

## South Africa-US Contest over Africa Policy Dominance: A Study with Emphasis on AFRICOM, BRICS and Libyan Issues\*

Martin Rupiya<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

Foreign policy is embodied in the pursuit of national interests by States in their interaction with other countries. The attainment of Nelson Mandela's African National Congress (ANC) led majority rule statehood and its relationship with the midwife, the United States, provides us with one of the most complex case study examined between the late 1980s until the present. At the end of the Cold War, a period which coincided with the decolonisation of several countries in Southern Africa including Namibia and South Africa, following mediation by the US, Assistant Secretary of State for Africa Affairs, Chester Crocker United States, predicted on its new found relationship with the then United Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and its presence in Angola, informed the decolonization of the sub-regional in which the US targeted South Africa's apartheid regime towards abandoning its military destabilisation activities and providing security guarantees to the white minority community under the new African majority regime.

The result was the withdrawal of Cuban forces in Angola, Namibia independence and finally, the ANC led by the long imprisoned Nelson Mandela at the head of the first coalition government. Consequently, this immediate post-independence arrangement constrained the freedom of action of the ANC during its first term in power. In the subsequent era,

---

\* DOI: [10.21747/21846251/joura2](https://doi.org/10.21747/21846251/joura2)

<sup>1</sup> Institute for African Renaissance Studies (UNISA) – South Africa

the evidence reveals tension and clashes of interests between Washington and Pretoria manifest in at least three areas: creating an African coalition during 2006 against US policy preferences such as the deployment of Africa Command (AFRICOM) on the continent; the 2010 entering into an international political economy of BRICS against Washington's global dominance and finally, the 2011 coalition attempts under the auspices of the African Union (AU) challenge towards Western intervention in Libya and the deposition of Colonel Muammar Gaddafi on 23 October 2011.

Based on secondary sources, newspaper, academic thesis and other official reports this article examines the tensions that developed between Washington and Tshwane/Pretoria over their intentions over Africa. This assesses three areas of foreign policy relationships depicting: contestation, belligerence and finally belated confrontation.

These phases begin with the 2006 US intention to locate AFRICOM in Africa, a development openly opposed by President Thabo Mbeki through the AU. This is followed by South Africa joining the global economic competitors made up of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) at the invitation by China. This competitive relationship not only challenged the existing World Bank and IMF dominance but created an entry point for China in Africa. Finally, the article examines the US policy on Libya of Colonel Muammar Gaddafi in 2011 after adopting UN Resolution 1973 in a subsequent development that went against the AU and South Africa, culminating in the capture and assassination of Gaddafi on 23 October 2011. Conclusively, the US-South Africa relationship over Africa has been characterised by phases of belligerence, collegial neutrality and uncooperative behaviour.

**Key Words:** AFRICOM, BRICS, Foreign Policy; South Africa; United States

## Introduction

An examination of US-Africa relations perceived through South African, post-independence foreign policy prisms since 1994, remains misunderstood and relatively unexplored. And yet there is massive available evidence, reflecting on some of the underlying developments providing clarity on why this has been so. For instance, on 31 July 2020, US Defence Secretary, Mark Esper announced the withdrawal of 11 900 US troops based in Germany, comprising the European (EUCOM) and African Commands (AFRICOM). Of this number, 5 600 were destined to be relocated elsewhere, perhaps in Poland while 6 400 were to return to the United States. (Rebecca Kheel 31 July 2020).

What is not evident but pregnant for Africa's US-South Africa relations is that, this development actually represents the default final admission by the United States towards its original intention of 2006, when Secretary of State, Donald Rumsfeld took the unilateral decision to "establish AFRICOM and be operational in Africa by 2007". (Burgess 2008: 2-5). At the time, Botswana and Liberia immediately expressed willingness to host AFRICOM. (Burgess 2008: Siko 2014: 78). According to Raymond Hinnebusch, this was the outcome "of realist theoreticians point of view arguing that 'extremists' managed to capture US foreign policy and set it on a path at odds with the national interest (Hinnebusch 2007: 210).

However, this became the first major test of US-South Africa foreign policy clash over Africa's security destiny. At the time, the then South African President, Thabo Mbeki, openly viewed this as the thin edge of yet another imperial and return of colonial domination strategy by the US and therefore mounted an active and aggressive campaign to block the deployment of AFRICOM.

Africa's sub-regional bodies and the media also enjoined themselves to the spectre of the return of possible US invasions in their neighbourhoods. This notion had been given credence following two foreign troop invasions

conducted by the United States. The first was the “controversial foreign policy” decision by the US in the invasion of Iraq in March 2003 which toppled President Saddam Hussein from power. (Hinnebusch 2007: 209). A few years later, in 2006, on the African continent, the US backed the Ethiopian invasion of Somalia. (Burgess 2008: 2-5).

In January 2008, the issue of AFRICOM’s intention to be located on the continent was on the Agenda of the African Union’s (AU) Summit, representing the continent’s highest decision making organ and although a formal resolution was not announced, South Africa, working through sub-regional bodies of ECOWAS, EAC, ECCAS and SADC had succeeded to marshal sufficient consensus to dissuade the one or two states ready to break ranks on the issue.

Reacting to the initial African refusal to accommodate AFRICOM, the unusual co-location of troops with EUCOM was regarded as a temporary sojourn measure, until the diplomatic hiatus raised by South Africa had blown over and the US would achieve its original intention of locating its forces on the continent. (Neethling 2015). It is in this sense that the “return of 6 400 troops to the United States” although for reasons of President’s apparent clash with Germany’s Angela Merkel “for not paying their bills,” is but a default conclusion of the AFRICOM 2006 intention to have the same troops located in Africa. (Kheel 31 July 2020; Burgess 2008: 2-5).

