IBSA Regional Security Dimensions:

The South African Perspective

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1. INTRODUCTION

The inauguration of the India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) Dialogue Forum in 2003 marked a watershed in South-South co-operation in the post-Cold War era. The forum was initiated by the foreign ministers of the three emerging economic powers in terms of the Brasilia Declaration of 2003, which outlined a broad agenda for cooperation among these countries.[2] Central to the IBSA alliance's mission and agenda has been an ambition to alter the balance of power between the developed and developing nations by democratising global decision-making bodies such as the United Nations (UN) and the Bretton Woods institutions, developing alternatives to the contemporary model of globalisation, and giving concrete shape to the ideal of promoting the economic and social interests of the South.[3]

Through trilateral cooperation the IBSA countries have sought to position themselves as leaders in their respective regions by collectively pursuing certain global aspirations, such as pressing claims for regional seats on the UN Security Council, challenging the dominant powers in the global trade system, and promoting solidarity among the developing nations and striving to champion their interests in the international system.[4]

This essay examines the challenges of international security with reference to the experience of the IBSA coalition. Specifically, it explores the role of IBSA in global security through the lens of South Africa. Its principal argument is that IBSA can play a crucial role – within the framework of South-South cooperation – in addressing conventional non-traditional security threats in the contemporary global order. And given its regional political and security circumstances and global posture, South Africa can play vital role in contributing to IBSA's effectiveness and relevance in this regard. Yet it is worth recognising that the impact of South Africa's contribution will be limited by the constraints placed on its regional policy by the political and security dynamics of the Southern African region. Addressing these constraints is necessary if South Africa is to fulfil its regional and global policy objectives.

The paper consists of six sections. The first part sets the tone for discussion by reviewing relevant conceptual issues that have shaped the debate on international security. This is followed by an analysis of the changing global security order. The third segment explores the ramifications of the new security regime for Africa, including South Africa, and the policy strategies that have been implemented by African countries to respond to it. This is followed by an examination of South Africa's approach to security in the Southern African region and across the broader African continent. The fifth section discusses the problems and constraints that have hampered South Africa's regional policy. This leads to the final section, which deals with the potential of the IBSA alliance in tackling contemporary security threats.

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[2] Ministério das Relações Exterior *Declaração de Brasília*, Brasilia, 6 June 2003

[3] ibid.

[4] ibid.

2. INTERNATIONAL SECURITY: CONCEPTUAL ISSUES

The end of the Cold War coincided with a proliferation of contending visions that sought to explain the emerging global order. The most sanguine of these was advanced by the American political scientist, Francis Fukuyama. The gist of his thesis was that the collapse of the Soviet bloc marked a triumph of the forces of individualism and liberal capitalism over communism. It represented the 'end' of one phase in history and the start of another, characterised by a global dominance of liberal economic values. Under this new normative order, there was no alternative to liberal capitalism. As such, there would be no significant conflict between competing ideologies about ends: rather, politics would be only about means.[5]

The optimistic picture painted by liberal optimists such as Fukuyama, contrasted sharply with the bleak assessment of the post-Soviet international system by other commentators. For example, the neo-realist, John Mearsheimer, argued that the end of communism and the bipolar power structure – which he believed had created stability and order after the Second World War – would bring about a return to the conventional multilateral balance of power politics of the past, with attendant rampant nationalism and ethnic rivalries. This would, in turn, engender widespread conflict and instability.[6]

In his 'clash of civilisations' thesis, Samuel Huntington proffered another grim analysis of international relations. He contended that the end of Cold War ideological confrontation did not imply the cessation of conflict. Instead, conflict would assume a new dimension that was 'civilisational' in nature. Central to the new fault-lines would be identity and culture, which would pit Western civilisation against those of the Middle East, China and Asia.[7]

An even bleaker view, grounded in the realist paradigm, of the emergent international order was enunciated by Robert Kaplan. In a widely debated essay, *The Coming Anarchy*, he argued that the human and economic collapses in parts of Africa were crucial in understanding the future character of global politics. Old structures and traditional certainties were making way for chaos and misery in countries, such as Sierra Leone in West Africa, where life had become 'nasty, brutish and short.' In other parts of the world, old-style ideological conflicts between capitalism and communism were being supplanted by fundamental clashes over resources such as water, exerting an even greater strain on the poorer regions of the world. The world was quickly fragmenting after the cold war into those regions whose inhabitants were extremely wealthy and those who were desperately poor. This posed a serious threat to the prosperous way of life in the developed world.[8]

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[5] Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (London: Penguin, 1992).

[6] John J. Mearsheimer, "Back to the future: instability in Europe after the Cold War," in Fareed Zakaria (ed.), *The New Shape of World Politics – Contending Paradigms in International Relations* (New York: Foreign Affairs, 2000), pp. 101-157.

