolute poverty in the last 20 years (Cornish, 1997: 254). A recent World Bank report labelled China's high life expectancy, universal primary education and other social-welfare achievements as "enviable" (Cornish, 1997: 254).

It is difficult to say how far human rights should extend and what priorities should be pursued. Maurice Cranston's solution (to which most western countries adhere) was a league table of human rights, putting civil rights first and economic rights or aspirations in the second division (Vincent, 1994: 29). China has approached it the other way around. She has given priority to

a class of human rights (socio-economic rights) that the west has chosen to de-emphasize. Thus, criticizing China's human rights policy takes on an ethnocentric slant.

Nevertheless, the issue of diplomatic recognition remains problematic and whether South Africa has made the most suitable decision, is often contested. Taiwan is not simply a subordinate region of the PRC: Chinese communists, who seized power on the mainland in 1949, have never been able to extend their jurisdiction to the adjacent island of Taiwan which is a fully-fledged liberal democracy (Geldenhuys, 1995: 6). Moreover, Taiwan has already invested some R1.4 billion in South Africa, creating over 4000 jobs in over 280 factories (Geldenhuys, 1995: 14). When compared to other industrialised countries, the PRC hardly features as either an investor or aid donor to South Africa. It should be added that the economies of South Africa and the PRC are in many respects competitive rather than complementary, a feature that may restrict the growth of trade. Already, the Trade and Industry Department has had to negotiate a deal to limit spiralling imports from mainland China which are seriously harming local industries (*The Star*, 29 January 1996). Indeed, the PRC may not turn out to be the land of boundless economic opportunities for foreign traders and investors: ranged against its impressive economic growth rate and its immense potential market are an inflation rate of over 25 % and endemic government inefficiency and corruption that already make it hard for foreigners to do business there (Geldenhuys, 1995: 6).

The China issue presented South Africa with a unique opportunity to provide innovative and moral leadership on a truly global scale. Unfortunately these moral imperatives were not entirely compatible with economic and political interests and were effortlessly abandoned. However, South Africa now has to be wary that even the pragmatism, expressed in economic terms, might not hold all the anticipated benefits. What morality requires of the South African government, if it intends being true to its own high ideals for humanity, is that recognition of and ties with the PRC must carry with it the obligation to take Beijing to task over its abuse of human rights.

Chapter Six

Case Study - Zimbabwe

The Zimbabwean crisis is the latest conundrum to accost South Africa's human rights-based foreign policy. It brought into question South Africa's integrity and commitment to human rights, fair play, and justice. The difficulty in implementing a foreign policy with a human rights dimension was aggravated in Zimbabwe by the problem of upholding two different sets of rights (political and socio-economic) for two different groups of people (indigenous Zimbabweans and white farmers).

Robert Mugabe and his Zimbabwean African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) justified and supported the invasion and occupation of white farms by arguing that they were acquired by imperial conquest, not the rule of law. The previous white Rhodesian regime had systematically stripped the African population of the country's most productive land without paying any compensation. Although the Zimbabwean government has been criticized for 'land-grabbing,' these accusations need to be assessed within the broader context of the past (that is, who grabbed the land first). At the UN's Millennium Summit, Mugabe emphasized that most of Africa was still burdened by the unfinished business of the twentieth century: "we cannot tax our own people, as poor as they already are, to pay farmers who are the grandsons of the robbers" (*Sunday Times*, 10 September 2000). It has been argued that the responsibility for compensating the farmers lies with Britain, not just as the former colonial power but because Margaret Thatcher agreed to provide the funds as a condition of Mr Mugabe signing the Lancaster House agreement which finalised Zimbabwe's independence twenty years ago (*Africa Confidential*, 28 April 2000: 1). Zimbabwe's parliament has now amended the constitution to allow the government to seize farmland without compensation, for redistribution. This occurred despite the fact that Mugabe lost the referendum regarding such constitutional changes. White farmers have taken it as a sign of unconstitutional behaviour and disrespect for the rule of law, and consequently bemoan the loss of their political rights.