The second area of US-South Africa foreign policy clash that is again right before our eyes but whose significance appears to have been missed by analysts is the question of an alternative global economy management platform in the form of the Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) which South Africa joined in 2010. (Sidiropoulos 2008: Shameem & Jayaprasad 2020: 1-3).

BRICS represents a major alternative to the Washington based International Bank for Reconstruction and Development or the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) amongst others and for South Africa

to opt towards the alternative represents a major challenge to the existing global economy dominated by Washington.

Significantly, South Africa's invitation towards its transition from IBSA to BRICS was at the instigation of China, during August 2010 with a decision by the end of that year. A further consequence has been the parallel consolidation of China in Africa stemming from this conducive relationship with Beijing. The development has its roots that were evident from about 2007, as part of a long-term strategy by China, in which South Africa was planned to play more than a facilitation continental role. To this end, according to the New York Times newspaper of 25 October 2007, the Chinese Industrial and Commercial Bank (ICBC) spent USD\$ 5.6 billion buying a significant percentage share of Pretoria's largest bank, Standard Bank. The bank has significant branches in 18 African states as well as 21 others throughout the world. The Chinese investment in South Africa was therefore the largest since independence but clearly set to lay the continental platform for further Chinese presence that has since alarmed both Europe and the United States.

Furthermore, the adoption of BRICS as a counter-weight to the traditional WB & IMF strictures speaks to post-independence South Africa philosophy on the international political economy as well as reinforcing Pan-African, anti-imperialist postures. (Phimister & Raftopoulos 2004: 385-400; Pfister 2001: 2-3).

Why this angle escaped international relations researchers may have been the result of China's long time planning effected with little fanfare but the end result is unmistakable, South Africa becoming a key contestant to Washington's dominance of the international political economy. But for this discussion, the above forms the second most important point reflecting the US-South Africa relations as both focus on the continent whose dynamics shall be further explored below.

In order to better understand what informed the African National Congress (ANC) leaders, Nelson Mandela and his successor, Thabo Mbeki in laying

the foundations that have guided and informed the country's foreign policy positions, we need to begin by looking at the crucial transitional period from the white minority apartheid state to the coalition of May 1994 led by the ANC teasing out the substantive role that the United States, supported by some key European states such as the United Kingdom and Germany played.

Finally, in this discussion, the third area of US-South Africa relations focussing on the African continent was played out in 2011 over the Libyan, Colonel Muammar Gaddafi violent "regime change and assassination of the dear leader" on 23 October 2011 in an operation led by the P3, comprising France, the UK and the USA against the African Union (AU) and particularly South African valiant efforts towards intervention. (De Waal 2013: 365-368).

These three dimensions of the pre-South African independence followed by the 2006-2020 AFRICOM belligerence and then the 2010 political transition to BRICS and finally, the P3 versus Africa and South Africa's interpretation of the execution of UN Resolution 1973 over Libya and Muammar Gaddafi constitute the key areas of manifestation over the foreign policy differences over Africa by Washington and Pretoria that this paper discusses before conclusions. Stated differently, the relations between the two over Africa, although in reality cast in the mould of Maurice A. East's *Size and Foreign Policy Behaviour: A Test of Two Models*' framework practically exhibit characteristics of belligerence, non-cooperation and collegial neutrality. (East 1973: 556-576).

In attempting to better understanding US-South Africa foreign policies towards Africa, this discussion examines the three epochs, mid-1980s until April 1994; 2006-2008-2020 on the issue of AFRICOM and finally, the IBSA-BRICS international political economy transition for South Africa, and argues that the relationship was characterised by belligerence, non-cooperation and studied neutrality.

## **1 – The US, laying the foundations of statehood in post-cold war Southern Africa: 1987-1994**

As the cold war approached from the mid-1980s, in southern Africa, the adversarial groups were stacked in two camps. (Bush 1987: 594-596; Hanlon 1986). On the one hand, was the dominant, white minority apartheid regime in South Africa, with an occupation force in the then South West Africa now Namibia and Portuguese colonial allies in Angola and Portuguese East Africa, now Mozambique as well as a minority, white-settler entity in power in the then neighbouring Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe.

The South African Nationalist Party secured electoral victory in the 1948 Elections after which they instituted the policy of separate development, later popularly known as apartheid. After coming into power in 1948 the Nationalist Party (NP) then crafted the separate development policy or apartheid. (Sako 2014: 57). In April 1974, an armed forces coup in Lisbon, Portugal precipitated the rushed handing over of independence to both the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) in Angola and The Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO) in Mozambique by 1975, directly exposing South Africa's territorial borders. (Sako 2014: 62). Within South Africa, the major political opposition leaders such as Nelson Mandela were incarcerated on Robben Island and other places, including also other political leaders from South West Africa such as Herman Andimba Toivo ya Toivo.

Confronted with the spectre of hordes of African armies supported by the Russians and the Chinese and later the Cubans threatening South Africa, the ruling NP, from 1975 then crafted the all-embracing political and economic Total National Security Strategy at whose apex were the 6 Gun-Type (Hiroshima type) nuclear weapons transportable by airplanes as a deterrent. (Ray Bush 1987; Hanlon 1986: 1-7; Pycoft 1994: Stephens 1 April 2019). Threatened directly by the presence of Cuban forces supporting the MPLA in Angola, South Africa launched Operation Savannah, in August 1975

comprising 3 000 troops some 2000 km from Luanda, cutting off the southern Ovambo region with the support of UNITA. (Sako 2014: 63).