[7] Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of the World Order* (London: Simon & Schuster, 1997).

[8] Robert Kaplan, "The coming anarchy," *The Atlantic Monthly*, February 1994.

Whereas Kaplan characterises security through the realist prism, critical security theorists have argued that most approaches accord disproportionate attention to the state. In their view, emphasis should be placed on the individual rather than the state. Security can be best achieved through human emancipation, which they describe as "freeing people, as individuals and groups, from the social, physical, economic, political, and other constraints that stop them from carrying out what they would freely choose to do".[9]

Like critical security theorists, feminist scholars have questioned the conventional focus on the dominant role of the state in international security studies, and have cautioned against the inclination to exclude gender from the literature on international security, especially considering that women (and children) are affected as much as men by wars and other conflicts.[10] Social constructivists, on the other hand, contend that international security is not only shaped by power politics but also by ideas. In terms of this view, the building blocks of international relations are social rather than material. Altering the way we conceptualise international relations can, therefore, contribute to greater international security.[11]

For their part, proponents of the global society school of thought have reasoned that the process of globalisation – exemplified by the emergence of a global economic system, global communications and variants of a global culture – has taken place alongside the fragmentation of the nation-state. The disintegration of the nation-state, in turn, has spawned new kinds of conflict within states - rather than between states - which the traditional state system cannot tackle. This calls for the emergence of the politics of global responsibility, in which social movements and regional security communities must play a leading role. Such politics must address issues of global inequality, poverty, human rights and environmental degradation.[12]

2.1. Security in a Changing Global Order

For a significant part of the Cold War, national security was defined through the realist lens. Inspired by the works of writers such as Hobbes, Machiavelli and Rousseau, this view is predicated on a number of assumptions: states are the key referent in the analysis of international politics and international security; international politics is anarchic; states

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[9] Ken Booth, "Security emancipation," *Review of International Studies*, 17 (4): 313-26; see also Timothy J. Sinclair, "Beyond international relations theory: Robert W. Cox and approaches to world order," in Robert W. Cox and Timothy J. Sinclair, *Approaches to World Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp.3-18.

[10] Ann Tickner, "Hans Morgenthau's principles of political realism: a feminist reformulation," *Millennium*, 17 (3): 429-40.

[11] See for example Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

[12] Martin Shaw, *Global Society and International Relations* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994).

frequently have offensive capabilities; states cannot be completely sure of the designs of other states; states have a basic desire to survive; and states attempt to behave rationally. [13]

The end of the Cold War highlighted the limitations of the narrow paradigm that had conceived of security purely in terms of inter-state violence. In the context of the evolving international security setting, states are no longer the exclusive determinants of security. Nor do citizens have confidence in the ability of governments to protect them. This accounts for the growth in public-private partnerships such as those in Iraq, where private security companies have been integrally involved in post-war reconstruction efforts.[14]

Over the past years, academic and policy analyses have drawn attention to a definition of security that transcends parochial military considerations. In an influential study, Barry Buzan argued for a conception of security that encompassed political, economic, societal, environmental and military aspects and which was defined in wider international terms.[15] The momentum towards broadening the definition of security has been in recognition of the reality that in most cases, war and violence originated from domestic circumstances within states.

This was underscored by the upsurge in civil wars and ethnic strife – rather than inter-state wars – in the 1990s, graphically illustrated by the Rwandan genocide in 1994. It is now commonly accepted that security also has to be about people, not only states: threats to security include domestic conditions such as repression, ethnic cleansing and human rights abuses.[16] As such, it can be argued that the concept of security has expanded in two ways:

- first, in respect of who or what the referent objects of security are (namely, the political, social, cultural, economic or material goods that must be secured); and

- second, in respect of the nature of the threats that these referent objects face.[17]

According to Coker, the transformed character of security has blurred the distinction between 'soft' and 'hard' security. This is because for individuals 'soft' or 'hard' is a question of perception, not objective reality: security today is based ever more on subjective

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[13] John Baylis, "International and global security in the post-cold war era," in John Baylis and Steve Smith (eds.), *The Globalisation of World Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p.265.

[14] Greg Mills and Kurt Shillinger, "Introduction," in Terrence McNamee, Greg Mills, Monde Muyangwa and Kurt Shillinger (eds.), *Trade, Development and Security in Africa – Report of the 2005 Tswalu Dialogue* (London: The Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies, 2005), p.xi.

[15] Barry Buzan, *People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in Post-Cold War Era* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991).

[16] Anne Hammerstad, "People, states and regions," in Anne Hammerstad (ed.), *People, States and Regions* (Johannesburg: SAIIA, 2005), p.4.

