

Trends and developments in South African foreign policy: 2009

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Introduction

Broadly speaking, foreign policy analysts consider two contexts when studying a given state's policy *vis-à-vis* the international environment: the systemic, which pertains to the structural determinants of the external domain, and the domestic. Predominant attention to the former is associated with realist schools of thought, which start from the assumption that states, as unitary, rational actors, make and implement foreign policy that is driven by national interests. On the other hand, emphasis on the domestic environment is the proclivity of liberal-pluralist foreign policy analysts (and, it should be noted, theorists within the fast evolving new paradigm of constructivism, who also contend that 'foreign policy behaviour is often determined primarily by domestic politics'¹). Liberal-pluralist theorists do not see foreign policy as exclusive to the inter-state domain, but rather as bridging the divide between the domestic and international spheres of policy.² An important analytical tool in this regard is the *government-bureaucratic politics* model, widely used because in a state-centric international legal system, official foreign policy is formulated and implemented largely by the organs of state. In analysing its foreign policy, therefore, the structure and functioning of a particular government is considered as important as any systemic variable.

Apart from the domestic versus international contexts, analysts can also engage a psycho-analytical level of analysis that involves the study of individual policy makers, particularly in states where an individual leader dominates foreign policy.³ Whatever the chosen approach, foreign policy analysis (FPA) has to contend with

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¹Wendt *Social theory of international politics* (1999) at 2.

²Du Plessis 'Foreign policy and diplomacy' in McGowan, Cornelissen and Nel (eds) *Power, wealth and global equity: An international relations textbook for Africa* (2009) at 119-135.

³As was the case with South Africa's foreign policy under Mbeki, as Merle Lipton notes. See Lipton 'Understanding South Africa's foreign policy: The perplexing case of Zimbabwe' (2009) 16/3 (December) *South African Journal of International Affairs* 331 at 342.

a complex interplay of contexts in which a multitude of issues, actors, structures, and interests are at stake.⁴ Not surprisingly, Walter Carlsnaes refers to it as ‘an uncommonly complicated field of study’.⁵

A thorough analysis of South Africa’s (SA’s) foreign policy, regardless of the limited period under review, is simply not possible in the restricted space of an article such as this. This article will therefore of necessity be selective in its focus, and for the period under review – the year 2009 – will concentrate mainly on internal political developments and the personae of key political executives in explaining developments and trends in the country’s foreign policy.

Without disregarding the impact of the external context, it will be argued that change and/or continuity in the form and substance of SA’s foreign policy during 2009 owed much to developments in the country’s domestic affairs. In the course of the year a number of events related to SA’s international image triggered introspection by the foreign policy community: inter alia, the British government’s decision to introduce visa-duty for SA passport holders; the highly publicised (and initially successful, during August 2009) application by a white South African man for refugee status in Canada on the grounds of alleged racially-motivated victimisation in SA; the resurgence of xenophobic violence; and yet another slide on the United Nations (UN) annual Human Development Index.⁶

Particularly irksome was the United States (US) President Obama’s choice, of Ghana as the first (and thus far the only) sub-Saharan African country for a state visit. Obama’s election as President had electrified South Africans, who like the rest of the continent, revelled in his African roots and expected a special diplomatic relationship to follow. South African leaders could have rationalised a state visit to Kenya by virtue of Obama’s family ties, but the choice of Ghana sent a disconcerting political message: the US considered Ghana, rather than South Africa, a model of good governance in sub-Saharan Africa.⁷ The domestic determinants of SA foreign policy were clearly of pressing concern.

The dawn of a new era in domestic politics

Politically-aware South Africans of all persuasions entered the year 2009 with

⁴See, eg, FPA theorising by Webber and Smith (eds) *Foreign policy in a transformed world* (2002) specifically at 29-46. See too Smith, Hadfield and Dunne *Foreign policy: Theories, actors, cases* (2008).

⁵Carlsnaes ‘Actors, structures, and foreign policy analysis’ in Smith, Hadfield and Dunne n 4 above at 86.

⁶See Perry ‘Could Jacob Zuma be the President South Africa needs?’ (2009) 7 December *Time* 26-29 at 29.

⁷This was never stated explicitly by the President or any other US representative, but inferred by the tone of Barack Obama’s speech to Ghana’s parliament in Accra on 11 July 2009.

a measure of apprehension: feuding within the ruling African National Congress (ANC), the party which has dominated SA politics since the democratic transition in 1994, had reached unprecedented levels, paralysing government and casting a pall over the general election scheduled for April.

The party's internal tensions had erupted publicly a year earlier, during December 2007, at its 52nd National Conference in Polokwane. The conference confirmed the fault lines that had developed in the ANC under the presidency of Thabo Mbeki, a leader with international clout but domestically perceived as aloof and increasingly out of touch with the sentiments of ordinary South Africans. He also appeared Machiavellian in his efforts to maintain his grip on power: having earlier fired the country's Deputy President, his arch rival Jacob Zuma, and being prevented by the Constitution from assuming a third term as SA President, he was seeking re-election at Polokwane to a third term as ANC president. In a single dominant party-political system such as South Africa's, and in a party where internal discipline and hierarchy are sacrosanct, this position is arguably where the real power is vested. However, in a humiliating turn of events, Mbeki was ousted⁸ as party president and replaced by Zuma, while key allies were voted off the ANC National Executive Committee (NEC) and replaced by Zuma supporters. Mbeki's marginalisation within the party reduced him to a 'paper' president of the country, and nine months later, during September 2008, he resigned, heeding a (constitutionally controversial) 'recall' issued by the ANC NEC. This was just six months before the 2009 general election and the expiry of his term. A caretaker president, Kgalema Motlanthe, was left in charge. This 'palace coup' prompted several of Mbeki's close allies to resign from the party, some of whom then founded a break-away party, the Congress of the People (COPE).

COPE contested the April 2009 general election but the results yielded the predictable landslide win for the ANC, even if the victory was tempered by the fact that the ruling party lost some support and obtained less than the outright two-thirds majority it had sought. As expected, the ANC-dominated National Assembly elected Jacob Zuma as president, and the stage was set for a new era in SA's domestic politics.

