

CHAPTER SEVEN

CHOOSING THE “BEST” ALTERNATIVE APPROACH TO SOUTH AFRICA’S FOREIGN POLICY RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PEOPLE’S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

7.1. Introduction

This chapter will consider some of the implications involved in planning and attempting to anticipate foreign policy needs and requirements. It will also examine a variety of foreign policy approaches that focus on concepts such as national interest, ideology, morality and constructive engagement; and will consider the alternative between a standardised generic approach and a country-specific approach to foreign policy. Furthermore, it will contrast the advantages and disadvantages of a regional approach to foreign policy as opposed to an independent domestic approach. This chapter will examine the current status of South Africa’s foreign policy relations with the People’s Republic of China. It will explore foreign policy options and alternative foreign policy approaches that are available to South Africa’s foreign policy decision makers and influencers of foreign policy, both generally and specifically. It will also advance arguments in support of the perceived *best* alternative approach to the conduct of relations with the People’s Republic of China, with due regard to the information reflected by the respective world view matrices of the two states. Finally, this chapter will consider the anticipated consequences of specific policy choices with regard to South Africa’s bilateral foreign policy relations with the People’s Republic of China.

7.2. Planning limitations in regard to foreign policy and the need for options

In the declining years of the *apartheid* era South Africa’s foreign policy had been reactive in terms of the attempts of the government of the day to counter economic, political and social sanctions and combat anti-*apartheid* rhetoric from politicians, activists, academics and journalists. It had also been proactive in attempting to

establish an environment that would make the inevitable demise of *apartheid* as painless and peaceful as possible. The relative clarity of foreign policy objectives was due, in no small measure, to the paucity of high priority foreign and domestic public policy issues. *Apartheid* was *the* issue. There was simply nothing else, in terms of policy, that could possibly take up so much attention. The only questions that required answers were *how* and *when*? How could the transition from *apartheid* take place and when?

In contrast, the years since the democratic elections of April 1994 have been filled by a plethora of new domestic policies aimed at ending all vestiges of the impact of the *apartheid* years, including economic, political, social, cultural and legal disparities and inequalities. Foreign policy, as public policy, has not escaped the impact of these changes. A consequence of change is that South African foreign policy has sometimes become detached from the pursuit of diplomacy and the world of foreign policy. For example, the *practical* aspects of tourism promotion (DFA. 2000: 14) and sustainable development (DFA. 2000: 12) have begun to displace what ought to have been a *facilitatory* role on the part of South Africa's Department of Foreign Affairs.

South Africa's foreign policy decision makers periodically appear to ignore the fact that foreign policy, because of the enormous number of players in the international environment, and the infinite number of variables affecting any individual state in relation to all others political entities, means that *foreign policy* cannot easily be subjected to five and ten year plans. Although foreign policy is an extension of domestic policy and although it also qualifies as public policy it is certainly *not* domestic policy. Foreign policy is about alternative choices and courses of action *outside* the domestic environment; it is about predictability in terms of the rational decision maker's responses and may also be about educated guesses concerning the irrational decision maker's responses; it is about dependability and consistency in terms of diplomatic and international legal norms. Foreign policy is also usually relatively short-term in respect of its articulation and formulation, although its effect may have long-term consequences. In this respect, its implementation may endure for several decades, as in the case of the Cold War, United States isolation of Cuba

(38}WS. 1997: 3-5), India's policy toward *apartheid* South Africa (41}WS. 1999: 1) or the bilateral relationship between China and *apartheid* South Africa (*vide* 40}WS. 1972: 5 and 42}WS. 1998: 1). However, foreign policy also needs to allow for flexibility and change when such change appears necessary. Lamentably, foreign policy outcomes are more often uncertain, and can never aspire to be more than highly probable in terms of their anticipated success.

Consequently, South Africa needs to be constantly aware of the need for foreign policy options and alternatives so that decisions can be made relatively quickly and with maximum beneficial results; so that policies will be advantageous for South Africa to the point where they can either be terminated when major disadvantages appear likely or modified to ensure that advantages continue. There is also no conceivable reason why bilateral agreements and arrangements should be entered into, or continued, if they do not promise the likelihood of substantial material or diplomatic benefits for South Africa and thereby contribute to making life "good" for the people of South Africa.

In the broadest sense, the purpose of entering into a foreign policy relationship with another state is to enhance a state's own position within the international environment; either for security reasons or for economic advantage. If ideology or like-minded opinions over human rights or religious issues, or "friendships" were the over-riding determinants of diplomatic relationships, the United States and the PRC may never have established diplomatic relations with one another. South Africa, too, was probably driven less by "friendship" than by economic concerns (the certain loss of consular representation in Hong Kong and the certain loss of landing rights in Hong Kong for South African Airways) when it switched its diplomatic relations from Taiwan to the PRC (1996: *Interview*).

Despite difficulties in planning for actions and policies in a dynamic and constantly changing environment, some medium and long-term foreign policy planning is necessary. It cannot be dispensed with entirely. Clearly there needs to be medium and long-term planning in terms of the budgets and resources needed to be able to

conduct normal diplomatic and foreign policy functions; and there needs to be preparation and planning in terms of the deployment and utilisation of these resources. There will probably also need to be planning in terms of the implementation of known foreign policy objectives; and, naturally, such policy implementation planning would need to be accomplished in accordance with the financial, human and material resources that are available. However, long-term foreign policy planning, in the context of South African bilateral foreign policy, would probably be no more certain than an educated guess or a hopeful wish. The Director General of South Africa's Department of Foreign Affairs is not unaware of some of the difficulties (DFA. 2000: 6), as indicated by his statement that,

... not all goals lend themselves to specific time frames as there are variables often beyond our influence which makes it difficult to work within set time frames.

The DFA Strategic plan 2000-2005 is intended to be a planning document and lists five "key strategic (domestic) priorities" (SA. 2001: 9) that South Africa's foreign policy is intended to support and that "... inform and direct the work of the Department of Foreign Affairs ..." (SA. 2001: 9). They are as follows:

- speeding up delivery of basic needs and developing human resources;
- building the economy and creating jobs;
- combating crime and corruption;
- transforming the state; and
- building a better Africa and a better world.

Clearly, many of these objectives (SA. 2001: 9) fall within the province of other government departments, such as the Department of Justice and the South African Police Services; or the Department of Labour and the Department of Trade and Industry; or the Department of Education. Surprisingly, particularly as a traditional function of practically any foreign service is to *protect and defend* the sovereignty and integrity of the state, DFA is expected to assist in the *transformation* (SA.

2001: 9) of South Africa. The more traditional function is, in fact, specifically mentioned ({{1}}SA. 2001: 18) as one of DFA's intended "priorities, strategies and activities" ({{1}}SA. 2001: 11). It would be useful to know what is intended by the concept of *a better world* ({{1}}SA. 2001: 9) as this would undoubtedly depend on the respective world views of the architects involved. Finally, it might be seen as presumptuous of South Africa to assume the role of building a "...better Africa .." ({{1}}SA. 2001: 9) without specific reference to the other states of Africa, who might also expect to be consulted in such an endeavour. If the United States were to declare its intention to create a better world as a matter of US foreign policy doctrine, it might be accused of imperialism and hegemonic pursuits. After all, the United States is a global super power. Consequently, for South Africa to aspire to such a lofty foreign policy pursuit might merely serve to highlight perceptions of an over-reaching South African ambition against the background of limited capacity. Few countries, if any, can realistically plan to *individually* change the African continent or the world. At best the individual states of the international environment, including South Africa, may plan to do so *collectively*, as acknowledged by Foreign Minister Dlamini Zuma in her opening remarks contained in the *Minister's Forward to the Strategic Plan 2000-2005* ({{1}}SA. 2001: 3). The question also arises, if South Africa aspires to build a better Africa, how may the achievement of such an objective contribute to making life good for the people and citizens of South Africa?

Although DFA has made a valiant effort to develop a five year foreign policy plan it would appear that it has been driven as much by the perceived need to *plan* as by the need to *achieve* foreign policy results. In some respects the DFA strategic plan is a plan about planning. For example, in regard to the "operationalisation" of the African Renaissance, the *Strategic Plan 2000-2005* declares ({{1}}SA. 2001: 10) that "...South Africa ... is in the process of elaborating a programme of action for its practical implementation ..."

DFA promotes a *vision* ({{1}}SA. 2001: 8) that declares "South Africa shall strive for peace, stability, democracy and development in an African continent ..." without also declaring what DFA intends to do for South Africa; describes its *mission* ({{1}}SA.

2001: 8) without clarifying how it intends to serve South African citizens abroad; and also promotes *values* (SA. 2001: 8) such as “loyalty” without specifying what is meant by loyalty. The danger of using words carelessly is that they could be misinterpreted.

In terms of the *DFA Strategic Plan 2000-2001* (SA. 2001: 10),

... the Department of Foreign Affairs engaged in an extensive strategic planning process to ensure that its policies, programmes and activities promote South Africa's national interests internationally. This process culminated in the adoption of a cluster of four high-level objectives with eighteen elements, which form the basis of the organisation's strategies, activities and outputs. These priorities have been arranged according to four clusters (calabashes) ... The calabashes are the following: Security, Stability, Development (economic and social) and Cooperation (author's emphasis in bold).