[17] Barry Buzan, Jaap de Wilde and Ole Waever, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998).

beliefs.[18] The changed security environment has also eroded people's trust in the ability of the nation-state to protect them. As he noted:

> *Once the most formidable political unit devised, now we have to draw a distinction between national security and homeland security, between the security of the state, and the security of the citizen, between aggression from another state and aggression from other citizens in far distant parts of the globe. National security still relies on military defence including SDI shields. But how do you secure your citizen against everyday risks which involve other 'wars' – the 'war against terror,' the 'war against crime', the 'war against AIDS'?[19]*

He maintains that citizens, at least in the developed world, feel insecure today mainly because the language of insecurity has been transformed: threats have been replaced by risks. In the international domain, politics has become "the institutionalised attempt to manage the future in the face of unknowable calculations and contradictory uncertainties."[20] The notion of risk has changed the way people comprehend security – unlike threats, risks cannot be eradicated but can only be managed, nor are they clear or quantifiable.[21]

In this context, the global threats that confront the international community have become interdependent as was underscored by the report of the UN High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, which pointed out that:

> *In today's world, a threat to one is a threat to all. Globalisation means that a major terrorist attack anywhere in the industrial world would have devastating consequences for the well-being of millions in the developing world. Any one of 700 million international airline passengers every year can be an unwitting carrier of a deadly infectious disease. And the erosion of State capacity anywhere in the world weakens the protection of every State against transnational threats such as terrorism and organised crime. Every State requires international cooperation to make it secure. [22]*

3. AFRICAN PEACE AND SECURITY ARCHITECTURE

Perhaps with the exception of the Middle East region, no part of the world has been scarred by conflict and insecurity on the same scale as Africa in recent decades. Not only has the

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[18] Christopher Coker, "The changing security environment," in Terrence McNamee, Greg Mills, Monde Muyangwa and Kurt Shillinger (eds.), Trade, *Development and Security in Africa – Report of the 2005 Tswalu Dialogue* (London: The Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies, 2005), p.37.

[19] ibid.

[20] ibid., p.38.

[21] ibid., p.39.

[22] United Nations, *United Nations High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change – Executive Summary* (New York: United Nations, 2004), p.1.

continent been blighted by widespread inter-state and intra-state strife, it has also fallen victim to other threats such as terrorism, poverty, disease and environmental decay.

In recent years, African countries have actively sought to broaden the discourse on security on the continent, both within the framework of the African Union (AU) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). The AU has designated for itself the role of promoting and safeguarding peace, security and stability in Africa.[23] Likewise, a major priority of NEPAD is to create circumstances for sustainable development by advancing peace and security.

Notwithstanding erstwhile differences among African countries over the interpretation of the security concept within the regional context – especially where it concerned the issue of national sovereignty – there is general agreement today among African leaders that the non-military facets of security are as crucial as the military ones.[24] The embrace of the notion of comprehensive security is codified in the protocols and declarations adopted by African countries, such as the Nepad Declaration (2002), the Durban Declaration (2002), the CSSDCA Solemn Declaration (2000), as well as the Cairo Agenda for Action (1995). [25]

An important challenge facing African countries has been how to reconcile the principle of national sovereignty and non-interference – rendered inviolable by the AU's predecessor, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) – with the emerging comprehensive security agenda championed by African regional and sub-regional formations. During the Cold War era, the OAU agenda was preoccupied with the struggle against apartheid and, therefore, failed to deal proactively with the multi-faceted challenges of peace and security.

This was compounded by its inflexible doctrine of national sovereignty, which discounted the safety of African citizens as a security concern.[26] Consequently, the OAU concerned itself only with inter-state relations and refrained from pronouncing on issues of governance and human rights in its member states. The absolutist interpretation of security derived mainly from historical circumstances: it was calculated to prevent the former colonial powers from meddling in the affairs of Africa's newly independent states. Yet it soon degenerated into a pretext for the pursuit of repressive policies by increasingly autocratic leaders.[27]

The inauguration of the AU marked the promise of a new era of accountability in Africa's security regime. Departing from the entrenched security status quo that evolved under the OAU, the AU Constitutive Act highlighted the inextricability of peace, security and development. It also supplanted the notion of absolute sovereignty with that of conditional sovereignty: it sanctioned the AU to intervene in the affairs of a member state in serious

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[23] Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, adopted by the 1st Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union, Durban, 9 July 2002.

[24] Hammerstad, "People, states and regions," p.6

[25] ibid., p.9.

[26] Elizabeth Sidiropoulos and Romy Chevallier, "The European Union and Africa: developing partnerships for peace and security," *SAIIA Report No. 51* (Johannesburg: SAIIA, 2006), p.5.

[27] Hammerstad, "People, states and regions," p.8.

cases of human rights violations, such as war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity.[28] This paved the way for the elimination of the norm of non-interference that had become the hallmark of the OAU's modus operandi.