On the nuclear weapons development, as has now been confirmed, the US was aware of this as it allowed major technological companies such as Westinghouse to work on the nuclear reactor programme as well as providing significant complimentary aid of US\$50 million. (Gordon 2016: 192-193; Harris, Hatang & Liberman 2004: 457-475; Rupiya 2004: 121-125; Sako 2014: 64). The parallel removal of South Africa's nuclear weapons and capability with the process to hand over to Nelson Mandela and the ANC was also informed by the latter's personal relationship with Libya's Muammar Gaddafi who was known to be in a relentless search for access to technology for Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). Gaddafi, described by both Cuban revolutionary leader, Fidel Castro and US President, Ronald Reagan as "a reckless adventurer" had supported almost all African liberation movements and beyond with his 'cheque-book-diplomacy' and created relationships that were anathema to the West. (Hussein & Swart 2005: 469-488). Consequently, the perceived Mandela-Gaddafi 'Brother Leader' post-apartheid relationship was a significant dimension of the thinking driving the process of dismantling and shipping out of the Gun Type nuclear weapons in South Africa before independence in 1994. (Hussein & Swart 2005: 490).

On the other side, were the majority and liberation cadres who, in 1912 had established the ANC and the Pan African Congress (PAC) on behalf of the marginalized and for purposes of seeking equal rights and freedoms against white minority rule. While some had been jailed in South Africa, others, especially the leadership and military wings of the ANC, UmKhonto we Sizwe and the PAC were in the African countries of Ethiopia, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Angola, Mozambique, Lesotho, Swaziland then now Eswatini and Zimbabwe after independence in 1980 operating under the auspices of the then OAU, Liberation Committee and the Front Line

States (FLS) of southern Africa as well as Nigeria. (Hanlon 1986: 7; Harris et al. 2004: 461)

The withdrawal from Angola by South Africa was also accelerated by serious battlefield loses as well as cost implications. The late 1987 battle of Cuito Canavale, an event that has been acknowledged as one of the greatest conventional clashes in southern Africa, became one of the defining moments for South Africa's reassessing the utility of the military option in its own survival. (Berridge 1989: 465; O'Neill & Munslow 1990: 81-83). In this, the SADF supported by UNITA fought against the FAPLA backed by the Cubans to reach a stalemate where for both the continuation of the military option came under serious reconsideration in favour of diplomatic and political solution. (Vladislav Zubok undated).

Furthermore, the deployment in Angola and other operations in Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Lesotho, Swaziland then now Eswatini had begun to wear down the capacity of the South African Defence Forces (SADF). In monetary terms, the 1988-89 defence expenditure was cited at an unsustainable, Rand 10 billion or 22.7% of GDP. (Sako 2014: 66).

It was against the background of these cold war adversarial camps that US Assistant Secretary of State for Africa, Chester Croker "working within unprecedented superpower cooperation in southern African between 1987-1988" according to Geoffrey R. Berridge was able to bring about the Tripartite Angola/Namibia Accords that gave birth to independence of Namibia, end of the civil war in Angola and then facilitated the withdrawal of Cuban forces from Angola by July 1991 as well as that of South Africa. (Berridge 1989: 464-467; Fortna 2003: 73-79; Knudsen, Mundt & Zartman 23 October 2000; O'Neill & Munslow 1990-1991: 88; Vladislav Zubok undated). The process by Chester Crocker benefited from the presence of the UK's Embassy in Luanda and its role in blocking the UN's fully fledged sanctions on South Africa. (Pycroft 1994: 169-171; Mills et al. 1997: 1-5). The UK also appealed to apartheid South Africa in order to secure the

cooperation of the minority regime in the country's decolonisation. (Greg Mills, Thomas J. Callahan, Deon Geldenhuys & Peter Fabricius 1994). To this end:

The transformation of a pariah regime...into a legal, internationally recognized state would allow the Republic to reduce its military profile in Southern Africa, deflect a certain degree of international attention from its domestic apartheid policies, reduce still further the likelihood of United Nations sanctions being imposed against it... as the British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher spoke of a chance 'to make progress towards ending the isolation of South Africa in world affairs'. (Gregory 1980: 24-28).

Finally, with these US inspired dimensions in place, events within the ruling NP in Pretoria completed the circle of the rapid post-cold war and post-apartheid transition. In January 1989, the ruling 73-year-old President Pieter Willem Botha suffered a stroke and was forced to step down in the following month in February. Following intermittent NP political party internal factional reorganisation, his successor, Frederick Willem de Klerk was only able to assume complete authority in September 1989.

However, on 2 February 1990 during the opening of parliament ceremony, when the world was expecting the long delayed announcement of the release of Nelson Mandela, in prison for 27 years, De Klerk made the sweeping announcement: unconditionally lifting the ban on the Communist Party, the ANC, PAC and all political exiles in diaspora; lifted the state of emergency and allowed trade unions and other civil society groups to conduct their mandates without hindrance from the 41 years of NP repression and over 300 years of colonial repression of the African majority. Nine days later, De Klerk released Nelson Mandela from Pollsmoor Prison in Cape Town. (Sako 2014: 66-71; The Independent 2 February 2010).

The coordinated Western and apartheid South Africa's withdrawal from political, defence and security domination of Southern Africa and South Africa caught many by surprise, including the ANC as correctly argued by

John Sako and others. (Sako 2014: 67-71; Independent 2 February 2010). At the point, South Africa had a minority government ready to negotiate the handover of political power to the ANC but still with formidable state and security apparatus in the form of the SADF and other security structures. The NP survived and later on, collapsed as distinct party well into independence in 1997.