A major shortcoming of the five and ten year economic plans of the former Soviet community (*vide* WS. 1992: 1-2) was that the plans became ends in themselves; planning tended to take up so much time that opportunities for actual achievement in terms of economic and social progress became casualties of the planning process. Unfortunately the *apparatchiks* (*vide* paragraph 1.6 *supra*; *vide* Myburgh in *Sunday Independent*. 1 April 2001: 7) of the new South African foreign policy *milieu*, with relatively limited experience in diplomacy and foreign policy, have tended to ignore the lessons of Soviet history by over-managing to a degree where the process has become a goal in itself. As Henry Kissinger observed decades ago (Kissinger in Rosenau. 1969: 263-264),

... bureaucracy becomes an obstacle when what it defines as routine does not address the most significant range of issues or when its prescribed mode of action proves irrelevant to the problem. When this occurs, the bureaucracy absorbs the

energies of top executives in reconciling what is expected with what happens; the analysis of where one is overwhelms the consideration of where one should be going. Serving the machine becomes a more absorbing occupation than defining its purpose.

Consider, then, the implementation and monitoring process as set out in the DFA *Strategic plan 2000-2005* (SA. 2001: 36-37), which is described as follows:

... the implementation of the strategic plan and government foreign policy and the monitoring of these takes place at three levels. At the political level, the Minister and Deputy Minister and the Director-General monitor the implementation of policy and the strategic plan by Ambassadors and Missions abroad and by senior officials of the Department. At the next level, Branches of the Department and the Programme Managers at Chief Director level determine regional priorities and objectives, which are aligned to the Department's strategic plan and priorities. At the third level, Directorates and Missions abroad implement business plans, which are country and region-specific. This operational level monitors implementation performance through a system of quarterly reports to Head Office on progress, supported by weekly and regular interaction and reports on the substance of the set objectives. The monitoring of progress is further enhanced by the following systems:

- *Head Office Business Unit business plans and quarterly reports;*
- *Mission business plans and quarterly reports;*
- *Six-monthly reviews of the Operating Environment and priorities;*
- *Performance Management System at all levels;*
- *Departmental in-house six monthly annual strategic review; and*
- *Management Consultancy Unit which monitors and improves mission performance;*

These systems are then integrated and coordinated by a process involving Departmental Management Committees to ensure what has been termed "...a coherent and focused approach ..." (1}SA. 2001: 36-37).

One might ask, when do South Africa's diplomats have an opportunity in their busy days of standardised managerial report-writing, report-reading and attendance at meetings, to give attention to the South African missions abroad that look to them for support; to give attention to the missions of their host countries stationed in South Africa; to attend to their many diplomatic duties; to meet with their colleagues in other government departments to discuss issues of common diplomatic concern; and to attend to the many urgent matters, sometimes of crisis proportion, pertaining to their respective countries of responsibility, particularly when events occur that could not realistically have been planned for or anticipated. This situation is equally frustrating to South Africa's diplomats abroad (2}2001. *Interview*). One has only to consider incidents involving the kidnapping of South African citizens abroad (*vide* 33}WS. 2000. Donaldson in *The Sunday Times*. 20 August 2000), or an outbreak of rebellion in a neighbouring state, or a natural disaster in a neighbouring state, the hijacking of an airliner, or the assassination of a world leader, to appreciate that these are not situations that can be anticipated in the deliberations of a five year plan. In the realm of foreign policy, opportunities for effective long-term planning are quite limited. At best they may lead to no more than hopeful wishes or educated guesses.

As alluded to previously, foreign policy may take a variety of forms, some realistic and some idealistic. However, in seeking the most advantageous base, whether philosophical or practical, upon which to premise its general approach to foreign policy, South Africa's options are probably no more and no less than those available to other states of the international environment. Regardless of differences, though, each state, including South Africa, may ultimately be expected to respond to its own peculiar needs and circumstances; an observation that is in line with the view expressed by Schlesinger (1986: 51) that,

... *the aim (of foreign policy) is the same for all states - the*

protection of national integrity and (national) interest. But the manner in which a state conceives and conducts its foreign policy is greatly affected by national peculiarities.

This is also the premise upon which the PRC bases its public policies, which would logically include foreign policy; the premise that national or domestic circumstances and *characteristics* (*vide* CPC. 1997: 9) must be taken into account when formulating policy.

7.3. Current status of South Africa's bilateral relationship with the PRC

The current status of South Africa's foreign policy relationship with the People's Republic of China must necessarily focus on the practical achievements, advantages and disadvantages, and existing problems and benefits, that have accrued to one or both parties during their relatively short practical foreign policy relationship since 1992 and more recent diplomatic relationship which commenced on 1 January, 1998.

By the end of February 2001, South Africa and the PRC had entered into twenty-two bilateral agreements (2 SA. 2001: *treaties*), twenty-one of which were signed after the decision to establish diplomatic relations between the two states. These agreements may be categorised as four Exchanges of Notes, three Memoranda of Understanding, twelve Agreements, one Letter of Intent, one Joint Communique and one Declaration (The Pretoria Declaration). During the first year of this new diplomatic relationship (1998) only one agreement, an Exchange of Notes regarding funding of a low cost housing project, took place (2 SA. 2001: *treaties*). During the following year (1999) six agreements were signed and during the State Visit of PRC President, Jiang Zemin, during 2000, seven agreements were signed on one day. In total, ten agreements were signed in the year 2000 (2 SA. 2001: *treaties*). However, as has been pointed out (3 2002. *Interview*), the Chinese do not necessarily sign agreements in order to implement them immediately but regard them as frameworks for future action. It is therefore largely up to South Africa to ensure that implementation takes place.

During the period 1992 to 1997 total annual trade volume grew from US\$14 million to US\$1.4 billion dollars. During the three years of the new diplomatic relationship from January 1998 to December 2000, SA-PRC annual total trade volume grew to US\$1.6 billion. In 1999 the PRC was South Africa's 20th most important export market; one year later, in 2000, the PRC was South Africa's 10th most lucrative export market (DFA. 2001 *Background*: 21). However, although trade growth during the almost ten-year SA-PRC foreign policy relationship has been positive, there are also aspects of the relationship that have exhibited some difficulties. For example, despite repeated attempts by South Africa to try and obtain an Approved Destination Status (ADS) tourism agreement, the PRC has steadfastly stalled on this issue (2001. *Interview*). The proposed ADS Agreement would open South Africa as an approved travel destination for tour groups comprising up to ten thousand (2002. *Interview*) PRC nationals during the first year of implementation. By the end of December 2000, ADS approval had already been granted to a number of other countries by the PRC, none of which was in Africa (2001. *Interview*). There is some hope in this direction, however, as the Programme for China-Africa Cooperation in Economic and Social Development, agreed to by the PRC and African participating states, including South Africa, during the China-Africa Conference of October 2000, contained the following statement (DFA. 2001 *Background*: 25):

*The Ministers acknowledge that tourism is an important activity
... they agree to cooperate in promoting tourism and undertake to
encourage investment in the development of tourism infrastructure
and capacity.*

It is essential, however, that if ADS is granted to South Africa, it should be implemented for mutual benefit and that the South African tourism industry should be seen to benefit from such a concession.

Another sticking point in the SA-PRC relationship is on the question of agricultural products. Although South African agricultural products are available in the European

and American markets the Chinese have tended to be cautious in regard to South African agricultural products entering their market ({3} 2002. *Interview*). There has been limited success in the export of live game animals to the PRC as well as some agricultural stock such as *Boer* goats (*Citizen*. 28 June 2000). Outbreaks of animal and plant diseases in South Africa, although contained and reportedly of no threat to potential export markets, including the PRC, have also been an obstacle in attempts to improve agricultural trade between the two states ({3} 2002. *Interview*). The unwillingness of the PRC to take into account positive European and American responses (to SA agricultural products) has been an added source of frustration for SA agricultural exporters ({2} 2001. *Interview*). The South African agricultural bureaucracy has reportedly ({3}2002. *Interview*) also been at fault. Significantly, ignorance of the PRC cultural and operational *milieu*, on the part of both the South African public and private sectors, has resulted in lost agricultural opportunities for South Africa, particularly in the ostrich industry ({2}2001. *Interview*). After six years, and the benefit of South African expertise and fertilised eggs from South Africa, the PRC today has a larger ostrich population than South Africa ({2}2001. *Interview*).

During October 2000 the first China-Africa Conference, the brainchild of PRC President Jiang Zemin, took place in Beijing. South Africa was one of a large number of African countries invited to participate and most African delegations were led at the level of foreign minister, including South Africa's delegation. South Africa's Minister of Trade and Industry and the Director-General of Foreign Affairs also participated. The President of Togo, the President of Algeria and the President of Zambia also attended the conference, the only Heads of State invited to attend ({2}2001. *Interview*).

On the one hand, the conference provided an opportunity for the PRC to display its solidarity with and support for Africa ({2} 2001. *Interview*); on the other hand, it threatened to create the impression of China holding court over its lesser African minions ({2}2001. *Interview*; {3} 2002. *Interview*) ; including those who helped the PRC become a Permanent member of the UN Security Council and who would no doubt be ready to defeat any unpleasant censure of the PRC's human rights record,

during deliberations at the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva. From the PRC perspective, African states are seen as an increasingly important potential reservoir of support to counter perceived United States hegemony (Robinson and Shambaugh. 1997: 293) and to support the resource needs of the growing PRC economy.