To underpin the agenda of promoting a comprehensive understanding of security, the AU has established several institutions that seek to address peace and security matters in a coordinated and coherent manner. Central among these are the AU Commission, the Peace and Security Council, the Pan-African Parliament, the Economic, Social and Cultural as well as the Court of Justice. Moreover, a number of instruments have been instituted specifically for the purpose of conflict resolution, notably the African Standby Force, the Continental Early Warning System, and the Panel of the Wise.[29]

4. SOUTH AFRICA AND REGIONAL SECURITY

As one of the active champions of the AU and NEPAD, South Africa has played a pivotal role in reshaping the security discourse on the continent. This has been evident, for example, in the Southern African Development Community's (SADC) Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation. This protocol sets out a security agenda spanning politico-military threats as well as non-military threats, including: inter-state war; internal war; large-scale human rights abuses; war crimes; crimes against humanity; genocide; food security; mass movements of refugees; illegal migrants; humanitarian and natural disasters; disease (particularly HIV/Aids and malaria); poverty and underdevelopment; and ecological degradation.[30]

The regional level has become central to tackling security threats in Africa.[31] Regions can contribute to the security of people and states by "putting pressure on state governments to modify their behaviour in a way that strengthens state legitimacy and capacity and provides a climate of security and stability within which people can prosper."[32]

Regions can advance peace and security in four ways:

- By promoting conflict prevention. This includes practising transparent and accountable governance, democracy and development as well as intervention in member states to avert violent conflict or violent seizure of power;

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[28] Intervention does not necessarily imply military intervention; it also entails the application of peaceful methods to influence or bring pressure to bear on the domestic policies of member states in order to ensure their alignment with regional or international obligations and norms.

[29] For more details on the objectives and roles of these institutions see www.africa-union.org

[30] Hammerstad, "People, states and regions," p.7.

[31] ibid., p.15.

[32] ibid.

- By encouraging conflict resolution through negotiations, mediation, peacekeeping and peace enforcement actions;

- By engaging in peace building through redeveloping a country's social, political and economic infrastructure after conflict; and

- By undertaking humanitarian military intervention in situations involving gross violations of human rights, war crimes, and crimes against humanity or genocide.[33]

An important pillar of South Africa's foreign policy has been the pursuit of peace and security in Africa, especially in the Southern African region. One of the crucial challenges that confronted the emerging South African democracy was the extent to which its foreign policy would reflect the ethical and democratic values that underpinned the anti-apartheid struggle. This explains why the cardinal tenets of South African foreign policy during the Mandela presidency were the advancement of human rights, democracy, justice and international law. [34]

Post-apartheid South Africa, especially under the leadership of Thabo Mbeki, has assiduously tried to cultivate a position as a 'natural' leader of the African continent. Invoking the rhetoric of 'African renaissance,' Mbeki has set out to reaffirm South Africa's African identity and legitimise its leadership ambitions. Although it accounts for 40% of Africa's economic output, South Africa has been careful not to throw its weight around. The South African government has actively championed Nepad and has expended enormous financial and diplomatic capital on efforts to end conflicts in several African countries.[35]

Under Thabo Mbeki's presidency, South African foreign policy assumed a strong multilateralist thrust: the emphasis was on working with other countries to fashion common solutions to global and regional concerns. South Africa sees itself as a bridge between the developed and developing worlds.[36] And it has used multilateral diplomacy to burnish its South credentials. Pursuing South Africa's national objectives through the multilateral setting has been seen as essential to providing the country with an avenue to "leverage its moral and political authority based on its democratic, non-racial and constitutional credentials,"[37] while also reversing the African continent's precarious position in world affairs. As such, foreign policy became more ever geared towards bolstering South Africa's international profile and towards using multilateral institutions to promote human rights and democratic global governance.[38]

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[33] ibid., pp.15-16.

[34] Kuseni Dlamini, "Ten years of foreign policy in the new South Africa," *SA Yearbook of International Affairs 2003/04* (Johannesburg: SAIIA, 2004), pp.1-2.

[35] 'Come, let's be friends,' *The Economist*, 8th May 2003.

[36] 'South Africa's role in the world,' *The Economist,* 31st August 2000.

[37] Dlamini, "Ten years of foreign policy," pp.1-2.

[38] ibid.

In this context, the apartheid-era policy of regional destabilisation made way for a policy that emphasised dialogue and mediation as the key means of conflict resolution in the region. The new policy, which South Africa has sought to export to the rest of Africa,[39] focused on finessing political solutions to conflicts and sponsoring initiatives designed to limit regional insecurity. This has entailed, among other things, promoting conflict prevention and conflict resolution, advancing human rights, providing assistance in monitoring and dealing with domestic issues, such as elections, that have a bearing on regional stability. It has also involved propagating regional cooperation through the evolving conflict resolution mechanisms of the AU.[40]

