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Djibouti and the US War on Terror

Strategically located at the intersection of the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea, Djibouti has become a new and vital US ally as the war on terror increasingly focuses its efforts on the Horn of Africa. The Horn has been deemed a political safe haven for terrorists by the US and represents an area already inundated with small arms and light weapons. In exchange for military assistance and training to strengthen border security, Djibouti has helped the US by sharing intelligence, providing over-flight rights, and granting access to airfields and bases. Djibouti is also host to the only US military base in Africa. After September 11, the US established the headquarters for the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa in Djibouti. The task force works with nations in the Horn of Africa to detect, disrupt and defeat transnational terrorism in the region. An estimated 1,800 US troops have been stationed in Djibouti to monitor terrorist movements in the region as part of the new task force. After initially basing itself on the USS Mount Whitney battleship off Djibouti's coastline, the task force has set itself up at Camp Lemonnier, not far from Djibouti's international airport. In December 2002, 2,400 US troops based on ships off Djibouti's coast conducted military exercises in preparation for the war in Iraq.

However, in its 2002 *Human Rights Report*, the US State Department described Djibouti's human rights record as poor, including violations such as: arbitrary detentions by government security forces; physical abuse of detainees and prisoners; restrictions on freedom of assembly,

SA's dead-end policy on Zimbabwe

SA's failed policy towards Zimbabwe can become the stumbling block for all its laudable diplomatic initiatives.

One of Pretoria's most significant foreign policy achievements over the last decade has been its ability to punch above its weight in the international arena. It has been able to do so because it captured the moral high ground in a global community too often preoccupied with narrow self-interest and political expediency.

Its positive role as a middle power and bridge-builder between the developed and the developing world on various issues such as disarmament, sustainable development, a fairer trading environment, debt relief and racism deservedly has won it accolades world-wide. South Africa has largely avoided the 'blame game' that has dogged multilateral and bilateral relations between the North and South over the last forty years. In that respect it has brought a fresh perspective about the necessity for Africa and the developing world to grasp the nettle of its under-development and to deal with the pervasive conflict that faces many of its societies by engaging the North in a more imaginative manner. Its role in providing new direction to UNCTAD, in the Non-Aligned Movement and as a facilitator par excellence with the G-8 are some of the many positive results that have flowed from these constructive initiatives. The pinnacle of its efforts is without a doubt its successful marketing of the Nepad initiative to the world.

Yet towards the close of the ANC-led government's first ten years in office SA runs the risk of losing all this hard-won recognition and respect. The reason for this is its policy towards Zimbabwe.

South Africa rightly recognises multilateralism as a key instrument in its diplomatic arsenal. As demonstrated by Pretoria's recent initiatives at the WTO in Cancun, the multilateral way is often the only option open to weaker countries and economies to make their voices heard internationally. Without the order and structure that the multilateral environment (despite its failings) provides, the weak are at the mercy of the strong. It is precisely under the multilateral umbrella that South Africa was able to adopt such a critical view on Iraq earlier this year. This view was also supported by a series of initiatives South Africa undertook until the eleventh hour to avoid the US-led war against Iraq. President Mbeki was one of the key proponents on the need for reform of the United Nations after the war and the importance of an equitable multilateral system that protects the weak.

It is precisely for this reason that South Africa's criticism of the Commonwealth position against Zimbabwe is so baffling.

The South African government has opted for the route of quiet diplomacy to deal with its neighbour. This choice in itself is not without merit and is a route that many countries can accept that have to deal with a difficult neighbour, such as for example the Nordic countries with the former Soviet Union. However, within the framework of so-called quiet diplomacy is a range of measures that South African policy makers could have used to influence the process in Zimbabwe. This includes actions

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Pan-African Parliament: Pipe-dream or reality?

South Africa attempts to show the way on the future of a Pan-African Parliament, but might have missed the boat by not proposing a representative from the official opposition for a seat on Africa's first continental parliament.

