



OCCASIONAL PAPER NO 95

South African Foreign Policy and African Drivers Programme

September 2011

Dependency, Instability and Shifting Global Power: Influences and Interests in African Foreign Policy in the 21st Century

Ross Herbert

South African Institute of International Affairs

African perspectives. Global insights.

ABOUT SAIIA

The South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA) has a long and proud record as South Africa's premier research institute on international issues. It is an independent, non-government think-tank whose key strategic objectives are to make effective input into public policy, and to encourage wider and more informed debate on international affairs with particular emphasis on African issues and concerns. It is both a centre for research excellence and a home for stimulating public engagement. SAIIA's occasional papers present topical, incisive analyses, offering a variety of perspectives on key policy issues in Africa and beyond. Core public policy research themes covered by SAIIA include good governance and democracy; economic policymaking; international security and peace; and new global challenges such as food security, global governance reform and the environment. Please consult our website www.saiia.org.za for further information about SAIIA's work.

ABOUT THE SOUTH AFRICAN FOREIGN POLICY AND AFRICAN DRIVERS PROGRAMME

Since the fall of Apartheid in 1994, South Africa's foreign policy has prioritised the development of Africa. To achieve its 'African Agenda' objectives, South Africa needs to intensify its strategic relations with key African countries. SAIIA's South African Foreign Policy and African Drivers (SAFPAD) Programme has a two-pronged focus. First, it unpacks South Africa's post-1994 Africa policy in two areas: South Africa as a norm setter in the region and South Africa's potential to foster regional co-operation with key African states and other external partners, in support of the continent's stabilisation and development. Second, it focuses on key African driver countries' foreign policy objectives that have the ability to influence, positively or negatively, the pace of regional co-operation and integration. SAFPAD assumes a holistic examination of the internal and external pressures that inform each driver country's foreign policy decisions by exploring contemporary domestic factors; the scope of their bilateral relations; their role in the regional economic communities; and lastly their relations with South Africa.

Programme head: Dr Nomfundo Xenia Ngwenya Xenia.Ngwenya@wits.ac.za

© SAIIA September 2011

All rights are reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or utilised in any form by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and recording, or by any information or storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher. Opinions expressed are the responsibility of the individual authors and not of SAIIA.

Please note that all currencies are in US\$ unless otherwise indicated.

ABSTRACT

Trade relations, strategic military balances, the Eastern bloc and Russia, China, Europe, the Cold War and post-Cold War issues have long dominated global studies of foreign policy. In this environment Africa has been little more than an after-thought, or at best the passive object of other nations' foreign policies. One consequence of the ending of the Cold War and the subsequent, much discussed 'uni-polar moment' has been a renewed interest in multilateral institutions as instruments to restrain unilateral state action. Although still not strong in any military sense or as decisive in action as a nation-state, the United Nations has attracted followers while in trade, economic policy, peacekeeping and crisis intervention, there has been a shift in influence of great consequence to foreign policy practitioners. This is the recognition that the United States and Europe remain highly influential but in power and normative terms can no longer take unilateral action.

In today's more consensus-orientated world, unilateral coalitions of the willing still can and do act; but greater consideration is being given to the views and policies of nations formerly ignored by the great powers. In many forums African states – which together represent a quarter of all the nations on earth – have a new relevance in international affairs. Of course, they continue to be financially dependent and rarely have the clout to mount spirited foreign policy initiatives. But their votes matter; and Africa is highly relevant to global concerns over issues such as energy security, conflict prevention, terrorism, drug smuggling, illegal immigration, financial regulation, money laundering, development, disease, minerals, wildlife conservation and climate change. The world is still far from coming together as a global village but there have been important moves away from the Hobbesian state of nature that in centuries past, permitted unrestrained conflict between nations.

In this slowly shifting context, it is important to reconsider the dynamics, policy priorities and strategic interests that drive African nations' foreign policy. Africa may not be leading global debates, but its views certainly are of greater consequence than hitherto, given the greater deference of global institutions to consensus decision-making and regional bloc representation.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ross Herbert was previously Africa governance research fellow at the South African Institute of International Affairs. He is currently undertaking his PhD at the School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

APRM	African Peer Review Mechanism
AU	African Union
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
FATF	Financial Action Task Force
G8	Group of Eight
G20	Group of Twenty
GDP	gross domestic product
IMF	International Monetary Fund
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
ODA	official development assistance
REC	Regional Economic Council
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WTO	World Trade Organization

AGENCY, STRUCTURE AND PATTERNS OF INFORMAL POWER

Foreign policy theory has long been dominated by Western perspectives and in the past half-century, the Cold War. While centring on the strategic rivalries of the great powers, the focus tended to be on those states regarded as well-formed, highly developed and mostly bureaucratically rational. Much less attention has been paid to the foreign policies of developing nations generally and African ones in particular. Often operating within tight financial constraints, African states generally struggle to fund more than a handful of embassies and lack the staff and financial resources to become involved in many areas of international contestation. Nevertheless, they have identifiable foreign policy preferences and strategies. Leaving aside detailed positions of specific nations, which will be dealt with in future papers in this series, what patterns deserve particular attention in assessing African foreign policy?

This question inevitably raises issues of global structure and the personal choices of particular leaders. Particularly in Africa, where power is often highly personalised and heavily concentrated in the presidency, there is much to be said for analysis of 'agency': the personal attitudes, choices and decisions of leaders as drivers of policy. Did, for example, South Africa's foreign policy truly change when the internationalist, Thabo Mbeki, ceded the presidency to Jacob Zuma, heavily concerned as the latter was with his legal troubles and intra-party squabbles?

While leaders have the power to influence events, define new institutions and seek radically new approaches to old problems, the sheer number of leaders, possible successors and particular forms of crisis that may arise among Africa's 54 nations is enormous. It is beyond the scope of the paper to consider all the personalities and choices confronting each leader; while granting that each of them may dramatically affect policy, leaders nevertheless must operate within the confines of national capacities, resource constraints and responses to powerful forces beyond their control. As Karl Marx observed, 'Man makes his own history, but he does not make it out of the whole cloth; he does not make it out of conditions chosen by himself, but out of such as he finds close at hand.'¹

Given the multiplicity of nations involved there is not one African foreign policy but many, reflecting diverse interests, weaknesses, strengths and national histories. The challenge of an introductory paper such as this is to reflect that diversity as well as those areas in which interests and attitudes coincide. In some arenas, African foreign policies demonstrate great similarities; in others they diverge across critical fault lines. Just as Russians, Chinese and Americans can have very different perceptions of the sources of risk in global affairs, African states also diverge, between themselves and with traditional powers, in their understanding of threats and of how and where foreign policy efforts should be directed.

The paper focuses on the incentives and goals that inform African foreign policy, factors that constrain the influence or execution of the continent's foreign policy and certain fault lines that result in key policy differences for certain groups of states.

FINANCIAL WEAKNESS AND POLICY INDEPENDENCE

With a few exceptions, mainly among natural resource-rich states, African nations are

economically weak and, as a consequence, governments are financially weak. This affects foreign policy in various ways. At the simplest level, many African states can afford to field only a limited number of foreign missions or diplomatic staff, which of itself limits their influence. Lacking substantial military forces or large markets, such nations are less attractive than others to non-African powers. Their economic and fiscal weakness is closely related to political instability and conflict, major issues on which foreign powers wish to engage Africa. The extent of Africa's economic weakness and its dependency on external financial aid turns domestic political actions into issues of foreign policy contestation.

Much has been written about African countries' persistent assertion of national sovereignty to deflect external criticism over their internal affairs. Such rhetoric does not, however, alter the reality, which is that Africa exists in a precarious realm in which its sovereignty in effect is already shared. The depth of Africa's poverty and the extent of its aid dependence have led foreign states and agencies to become heavily involved in many aspects of its domestic policy. Dependency theorists observe that many aspects of international relations constitute 'a matrix set up by the advanced capitalist countries, a system of pressures which sharply constrain, indeed, wholly determine the options available to developing countries.'²

As Gourevitch also notes, however, international relations theorists concentrate on how domestic politics shape foreign policy but tend to neglect the converse, which is the significant way that international relations affect domestic politics, for rich and poor nations alike. Treaties impose responsibilities. International gatherings raise political expectations and legitimise critical civil society questions. Global affairs bring intellectual and normative contagion. The global web of passport-based travel controls and such bodies as Interpol, the International Criminal Court and various tax, money laundering and terrorism agreements constrain nations and individuals. Furthermore, as the Greek imbroglio is currently demonstrating, international financial markets monitor domestic conditions and punish states that cannot manage their finances. Interest, inflation, foreign exchange and national budgets all can be driven by external events. Under unstressed conditions nations appear autonomous, but crisis quickly highlights the extent of international financial interdependence.

African states since the 1970s have been buffeted by the same forces now at work in Greece. A variety of indicators highlight the gap between African performance and that of other regions. Twenty-two of the 24 lowest positions on the UN Human Development Index are occupied by African countries³; Africa accounts for less than 3% of global merchandise trade (70% of that, being in oil trading⁴) and of the world's 50 poorest countries on a gross domestic product (GDP) per capita basis, 32 are African.⁵

Such statistics underscore an important asymmetry. While international systems impinge into domestic affairs in a crisis, the global economy does not necessarily lift all boats equally during good times. As the former Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo lamented, employing a different transport metaphor 'the African coach of development has been delinked from the train of global development.'⁶

One could separately analyse each of the major global institutions for its effects on African foreign policy: the International Monetary Fund, Interpol, the UN Security Council and Human Rights Council, global financial systems and the World Trade Organization (WTO), among others. It is appropriate, however, to focus on the most direct

and consequential aspect that informs African foreign policy. This is the extent to which governments depend on development assistance. Excluding the relatively economically independent states of North Africa, South Africa and Nigeria, on average over the past decade sub-Saharan governments depended on aid for 63.9% of their central government revenues.⁷

Table 1: Overall fiscal balance excluding grants (central government, percentage of GDP)

Low-income countries	1997–2002	2008
Benin	-7.4	-8.2
Burkina Faso	-2.8	-3.5
Ethiopia	-9.0	-7.0
Ghana	-12.4	-18.2
Kenya	-2.2	-5.7
Madagascar	-7.8	-7.1
Malawi	-12.2	-16.0
Mali	-7.9	-5.6
Mozambique	-13.1	-11.9
Niger	-8.7	-4.4
Rwanda	-9.4	-11.0
Senegal	-2.7	-7.2
Tanzania	-5.5	-10.1
Uganda	-9.1	-4.7
Zambia	-11.0	-5.2
Fragile countries (IMF categorisation)	1997–2002	2008
Burundi	-6.9	-25.2
Central African Republic	-7.2	-6.3
Comoros	-5.4	-12.9
Ivory Coast	-2.0	-2.3
Eritrea	-42.4	-16.1
Gambia	-7.2	-3.5
Guinea	-5.7	-1.8
Guinea-Bissau	-20.1	-21.9
Liberia	-1.1	-8.8
São Tomé and Príncipe	-36.8	-15.3
Sierra Leone	-13.9	-9.4
Togo	-3.3	-2.5
Zimbabwe	–	-4.0
Sub-Saharan Africa	-3.8	0.3