The internal security threat from a previously ethicized and political army of the NP was to continue well into the first decade of transition before alignment to the constitution became a reality captured in aptly titled: ‘Blacks Can Win Everything, but the Army’: The ‘Transformation’ of the South African Military between 1994 and 2004, *Journal of Southern African Studies* by Lephophotho Mashike when he refers to the “absorption” of the other seven armies during the integration as simply, “welded onto the existing structures of the SADF.” (Mashike 2007: 601-618).

Notwithstanding the stage managed power shifts by FW de Klerk under the Western post-cold war umbrella as had been hoped for by the UK Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, the next stage was to negotiate for a secondary political role in the incoming ANC government. (Greg Mills, Thomas J. Callahan, Deon Geldenhuys & Peter Fabricius 1994).

## **2 – Nelson Mandela’s Foreign Policy aspirations before assuming power in April 1994**

Before examining the foreign policy ideas advanced by Nelson Mandela from his 27 years of imprisonment by the apartheid regime, it is instructive to also note that the United States played a role in his arrest during the armed struggle period while hiding in Kwa Zulu Natal area in South Africa. As later quoted by Guardian Newspaper correspondent, Adam Taylor on 16 May 2016, he quotes Donald Rickard, a former diplomat tipped off authorities’ apartheid about location leading to the arrest 1962 “posing as a chauffeur in Durban – “I found out when he was coming and how he was coming...

that's where Mandela was caught.” – supported by Ethiopia, Russia, Cuba, Libya – as late as 2008 US terrorist list included Mandela; President 1994-1999 in a demonstration of how the US had played a combative role against the struggle for self-rule by the African majority in South Africa.

While the US's Chester Crocker and the Russians were working collaboratively between 1987-1988 supported by the other Western powers to deliver a nuclear disarmed South Africa to the ANC nationalists, Nelson Mandela, sitting in prison, put together a document which would guide his administration in forging, human rights based relations with 'Africa first' followed by the then 'damaged and destabilised' southern African region, as well as the rest of the world.

A central goal of our Foreign Policy will, therefore, be to promote institutions and forces that, through Democratic means, seek to make the world safe for diversity. (Nelson Mandela 1993: 89).

His overall objective was to address the severe poverty disparities within South Africa's society through expanded economic growth. (Mandela 1993: 88, 97; Landsberg 2000: 107-121). In the insightful 1993 foreign policy think-piece, Mandela believed that:

...nations will have boldly to recast their nets if they are to reap any benefit from international affairs in the post-Cold War era. The African National Congress (ANC) believes that the charting of a new foreign policy for South Africa is a key element in the creation of a peaceful and prosperous country. Apartheid corroded the very essence of life in South Africa. This is why the country's emerging political leaders are challenged to build a nation in which all people-irrespective of race, color, creed, religion or sex-can assert fully their human worth; after apartheid, our people deserve nothing less than the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. (Nelson Mandela 1993).

Mandela also believed the new South Africa had to make up for the destabilization losses that Africa, particularly southern Africa had endured under apartheid when he stated that:

Southern Africa commands a special priority in our foreign policy. The historical patterns of relations and economy in southern Africa have, however, been highly uneven and inequitable. ...under colonialism entrenched the domination of one country (South Africa) and incorporated others in subsidiary and dependent roles as labor reserves, markets for South African commodities, suppliers of certain services (such as transport) or providers of cheap and convenient resources (like water, electricity and some raw materials). South Africa's visible exports to the rest of the region exceed imports by more than five to one. This is a reflection not just of the stronger productive base of the South African economy, but of barriers of various kinds that have kept goods produced in regional states out of the South African market. Destructive apartheid policies have, caused further distortions. While South Africans experienced discrimination and repression at home, southern Africa fell victim to apartheid's destabilization strategy, which left two million dead and inflicted an estimated \$62.45 billion of damage on the economies of our neighbors. (Mandela 1993: 90; Ray Bush 1987)

In the concluding remarks on the establishment of the 1994 post-apartheid state in South Africa, the attention of the new leaders was consumed by the concentration of the internal challenges to create cohesion, stability and managing the huge expectations of the recently freed millions of impoverished African majorities. (Landsberg 2000: 107). To this, was the obvious constraint for the ANC while leading the first coalition government in which colluding competitors of the outgoing NP and the ethnic Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) in a framework in which Mandela was unable to take unilateral decision and had to negotiate key matters for progress. The second was the survival of the SADF, still heavily equipped with conventional weaponry and had 'absorbed' the incoming combatants from MK and PAC in the negotiated integration exercise that had begun with the ANC unilaterally abandoning the armed struggle option as part of the late 1980s independence negotiations. Afterwards, the decision was simply put to the military wing, MK to fall into line. (Mashike 2007: 601-608). It was

therefore a weakened state over which Mandela presided as his ministers continued to be hounded and arrested in the middle of creating the new democratic state. Given the history of destabilization under apartheid, the new state would not only speak to the internal liberation struggle demands but also be acceptable to the SADC neighbours who had been victims of destabilisation. The above is the background of the transition of the new state in South Africa as a product of cold war superpower collusion in Southern Africa before we turn to the two events of non-cooperation and neutrality between 2006 and 2020.