This condensed historical *domestic* context may seem far removed from SA's foreign policy and international interests, yet it is essential for an analysis of

⁸The Dinokeng Scenarios Team, a group of distinguished individuals from all walks of life, who issued a report reflecting on the failures and achievements of South Africa's fifteen post-apartheid years, refers to the Polokwane events as a 'popular revolt' within the ANC. See their 2009 report 'Three futures for South Africa' at 11 available at www.dinokengscenarios.co.za accessed 28 December 2009.

the country's *foreign* policy during 2009. As Christopher Hill⁹ cautions, analysts should not abstract foreign policy from 'the realm of political and normative debate', precisely because foreign policy exists 'at the hinge of domestic politics and international relations'. It was indeed the normative dimensions of SA's domestic politics that determined its pariah status within the international community before 1994, despite the apartheid regime's energetic attempts to 'separate domestic and foreign policies'.¹⁰ It was also domestic variables that accorded the country its moral high ground, when, in a 180 degree turn, the nature of its democratic transition ushered in its new role in global affairs post-1994. Would the dawn of a 'post post-apartheid period',¹¹ as Elizabeth Sidiropoulos calls it, change South Africa's role on the global stage?

Secondly, even though the domestic changes were not partisan, the very nature of the ruling political party is germane to an analysis of SA foreign policy. The ANC, with its distinct Marxist roots, has an ideological approach to governance and policy. As the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation observed in a speech to students and academics at Rhodes University¹²

[i]t will be hard to have a full grasp of our foreign policy approach and behaviour without an understanding of the ANC's ideological perspective ... this ideological perspective is not something of the past – it is still with us to this day.

Moreover, the proportional representation electoral system means that neither members of parliament nor the president are elected directly, but that their positions are dependent on their hierarchical standing within the party. Party allegiance is compounded by the fact that the ruling party has been in power since South Africa's transition to democracy, without any viable threat to its dominance emerging. The lines between the interests of the party and those of the state, therefore, tend to become blurred and inevitably, the party's policies become synonymous with those of the state,¹³ hence the habit among SA cabinet ministers, and even civil servants, to refer to their own 'deployment' in government service.¹⁴ It is also important to take into account the fact that the ANC operates as a

⁹Hill *The changing politics of foreign policy* (2003) at 249, 23.

¹⁰*Id* at 227.

¹¹Sidiropoulos 'South African foreign policy in the post-Mbeki period' (2008) 15/2 (December) *South African Journal of International Affairs* at 107-120.

¹²Nkoana-Mashabane 'Lecture by the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation at Rhodes University Grahamstown' 22 October 2009.

¹³In describing South Africa's party system, the Dinokeng Scenarios Team n 8 above at 16, stated 'The conflation between leader, party, government and state creates a sense of hierarchy and arrogance that is disconcerting'.

¹⁴See, eg, the public lecture by Minister Nkoana-Mashabane at the University of Limpopo 16 October 2009.

tripartite alliance. Its partners, the SA Communist Party (SACP) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), had always expressed dissatisfaction with Mbeki's business-friendly economic policies and had supported Zuma throughout his stand-off with Mbeki. Would the breakaway by COPE, and muscle flexing by the two left-wing components of the alliance, force a review of neo-liberal aspects in existing foreign policy?¹⁵

Thirdly, the overwhelming impact of Thabo Mbeki on SA foreign policy since the country's democratic transition, has to be contended with. For all intents and purposes Mbeki had been at the helm of the SA government since 1994 – at first, acting as *de facto* prime minister to Nelson Mandela, and thereafter serving two consecutive terms as SA President. Throughout this 15-year period, he personally dominated and micro-managed government's foreign policy portfolio. Mbeki's grand vision of an African Renaissance, his visibility on the world stage, and his relentless, almost obsessive, efforts to transform the architecture of global governance,¹⁶ had secured South Africa a reputation within the international community as 'punching above its weight'.¹⁷ Would the demise of Mbeki also mean the demise of his carefully articulated foreign policy ideas?¹⁸

Fourthly, Mbeki's successor was not only likely to have different foreign policy ideas, he also ascended to the Presidency with a chequered moral reputation: Jacob Zuma assumed his position in the aftermath of a rape trial (during which he was acquitted but with serious questions expressed over his judgment), a pending court case on issues of corruption (with charges dropped just two weeks before he assumed his position, in an apparently political move), and an image as populist politician, polygamist and semi-literate warlord. He was unashamedly traditional to the point of being politically incorrect, and the contrast with the urbane Mbeki could hardly have been more glaring.¹⁹ The obvious question was what, if any, impact Zuma's persona would have on policy issues, both domestic and foreign.

¹⁵As the minister stated, '[t]he global financial crisis is also an opportunity for us to advocate for and promote an alternative to the neo-liberal model of development which believes in the mystery of the market and gives no significant role to the state in the economy. We now know that the market cannot work to the benefit of all of us when the state is not there to play its active, developmental role. In fact, the market, left on its own, can bring all of us down' – n 12 above.

¹⁶Fabricius 'Good Move on Human Rights Policy' *Pretoria News* 18 December 2009 at 9 refers to these efforts as an 'ideological endeavour to redress imbalances in global power'.

¹⁷Disproportionate prestige for the foreign policy of a small country such as SA and its image as a global 'model' state, also noted by Hill n 9 above at 309, n 10 and Lipton n 3 above at 331.

¹⁸Lipton n 3 above at 340 points out that COSATU, eg, opposed Mbeki's 'quiet' diplomatic approach to Zimbabwe.

¹⁹See the biographical sketch by Perry n 6 above..

With all these uncertainties as variables, and in the midst of a global economic recession, debate on possible changes in SA's international relations policy was ubiquitous.²⁰ The foreign policy community, both inside South Africa and beyond its borders, expected a new direction – the question was what would this be?

