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Broader vision needed for 2010

Achille Mbembe

JUDGING by the reigning public discourse, SA's hosting of the Soccer World Cup in 2010, the first on African soil, is a purely practical matter – an opportunity for money-making – requiring no creativity or cultural imagination. Current debates are conducted as if building new infrastructure, renovating airports and stadiums, resolving questions of transport and traffic, increasing the number of hotels, and finding appropriate responses to security issues are all that is required to successfully stage this mega-event.

Citizens' participation

Hardly anyone is asking questions about citizens' or popular participation, without which no such event has been staged successfully in recent memory. Nothing is being done to bring the event to communities, and public information about the road map to the Cup itself is lacking.

If this instrumentalist approach persists, we are likely to organise a reasonably successful, if not original, Soccer World Cup. But it won't be African, nor will it be memorable. It will probably primarily benefit FIFA, private local and international agencies, and special interest groups. Should this happen, the SA taxpayer will have subsidised the first major transnational financial scam of the 21st century.

The current spirit of instrumentalism extends to the cultural realm. There does not seem to be a coherent cultural and powerful moral proposition that justifies the colossal financial effort South Africans are making in respect of this event.

When Japan and Korea first organised the Olympics in 1964 and in 1988 respectively, they used those opportunities to market themselves as modern nations, and to celebrate their progress towards the top echelons of the industrialised world. More recently, Korea used the Soccer World Cup to re-brand itself as an advanced post-modern society and economy. After all, it is one of the world's best educated and most technology-savvy populations.

It had learnt from the 1988 Olympics that sports mega-events provide their host countries with a major opportunity to attract worldwide attention to their products and services. It also understood that, due to the mediated nature of the event, the World Cup is about brand-making rather than direct money-making. And brand-making is fundamentally a cultural act.

All the indications are that 'Africa, the cradle of humankind' will be the dominant theme of the 2010 Soccer World Cup. On the global stage, such platitudes will only further relegate the continent to the realm of folklore. Not only do they

smack of nativism; they also do not say anything meaningful about who we are, who we want to be, and our proposition to the world.

That Bafana Bafana (the national football team) will not win this competition is a public secret. If we cannot win on the field, and if our victory won't be economic and financial, we had better start thinking hard about changing the very terms of what it means to compete at all.

Our victory can only be a cultural and moral one. We will win the 2010 Soccer World Cup if we organise it in such a way that it helps to change the terms of Africa's world recognition. If it fundamentally alters the ways in which Africa's *voice* is expressed and heard, and Africa's *face* is seen in the world, then this alone will justify the colossal amounts of public money spent on this postcolonial and megalomaniac venture. Indeed, since the end of apartheid, the law of greed and profit has superseded the law of value and meaning. In government, business circles, and the public mind, a poor understanding prevails of what the current epoch of cultural globalisation is all about.

Petty nationalism

Petty nationalism prevents us from coming to terms with the role of football in the new global cultural economy. Years of cultural boycott, intellectual isolation, and white supremacy have hardly prepared us to creatively appraise the role of mega-events such as the World Cup in the global politics of culture.

Our ruling elite – and its opponents – do not seem to understand that one of the main features of contemporary capitalism is the increasing convergence of the cultural and the economic. Today, cultural products of all sorts constitute a crucial share of the output of modern capitalism, and culture-producing sectors of the economy represent some of the most dynamic growth industries in the world. They also constitute the central economic engines of a number of global city-regions.

For this reason, cities such as Paris, New York, Los-Angeles, Barcelona, Rio de Janeiro, Toronto, or Seoul consistently play the cultural card as a way of promoting local business and economic growth. In order to attract foreign investors, they do not simply liberalise their tax codes; they also invest massively in culture (street life, museums, art galleries, libraries, universities, parks, restaurants and cafés, theatres and halls, squares, gardens and open spaces, educational and civic institutions).

We will win the 2010 Soccer World Cup if we organise it in such a way that it helps to change the terms of Africa's world recognition



President Thabo Mbeki at South Africa's World Cup presentation in Berlin ... SA will need more than infrastructure to stage a successful World Cup. Alexander Hassenstein / Getty Images

Football *per se* is increasingly part of the wide range of cultural commodities that are the hallmark of globalisation: electronic and consumer products, films and musical recordings, cable television services, software and multimedia production, satellite broadcasting systems and associated entertainment products, theme parks, sports teams, cosmetics and perfumes, clothing, furniture, jewelry, advertising, book publishing, theatre, avant-garde architecture, and so on.

The game of football displays the four main features of contemporary global capitalism: rampant speculation, the creation of new bundles of rights of ownership, the emergence of new commodity forms and possibilities for profit, and the dematerialisation of labour. Global capitalism itself has undergone a cultural turn; in turn, global cultural circuits now constitute vibrant markets. Football is not simply one of these cultural commodities; the game has become one new modality of profit-making in the global sphere.

Global commodity

As an event, the World Cup is a business operation in this global cultural economy. It does not simply reflect the globalisation of popular culture. Due to its ever-refined attractiveness to the commercial trinity of sponsors, advertisers, and television, football has become the ultimate global commodity, and a portal to the world's most distant regions.

If we want to make the best of this event, it is important for us to understand the nature of these shifts. The production of images is one of the core characteristics of globalisation. Today, the image is the commodity *par excellence*. Strictly speaking, the World Cup is as much about the game as it is

about practising capitalism in the sense of producing representations, images, and signs that are sold to the world as commodities.

The 2010 Soccer World Cup will not solve the structural problems of poverty, disease, insecurity, crime and unemployment. We should therefore use the tournament to change the way in which we craft our own image of ourselves and our continent. We should use this opportunity to claim a share of the commercialised production of images for world markets.