The elusive goal of African unity negotiated another hurdle on 12 November 2003 when Senegal became the 27th member state of the AU to ratify the Protocol on the Pan-African Parliament (PAP). Senegal's ratification provided the required simple majority to bring the Protocol into force. Preparations are now underway for the inaugural session of the PAP, slated to be held in the third week of March 2004. Negotiations surrounding the March session, as well as other details, such as the list of observers to be invited and the themes for debate, were discussed in the recent 8-9 December meeting of the AU Steering Committee on the Protocol for the PAP. The final date for the session will be decided upon by the current AU chairman, Mozambican President Chissano.

Of all of the AU's bodies, the PAP is potentially the most important mechanism for realising the goals of the Maputo Summit of 2003, which called for an organ 'which will ensure the effective and full participation of the African Peoples in the Development and Integration of the Continent.' However, like many pan-African initiatives introduced throughout the years, the PAP's formal establishment risks being obscured by confusion over implementation, and faces deep scepticism about the prudence of a continental-wide parliament on a continent still grappling with parliamentary democracy in many of its constituent states.

The Protocol establishing PAP will not provide the first Pan African Parliamentarians with much of a blueprint for action. Indeed, the Protocol is more noteworthy for what it is missing than for what it contains. The vision for the PAP is that it will eventually function with legislative authority of roughly the same order as that of the European Parliament. During

its first term however, the PAP will exercise advisory and consultative powers only. It will be free to make recommendations on matters such as human rights and the consolidation of democratic institutions and practices; it can work towards the harmonisation and co-ordination of the laws of its member states; and it can promote the programmes and objectives of the AU. But in terms of the mandate to legislate over the whole of Africa, the PAP will be powerless until its

States that have ratified the Protocol on the Pan-African Parliament:

Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Egypt, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Lesotho, Libya, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Rwanda, The Saharawi Democratic Republic, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe

first elected members adopt the structures for decision-making and delivery.

Thus the PAP is still very much an amorphous phenomenon. This can be viewed as both a blessing and a curse. On the one hand, the PAP will be uniquely positioned to craft its institutions in ways it deems to be most appropriate for Africa's unique needs; its space for manoeuvring and flexibility leave open substantial opportunities for compromise, creativity, and initiative.

On the other hand, however, lacking so much in terms of structure, specifics, resources and scope, the feasibility of PAP cannot but be questioned. After all, modelling the PAP after the European Parliament may be profoundly misguided – we have seen the fallacy of crafting Africa in Europe's image too often before.

Moreover the very notion of a democratic parliament is still relatively new on the African continent – how can a supra-national legislature consolidate itself when so many national parliaments are only taking root incrementally throughout Africa? Likewise, how will the PAP ensure that it adequately represents and articulates the huge diversity of African regional and national interests? Can PAP possibly account for all African perspectives when its member states are struggling to do so themselves? And how does PAP propose that it will support itself and its decisions, given the current financial state of the source of its authority, the cash-strapped AU?

Despite these daunting challenges, African leaders recognise that direct action has to be taken now if PAP is to avoid the fate of past pan-African initiatives. In this regard, South Africa's actions are particularly encouraging. SA parliamentary leaders, but particularly National Assembly Speaker Dr Frene Ginwala, have been instrumental in moving the process forward on the modalities of the PAP's organisation and purpose. Parliament's working group on the African Union has debated the PAP's proper relationship with other AU institutions and programmes; it has taken particular interest in PAP's potential role in Nepad. The group likewise has explored structures to link the PAP with national and regional parliaments and economic communities. Under Ginwala's stewardship, the South African Parliament is now prepared to make recommendations at PAP's first sitting; South Africa's rules task team, for instance, is currently drawing up potential options for PAP's rules committee, covering everything from election of

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Doing Business in Angola

Can economic relations between Angola and SA lead to political harmonisation?

Relations between Angola and SA continue to be driven by economic imperatives rather than political motivations. Bilateral trade between Luanda and Pretoria increased more than two-fold between 2000 and 2002. This can be interpreted as an encouraging sign despite the fact that trade is still skewed in Pretoria's favour. SA share of the trade, which totals R3.5bn in 2002 dwarfs that of Angola, which in the same year was just over R900m. While SA buys vehicle and aircraft equipment from Angola, it supplies the country with a wide range of consumer and primary goods including prepared foodstuffs, mineral products, machinery and mechanical equipment.