Africa also had an opportunity to derive some benefit from the China-Africa Conference. However, the PRC had always had the advantage of being able to speak with a single voice whereas the African states were confronted by the disadvantage of having to compress the aspirations and needs of African states having different languages and colonial experiences, different religions, different economies and different political and social structures, into a common African endeavour (*{2} 2001. Interview*). In this daunting undertaking the African delegations sought to impress upon the Chinese the need for a substantive and mutually beneficial relationship between the PRC and African states to be defined in the two resulting conference documents (*{3}2002. Interview; {2}2001. Interview*), the Beijing Declaration and the Programme for China-Africa Cooperation in Economic and Social Development (DFA. 2001 *Background: 25*).

Although the China-Africa Conference was essentially a hybrid bilateral-multilateral aspect of diplomacy and foreign policy it also holds important bilateral implications for South Africa in that the conference represented an invaluable opportunity to present and project the envisaged *African Renaissance* (*{2}2001. Interview*). This was also an opportunity to advance the idea of a mutually beneficial trade regime involving the PRC and African states, including South Africa, and to address problems involving the dumping of PRC goods, arms trafficking in areas of conflict, illegal immigration, international crime and traffic in narcotics (DFA. 2001 *Background: 26*) and environmental concerns.

The more promising aspect of the SA-PRC relationship, however, resides in the substance of the Pretoria Declaration, entered into on 25 April 2000 (*{2}SA. 2001: treaties*), during the PRC President's visit to South Africa, which articulated the concept of a South Africa-PRC Binational Commission that would be established to

take the bilateral relationship between the two states forward in a positive and substantive manner. The Pretoria Declaration is based upon the Five Principles of Sino-African Relations (DFA. 2001 *Background*: 30) which are as follows:

- Sincere Friendship;
- Equality and Sovereignty;
- Common Development on the basis of Mutual Benefit;
- Increased Consultation and Cooperation in International Affairs; and
- Cooperation in the Establishment of a New International Political and Economic Order.

In terms of the Pretoria Declaration, South Africa again felt compelled to assure a seemingly distrustful PRC (DFA. 2001 *Background*: 30-31) that “...there is but one China in the world and Taiwan is an inalienable part of China ...” and, in exchange, received the assurance of the PRC President’s “... appreciation for the noble ideals embodied in the philosophy of the African Renaissance...” On a more substantive note, the Pretoria Declaration also formalised the following undertakings (DFA. 2001 *Background*: 30-31) on the part of South Africa and the PRC:

Firstly, the establishment of a “... high level Bi-National Commission ...” that would meet regularly and would aim to “...guide and coordinate all government-to-government relations between South Africa and China, and to consult on matters of mutual interest in the bilateral and multilateral spheres ...” ; Secondly, South Africa and the PRC agreed “... within the context of South-South cooperation ... to endeavour to advance their economic relationship “... by removing obstacles that impede negatively on bilateral trade and investment, and service and commercial relations ...”. The two states also agreed to support closer cooperation in the development of natural resources, “...especially in the areas of mining and manufacturing ...”; Thirdly, the parties agreed to cooperate “...constructively and effectively ...” to promote their new relationship “... on the basis of equality and mutual benefit ...” by supporting Africa’s efforts to seek peace, stability and development and by promoting the continent’s interests through multilateral

organisations such as the United Nations and its agencies, and the Group of 77 (G-77) plus China. Fourthly, South Africa and the PRC agreed to support one another,

... in efforts to create a new international political and economic order... (predicated upon the mutual assumptions that) ... the diversity of the world should be respected; the principles of sovereign equality and non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries should be upheld; no country should dominate others; the negative effects of globalisation - especially on developing nations - should be reduced and restricted; and harmony, democracy, justice and equality in international relations should be actively pursued and fully promoted (DFA. 2001. *Background*: 30-31).

The terms of the Pretoria Declaration, apart from specific commitments such as the status of Taiwan, are open to subjective interpretation by either side. Nevertheless, if the spirit of the agreement is upheld there are obvious opportunities for both sides. South Africa, for example, may hope to pursue the request for ADS status on the basis of the anticipated removal of obstacles that impede negatively on bilateral ... service and commercial considerations; and may also hope to remove obstacles concerning agricultural exports to the PRC (2001. *Interview*)

The PRC having hosted the China-Africa Conference in Beijing, it might be prudent for South Africa to consider hosting the first Binational Commission (BNC) in South Africa as this would allow South Africa to influence the future direction of this bilateral mechanism, in terms of substance and quantifiable results. Although the concept of a South African-PRC Binational Commission was initially proposed by the Chinese, their motivation may also have had to do with a quest for recognition on equal terms with other countries that operate binational commissions with South Africa, such as the United States (2001. *Interview*). The PRC, in fact, has little experience in the functional operation of binational commissions (2001. *Interview*) and it would therefore be essential for South Africa to ensure that effective interaction takes place between the two countries at the first meeting of the SA-PRC

BNC. It would also be cheaper, as South Africa's various Cabinet ministers, and their numerous advisors and officials involved in these discussions (2001. *Interview*), would not need to travel to the PRC until such time as a follow-up meeting is held, by which time there would be clarity on exactly which Ministers are likely to be involved as well as the preferred size of their respective delegations.

Despite much progress in the SA-PRC relationship, however, South Africa cannot afford to lose sight of the fact that the PRC has its own interests to consider and that this very powerful and influential state is also in competition with South Africa. For example, South African companies and individuals are as vulnerable to copyright infringement and theft of intellectual property rights by PRC citizens and PRC companies as are the states and citizens of the developed world (2001. *Interview*). However, South Africa's major vulnerability, as a developing African country, is the vulnerability of allowing its natural resources to be exploited in a manner that, in the long term, may be detrimental to the country's environment and its economy. South Africa should be wary of selling land to a state that does not recognise the right to private ownership of land (Liu. *China Daily*. 27 September-3 October 1998: 7); and should take care that foreign mining, farming, forestry and fishing activities meet its own resources and environmental needs. On the question of trade, South Africa needs to ensure that products emanating from the PRC meet stringent safety and quality control requirements. These are all concerns that should be properly addressed by means of agreements and diplomatic mechanisms such as the Binational Commission. On the question of how best to approach the SA-PRC bilateral relationship at the strategic policy level, however, one needs to look at what choices and opportunities are available.

7.4. Available foreign policy choices

South Africa, like most other states of the international environment, has a number of foreign policy choices. South Africa might, for example, consider adopting a generic approach that is uniquely South African and which can be universally applied in its foreign policy relations with all other states, separately or collectively. It might also

be feasible to think in terms of such an approach that would only apply in regard to regional and multilateral relationships. There is also the question of whether to premise foreign policy on realistic national interest considerations or on ideological or idealistic human rights considerations. Furthermore, there is the realistic idealistic hybrid alternative approach of constructive engagement. In addition, South Africa might consider whether to adopt an idealistic approach in regard to regional and multilateral issues and a more pragmatic and realistic approach in regard to bilateral issues. Finally, South Africa might wish to pursue an individual-state foreign policy approach which depends primarily on the issues and circumstances and personalities of the moment.

7.4.1. Generic global foreign policy formula

The People's Republic of China (PRC) is probably the best-known exponent of this type of approach to foreign policy. The five principles of peaceful coexistence which have formed the basis of all PRC bilateral foreign policy relationships since first enunciated in 1955 (PRC, 1999) set clear and logical parameters whereby PRC leaders may conduct, and bureaucrats may implement, foreign policy. The qualities of consistency and predictability and dependability are natural by-products of this approach.

Because the People's Republic of China developed and implemented the five principles of peaceful coexistence almost five decades ago, the changing nature of the international environment may make it difficult for the PRC to continue functioning as it would like to do without re-thinking some of these principles. For example, as a Permanent Member of the UN Security Council the PRC may need to fill an active military role either in a peacekeeping situation or in support of a UN-sponsored military campaign against an agreed threat to international peace. The latter possibility, in the absence of a perceived threat to PRC sovereignty, would conceivably violate all the five principles, which are as follows:

- mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity;

- mutual non-aggression;
- non-interference in each other's internal affairs;
- equality and mutual benefit; and
- peaceful coexistence.

A possible way around this contradiction may be for the PRC to consider developing a different generic foreign policy strategy in regard to its multilateral foreign policy relationships, while retaining the five principles of peaceful coexistence as a sure guide for its bilateral foreign policy relationships. The PRC has, in fact, embraced this concept in so far as its hybrid bilateral-multilateral relations with Africa are concerned. For example, the Five Principles of Sino-African Relations (DFA. 2001 *Background*: 30) differ from the Bandung Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence and both of these differ from the Five Principles of Cooperation enunciated in the Programme for China-Africa Cooperation in Economic and Social Development (DFA. 2001 *Background*: 64).

South Africa could possibly learn from the PRC example, not so much in regard to the variety of principles themselves but in regard to the PRC's general approach to foreign policy; an approach that allowed for the need to present consistent, predictable and dependable foreign policy, and which ensured, in the very early history of the PRC, that even relatively unsophisticated, inexperienced and unskilled makers and implementers of foreign policy, and foreign policy advisors, would be capable of doing so. It also kept the leadership relatively focused and unencumbered by costly political and military alliances (CPC. 1997: 88).