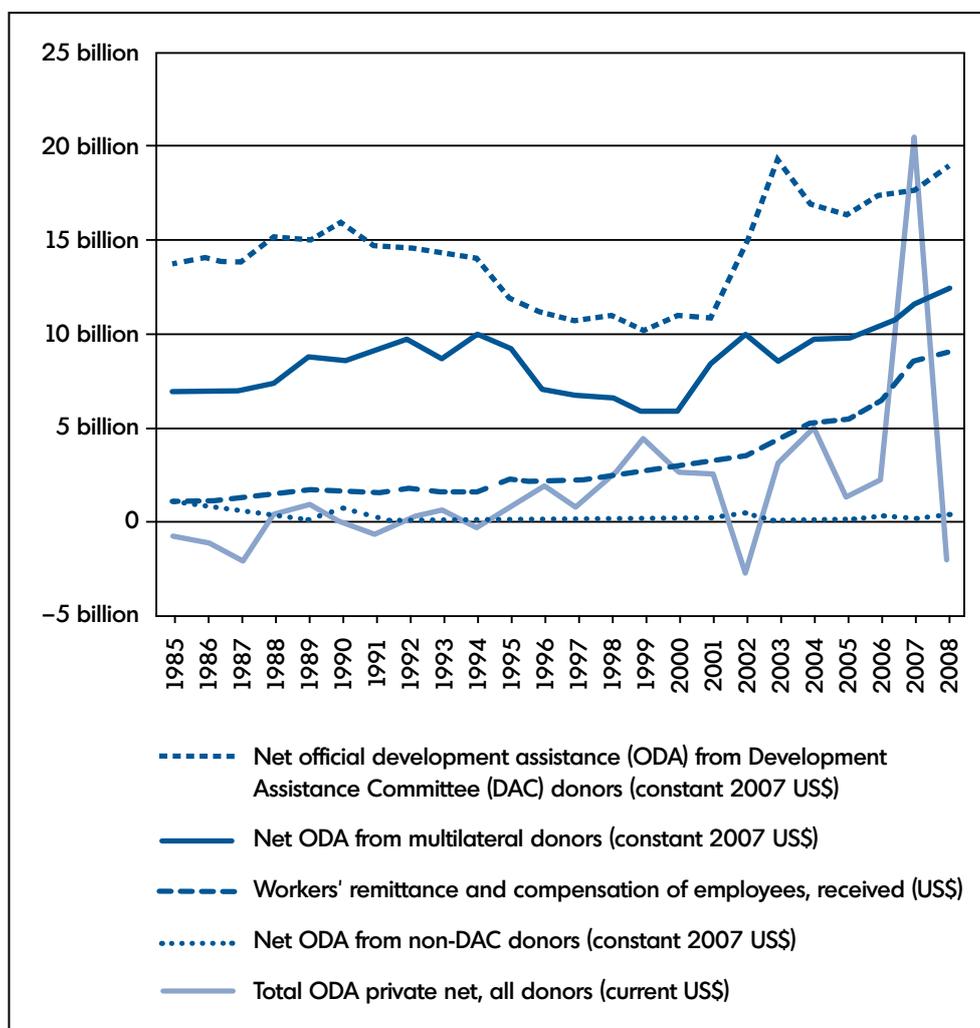
Source: International Monetary Fund (IMF), *Regional Economic Outlook: Sub-Saharan Africa 2009*. Washington, DC: IMF, 2009, p. 70

As a result, fiscal dependence has been a central foreign and domestic policy consideration for much of the continent over the past half-century. Without continued aid flows, many

African governments could not function. Regimes that possess significant oil or mineral deposits, however, represent an important exception. North Africa, Nigeria, Cameroon, Gabon, Congo-Brazzaville, Equatorial Guinea and Botswana (where diamond sales provide the bulk of government revenue) all have the resources to sustain themselves with little outside assistance, and all have been more willing than other states to defy structural adjustment and democratisation demands from international bodies and donors. In addition, Nigeria and Angola have demonstrated a greater ability and willingness to intervene militarily in neighbouring states.

The need to maintain aid flows and access to credit is a vital foreign policy interest, but in Africa it is not one primarily managed by foreign ministries. Presidencies and ministries of finance take the leading role in relations with aid donors, while other line ministries maintain a variety of contacts with bilateral and multilateral development assistance institutions.

Figure 1: Aid to sub-Saharan Africa in US dollars (excluding South Africa and Nigeria)



Source: <http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/africa-development-indicators>

The combination of dependency, neo-patrimonial demands, clientelism and donor pressures to improve governance, creates perverse incentives in the aid dimension of foreign policy. A variety of prominent Africa scholars – William Easterly, Nicolas van de Walle, Dambisa Moyo and Paul Collier among them – have noted that the need to finance re-election campaigns and sustain the flow of clientelistic political payouts requires governments wedded to such an approach to divert public resources from their intended purposes. Their chosen political path demands illicit activity of them. Because evidence of such misdeeds is continually leaking into the press and to aid agencies, such politicking also requires incumbent governments to hide their activities and subvert accountability and investigation. In short, the lack of good governance is not, as many governments publicly contend, a consequence of lack of capacity or funding; rather it is frequently a matter of political choice. Officials opt for illicit approaches or assume that they could not attract sufficient votes by offering programmes that truly address voter needs.

For countries that rely more on patronage and clientelism than delivery, this dynamic injects a substantial element of deception into foreign relations and public policy. Indeed, in many countries accusations of corruption and cover-ups are central to foreign aid policy and media and political debate. Moreover, almost every coup d'état in Africa since the 1960s has been publicly justified as necessary to end corruption in the political class.

While foreign policy generally is conceived of as taking place beyond national boundaries, Africa's foreign policy is mostly conducted on home turf between the domestic government and the many embassies and offices representing foreign donors. In important ways this gives Africa a warped perspective on the thinking of its foreign benefactors.

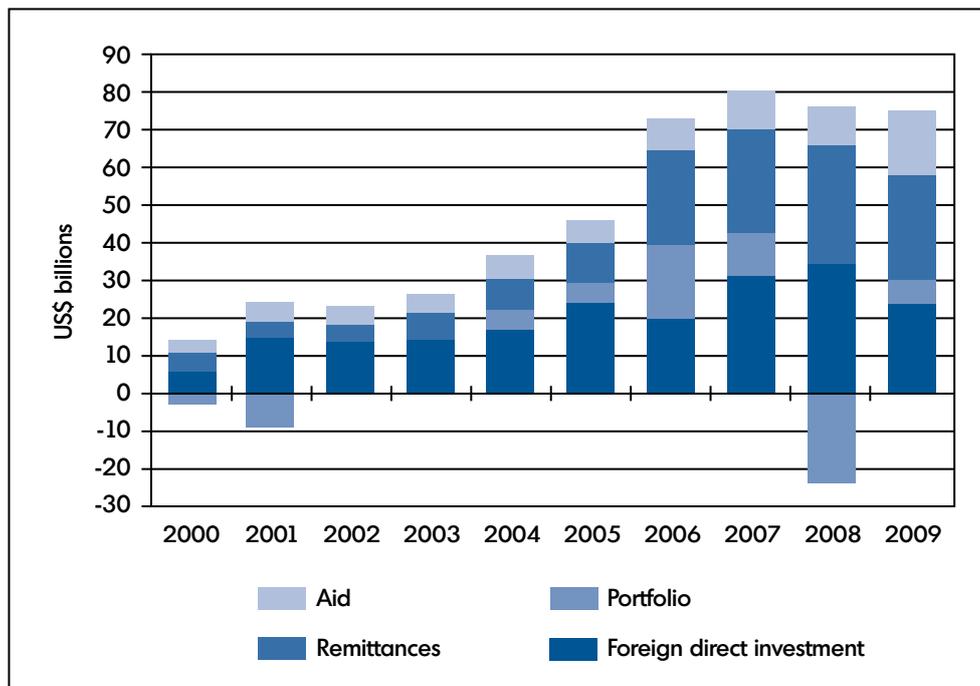
At one level, many governments engaged in large-scale corruption have been very shrewd in judging which foreign donors will not cut off aid because sympathies for the poor among their domestic constituencies are a very strong motivation to maintain the process. The sentiments of foreign governments are not, however, homogeneous. Aid agency staff and diplomats posted to Africa have often chosen that career because they are temperamentally sympathetic to the predicament of the poor and to Africa's developmental plight. Frequently, however, the political discourse on aid in their home countries is rather more sceptical of its utility. Parliamentarians called to vote on budgets back home must weigh foreign aid against many competing funding demands. Consequently, major corruption scandals that find their way into international media may precipitate large swings in aid allocations. Maintenance of trust and a reputation for integrity therefore become important foreign policy goals for aid-dependent states.

Because many of the foreign policy initiatives concerning aid occur on Africa's home soil, African states at times fail to recognise the difference in attitudes between diplomats and aid officials posted to African countries, and the broader political community in foreign capitals. After years of dealing with embassy and intelligence officials anxious to keep him as a Cold War ally, former Zaire President Mobutu Sese Seko failed to appreciate how the collapse of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) changed political dynamics. As Rwandan-backed rebels advanced toward Kinshasa in 1996–1997, Mobutu continued to appeal to the Americans. He could not grasp that by then the US saw him more as a liability than a valuable ally.⁸ That misperception led Mobutu to refuse significant concessions or peace deals with rebel militias in Zaire until the very end, when he fled the country on the same day that rebels marched into Kinshasa.

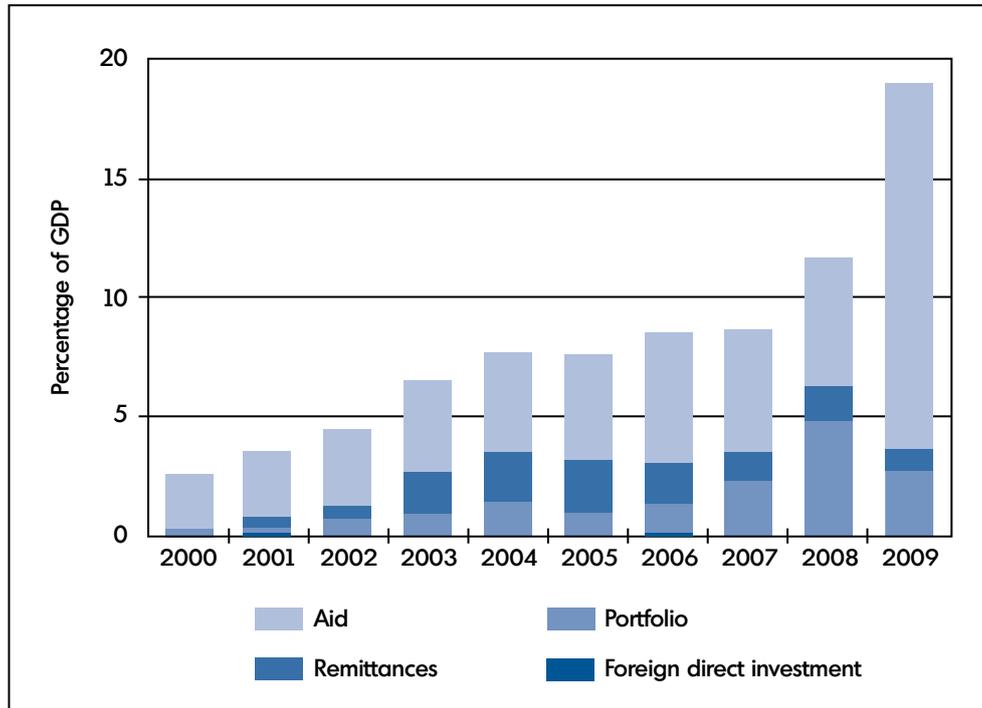
Conversely, when African states accurately evaluate their strategic value to donor states, this knowledge can embolden them despite diplomatic calls for improved governance. An example of this would be Ethiopia, where aid continues in spite of its brutal suppression of opposition, because the country is regarded in the West as a strategically necessary bulwark against Islamic fundamentalism in the Horn of Africa. Kenya is similarly viewed for its importance to powers requiring an ally to incarcerate captured Somali pirates whom Western governments do not, or cannot, prosecute themselves. As a result, aid to Kenya has continued to rise over the past decade despite evidence of massive corruption at the highest levels of its government.⁹

In many instances African states have successfully managed aid relationships to obtain debt relief and higher aid flows, but have not generally engaged with parliaments and civil society groupings in donor countries. Consequently, when economic shocks hit the developed world, aid budgets often undergo major downturns. When the USSR collapsed in 1990, aid to Africa fell as Western resources were diverted to former Soviet satellite countries. Figures 2 and 3 indicate, however, that aid to Africa from all sources has been rising steadily if unevenly since the mid-1990s. At present, high debt levels and public deficits in Europe are leading to massive domestic budget cuts that inevitably will curtail Europe's generous social welfare and pension programmes. Similarly large debt problems exist throughout the developed world. This suggests that aid volumes will come under challenge; which in turn will increase the economic and political pressure on many African governments. It is important to note that aid dependency is much more pronounced among Africa's low-income and fragile states. It is not inevitable that aid reductions lead to conflict, but in fragile states that risk becomes greater.