Many SA companies have also taken advantage of the end of the war and the return of stability to Angola. Construction giant Group Five is currently running the three-year \$100 million Nova Vida project, which started in October 2000. Others in the construction industry include Grinaker LTA, Murray & Roberts and Basil Read. In the mining sector SA-based diamond giant, De Beers, which has been locked in dispute with the state-owned Angolan mining company Endiama, is having a hard time negotiating a return to the country. In the retail sector, the Shoprite group opened its first store in Luanda on 27 August 2003 and expects to have two more stores running by June 2004. South African fast food outlets, Steers and Debonairs also announced the opening of their stores in Angola in December 2003.

However, SA businesses confronted substantial constraints in their operations in Angola. First, the fact that the Angolan government gives preference to Portuguese and Brazilian companies in the construction sector which are already deeply entrenched in the Angolan system politically and economically, is a challenge in its own right. Some companies have complained of irregularities in the tendering processes that they believe tend to favour their Portuguese and Brazilian competitors. Second, companies have found the operating environment in Angola more difficult than in other SADC states where they face little or no competition. In Angola, they are confronted with established Portuguese, Brazilian, Lebanese and Israeli players. Third, insufficient co-operation between the South African Departments of Foreign Affairs (DFA) and Trade and Industry (DTI) is hurting companies in Angola. The perceived lack of collaboration between DFA and DTI in co-ordinating business engagement on the ground and the non-alignment of political and economic priorities are complicating matters. Political tensions between Angolan President Jose dos Santos and his South African counterpart Thabo Mbeki are impacting negatively on South African companies' efforts to gain access to the upper echelons of Angolan society where 13 families allegedly control the country's economy.

While Angola and SA can do fine working apart, there is a lot more that could be gained if their co-operation is expanded. The challenge is to ensure that DFA plays a more proactive role in co-ordinating economic relations between SA and Angola at a political level. This would ensure better access for companies in the environment in which they operate. Furthermore the respective roles of DFA and DTI needs to be reconciled to ensure better support to companies in Angola.

The DFA is attempting to close the gap between economic and political relations with Angola and the current Ambassador in Pretoria is also keen to achieve this end. Plans are underway for a seminar that will bring together business to brief them on DFA's priorities for reconstruction and engagement in Angola. Hopefully the seminar planned for 2004 will expand political co-operation between the two countries, which should be good for SA business.

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freedom of press, freedom of association and freedom of movement; widespread practice of female genital mutilation, child labour; and extensive discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, nationality and clan background. However, in the face of the war on terror Djibouti's strategic position is the key driver of relations between the two countries.

The strategic access to the Horn of Africa that its presence in Djibouti provides to the US has enabled it to assist Yemen and Kenya, two countries that have been targeted by al-Qaeda. In turn Djibouti has gained military training and some economic advantages. In an interview with Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN), President Ismail Omar Guelleh stated that since the Americans arrived, over 1,000 people have found employment (current unemployment rates are 50% out of a population of 472,000), local businesses are engaged and the Americans are making considerable investments. Furthermore, US troops have been carrying out humanitarian work, such as renovating hospitals, as well as military training for armies in neighbouring countries. 'It has definitely had a positive effect on Djibouti,' stated President Guelleh.

The current economic boom in the small country can be felt strongest in the port of Djibouti. Historically, the port has been the lifeline of the country. The port experienced a massive boom after Ethiopia diverted its trade from Eritrea as a result of the 1998 - 2000 border war. Currently 80% of the goods it handles are destined to landlocked Ethiopia, and the port's capacity is almost saturated. Thus a new port is being built 8km east of the current facility to absorb and develop the demand. In early December 2003 the African Development Bank approved a \$10 million loan to finance the project. It is believed that the new port will generate jobs and assist to diversify the economy. The Djiboutians hope in particular that tourism will grow. The port is scheduled to be finished in 2006. Aden Doule, the Djibouti government representative at the port, pointed out 'September 11 changed everything, the Americans needed a base in the region and Djibouti was seen as the most secure country. The Americans will use the new port. The opportunity is now and we have to grasp it.'