On the other hand, it is pointed out that past legislation such as the Land Tenure Act and the Land Apportionment Act were racially motivated laws enacted to secure the best land for white settlers

(Electronic *Mail and Guardian*, 8 December 1997). Moreover, during the Lancaster House talks, the British government did its utmost to protect the privileged position of its descendants by insisting on constitutional provisions that would prevent the black majority from redressing the imbalances created by nearly a century of white domination and subjugation (Electronic *Mail and Guardian*, 8 December 1997). In this regard, it is not surprising that whenever the post-independence government attempts to create laws that seek to reverse the imbalances, they are regarded as unconstitutional. The same people who have denied black Zimbabweans many of their rights are now appealing to the courts for the protection of their constitutional rights. Is it fair to talk about political and human rights when nothing is being done to address the issue of the rights of indigenous Zimbabweans to the resources of their country?

The delicate nature of the issues characterising the Zimbabwean crisis challenged the very foundations of South Africa's foreign policy. The adoption of a hard stance during the Zimbabwean crisis would have suggested the protection of white Zimbabwean interests above those of the indigenous people. Considering its own turbulent past, it would have been extremely difficult and costly for the South African government to sustain sanctions against an African government campaigning against white land-holdings. The issue has already stirred frustration over the slow pace of the land redistribution program in South Africa where a recent poll in African townships revealed 54% support for Zimbabwe's land seizures (*Africa Confidential*, 7 July 2000: 4).

As with China, a coherent policy towards the country is compounded by a number of UN declarations on non-intervention and principles of international law prohibiting states from "interfering in civil strife in another state"(Suttner, 1997: 16). Whether this legalistic interpretation is adequate, is mooted. One cannot dispute that there are unspoken rules of non-interference and respect for sovereignty, but it should be acknowledged that within this same body of rules, there are also those that enunciate the sanctity and inviolability of life. One could argue that internal matters become matters of legitimate external concern once the level of conflict and instability creates an effect that impacts on other states. In an interdependent world, one country's domestic instability may become more of a problem for its neighbours. The situation in Zimbabwe attests to this. Already, 8 billion rands in annual cross border trade has been disrupted (*The Economist*, 2000: issue 8166, electronic version).

With globalisation diminishing the significance of national boundaries and the world economy no longer looking at national markets but rather at regional markets, Southern Africa will either have to join the club or get left behind Consequently, South Africa's interests and objectives in the Southern African region are guided by the existence of strong linkages between the domestic and regional economy. In addition, a disaggregation of South Africa's trade to the Southern African Development Community (SADC), reveals that Zimbabwe is her most important market (www.gov.za/yearbook/economy.htm). It is therefore not surprising that the rand's dramatic fall against the US Dollar in 2000 was generally ascribed to the turmoil in Zimbabwe. Reserve Bank governor, Tito Mboweni, pointed out that the deteriorating economic and political situation in Zimbabwe has affected the mood of investors in South African markets (*Southscan*, 5 May 2000: 68). A DFA's employee explained the predicament in terms of a useful analogy: just as the squalid conditions of a neighbour's property reduces the value of a beautifully kept house so too foreign investors do not see chaos in Zimbabwe, but chaos in Africa; not war in the DRC but war in Africa (Interview A, appendix 1).

Nelson Mandela has argued that South Africa cannot escape its African destiny and it is in her own interest to play a role on the African continent generally and specifically in the regional context (Pahad, 1996: 8). Aziz Pahad concurs that without peace and stability at home and in the rest of Africa, economic growth and development will be subverted (Pahad, 1996: 8). Consequently, South Africa's foreign policy for the Southern African region is supposed to reflect a commitment to close diplomatic, economic, and security co-operation and integration, adherence to human rights, the promotion of democracy, and the preservation of regional solidarity, peace and stability (www.gov.za/yearbook/foreignrelations.htm). South Africa's approach to achieving these aims whilst simultaneously preserving her national interests was criticized as being weak and docile. True, South Africa's approach did not yield the results desired by her western critics (a return to the status quo for white farmers and the purging of Mugabe), but whether this was actually an awful thing is debatable.