Figure 2: Selected inflows for sub-Saharan Africa



Source: IMF, *Regional Economic Outlook: Sub-Saharan Africa 2009*. Washington, DC: IMF, 2009

Figure 3: Fragile states (percentage of GDP)

Source: IMF, *Regional Economic Outlook: Sub-Saharan Africa 2009*. Washington, DC: IMF, 2009

LEGACY OF WEAKNESS: AFRICA'S POSITION IN THE GLOBAL ORDER

Africa's financial weakness is not separate from its history but rather is evidence of a relatively weak economic and military position in the world that has spanned centuries. Jared Diamond, tracing 10 000 years of history, argued that Africa lagged behind other regions economically and in the scale of its government capacity because it had significant geographical disadvantages. In particular it possessed far fewer of the domesticated animals and cultivable plants that in other societies provided the surpluses that propelled population growth, and the competition for land that prompted military organisation. On the basis of their access to transport and draught animals, many grains, and multifarious species of fowl and livestock, China, Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Meso-America developed complex, large-scale societies millennia before Africa, which depended on crops and animals that almost all arrived within the past few hundred years. Over time, other regions compounded their technological advantages. Hence, the African continent has faced centuries of domination, an historical legacy vital to an understanding of how Africa assesses the world and its risks.

The legacy of colonial domination by European powers influenced the highly centralised structure of African states, their foreign policies, and their early economic strategies. These had significant knock-on effects on African economic choices, social and political tensions and instability. More recently, Western diplomatic and developmental

policies towards Africa have been shaped by perceptions of over-centralisation of African state authority and the economic and political instability associated with untrammelled executive power. Recognising its technological, military and economic weakness relative to the West, newly independent African states were on guard against attempts to dominate or control them. They remain so today.

It is hard to overstate the impact of this assumption on foreign policy calculations. Concern over external domination has been a major reason for Africa's pronounced emphasis on national sovereignty in international forums, and contributed significantly to the initial assumptions informing African state structures. Unlike their counterparts in the US, where distrust of coercive central power is the central organising principle of the constitutional order, African leaders at independence argued that Africa needed a strong, centralised state to guard against foreign pressures, to preserve domestic unity, and to engineer state-led development. In part because of transitional agreements with former colonial powers, and partly out of choice, Africa largely preserved the extensive centralised coercive powers of the colonial state. In many cases colonial police powers to detain and interrogate without trial were maintained or extended, a process that was justified by countries in and around Southern Africa in the light of a continued aggressive military posture by South Africa's then Apartheid government.

While African states are often cited as lacking either the desire or the means to sustain developmental programmes over long periods, African regimes did demonstrate over many years creativity and determination in opposing 'settler' control of Rhodesia and South Africa and continued Portuguese rule in Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, Angola and Mozambique. Despite a lack of resources and staff, African diplomats successfully sought to isolate and condemn those regimes and in many instances secured their expulsion from international bodies, which is a reflection of the depth of the perceived threat as well as of the extent of moral condemnation of racist rule. While this example reaches back to earlier days of African foreign policy, it remains highly relevant. When united and determined, African governments have been able to deploy their votes in international bodies to good advantage.

African nations have made several consistent foreign policy choices as a consequence of a perceived need to resist external domination.

First, Africa has shown significant and sustained cohesiveness in voting as a bloc in various UN bodies, even when to do so has provoked Western criticism of African foreign policies. For example on Zimbabwe and Sudan – both instances of well-documented major human rights abuses – African states have moved consistently to obstruct efforts to launch UN human rights investigations. Nevertheless, although they blocked what they saw as punitive UN action, they themselves sought avenues of diplomatic intervention in those countries.

It is also important to note that African solidarity has not been complete and differences do arise. South Africa was very assertive in attempting to block coercive action on Zimbabwe in the Commonwealth even though Nigeria and other African members were willing to go along with Zimbabwe's suspension from the body. Zimbabwe is an extreme and polarising case, however, and does not nullify the marked tendency of African states to act in concert in spite of external pressure. Indeed, a key factor in African reluctance to condemn Zimbabwe has been Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe's continued assertion in regional meetings and through the media that the West

has launched economic sanctions in retaliation for the confiscation of 'White' farms, and that the opposition Movement for Democratic Change is under the control of the United Kingdom and the US. The merits of such claims need not be debated here beyond noting that there is substantial agreement that they were important factors in making African leaders reluctant to criticise Mugabe in public.

African solidarity has been particularly important in global trade negotiations. African states (together with other developing countries) effectively blocked the Doha Round of trade talks in the WTO when they concluded that developed nations had not fulfilled the promises they made in earlier trade deals.

Secondly, Africa has sought to establish the principle in international affairs that diplomatic and peacekeeping responses to crises should be dealt with first and foremost by the relevant regional body, rather than directly by the UN Security Council. The African Union (AU) has sought to command and control peacekeeping forces deployed in the continent such as those in Darfur. It has rebuffed Western diplomatic attempts to mediate, or participate in mediation, in crises in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Ivory Coast. This is not to say that Africa has tried to exclude external powers completely, but it has sought the right to deal with crises itself before reference to the UN Security Council. The result has been often cumbersome and occasionally counter-productive. US and UK pressure on Rwanda and Uganda over their 1998–1999 invasion of the DRC arguably complemented South African-led mediation, but was nevertheless rebuffed by South Africa.

The principle of regional leadership in effect has been extended to Africa's sub-regional bodies, which take the lead in resolving crises before referring them up to AU or UN level. (For example, the Southern African Development Community has taken the lead in diplomatic initiatives on Zimbabwe.) The principle has not been universally applied but remains an important operational presumption. At times it has resulted in diplomatic stagnation, particularly when influential members of regional blocs either have vested interests in, or very firm views on, the issues at hand; as when Ethiopian involvement in Somalia muted the effectiveness of regional diplomatic intervention.

Thirdly, concern over Africa's relative weakness and the potential for external domination has led to African efforts to counterbalance the West by courting trade and aid links with the former USSR, and now with China. In economic terms China's rise as investor, minerals purchaser and development assistance provider has more than offset the influence lost through the collapse of the USSR.

African ambivalence is perhaps most acute over the US. At one level, Africa has made conflict resolution a central element of continental diplomacy. The transformation of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) into the AU in 2002 saw the creation of significant new conflict prevention bodies, including the African Peace and Security Council, the group of retired elder statesmen known as the Panel of the Wise and the African Standby Force. The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) also was firmly grounded in the recognition that development could not occur without a reduction in levels of conflict. Africa does not, however, have the financial strength to field its own peacekeeping forces, which means it needs outside finance and, often, military equipment. Despite this, Africa reacted with some hostility to the US proposal to base its military Africa Command on the continent. Only Liberia publicly offered to host the command, while South Africa urged other countries to sanction any nation accepting the American unit.

Stephen Morrison, director of the Africa Programme at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, argued that the US under Presidents Clinton and George W Bush was very receptive to South Africa, but ‘particularly on matters of trade, investment, security and crisis diplomacy, Washington was surprised and frustrated by South African hesitation. ... [South African foreign policy] at all points remained apprehensive of a smothering [American] embrace.’¹⁰

The point is not to debate the policy merits of hesitation about the US relationship, but to note the persistent and assertive foreign policy steps taken as a consequence of African concerns over foreign intervention on the continent.

COLLECTIVE VERSUS NATIONAL FOREIGN POLICY APPROACHES

Another manifestation of the way in which African apprehension over its weak position in the world informs foreign policy is a strong commitment to working through multilateral bodies, among them the UN, the AU and Regional Economic Councils (RECs). This is a response to the tendency towards, and capacity for, unilateral action by more developed countries.

African acceptance of multilateralism, however, has not been unqualified. African foreign policy has consistently sought reconfigurations away from historically dominant powers and toward an international regime based on democracy among nations (‘one nation, one vote’). In some instances this also includes preference for rules-based international decision-making; but when that runs counter to African interests African states have sought to curtail international intervention. A key motivating factor has been the intensity of Western criticism of African governance and democratic practice, which suggests that if and when the world freely accepted aggressive intervention in dubious democracies, Africa would bear the brunt of it.

Working within multilateral frameworks has not meant acceptance of them. Indeed, Africa has sought fundamental changes in global governance and the world economic order ever since de-colonisation. ‘The challenge for South African foreign policy’, former President Nelson Mandela wrote in 1994, ‘is to ensure that the debate about the restructuring of the global order is kept alive.’¹¹

With better funding and greater numbers of diplomatic staff, South Africa has been more active on various foreign policy fronts than have many of its African peers, but it shares goals widely held on the continent. Among its foreign policy objectives, South Africa seeks to:¹²

secure a new world security compact through the United Nations (as the primary global security body), the Non-Aligned Movement, the African Union, the Southern African Development Community, the Commonwealth and other multilateral fora (sic) ... promote multilateralism to secure a rules-based international system, [and] promote the democratisation and reform of the United Nations system and the Bretton Woods Institutions (i.e. International Monetary Fund and World Bank).

In some ways this desire for change was more animated in the days when the Soviet model still seemed to offer a viable alternative to capitalism.

Despite this imperative for change, Africa remains limited in its ability to exact fundamental shifts in global institutions, given the ability of major powers to block reform; but the scope of its ambition to shift the world order deserves attention. The tension between African ambition and its capacity to alter operating rules to constrain global powers is best illustrated by the debate over UN Security Council reform. Africa sought two permanent veto-wielding seats and, taking an all or nothing approach, blocked further attempts to reach agreement on expansion unless the African position prevailed.

MULTILATERALISM WITHIN AFRICA

Since the era of independence began, Africa has been simultaneously attracted to, and wary of, the idea of a continental economic and political union. Although the former Ghanaian President Kwame Nkrumah forcefully advanced the idea of African union, many leaders since then have observed that colonial boundaries have left African states too weak and their internal markets too small to permit industrial development on a competitive scale. In fact, once established as independent states, most governments were sceptical of the practicality of union and recognised its real and unwelcome potential to mitigate the domestic political power of incumbents. As the Kenyan academic Ali Mazrui has noted, pan-Africanism has been much more successful as an ideology of liberation than of integration.¹³

Until his most recent travails Libya's Muammar Gaddafi was the most persistent and vocal advocate of a United States of Africa and his actions reveal Africa's continued ambivalent but constructive responses to calls for union. The idea retains an ideological appeal that many leaders feel obliged to publicly endorse while they privately resist. It is driven partly by a desire for more clout and respect on the global stage, which a more united African bloc would provide, but it overlooks the reality that even within the present small states the political process has failed to contain ethnic divisiveness by means of stable, equitable political mechanisms. Physical proximity to power confers huge advantages on capital city and metropolitan residents, while isolated rural majorities are overlooked in the allocation of public goods. Without the financial means to travel to the national capital or to form lobbying associations, rural peasants are effectively cut off from political life. Political accountability structures are consequently very weak and would be more rather than less so under a United States of Africa, where elite decisions in a remote capital would not be subject to any effective popular restraints.