Nuria Giralt

presiding officers to rules of debate and decision-making to the specific wording of the oath of office.

South Africa was also the first African state to choose its delegation of representatives to PAP. Under the Protocol's Article on Election, each member state may send five representatives to the PAP, at least one of whom must be a woman. Significantly too, the Protocol states further that the representation of each member state must reflect the diversity of political opinions within that state. Adopting an electoral method that can be used as a model by other parliaments, South African party whips drew up a list of potential representatives which was tabled before the entire Parliament; they

agreed that at least three of South Africa's five representatives would be women. South Africa's first delegation to the PAP, chosen on 26 November before a full sitting of Parliament, is to be: Dr Frene Ginwala, Speaker of the National Assembly (ANC); Mr Mninwa Mahlangu (ANC), Deputy Chairperson of the National Council of Provinces; Ms Nomakhosazana Njobe (ANC); Dr Barend Geldenhuys (NNP); and Professor Harriett Nbugane (IFP). The absence, however, of a representative from the official opposition (DA), is regressive and a missed opportunity. The government could have, if it had taken such a step, sent a significant signal to the rest of Africa about the important and indeed critical role

that opposition parties should play in the democratisation of the continent. The European Union Parliament is in this regard streets ahead of the fledgling PAP.

Still fundamental questions abound and Pretoria is far from a disinterested party in these. Perhaps the most thorny and one that to some degree has driven SA engagement, is the location of the PAP. AU officials have announced that the inaugural meeting will be held in Addis Ababa until differences between Libya, Egypt, and South Africa can be resolved. With uncertainty plaguing even these most basic of details, the grounds for scepticism persist.

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such as the humble Note Verbale, the withdrawal of its diplomatic representative for consultations, a more supportive engagement of Zimbabwean civil society and the opposition, and a range of multilateral initiatives to influence the process constructively, such as through SADC, the Commonwealth or the AU.

The fact is that South Africa has not used these instruments decisively or strategically. The standard government response on the rightful criticism of its quiet diplomacy has suggested that those who call for a more decisive policy on Zimbabwe are suggesting that South Africa should send in the troops. This is both cynical and demeaning and fails to acknowledge the glaring shortcomings of its present policy and the wide range of options at its disposal.

Worse however, is the fact that South Africa's lack of decisive action on Zimbabwe supports the notion that second-class human rights on the African continent are acceptable.

It is clear that South Africa has lost the moral high ground on

Zimbabwe and that it is fast losing the hard-won goodwill and

Facts on Zimbabwe

Since 2000 most sectors of the Zimbabwean economy have been contracting. Unemployment is well over 70% and current inflation stands at 619.5%. Tobacco exports, which previously provided more than a third of all foreign exchange receipts, have been reduced to a trickle. The acute foreign currency shortage has had a negative impact on the ability of the economy to source external inputs, with socio-economic consequences, including the inability of the health sector to access much-needed drugs. Medical expenses went up 224% in November alone. Life expectancy in Zimbabwe has been reduced to just 35 years. Some 5.5m of the population are facing famine, especially in the rural areas. Many of them are reliant on humanitarian aid from countries of the North to survive.

support that it has carved out since its transformation to a democratic, free, non-racial and non-sexist society. Whether the South African government likes it or not, Zimbabwe is perceived as a test case for Nepad. Africa's failings in this area have become the dominant theme in the global discourse about the future of the continent.

A change in policy is not only necessary because the current approach has brought no tangible results, but also because the circumstances in Zimbabwe flies in the face of every principle that South African society has endorsed with such conviction since 1994, namely political freedom, the rule of law and tolerance.

Hopefully, the latest positive signals about a dialogue between ZANU-PF and the opposition after President Mbeki's visit to that country this week will lead to concrete progress. Unfortunately, we have been here before. In the meantime Zimbabweans are paying the price.

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