### **3 – US-South Africa, Africa and AFRICOM hosted on the continent contestation: 2006-2020**

In 2006, in keeping with the traditional US military carving out of the globe, Secretary of Defence, Donald Rumsfeld ordered that the US armed forces prepare to put together a new force, African Command (AFRICOM) that would be located on the African continent and be partly operational under Europe Command (EUCOM) by 2007 and be standalone by 2008. AFRICOM would complement other existing Commands such as EuroCom (Ploch 2007; Burgess 2008: 2-5; Fabricius 2007). The purpose of AFRICOM as the rest of the other commands was/is to advance US National Security objectives in Africa.

An almost immediate response and ready invitation to host AFRICOM was announced in Botswana and Liberia.

However, immediate concerns were raised amongst other African leaders and the media pointing towards the recent, 2006 US Air strikes in Somalia in support of the Ethiopian invasion that would be expected as part of its mandate to occur without warning, invoking neo-imperialist visions. (Ploch 2007; Raymond Hinnebusch 2007: 209-228). Furthermore, the world and African leaders still had in mind the US 2003 invasion of Iraq leading to the violent overthrow of Saddam Hussein, a fate that would befall any leader perceived to be against US interests. Sitting South African President,

Thabo Mbeki mounted an aggressive diplomatic campaign convincing and coordinating the rejection of AFRICOM to be hosted in Africa. In the January 2008 African Union Summit, Mbeki had the AFRICOM issue on the Agenda where he was able to secure sub-regional consensus that would marginalise the few states that had indicated willingness to host AFRICOM.

Blocked from what had been perceived as an automatic and internal US matter, Washington was forced to temporarily locate AFRICOM with EUCOM in Germany, while continuing to seek to overcome the unexpected diplomatic challenge. However, this was not to be as several years later, the serving AFRICOM General – on retirement and returning to the US made the admission that, ‘while he had visited almost every country on the African continent, but never received an invitation from South Africa.’ This revealed the extent of brinkmanship on the issue of AFRICOM that President Thabo Mbeki had adopted towards the US.

By 2020, in a development that sought to respond to NATO and European Union differences with the US, the Trump administration unilaterally ordered the departure and withdrawal of American troops from EUCOM including a direct order to AFRICOM to begin downsizing and return home as confirmed by Commander Stephen Townsend. (Kheel 31 July 2020; Herszenhorn 6 June 2020). On this point, while there are several pockets of US troops in different parts of the African continent including Djibouti, the actual headquarters of AFRICOM remained outside since 2008 when co-located with EUCOM in Stuttgart, Germany from where they are now relocating acknowledging the triumph of the Mbeki campaign.

#### **4 – Re-arranging the international political economy deck chairs: enter BRICS**

The originator of the BRIC concept, Goldman & Sach director, Jim O’Neill had argued that the global economy could benefit from the leadership of

a group of countries promoting the interests of the global South within a multilateral system. Making the suggestion to Brazil, Russian, India and Chinese Foreign Ministers, Jim pointed out that, while made up of different political systems which include authoritarian, totalitarian, democratic as well as federal, however, the consensus that would bind the group would be trade suggested at about USD\$ 3.41 trillion in a report also acknowledged as valid by the IMF. (Shameem & Jayaprasad 2020: 1-19)

This then became the second area of foreign policy divergence that was the international political economy choice by South Africa, at the invitation of China to join the alternative to the World Bank and IMF sphere of influence and become part of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) in 2010. South Africa's foreign policy intentions were made clear on the government website which stated that:

South Africa joined the important bloc of emerging economies in December 2010, in line with the country's foreign policy to strengthen South-South relations. (Mandela 1993: 97; Sidiropoulos 2019)

As it later turned out, this aspiration expressed by Mandela towards strengthening Africa through south-south ties was also part of a wider Chinese strategy, towards extending and consolidating its presence on the African continent and therefore crowding out previous Western dominance. (Shameem and K. Jayaprasad 2020: 1; Sidiropoulos 2019). The ideological underpinnings for the ANC in joining BRICS had begun earlier from its membership of the India, Brazil and South Africa (IBSA) tentative exploration of emerging economies convergence and cooperation to then finally transit to BRICS. More practically, in the lead up to the invitation by China, that country had concluded the largest, foreign direct investment in South Africa since independence when it acquired 20% stake in Standard Bank for US\$5.5 billion on 26 October 2007. (New York Times 25 October 2007) Standard Bank, the largest bank in South Africa already had branches in 18 African countries and was now able to access 21 more

from its Chinese associate partner. Afterwards large projects such as dams, railways and ports as well as exchange of commodities could be facilitated by Standard Bank enjoying the acceptance of the Chinese yuan/renminbi as an international currency by the World Bank and IMF in September 2009. In a related development, major oil producing African states such as Angola and Nigeria converted from US\$ currencies to dealing directly with the renminbi facilitated by newly established Chinese banks in their countries. Consequently, the choice by South Africa over BRICS has allowed the default expansion of China-Africa's strategy at the expense of that of the US. (New York Times 25 October 2007)

### **5 – South Africa versus P3 Countries of France, UK & USA over Libya's Col Gaddafi in 2011**

Finally, differences in foreign policy approach over Africa between Pretoria/Tshwane and Washington were also revealed in stark terms during the Libyan crisis that had emerged as part of the Arab uprisings in February 2011. (De Wall 2013: 365-379). In the background to the events, Col Muammar Gaddafi's 42-year reign had been characterised with divisiveness, controversy and ambiguity even as he espoused an anti-colonial sentiment while supporting liberation movements in their quest for self-government. In that, Gaddafi had supported Mandela and the ANC as well as PAC's military wings. As part of his 'adventurism' Gaddafi, had admitted to the UN, responsibility of bringing down the Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland and agreed to pay over US\$2.7 billion in compensation. Confronted with what he perceived was a hostile global community, Gaddafi had been known to have sought to acquire sophisticated Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) including nuclear. On this, the international community was suspicious of the 'Brother Leader' relationship between Gaddafi and Mandela that they argued could extend to sharing nuclear technology access and materials. (Hussein & Swart 2005: 469-492).