Assuming that the foreign policy matrix in respect of South Africa accurately reflects the country's primary foreign policy concerns, a generic approach upon which to base South Africa's foreign policy might draw from this matrix as well as the existing PRC example to identify principles such as the following:

- equality;
- mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity;

- mutual economic benefit;
- development of the Southern African region;
- collaboration for peace; and
- an agreed basis for human rights dialogue.

In some respects, these proposed principles encapsulate the ideals expressed in the Pretoria Declaration, although concern for human rights issues was not a prominent feature of that agreement. There was, however, a commitment to “... constructive dialogue ...” (DFA. 2001 *Background*: 31).

As indicated above there may, of course, be any amount of principles depending on the needs identified. In the above examples, assurance of respect for sovereignty and equality are necessary to ensure that South Africa is taken seriously by its foreign policy partners and would also affirm the independent nature of South African foreign policy; mutual economic benefit would require fair and equitable commercial transactions and agreements; development of the Southern African (SADC) region would also presumably still be in line with the needs of the African Renaissance; collaboration for peace would confirm South Africa’s commitment in this regard; and an agreed basis for a bilateral human rights dialogue would be consistent with South Africa’s stated commitment to respect for human rights (SA. 1998: *Nzo speech*).

A principle such as *development of the Southern African region* is probably not a principle to which all other states might agree. For example, could one realistically expect Iceland or Fiji to contribute to the development of Southern Africa? However, the remaining principles might well be mutually agreed upon, even the one relating to human rights. South Africa might therefore have an opportunity to pursue a new diplomatic relationship by negotiating that new relationship on the basis of *all*, or merely *some*, of these principles.

What seems likely, from the foregoing, is that a generic foreign policy approach, if followed, would have enabled South Africa’s foreign policy toward the PRC to become more focused, less susceptible to domination by the PRC and other powerful

states, more substantively helpful to the African renaissance, and less contradictory and ineffectual in terms of previously recorded important human rights issues. Whereas these arguments have focused on a global generic foreign policy encompassing all possible South African foreign policy and diplomatic relationships, a generic regional foreign policy approach, although theoretically possible, is arguably infinitely more complex and difficult to achieve.

7.4.2. Generic regional foreign policy formula

If a regional foreign policy approach is to be considered as a viable option for South Africa then it need not be limited to the organised institutional region or multilateral environmental approach. Bilateral relations would still be feasible, and in fact desirable, but in the manner of an agreed coordinated regional strategy. Such a strategy, from South Africa's perspective, would probably work best in the context of Africa's regional organisations. In terms of this approach the member states of these regions, including South Africa in the case of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), would seek to coordinate their individual bilateral relationships with selected developed and developing states, such as the United States, Canada, Australia, the European Union states, the PRC, Russia, Japan and India, with a view to Africa's developmental needs.

A regional foreign policy approach might include several variations; for example, it might refer to multilateral and bilateral relations between individual states within a specific region; or regions engaging regions, multilaterally and bilaterally; or individual states engaging regions, collectively, and *vice versa* (*vide* EC. 1998); or individual states adopting a specific foreign policy approach toward the individual states of a specific region. With regard to the first variation, influence in the multilateral arena, apart from providing an opportunity to exert an impact on the direction of multilateral international foreign policy, is particularly useful for networking and lobbying purposes. In a sense South Africa has already focused on these opportunities with a notable amount of success in that South Africa, since 1994, has chaired the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the

Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) (*vide* {2}SA. 1999: *Parliamentary media briefing*); and is scheduled to host and chair the World Conference Against Racism (WCAR) during 2001; and the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) and first meeting of the African Union (AU), successor to the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), during 2002 (*vide* DFA. 20001009: *Backgrounder*).

The PRC has also utilised lobbying and net-working opportunities within the multilateral environment (e.g. NAM) very effectively in the past (*vide* Kim. 1998: 108 and 233). The PRC managed to become a Permanent Member of the UN Security Council with the help of mainly African and Asian diplomatic support, at the expense of Taiwan (*vide* Robinson and Shambaugh. 1997: 293). One of the reasons why South Africa and other selected developing states appear so important to the PRC is because of their perceived and actual multilateral and regional influence. In recent years the PRC has relied on the support of developing states to successfully counter attempts by developed states, such as the United States, to publicly censure the PRC for its human rights transgressions and abuses.

On a more positive note, South Africa's participation and influence in multilateral forums provides an excellent opportunity to garner substantive support for developmental programmes among, particularly, developed states; and to encourage developing states, particularly African states, to make greater strides toward democratisation, rule of law, self-development, social justice, and respect for human rights and environmental needs. Opportunities are often wasted, however, if not translated into action.

In regard to the second variation, there may be opportunities for a region such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to engage other regional organisations such as the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) or the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC) or the European Union (EU) with a view to mutually advancing regional foreign policy interests. The third type of variation might allow a regional organisation such as SADC to consider

engaging an economically powerful state such as the PRC, including the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and Macao Special Administrative Region, with a view to advancing the economic aspects of the foreign relations of all these states and territories in ways that are mutually beneficial. On the other hand, South Africa might foresee an opportunity to follow the example of the PRC, as displayed in planning the China-African Conference and collectively engaging a large number of African states, by identifying a regional community, whether institutionally organised or not, and engaging its individual states collectively with a view to advancing diplomatic, economic and commercial interaction in a mutually beneficial manner.

Finally, the fourth variation would encourage individual states to seek out opportunities to engage other individual states, that are part of a specifically identifiable region, in terms of their perceived regional commonalities and characteristics, so that a specific regional foreign policy approach would be clearly discernible.

If South Africa were to follow this approach it would be necessary to closely examine its *bilateral* relationships with other states of the international system with a view to categorising such states in terms of the anticipated most advantageous way to pursue the relevant relationship. For example, the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, including the PRC, represent a specific categorisation that ought to be different from all other relationships simply by virtue of the enormous amount of influence and power, in a variety of manifestations, wielded by these states and the contributions they are capable of making toward the improvement of living conditions within South Africa and the developing world. The core states of the developed and developing regions, which also include the PRC, might also be identified and categorised accordingly.

Although this approach would, again, tend to direct South Africa's bilateral relations toward regional and multilateral pursuits it would be in line with South Africa's established foreign policy practices in the African and developing regions. However, despite obvious regional implications, the approach itself would be bilateral.

At this stage, particularly in regard to the second and third variations of this approach, as previously described *supra*, it would be premature to consider this type of regional foreign policy formula. From South Africa's perspective, for a regional foreign policy to be viable there would need to be a region comprising individual states, which can successfully implement and sustain a regional foreign policy; and South Africa would have to be one of those states. At present, in terms of organisations in which South Africa participates, only the Southern African Development Community (SADC) provides a foundation for the mere possibility of developing such a regional foreign policy approach. There are, however, serious obstacles. Firstly, Swaziland and Malawi do not have diplomatic relations with the PRC and a regional foreign policy would be dependant on unanimity of purpose in an organisation, such as SADC, which takes decisions on the basis of consensus ({{39}}WS. 2001: *SADC Constitution*: Article 8, (3) [c] {f}). Secondly, SADC has not yet reached the stage of cohesiveness necessary to sustain unity of action in the form of a regional foreign policy. Like many other regional organisations, particularly in the developing world, SADC comprises members which are diverse in terms of language, political systems and ideology, cultures, history, population, economic development, and many other factors, and would appear to be a long way from developing the kind of political, social and economic system that would be able to develop, implement and sustain a common regional foreign policy such as the European Union (EU) is able to apply, within certain defined parameters, in its relations with China. The European Union's approach was initiated in 1995 when it "... responded to the economic and political challenges posed by the changes in China by drawing up a comprehensive policy for the future developments of the EU's relations with China (EU. 1998. *European Communities*: 3).

The European Union's foreign policy approach toward China offers a useful concept for SADC to consider emulating in the distant future, and one which South Africa ought to consider promoting, but only after fundamental changes in SADC take place to eliminate the disparities and differences within and between the organisation's member-states that would otherwise make such a foreign policy impossible to

implement. On the question of human rights, for example, the European Union has been able to engage China "... in a serious and results-oriented dialogue. All subjects of concern, even the most sensitive ones, have been addressed during ... discussions and the prospect of continued, regular dialogue has now been established" (*European Communities*. 1998: 9).

For SADC, or any other regional organisation in which South Africa has membership, to be able to credibly and effectively engage China on a sensitive foreign policy concern, such as human rights, in the manner of the European Union, a necessary prerequisite would be for individual regional-member states to reach agreement on human rights concepts and human rights practices. Clearly, this is not happening at the present time when, for example, South Africa and Zimbabwe differ fundamentally on such issues as press freedom and freedom of speech (*vide* {36}WS. 2001: 1-2).

There is, of course, the question of national sovereignty. Any move in the direction of pursuing a regional foreign policy approach would need to give due consideration to precisely what parameters would apply. What aspects of foreign policy would be dealt with regionally and what aspects would be applied collectively as regional foreign policy in the "bilateral" context; for example, between SADC member states and the PRC. To some extent this situation has already arisen in reverse, a result of the China-Africa Conference whereby the PRC engaged African states, collectively, on the basis of the five principles enunciated by PRC President Jiang Zemin, during a visit to Africa in 1996; and at the same time, still engages those individual African states in terms of individual foreign policy requirements.

7.4.3. Individual-state foreign policy formula

South Africa's current foreign policy has been described as constituting an *ad hoc* approach to foreign policy; an approach apparently specific to the moment and to the state concerned but that may be directed by caprice; and, by implication, could be viewed as lacking consistency, reliability, dependability and predictability.