A new face for foreign affairs²¹

The radical change of guard within the ruling party guaranteed adjustment in the management of SA foreign policy after the April 2009 election. Of note in this regard, is the profile of the coterie of foreign policy advisors that Zuma selected to assist him in his new role as 'primary custodian of State-to-State international relations and cooperation'.²² The announcement of his (enlarged) cabinet indicated significant changes in the executive branch of government, *inter alia*, the introduction of additional economic ministries and a potentially powerful new ministry in the presidency charged with national planning. The designated minister would chair the new National Planning Commission (NPC), which would henceforth be responsible for the coordination of all government policy – including foreign policy. Venerated former Minister of Finance, Trevor Manuel, was appointed to this position, signalling to nervous local and international observers a measure of continuity and stability in post-election government policy.²³

The appointment of a new foreign minister was another key change: Maite Nkoana-Mashabane replaced the incumbent, Zuma's ex-wife Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma. Her appointment was one of the biggest surprises of Zuma's cabinet, given her relatively junior status in the party and lack of prominence in the foreign policy community. However, in contrast to her predecessor, she brought formal diplomatic experience to the position in that she had previously served in two ambassadorial postings, as High Commissioner to Malaysia and India respectively. Her affable approach to the civil servants she now headed and the foreign diplomatic corps in Pretoria, immediately set her apart from the notoriously abrasive Dlamini-Zuma. Mbeki's trusted friend and foreign policy confidant, Aziz Pahad, who had served three consecutive terms as Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs until he resigned in solidarity with Mbeki, was replaced by Ebrahim Ebrahim, an ANC stalwart and former chair of the

²⁰Note, eg, the title of the Institute for Global Dialogue's symposium 'The Future South African Foreign Policy: Continuity and Change?' Pretoria 26-27 August 2009.

²¹The new 'face' of DIRCO has been aptly symbolised – even if coincidentally – by its Pretoria headquarters' move to a high-tech new building in mid-2009. The building was subsequently named after Oliver Tambo.

²²As described by Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Ebrahim Ebrahim, in his keynote address at the DIRCO 2009 Annual Conference on the Theme: 'Closing the gap between Domestic and Foreign Policies' Pretoria 5 November 2009.

²³Perry n 6 above at 28.

Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Foreign Affairs. The Second Deputy Minister, Sue van der Merwe, was retained in her position. With the Director-General of the department's contract having been renewed a few months after the election, the profile of the new team at the helm of foreign policy heralded modest²⁴ change rather than a radical overhaul. It also indicated a greater willingness by Zuma to be advised in this domain, rather than just obeyed: whereas Mbeki had no foreign policy advisors in his office, Zuma appointed two former SA Ambassadors, Lindiwe Zulu and Welile Nhlapo, as his advisors²⁵ on international relations and national security respectively. He also drew into his inner circle as political advisor, former Minister of Safety and Security, Charles Nqakula – a man who had gained extensive experience as special envoy during the Mbeki administration.

Most of the other structural changes introduced in the foreign policy arena were expected, and reflected the ruling party's decisions taken at its Polokwane Conference. One of these decisions was that the Department of Foreign Affairs' (DFA's) name would be changed to that of Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO).²⁶ Minister Nkoana-Mashabane explained that the change in name was based on 'international trends which require states to put emphasis on cooperation over competition, and collaboration over confrontation', and added that the renaming indicated government's desire 'to give more clarity and focus on the role of the Department in meeting domestic priorities through international partnerships and cooperation'.²⁷

The Polokwane Conference in fact mooted the idea of transforming the African Renaissance and International Cooperation Fund (ARF), established during 2000, into a fully-fledged development agency, the South African Developmental Partnership Agency (SADPA). This would formalise the country's status as a donor state in Africa, a *de facto* role that had become evident during Mbeki's presidency. Following this directive, during 2008 cabinet commissioned a policy framework for SA development assistance. In her first budget speech to parliament on 18 June 2009, Nkoana-Mashabane

²⁴Lipton n 3 above at 342.

²⁵The new appointments will fall under the Policy Coordination and Advisory Services arm of the Presidency. See www.thepresidency.gov.za or the official South African government information at www.search.gov.za. Both sites accessed on 30 December 2009.

²⁶African National Congress '52nd National Conference University of Limpopo Polokwane 16-20 December 2007, Resolutions: Section 8 (International Relations) item 48. There was initial confusion about the acronym, with the Polokwane resolution having specifically indicated that it would be abbreviated as DICO, and for the first few months of the new Zuma Administration used as such (see, eg, the 2009 Budget Speech of the minister, referred to hereunder). However, the more logical acronym DIRCO subsequently came into use.

²⁷Nkoana-Mashabane 'Speech by the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation on the occasion of the Heads of Mission Conference' Sandton 13 August 2009.

highlighted the priority accorded to the new agency's role as a 'key vehicle for the delivery of development cooperation'.²⁸ Two months later, addressing her assembled Heads of Mission and senior officials, she confirmed that work towards the establishment of SADPA was underway.²⁹

Commentators for the most part reacted positively to the idea of SADPA and emphasised the potential of the new agency to provide strategic focus and coherence in policy formulation and implementation, as well as coordination of SA's international development cooperation. As Van Nieuwkerk³⁰ pointed out,

[t]here is much to be said for developing a strategy for coordinating the planning, implementation, and monitoring of the various ongoing development cooperation activities across government departments and agencies. This includes the management of funding thereof, whether from government as a provider of development assistance or via trilateral cooperation agreements involving International Cooperation Partners (ICPs) and/or other international agencies.

He agreed with the view expressed in the Polokwane resolutions that SADPA, in conjunction with other development initiatives, could potentially contribute to sub-Saharan Africa's achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

By end of 2009, however, no movement on the operationalisation of DIRCO's new developmental focus had been communicated, and it remains to be seen whether the department's new name heralds any substantive change in foreign policy output.

Foreign policy priorities revisited

The ANC's 2007 Polokwane Conference outcomes provided the conceptual framework for the party's 2009 Election Manifesto and thus, *inter alia*, also the foreign policy programme of action of the incoming government. This 'umbilical cord' is clear from Nkoana-Mashabane's statement that '[t]he strategic vision and the resolutions of the National Conference constitute a mandate that will guide the actions of all cadres of the ANC, wherever they may be deployed, and which will form the centre piece of our policy agenda over the next five years'.³¹ The foreign policy priorities of the new Zuma administration can therefore be considered 'new' only in as much as the Polokwane directives had filtered through to formal government policy by the time Zuma took office.

²⁸Nkoana-Mashabane 'Address by the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation to the National Assembly on the occasion of the DICO (*sic*) Budget Vote' 18 June 2009.

²⁹Nkoana-Mashabane n 27 above..

³⁰Van Nieuwkerk 'Impact of power on the developmental and stabilisation agenda of South Africa' paper delivered at the DIRCO's Annual Conference 'Closing the gap between Domestic and Foreign Policy' Pretoria 5-6 November 2009.

³¹Nkoana-Mashabane n 14 above.