On 17 March 2011, against the background of worsening situation in Libya, the UN Security Council that included South Africa as a rotating and non-permanent member, passed Resolution 1973 intended to “take all necessary measures to protect civilians, reach a ceasefire and organise humanitarian relief” amongst other provisions. In the view and understanding of South Africa as later admitted, UN Resolution 1973 was in favour of deploying a limited force to protect civilians while restraining reported excesses by Gaddafi with its presence and was not designed to effect regime change. (De Waal 2013: 367). Meanwhile, as it later turned out, the P3 members were looking to secure support for what they perceived to be fragile international consensus in support of military action whose ultimate objective was to depose Gaddafi from power.

This became evident when the Resolution was passed as the P3 embarked upon what was clearly a violent regime change agenda that specifically targeted the removal of Col Gaddafi from power. Alarmed, South Africa again sought to use the AU platform in order to intervene and block the P3 military option with what was now called an African Solution to the African Problem. To this end, South Africa’s President Jacob Zuma made strenuous and well publicised efforts, visiting Russia, Europe and Libya as part of the AU initiative seeking to find a negotiated solution. Whilst in Tripoli, Zuma invited Gaddafi to consider stepping down and going into exile as part of the mediation and reconciliation process that he refused to accept. On 23 October 2011, Gaddafi’s hide out was discovered, wounded and later killed in full view of television cameras before his body was inhumanely desecrated.

The chaos that followed the removal of Gaddafi from power has since witnessed Libya disintegrate into various fiefdoms being fought over by well-armed militia groups enjoying support from competing international actors in a development that has left the AU completely marginalized.

## Conclusion

The United States was instrumental in creating the post-cold war geopolitical framework in southern Africa between 1987-1988, working with Russia even as its influence receded. Based on the Angola/Namibia Tripartite Accords, agreement was reached to result in the withdrawal of Cuban and South African forces from Angola, the independence of Namibia and ultimately a negotiated settlement in South Africa shorn of the 6, Gun Type (Hiroshima) nuclear weapons. The process was of course accelerated by the late 1987 to August 1988 major losses and stalemate at Cuito Canavale, described as the largest defining conventional battle ever fought in southern Africa. Furthermore, the South Africa's new coalition government had to contend with the still strong but residual SADF able to 'absorb' the returning combatants to form the new South African National Defence Forces (SANDF). Even acting under a restraining coalition government, Nelson Mandela, who had carefully thought out his foreign policy positions whilst still in jail, was able to embark on his Africa first emphasizing southern Africa and giving due attention to the internal socio-economic disparities of the new state while managing expectations. But already the West was watching him as to what extent he was prepared to continue engagement with Libya's 'maverick and Brother Leader' Col Muammar Gaddafi who was anxious to find WMD weapons to feed into his adventures.

Once in office, Mandela and the ANC have been able to forge remarkable consistency on foreign policy as it relates to the United States and its interests over Africa. Given the limited size of the canvas of a journal article, this paper has looked at three distinct moments that interestingly, each has had lasting impact. We describe the US policy towards ushering a weakened African state in South Africa as the initial belligerence which appears to have been reciprocated in 2006-2008 by the administration of Thabo Mbeki. At the time, the US Defence had taken the unilateral decision to declare its intention to establish AFRICOM, to be located and operational in Africa by the following year in 2007. While Botswana and Liberia indicated

willingness to host AFRICOM, Mbeki went over their national aspirations by appealing to the AU and its sub-regional structures of ECOWAS and SADC to block the deployment of US troops on the continent. In order to achieve this, South Africa was able to rely on its diplomatic offensive that placed the issue on the agenda of the AU during its January 2008 Summit resulting in the effective scuppering of the initial intention. Not backing down, the US temporarily located AFRICOM forces in Europe with EUCOM hoping to work the system and later return to the continent.

However, nearly a decade and half later, President Donald Trump had ordered General Stephens to begin winding down and send troops elsewhere including back to the United States demonstrating the admission that the location of AFRICOM in Africa is no longer going to happen. The second area of competition over African policy positions between Tshwane/Pretoria and Washington occurred between August to December 2010 when South Africa was invited and accepted to become a member of BRICS. As has been argued, this was the thin edge of the Chinese wedge into the continent, facilitated through its major investment in acquiring 20% of the local Standard Bank with branches already in 18 African countries. South Africa is the only country with a small minute population of just over 50 million compared to Brazil, Russia, India and China but structured as a platform to access the 1.2 billion Africans on the continent. This has been an important policy posture with infinite expansive prospects for China leaving the US and related Western financial institutions marginal to the future growth on the continent.

Finally, the discussion examined the policy contradictions between the two protagonists as it related to the fate of Libyan Col, Muammar Gaddafi following the February 2011 Arab uprising. Working together within the UNSC to pass Resolution 1973, the countries later fell out when South Africa and the AU realized that there had been misrepresentation on the objective to effect regime change and the assassination of Gaddafi rather than the benign protection of civilians that had been advanced during the discussions. As

Alex de Waal has pointed out in his article, based on extensive interviews with officials from the African Union and other diplomats, the behaviour by the P3 UN Members and particularly the United States left most feeling frustrated, angry and almost humiliated as officials unable to understand the texts and the debates.