In examining its bilateral relationships with individual states, South Africa might consider a number of indicators that, on the one hand, are inclined to reflect the status and relative success of the relationship; and, on the other hand, demand attention with a view to possibly improving the relationship. For example, the number and type of bilateral agreements signed and implemented; the number of high-level political visits in each direction; the volume of tourism traffic in each direction and current trends; statistics and trends in respect of the volume of trade, development aid and investment; size and population of each country; number of missions established, and where, in each of the two countries; types of political systems in place in each country; and multilateral organisations to which each country belongs or has access to as an observer or dialogue partner.

Apart from quantitative aspects of a foreign policy relationship, however, it might also be necessary to take into account the need for specialisation in terms of language requirements, as well as knowledge and insight into the cultural, political and historical *milieux*, of the state concerned. With regard to the PRC, for example, it has been stated (2002. *Interview*) that it is simply not possible to function effectively in the PRC in the absence of fluency in Mandarin and that without an ability to read Mandarin it would be equally impossible to understand Chinese society. In order to promote an effective diplomatic relationship with the PRC it would seem that South Africa's foreign policy needs demand a more specialised approach. As has been pointed out (2002. *Interview*):

*If you do not understand Chinese they (the PRC Government)
will assume you are not serious about (your relationship with) China.*

Consequently, the need for specialisation skills, in regard to South Africa's diplomatic service, should not be overlooked or discounted.

The above proposals do not constitute a comprehensive list but merely suggest possible indicators that may help assess the nature and strength of specific bilateral relationships with a view to improving such relationships where possible. The

individual-state foreign policy formula assumes that a close examination that qualifies and quantifies the extent of the existing relationship, with a view to its improvement, will also be capable of reflecting some of those considerations dealt with separately elsewhere, such as generic global and regional; national interest; and human rights, ideological and moral considerations.

A further important consideration is the following. If it is accepted that individual states exhibit often unique combinations of individual characteristics, then it follows that individual foreign policy relationships are equally unique; and that the best way to advance these relationships would be to do so individually.

7.4.4. Ideology and moral issues: policies of idealism

Ideology has been described as an “economising device” by which individuals come to terms with their environment and are provided with a “world view” so that the decision making process is simplified (North. 1981: 48; Gore. 1998: 20). According to North, incomplete information forces individuals to construct subjective models to decipher the world around them (North. 1990: chapter 3; Gore. 1998: 20) and, as Gore (1998: 20) has noted, such “diverse subjective models ... could prevent people from even realising that existing institutions are inefficient.”

This view could, of course, represent a valid criticism of the way in which the PRC utilises the five principles of peaceful coexistence to construct its foreign policy (*vide* paragraph 7.4.5. *supra*); and, by implication, also challenges the supposed validity of proposals in favour of a possible generic foreign policy approach by South Africa. As already pointed out, the world has changed and the PRC approach might well be in need of revision, in which case the observations by North and Gore are pertinent and probably correct. However, this is not to suggest that the PRC’s foreign policy approach has not been effective during the past forty-five years of its use. What is being suggested is that the approach may need to be updated to bring it into line with the expectations and requirements of the modern era of the third millennium, particularly if the PRC intends to play a more effective leadership role in world

affairs; and has been shown, the PRC has already demonstrated a willingness to use a variety of “five principles” combinations (*vide* paragraph 7.4.1 *supra*).

It has become clear that the PRC is increasingly torn between its international ambition to become the equal of the United States, the world’s only global power in terms of military and economic might (*vide* Lam. 1999: 391 & 394) and its national ambition to ensure domestic tranquillity, economic and political stability, and security at home (*vide* Lu. 1997: 155). However, as Kissinger (1972: 388) has pointed out,

... (it may be) ... *that increased control over the domestic environment is purchased at the price of loss of flexibility in international affairs.*

Consequently, the very fact that the PRC exercises such close control, even allowing for its acknowledged moves toward a more open society, over its domestic environment, makes its activities and actions within the external international environment less spectacular and less global than those of the United States. Its lack of certainty at home often makes it less certain abroad. However, the time will surely come when the PRC is ready to take a more active international role and, in order to do this, it may need to adapt its approach to circumvent those foreign policy constraints currently imposed by the existing five principles (PRC. 1999) which include specific reference to mutual non-aggression, non-interference in internal affairs, peaceful coexistence and respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity.

There are other aspects of ideology that must also be taken into account. For example, the PRC’s ideological base, although rooted in Marxism-Leninism (Robinson and Shambaugh. 1997: 31-32), has been elevated to its modern foundation of Socialism with Chinese characteristics, which allows for the important substantive contributions of Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping. In terms of its politics the PRC views itself as being on course for its socialist goal - the secondary stage of socialism - some fifty years in the future, in or around the year 2049 (PRC. 1991: 644); and in terms of PRC economics it views itself as a developing state that will utilise a peculiarly Chinese form of socialist economic practices to attain and eventually surpass the

economic achievements of the world's most developed states by demonstrating "...the superiority of socialism..." (PRC. 1991: 648). These points were made by Zhao Ziyang (*vide* paragraph 9.2: Addendum two {13}): in an address to the 13th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party in October 1987 (PRC. 1991: 635-702) and they remain valid PRC policy objectives today. Part of the PRC economic plan involves learning from economically developed, as well as developing, states wherever possible, particularly in the fields of science and technology, managerial techniques, military technology, agricultural sciences, mining and industrial technology.

Marxism-Leninism, the Communist Party of China, and the evolutionary concept of Socialism with Chinese characteristics, provide useful opportunities for PRC leaders and officials to meet and collaborate with like-minded individuals and political groupings in other parts of the world, including the South African Communist Party (SACP) (*The Sunday Independent*. 6 August, 2000: 4). There is a potential opportunity here for South Africa to utilise these ideological connections to benefit its relationship with the PRC. However, this is a potential two-way street and the CPC is also very likely to seek advantages for the PRC by means of this less formal communication channel ({3}2002. *Interview*).

The closest appeal to ideological policy within South Africa at present is in the form of the African Renaissance and the general Afro-centric approach to all forms of public policy, including important aspects of foreign policy. Ideology, as a policy of idealism, is closely linked, in the South African context, to questions of morality and human rights considerations. South African leaders have continually referred to the linkage between domestic and foreign policy (*Sowetan*. 3 November 1999: 8); and have stressed the importance of human rights commitments in South Africa's foreign policy ({1}SA. 2001: *Nzo speech*). This is not surprising, given South Africa's *apartheid* and colonial history, and the existence of a Bill of Rights entrenched within the country's Constitution ({4}SA. 1996. *Constitution*: chapter two). What is disappointing, if not surprising, is the lack of consistency among South Africa's leadership echelon in expressing concerns for human rights abuses in countries that

are politically and diplomatically close to South Africa; and the failure of South Africa's leaders to meet with prominent Nobel Peace Prize recipients, such as the Dalai Lama (*Pretoria News*. 10 December 1999: 15).

Although it would be unrealistic, and probably self-defeating, for South Africa to base its foreign policy on human rights considerations, human rights issues should be accommodated in a pragmatic way within the broader constraints of South African foreign policy, in accordance with the stated intentions of its leaders and the natural influences of the country's domestic environment. Schlesinger, who argues that human rights cannot be the exclusive goal of foreign policy, has stated as follows (1986: 102):

A nation's supreme interest is self-preservation. When national security and the promotion of human rights come into genuine conflict, national security must prevail (which is not at all to accept the national security bureaucracy as the infallible judge of national security). Because in the nature of foreign policy, human rights can only be one of several competing interests, principle must be tempered by prudence. In short, a state cannot apply the human rights standard consistently. This does not mean, however, that the standard should be abandoned.

Others, including former British Foreign Secretary, David Owen, and former U.S. President, Jimmy Carter, who learned from experience, have also commented (Schlesinger. 1986: 98) on the pitfalls of striving to project policies founded on human rights imperatives.

There are many hard working and effective individuals and organisations outside of government that are committed to the elimination of human rights abuses. Churches and religious organisations, the news media, writers, academics, teachers and universities, business organisations and trade unions, as in the case of the anti-*apartheid* movement are also all capable of exerting pressure on individual governments that are known human rights abusers. If South Africa is serious about its

human rights commitments then it does not need to base its total foreign policy on human rights concerns in order to remain committed and reasonably effective. As Schlesinger (1986: 107) has written,

...moral obligations of human rights rest more strongly on non-governmental than on governmental bodies.

South Africa can and should play a far more effective active role in support of human rights everywhere but such actions will need to display impartiality and consistency if South Africa expects to earn and retain respect in this endeavour. There needs to be a balance between the requirements for good diplomatic relations and the requirements for unambiguous condemnation of human rights abuses where and when they occur.

7.4.5. National interest: a policy of realism

A number of South African foreign policy statements have been made which reflect an interest, and possibly a commitment, to the pursuit of a foreign policy in support of the national or domestic interest. Interestingly, in the *Department of Foreign Affairs Strategic Document 2000-2005*, Foreign Minister Dlamini Zuma referred to *national interest* (SA. 2001: 5) whereas the Director-General, Siphosiso Pityana, referred to *domestic interest* (SA. 2001: 7).