But without a vigorous and concerted intellectual effort, cultural and artistic imagination, the right mix of entrepreneurial know-how, creative energy, and public policy, we might have almost nothing to sell.

Contrary to the norm in Europe, the US or Japan, our biggest corporations have not mastered the organisational complexities or cultivated the creative verve that constitute the bedrock of global cultural production. Even worse, they show no interest in the arts and humanities. In the absence of proper institutional infrastructures, policies and strategies, the only images we might end up peddling will be the usual stereotypes of happy natives in leopard skins and beads, performing a so-called traditional culture they, in fact, are inventing almost from scratch, all of this in the midst of lions and elephants roaming the wild African landscape.

The tournament itself is, first and foremost, a city festival on a world scale. A memorable World Cup will be one that heralds an urban and cultural renaissance in SA. For this to happen, 2010 should be used as a stepping stone towards fostering public culture, the arts and the humanities; further de-racialising our cities; and ending the destruction of public space that was the hallmark of apartheid urbanism.

We should use this event to move away from the current 'bantustanisation' of urban space. We should also use it to reverse the militarisation of city life that is fostered by the uncivil state of social warfare we have been forced into by high levels of crime, poverty, and disease.

To be sure, shopping malls surrounded by spiked metal fences and the ubiquitous 'armed response' units cannot be the only spaces where the public will conglomerate during the World Cup. A new concept of built public environment that fosters racial desegregation and a culture of conviviality should be invented. To properly host our African and foreign visitors as well as our own people, more squares, more pedestrian streets should be built. We need to take back our parks, turn our cities inside out, and revert the current process whereby they are turned outside in. We should also use the World Cup to counter the privatisation of the urban public realm, and its rampant colonisation by property developers.

We will need a reformist vision of public space that includes, among others, a de-racialisation of our street names. We should make the streets themselves less desolate and less dangerous. This implies substantial investments in public amenities and in public space and recreation. To turn back the clock on a decade of white and black middle-class demand for increased spatial and social insulation, we will need to shift fiscal resources away from corporate-defined redevelopment priorities and end the subsidisation of new, racist enclaves, in however benign terms they are described.

Arc of violence

To be sure, this will require a serious security effort. Our crime rates are too high, and present a deadly risk to any foreign visitor. A rising arc of violence is engulfing our neighbourhoods. The carnage is no longer self-contained within racial boundaries, as was the case under apartheid. It now tends to leak everywhere.

Crime is fast destroying the moral fabric of SA cities, and is becoming a major threat to SA democracy as well as the prominent manifestation of a 'class war' that is largely a continuation of the 'race war' of yesterday.

We will organise a memorable Soccer World Cup if, by 2010, safety and security are no longer commodities defined by access to private protective services or membership of some fortified residential enclave or restricted suburb, but truly public, democratic goods accessible to all.

We cannot organise a memorable Soccer World Cup if the fear and reality of violent death at the hands of criminals are not tackled efficiently. This might require a 'zero tolerance policy' that does not criminalise the poor but is unforgiving towards the criminal.

FIFA is the most likely to profit from the 2010 World Cup. The two main financial levers in the profit-making project of the FIFA World Cup are broadcasting rights and corporate sponsorship. During the 2002 World Cup, FIFA granted the

worldwide broadcasting rights to a private sports marketing group for a guaranteed minimum of US\$800 million. Besides this, 15 of the world's leading companies paid an average of US\$35 million to join the 'FIFA partnership programme' of sponsors.

The willingness of these companies to pay such huge sums of money demonstrates their recognition that the World Cup affords them an unprecedented opportunity to brand themselves as global players; this is especially true for firms with head offices in the host region. For the 2002 World Cup, these companies included Toshiba, Fuji Xerox, Hyundai, Fuji Film, Gillette and Coca Cola.

The economies of the venue cities might also benefit. But it will be a profit of a different kind; one conditional on a long-term view of what these cities want to become long after the event has taken place.

Infrastructure-led vision

There will definitely be a gap between forecast and actual impact. Because of our largely infrastructure-led vision of 2010, the event will benefit the construction industry, as well as public works. But the World Cup is unlikely to be the growth engine it is made out to be unless we create the conditions for this to happen. It will certainly not add any significant upward momentum to domestic consumption. More people will buy television sets, but many retailers may nevertheless be disappointed; instead of going to hotels, bars and restaurants, customers may stay at home watching the games on TV.

Besides the construction sector, the sectors and commodities most likely to benefit are transport, the media, satellite TV services, and the sales of related items such as video recorders. Other winners may include the producers of official World Cup merchandise, the sellers of unlicensed replicas, and the beer and wine industries.

Contrary to popular expectations, SA may not experience a large influx of visitors, either during or after the Cup. For instance, during the 2002 World Cup the number of visitors to Japan increased by only 30 000, and during the event in Korea tourism officials did not report any increase of visitors at all.

Whether SA media technology and other corporations will be able to use the event as a marketing vehicle remains to be seen. Very few SA firms figure in the world's top 100 companies; they cannot spend huge amounts of money on a global advertising campaign. This is what Samsung did during the last World Cup in Korea; it advertised globally for its mobile phones, computers, and DVD players.