South Africa has opted for a policy of 'quiet diplomacy' and 'constructive engagement' in response to the Zimbabwean crisis.   In the past, Alfred Nzo had stated that actions by the Mugabe government against journalists and others was a domestic matter and South Africa would not involve itself in it (Muller, 1999: 17, electronic version). Nevertheless, it was noted

that this did not exclude 'quiet diplomacy' and more private attempts to work for human rights and democratic ideals. South African foreign policy makers theorized that a discreet approach would be less likely to provoke its volatile neighbour with its "sensitive" president[4] than the loud insults emanating from Britain and the rest of the western world. It is suggested that the Zimbabwe situation has been exaggerated, especially by Britain which has taken offence to President Mugabe's intemperate use of language (especially his unwise homophobic remarks, among others). Punishing Mugabe for being undiplomatic, by treating him as the next Idi Amin, is perhaps harsh. "Amin would never have held a referendum on his constitutional proposals, let alone allow himself to lose it. Amin would have also fed Morgan Tsvangirai, leader of the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), to crocodiles long before he turned his trade unions into a political party."(Duodu, 2000: 1, electronic version).

Nonetheless, South Africa's 'quietly, quietly' approach draws fire that Pretoria is not doing enough to stop the Zimbabwe crisis from further damaging the regional economy. However, South African policy makers are looking ahead at the bigger picture and the country's long term national interests. Disrupting Harare-Pretoria relations would lose South Africa what little leverage it has in the DRC war. Former Botswana president, Ketumile Masire, who was given the role of mediating between the warring sides in the DRC, declared that Mugabe could play "the most decisive role in resolving the conflict, since it was the presence of his army that sustains the present situation" (*Southern Africa Monthly Regional Bulletin*, April 2000: 6). Pretoria's leverage is further limited by its belief that Mugabe's ZANU-PF remains the only viable guarantor of stability in Zimbabwe. The opposition MDC, a youthful party of trade unionists, human rights activists, academics, and some business owners, is regarded as utilizing a coalition formula that went terribly wrong with Frederick Chiluba's Movement for Multi-Party Democracy in Zambia (*Africa Confidential*, 7 July 2000: 1).

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[4] Interview A, appendix 1: "President Mugabe is a very sensitive person who does not take kindly to public criticism. If you attack him through the media or openly you will not get positive results. The deterioration of the relationship between Britain and Zimbabwe was largely due to the activist position adopted by Tony Blair and Peter Hain.

Moreover, enthusiasm for a more visionary regional policy is tempered by a cautious approach to the thin line between leadership and hegemony. In 1999, a study by the Institute for Security Studies found that the intervention in Lesotho had left "a legacy of bitterness" towards South Africa (*Southern Africa Monthly Regional Bulletin*, April 2000: 4). If Mugabe appealed to other states for help against South Africa's 'bullying,' it would widen the nascent split in SADC. Therefore, it is in South Africa's national interest to prevent a situation whereby resentment and hostility emerge and grow as a result of actual or perceived domination of these countries by a more powerful South Africa. Thus far, the South African government's 'quiet diplomacy' has been buttressed with a parallel channel of engagement between the ruling ANC and its Zimbabwean counterpart, ZANU-PF. Mbeki has been talking to Mugabe regularly since the World Economic Forum meeting in Switzerland (*Africa Confidential*, 28 April 2000: 3). This silent diplomacy is aimed at averting an even bigger human rights crisis and it shows that the South African government is interested in negotiating a regional understanding, not dictating one. This contrasts with the dictatorial approach of the United States where the senate passed a bill - the Zimbabwe Democracy Act of 2000 - setting the conditions for the sovereign state of Zimbabwe to follow in carrying out land reform (*Sunday Times*, 13 August 2000: 17). As a regional power, South Africa realizes the limits to that power and consequently relies more centrally on non-coercive instruments of foreign policy such as diplomacy, trade and economic co-operation.