Democratic South Africa's formative experience of conflict resolution dates back to 1996, when the country tried to broker a peace deal between the president of the then Zaire (which subsequently became known as the Democratic Republic of Congo), Mobutu Sese Seko and Laurent Kabila, who marshalled the rebel forces that deposed Mobutu from power.[41] In recent years, South Africa has actively championed a negotiated settlement to the Congolese conflict, and its mediation efforts resulted in the conclusion of the Inter-Congolese Dialogue in 2003 (which cost the country about US$20m), initiated under the Lusaka Ceasefire agreement.[42]

The emerging security doctrine was also evident when the country, backed by the United States (US), succeeded to discourage the former Zambian president, Frederick Chiluba, from changing his country's constitution in order to seek a third term in office.[43] Controversially, however, the policy suffered a setback when South Africa bungled a military intervention in Lesotho in 1998. This sparked questions about South Africa's true intentions in the region.[44] Beyond its 'near abroad,' South Africa has been involved in mediating an agreement between Burundi's warring factions in that country's civil war. To give diplomacy a chance, Pretoria provided 1,400 protective soldiers to guard political leaders and maintain peace and stability. Its mediation efforts culminated in the conclusion of a power-sharing agreement between the rebel forces and the government of Burundi.[45]

Moreover, South Africa has committed material and human resources to bring peace and stability in Eritrea, Ethiopia and Comoros and Cote d' Ivoire. And it has continued to play a role in addressing the issue of "conflict diamonds" through the Kimberley process – which is designed to stamp out the use of illicit diamonds that have stoked conflict – particularly in

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[39] Nomazulu Mda, "South Africa's role in conflict resolution in Southern Africa: prospects for cooperation with the US," *SA Yearbook of International Affairs 2003/04* (Johannesburg: SAIIA, 2004), p.138.

[40] ibid., p.136.

[41] ibid., p.138.

[42] ibid., p.139.

[43] 'Plunging in at the deep end,' *The Economist*, 1st November 2001.

[44] Mda, "South Africa's role in conflict resolution," p.138.

[45] Initially, mediation efforts were led by the former South African president, Nelson Mandela. They were subsequently taken over by Jacob Zuma, the former deputy president who was axed by President Thabo Mbeki amidst corruption allegations. The current mediator is Charles Nqakula, the minister of safety and security.

Sierra Leone and Liberia. At the heart of these activities has been a determination to foster political stability, good governance and sustainable development across the African region as a prerequisite for general prosperity. To this end, Pretoria has, among other things, invested heavily in building the AU and its constituent structures, including the Pan African Parliament. This is in recognition of the reality that South Africa, which accounts for 40% of Africa's gross domestic product, cannot achieve economic success in isolation from the wider African continent: its destiny is inextricably tied to that of Africa. Leading the continent into an era of stability and prosperity – encapsulated in Mbeki's "African renaissance" doctrine – has thus become the leitmotif of South Africa's external policy. [46]

4.1. South Africa as Regional Actor: Challenges and Constraints

Notwithstanding some positive advances, South Africa's leadership role in Southern Africa, especially in conflict resolution, has not yielded unqualified success. In part, this has to do with the fact the new security paradigm propounded by South Africa has been challenged by some states within the region, who have refused to accept South Africa as the guardian of their interests.[47] Fundamentally, this goes to the heart of power politics and relations between the regional states. As Mda observed:

> *Naturally, a group of nation states will resent a counterpart that dominates, whether by default or design.   Perceptions of an overwhelmingly powerful South Africa could cause feelings of unease amongst its peers, in a region that still emphasises the importance of military prowess as the ultimate means of enforcing authority.[48]*

Considering its historical role in the political and economic destabilisation of the region, South Africa has been anxious to prove that it is a good regional citizen and has striven to ensure that it acts in a manner that does not undermine the cohesion of SADC. Over the past few years, South African regional diplomacy has focused on building regional unity and consensus-building, tackling SADC's institutional problems, and pursuing multilateral solutions to regional conflicts.[49] This explains why SADC has not intervened (bar the ill-fated invasion of Lesotho in 1998) in an intrusive fashion in the internal affairs of its member states, in the same way as, for example, the Economic Community of West African States has done in West Africa.[50]

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[46] 'South Africa's role in the world,' *The Economist*, 31st August 2000.

[47] Mda, "South Africa's role in conflict resolution," p.136.

[48] ibid., p.140.

[49] Chris Alden and Mills Soko, "South Africa's economic relations with Africa: hegemony ands its discontents," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 43, 3 (2005), pp.367-392.

[50] See Abiodun Aloa, "Managing regional security in times of change: lessons and conclusions from ECOWAS," in Anne Hammerstad (ed.), *People, States and Regions* (Johannesburg: SAIIA, 2005), pp.177-200.