The official World Cup Sponsor, Korean Telecom, did the same, and its brand recognition improved by 95%. SA companies of a certain size can take inspiration from the guerrilla-style advertising of companies such as Nike; they can do this

We cannot organise a memorable Soccer World Cup if the fear and reality of violent death at the hands of criminals are not tackled efficiently

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An Israeli gunner prays at an artillery position near the Lebanese border. AP Photo/Jacob Silberberg

History weighs heavily on Middle East

Aslam Farouk-Alli argues that the Israeli invasions of Gaza and Lebanon are best understood when placed in historical perspective – and recounts a series of events stretching back almost 100 years

ON 25 June 2006, Palestinian gunmen attacked an Israeli army post, killing two soldiers and capturing a 19-year-old corporal. The following day three Palestinian groups, including the Islamic resistance movement Hamas, claimed responsibility and demanded the release of all Palestinian women and children being held in Israeli jails in exchange for the Israeli corporal. Israel responded by mounting its biggest operation in Gaza since its disengagement from the Gaza Strip and some areas of the West Bank in the course of last year. On 12 July, Hezbollah fighters crossed Israel's northern border, killing three Israeli soldiers and capturing two more. Israel responded by mounting a massive offensive against Lebanon, sparking a regional crisis.

Cover picture: A UN peacekeeper from Ghana in the village of Qana near Tyre, Lebanon.
AP Photo/Lefteris Pitarakis

Pinpointing the capture of the three Israeli soldiers as the trigger for the current crisis is not only politically expedient, but also has little explanatory power; examining the burden of history upon these events is far more telling. A historical perspective reveals that the crisis is merely the latest in a series of events surrounding the 'Palestinian question' that has remained unresolved for almost a hundred years.

This article seeks to revisit the events and forces that have shaped this crisis, in the hope of cultivating a better understanding of the Israeli invasions.

The context

The Palestinian-Israeli struggle emanates from the inception of the project of political Zionism in the late 19th century, which sought to create an exclusive Jewish state in historic Palestine, a territory about twice the size of the Kruger National Park, and inhabited by an Arab majority for the past 1 200 years. Palestine – which was an isolated principality in the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century – was officially placed under British mandate in 1920, but in practice had been controlled by the British from 1917, when British forces captured Jerusalem in the course of World War 1. At that time, the Zionist movement already enjoyed significant influence in Britain. In a letter dated 2 November 1917, now infamously known as the Balfour Declaration, Arthur Balfour, the British foreign secretary, promised the Jewish people a national homeland in historic Palestine.

Throughout this early period the Zionist movement remained active and facilitated the transfer of Jewish people to Palestine, while simultaneously lobbying the international community to deliver on Balfour's promise. In 1947 the UN General Assembly passed resolution 181, popularly referred to as the partition resolution, which called for the halving of British-Mandate Palestine into two equally sized independent states, for the Arabs and the Jews respectively. This led to the 1948 declaration of the state of Israel by the Zionist movement after a bloody guerrilla campaign against the British administrators and the local Arab population. The birth of Israel was mourned by the defeated and displaced Arabs as a catastrophe (*Nakba*), and caused a refugee crisis of immense proportion.

UN General Assembly resolution 194, passed in 1949, recognised the gravity of the refugee crisis and affirmed that displaced Arabs had a right to return to the territory. Palestine refugees dispersed among the neighbouring Arab states, which only served to emphasise the Palestinian problem as an Arab one as well. The 1967 Arab – Israeli war brought no redress for the Palestinian cause as the Arab defeat resulted in the Israeli occupation of Gaza, the West Bank, and West Jerusalem in the Palestinian territories, in addition to the Sinai region of Egypt and the Golan Heights of Syria. UN Security Council (UNSC) resolution 242 of the same year emphasised the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by war, and also called for a just and lasting peace in the region.

By 1970 tensions had developed between the leadership of the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO), then based in Jordan, and the regime of King Hussein – largely due to the latter's friendly overtures toward Israel. The ensuing military clash resulted in the expulsion of the PLO from Jordan in what came to be known as Black September, and the PLO was forced to move camp to Lebanon.

Even though the Egyptian victory over Israel in the 1973 Yom Kippur War soothed injured Arab pride, it achieved precious little for the Palestinians. UNSC resolution 338 called for a cessation of hostilities, and reaffirmed resolution 242. At this point, however, the sphere of contestation between Israel and the PLO had shifted to Lebanon.

The modern state of Lebanon was created by France, which was granted the mandate over Lebanon and Syria by the League of Nations in 1920. The French brought the State of Greater Lebanon into existence by incorporating areas of historical Syria that included a large population of Maronite Christians. This created a politically fractious society – true to the classical colonial paradigm – in which the minority Christian community was propped up by the French colonial authorities, enabling French manipulation of Lebanese politics. This had disastrous consequences for post-independence Lebanon, in that it created a tradition of violent political contestation. Factional tensions were further complicated by the arrival of the PLO in 1970, following its brutal crushing by King Hussein of Jordan.

Lebanon became a target of Israeli aggression soon after the PLO began mounting guerrilla attacks against the Jewish state across the southern Lebanese border. The Israeli incursions into Lebanon inflicted severe trauma upon Lebanon's southern population, predominantly consisting of Muslim Shi'a. The result was the forging of a strong sense of common cause against Israel between the Palestinian refugees in the south, led by the PLO, and the Shi'a villagers affected by Lebanese 'collateral damage'. In the context of Lebanese politics, support for the Palestinians came primarily from Muslims alienated by the existing political system that favoured the Maronite Christians, even though they were outnumbered by Muslims.

The Palestinian refugees were also strongly opposed to the status quo, and civil war was sparked in 1975 by an attack by Christian militias against a busload of Palestinians.

The Palestinian-Israeli struggle emanates from the inception of the project of political Zionism in the late 19th century

The Syrian factor

Syrian intervention brought an end to hostilities between the PLO and the Lebanese Christian militias, and an Arab deterrent force consisting almost exclusively of Syrian troops was stationed in Lebanon. Although the Syrians had initially sided with the Lebanese Maronites, their presence resulted in the erosion of the power of the central Lebanese state. Syria's intervention also has to be understood in terms of its own political imagination; Syrians still recall that much of Lebanon was originally part of Syria.