However, there is consternation that in South Africa the "pendulum may be swinging from domination towards doing nothing"(Calland and Weld, 1994: 9). The concern is that caution may lead to inertia. The African Commission on Human and People's Rights, in its 8th annual activity report (1994-1995), calls for an environment in which human rights may flourish but submits that the quiet diplomacy on the African continent has failed to create such an environment and has failed the many victims of abuse by African governments. For example, a South African member of the observer mission to Zimbabwe, intimated that "no one was prevented from casting their vote. Those who wanted to participate in the election did so, and importantly voted for the party of their choice" (*The Natal Witness*, 15 September 2000). However, some critics later claimed that 25% of registered voters were in fact dead, and that doctored voter rolls and Mugabe-designed constituency boundaries were finalised a mere three weeks before the election and released to the opposition only by court order (Rotberg, 2000: 48).

However, it can be argued that the difficulty in applying a human rights-based foreign policy to the Zimbabwean situation lies in the dual nature of the rights in question. On the one hand, the "arbitrary amendment of the constitution" and the occupation of white-owned farms indicate a "clear violation of civil and political rights of white Zimbabwean farmers" (Rotberg, 2000: 48). On the other hand, one could argue not only that many of the targeted farms were acquired immorally but also that the socioeconomic deprivation of the black Zimbabwean community has been ignored for too long. An article in Zimbabwe's *Herald* newspaper elucidated that "we have the right to vote and engage in politics without participating meaningfully in the economy"(8 December 1997: 4, electronic version). This conflict between the rights claimed by white farmers and black veterans is a microcosm of the larger conflict between political and socioeconomic rights. Contradictory as it may seem, a high degree of pragmatism is required in pursuing a didactic foreign policy based on human rights. Under the circumstances, South Africa's quiet diplomacy which cautiously refrained from taking sides was probably the best option both in terms of her need to preserve national economic interests and her aspiration to promote human rights. After all, an effective and judicious foreign policy should include not just a concern for the respect for human rights but also its various manifestations in terms of civil, political, and socioeconomic rights of all citizens.

Conclusion

Evaluating South African Foreign Policy

This analysis has not aimed at being exhaustive. It has selected key issues to illustrate the need to articulate more clearly the objectives of South Africa's foreign policy. An attempt has also been made to denote the complexities relating to the application, in contemporary international relations, of general principles such as human rights.

In 1995, Nelson Mandela noted that the irony of South Africa's late entry into international affairs was that she could reap the fruits of a world redefining itself (South African Foreign Policy Discussion Document, 1996: 6). However, time has proved him wrong. Surviving in a competitive interdependent global system whilst vainly trying to maintain its commitment to human rights, justice, fair-play, and peace has been burdensome rather than rewarding for South Africa. Since the advent of democracy in 1994, domestic and international expectations have steadily grown regarding South Africa's role as a responsible and respected member of the international community. Indeed, the wider a state's foreign policy commitments, the more limited is its freedom of action in foreign policy. South Africa has learnt this the hard way. Although these external environmental restraints are not wholly determining, they do set narrow bounds to the foreign policy states ought to pursue. In addition they have to be balanced against domestic constraints. In South Africa, foreign policy perspectives have not been freed from the awesome and debilitating baggage of domestic concerns.

The early optimism surrounding South Africa's pursuit of a foreign policy based on high moral principles, specifically the promotion and preservation of human rights, was blinded by the tragic character of political and social problems bequeathed by the apartheid regime. South Africa's first priority was to ensure that she would be able to compete on the global playing field in her own right, thus guaranteeing the security and well-being of her own citizens. However, South Africa's remarkable transition from political pariah to pedagogue has resulted in a set of onerous international obligations even as it is also expected to act in concert with other actors in pursuit of diverse bilateral, multilateral and regional expectations. The two are undoubtedly interdependent but, unless South Africa is effectively able to manage its own transition to an

outward-orientated, internationally competitive economy, its relatively new role of international mediator will not be sustainable. South African foreign policy makers have come to realize that 'bread and butter' survival issues (preservation of the national economy in a competitive, interdependent international arena) take precedence over the 'niceties' of human rights protection.