The new emphasis in foreign policy, and a theme that has been a *leitmotiv* in policy documents and speeches since April 2009, is the notion that ‘South Africa’s foreign policy imperatives ... are informed by domestic priorities’.³² As announced by Zuma shortly after his election as president,³³ and reiterated in his eagerly awaited first State of the Nation address on 3 June 2009, his administration would prioritise the following five issues: health care, employment creation, education, eradication of crime, and land reform with its associated rural development. Growing dissatisfaction with service delivery related to these issues, and anger over government’s failure ‘to follow up ambitious schemes with effective policies and implementation’,³⁴ had dogged the preceding election campaign. It was henceforth incumbent upon all spheres of government to link any and all policy explicitly to these ‘big 5’ priorities.

The DIRCO duly set about reformulating strategic objectives in terms of the five main domestic priorities.³⁵ Apart from its internal processes, during November 2009 it also hosted a consultative conference on the theme ‘Closing the gap between Domestic and Foreign Policies’. As Deputy Minister Ebrahim³⁶ explained to the assembled group of civil society representatives and senior civil servants, ‘[t]here is, thus, a need to recalibrate South Africa’s foreign policy in the light of domestic policy changes ... we are all responsible for the domestication of South Africa’s foreign policy’. On a rather realist note – very different from the altruistic foreign policy statements during the preceding fifteen years of ANC rule – he emphasised that ‘South Africa’s national interests must be about what will benefit our people and country; and what will advance our domestic agenda in line with the goals we have set for ourselves. ... [w]e must always have in mind the pursuit of our national interests in our foreign policy’.³⁷ His minister was equally forthcoming in noting the reining in of foreign policy. She called the new Planning Commission in the presidency a ‘corrective measure’ to ‘align various streams of the work of Government’ and added that ‘now, what we do in our foreign policy as a Department has to be clearly aligned with the overall work of Government’.³⁸ With the president himself having acknowledged his country’s ‘serious and growing capacity constraints in managing its large state and parastatal infrastructure, including in areas related to its regional role’,³⁹ it was clear that SA’s ambitious post-apartheid foreign policy would have to be cut down to size.

³²Ebrahim n 22 above.

³³Address by Jacob Zuma following his election as President of the Republic of South Africa, National Assembly 6 May 2009.

³⁴Lipton n 3 above at 340-341.

³⁵Nkoana-Mashabane n 12 above.

³⁶Ebrahim n 22 above.

³⁷*Ibid.*

³⁸Nkoana-Mashabane n 12 above.

³⁹Lipton n 3 above at 340.

As coordinator of government policy, the new Minister for Planning in the presidency, Trevor Manuel, published the presidency's 'Medium Term Strategic Framework' (MTSF) during July 2009, as 'a framework to guide government's programme in the electoral mandate period 2009-2014'.⁴⁰

The five-year plan of the MTSF outlined ten strategic priorities, of which (only) the eighth, 'Pursuing African Advancement and enhanced International Cooperation', addressed foreign policy specifically. It included six sub-objectives:

- continued prioritisation of the African continent, *inter alia* with reference to the establishment of SADPA;
- improvement of political and economic integration of the Southern African Development Community (SADC);
- strengthening of South-South relations;
- formation of strategic relations with the global North;
- strengthening of political and economic relations, with specific reference to the need for enhanced economic diplomacy; and
- participation in the global system of governance to ensure that the developmental objectives of the developing world are addressed.

These six priorities have since been cited⁴¹ repeatedly as the pillars that will support SA foreign policy for the next five years – and in essence are reminiscent of much of the rhetoric of post-1994 foreign policy. Indeed, when Zuma delivered his maiden speech⁴² as SA President to the UN General Assembly on 23 September 2009, there were no surprises. His speech could indeed have been a less poetic, less ambitious, and shorter version of what the erudite Mbeki would have presented. There was the perfunctory reference to the struggle against apartheid; the historical refrain expressing solidarity⁴³ with Palestine, Cuba and Western Sahara; the usual rebuke of the rich global North for not delivering on its commitments and responsibilities to the developing world; and the assurance of SA's normative commitment to multilateralism, including the appeal for a nuclear weapon free world and Security Council reform.

The hierarchy of post-1994 foreign priorities had also not changed: Africa first, followed by the global South, and finally the complex, uneasy

⁴⁰Presidency, Republic of South Africa, 'Together, doing more and better: A framework to guide Government's programme in the electoral mandate period 2009-2014' Medium Term Strategic Framework July 2009.

⁴¹See Nkoana-Mashabane n 12 above, n 14 above, and n 27 above.

⁴²Zuma 'Address by the President of the Republic of South Africa to the 64th United Nations General Assembly Debate' 23 September 2009, available at <http://www.iol.co.za/index.php> accessed 27 December 2009.

⁴³See also Nkoana-Mashabane n 12 above reiterating sympathy with these three states as perceived victims of international neglect or ostracism.

relationship with the developed world. Throughout 2009, the country's preference for multilateralism as a diplomatic approach continued to be emphasised. Van Nieuwkerk points out that 'neoliberal critics have argued that the ANC's multilateral diplomacy reached its limits – and ultimate failure – under the grandiose designs of Mbeki, [but] there is still much to be said for the idea of making strategic partnerships work in the national and African interest'.⁴⁴ As a diplomatic method, multilateralism has not only normative but also functional and procedural implications for diplomatic endeavours. It remains to be seen whether the hierarchical order of SA's multilateral loyalties has been retained in theory only, or whether it will indeed manifest in the country's international relations over the next few years – specifically in choices of diplomatic strategies and partners.

Hegemony and hierarchy of loyalties

Post-apartheid South Africa's disproportionate influence in multilateral institutions has largely been a function of its soft (or 'co-optive') power, which can be described as 'the ability to set the political agenda in a way that shapes the preferences of others [and which] flows from the attractiveness of a country's values, ideology or culture'.⁴⁵ This has been a function not only of the country's lauded democratic transition and post-transition political and economic stability, but also of its track-record as a peace-broker and bridge-builder beyond its own borders. Commentators have labelled SA variously as a middle power, a pivotal state, a regional hegemon, an emerging power, and a sub-imperial power, as Van Nieuwkerk⁴⁶ observes. It is clear from his explanation of these concepts, and South Africa's foreign policy track-record since 1994, that the country can be situated in each of these categories:

A middle power occupies a particular position in the global hierarchical order of states, as well as rank and size in the international division of labour, which confers the opportunity to exert moral influence. It has an interest in a stable international order, and operates via multilateral avenues. Emerging powers are found in the global south and their job is to shoulder responsibility and order in their regional environment ... the idea of pivotal states implies partnership, multilateralism and non-assertive behaviour.