Above all, South Africa's mediation efforts in conflict situations have been rebuffed by the leadership in Angola and the DRC (until Laurent Kabila's death). But it is in Zimbabwe that the limits of the regional hegemon's power have been exposed. Despite numerous attempts at finding solutions to Harare's intractable social and economic problems, Mbeki's 'quiet diplomacy' has had little effect in swaying Robert Mugabe's regime or moderating its conduct. Indeed, the South African government has appeared unable to exert influence over events in that country, nor, for that matter, over the proceedings of the SADC.[51]

South Africa's security role has also been impeded by the SADC's deficiencies, typified by institutional differences over leadership, security and democracy, as well as the problem of poor managerial expertise. This means that the SADC has not been able to perform its security mandate effectively. For example, it has struggled to ensure credible, free and fair elections in the region.[52] Moreover, there is the challenge of buliding a SADC peacekeeping stand-by brigade as part of the AU's goal to establish five regional brigades by 2010, which will jointly constitute the African Stand-By Force. A study conducted by Cedric de Coning concluded that the SADC "is highly unlikely to meet the 2010 deadline, and suggests that the Southern African stand-by force may never reach the stage where it is capable of conducting complex peace missions".[53]

South Africa's ambition to become a regional security guarantor has also been constrained by the downward trend in defence expenditure over the past decade. The growth of South Africa's defence started in the 1960s when the erstwhile National Party government embarked on a concerted mission to strengthen the country's defence capabilities. This occurred in the context of the country's growing international ostracism, as well as domestic and regional resistance induced by the country's apartheid policies.

Defence spending escalated following the imposition of an international arms embargo against South Africa in 1977, inspiring the apartheid regime's determined drive for strategic independence and self-sufficiency in armaments. As such, the 1980s saw defence production become one of the most important economic activities in South Africa, employing around 130 000 people and accounting for 9% of manufacturing jobs.[54] However, this upward trend in defence expenditure was reversed following changes in South Africa's foreign strategic environment ushered by the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s. The defence budget shrank by over 50% in real terms between 1989/90 and 1997/8, with the acquisition budget decreasing by over 80% in real terms during the same period.[55]

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[51] Alden and Soko, "South Africa's economic relations with Africa," p.379.

[52] See Khabele Matlosa, "Managing democracy: a review of the SADC principles and guidelines governing democratic elections," in Anne Hammerstad (ed.), *People, States and Regions* (Johannesburg: SAIIA, 2005), pp.153-176.

[53] See Cedric de Coning, "A peacekeeping stand-by system for SADC: implementing the African stand-by force framework in Southern Africa," in Anne Hammerstad (ed.), *People, States and Regions* (Johannesburg: South African Institute of International Affairs, 2005), pp.83-116.

[54] Aerospace, Maritime and Defence Association, "The SA defence-related industries," (Centurion: AMD, 2005), p 6.

[55] ibid., p.2.

This situation was compounded by the announcement in 2003 by the US that it was suspending annual military assistance to South Africa totalling US$7.5 million because of "South Africa's refusal to exempt US citizens and soldiers from the jurisdiction of the new International Criminal Court."[56] Predominantly, this entailed a reduction of military education and training, pivotal to South Africa's peacekeeping activties. [57]

Even so, there have been attempts to enhance the capabilities of the national defence force and to underline South Africa's leadership status in Africa. This has been manifested in the contentious decision to spend US$5 billion refurbishing the armed forces with new submarines and fighter jets. It has also been highlighted by the South African government's decision to participate in the A400M aircraft programme. The A400M aircraft programme is an international partnership launched in 2003 between South African and seven European partners (France, Spain, Luxembourg, Turkey, Germany, Belgium, and the UK), aimed at designing and building the A400M military transport aircraft.[58]

Participation in the programme has been influenced mainly by industrial considerations. But it has also been driven by foreign and security policy factors, especially the imperative of expanding South Africa's role in conflict prevention, peace-keeping operations, and humanitarian missions across Africa. Given the limitations of the current SA military transport infrastructure, it is expected that the new transport aircraft will go a long way towards meeting national defence needs.[59]

Finally, whether South Africa's hegemonic position can effectively be translated into a leadership role in Southern Africa will depend on the extent to which the political elites are able to balance international and regional obligations with domestic pressures. This means reconciling the concerns of those who favour greater engagement with the outside world as a means of advancing the national interest and those with isolationist impulses, who want the South African government to prioritise domestic socio-economic issues.[60]

5. A SECURITY ROLE FOR IBSA?

The IBSA declaration identified trilateral cooperation as a crucial vehicle for advancing social and economic development and for intensifying political and economic relations among the IBSA nations. It also committed these countries to coordinating their strategies around issues of trade, health, defence and security, technology, multilateral diplomacy and global governance.[61]

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[56] Mda, "South Africa's role in conflict resolution," p.143.
[57] ibid.
[58] Department of Trade and Industry, "Repositioning the SA aerospace industry as a priority sector – the contribution of the Airbus Military A400M programme," (Pretoria: DTI, 2005).
[59] ibid.
[60] Dlamini, "Ten years of foreign policy," pp.1-2.
[61] Ministério das Relações Exterior *Declaração de Brasília*, Brasilia, 6 June 2003