Most modern ideologies are infinitely malleable and one would expect the calculation of national interest and ideological prescription to march hand in hand (Goodwin, 1974: 172). Despite this, South Africa's approach to foreign policy shows that if a sharp breach occurs between interest and political creed, the former generally wins out for the simple reason that the state must survive and somehow prosper. An employee at the DTI reluctantly admitted that human rights was compromised globally in order to alleviate the economic situation at home (Interview D, appendix 1). This makes for an unhealthy foreign policy: a failure to uphold human rights could mean that a democratic South Africa would unintentionally send into the region what Susan George has called 'boomerangs'- "actions or inactions by a more developed country with negative consequences for less developed countries, but which eventually rebound on the more advanced country in various negative ways," for example, through refugees (Davies et al, 1993: 60).

It is important that foreign policy makers realize that "the choice is not between bread or freedom but bread and freedom."(Mills and Boulden, 1997: 2, electronic version). Clearly, there is a need for reconciliation between preserving national interests and promoting broader interests such as human rights if South Africa is to achieve a coherent foreign policy that is congruent with her external aspirations as well as the internal needs of her citizens. The first step towards achieving this, ideally, should involve an alteration of the perception that promoting/protecting human rights and preserving national interests are parallel goals which never intersect. Picturing principles and interests at opposite poles can inhibit the development of a foreign policy that takes cognizance of both higher aspirations and mandatory needs. Winston Churchill explained that the identity between collectivist internationalism and British nationalism existed because Britain's national interest coincided with the interests of humanity and civilization: "the fortunes of the British Empire and its glory are inseparably interwoven into the fortunes of the world. We rise or we fall together" (Wolfers, 1967: 273). South Africa should draw on Britain's experience

and harmonize her national interest with international concerns. In this sense, promoting broad values such as human rights and democracy will become important components of South Africa's national interest.

The case studies have shown that one of the most basic reasons for establishing diplomatic relations with countries accused of human rights violations, is to create a channel of communication which is then used to convey to the government of that country the values which South Africa promotes and propagates. This approach is derived from the belief that communication and persuasion would be more constructive than isolation. Nevertheless, as the China case so aptly illustrates, in an era where economic welfare is a prime national value, acting on one's conscience is not always meritorious. Whether we refer to the diplomatic recognition of China, our relations with Zimbabwe, the Atlantis Diesel Engine deal with Cuba or oil arrangement s with Iran, South Africa will need to use all of its diplomatic savoir faire to balance the interests it has in dealing with the more 'pariah' countries whilst simultaneously maintaining its moral high grounds (Kuper, 1997: 259).

It is advised that the DFA would be less criticised if it were to take the public more fully into its confidence over the difficulties and constraints that condition it actions regarding states practising human rights violations. Of course, sections of the public may still not agree with the choices, but public perceptions will be better informed if we all know why the government acts as it does and what criteria have informed its choices. South Africa can make a valuable contribution to the international system of the new millennium, but only if it is prepared to make some hard policy choices on human rights questions. At present, there is a tendency to harp on values such as prestige without recognising that they can only be earned by our success in managing our affairs and in gaining the respect of others, and that they cannot be bolstered by mere words or gestures. In South Africa, there is a predisposition to treat the political and economic aspects of foreign policy separately. "I would be hesitant to comment on human rights because that is not something related to DTI's function. It is a difficult issue to address within a trade context," is a typical response at the DTI on the issue of human rights (Interview D, appendix 1). The dangers of this are exemplified by the fact that often particular trade interests are seen as incompatible with certain principles and values inherent in South Africa's foreign policy. The task of diplomacy is to reconcile or explain divergent interests, to appropriate

external actors or to bring trade policy in line with foreign policy (Barston, 1988: 159). One should acknowledge that trade cannot only be used for economic objectives but also political ones. However, it needs to be realized that this is not in itself a strategy for realizing objectives.