A policy of realism, according to Morgenthau (Pfaltzgraff. 1972: 50), would require that national interest be conceptualised in terms of power:

... if we look at all nations, our own included, as political entities pursuing their respective interests defined in terms of power, we are able to do justice to them all. And we are able to do justice to all of them in a dual sense: We are able to judge other nations as we judge our own and, having judged them in this fashion, we are then capable of pursuing policies that respect the interests of other nations, while protecting and promoting those of our own. Moderation in policy

cannot fail to reflect the moderation of moral judgement.

Unfortunately, Morgenthau's theory does not allow for the irrational decision maker or the poorly advised decision maker. Morgenthau (Pfaltzgraff, 1972: 45) assumed that statesmen would automatically distinguish between the nation's need " ... to think and act in terms of the national interest, and their *personal* wish ... to see their own moral values and political principles realised throughout the world ..." Clearly, not all leaders expect their personal moral values and political principles to be imposed on the rest of the world but many of them seem to expect the rest of the world to understand and accept those values and principles, even when they are widely regarded as morally reprehensible and abhorrent.

If South Africa is to pursue a policy of national interest, that aspires to be effective, then South Africa's decision makers will need to subordinate its perceived regional and multilateral interests to a strong and focused national interest driven by a deliberate emphasis on its many bilateral foreign policy relationships. This would certainly enhance South Africa's opportunities to display leadership within the international environment, particularly in Africa, because decision makers would be able to focus on the requirements of national interest, involving a single decision making institution within a single domestic environment, and not regional interest, involving a relatively large number of decision making institutions within an equally large number of domestic environments. However, as Robinson (Rosenau, 1969: 185) implies, the effectiveness of a national interest approach would rest on the power available to the state employing such an approach; and the essential nature of the foreign policy goals themselves.

Foreign policy goals must not range beyond the power available, for although national desires for good and for evil are infinite, the resources for obtaining them are strictly limited. It is therefore necessary to distinguish desirable goals from essential goals. The list of essential national goals is called the total national interest.

A national interest approach would, in some respects, exhibit characteristics of the PRC's generic approach, in that its success depends on a useful reserve of power and influence; it would also exhibit limited similarity to the United States and Russian approaches as regards the foreign policy doctrines of these countries, as expounded by their top executive decision makers. Foreign policy doctrines are unilateral policy statements that are premised on national interest considerations and include the Monroe Doctrine (Plano and Olton. 1969: 155), whereby the United States declared that it would oppose any foreign (military) intervention in the Western Hemisphere; the Brezhnev Doctrine (Karnow. 1983: 637), whereby "... the Soviet Communist Party boss ... (warned) that the Soviet Union might intervene in any (communist) country whose policies deviated from its standards ..."; and the Nixon Doctrine (Karnow. 1983: 594), whereby countries receiving American money and *materiel* to protect themselves against communism would have to supply their own troops. South Africa, of course, is not in the same league as these countries in terms of the relative power at their disposal, and would need to tailor its own foreign policy declarations to its available resources.

A national interest foreign policy approach by South Africa can therefore be expected to work best in selective and relatively limited circumstances; as when practised against the interests of a weaker state, at least in terms of the circumstances that are being contested. As far as the SA-PRC bilateral relationship is concerned the PRC is well-placed to conduct its foreign policy in terms of purely national interest considerations because of its extensive and varied power base. South Africa does not have this advantage and its national interest considerations, in terms of its foreign policy approach, would only be expected to arise in regard to primary interests, (Robinson in {1}Rosenau.1969: 184) such as,

... protection of ... physical, political, and cultural identity and survival against encroachment from the outside. Primary interests can never be compromised or traded. All nations hold these same interests and must defend them at any price.

In regard to national interest considerations there is a need to also be aware, as Robinson (Rosenau.1969: 183-185) observes, that national interest can take many forms. It is axiomatic, of course, that a total national interest approach would be individualistic and nation-centred. Of course, South Africa cannot afford to be seen to turn its back on its regional and multilateral responsibilities and concerns, and is unlikely to do so. There is, therefore, a perceived need to explore the possibility of finding a middle way between the realist national interest approach and those approaches that might allow more flexibility in terms of South Africa's ideological and moral commitment to Africa and the developing world.

7.4.6. Mutual strategic interest: a policy of constructive engagement

It may be possible to find a middle way between the ideological and moral approach to foreign policy on the one hand and the realistic approach on the other. The United States originally attempted such an approach when it embarked on a policy of constructive engagement with *apartheid* South Africa (Crocker. 1993: 79).

Constructive engagement, as an approach to foreign policy, may provide an opportunity for South Africa to combine its national interest concerns with its moral concerns and ideological preferences; and at the same time advance its regional and multilateral priorities. It could be construed as morally irresponsible as well as diplomatically, and perhaps economically, self-defeating for South Africa to continue to engage certain countries of the international environment more favourably than others in spite of mal-administration, mis-government, mis-guided economic policies, and fundamental and blatant abuses of human rights. The moral justification for engaging such states would ideally arise if communication and contact were seen as a means to effectively facilitate increased respect for human rights, no matter how small; and to create a climate of rational discourse about sensitive diplomatic topics with a view to elevating the bilateral relationship, morally and beneficially. Deputy President Zuma (DFA. 1999:1203. *Foreign Correspondents Association dinner*: 2 December 1999) has already declared that *engagement* is a means whereby South

Africa and other states can seek *common ground ...and ... speak with one voice on issues of common interest.*

While recognising the economic and social transformation that has taken place in the People's Republic of China, particularly since the commencement of the era of Deng Xiaoping (*vide* Naughton in Shambaugh. 1995: 106) and as continued under the leadership of Jiang Zemin, South Africa may find it increasingly difficult to ignore some of the less palatable facts about the PRC that must, inevitably, impact on South Africa's relations with that country. On the question of human rights there is a fundamental generic difference between South Africa and the People's Republic of China in that the PRC focuses on community or group rights (Pye in Hook. 1996: 17) whereas SA focuses on individual rights (SA. 1996. *Constitution*: chapter two).

In the very broadest sense, on the fundamental question of personal freedom, laws in South Africa usually focus on what the law forbids whereas, in the PRC, the focus is usually on what the law permits. In other words, in South Africa the individual *may do* anything he or she wants to do unless the law forbids it; in the PRC the individual *may not do* anything that the law does not expressly permit him or her to do.

In the PRC the news media are strictly controlled by the state. In March 1988, Li Peng, in an address to the First Session of the Seventh National People's Congress, declared (PRC. 1991: 748),

... governments at all levels (in the PRC) should pay close attention to the development of such enterprises as broadcasting, television, film production, the press and publishing, and let the mass media play an active part in publicising policies, keeping in touch with the masses and developing consultation and dialogue.

Today there are still no privately owned newspapers. Foreign TV channels, such as CNN, BBC TV and *Deutsche Welle* are available to foreigners, foreign embassies, selected government agencies and selected international hotels, but the Chinese

people normally do not have access to these facilities. Nevertheless, the fax machine and the internet are increasingly ensuring that some uncontrolled foreign news does reach the Chinese people.

Although religion has not been stamped out in the officially atheistic PRC, it is strictly controlled. The state-backed Catholic Church in the PRC (DFA. 2001 *Background*: 81) is not recognised by the Vatican and its bishops have not been ordained by the Pope. Article 36 of the PRC Constitution, states ({{1}}PRC. 2000. *Constitution*) that, "... religious bodies and religious affairs are not subject to any foreign domination ...", which makes it effectively impossible for the official Catholic Church or any other organised foreign Church to operate within the PRC. Christians may not hold religious meetings in their homes but must attend a registered meeting place, usually a Church building invariably constructed before the Communist take-over. As recently as October 2000, a nineteen year old Christian, reportedly (DFA. 2001 *Background*: 81) arrested after attending a church service in a private home, died in prison.

There are no "opposition" political parties in the PRC. However, there are eight so-called democratic parties ({{2}} PRC. 1999: *Democratic Parties*) which collaborate closely with the ruling CPC to which they are all subordinate. These eight parties are also financed by the PRC Government. They function very much in the manner of political guilds in that they represent specific occupational, intellectual and social groups within Chinese society. The *Democratic Parties* are an important factor in the membership of the pro-government *United Front* grouping of "... non-party intellectuals, business people, overseas Chinese, (Communist Party-approved) religious leaders and other people of influence ..." (Lau. *South China Morning Post*. 9 December, 2000: 9). Although the survival of these parties is assured by virtue of their creation during the formative era of the PRC, and their unfailing support for the ruling CPC, the China Democracy Activists (CDA) were not permitted to form a new political party (Lam. *South China Morning Post*. 26 October 1998: 7) because of its stated intention to be an opposition party; one that would be prepared to challenge the

supremacy of the CPC. The leaders of the CDA were arrested, tried and imprisoned and some fled into exile (Bezlova in {16}WS. 1998: 1).

South African decision makers may also exhibit fundamental differences with their PRC counterparts on the question of justice because the PRC practices capital punishment. However, despite obvious differences that threaten to divide the PRC and SA on human rights issues, both South Africa and the PRC have strategic interests in developing their diplomatic and foreign policy relationship. Although the need to preserve and build on this diplomatic relationship appears to be a fundamental reason why human rights issues have not been raised at high level, these differences need to be addressed in diplomatic terms so that there is no confusion about where South Africa stands on the question of human rights. It should be made clear, sooner rather than later, as to how South Africa is likely to respond to a PRC request for extradition of a PRC national accused of a capital crime in his or her country. Is South Africa prepared to enter into an extradition agreement and, if so, with what provisos, if any? South Africa may also need to clarify its stance in regard to official meetings with the Dalai Lama, an important religious leader and Nobel Peace Prize laureate.