In the domain of security the declaration noted that:

> *New threats to security - such as terrorism, in all its forms and manifestations, drugs and drug-related crimes, transnational organised crime, illegal weapons traffic, threats to public health, in particular HIV/AIDS, natural disasters, and the maritime transit of toxic chemicals and radioactive waste - must be handled with effective, coordinated and solidarity international cooperation, in the concerned organisations based on respect for the sovereignty of States and for International Law.* [62]

A surprising feature of the IBSA process is that, notwithstanding the founding declaration's reference to peace and security issues, there appears to be very little that has been achieved by way of practical steps to deal with contemporary security challenges. To a certain extent, this can be ascribed to the desire on the part of policymakers to prioritise areas where they thought they could produce most progress, namely energy, information and communication technologies, transport, science and technology, and trade and investment.[63]

Yet there is clearly a role, from the South-South cooperation perspective, for IBSA to pay in meeting security challenges in the context of a changing global order. And considering its regional political and security circumstances and global orientation, South Africa can play a vital part in contributing to IBSA's effectiveness and relevance in this regard. As pointed out earlier, post-apartheid South Africa has sought to position itself as regional leader in Southern Africa, in the same way as India and Brazil have advanced their leadership aspirations in South Asia and Latin America respectively.

South Africa's extensive involvement in conflict resolution in its 'near abroad' and across the broader African continent is, thus, a reaffirmation of its African identity and legitimisation of its leadership ambitions. This regional approach has echoed those of India and Brazil. India's 'Look East' policy – based on the strengthening political, economic and defence links with the East Asian region – has been an important tool in the country's efforts to legitimise its regional and global power status.[64] Likewise, Brazil's regional policy has focused on promoting cordial and constructive relations with its South American regional neighbours.[65] This has been exemplified by Brazil's participation in peacekeeping missions (in East Timor and, under president Lula, in Haiti), involvement in settling an intractable border dispute between Peru and Ecuador, intercession to prevent a coup in Paraguay, and involvement in reducing intra-state strife in Venezuela, Bolivia and Colombia.[66]

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[62] ibid.

[63] See Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, "Address given by Dr Nkosazana Zuma-Dlamini, South African Minister of Foreign Affairs, during the opening session of the 3rd IBSA Ministerial Trilateral Commission," Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 30 March 2006.

[64] 'Joining the nuclear family,' *The Economist*, 2nd March 2006.

[65] ibid.

[66] 'Southern crossroads,' *The Economist*, 24th August 2000.

The similarities in regional policy postures among the IBSA countries underscore the need for greater trilateral cooperation in dealing with traditional and non-traditional threats. In respect of traditional threats, a key potential area of collaboration is in combating terrorism. The UN has designated terrorism as a threat to all states. In particular, new facets of the threat – including the growth of a global terrorist network, and the potential use for terrorist use of nuclear, biological or chemical weapons – demand decisive responses.[67] In their founding declaration, the IBSA alluded to this threat and have implemented measures to avert or contain it.

Peacekeeping, which the three countries contribute to appreciably, is another avenue for collaboration, especially in light of the declining global supply of peacekeepers. Tied to this is sharing expertise in post-conflict building, disarmament, rehabilitation and reintegration of combatants, skills development, job creation, and the reconstruction of collapsed government institutions.

Cooperation can also be pursued in supporting each country's strategic defence needs. This can be facilitated by the global trend towards the industrialisation of defence production, which provides clear opportunities for integrating the domestic defence industry with global supply chains. Such collaboration can be accomplished, for example, through international strategic alliances, which are crucial to pursuing high-value manufacturing programmes and mitigating potential risks to individual economies.[68]

Previous experience has shown that such global partnerships can produce important economic gains and spillovers, especially the transfer of skills and technology. It is worth noting in this context that the South African Department of Defence has been engaged in discussions with the Brazilian authorities with a view to either upgrading or replacing some of that country's ageing airforce hardware – mainly fighter jets, but also supporting subsystems. South Africa has also made progress in entering the Indian market. Taking cognisance of India's growing defence spending and robust defence and aeronautical industry, plus its high ambitions, South African aerospace companies, notably Grintek, are seeking to share their technology with India and supply its fighter aircraft with self-protection systems. Furthermore, as part of its partnership with BAE Systems, the state-owned Denel was awarded contracts to supply aircraft tooling for the production of the Indian Air Force's new BAE Systems Hawk advanced jet trainer.[69]

But there are also possibilities for collaboration in regard to unconventional threats. Among these, the HIV/AIDS pandemic (which the UN has identified as a threat to social and economic stability) ranks as one of the most pressing. South Africa has an extremely high incidence of HIV/AIDS infection, with about 5.5 million people estimated to be living with the disease. India's infection rates have been growing rapidly, too. For its part Brazil,

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[67] United Nations, United Nations High-Level Panel, p.3.