It is proposed that South Africa's foreign policy initiatives be modest and not overly ambitious. Economic objectives and political ideology can be balanced. Forging a new foreign policy is not about changing internal values, elevating national interests, or sacrificing/compromising external values; it is about rethinking what South Africa can offer the world. It is easier to argue for the morality of politics if one does not have to bear the responsibility of choice and decision. Although the means can frequently eat away or corrode the ends of foreign policy, unless or until South Africa, as a matter of deliberate policy-planning, begins to broaden or redefine interests and aspirations, the contradiction between substance and form that lies at the heart of South Africa's external relations will remain. In order for South Africa not to end up with an insolvent foreign policy, it will have to define and prioritise its objectives and take cognizance of its own limitations as well as the nature of the world outside. It has been pointed out that we need a reappraisal of content as well as packaging, "neither old wine in new bottles nor new wine in old bottles" will suffice (Evans, 1991: 6).

We need to think like idealists in the search for ideas of what an alternative world might look like; yet, we need to think like realists in the sense of asking whether favourable human rights conditions that already exist in some economically advanced countries might be extended to their less economically advanced counterparts. There is an intriguing but daunting possibility that stable peace, economic equality, decent living conditions, and political liberties may be bound together in an inseparable package; thus, to strive for one may require us to strive for them all.

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APPENDIX 1:

During the course of this year (2000), a series of interviews (both personal and telephonic) were conducted with officials from the relevant branches of the **Department of Foreign Affairs** and the **Department of Trade and Industry.** Information was provided on condition of anonymity.

A. Personal interview with an official from the Zimbabwe Desk of the Africa Branch of the Department of Foreign Affairs, Pretoria - 12 September 2000

B. Personal interview with officials from the Social Affairs Branch of the Multilateral Division of the Department of Foreign Affairs, Pretoria - 12 September 2000

C. Telephonic interview with a representative from the Asia and Oceania Branch of the Department of Foreign Affairs, on behalf of the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs - 13 September 2000

D. Personal interview with an official from the Foreign Trade Relations Branch of the Department of Trade and Industry - 12 September 2000

E. Personal interview with an official from the Africa Trade Relations Branch of the Department of Trade and Industry - 12 September 2000

F. Personal interview with an official from the Bilateral Trade Relations Branch of the Department of Trade and Industry - 12 September 2000

Likert Scale Measuring Commitment to Human Rights

Please respond with regard to South African Foreign Policy

	strongly agree (Sa)	agree (a)	disagree (d)	strongly disagree (Sd)

1. Human rights issues are important to foreign policy.
2. The promotion of national economic interests should take precedence over the promotion of human rights issues.
3. Given the potential economic benefits to South Africa, the sale of arms to DRC rebels should be considered seriously by the SA government.
4. Promoting/Protecting human rights should be the primary aim of foreign policy.
5. Promoting human rights has ideological significance but is not practical.
6. Preserving national economic interests should be at the heart of foreign policy.
7. South African economic interests in Angola should not take precedence over human rights considerations.
8. Promoting national economic interests above universal values such as human rights is selfish.

Key :

	Sa	a	d	Sd
Q1	4	3	2	1
Q2	1	2	3	4
Q3	1	2	3	4
Q4	4	3	2	1
Q5	1	2	3	4
Q6	1	2	3	4
Q7	4	3	2	1
Q8	4	3	2	1

* Questions 1, 4, 7, and 8 indicate that human rights are central to foreign policy and are scored Sa = 4, a = 3, d = 2, and Sd = 1 whereas questions 2, 3, 5, and 6 allude the opposite and are scored Sa = 1, a = 2, d = 3, and Sd = 4.