Lebanese with salvaged belongings leave a devastated suburb in Beirut. AP Photo/Hussein Malla

Throughout this period, sporadic clashes between the Israelis and the PLO continued, and any Lebanese regime in opposition to the PLO would clearly be in Israel's favour. In 1978 the authority of the Lebanese president, Elias Sarkis (1976-82), scarcely extended beyond the capital. In that year 25 000 Israeli troops invaded Lebanon in an attempt to dislodge the PLO from its strongholds. This attempt failed, but caused large-scale demographic disruptions, with thousands of Shi'a villagers fleeing their homes.

Two important lessons

Nonetheless, the Israeli regime under Menachim Begin learnt two important lessons from this episode: the first, that the Palestinian guerrillas could not be rooted out by military action confined to southern Lebanon alone; and, second, that the issue of the influence of the Palestinians over Lebanese affairs could not be resolved without addressing Lebanon's political instability.

The above two factors strongly influenced the Israeli decision to invade Lebanon in 1982. The invasion was predicated on three main objectives: the destruction of the PLO; enforcing a withdrawal of the Syrian troops; and finally, forging a mutually advantageous alliance with the Maronite faction that was politically dominant at that time.

The invasion was not decisive in achieving its outcomes,

and culminated in an agreement that multinational forces headed by France and the US would supervise the withdrawal of the PLO from Lebanon. Two important events shifted the balance away from the Israeli plan. The first was the assassination of the Lebanese president-elect Bashir al-Jumayl, who was pro-Israeli. The second was the massacre of Palestinian refugees, in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in Southern Lebanon, by Maronite Phalangists with the assistance and back-up of Ariel Sharon, the Israeli Defence Minister.

These events turned the tide, and brought into prominence a united Shi'a front under the political banner of the *Amal* (Hope) Party. This party served as the antecedent to the Islamic resistance movement Hezbollah, which ultimately united the Shi'a community, drawing it into a cohesive political bloc. These events were greatly facilitated by the swinging of the Syrian alliance in favour of Hezbollah, specifically due to Maronite allegiance with Israel, further entrenching Syria's position in Lebanon. The single constant in determining Syria's regional policy since 1967 has been its bitter opposition to Israel, which occupies the Syrian Golan Heights to this day.

The 1989 Ta'if accord brought political redress to the majority Muslim population in Lebanon by granting them equal parliamentary representation, which they had previously been denied. Hezbollah's stature as a political force increased as

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Rather than demonising Iran over its nuclear energy programme, the major powers should make every effort to maintain dialogue and seek a negotiated solution, writes **Garth le Pere**



Iran's nuclear programme: fact

LOST amid the clamour to expose Iran's lack of candour about its nuclear ambitions is a sober examination of the context that defines the debate. Such an examination can be traced to the 1950s when, with strong US support, Iran began its efforts to develop nuclear technology. By 1975 the US secretary of state, Henry Kissinger, had entered into a nuclear co-operation agreement with Iran that provided for the sale of equipment which would earn US companies more than US\$6 billion. (At that time Iran's oil production was as much as 6m barrels a day, compared to about 4m barrels today.)

Another directive signed by president Gerald Ford in 1976 offered Iran the opportunity to buy and operate a reprocessing facility for extracting plutonium from nuclear reactor fuel. Notwithstanding the attendant proliferation risks, this deal envisaged a complete nuclear fuel cycle with plans to not only build a massive nuclear energy industry but also to complete a multibillion dollar arrangement that would provide Tehran with large quantities of plutonium and enriched uranium – certainly two pathways to developing nuclear weapons. A

nuclearised Iran, with a 3 200km common border with the Soviet Union, was then seen as an important buffer against communist encroachment in the Middle East, and a further check against the rise of Arab nationalism, which the US saw as a potential threat to Israel's security.

Turning point

After the 1979 revolution, during which the Shah was overthrown, relations between Iran and the US changed dramatically, marking a turning point in the once robust international co-operation and US involvement in Iran's development of nuclear technology. This issue became highly politicised precisely because the Islamic Republic openly declared its intention to continue with a reinvigorated nuclear programme using indigenously manufactured fuel, and sustain an ambitious agenda for developing nuclear power reactor and fuel cycle technologies. Indeed, the US had already been paid to deliver new fuel and upgrade Iran's power in accordance with



Iran's nuclear power plant at Boushehr
... before the revolution, the US was
closely involved in Iran's nuclear
programme. AP Photo/Vahid Salemi

regime is based on legal commitments, sober strategic calculations and spiritual and ideological doctrine. Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the leader of the Islamic Republic, has issued a decree against the development, production, stockpiling and use of nuclear weapons.'

This declaration comes up against western suspicions about Iran's real nuclear intentions. A US National Intelligence Assessment in 2005 estimated that Iran was a decade away from developing nuclear weapons. This finding was primarily based on the conversion facilities at Esfahan, and the centrifuges at Natanz. Western suspicions have been fuelled further by Iran's building of medium- and long-range missiles. Of particular concern is the fact that its long-range (1 300km) ballistic missile, the Shahab-3, could be fitted with nuclear warheads. This has made the US, Europe and Israel decidedly uneasy.