Although that logic is manifest to many leaders, calls for collective action continue to resonate. The majority of African states quietly express doubts about the practicality of union, but they also feel obliged to express rhetorical support for the idea. As a result, every AU Summit since the organisation's inception has involved Libyan initiatives to accelerate union, and efforts by other states to politely block it. The African preference for avoiding condemnation or disagreement in direct terms is pronounced, at least as it relates to other African leaders. Notably more caustic and confrontational rhetoric is routinely applied in discussion of non-African leaders and proposals.

The combination of a preference for collective solutions and lack of robust discussion of problems attending those proposed solutions has left the foreign policy arena populated by overlapping regional institutions, many of which are redundant and moribund but have

not been closed down. Many African states have been unable or unwilling to fund various sub-regional bodies themselves and have looked to development aid and Africa's wealthier states to pay the bills. In the continuing dialogue about African union, states advocating a go-slow approach have argued that integration should proceed first at the REC level before considering continental federation (see table 2).

Table 2: Member countries of regional groupings in Africa

Economic and Monetary Community of Central African States	Inter-governmental Authority for Development	East African Community	Arab Maghreb Union	Council of Arab Economic Unity	Southern African Customs Union
Cameroon; Central African Republic; Chad; DRC; Equatorial Guinea; Gabon.	Djibouti; Ethiopia; Kenya; Somalia; Sudan; Uganda.	Burundi; Kenya; Rwanda; Tanzania; Uganda.	Algeria; Tunisia; Libya; Morocco; Mauritania; Egypt.	Egypt; Iraq; Jordan; Kuwait; Libya; Mauritania; Palestine; Somalia; Sudan; Tunisia; Syria; United Arab Emirates; Yemen.	Botswana; Lesotho; Namibia; South Africa; Swaziland.
Economic Community of West African States	West African Economic and Monetary Union	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa	Southern African Development Community	Community of Sahel-Saharan States	
Benin; Burkina Faso; Cape Verde; Côte d'Ivoire; Gambia; Ghana; Guinea-Bissau; Guinea*; Liberia; Mali; Niger*; Nigeria; Senegal; Sierra Leone; Togo.	Benin; Burkina Faso; Côte d'Ivoire; Guinea-Bissau; Mali; Niger; Senegal; Togo.	Angola; Burundi; Comoros; DRC; Djibouti; Egypt; Eritrea; Ethiopia; Kenya; Madagascar; Malawi; Mauritius; Rwanda; Seychelles; Sudan; Swaziland; Uganda; Zambia; Zimbabwe.	Angola; Botswana; DRC; Lesotho; Malawi; Mauritius; Mozambique; Namibia; Seychelles; South Africa; Swaziland; Tanzania; Zambia; Zimbabwe.	Benin; Burkina Faso; Central African Republic; Chad; Comoros; Côte d'Ivoire; Djibouti; Egypt; Eritrea; Ghana; Guinea; Guinea-Bissau; Kenya; Liberia; Libya.	Mali; Mauritania; Morocco; Niger; Nigeria; São Tomé and Príncipe; Senegal; Sierra Leone; Somalia; Sudan; Gambia; Togo; Tunisia.

*currently suspended because of coups.

Source: <http://www.imf.org>, <http://www.au.int/en>, <http://www.cen-sad.org> and <http://www.ustr.gov>

The NEPAD initiative, which arose at the same time and from many of the same currents of disaffection with continued marginality and poverty, is another important manifestation of Africa's preference for collective foreign policy action. The need to sustain access to external funding was a prime motivation behind NEPAD although it asserts the need for comprehensive action to maintain peace, improve governance and accelerate development. NEPAD sought to engineer a shift in attitudes towards Africa and the transfer of major new resources and trade concessions. In exchange it offered to improve governance and take responsible action to promote democracy and peace. Reviews of the success of this grand bargain have been decidedly mixed. The overall effort has been confused by poor communication about what NEPAD is and what specific role its secretariat should play. Critics have cited its failure to deliver tangible, bricks and mortar projects.

In certain foreign policy respects, however, NEPAD has succeeded. Aid and debt relief have risen significantly since the forerunners of NEPAD emerged in 2000 (helped by UN and Western non-governmental campaigns to revitalise attention given to poverty and development). Because these additional funds flowed through individual governments and not through the organisation itself, attributing the rise in aid solely to NEPAD is problematic. President Mbeki succeeded in securing African participation in the Group of Eight (G8) Summit meetings from 2002, thus offering African leaders significant opportunities to lobby Western industrial nations. Whether or not such encounters secured durable concessions, the creation of such a new forum should be seen as an example of inventive, assertive foreign policy.

Speaking at a conference on African development in May 2010, Mbeki argued that a shift from the G8 to the Group of Twenty (G20) as the dominant elite policy forum as a result of the global financial crisis of 2008–2009 has had the effect of greatly reducing Africa's direct access to heads of state. He further noted that the strategy of seeking influence through the G8 was limited in effectiveness, because the G8 lacked a permanent implementation arm with which to follow up initiatives. With G8 host nations having a major influence on the agenda for each summit (which is also true of the G20) and a strong desire to use the summit to reap domestic political benefits, the event can lead to posturing without real follow-through. Although, the 2002 Kananaskis G8 Summit in Canada produced an Africa Action Plan with pledges for higher aid and other promises, G8 leaders resisted funding large-scale infrastructure projects and put all implementation through existing development agencies, which diffused responsibility to many agencies. Subsequent gatherings involved African leaders, but focused on selective new promises rather than accounting for progress on the agreed 2002 Africa Action Plan.

Mbeki argued that as a form of foreign policy influence, NEPAD would have been more likely to secure lasting concessions if it had also courted Western non-governmental organisations, academics and parliamentarians to build a broader support base for aid to Africa. He acknowledged that NEPAD lacked traction within Africa, in large part because there was not much engagement with civil society or a sufficiently informed and motivated civil society able to pressure leaders to follow through on NEPAD commitments; a situation that reflects a deeper problem of a dearth of democratic mechanisms that push leaders toward efficient and effective developmental governance.¹⁴

African civil society is generally too small and ill-prepared to sustain protest over aspects of domestic foreign policy. Moreover, many of the premises on which NEPAD

was based have only patchy acceptance by African leaders and civil society. Citizens have widely recognised that coercive one-party rule without human rights and fair elections was morally bankrupt, but did not sufficiently appreciate the extent of the African financial bankruptcy that had set in by the mid-1980s. Protests against both NEPAD and structural adjustment were based on a simple rejection of neo-liberal formulas without proper discussion of where the money would come from, given donor determination to enforce austerity and state rationalisation.

Within the developed world, NEPAD generated two opposing responses. Many enthusiastically praised it as an acceptance of responsibility by African regimes after years of structural adjustment disputes. Western diplomats, however, also expressed serious doubts that any continental secretariat or combination of leaders could bring about the reforms that Africa needed. The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), conceived within NEPAD's ambit, was a substantial African foreign policy initiative designed to evaluate African governance and harness public and peer pressure to urge the adoption of necessary reforms. The process, which got under way in 2003, has produced in-depth country reviews but has not been yet translated into significant shifts in African governance. While embracing the language of good governance, it has notably eschewed penalties or mandatory participation, which reflects the dubious potential of APRM and NEPAD alike to ameliorate patronage-based and clientelistic political practices.

The discussion of Africa's responses to conflict below also reflects important patterns in its multilateral diplomacy within Africa.

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL PRESSURES TO DEMOCRATISE

Since the mid-1980s citizens and external funders have brought increasing pressure for democratisation on African governments. This has had profound, albeit indirect effects on foreign policy through the linkage of aid dependency and debt forgiveness conditionality. The linkage between foreign policy and governance did not, however, begin with structural adjustment, nor was it confined to economic questions. State structures, economic policy and political practices have all been conjoined since independence and these linkages have much to do with the patterns of political instability, conflict and economic crisis that have bedevilled African foreign policy.

In deference to both the colonial tradition and the apparently rapid growth of the Soviet model in the 1960s, African states showed a remarkably strong preference for centrally managed economic intervention, including political control of prices, interest rates and foreign exchange mechanisms. By the early 1970s this had led to growing market distortions and shortages. At the same time political power and policymaking were highly centralised around heads of state, with few real checks on executive power. Centralisation contributed significantly to the rise of corruption and was a key enabler of a central political strategy based on clientelism and patronage; this in turn demanded centralised management but also generated a need to circumvent legal controls and, frequently, to subvert the proper functioning of public accountability bodies. Many regimes remain unable to restrain illicit behaviour within ruling coalitions.

The combination of political and economic centralisation with patronage politics led to inflexibility, while routine pricing changes provoked protests that often mutated into

demands for political liberalisation. A shift toward market pricing in the 1990s allowed daily price adjustments in small increments, which greatly relieved political pressure, while privatisation also offered a social cushion because the target of protests was no longer government but new private sector owners. Until market liberalisation took firmer hold, however, the political climate was marred by economic shocks, corrupt manipulations of price controls and widespread public protest.

After aggressive initial efforts to industrialise in the 1960s and 1970s, Africa quickly began realising great financial losses on state-led developmental efforts, which necessitated greater borrowing and unsustainable seignorage. Disaffection over corruption became one of the reasons most cited by instigators of military coups, which were the dominant form of regime change in many African states through the early 1990s. Indeed, in its first three decades, Africa had four times as many violent or other unconstitutional changes of power as any other region in the world.¹⁵

Anger over denials of access to state resources fuelled separatist movements and political protests. Many regimes through the early 1990s responded with greater coercion and centralisation. While Western powers were initially more concerned with Cold War rivalries and the preservation of their influence in the post-colonial environment, Africa's democratic deficit, poor human rights record, and unstable economic policies began to re-shape Western foreign and developmental policies toward the continent.

A central feature of the structural adjustment formula which Western powers pushed in Africa (and Latin America) in the 1980s was a reversal in the centralisation of state power through privatisation, deregulation, trade and foreign exchange liberalisation and reduced state bureaucracies. This process in turn became a major focus of African foreign policy, as many African regimes sought to delay or subvert the reforms demanded by donors in return for aid and loans.

It is important to note that structural adjustment directly undercut the ability of elites to use the state to buy support through patronage. Centralisation of power, patronage and economic control represented a viable political strategy only for as long as generous external resources flowed in, and external price shocks did not threaten revenues or the balance of payments.

It did, however, set in motion a deep tension between aid donors and recipients, which institutionalised both 'gamesmanship' and dishonesty at the heart of African statecraft. African states had to account to donors but had strong incentives to hide corrupt or political diversions of funds. Illicit diversion of funds supplied for developmental purposes motivated donors to try to maintain control of development spending. Regulations and bureaucracy proliferated in aid management and donors increasingly relied on their own programme management units, or attempted to bypass recipient states by making grants to civil society organisations. Lack of trust continues to play out in the development assistance game. In this field of foreign policy, African diplomats have played only a marginal role: core aid interactions are between foreign governments and African ministries of finance and social services, or heads of state.

NEPAD attempted to address the linked problems of development, conflict and governance but has done so through essentially voluntary approaches that gained little support, particularly among less liberal regimes on the continent. Nor could NEPAD's voluntary, sanctions-free approach deal with the central problem: that illiberal government can be a highly effective means of retaining power. The illiberal formula in use throughout

the developing world includes patronage politics, highly centralised unrestrained executive power, coercion against opponents, restrictions on electoral competition, and electoral rule manipulation.