Despite its differing approach to human rights questions, the PRC is a signatory to the United Nations Conventions on Human Rights (Ma. *China Daily*. 8 October 1998: 1). In addition the PRC has demonstrated a willingness to engage with other states in dialogue about human rights issues and considerations.({2}2001. *Interview; vide* {23}WS. 1999: 1). Therefore, the question of human rights need not be a cause of dissension between South Africa and the PRC. Instead, human rights issues may provide a useful and fruitful dialogue whereby South Africa and the PRC can be made aware of sensitivities; and may be better prepared to try and resolve differences when they occur in a manner that will facilitate a constructive approach to resolving these differences. As pointed out previously, the Pretoria Declaration makes provision for constructive dialogue between South Africa and the PRC. There is no reason why such constructive dialogue should not include dialogue about human rights issues.

The European Union, for example, “is committed to a strategy of comprehensive engagement with China .. (which focuses on) .. “a renewed and upgraded EU-China bilateral political dialogue, as well as through the greater involvement of China in both regional and multilateral initiatives of global interest” (EC. 1998: 5). Consequently, the European Union has established an EU-PRC partnership (EC. 1998) that pursues aims such as,

- engaging China further, through an upgraded political dialogue, in the international community;
- supporting China’s transition to an open society based upon the rule of law and the respect for human rights;
- integrating China further in the world economy by bringing it more fully into the world trading system and by supporting the process of economic and social reform underway in the country; and
- raising the EU’s profile in China.

The EU-PRC partnership also aims at strengthening its trade dialogue through the conclusion of specific bilateral agreements (EC. 1998: 16-17) that relate to maritime transport, air transport, nuclear trade and safety, customs and science and technology. Although these types of agreement also have relevance for South Africa, few have been negotiated and none have been fully implemented (2001. *Interview*).

The United States, too, has been able (albeit from the advantageous perspective of being the world’s only global super power) to engage the PRC in a mutually beneficial manner, despite long-standing differences on a number of issues, including human rights and military policy. Although not specifically termed constructive engagement (*vide* Roy. 1998: 137) this is the type of foreign policy that is effectively being practised with the PRC by states that either have, or envisage reason for, a realistic and morally defensible foreign policy relationship with the PRC. This is an approach that might also be well-suited to the SA-PRC bilateral relationship.

7.5. Alternative policy choices

In considering various types of foreign policy approaches that are generally available to decision makers it is now necessary to identify the *best* of these alternative approaches, and consider their anticipated consequences if applied to the bilateral foreign policy relationship between the Republic of South Africa and the People's Republic of China. For example, could a generic foreign policy approach, by South Africa, be expected to prove viable and effective?

If the proposed six principles, recorded in chapter seven, paragraph 4.1 *supra*, are retained and if these principles are steadfastly reflected in South Africa's foreign policy approach, there can be little doubt, if any, that human rights considerations, respect for peace and stability, African developmental priorities, mutual economic advantages, equality and respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, could establish a solid basis for an honourable, predictable, dependable, consistent foreign policy. With particular regard to the relationship with the PRC it might be useful to consider incorporating, as far as possible, the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, in an agreed manner that would avoid negating the principles advanced by South Africa. The PRC insistence, for example, on *non-interference in each other's domestic affairs* should not be allowed to eclipse a possible South African requirement (hypothetical in this example) for *an agreed basis for human rights dialogue*.

The use of declared principles as a foundation for a generic South African foreign policy approach could also be expected to serve as an invaluable quick reference guide to keep South African diplomats consistently on track as far as the basic tenets of foreign policy are concerned; and could provide the leeway necessary to make effective and focused foreign policy decisions outside the restrictions imposed by the present DFA administrative and management structure. However, a determining factor must be the resources and employable power available to South Africa and a willingness to utilise that power and those resources.

In examining the possibility of employing a generic regional approach to foreign policy it became clear that the SADC region (*vide* Mills, 2000: 278) would not be capable of effectively and consistently projecting this type of approach to foreign policy relations with the PRC. Apart from the disparate views of member states on particular aspects of human rights (DFA, 20000619) the region includes member states that do not have diplomatic relations with the PRC due to their continuing diplomatic support for Taiwan. There are, of course, other regions besides SADC but none in which South Africa has membership that could be considered a suitable vehicle for the pursuit of a collective or coordinated foreign policy toward the PRC.

Even though the China Africa Conference 2000 effectively created an excellent opportunity for a large number of African states to promote their continent with a single diplomatic voice this did not happen. The conference favoured the PRC organisers from the outset and resulting developmental and economic gains for Africa may be slow to materialise in substantive terms (2001. *Interview*).

Clearly, the pursuit of a national interest foreign policy approach is best suited for use in regard to weaker states and South Africa would be at a clear disadvantage if it were to promote such a policy in regard to powerful developing states such as the PRC or India, or any of the developed states. The use of the unilateral doctrinal approach, as an important aspect of political realism, would also only prove feasible when directed in relation to weaker states but might be worth pursuing as an aspect of multilateral diplomacy; a situation where small and developing powers could combine to increase their access to collective power and collective resources. For example, African maritime states might collectively consider a doctrinal foreign policy approach to the protection of their marine and coastal resources.

It has been shown that the ideological approach to foreign policy can be restrictive and may impact negatively on the need for flexibility in decision making whereas too strong a focus on moral issues, including human rights concerns, would be impractical because primary high priority realistic concerns, such as the preservation of society and the state, would always tend to over-ride moral issues (Schlesinger.

1986: 102). Nevertheless, if *ideological* issues such as the African Renaissance philosophy, are promoted within the framework of a less rigid, yet focused, approach there is some hope of success. Moral issues, too, can be incorporated in approaches to foreign policy, other than the proposed policies of idealism; for example, the generic approach, the individual state approach and the constructive engagement approach.

The individual state approach, as indicated, may appear to be an *ad hoc* and rather directionless approach if not well secured by principles of dependability, predictability, reliability and consistency. An advantage of this approach, however, resides in the opportunity to tailor South Africa's individual foreign policy relationships according to its needs and, one might add, the perceived accepted norms of the international *milieu*. There is some resemblance to the PRC's *lingqi luzao* approach of initiating diplomatic relations with every country on a new basis (*vide* Zhao. 96: 4). The approach does not require that all states should be treated equally as not all states will be of equal importance or relevance to South Africa. In fact it would be appropriate to categorise states of the international environment in terms of their relative importance to South Africa so that foreign policy objectives can be determined and implemented accordingly. In a sense, South Africa has already embarked on this course through the establishment of binational commissions and equivalent mechanisms with several states of the international environment ({}SA. 2001). For example, binational commissions help coordinate South Africa's relations with the United States, India and Australia, among others (*vide* {}SA. 2001: 1-3). Since the national elections of 1994 some 18 states, five of them in sub-Saharan Africa and seven (including four North African states) from the Islamic region, have either established, or are in the course of establishing, binational commissions (or equivalent mechanisms) with South Africa (*vide* {}SA. 2001: 1-3). A binational commission will soon also help coordinate the SA-PRC bilateral relationship. Too many binational commissions, however, might tend to reduce the value of this mechanism in its symbolic sense as a benchmark for diplomatic excellence; too many commissions might also tax South Africa's ability to give the proper amount of time, energy and resources to keeping them in proper operational order.

The constructive engagement approach appears to offer some limited possibilities for South Africa. Since 1994, South Africa has stated, time and again, that human rights considerations are an important aspect of its foreign policy approach (SA. 1998. *Nzo Speech*). Yet, to date, it has hesitated to raise this topic with the PRC (Rademeyer. *The Star*. 27 April 2000: 3). In some cases it has been intimidated into silence and inaction (*vide* Mills. 2000: 265). It has also been slow to raise questions of human rights abuses with its neighbours in the SADC community (*vide* DFA. 20000619). If South Africa is to retain some semblance of a reputation for its professed commitment to human rights it will need to be prepared to risk unpopularity with transgressor states, in the interests of its own international reputation and expressed foreign policy commitments. In this regard, a constructive engagement foreign policy approach, whereby a frank human rights dialogue takes place at high level on a regular basis, may provide a useful opportunity to engage the PRC and other states. Clearly, South Africa is not the United States and the PRC is not South Africa. Therefore, a constructive engagement approach on the lines of the American regional model, whereby the United States could and did apply enormous pressure against the South African Government and other Southern African states (Crocker. 1993: 76), during the latter days of the *apartheid* era, would not be feasible for use by South Africa.

From the foregoing, and given that this research focuses primarily on South Africa's *bilateral* foreign policy relationship with the People's Republic of China, proposed multilateral regional approaches can be discounted. It is also quite clear that approaches that would require access to extensive resources and power capabilities would be inappropriate in regard to South Africa's foreign policy toward the PRC. In addition, it is desirable that South Africa should adhere to its stated foreign policy commitments, including its commitment to support for human rights (SA. 2001. *Strategic plan 2000-2005*: 11), and that its foreign policy relationships should be seen to be consistent, dependable, reliable and predictable. Therefore, it is argued that, in regard to the SA-PRC bilateral relationship, the generic approach and the individual state approach have most to offer. A combination of these two approaches could

conceivably lead to the perceived *best* way to promote the SA-PRC bilateral relationship.