Since the overthrow of the Shah in 1979, and the installation of a revolutionary Islamic regime, US diplomacy towards Iran has been confrontational, coercive, and adversarial. Tensions have now been further exacerbated by George Bush's inclusion of Iran in his 'axis of evil' along with Iraq and North Korea, and it appears that regime change in Tehran has become something of a messianic goal for him. His vice-president, Dick Cheney, has stated that Iran's ongoing nuclear experiment will invite the imposition of 'meaningful consequences', and the US secretary of state, Condoleezza Rice, has accused Iran of being the 'central banker' of terrorism in the Middle East. This is symptomatic of the deep mutual distrust, enmity, and recrimination between Tehran and Washington, and each looks at the other through Manichean lenses: the US is seen as 'Satan', and Iran as 'evil'. Against this backdrop, it is useful to consider the context and environment in which Iran's nuclear pursuits have unfolded.

Historical dimensions and the NPT

Nuclear weapons have come to play an important part in the strategic calculus of global powers, and their deterrent value is a vital element of the doctrine that has helped to shape the global balance of power, especially during the Cold War. Following World War 2, there was a rapid acquisition of nuclear capabilities by those countries that have become key global players: the US in 1945; the Soviet Union in 1949; Britain in 1952; France in 1960; and China in 1964. These official nuclear weapons states also came to form the permanent five members of the UN Security Council. The spectre of nuclear proliferation, the fragile deterrence between the US and the Soviet Union, and their consequences for world peace resulted in the negotiation and signing of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1968. The treaty came into force two years later, and acquired permanent status in 1995 at the

or fiction?

contracts signed before the revolution. The US delivered neither, nor did it return the billions of dollars which it and its companies had already received. Similarly, Germany, which had also been paid billions of dollars for two nuclear facilities in Bushehr, refused to export any more equipment, or reimburse any funds. In the teeth of US pressure and international opprobrium, Iran has nevertheless forged ahead with its development and acquisition of nuclear technology. Its current programme consists of several research sites, a uranium mine, a nuclear reactor, and uranium processing facilities that include a uranium enrichment plant.

The Iranian government has vigorously defended its right to develop its capacity for peaceful nuclear generation. In an article in the *New York Times* (6 April 2006) entitled 'We do not have a nuclear weapons program', Javad Zarif, Iran's ambassador to the UN, wrote: 'Iran has a strong interest in enhancing the integrity and authority of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. It has been in the forefront of efforts to ensure the treaty's universality. Iran's reliance on the non-proliferation

NPT Review and Extension Conference in New York. Besides regulating proliferation, the treaty has two other important pillars: it seeks to promote disarmament among the nuclear weapons states through reduction and liquidation of their stockpiles; and it protects the inalienable right of its signatories to develop nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, but under monitored conditions that make it difficult to develop nuclear weapons.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is the UN's institutional custodian of the NPT, charged with overseeing adherence to its letter and spirit among the 188 signatories. Serious challenges to the NPT regime remain. Non-signatories such as India and Pakistan became confirmed nuclear powers in 1998, North Korea withdrew from the treaty in 2003, and Israel is widely believed to have acquired a nuclear capability as early as 1968. Iraq, under Saddam Hussein, sought to acquire a nuclear capability, but its embryonic infrastructure was destroyed by a pre-emptive strike by Israel in 1981 and later by the US-led coalition during Operation Desert Storm in 1991. And since 2000 international attention has turned to Iran and North Korea as the two countries that have been involved in alleged clandestine nuclear weapons activities. While their nuclear programmes function under a penumbra of uncertainty, there can be no doubt that their aspirations are influenced by an instinctive aversion to America's military presence in their respective neighbourhoods as well as a search for international prestige, status, and respect.

Iran, the US and realpolitik

The ongoing standoff and distrust between the US and Iran over the latter's nuclear programme is grounded in and influenced by three factors. Firstly, during the Iran–Iraq war (1980–8), precipitated over control of the Shatt-al-Arab waterway, the US not only failed to condemn Iraq's aggression but also provided Hussein's regime with active military and political support to ensure that it emerged the victor. Secondly, Iran's Islamic regime feels that it is constantly threatened and its security thus compromised by the US and Israel. This threat perception has been compounded by the US-led coalition's victory in the Gulf War in 1991, the post-September 11 invasion of Afghanistan, and the occupation of Iraq since 2003. Thirdly, when it began to accelerate its nuclear programme in 1988, Iran invited both the US and European countries to help build and develop its nuclear reactors. The rejection of this invitation caused Iran to turn to Russia for assistance, and for economic and geopolitical reasons Russia obliged, again in the face of strong opposition from the US.

In 2005, in a speech to the UN General Assembly, Iran's president, Muhammad Khatami, extended another invitation to western public and private sectors to help develop its civilian nuclear programme. This invitation was also rejected. In August 2005 Iran resumed its conversion of uranium at the Esfahan facility, and in April 2006 president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad

announced that Iran had successfully enriched uranium to the 3.5% level in a 164-centrifuge cascade. This laboratory-scale capability should not be equated with an industrial-scale capability, which requires the sustained operation of centrifuges aligned in cascades containing many thousands of machines, and still falls well short of the 93% required for making nuclear weapons. These well-known facts notwithstanding, it was this announcement by Ahmadinejad that caused the US to show its paranoia about Iran achieving the full nuclear fuel cycle when Rice asserted that the UN Security Council should take 'strong steps' to change Iran's behaviour.

Energy demand

Iran sees nuclear power as a means of modernising and diversifying its energy supply, since its large oil reserves will be depleted over the next seven to nine decades. Its crude oil reserves are estimated at 137bn barrels, or 11.6% of the world's total reserves; and it has 29 000bn cubic metres of natural gas, or 15.3% of the world total reserves. However, given a doubling of Iran's population to 70m since 1979, energy demand at home has risen exponentially. Moreover, the country is heavily dependent on oil and gas, deriving 80% of its foreign currency and 45% of its annual budget from their export. Such a rational calculus is lost on the US, for which the mullahs in Tehran and their perceived fundamentalist anti-western streak are anathema.