South Africa's performance in these leadership roles has earned it the respect of the international community, but ironically, much less praise has been forthcoming from the rest of the African continent.⁴⁷ In fact, its African identity has been fraught with ambiguity and has led to friction in its relations with states

⁴⁴Van Nieuwkerk n 30 above.

⁴⁵Van Nieuwkerk *id* paraphrasing Joseph Nye.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*

⁴⁷Lipton n 3 above at 335-336.

that see themselves as continental leaders,⁴⁸ notably Nigeria, Egypt, Libya, and in Southern Africa, Angola and Zimbabwe. SA foreign policy makers have gradually accepted the ‘ambivalence with which it is regarded by many African states’, as Lipton observes, and this has fuelled ‘post-apartheid South Africa’s desire to differentiate itself from the West’.⁴⁹ Thus, during the first decade-and-a-half of SA democracy, its politicians and diplomats have rejected any intimation of hegemony and pledged submission to the collective will of the sub-region or continent,⁵⁰ as though fearing ‘that assertive leadership would negate continental comradeship ... [because] hegemony is equated with imperialism, or at least considered politically incorrect foreign policy behavior’.⁵¹ In practice this has manifested in the country failing to articulate an independent principled foreign policy position when dealing with errant African states, and a vexing lack of moral leadership *vis-à-vis* the continent. However, the reality of SA’s relative political and economic weight within Africa has sporadically exposed the sub-text of SA pre-eminence. In this regard it is the only African member state of the G20 that, during September 2009, formally became the successor to the G8 as engine of global economic and financial governance.⁵²

Since the Zuma administration took power, genuflection to the collective African will has been markedly less pronounced. Deputy Minister Ebrahim referred to the continent as ‘*one of our foreign policy priorities*’⁵³ just a month after Minister Nkoana-Mashabane, during October 2009, reiterated⁵⁴ South Africa’s desire to take up a permanent seat on the UN Security Council, without as much as passing reference to the 2005 Ezulwini Consensus which articulates Africa’s ‘common position’ on the issue. A diplomatic stand-off at the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in Copenhagen during December 2009 is testimony to this change in multilateral strategy: after protracted and seemingly deadlocked negotiations at the summit, a last-minute deal was spearheaded by the US, with the support of China, India, South Africa and Brazil. The deal provoked an acrimonious exchange, with the

⁴⁸See, eg, Kotzé ‘Identity and international dynamics: South Africa’s state identity’ paper delivered at the AISA/SAAPS research symposium ‘Defining the contours of knowledge production in the 21st century’ 15 October 2009 Pretoria.

⁴⁹Lipton n 3 above at 333.

⁵⁰For incisive and nuanced analysis of South Africa’s hegemonic identity, see Alden and Le Pere ‘South Africa in Africa: Bound to lead?’ (2009) 36/1 (April) *Politikon* 145-169. See too Habib ‘South Africa’s foreign policy: Hegemonic aspirations, neoliberal orientations and global transformation’ (2009) 16/2 (August) *South African Journal of International Affairs* 143-159.

⁵¹See Spies ‘Leadership versus comradeship in the AU’s quest for Security Council transformation’ (2008) 5/1 *African Renaissance* [page refs??](#).

⁵²G-20 ‘Leaders’ Statement’ Pittsburgh Summit 24-25 September 2009 available at http://www.g20.org/Documents/pittsburgh_summit_leaders_statement_250909.pdf accessed 31 December 2009.

⁵³Ebrahim n 22 above (my italics).

⁵⁴This intention most recently reiterated by Nkoana-Mashabane during her Rhodes lecture n 12 above.

Sudanese representative, Lumumba Stanislaus Di-Aping, accusing South Africa in no uncertain terms of betraying Africa's interests. What made this diplomatic altercation more poignant is the fact that he also spoke in his capacity as leader of the G-77 group.⁵⁵ SA foreign policy thus, at the rhetorical level, appears to prioritise multilateralism and the pursuit of the African Agenda, yet at a functional level reveals a more detached attitude to the historical imperative of seeking African consensus.

Also beginning to emerge is a more pragmatic approach to the perennial goal of continental unity. Nkoana-Mashabane stated rather soberly during October 2009 that '[t]he decision on the African Union Authority will have to be implemented within the context of our understanding of the AU as an intergovernmental organisation of independent, sovereign Member States. It is not our understanding that the African Union Authority will be a supranational entity operating over our heads'.⁵⁶

The ideal of African integration, especially in the context of the sub-region, has been a *sine qua non* in SA foreign policy ever since the country joined SADC in September 1994. During 1996, SADC adopted the Maseru Protocol on the Establishment of a Free Trade Area (FTA), envisaged for 2000 but eventually launched in August 2008. This is just one example of the region's poor track-record in meeting its own deadlines as a Regional Economic Community (REC), and 'preliminary indications from the 2009 FTA Audit Report are that the pace of growth of intra-SADC trade is lower than that of SADC with the rest of the world, despite general increases in trade'.⁵⁷ The reality-theory discrepancy in the integration agenda was acknowledged by the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation when she told her Heads of Mission that the regional organisation needed to 'revisit the 2006 SADC Extraordinary Summit agreed time-frames for the launch of the Customs Union in 2010, the Common Market in 2015 and the Monetary Union in 2016 as it has become clear that the region is unlikely to achieve the set goals of this time-frame'.

The massive asymmetry in SA's relations with its neighbours and the overlapping membership of so many member states' involvement in RECs, only add to the complex web of historical and evolving relations, both bilateral and multilateral, that bedevils the region's integration agenda. This is acutely evident in the SADC-SACU relations, where varying positions on negotiations around the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) with the EU have caused friction. Tense relations

⁵⁵BBC News 'Copenhagen deal reaction in quotes' 19 December 2009 available at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/8421910.stm> accessed 2 January 2010. Note that Di-Aping later apologised for his tone.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*

⁵⁷*Ibid.*

between the EU and South Africa did not thaw during 2009 – despite a special summit held in Cape Town during September – and both parties publicly accused each other of negotiating in bad faith.⁵⁸ Ivano Casello, the EU's trade negotiator for SADC, not only accused South Africa of being a regional bully, but also of using the EPAs as a 'pretext for disbanding SACU'.⁵⁹ South Africa does indeed seem to be losing interest in maintaining the SACU: the MTSF rather vaguely merely mentions '[r]enegotiating the SACU revenue sharing arrangement to strengthen its sustainability, fairness and contribution to achieving economic development'. It seems as though the Zuma administration is keeping its options open.