7.6. Implementation of the proposed alternative

At the outset it must be stated that the proposed foreign policy approaches are unlikely to be implemented, or even considered, given the nature of foreign policy decision making in South Africa and given the nature of the decision making *milieu* in which foreign policy is formulated. Therefore, the question of actual implementation only arises in the purely hypothetical sense.

The process of public policy implementation, including foreign policy implementation, would normally commence after the relevant decisions are taken to adopt the recommended course of action and the policy implementation process would terminate when the intended goals applicable to those decisions have been achieved; and when it is clear that the costs relating to those decisions, in terms of time, money and other resources, will be largely in accordance with expectations. The required human and material resources would also need to be readily available. In the case of foreign policy, however, goals are often ongoing, and not all could be expected to be achieved within the anticipated time frame; and sometimes the failure to achieve some goals might be due to organisational failings on the part of South Africa's bureaucracy (2002. *Interview*), rather than intransigence or obstructionism on the part of the PRC.

It is necessary to consider, in a hypothetical sense, some of the foreign policy goals identified and proposed, in regard to South Africa's bilateral relationship with the PRC: the need for Approved Destination Status for PRC tourists to SA (2001. *Interview*; 2002. *Interview*); the need to open the way for the export of SA agricultural products to the PRC (2002. *Interview*); the need to establish a Consulate-General in Shanghai (2001. *Interview*); the prevention of illegal immigration from the PRC into SA (Sono. *The Star*. 27 April 1999), which is estimated to exceed 70000 mainly mainland Chinese (2002. *Interview*); and the

need to enter into a human rights dialogue with the PRC. The first goal depends on the PRC; the third depends on South Africa; and the second, fourth and fifth goals depend on both South Africa and the PRC.

In view of the government's often-stated commitments to human rights, South Africa is morally and ethically obliged to find a way to raise this issue with the PRC. The PRC, of course, is under no similar bilateral obligation. However, if South Africa wishes to honour its expressed commitment it will need to find a mutually beneficial and acceptable foreign policy mechanism for doing so and it would seem that the proposed Binational Commission, established under the terms of the Pretoria Declaration (DFA. 2001: 30), would provide such a mechanism. Furthermore, in order to avoid appearing to single out the PRC (not the only state to receive international criticism for its response to human rights issues) (*vide* Kennedy. 1987: 410) for special treatment, in regard to human rights concerns, South Africa might consider establishing similar bilateral dialogues with all states that are known to have questionable human rights records. South Africa could also benefit from the experience of other states that have successfully developed, bilaterally or multilaterally, coherent foreign policy approaches toward the PRC, such as the member states of the European Union (EC. 1998). Of course, South Africa should not expect to faithfully duplicate the objectives of other states in regard to the PRC but, at the same time, should not be afraid to be guided by the diplomatic strategies and techniques of states that have more expertise and experience, than South Africa, in forging a mutually beneficial and successful relationship with the PRC.

On the question of SA agricultural exports and Approved Destination Status, these are issues that have already received some attention in terms of agricultural-related bilateral agreements already signed (2001. *Interview*); and a signed commitment at the China-Africa Conference to promote, among other priorities, service industries, which would include tourism. These issues can also be resolved, wholly or partially, through the Binational Commission. However, there is a need to ensure that South African agricultural land and fishing resources are not exploited in ways that are ultimately not beneficial to South Africans. Environmental needs, correct farming

methods, labour needs and practices, and any other concerns that fall within the province of good government, need to be addressed. Although the PRC has reportedly (2002. *Interview*) made some progress in addressing environmental concerns there are inherent dangers in regard to over-fishing, due in part to questionable PRC statistics and that country's belief that there are more fish available in some waters than actually exist. A further troubling aspect of the bilateral relationship between South Africa and the PRC relates to illegal immigration (2001. *Interview*; *vide* Sono. *The Star*. 27 April 1999) but before real progress can be made in this regard South Africa will have to improve its immigration policies and ensure that it has the necessary resources to effectively police the country's borders and coastline; it will have to ensure maximum cooperation from SADC states, particularly neighbouring states such as Lesotho, Namibia and Botswana (2002. *Interview*); and it will have to combat corruption, both at the Department of Home Affairs in South Africa and at South Africa's embassies abroad (2001. *Interview*; 2002. *Interview*).

South Africa also needs a Consulate-General in Shanghai in order to support South African business interests there and in order to encourage investment into South Africa from this very wealthy and influential city (2001. *Interview*; 2002. *Interview*). During the period since South Africa established diplomatic relations with the PRC, South Africa has established embassies in Kingston, Jamaica and Kampala, Uganda, among others, and the PRC has established Consulates-General in Cape Town, Durban and Johannesburg (2001. *Interview*). Given that the PRC is eight times the geographical area of South Africa, a Consulate-General in Shanghai is a necessity that only the South African Government can turn into reality.

Finally, South Africa has to consider using competent and well-trained diplomatic personnel (*vide* Mills. *The Star*. 4 February 1999: 2) who can read and speak Mandarin fluently. The inability to converse in or read Mandarin will automatically deny the opportunity to perform effectively and efficiently in the PRC (2002. *Interview*; 2002. *Interview*). The Department of Foreign Affairs should be aware that when anything appears in English in the PRC it is because the PRC Government wants to get a particular message across to the Developed and English-speaking

worlds. What appears in Mandarin is intended for the Chinese (2002. *Interview*). Therefore, it is not possible to effectively work in, and understand, the PRC without first understanding Mandarin (2002. *Interview*). The Department of Foreign Affairs and other relevant government departments might also consider recruiting members of the South African Chinese community, particularly those who have retained a commitment to their Chinese cultural and linguistic traditions and who would therefore be able to function effectively in the PRC and other Chinese-speaking states and territories. However, it has also been suggested (2002. *Interview*) that Chinese South Africans would tend to function more effectively in Hong Kong and Taiwan than on the Chinese mainland.

It is appreciated that racial and gender representativeness is a major focus of South African governmental policy. However, there are ways to accomplish this objective without diminishing the needs for competency and experience. For example, experienced diplomatic personnel (Landsberg. *Sowetan*. 7 July 1998: 12), can still serve a very useful mentoring and training role, in specialist capacities, both at Head Office and at overseas missions, and should be utilised with a view to assisting new appointments, Heads of Mission, and Heads of Departments, *where necessary*, to gain experience and competence. This would do far more to establish a team spirit and collaborative approach than the current ongoing exclusivist (*vide* remarks by Colin Eglin in Hadland and Rantao. 1999: 144), and covertly discriminatory (*vide* Mvoko. *Business Day*. 4 October 2000), approach that has been introduced into the DFA's operational *milieu*.

From the foregoing it is clear that South Africa's current foreign policy approach is long on planning and relatively short on focus, and that in regard to its SA-PRC policy, it has only made progress at the pleasure and direction of the PRC (2001. *Interview*). If South Africa intends to show leadership, no matter how modest, in the international environment (not only Africa) it will need to choose its own course and demonstrate its independence (*vide* Landsberg. *Sowetan*. 7 July 1998: 12) by giving expression to its own needs and values through a foreign policy approach that adds moral and material value to its international pursuits. And whatever planning takes

place should focus on making the necessary resources available to achieve the broad goals, hopefully realistic goals, that the government has determined. As to the *best* foreign policy approach, a subtle combination of the generic and individual state approaches would, it is argued, help to create focus with regard to South Africa's foreign policy relationship with the PRC. Such a combination of approaches would free top decision makers to take important decisions in a consistent, reliable, dependable and predictable manner; and would subordinate planning and micro-management to a supportive role that would allow South Africa's professional policy advisors to get on with the business of advising decision makers. It would also give South Africa's diplomatic personnel the freedom to implement policy without foregoing the opportunity to also influence its direction from time to time by recommending changes to policies that prove ineffective or inappropriate.

The obvious monitors of policy, of course, are those who implement it, both within the DFA and at South Africa's Missions abroad. However, it is argued that the Foreign Affairs Parliamentary Portfolio Committee should play a much more high-profile role in this regard because there is a perceived need for public policy, including foreign policy, to be publicly debated when not of such a nature as to jeopardise national security if made public. It is also proposed that the Foreign Affairs Portfolio Committee should have the right to publicly question, and veto if necessary, proposed new appointments of all ambassadors and heads of mission who would serve South Africa's interests abroad. This procedure, it is argued, would give added import to the proper and effective implementation of South African foreign policy.

Finally, it remains to point out that in order to be effective, and of practical benefit, a policy analysis needs to be comprehensible and timely (Hogwood and Gunn. 1984: 269). How timely it is perceived to be may depend on the response of the reader; whereas its comprehensibility depends essentially on the researcher.

7.7. Conclusion

This chapter has explored some of the practical limitations of foreign policy long-term planning and has also examined the current status of South Africa's relations with the People's Republic of China. The chapter has identified and explored a variety of approaches to foreign policy and has recommended a proposed "best" choice from a range of possible courses of action, whereby South Africa may pursue a more effective foreign policy relationship with the PRC. The chapter also demonstrates that in order for foreign policy to be effective, in regard to the PRC, proper professional skills and competencies must be available to members of the South African diplomatic contingent performing service in the People's Republic of China. Finally, it remains to summarise this thesis in the following and final chapter, and draw conclusions based on the elaborated body of research.