Part of the problem is that the US has a long history of being the globe's de facto nuclear policeman. It has successfully used its economic and diplomatic leverage to persuade countries such as Belarus, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, and Libya to give up their nuclear weapons programmes. After September 11 the US has concentrated on going after 'rogue states' and their 'terrorist clients' in order to deny them access to nuclear materials and indeed weapons of mass destruction. For Iran this 'nuclear apartheid' smacks of hypocrisy and double standards in view of a much more conciliatory and less

belligerent response to North Korea, the American embrace of a nuclear Pakistan after it began co-operating with Washington's 'war on terror', and its recent readiness to assist with India's civilian production.

But, above all, Iran bristles at the nuclear asymmetry in the Middle East: the US has adopted a permissive attitude towards Israel, with its reputed 200 nuclear warheads, an extensive chemical and biological arsenal, and a formidable conventional force. Relations between the US and Iran have become even more acrimonious since president Ahmadinejad assumed power in early August 2005; his is a nationalist mission to win respect for Iran by not kowtowing to the whims of the US, and promoting its nuclear ambition as an expression of national self-assertion.

If western countries wish to persuade Iran of the folly of pursuing a nuclear option, they have to demonstrate that it will be better off economically and strategically without a nuclear device. There is the liberal argument that increasing

Part of the problem is that the US has a long history of being the globe's de facto nuclear policeman

economic interdependence acts as a constraint when countries wish to undertake risky foreign policies. Consequently, increased international economic and political integration provides a powerful incentive for countries to observe and adhere to global norms, rules, and standards. Iran is no exception, and indeed its domestic politics since the end of the 1988 war with Iraq has been subject to popular calls for greater pluralism and increased political accountability. Further impetus in this regard comes from the new oversight powers given to the Expediency Council now headed by the more moderate and pragmatic former president, Ali Rafsanjani, who will supervise all three branches of government.

Open society

Hence, despite the tremendous influence of a conservative theocracy, and the election of Ahmadinejad as its new standard bearer, Iran is a far more open society than many of its Arab neighbours, and its young population is likely to continue demanding more freedom and political liberalisation. This is especially the case given that Iran's economy is far more closely tied to the global system today than it was in 1979. Economic decline resulting from the heavy toll of the war with Iraq, US sanctions, and a high population rate have all become major imperatives for introducing wide-ranging structural reform, including exchange rate and trade liberalisation; improved investment and tax regulation; and the granting of licenses to private banks and insurance companies. There is therefore every incentive for major powers to resist isolating Iran and to rather maintain and expand dialogue with it.

This defines the spirit of EU diplomacy. In October 2003 Britain, France, and Germany – the EU-3 – signed an agreement with Tehran in terms of which it would suspend its nuclear activities, and allow for more intrusive IAEA inspections under the NPT's Additional Protocol. This overture was based on several key policy considerations. These include Iran's right to develop civilian nuclear power; the EU-3's opposition to military action against Iran; and conditional engagement with Iran on the basis of a trade and co-operation agreement. In exchange for Iran's permanent cessation of enrichment activities, the Europeans undertook to guarantee the supply of fuel for the civilian plant at Bushehr and future plants; expand economic co-operation, including the prospect of European companies providing civilian nuclear technology and replacement aircraft for its national carrier; and include Iran in discussions about regional and international security, especially with regard to EU policy in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The EU policy and its reassuring signals are closely aligned with that of the IAEA which, since 2002, has vigorously been investigating Iran's nuclear programme. The common strategic approach turns on the 'Japanese model', aimed at gaining foreign investment and nuclear technology. The EU package of proposals would go hand in hand with a monitoring agreement with the IAEA. As such, Iran would have both nuclear energy and a *latent* military deterrent – its neighbours would know that it was capable of crossing the weapons thresh-



An Iranian student holds a banner in support of Iran's nuclear programme at the uranium conversion facility outside Isfahan ... Iran sees nuclear power as a means of modernising and diversifying its energy sources. AP Photo/Vahid Salemi

old very quickly. It is important to note that while the IAEA's board of governors found serious irregularities in Iran's NPT commitments, there is no firm evidence that it wants to develop nuclear weapons. Indeed, in November 2004 the IAEA director-general, Muhammad El-Baradei, summarised the position as follows: 'While we have reached the conclusion that all declared nuclear material in Iran has been accounted for, and therefore such material is not diverted to prohibited activities, the Agency is not yet in a position to conclude that there are no undeclared nuclear materials or activities in Iran. The jury is still out on our ability to provide assurance that everything has been declared to us.'

Out of step

This assessment and the EU initiative have been undermined by the arrogance of the US, which is bent on clearing the way for referral to the UN Security Council and possible UN sanctions against Iran. Without any proof at its disposal, in its blinkered view, the US still asserts that Iran is moving determinedly towards a nuclear arsenal. The logic of punitive measures has even alienated America's European allies, and exposed it as out of step with political developments and changing social dynamics in Iran. As far as Iran is concerned, by maintaining a massive nuclear arsenal of 10 000 weapons and increasing its stockpile of tactical nuclear weapons, the

US is more guilty than any other party of violating the letter and spirit of the NPT, especially Article VI, which states: 'Each of the parties to the Treaty undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament.'

The US policy of sanctions might have delayed but has not denied Iran access to nuclear material and technology. Russia's policy is therefore of interest because, since the 1990s, it is the only country that has maintained a high level of nuclear co-operation with Iran. Russia's relations with Iran are defined by economic and strategic considerations, in view of the latter's important role and location at the intersections of the Middle East and Central Asia. Iran could become as an important external link in Russia's emerging energy diplomacy.