Drawing on a database of 558 elections from 1974 to 2004 in which an incumbent stood for re-election, Collier and Hoeffler found that ‘an incumbent increases the prospect of victory from 62% to 84% if he uses illicit tactics’¹⁶ when controlling economic stimulus programmes and other variables that traditionally affect election outcomes. They found that blocking the flow of information to voters also worked.

With no press freedom the likelihood of winning a dirty election is 92% while it is only 63% with full press freedom although the complete absence of press freedom may go along with other forms of repression that affect outcomes.¹⁷

In response to external pressures to democratise, Africa made the defence of its practices and negotiations with international financiers a central theme of foreign policy. Many regimes resisted reform until the state had run out of money to pay government salaries. In this respect, it is important to distinguish the relative independence exhibited by regimes capable of financing their own activities and those dependent on external support.

TRADE AS A GROWING FOREIGN POLICY PREOCCUPATION

In addition to provoking constant anxiety about government revenues, Africa’s economic weakness has made the pursuit of economic growth a central preoccupation of state policy. Africa remains highly dependent on the sale of a few commodities sold to more developed markets. Global economic cycles have subjected the continent to wide swings in commodity prices, although China’s economic growth has helped fuel a substantial commodity price rise; since roughly 2005 there have been only modest price declines attributable to the 2008–2009 financial crisis and subsequent economic slowdown. Several longer-term trends in the global and regional environment are forcing African states to take trade negotiations more seriously as a foreign policy issue.

In many cases, efforts are advanced to create preferential trade areas and eventual customs unions, which represent another dimension of linkages between domestic and foreign policy. African states remain substantially dependent on customs duties for government revenues, and proposals to eliminate regional trade barriers could weaken state finances. Intra-African trade, however, represents only 9% of total African trade with the world.¹⁸ Trade provokes some political anxieties, particularly among poorer, less industrialised nations concerned about the greater economic heft of some of their peers. In East Africa, Kenya’s neighbours worry about its more advanced industries obtruding on their own. As by far the most advanced economy in sub-Saharan Africa, South Africa provokes similar suspicions that freer trade would benefit Pretoria and de-industrialise weaker states.

Africa historically benefitted from significant tariff concessions from developed countries, but significant changes have undermined its trading position.

Prior to the Uruguay Round, which set the stage for the shift from the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade system to the WTO, developing countries largely opted out of global trade talks and relied on unilateral trade preferences granted by developed countries. Developing countries were not obliged to reciprocate and could protect their

infant industries. Before long, however, Western and Asian powers, feeling the political tensions associated with the rise of Asian manufacturing in the early 1980s, sought to entrench a global rules-based system that would address accusations of unfair trade practices.

Unions and manufacturers in Western countries sought greater protection against more competitive Asian goods. The shift to a rules-based system with more specific prohibitions on forms of 'unfair' trade and state subsidy was a compromise to deflect calls for a return to protectionism, and had far-reaching consequences for developing countries, particularly those in Africa. In successive rounds of trade talks, developed nations have lowered their trade barriers in many areas and in so doing have slowly eroded the value of preferential access concessions that many African nations had relied upon. As Draper and Sally argue, the focus on trade preferences and exemptions from emerging global rules made developing nations 'dependent on uncertain and dwindling tariff preferences; it inculcated a begging-bowl culture; and [the absence of developing countries] from the bargaining table allowed developed countries to exclude agriculture, textiles and clothing from multilateral liberalisation.'¹⁹

Throughout the 1980s, many developing countries remained outside the global trade negotiations and opposed liberalisation, while maintaining inwardly focused import substitution policies. Slowly, however, ad hoc groupings of developing nations participated in and made concessions to WTO processes, extracting gains denied non-participating states. At the same time, trade rules began to reach further into domestic policy and limited or banned forms of support for domestic industry.

Developed countries are currently seeking to bring a wider and deeper array of issues within the ambit of the WTO. These include regulations on labour, environment, food safety, intellectual property, services and government tendering, all of which have implications for African economic strategy. Unlike the UN Security Council, the WTO relies on consensus voting, but the rapid expansion of its membership has increasingly contributed to the kind of intractable differences evident in the rejectionist stance taken by African and other developing countries in the Doha Round of talks.

This inability to break the negotiating impasse has prompted efforts by Northern and Southern nations alike to cut separate regional trade deals that cement gains while bypassing the blocked WTO process. Although this route allows nations to entrench relatively free trade with major trading partners it may still end up cutting Africa out of the game, because the continent lacks the dedicated trade negotiations expertise or political sophistication to create and sustain viable trade negotiating strategies. Nominal efforts have been made to co-ordinate an African position, but they have not translated into hiring additional staff with the requisite experience in trade negotiations. As a result, Africa's poorer nations remain largely passive yet (with the exceptions of South Africa and Mauritius, which have shown greater openness to global trade and negotiations), continue to wield a veto over any further talks that do not address developmental concerns. Africa as a whole perceives more risk than reward in further trade liberalisation and remains substantially defensive and reactive in its approach. Little effort has gone into building supportive coalitions or finding acceptable compromises.

European trade negotiations remain a difficult area for Africa. Under WTO rules, the EU wants to rationalise the trade preferences it extends to former colonies and developing nations through Economic Partnership Agreements with each African REC. This would

require the elimination of substantial overlaps between RECs. For example, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa includes most members of the Southern African Development Community and the Southern African Customs Union, and all members of the East African Community, each of which has separate trade arrangements and liberalisation plans. Of particular interest are agricultural issues, which were largely exempted from the WTO process and remain highly subsidised in developed nations.

Africa competes well in seasonal products and those that do not grow in the North. These include fruit and vegetables, coffee, cocoa, and flowers. At the same time Northern subsidies create large agricultural surpluses that are often exported to developing countries at prices the South cannot compete against. Such produce includes butter, cheese, dried milk products, maize and frozen chicken. Cotton and sugar are two key products produced in both the North (on highly subsidised terms) and South, where unsubsidised farmers are directly impoverished by Northern policies that suppress global prices. Africa has engaged in some global debate on these matters and some African heads of state have written opinion articles in Western newspapers calling for an end to Northern subsidies, but Northern agricultural interest groups are highly organised and sufficiently politically influential to have blocked progress on the issue. South Africa has been the most energetic of the African states in its trade diplomacy, joining the agriculturally focused Cairns Group of Southern agricultural exporters and co-operating extensively with Brazil, India and China. As a food exporter and a fairly competitive manufacturing country, South Africa's trade interests diverge materially from the poorer, less competitive neighbours to its north.

It is important to recognise that all nations, not just those of Africa, must use a variety of processes and institutions in order to advance a coherent trade agenda. The sheer number of such institutions and processes, and the technical detail involved, represent a major challenge for Africa's weak states. While the WTO guides and administers trade negotiations, each nation must negotiate unilaterally with other nations or selectively through sub-groupings. The International Monetary Fund (IMF), which Africa must turn to for emergency credits, is responsible for monitoring African economic policy and policing debt relief agreements which include provisions to liberalise trade and follow market-based financial and foreign exchange rules. Bilateral donors significantly make aid contingent on poor countries' abiding by agreements with the IMF and World Bank; hence continuation of aid is contingent upon, or at least subject to, significant pressure over trade liberalisation. This dynamic created sharp tensions in the 1980s and 1990s but African regimes have adapted themselves to market-based reforms. Oil-rich states have been much more successful in resisting reform demands not least because they did not need structural adjustment credits to deal with balance of payment problems. In practice, this allowed Nigeria and Angola to delay the clean-up and rationalisation of their financial practices long after the rest of Africa had begun to improve budget, debt and macroeconomic management systems.

Another important international process, the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), affects commerce through financial regulation aimed at banking stability and the prevention of money laundering. Except for South Africa, however, African countries have not yet conformed to FATF principles. This has not so far had much effect because Africa remains outside the main currents of global financial trade. But after the attack on the World Trade Centre in 2001, there was increased concern over terrorist and drug-related use of global banks. New FATF rules were promulgated and the body now has the

power to blacklist unresponsive nations, an action that could have severe consequences for continued access to sovereign loans and trade finance. Financial regulation will, therefore, probably grow in importance but Africa will struggle to develop the necessary regulatory capacity. At the cutting edge of this issue will be those states that have been used as terrorist staging grounds or where Latin American gangs have begun to use Africa as a transport route for drugs bound for Europe, as they have in West Africa.

The emergence of the G20 is an important development that may promise greater contributions from the developing world to global financial and developmental policy. It began as a low-key financially orientated gathering of reserve banks and finance ministries, but since the 2008 financial crisis the G20 has eclipsed the old G8 grouping as an elite global forum. South Africa is its only African member. Although it circulates issues for discussion within Africa and makes a point of using the G20 to advance African views, the composition of the group does not favour discussion of African issues.

PATTERNS OF CONFLICT AND AFRICAN RESPONSES

Conflict has been a continuous preoccupation of African foreign policy for decades. Since the 1960s, Africa has consistently led the world in its numbers of conflicts, coups and refugees, all of which have become major foreign policy concerns for individual states and African regional bodies.

Studies of conflict patterns reveal important dimensions rarely appreciated in Africa or the international system. Although elections are often seen as a solution to internal conflicts, they are frequently badly managed with unfair voter registration processes and disputed counts, which deeply undermine public trust in government and exacerbate, rather than resolve, regional and ethnic differences. Paul Collier concluded that ‘in the typical society of the bottom billion, electoral competition, far from disciplining a government into good policies, drives it into worse ones.’²⁰

A consortium of leading researchers funded by the US government spent 10 years developing a model to predict conflict. Reaching the same conclusion as Collier, it found that both very autocratic and very liberal democracies had few instances of conflict, but partial or illiberal democracies with some degree of contestation for public office but a high level of factionalism are ‘exceptionally prone to all types of instability.’²¹

Other key risk factors identified by this consortium include poverty, a lack of trade openness, and state-led discrimination against, or exclusion of, particular groups. Collier and Hoeffler more specifically studied civil war and found the presence of opportunity – in the form of favourable geography, large dispersed populations and portable natural resources – significantly increased the risk of conflict. They also found that the more time that has passed since a previous conflict, the less likely it will recur. In effect, time heals.²²

Africa’s predominant political practices, poverty and aid dependency all work against its attempts to end conflict. Contrary to conventional wisdom, Collier found that, ‘an additional four percentage points of GDP [through] aid increases the risk of a coup by around a third. This may be because aid works like a honey pot, making control of government more attractive.’²³

Because aid is largely fungible – directed to one area it allows government to fund others where it wishes – a dollar of aid on average increases military spending by about 11

cents. Given current aid levels, that means aid could be funding as much as 40% of African military budgets, albeit indirectly.²⁴

Nevertheless, Africa has built substantial international systems to avert conflicts and resist non-democratic changes in government. Instead of directly opposing Libyan pressure to unify Africa, South Africa and Nigeria led efforts to transform the old OAU into the more effective AU, with a stress on institutions that could credibly function on a continental level without turning the AU into a federal nation. They drew significantly from EU models but created new bodies to deal with conflict. The AU charter specifically prohibits unconstitutional and violent seizures of power and gives the body authority to intervene in such cases through the African Peace and Security Council and the Panel of the Wise and also by way of diplomatic delegations to RECs. The development of this diplomatic architecture reflects growing concern over conflict and the risk of collapse to the affected states and the broader region. Awareness has grown of the danger of contagion (Rwanda's collapse and refugee outflow spread war and regime change to the DRC) and of reinforcing global stereotypes of Africa that are detrimental to trade and investment. While the AU provides a sound legal basis for intervention, at a political level Africa's record includes both notable successes and a substantial number of tepid responses to crises. African states led efforts to negotiate an end to Burundi's long-running civil war, intervened to end conflict in the DRC and bring about the withdrawal of Ugandan and Rwandan troops, quelled military revolt in Lesotho, intervened to ensure an electoral transfer of power on the death of Togo's long-serving President Gnassingbe Eyadema and engineered a solution to conflict in the Comoros. Africa also deployed troops in Burundi, the DRC, Sudan and Somalia. Its actions have not, however, lived up to its professed commitment to free and fair elections. When conflict erupted between the elected government and armed political party militias in Congo-Brazzaville, Africa took little action. Denis Sassou Nguesso was put in place as leader with the assistance of Angolan troops and installed himself as president through an election without opposition participation. Africa condemned coups in Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Niger, Mauritania and Madagascar but has not been very energetic or successful in finding solutions.