The gradual de-emphasis of South Africa's regional responsibilities, left space during 2009 for increased attention to broader South-South relations, with the idea of functional, or strategic, partnerships being promoted. During the Mandela/Mbeki years, South Africa's hemispheric allegiance appeared to be ideologically driven⁶⁰ – an attempt to transform the global governance system. The foreign policy statements of the Zuma administration continue to extol the virtue of the 'have-nots' standing up to the 'haves', rejecting unilateralism, unbridled capitalism and neo-imperialism, and echoing the progressive internationalist thinking that has historically infused ANC foreign policy. However, the tone is increasingly pragmatic. As Ebrahim⁶¹ observes, 'the size and complex nature of countries of the South, as well as their own serious socio-economic challenges, render the majority of countries in that part of the world as ideal partners for enhanced interaction given that South Africa shares many similar political and socio-economic challenges'.

The changing nature of 21st century global South alliances may have forced this pragmatism. The India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) forum, which was founded in 2003, had created expectations, not least among South African foreign policy leaders, of a new global-South power-bloc in international affairs. During June 2009, however, an overlapping quartet of emerging economies, comprising Brazil, Russia, India and China (BRIC) held their first summit and it became clear that they were positioning themselves as a new multilateral bloc – and that South Africa had not been invited to the table, despite the fact that its own declared foreign policy had singled out Brazil, India and China for strategic partnerships. This has driven home the reality

⁵⁸Ebrahim 'What do the geopolitical and "global commons" challenges mean for Africa?' address by the Deputy Minister of International Relations and Cooperation at the South African Institute of International Affairs' 75th Anniversary Conference Johannesburg, 17 September 2009. See too Nkoana-Mashabane n 12 above.

⁵⁹Hazelhurst 'Europe resorts to name-calling' *Business Report* 8 July 2009 at 19.

⁶⁰Nkoana-Mashabane n 12 above.

⁶¹Ebrahim n 22 above.

that the new multilateral formations of the global South are more than just comradely clubs – they are selective, competitive and exclusive, and they pursue narrower, issue-driven agendas.⁶²

SA foreign policy: The weak links

The groundswell of civil society criticism of government performance, deploring triumphalism and lack of accountability,⁶³ continued in 2009. The domain of foreign policy was no exception. A major point of contention was South Africa's voting record⁶⁴ during its two-year (2007/2008) stint as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council, during which it sided with and protected some of the world's most notorious perpetrators of human rights abuses – in the process even breaking ranks with other African Council members.⁶⁵ This prompted Human Rights Watch to accuse the country in its 2009 World Report of 'indulging a short memory of its own struggle'.⁶⁶ The disappointing performance on the Council, and the controversial decision in March to refuse the Dalai Lama a visa to take part in a 2010 World Cup-organised peace conference in Johannesburg, added to the outrage expressed by eminent South Africans such as Desmond Tutu, Mamphela Ramphele, FW De Klerk, and others. These commentators warned that South Africa was in danger of losing its moral high ground in the domain of foreign policy on account of its 'reluctance to criticize, let alone support punitive measures against, governments of the South and the increasing priority it accords to sovereignty and "South-South" solidarity over human rights'.⁶⁷ Critics were not impressed by the government's justification of its actions by invoking procedural concerns, namely that the General Assembly or other UN organs, such as the Human Rights Council, rather than the Security Council, were the proper fora for addressing human rights issues.⁶⁸ Ken Roth, Executive Director of Human Rights Watch in the US, made the point that, for all its protestations, SA did not in fact agitate for the relevant issues to be prioritised within the Human Rights Council.⁶⁹

⁶²See also the discussion by Fabricius 'SA mulls membership of BRIC league' *Business Report* 18 October 2009 available at <http://www.busrep.co.za/> accessed 29 December 2009.

⁶³One member of the Dinokeng Scenarios Team, eg, remarked: 'We have succumbed to triumphalism, and denialism of what has not gone so well' n 8 above at 1.

⁶⁴Author's note: South Africa's voting pattern in the Security Council could arguably be attributed to the ideological fervour of the Mbeki government to transform global governance, in this instance by wresting back control over global politics from the traditional, 'western' powers on the Council.

⁶⁵Kotzé n 48 above.

⁶⁶Human Rights Watch 'World Report 2009' at 7 available at <http://www.hrw.org/world-report-2009> accessed 30 December 2009.

⁶⁷Lipton n 3 above at 333.

⁶⁸See, eg, Sarkin 'The role of the United Nations, the African Union and Africa's sub-regional organisations in dealing with Africa's human rights problems: Connecting humanitarian intervention and the responsibility to protect' (2009) 53/1 *Journal of African Law* at 14.

⁶⁹Roth, comment made by the Executive Director of Human Rights Watch (US), during his seminar on 'Human Rights Principles in South African Foreign Policy' at the Institute for

The incoming Zuma administration quickly moved to signal a new ethical course. Minister Nkoana-Mashabane reversed⁷⁰ the decision on the Dalai Lama's visa within days of her appointment, and during June her Deputy implicitly acknowledged the dismal foreign policy track-record when he told parliament that government would 'more robustly flex our muscles on human rights issues so that we can never be accused of betraying the ideals on which our democracy was founded'.⁷¹ Ebrahim subsequently delivered on his promise by calling in the Myanmar (Burmese) Ambassador to SA to reprimand him for the latest arrest of opposition leader Aung San Suu Ki. Peter Fabricius detects another (subtle but significant) change in SA voting behaviour within the UN General Assembly's Third Committee (on Social, Cultural, and Humanitarian issues): whereas over the past three years 'no action motions' were supported rather than resolutions that condemned human rights abuses by the Myanmar and Iranian governments, during the committee's November 2009 deliberations, the SA representatives for the first time supported the resolution in the case of Myanmar and abstained in the case of Iran.⁷²

However, the new administration's foreign policy also yielded its share of contradiction and contention. During July 2009 South Africa meekly toed the line when an AU Summit decided not to implement the International Criminal Court's (ICC's) indictment of Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir.⁷³ Fabricius remarks that the legal advisors of DIRCO had warned that acquiescence with the AU decision would 'negatively impact on our international reputation and stature' and would signal non-adherence to South Africa's constitutional values of 'human dignity, the achievement of equality and the advancement of human rights and freedoms'.⁷⁴ The decision to go along with the AU position, despite several African states actually distancing themselves from it, provoked a storm of legal and political debate.⁷⁵

Something that has been welcomed by SA's vocal civil society is that the Zuma administration seems much less irritated by public debate of policy.⁷⁶

Security Studies Pretoria 24 June 2009.