[68] Mills Soko, "The aerospace industry: prospects for strategic cooperation among the IBSA countries," SAIIA Trade Report No. 13 (Johannesburg: SAIIA, 2006), p. 19.

[69] ibid.

through various interventions, has succeeded to reduce its rates of infection drastically. Through implementation of bilateral agreements in the health sector, the IBSA countries can play a useful role in tackling infectious diseases, in exchanging medical knowledge and expertise, and in upgrading the health infrastructure in their respective regions.

Linked to HIV/AIDS prevalence is the problem of poverty and inequality. Combating poverty and inequality can go a long way towards addressing the underlying causes of instability and insecurity, including terrorism. The IBSA countries are characterised by high levels of social and economic inequality, which have acted as an impediment to development. A viable and sustainable collective security system can be built without attention being given to development. Not only can development contribute towards fighting poverty and disease, it can also diminish factors that give rise to terrorism.[70]

Transnational organised crime, abetted by corruption, constitutes another threat to security. For example, drug trafficking has become a major source of concern in bilateral relations between South Africa and Brazil.[71] There is a need for greater cooperation between the IBSA countries, at a bilateral level or through Interpol, to tackle organised crime, including drug trafficking, human trafficking and money laundering.

In sum, South Africa can play a vital part in contributing to the effectiveness and relevance of the evolving IBSA security agenda. Yet it bears emphasising that the impact of South Africa's contribution will be constricted by the limitations – which were discussed in the preceding section of this article – imposed on its regional policy by the political and security dynamics of the Southern African region. Addressing these constraints is necessary if South Africa is to fulfil its regional and global policy objectives. Furthermore, South Africa ought to be sensitive to the perception that some African countries have of IBSA, who have accused the IBSA coalition (at least in terms of negotiating positions in the World Trade Organisation) of driving a wedge between South Africa and Africa. This has resulted in these countries questioning South Africa's commitment to Africa. Allaying such perceptions is imperative if Pretoria is to safeguard its African credentials.[72]

6. CONCLUSION

This essay has explored the challenges of international security with reference to the experience of the IBSA coalition. Specifically, it has investigated the role of IBSA in global security through the lens of South Africa. The end of the Cold War brought into focus the deficiencies of the narrow paradigm that understood security only in terms of inter-state violence. It is now generally accepted, in the context of the evolving global order, that

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[70] United Nations, *United Nations High-Level Panel*, p.2.
[71] Personal chat with a South African diplomat based in Brazil.
[72] 'The region's blundering elephant,' *The Economist*, 12th November 1998.

security transcends narrow military considerations; it also encompasses political, economic, societal and environmental aspects.

Not only has the changed character of security blurred the difference between 'soft' and 'hard' security, it has also eroded people's trust in the ability of the nation-state to protect them. This is due to the transformed language of security – threats have been supplanted by risks. And, in turn, the idea of risk has altered the way people understand security. The global threats that face the international community are interdependent: a threat to one is a threat to all.

In recent years, African countries have actively sought to broaden the discourse on security on the continent, both within the framework of the AU and Nepad. Despite previous differences over the interpretation of the security concept within the regional context, African leaders agree the non-military aspects of security are as important as the military ones. A key challenge facing African countries is to reconcile the principle of national sovereignty and non-interference with the emerging comprehensive security agenda.

South Africa has played a pivotal role in recasting the security discourse on the continent. This has been a key pillar of South Africa's foreign policy, which has sought to achieve pursuit of peace and security in Africa, especially in the Southern African region. In this context, the apartheid-era policy of regional destabilisation made way for a policy that emphasised dialogue and mediation as the key means of conflict resolution in the region.

In spite of some successes, South Africa's leadership role in Southern Africa, especially in conflict resolution, has not produced absolute success. The new security paradigm advocated by South Africa has been challenged by some regional states, which have baulked at South Africa's leadership designs. South Africa's security role has also been hobbled by the SADC's ideological and institutional problems, coupled with the downward trend in defence expenditure over the past decade. The extent to which South Africa's hegemonic position can be translated into a regional leadership role will depend on the ability of the political elites to balance international and regional obligations with domestic pressures.

The IBSA alliance can play a significant role, against the backdrop of South-South cooperation, in dealing with conventional non-traditional security threats in the evolving international order. Considering its regional political and security conditions and global positioning, South Africa can contribute usefully to IBSA's effectiveness and relevance in this regard. Even so, the efficacy of South Africa will be circumscribed by the constraints imposed on its regional policy by the political and security dynamics of the SADC region. Dealing with these limitations is crucial if South Africa is to meet its regional and global policy objectives.

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