In Zimbabwe, where elections have been marred repeatedly by widespread and well-documented violence, Africa was unable to reach consensus on how to respond. In Kenya, where the electoral commission said it did not know who won and where widespread violence drove 300 000 people from their homes, Africa pushed only for a government of national unity without a recount or re-vote. Mismanagement of the Kenyan and Zimbabwean crises offers incentives for other incumbents to use violence to avoid free and fair elections. Six key trends are evident in Africa's collective foreign policy responses to crisis. Firstly, African multilateral bodies suffer weaknesses similar to those of the UN in that bureaucracy responds to the will of member states but rarely challenges or pushes unwilling states to action. While the UN provides a forum for discussion and reminds members of agreed rules of acceptable conduct, real power rests with member states. If they lack the will to act, little is done. Secondly, personalities matter. While the AU peace and security institutions are important and provide the possibility of establishing stronger democratic standards, there has been an evident downturn in effectiveness since the internationally assertive presidents of Nigeria and South Africa, respectively Obasanjo and Mbeki, ended their terms of office. President Zuma has been mainly concerned with internal political squabbles while Nigeria's newly appointed president, Goodluck Jonathan,

faces significant challenges in consolidating his power, notwithstanding his victory at the polls in April 2011. Even within a multilateral framework there is a need for someone to step forward in urging action and building consensus on solutions. North Africa is now mired in its own debilitating crises. Moreover, historically it has distanced itself from sub-Saharan crises and in any case is not much trusted in the South. Without strong leadership from South Africa and Nigeria, therefore, collective African action is difficult to organise. Even then, determined resistance, such as that shown by Mugabe, has been able to deflect African intervention. Thirdly, just like global powers, African states react forcefully in response to widespread conflict but struggle to find the will or consensus to react to less violent but still flagrant transgressions, such as stolen elections or dynastic power transfers. Kenya is a prime example. Politically motivated ethnic violence and land grabs had been used in the 1992 and 1997 elections. When the 2007 election was in effect stolen by the incumbent President Mwai Kibaki, widespread organised violence ensued. Although an awkward government of national unity was finally agreed upon, nothing was done to deal with the consequences of the violence or the new grievances it generated. Notably, in its report released before the disputed 2007 election, the Kenyan APRM review pointed out clearly many sources of serious tension in Kenya and warned of wider conflict. The gathering of APRM heads of state was supposed to discuss Kenya's report and progress and the APRM provided the perfect context to legitimise intervention; but the gathering ignored the crisis and did not use the powers to intervene enshrined in the founding APRM documents. Fourthly, where open conflict exists, the main strategy (called for by both the AU and UN) has been to engineer a ceasefire followed by elections. Very little of substance has been discussed about resolving the causes of instability. Indeed, until the shooting starts, most African states have been content to ignore incipient conflicts. Long before the Ivory Coast became divided by military rebellion its leaders had embarked on manipulations to disenfranchise supporters of the Northern leader Allasane Ouattara. That exclusionist policy and the ethnic animosity it engendered were behind the Ivory Coast's 1999 coup d'état and two subsequent coup attempts. When elections were finally held in 2000, long-time opposition leader Laurent Gbagbo, who had frequently criticised government for ethnic favouritism, immediately employed the same ethnic exclusionary tactics because they would allow him to avoid competing fairly with Ouattara. Once battle lines had been drawn and the country partitioned, Africa sought to mediate, but deep damage had been done in the intervening years. The damage was still obvious in the elections held in November 2010, where the opposition leader Alassane Ouattara won but Gbagbo relinquished power only after much bloodshed and external intervention.

Fifth, despite an emphasis on elections as a palliative, badly managed or manipulated elections frequently tap into long-standing animosities and distrust of autocratic incumbents. In many instances elections become catalysts for conflict rather than peace. This tendency is greatly under-appreciated in African foreign policy circles.

Sixth, the overall pattern of AU and UN conflict intervention has in many cases created territories where conflicts are frozen in place rather than resolved. In fairness, without the resources or the will from developed countries it would be difficult for Africa to affect the kind of systemic changes in governance and public attitudes that are needed to stabilise many recurring hotspots. NEPAD and the APRM represent the high-water mark of African activist foreign policy. Both have lost substantial momentum and credibility, leaving African conflict interventions inherently ad hoc and reactive.

SOCIETAL LEARNING AND IDEOLOGICAL CHANGE

The idea that foreign policy in any country or region may be described necessarily involves generalisations across space but implicitly across time as well. In writing and reading about any nation or nations it is easy to assume that their behaviour patterns have been, and will remain, consistent. Yet Africa has undergone great changes and will change further, rendering this present – or for that matter any other – analysis increasingly inaccurate or incomplete with the passage of time. Not only are global circumstances changing but so also are the values, beliefs and ideological frameworks that Africans use to interpret those events and choose responses.

Although national interests are often clear, equally they are often hard to discern. In addition, prevailing beliefs about how the world works and the nature of its risks change with time and intellectual fashion. For African governments, important changes in ideology affect foreign policy in several ways. Firstly, although Africa was caught up in Cold War rivalries and several regimes declared themselves to be Marxist or socialist, there was more symbolic rejection of the West than political substance in this self-labelling. With the exception of modest efforts at follow-through in Tanzania and Mozambique, variations on leftist political ideology were never implemented on anything like the scale seen in the Soviet Union and its allies. Writing in 1984, Timothy Shaw observed of African foreign policy:²⁵

The idealistic and aggressive stances of the early 1960s have yielded to more pragmatic and reasoned positions. And the apparently relentless process of marginalisation [in the global economic and political order] has almost led to a sense of resignation rather than expectation. To be sure, African diplomats individually and collectively continue to blame and berate the world, especially its Western parts, for both imperialistic and disinterested policies yet nowadays they rarely threaten economic sanctions or diplomatic breaks.

This moderation of belief has gone beyond the style or tone of foreign policy to affect state organisation and core economic policies. This paper noted earlier the state-centric bias and heavy concentration of power in the executive, which began in the colonial era and continues in modified form today. In some respects the beliefs about the risks and challenges Africa confronts are the same, and many leaders cling vigorously to power through illiberal means. African citizens and many leaders have, however, added to or renounced important ideas that justified centralised power and state-centric development at independence. Chief among these has been a healthy dose of scepticism about the way governments behave and the claims of politicians to be acting in the public interest.

The main aim at independence was to eject the colonial powers and secure the right of self-determination, but the mismatch between the authority of the colonial state and the power of poor and poorly educated citizens continued, conferring great oligopolistic powers on political leaders. Weak and dependent society was still no match for a dominant state able and willing to use coercion to suppress dissent.

The wave of democratisation that followed the collapse of the USSR in 1990 involved explicit efforts to rein in the executive through fiscal, parliamentary and democratic accountability. The subsequent record has been mixed, with some autocratic rulers and coup-makers learning to adapt to the multi-party era through patronage, repression, rule

manipulation and other tactics. As long as they have remained in power, the number of citizens committed to democratic government has grown and with it, the intensity of protest over corruption, stolen elections and abuse of power. Surveys by the research group Afrobarometer found that in 2008 across 19 African countries, on average 75% of those surveyed rejected military rule, 73% a one-party system and 79% 'strongman' rule.²⁶

Such a finding represents a profound shift in knowledge and belief from a rather naive acceptance of the one-party state to an appreciation of democracy, and of the maxim that all power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. This form of societal learning informs the ways that citizens try to reform government and it will continue to be important to African foreign policy as long as regimes remain financially dependent, and their donor benefactors committed to democracy and good governance. In the context of collective African foreign policy, however, illiberal democracies and autocracies still outnumber liberal democracies; a situation that will ensure that the AU and RECs remain hesitant over electoral theft and low-grade coercive government.

Another important ideological shift has occurred with regard to capitalism, trade and investment. By the end of the colonial period many influential scholars and political leaders had come to see colonialism as a natural extension of the capitalist system, and turned toward the USSR for alternatives. With the passage of sufficient time, most of the world came to understand that the Soviet model was not only much less efficient but that it was also characterised by the same coercion and abuse of power that plagued Africa. It merely used different justifying rhetoric. As state-led development in Africa largely failed and the Soviet Union collapsed, Africa began to accept that markets and investors could have their positive side. Formerly, socialist Tanzania sold off hundreds of state-owned companies, wrote an investor-friendly mining code and welcomed foreign mobile phone companies. Once-Marxist Mozambique now courts investors and thrives on the back of South African investment and tourism. As Bill Freund argued, Africa adjusted its thinking about capitalism and stopped 'searching for some major liberatory [sic] historical break' with the world's dominant economic motifs. 'Faith in the possibility of a non-capitalist solution to Africa's development needs began to plummet together with the fortunes of the Soviet Union and its allies.'²⁷

This change in attitude opened significant new forms of foreign policy engagement. African leaders began attending World Economic Forum meetings and listening to analyses of the high cost of doing business on the continent. As globalisation took hold, private investment began to dwarf foreign aid. Not only was such investment potentially much larger, but it also brought much more tangible technological and managerial benefits that have gained importance in Africa's assessment of strategy, particularly as articulated in NEPAD. Once this important shift occurred, Africa became more active in investment promotion and trade negotiations. African foreign ministries, however, remain poorly geared to the demands of investors and lack practical experience of dealing with business. Thus the continent has put on a friendlier face to business but has not yet matched this with reforms substantive enough to begin to attract investment that otherwise is drawn to Asia and Latin America. Further change will surely come in increments. As noted in the earlier discussion of trade matters, Africa remains more reactive than other regions in trade talks but increasingly sees participation in the global economy as the only game in town, with declining numbers of proponents of economic isolation or import substitution.

Although Africa appreciates investment and trade more than before, it has not yet had cause to break with its aid dependency. To do so would require building up much more robust tax collection systems, figuring out how to keep tax officials from siphoning off the money and convincing citizens that tax revenues would go to useful public purposes rather than private fortunes. Unless those steps are taken, reducing aid dependency means shrinking the state through austerity programmes that invariably bring direct and potent protests in their wake. Until a reduction in aid is engineered or enforced by waning donor interest, Africa will remain in a netherworld wherein domestic politics are the target of foreign pressure and its foreign policy must, in the main, centre on satisfying foreign funders.

CONSTRAINTS

This discussion so far has focused on the incentives and beliefs that drive foreign policy thinking in Africa. Foreign policy is, however, subject to serious constraints.

The extent of African influence over the rest of the world relates to its military, geo-strategic and economic value as perceived by non-Africans. Although populous, Africa represents only a tiny fraction of global trade. Its resources make it attractive but its importance in this sphere has waned. Copper, gold, coffee, cocoa and palm oil increasingly can be sourced elsewhere. Oil is an important exception that has provided Angola, Nigeria, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Sudan, Cameroon, Algeria, Libya and Congo-Brazzaville with financial independence and has given them some international leverage.

The foreign policy of many nations tends to follow their commercial interests. Africa's markets, however, are too small to attract serious interest from countries such as China, India or Brazil: investors favour destinations with large consumer markets, ample reserves of well-trained workers and good infrastructure, all or most of them lacking in Africa. Unfortunately, there are no quick solutions that will make Africa more attractive, hence more influential, in the short term.