Nuclear assistance also provides a basis for co-operation in other areas such as the Caspian Sea, and opening a major market for Russian arms. These interests formed the basis for a fuel supply agreement in February 2005, thus paving the way for completing the nuclear reactor at Bushehr. A key element of the agreement is that Iran will repatriate all spent nuclear fuel to Russia, which Moscow hopes will at least allay America's anxiety that Iran could reprocess the spent fuel into weapons-grade plutonium.

Diplomatic stalemate, and future prospects

The initial progress of the EU negotiating track and the promise of the 'Japanese model' have confronted several problems relating to the EU-3's insistence that Iran permanently abandon its enrichment and reprocessing facilities and provide a 'binding commitment' not to pursue fuel cycle activities other than the construction and operation of light-water power and research reactors that do not have nuclear conversion potential. Iran's decision to resume enrichment at the Esfahan plant has led to denunciations by the EU and US, and threats of referring the matter to the UN Security Council for the imposition of sanctions. In Iran's view, the diplomatic goodwill that existed for advancing an agreement has been eroded by the EU's timidity and its inability to act independently of Washington.

In this poisoned political atmosphere, the 35-member board of the IAEA met in September 2005 to review the issue and decide whether or not to refer Iran to the UN Security Council. The board passed a resolution (22 in favour, 12 abstaining, and one against) that declared Iran to be in 'non-compliance' with IAEA's nuclear safeguard requirements. Even though the UN Security Council issued a presidential statement in March 2006 that called for Iran's compliance with the voluntary suspension and interim application of the Additional Protocol, major members of the board such as Russia, China, and India rather want Iran's nuclear issue to be resolved within the framework of the NPT and the regulatory authority of the IAEA.

At this point, it is worth recounting the commitments Iran had made during the negotiations with the EU-3 as part of a balanced package of measures. It undertook to:

- present the Additional Protocol of intrusive inspections to the Iranian parliament for ratification, and to continue to implement its provisions pending ratification;
- permit a continuous on-site presence of IAEA inspectors at the conversion and enrichment facilities;
- introduce legislation to permanently ban the development, stockpiling, and use of nuclear weapons;
- co-operate on export controls to prevent unauthorised access to nuclear material;
- refrain from reprocessing or producing plutonium;
- limit the enrichment of nuclear materials so that they are suitable for energy production but not for weapons;
- immediately convert all enriched uranium to fuel rods, thereby precluding the possibility of further enrichment;
- limit the enrichment programme to meet the contingency fuel requirements of Iran's power reactors and future light-water reactors;
- begin putting in place the least contentious aspects of the enrichment programme – such as research and development – in order to assure the international community of the sincerity of its intentions; and
- invite foreign public and private partners and participation in Iran's enrichment programme.

Meaningful dialogue

These commitments still form a viable basis for resuscitating meaningful negotiations and dialogue. These commitments are fully congruent and in line with Iran's obligations to the NPT under Article IV which emphasises the 'inalienable right of all the parties to the Treaty to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination'. These commitments and a return to diplomacy will continue to collide with Washington's approach if the latter persists in using Iran's nuclear programme as a pretext for effecting a regime change in Tehran, and keeping the military option open. It appears as if Iran has become a major 'speed-bump' in the US attempt to project a pan-regional foreign policy in the Middle East, and for this reason its nuclear ambition has to be checked. In this regard, the EU and the US would do well to heed a statement issued by 50 British and American former diplomats and nuclear experts:

'If negotiations are not revived, this dispute may lead to stalemate at the UN [Security Council]. This could leave the Iranians with sufficient wriggle-room to develop their nuclear weapons capability transparently and under existing safeguards. Continued allusions by US officials to the prospect of military action also give the Iranian government a powerful incentive to double their efforts in this direction. Should these events occur, the prospect of military action against Iran by either the US or Israel cannot be excluded. Such action would be a disaster for global and regional security and must be avoided. Diplomacy and creative compromise on all sides are the only acceptable choice.'

Dr Garth le Pere is the executive director of the IGD.

Are the IFIs worth saving?

Instead of trying to reform the International Financial Institutions (IFIs), developing countries should follow the Asian example and build alternative regional financial mechanisms, writes **Nhamo Samasuwo**

AMONG the most important multilateral institutions to emerge out of World War 2 was a troika of organisations formed at Bretton Woods in New Hampshire in July 1944: the IMF; the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), later the World Bank; and the International Trade Organisation (ITO), later the WTO.

Negative impact

Often collectively referred to as International Financial Institutions (IFIs), these organisations were formed to promote economic stability and development, and thus help to ensure lasting global peace. However, in contrast with the noble objectives set at Bretton Woods, the role played by the IFIs, especially in monitoring and regulating the global markets, and formulating development policy, has been highly controversial. Among other things, analysts and others have focused attention on the negative impact of the economic Structural Adjustment Policies (SAPs) imposed by the IFIs on poor developing countries.

More recently, however, observers have placed the spotlight on the need to reform the IFIs themselves. The 'reformists' are convinced that this will not only lead to more democratic global economic governance, but also restore the credibility and legitimacy of these institutions. They believe reform will bring dividends such as greater participation in global economic decision-making and, by extension, friendlier economic policies towards developing countries.

Admittedly, the IMF and World Bank were designed for a different era. What makes the current debate on reform so interesting is the fact that the main ben-

eficiaries of the existing global financial architecture suddenly seem to have had a damascene experience, and are now spearheading the debate on IMF/World Bank reform. In early 2006, the US and its partners in the G-8 caused a first-rate surprise when they mandated the IMF's managing director, Rodrigo de Rato, to produce 'concrete proposals' for giving emerging economies a stronger voice in the institution's decision-making process. In terms of a reform plan to be presented at a gathering in Singapore in September this year, the US has reportedly expressed its willingness to accept reduced voting powers in the IMF in exchange for European states accepting a less influential role as well.