⁷⁰Nkoana-Mashabane *Media briefing by the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation* Pretoria 14 May 2009.

⁷¹Fabricius n 16 above.

⁷²*Ibid.* Note: A 'no action motion' implies that an issue will not even be debated.

⁷³African Union 'Press release on AU summit decision on the meeting of African states parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court' Addis Ababa 14 July 2009.

⁷⁴Fabricius n 62 above.

⁷⁵SA made an audacious, if maladroit, proposal during the November 2009 session of the ICC's Assembly of State Parties, namely that the provision allowing for the UN Security Council to defer proceedings before the court be amended to allow for the UN General Assembly to do so in the event that the Council fails to act. For legal contextualisation of the proposal, and comment of the political hegemony of the Security Council, see Gevers 'SA's bold proposal shows up the flaws in the Rome Compromise' *Business Day* 29 December 2009 at 5.

⁷⁶See, eg, Nkoana-Mashabane n 27 above..

After many years of eloquent sermons by Mbeki and his foreign policy lieutenants, during 2009 the tenor of government communication was decidedly less patronising. Not only was flawed policy admitted, but it was also acknowledged that ‘we have not engaged ordinary people fully and effectively in our foreign policy through our public diplomacy’.⁷⁷ An undertaking was made to consult civil society, *inter alia* by ‘engaging on a massive *imbizo* with our people, stakeholders, organs of civil society and the mass media’.⁷⁸ This was translated into a country-wide ‘road-show’ during which the minister and senior DIRCO staff interacted with various audiences on foreign policy issues.⁷⁹ It also manifested in the annual conference that DIRCO held during November, where Deputy Minister Ebrahim stated his department’s intention to deepen its engagement with foreign policy stakeholders in order ‘to bridge the gap between knowledge and policy in critical areas’.⁸⁰

Having to consult civil society, however, should not entail the management thereof. The Polokwane directives had urged DIRCO to monitor the activities of SA non-state actors in the rest of the continent, and to develop a code of conduct for this private sector, so as to ensure ‘a clear coordination and linkage with the overall objectives of our foreign policy’.⁸¹ This objective predictably met with mixed reaction when it found its way into policy statements. As Mpumelelo Mkhabela⁸² observes ‘the government still believes it can regulate the behaviour of privately owned South African multinationals outside its borders ... what South Africa needs is sound government and business relations at a domestic level, which could be translated into political and corporate diplomacy abroad’. He laments the lack of a government strategy on economic diplomacy and warns that ‘South Africa stands to lose in global competition if it fails to combine its political and economic diplomacy for greater national interests. There is even the risk that South Africa could lose its economic clout on the African continent – and with it, political clout’.⁸³

An area that definitely requires more effective management is the international relations of various tiers of government. Nkoana-Mashabane⁸⁴ remarked that one of the challenges government has identified is ‘that many government actors from our three spheres of government are active on the world stage – signing MOUs and Twinning Agreements – yet the coordination within

⁷⁷Nkoana-Mashabane n 12 above.

⁷⁸Nkoana-Mashabane n 28 above.

⁷⁹Nkoana-Mashabane n 12 above.

⁸⁰Ebrahim n 22 above.

⁸¹Nkoana-Mashabane n 12 above.

⁸²Mpumelelo Mkhabela ‘The business of diplomacy ought to be business’ *Sunday Times* 12 July 2009 at 13.

⁸³*Ibid.*

⁸⁴Nkoana-Mashabane n 12 above.

government has not been at the desired level'. She did not mention the compounding fact that with more economic cabinet portfolios than ever before, a key focus of foreign policy, namely economic diplomacy, would invariably entail more overlap – and to an even larger extent than the already confusing relationship between the Department of Trade and Industry and DIRCO.⁸⁵ She did note, when she met with Heads of Mission, that the alignment and coordination of South Africa's economic diplomacy across all spheres of government would be a priority.

Policy documents over the past few years have indeed consistently identified economic diplomacy as a main priority,⁸⁶ and the 2009 MTSF reiterated the need to 'strengthen economic diplomatic capacity in our missions (by, among others, undertaking effective and intense training for all South African representatives abroad)'. The strained SADC/SACU relations, and the overlap in integration agendas within the sub-region, however, raise the question of what exactly South African diplomats will be trained to do until such time as their government articulates lucid policy on its economic diplomacy.

Zuma and the world

During the (effectively) fifteen years of Mbeki domination, SA foreign policy acquired the character traits of the man himself: driven, assertive, ambitious, but also elitist and contradictory. It was inevitable that the profile of his successor would be scrutinised for its effect on foreign policy, and as discussed earlier, Jacob Zuma could hardly be more different. He appears to be a pragmatist and not particularly captivated by the international diplomatic circuit; neither does he seem to seek out opportunities to trump the former colonial masters.⁸⁷

If he harboured any lingering resentment towards Mbeki, or intention to change significantly the course of his predecessor's foreign policy, he has not revealed it during the period under review. In fact, in his Presidential inaugural address⁸⁸ on 9 May 2009, Zuma signalled that he held Mbeki's contribution to diplomacy in high esteem: 'He took the country forward as a true statesman ... he made our country an integral part of the continent and worked tirelessly for an African rebirth. Through his leadership, South Africa's stature grew in the continent and globally'.

⁸⁵Mkhabela n 82 above.

⁸⁶See Nkoana-Mashabane n 27 above.

⁸⁷Perry n 6 above at 29.

⁸⁸Zuma 'Address on the occasion of his inauguration as fourth President of the Republic of South Africa' Pretoria 9 May 2009.