Africa does command some attention derived from concern with the potential of international terrorism, drug smuggling and refugee flows, which provides African states with some bargaining power to gain additional aid or reduced scrutiny of governance. In this way Libya, until the 2011 uprisings there, had effectively bargained with Italy, promising to stem the flow of illegal immigrants in exchange for aid. As noted earlier, Kenya gaols Somali pirates and co-operates with anti-terrorist activities but uses this policy as a lever to gain more aid and deflect criticism.

Africa's poverty animates developed world governments but there are limits to this sentiment. Compassion remains balanced by concerns over corruption, governance and democracy, which make policy toward Africa interventionist and contingent.

The modest scale of the financial resources that can be committed to traditional foreign policy institutions – embassies, diplomats, research staffs, foreign travel, peacekeeping and the like – is a significant constraint on African foreign policy. Africa's economic weakness tends to foster more activity on the part of its larger and more affluent states, which can deploy envoys to more locations, conferences and multilateral negotiations. For poorer states, foreign policy is largely conducted on home turf between the government and various foreign embassies and development agencies. Because these conversations tend

to be conducted with foreigners who are already Africa specialists, African leaders may lack a full picture of how marginal the continent is to mainstream political and foreign policy calculations in developed countries. Outside the small group that concerns itself with poverty and African affairs, mainstream interests in the developed world have little interest in Africa or in the aid and global institutional reforms it seeks. NEPAD attempted to change this but lacked a strategy for engagement beyond the G8 heads of state level.

The colonial legacy offers some advantages but significantly constrains African foreign policy, particularly in relations with France, Portugal and the UK. It gives African countries preferential access to their own former colonial powers but at the same time gives them less influence with the others. Common language has helped preserve business links with former colonial powers but continues to divide African nations, provoking incessant accusations of bias in African gatherings, and tends to limit co-operation between Anglophone and Francophone states. French military and economic support allowed many first-generation Francophone leaders to hold office much longer than their Anglophone counterparts, but also postponed, significantly, the shift from autocratic rule and efforts to improve governance in Francophone countries.

The language issue remains salient when conflicts arise in Francophone states. France has been hostile to Anglophone mediation or economic activity in its former colonial zone. One example is South Africa's mediation of the crisis in the Ivory Coast, where Mbeki's efforts to mediate were undermined both by France and Senegal. Language fault lines also affected NEPAD. As frustration grew about the slow pace of progress under the NEPAD initiative, Senegal was the only nation publicly to raise concerns, but its overtures were dismissed in South African circles because President Abdoulaye Wade was widely seen as using the language issue to gain standing as the 'leader' of Francophone states. His use of the language issue contributed to positioning Wade as a gadfly and malcontent among his Anglophone peers, which had the effect of preventing valid issues about NEPAD being taken seriously.

For all nations, the rise of globalisation has broadened foreign policy from its former bilateral inter-state basis. Foreign ministries in Africa, as elsewhere, have had to 'play catch-up'. Ministries of finance and commerce and the military play important foreign policy roles, particularly in Africa where they lead on certain aspects of the relationship with donor nations. In economics, trade, finance and investment, African foreign policy establishments are seriously short of skills and sophistication in their understanding of global markets, although South Africa, Mauritius, Egypt, Algeria and Tunisia are important exceptions.

Military capacity is a further important constraint. African foreign policy has become much more active in settling conflicts and attempting to reverse unconstitutional changes of government. When peacekeeping forces are required, Africa faces limits to its own finances and in supplying the troops, communications equipment, aircraft, vehicles and technical support services necessary for large deployments. This has put Africa in some difficult positions vis-à-vis the UN and the major global military powers. On the whole, Africa has been prepared to intervene in African conflicts earlier than have developed countries but lacking funding, has had to wait for the outside world to gather interest. South Africa deployed forces in Burundi from its own resources, but obviously could not do so in every African conflict. The US and France have offered training programmes to African military and police forces and funds for peacekeeping missions. There has

often been a mismatch, however, between the extent of Western funding and the size of the military force required. Thus very small forces were deployed to Darfur and eastern DRC even though all parties recognised that they were inadequate, given the scale of the conflict.

FOREIGN POLICY FAULT LINES

As previously noted, any exercise in describing a diverse continent will tend toward generalisations that cannot always hold. A variety of categories might be used to describe African states, which reflect differing patterns of foreign policy. Below are several of the more prominent, though the list is not exhaustive.

North versus South

North Africa evinces much greater interest in, and solidarity with, issues attending Middle-East politics, Israel and Palestine, and Sudan. It is much less concerned with aid, development, trade and conflict-related issues in sub-Saharan Africa. In cases where voting rules in the UN and other bodies define Africa as a bloc, however, North African states act with their sub-Saharan African neighbours.²⁸

Weak versus strong bureaucracies

African states vary considerably in the coherence and depth of bureaucratic capability. Some leaders retain powers concentrated in a narrow circle of advisers while others operate within much more institutionalised, formal bureaucracies. Although all African states have formal foreign ministries, these vary greatly in the extent to which their staff are trained and possess sufficient depth of research to respond to emerging challenges. Generally, wealthier states have more capacity in foreign policy and areas of international trade and finance; they have a more pro-active posture on these issues and, particularly in the case of South Africa and North African states, play more active roles in global affairs.

Large versus small states

Africa's more populous and affluent states generally have larger governments and greater capacity. They are more influential within and outside Africa and are also more active in foreign policy. Africa includes 20 states with populations of five million or less, which inherently limits their economic, hence foreign policy, resources. Occasionally involved as mediators, small states have nevertheless tended to follow rather than lead foreign policy debates within Africa. For example, both Botswana and Zambia occasionally spoke out about the Zimbabwe situation but were unable to move larger states towards a more assertive stance and quickly dampened their rhetoric when others signalled an unwillingness to act. On a per capita measure, however, small states have tended to secure more development assistance than have larger ones. Some small states – including Lesotho, Swaziland, Benin, Togo, and landlocked countries generally – tend to be more dependent on regional trade than are their larger neighbours.

Integrators versus isolationists

African states vary in their degree of integration into the global economy and their attitudes toward globalisation. Some, such as South Africa, Mauritius, Morocco, Kenya and Lesotho, have accepted extensive foreign investment and recognise the need to negotiate trade opportunities. Others take a more isolationist posture, seeking greater insulation from global currents. This alignment has also been described as a division of regimes into those at the 'semi-periphery' versus those at the 'distant' periphery.²⁹

Francophone versus Anglophone

The divide between French- and English-speaking nations is a recurrent issue in African foreign policy, particularly in international bodies as it concerns peacekeeping efforts. There is both more and less to the issue than meets the eye. Gatherings of the AU or sub-regional bodies are frequently mired in debate over whether or not Francophones are adequately represented. A disproportionate amount of discussion time is taken up with statements on the language question even when both camps largely agree on the non-linguistic issues to be discussed. As noted earlier, the language divide can impede united diplomatic action.

Post-conflict or fragile states

Global concern with the fate of some fragile states has the effect of placing them in a different foreign policy context from other more stable, autonomous states. Liberia, Sierra Leone, the DRC, Ivory Coast, Guinea-Bissau, Burundi and Rwanda are all measured by Western powers against somewhat different standards in their approach to governance and democracy, and for similar reasons. There is broad recognition that these states are among the most politically and economically fragile. While Western donors are reluctant to fund regimes that lack reasonably fair democratic processes and appropriate fiscal controls, fragile states often have very weak bureaucracies and democratically dubious practices. A sudden withdrawal of aid could propel such states back into conflict. A few countries, among them Mozambique, Angola and Rwanda, experienced rapid and sustained growth after major wars with the help of large financial aid flows, but others have attracted much less external support and continue on a low-level life support system.

Democrats versus autocrats

Since the late 1980s, worldwide recognition of the importance of governance and democracy has grown, with aid donors placing increasing stress on both. Aid dependency has turned governance and democratisation into significant foreign policy concerns, particularly for states with poor governance or flawed democratic practices. For regimes comfortable with the public debate, protest and contestation that go with democracy, this has not been a problem, but a significant number of autocratic regimes have acquired or retained power through rigged or stolen elections and the suppression of civil rights. Consequently such issues have become a source of foreign policy tension, directly linking the domestic environment with the international.

Strategic versus non-strategic states

African states have generally been adept at identifying their value to external powers and exploiting this to their advantage, as they did in the context of the geo-political rivalry of the Cold War. Today, US and Western concern with terrorism, European worries about illegal immigration, and the worldwide issues of Somali piracy, scarce oil resources and military basing rights, all provide particular states with elements of leverage that can help win aid or deflect criticism over governance. Strategic states in this category include Ethiopia and Kenya. The former has received much less scrutiny and pressure over its electoral and human rights abuses than other states that are regarded as less important in the fight against terrorism; while Kenya has been accepting detained Somali pirates that Western powers could or would not prosecute themselves, using this to leverage Western aid and temper criticism of its own, flawed, political system.

Militarily weak versus militarily strong states

Conflict prevention and peacekeeping remain high on the African foreign policy agenda and there is a strong continental consensus on the need to prevent unconstitutional changes of government. There is also a willingness to deploy forces to stabilise conflicts. This notwithstanding, most states lack the financial or military capability to deploy forces beyond their borders; but a handful do, which affects their foreign policy posture. Nigeria is the most significant force in West Africa and has shown a willingness to use its power domestically and regionally. Ghana has a small but fairly professional army with peacekeeping experience. Angola, after decades of civil war and with ample resources, has a large and capable force by African standards, which has been deployed in the DRC to prevent regime change and in the neighbouring Republic of Congo to overturn an elected government. Uganda, Rwanda, Sudan, Ethiopia and Eritrea all have sizeable well-organised forces and a political leadership that has demonstrated its willingness to engage in international conflict. Uganda invaded the DRC, pursued the Lord's Resistance Army rebels into Sudan, the Central African Republic and the DRC, and provided troops for operations in Iraq and Somalia. Rwanda twice invaded the DRC and contributed to peacekeeping forces in Darfur. Ethiopia fought Africa's bloodiest war with Eritrea and invaded Somalia. Sudan, although focused on retaining control of its own territory, remains substantially militarised. In Southern Africa, Zimbabwe and South Africa retain significant military capability and both have deployed forces in peacekeeping and enforcement capacities.

CONCLUSIONS

The paper has attempted to outline the broad patterns of African foreign policy but recognises that space prohibits an exhaustive discussion or the important consideration of particular national foreign policies. The purpose is rather to begin an extended exploration that will become more detailed in subsequent papers.

Although Africa's poverty increases its aid dependence and leaves it with only modest diplomatic resources, the continent has succeeded in garnering international support for

its causes. It successfully maintained pressure for full decolonisation and isolated Rhodesia and South Africa until they accepted political change. Africa used Cold War tensions to gain leverage, even though this was used by some autocratic regimes to deflect criticism and entrench undemocratic rule. African leaders have effectively interpreted the West's interest in Africa and its concern for poverty, in order to maintain aid flows. Efforts to dramatically expand aid have met with only limited success, however, in part because Africa's foreign policy rarely involved outreach to the developed world's interest groups and parliaments, which is essential if political support is to be built for significant changes in spending patterns. Africa has shown a preference for united African action through multilateral groupings, which has given it significant veto powers in the case of the WTO and the UN Human Rights Council.

Despite consistent attempts to democratise global institutions, however, it is the traditional financial and military powers that retain substantial power to veto institutional changes. Through the financially based weighted voting system in the IMF and World Bank and by way of their control over key financial regulatory bodies, Western powers continue to command many aspects of the rules governing trade and finance. Consequently and with the exceptions of Libya, Zimbabwe and Eritrea, African nations have shifted in their attitudes to global economic forces, opting to join rather than isolate. That change was accompanied by a move to market-based foreign exchange systems and the privatisation of many economic functions, which ameliorated many of the intense economic crises that occurred in the 1980s and ushered in a significant expansion of investment into Africa, not to speak of substantial remittances from expatriate African workers.