## References

- Habib Adam. "South Africa's Foreign Policy: Hegemonic aspirations, Neoliberal orientations and Global Transformation," *South African Journal of International Affairs*, 16:2, 2009, pp. 143-159.
- De Waal Alex. "African roles in the Libyan conflict of 2011," *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)*, Vol. 89, No. 2, Mar. 2013, pp. 365-379.
- Arceneaux Giles David. "Beyond the Rubicon: Command and Control in Regional Nuclear Powers" (August 2019). Dissertations - ALL. 1080. <https://surface.syr.edu/etd/1080>. Syracuse University.
- Cooper F. Andrew. "The Multiple Faces of South African Foreign Policy," *International Journal*, Vol. 53, No. 4, 1998, pp. 705-732.
- Taylor Adam. "CIA's management role in arrest of Nelson Mandela", *Washington Post*, citing UK's Sunday Times report, 16 May 2016.
- Fortna Virginia Page. "A Lost Chance for Peace: The Bicesse Accords in Angola," *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 4, No. 1, Georgetown, 2003, pp. 73-79.
- C. Knudsen, A. Mundt & I. W. Zartman. The Bicesse Accords, 23 Oct 2000, At: <https://reliefweb.int/report/angola/peace-agreements-case-angola> accessed 25 September 2020.
- Moon E. Bruce. "Consensus or Compliance? Foreign-Policy Change and External Dependence," *International Organization*, Vol. 39, No. 2, 1985, pp. 297- 329.
- Gordon J. Brian. "Deception in Covert Nuclear Weapons Development – A Framework to Identify, Analyze & Mitigate Future Long-term Deception Efforts," Rand Pardee Graduate School, 2016, Unpubl. Dissertation.
- Ray Bush Ray. *African Affairs*, Vol. 86, Issue 345, October 1987, pp 594–596.
- C. C. Shameem and K. Jayaprasad. "The Evolution of BRICS in International Political Economy," *American Review Of Political Economy*, Vol. 15 (1), 2020, pp. 1-19 at: <https://www.arpejournal.com/volume-15-number-one/the-evolution-of-brics-in-international-political-economy/> accessed 24 September 2020.

- Herszenhorn M. David. "Trump Orders Large Withdrawal of US Forces from Germany," *Politico*. 6 June 2020. At <https://www.politico.eu/article/donald-trump-withdrawal-us-forces-from-germany-angela-merkel/>
- Siko Alan John. "Democratic Foreign Policy making and the Thabo Mbeki Presidency: A Critical Study". Dissertation, University of South Africa, 2014. [http://uir.unisa.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10500/13360/thesis\\_siko\\_ja.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](http://uir.unisa.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10500/13360/thesis_siko_ja.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y) accessed 24 September 2020.
- Sidiropoulos Elizabeth. "South African Foreign Policy in the post-Mbeki period," *South African Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 15 (2), 2008, pp. 107-120.
- . "South Africa's changing role in global development structures: being in them but not always of them," *Discussion Paper*, No. 4/2019,
- Berridge R. Geoffrey. "Diplomacy and the Angola/Namibia Accords," *International Affairs*, Vol. 65, No. 3, 1989, pp. 463-479
- Gilpin R. *Global Political Economy: Understanding the International Economic Order*, 2001. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Mills Greg. "The US and Africa: prisoners of a paradigm?" *Current History*, May 2008, pp. 225-230.
- Mills Greg, et al. Eds. "From Pariah to Participant: South Africa's Evolving Foreign Relations, 1990-1994," *South African Institute of International Affairs*. Papers from a Workshop organised by The South African Institute of International Affairs Jan Smuts House Johannesburg, South Africa 5 March 1997, pp. 1-38.
- Hampton Stephens 1 April 2019. The Truth about US Military in Africa, *World Politics Review*,
- Hanlon, Joseph. *Beggar your Neighbours: Apartheid Power in Southern Africa* James Currey, London, 1986. Whole Book at: [http://psimg.jstor.org/fsi/img/pdf/t0/10.5555/al.sff.document.crp2b20027\\_final.pdf](http://psimg.jstor.org/fsi/img/pdf/t0/10.5555/al.sff.document.crp2b20027_final.pdf) accessed 24 September 2020.
- Hussein Solomon and Gerrie Swart. "Libya's Foreign Policy in Flux," *African Affairs*, Vol. 104, No. 416 (Jul., 2005), pp. 469-492