Zuma's leadership style within government has thus far been inclusive and consultative, but also *laissez faire*, which results in him being less inclined to dominate foreign policy. His disinclination to be centralising and assertive in policy matters, is of concern to some commentators, especially as regards SA's contentious policy towards Zimbabwe. Lipton⁸⁹ makes the observation that Zuma seems reluctant to impose his will when confronted with divisive issues, and says this is causing fears that

while he may be less willing to provide a protective shield for Mugabe and less driven by anti-West resentments, he is unlikely, in the face of conflicting interests, pressures and capacity constraints, to launch a more decisive, coherent policy for the festering Zimbabwean quagmire bequeathed to him by Mbeki.

Zuma's cautious approach to Zimbabwe cannot be attributed to inexperience – he has extensive experience in peace-building initiatives in Africa, *inter alia*, as mediator in Burundi during his six years as South Africa's Deputy President. This may explain his selection of Zimbabwe as one of only a handful of official state visit destinations during 2009. In what seemed to be a continuation of Mbeki's policy, he reiterated SA's commitment as guarantor of the 2008 Global Political Agreement (GPA) when he visited Harare during August. Indeed, he offered no criticism, only solidarity with Zimbabwe's Government of National Unity (GNU).⁹⁰ However, what has been evident from the follow-up visits to Harare by his key advisors, is that Zuma, in comparison with Mbeki, is less inclined to undertake the mediation himself and more willing to entrust the process to his officials.⁹¹

Apart from the Zimbabwe visit and his attendance at various global summits,⁹² Zuma elected to pay only three other official state visits during 2009: outside of Africa only to Brazil⁹³ during October and, in addition to Zimbabwe, to two other SADC countries, Angola during August, and Zambia during December. The visit to Zambia may have been a pilgrimage: Zuma explained that Lusaka had offered a headquarters for the ANC over a period of three decades, and that President Kaunda had treated the exiled ANC cadres as family.⁹⁴ But it was the state visit to

⁸⁹Lipton n 3 above at 342.

⁹⁰Zuma 'Speech by the South African President on occasion of his state visit to Zimbabwe' issued by the South African Presidency 27 August 2009.

⁹¹For information on visits and composition of delegations, see the presidency's website n 25 above.

⁹²After ascending to the Presidency, and during the remainder of 2009, Zuma attended *inter alia*, the following multilateral summits: SADC in Sandton during June, AU in Sirte during July, G-8 in Aquila during July as well as the NAM in Sharm-El-Sheikh during July, SADC in Kinshasa during September, UN General Assembly also during September, the CHOGM during November in Port of Spain, and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in Copenhagen during December.

⁹³Author's remark: Brazil, possibly because Zuma's International Relations Adviser is a former SA Ambassador to that country.

⁹⁴Zuma 'Remarks by the President of the Republic of South Africa at the state banquet hosted by President RB Banda in his honour during state visit to Zambia' 7 December 2009.

Angola, Zuma's very first after becoming President, that represented a directional change in foreign policy. The relationship between Angola and South Africa had been frosty under Mbeki, and together with Zimbabwe posed the greatest challenge to South Africa's leadership position in the region. Zuma's visit signalled a new, inclusive approach to regional politics, and the deliberate mending of fences.

Conclusion

This article set out to provide a domestic context for South Africa's foreign policy trends and developments during 2009. External, or systemic, determinants were not discussed, not because such variables are any less relevant, but because internal political events in the run-up to, and course of, 2009 dominated all spheres of South African government policy. At a psycho-analytical level, the legacy of former President Mbeki was investigated because he had dominated post-apartheid South Africa's foreign policy so completely and distinctly, and had steered it in a particular ideological direction. Mbeki's image as a globetrotting, transformative foreign policy President probably contributed to his eventual downfall – his constant absences from South Africa and preoccupation with the global rather than the local may have rendered him and his policies ultimately *too* foreign. His successor's profile was therefore juxtaposed to determine its potential effect on policy. Jacob Zuma seems to be everything that Mbeki was not – low-key and *laissez-faire* in his approach to international relations – and has thus far not veered from the directives of his party's electoral mandate in the domain of foreign policy. Further foreign policy analysis of South Africa's domestic context will therefore probably need to prioritise the *government-bureaucratic politics* model, because a much wider group of foreign policy advisors and officials, and the processes of the interaction among them, are likely to impact the country's foreign policy for the duration of the Zuma Presidency.

The political backlash brought on by neglected domestic constituencies of foreign policy contributed to the ruling ANC's sense of introspection as it entered the general election of 2009. The incoming administration therefore made it clear that all its policy, including that on international relations, would henceforth be anchored in domestic imperatives. At the same time there was no deviation from the post-1994 hierarchy of geo-political foreign policy priorities. At least in theory, 'consolidation of the African Agenda remains central to foreign policy objectives'.⁹⁵ However, for the first time since South Africa's transition to democracy, the issue of 'national interest' was broached more than the idealistic notion of collective continental interest, as had been the penchant of the Mbeki administration. This was probably in part a reaction to disappointing experiences in the country's relations with the rest of Africa,

⁹⁵Nkoana-Mashabane n 27 above.

and the realisation that South African foreign policy could no longer live up to its own rhetoric. During 2009 South Africa's multilateral endeavours thus displayed greater pragmatism in their selective focus on strategic partnerships rather than broad ideological coalitions.

Despite several initiatives by the new administration to address concerns about ethical incongruities in the foreign policy of the Mbeki years, 2009 also yielded a crop of contradictions. One of these was South Africa's support for an AU decision that negated the country's international legal commitments to the ICC. South Africa has also not taken any firm action to address the crisis in Zimbabwe, despite expectations to the contrary. It is surely too early to judge the performance of the new administration, but by the end of 2009 the symbolic name change of the former DFA, to denote a new emphasis on development cooperation, had not yet been translated into any substantive change in the making or implementation of foreign policy.

The deliberate 'domestication' of its foreign policy implicitly confirmed that post-apartheid South Africa had reached the end of an epoch. As the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation acknowledged: 'the era of being the toast of the world is over; we are now viewed and treated like any other country'.⁹⁶ South Africa's foreign policy, so much part of Mbeki's 'dream deferred',⁹⁷ essentially underwent a reality check during 2009.

⁹⁶Nkoana-Mashabane n 12 above.

⁹⁷The title of Mark Gevisser's incisive biography on Thabo Mbeki: *Thabo Mbeki, the dream deferred* (2007).