Globalisation is changing the nature of foreign policy, which once was primarily a function of military and state-to-state relations. Today, all nations in the world are affected by fast-moving financial markets and gigantic private capital flows. As an example, Greece today is suffering the same kind of market punishment and imposed austerity that Africa has had to endure for a generation. The contribution of economics to national success and foreign policy is demanding new skills of foreign policy practitioners, and drawing other state ministries into foreign negotiations.

For Africa the IMF, World Bank, WTO, UN, AU, the Global Fund on HIV and Malaria, RECs and many and varied private philanthropies all represent important forms of foreign engagement. Because of its historical involvement in Africa and its own complicated internal procedures, the EU continues to play a special role. Its efforts to negotiate Economic Partnership Agreements are adding pressure to remove existing overlaps between African RECs. China is rapidly growing in influence as an investor, a buyer of resources, a seller of manufactured goods and a provider of development and infrastructure resources.

Thematically, domestic African governance and democratic practices have become foreign policy issues through Africa's aid dependence and the interests of its donors. In contrast to more financially independent nations, Africa is compelled effectively to share its sovereignty over many aspects of domestic policy. Traditional insistence on national sovereignty is, in many instances, a polite fiction. In cases where states have broken down and have little or no administrative control, aid donors and international agencies have sought new forms of joint financial control through trust funds or external approvals to spending plans. Such arrangements exist in different forms in Liberia, Sierra Leone, the DRC and Chad.

Although Africa remains marginal to the global economic system and is substantially weaker than other regions of the world, it has creatively engaged with global foreign policy issues. The establishment of NEPAD and the APRM follow a number of less successful African efforts to change global perceptions of the continent and its terms of economic engagement. In certain respects NEPAD has sensitised Western powers to African concerns, but the seat at the G8 table won through NEPAD may have served merely to acclimatise the G8 to wider influences and by so doing, facilitate a shift to the G20 as the most influential elite policy forum. South Africa retains a seat in the G20 but now must make its voice heard over much larger, more influential developing nations in that gathering.

The major issues absorbing African foreign policy resources will probably remain unchanged. They include sustaining resource flows, domestic governance and political conflicts, and development. Efforts to forge South–South diplomatic and economic ties remain small in proportion to trade, aid and financial flows from the developed world which, under UN rules, also provides the bulk of peacekeeping and post-war reconstruction funding. In the long term, although Africa may succeed in democratising global decision-making systems by increments, it will remain subject to existing global markets and systems of trade and finance.

It is important to recognise that the future may not be a simple extrapolation of the past and undoubtedly, unexpected changes will obtrude on the foreign policy agenda. Climate change and global efforts to manage it may be significant for Africa, particularly if viable carbon credit schemes take off. An Al Qaeda victory in Somalia could have widespread ramifications. The independence of Southern Sudan will almost certainly result in continuing tussles for control of Sudan's oil resources. Africa will remain engaged with many fragile states. In some, open conflict has ended but has left a legacy of instability. The Central African Republic, the DRC, Ivory Coast, Zimbabwe, Guinea-Bissau, Eritrea, Angola, Burundi and Chad all fall within this category. Others have not yet embraced free and fair elections or ended autocratic political practices. Such states include Togo, Cameroon, Gabon, Guinea, Gambia, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Congo-Brazzaville, Kenya, Niger and all of North Africa. As long as they face political or economic instability, these states will remain internally focused and defensive in their foreign policy. They will use African solidarity and regional bodies to deflect scrutiny and pressure for reform and will remain hostile to an interventionist AU.

Debates about whether to create a United States of Africa will continue but will act largely to divert attention from the rationale and means to shift undemocratic and conflict-prone states toward a more stable path. The ability of Africa's collective foreign policy to tackle such issues also will depend on whether powerful and internationally minded leaders emerge in the larger states. Ethiopia and Kenya are strong enough but primarily concerned with deflecting pressures on their own internal situation. Nigeria and South Africa, too, are at present preoccupied with internal issues. Without their presence in a leadership role, it is improbable that small states will have the interest or clout to lead continental foreign policy engagements.

All this suggests Africa is heading into a period of consolidation, relative passivity and reaction to events. The high hopes stoked by NEPAD and the formation of the AU have largely been dissipated. But although their leaders may be quiescent, African citizens are continuing to learn and re-shape their beliefs about governance, power and the world order. They have crossed important moral and intellectual bridges in rejecting autocratic rule

and embracing democracy. If modernisation theory holds, the slow social changes brought about by rising incomes, urbanisation, the spread of communications and media, and economic specialisation, will gradually empower people and sharpen their understanding not simply of what is wrong with government policy, but of how to change it.

Until the power of citizens relative to the state shifts considerably toward civil society, Africa in general will probably remain in the grip of somewhat illiberal democracy. A few small nations, among them Benin, Mali, Botswana, Mauritius, Malawi and Zambia, have managed repeated democratic elections and avoided conflict, but remain very inwardly directed. These states will not have to concern themselves with deflecting donor criticisms of internal democracy, but they remain deeply concerned with the imperatives of development.

Taken overall, with the exception of more affluent states, much of the continent has only modest room for experimentation with either developmental or foreign policy. A dramatic change in African fortunes may have to wait for economic progress to lift China, India, Pakistan, Indonesia and other developing nations into the middle class, which only then will shift attention to Africa as the world's last great reservoir of low-cost labour. For now, manufacturers and investors have many options more attractive than Africa. In the long term, that fact remains the biggest of all drivers of African foreign policy.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Marx K, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*. New York/Berlin: Mondial Books, 2005, p. 1.
- 2 Gourevitch P, 'The second image reversed: The international sources of domestic politics', *International Organization*, 32, 4, Autumn 1978, p. 888.
- 3 UNDP (United Nations Development Programme), Human Development Reports, UN Human Development Index, 2009 figures, <http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/>.
- 4 UNECA (United Nations Economic Commission for Africa), *Economic Report on Africa 2009: Developing African Agriculture Through Regional Value Chains*. Addis Ababa: UNECA, 2009, p. 78.
- 5 World Bank, World Development Indicators, database, <http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog> (<http://data.worldbank.org/products/data-books/WDI-2007>), using 2007 figures.
- 6 Obasanjo O, 'A balance sheet of the African region and the Cold War', in Keller EJ & D Rothchild (eds), *Africa in the New International Order: Rethinking State Sovereignty and Regional Security*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1996, p. 17.
- 7 World Bank, African Development Indicators, database, 1999–2008 simple un-weighted average, net ODA aid from all donors (% of recipient central government expenditure), <http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog>.
- 8 Personal interviews with diplomats, Kinshasa, January–May 1997.
- 9 Wrong M, *It's Our Turn to Eat: The Story of a Kenyan Whistle-blower*. London: HarperCollins, 2009.
- 10 Morrison SJ, 'The US–South Africa courtship shifts', in Mills G & J Strelau (eds), *The Reality Behind the Rhetoric: The United States, South Africa and Africa*. Johannesburg: South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA), 2000, p. 17.
- 11 Mandela NR, 'Foreword', in Sidiropoulos E (ed.), *Apartheid Past, Renaissance Future. South Africa's Foreign Policy: 1994–2004*. Johannesburg: SAIIA, 2004, p. v.

- 12 South Africa, Department of Foreign Affairs (Public Diplomacy), 'Principles underpinning South Africa's foreign policy', in *South Africa within the United Nations Security Council*, p. 35, http://www.dfa.gov.za/images/gallery2/sa_un.pdf, accessed 23 May 2010.
- 13 Mazrui AA, *Africa's International Relations: the Diplomacy of Dependency and Change*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1977, p. 78.
- 14 Personal interview and public remarks, 21 May 2010, '53 Nations, One Union' conference, Foundation for World Wide Cooperation and Johns Hopkins University Bologna Center, Bologna, Italy.
- 15 Posner DN & DJ Young, 'The institutionalization of political power in Africa', *Journal of Democracy*, 18, 3, 2007.
- 16 Collier P & A Hoeffler, 'Democracy's Achilles Heel or, How to Win an Election without Really Trying', Working Paper Series, 2009–08. Oxford: Centre for the Study of African Economies, July 2009, p. 9.
- 17 *Ibid.*
- 18 World Trade Organization, trade database online, 2008 figures, http://www.wto.org/english/res_e/statis_e/its2008_e/its2008_e.pdf.
- 19 Draper P & R Sally, 'Developing Country Coalitions in Multilateral Trade Negotiations: Aligning the Majors?', Trade Policy Report, 8. Johannesburg: SAIIA, 2005, p. 3.
- 20 Collier P, *Wars, Guns and Votes: Democracy in Dangerous Places*. London: The Bodley Head, 2009, p. 45.
- 21 Goldstone JA, Bates RH, Gurr TR, Lustik M, Marshall MG, Ulfelder J & M Woodward, 'A global forecasting model of political instability', paper presented at the 2005 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Washington, DC, 1–4 September 2005.
- 22 Collier P & A Hoeffler, 'Greed and Grievance in Civil War', *Oxford Economic Papers*, 56. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, pp. 563–595.
- 23 Collier P, 2009, *op. cit.*, p. 148.
- 24 *Ibid.*, p. 111.
- 25 Shaw TM, 'Conclusion: The future of a political economy of African foreign policy', in Shaw TM & O Aluko (eds), *The Political Economy of African Foreign Policy: Comparative Analysis*. Hants, England: Gower Publishing Company, 1984, p. 373.
- 26 Bratton M & R Mattes, 'Neither Consolidating Nor Fully Democratic: The Evolution of African Political Regimes, 1999–2008', Afrobarometer Briefing Paper, 67, May 2009, p. 1, http://www.ireep.org/i/files/doc_afrobarometer/survey2009/AfrobrieffNo67.pdf.
- 27 Freund B, 'Africa in the long twentieth century', in Jomo KS (ed.), *The Great Divergence: Hegemony, Uneven Development, and Global Inequality*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006, p. 109.
- 28 While the North shares similarities, it also is not united. Morocco stands somewhat apart from its northern neighbours. It has been much more aligned with the US and has been more willing to deal with Israel than its northern neighbours. It is not a member of the AU because of the union's insistence that Morocco grant independence to Western Sahara (Sahawri Republic). As the staging point for illegal emigration to Europe, North Africa has engaged with Europe over strategies to stem the flow of sub-Saharan emigrants. Libya is the only North African state to substantially engage with sub-Saharan Africa, pressing over many years to transform the AU into the United States of Africa. Libya has paid the outstanding dues of many member states to the AU and involved itself as an investor (and occasionally militarily) in supporting African regimes.
- 29 Shaw T, *op. cit.*, p. 374.

SAIIA'S FUNDING PROFILE

SAIIA raises funds from governments, charitable foundations, companies and individual donors. Our work is currently being funded by, among others, the Bradlow Foundation, the United Kingdom's Department for International Development, the European Commission, the British High Commission of South Africa, the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, the International Institute for Sustainable Development, INWENT, the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Royal Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, the Canadian International Development Agency, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, the African Development Bank, and the Open Society Foundation for South Africa. SAIIA's corporate membership is drawn from the South African private sector and international businesses with an interest in Africa. In addition, SAIIA has a substantial number of international diplomatic and mainly South African institutional members.

South African Institute of International Affairs
Jan Smuts House, East Campus, University of the Witwatersrand
PO Box 31596, Braamfontein 2017, Johannesburg, South Africa
Tel +27 (0)11 339-2021 • Fax +27 (0)11 339-2154
www.saiia.org.za • info@saiia.org.za