- International Relations/The Making of Foreign Policy* – Wikibooks, at [en.wikibooks.org/wiki\\_The\\_Making\\_of\\_Foreign\\_Policy](http://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/The_Making_of_Foreign_Policy)
- Wyk Jo-Ansie van. “The Saga Continues... The Zimbabwean Issue in South Africa’s Foreign Policy,” *Alternatives: Turkish Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 1 (4), 2002, pp. 176-231.
- O’Neill Kathryn and Munslow Barry. “Ending the Cold War in Southern Africa,” *Third World Quarterly* Vol. 12, No. 3/4 (1990 - 1991), pp. 81-96
- Keohane R. ‘Theory of world politics: structural realism and beyond’ in Keohane R (ed.), *Neorealism and its Critics*. New York Columbia University Press, 1986, pp. 158-203
- Mandela Nelson. “South Africa’s Future Foreign Policy,” *Foreign Affairs*, Nov. - Dec., Vol. 72, No. 5, 1993, pp. 86-97 Published by: Council on Foreign Relations at <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/20045816.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3Ae52f0e3d1e4a1d9d3c90a72e8d4f7140> accessed 25 September 2020.
- “ICBC to buy \$5.6 billion stake in South African bank,” *New York Times* 25 October 2007.
- Martyn Gregory. “The Zimbabwe Election: The Political and Military Implications”, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Oct., 1980, Vol. 7, No. 1, *Special Issue on Contemporary Politics* (Oct., 1980), pp. 17-37
- Maurice A. East. “Size and Foreign Policy Behavior: A Test of Two Models,” *World Politics*, Jul., 1973, Vol. 25, No. 4, 1973, pp. 556-576
- Morgenthau H. *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*. 4th edition. New York, Alfred Knopf, 1986.
- Crocker A. Chester. *High Noon in Southern Africa: Making peace in a rough neighbourhood* New York & London, W. W. Norton and Company, 1994
- Pycroft C. *The Journal of Modern African Studies* Vol. 32 (1), pp. 169-171.
- Hinnebusch Raymond. “The US Invasion of Iraq: Explanations and Implications,” *Critique: Critical Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 16 (3), 2007, pp. 209-228

- Rebecca Kheel. "AFRICOM ordered to plan headquarters move as part of Trump's general withdrawal," *The Hill* 31 July 2020, at <https://thehill.com/policy/defense/509954-africa-command-ordered-to-plan-headquarters-move-as-part-of-trumps-germany> accessed 12 October 2020.
- Landsberg C, 'Promoting democracy: the Mandela Mbeki Doctrine', *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 11 (3), 2000, pp. 107-21.
- Lauren Ploch. *AFRICOM: the US Military Consolidating its Efforts in Africa*, The Centre for Strategic & International Affairs, 2007.
- Mashike Lephophotho. 'Blacks Can Win Everything, but the Army': The 'Transformation' of the South African Military between 1994 and 2004," *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 3, 2007, pp. 601-618
- Fabricius Peter. "AFRICOM May be looking for a new home," *Analysis, ISS Today* 2007. At <https://www.onenewspage.com/n/World/1zltpherio/AFRICOM-May-Be-Looking-For-New-Home.htm> accessed 24 September 2020.
- Phimister I & Raftopoulos B. 'Mugabe, Mbeki, and the Politics of Anti-Imperialism', *Review of African Political Economy*, 31.101, 2004. pp. 385-400
- P.J. Salazar & Macmillan Harold, —The wind of change, *African Yearbook of Rhetoric* Vol. 2, Issue 3, 2011, pp. 27 – 39 at <http://www.africanrhetoric.org/pdf/J%20%20%20Macmillan%20-%20%20the%20wind%20of%20change.pdf> accessed 28 September 2020.
- Bush Ray. Review: *Beggar Your Neighbours: Apartheid Power in Southern Africa* by Joseph Hanlon, Catholic Institute for International Relations, in collaboration with James Currey and Indiana University Press, London and Bloomington, Indiana, 1986, xi+352 pp. ISBN 085255 307 2 and 0 85255 305 6, *Apartheid's Second Front: South Africa's War Against Its Neighbours*, by Joseph Hanlon, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1986, vii+130 pp. ISBN 0 14 052370 7. *Destructive Engagement: Southern Africa at War*. Edited by Phyllis Johnson and David Martin (Foreword by Julius K. Nyerere), Zimbabwe Publishing House for the Southern African Research and Documentation Centre, 1986. *African Affairs*, Vol. 86, Issue 345, October 1987, pp. 594-596 at: <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordjournals.afraf.a097959> accessed 25 September 2020.

- Rupiya Martin. "Review: Hannsen Steyn, Richardt Van Der Walt & Jan Van Loggernberg 2003. *Armament & Disarmament South Africa's Nuclear Weapons Experience*, Pretoria Network Publishers, *African Security Review* (ASR), Vol. 13 (1), 2004, pp. 121-125.
- Pfister Roger. South Africa 's Post-Apartheid Foreign Policy Towards Africa, *Electronic Journal of Africana Bibliography*, Vol. 6, (Article 1), 2001, pp. 1-42. At <https://doi.org/10.17077/1092-9576.1003> Swiss Federal Institute of Technology ETH, Zurich.
- Burgess F. Stephen. *US Africa Command, Changing security Dynamics, and Perceptions of US Africa Policy*. US Air Force Institute for National Security Studies (INSS), US Air Force Academy, Colorado, USA, 2008.
- Smith Steve. "Theories of Foreign Policy: An Historical Overview," *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 1, 1986, pp. 13-29.
- The Independent* 2 February 2010. FW de Klerk: The Day I ended apartheid" At <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/fw-de-klerk-the-day-i-ended-apartheid-1886128.html> accessed 14 October 2020.
- Neethling Theo. "South Africa & US AFRICOM – The Politics of a Tepid & Limited Relationship," Paper presented at the ECPR 2015 General Conference, hosted by the Université de Montréal, Montréal, Canada, 26-29 August 2015.
- Verne Harris, Sello Hatang and Peter Liberman. "Unveiling South Africa's Nuclear Past, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 3, 2004p, p. 457-475.
- Vladislav M. Zubok undated. "New Evidence on the End of the Cold War – New Evidence on the "Soviet Factor" in the Peaceful Revolutions of 1989," – *Cold War International History Project Bulletin, Issue*, Issue 12/13- [https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/publication/New\\_Ev\\_EndCW.pdf](https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/publication/New_Ev_EndCW.pdf) accessed 25 September 2020.
- Waltz Kenneth. *Theory of International Politics*. McGraw-Hill, 1979