Anti-IMF slogan on a stop sign in Washington.
AP Photo/Joe Marquette

The fact that pressure for the reform of the IMF is also coming from the US, its major shareholder, is welcome in itself. However, given its long history of maintaining the voting status quo in the IMF, what exactly are America's motives? More fundamentally, does a fast-changing world need the IMF at all? And if not, what are the alternatives? These questions need to be answered before developing countries are misled

into celebrating this 'breakthrough' too quickly.

Unlike what some IMF 'insiders' would have us believe, the current 'breakthrough' over the fund's internal reform is a function of two main factors. The first is a 'lost quarter of a century' characterised by 'rule by error' that caused untold misery in many poor countries and resulted in a progressive decline in the legitimacy and power of policies driven by the Washington Consensus and market fundamentalism. The second is the very real possibility that the IMF and its main backer, the US, are becoming irrelevant to the economic needs of the emerging or new world.

Crisis of legitimacy

Part of the IMF's crisis of legitimacy arises out of the undemocratic and non-transparent way in which it has been managed since its establishment in 1944. Since that time, the IMF has been dominated by the G-8 and has served their economic interests at the expense of those of poorer countries. To protect their interests at the multilateral level, the fund's main shareholders have used their collective economic clout to enable the IFIs to make all the rules and drive global economic development at the expense of the UN, where poor countries form a majority. Not surprisingly, this has led to fears that developed countries want to use the current UN reform agenda to systematically marginalise the world body in matters of global development.

Developing country diplomats suspect that, under the guise of achieving greater management efficiency, rich countries are bent on imposing structural adjustment-style reforms aimed at clearing the way for the Bretton Woods

triumvirate – which they dominate – to have a monopoly over global economic matters at the UN level. They fear that, if the UN is rendered obsolete, developed countries will continue making all the global economic rules, which the poor will have to obey. This is happening at a time when the power of the rich countries in the UN has been weakened by the G77+China. Keen on pre-empting this, the G77+China have made the reform of the IFIs themselves an urgent multilateral imperative.

Archaic voting formula

For a start, developing countries are concerned over the fact that the IMF is still controlled by 39 founding members despite its current membership of 184. They also have a problem with the fact that prominent members of the G-77, such as China, India and Brazil, whose roles in the global economy have grown considerably, don't have a more prominent voice in the IMF. The main problem is the IMF's archaic weighted voting formula, corresponding to the size of members' national economies and their share of global trade in 1944, when the system was established. Under this system, the US has a 17% voting stake, which virtually gives it a veto over the fund's direction. Without the American stake, member countries cannot muster the magical 85% consensus vote needed to take decisions. Japan is the second biggest player, with 6,16% of the voting shares, followed by Germany with 6,02%. Britain and France each have 4,97% of the voting shares, while China, whose economy surpassed both Britain's and France's in 2005, has a paltry 2,95% share.

This has created the ludicrous situation whereby China – now the fourth largest economy in the world – has fewer votes in the IMF than Italy; and Belgium, with a \$352 billion economy, has more clout than Brazil, India, Mexico, or South Korea, all of which have economies at least 70% bigger. Canada, with the ninth largest economy in the world, has a 3,72% share, along with smaller countries it represents at the Fund, such as Ireland and Jamaica.

Yet another notable relic of the post-war settlement and allied victors' arrogance is the stipulation that the IMF should be headed by a European. This flies in the face of contemporary realities in which developing countries make up the majority of the fund's membership, and their combined economic output exceeds that of Europe.

Besides problems associated with a lack of democratic governance, the fund's lack of legitimacy and, by extension, existential crisis has arisen from its failure to lift poor countries out of poverty. As the former Zambian president Kenneth Kaunda once famously remarked: 'The IMF does not care whether you are suffering from economic malaria, bilharzias or broken legs. They will always give you quinine.' Thus the failure of SAPs in general has led to a reassessment of neoliberal policies, especially on the role of the state in development.

The IMF's reputation has not been helped by the fact that some countries that did not embrace SAPs have done better economically than those that did. Thus, the emergence of vibrant economies in China, India, Brazil, Mexico, Malaysia, and Turkey during an era characterised by the fund's palpable policy failures actually helped to implode the myth of the 'hidden hand' of the free market, and weakened the appeal of

Ironically, the IMF's crisis of legitimacy can also be explained in terms of the process of globalisation that its own policies have sought to promote

Washington Consensus thinking in general. According to the renowned economist Joseph Stiglitz, countries such as China survived the financial crisis of the late 1990s by either simply ignoring IMF advice altogether or by adopting countercyclical state-centric strategies at variance with orthodox thinking.

Ironically, the IMF's crisis of legitimacy can also be explained in terms of the process of globalisation that its own policies have sought to promote. As a result of globalisation, the international

financial architecture has changed. Parallel sources of private and bilateral credit, particularly in developed countries, emerged in competition with the old IMF-dominated system. Thus, while new sources of external support quickly gave industrialised countries easy access to external financing, poor countries, especially in Africa, have been left to subject themselves to the often humiliating conditions laid down by the IMF in exchange for loans.

More importantly, the already existing internal divisions in the fund became even more pronounced, with a clear division between those countries that determine IMF policies and shape its decisions (its shareholders) on the one hand, and those to whom the decisions, rules and policies of the fund have been ruthlessly applied (stakeholders) on the other. Such power disparities allowed some of the major shareholders to use the fund as a punitive foreign policy tool, and to whip errant governments adopting anti-free market policies back into line. Seen in its global context, the case of Zimbabwe and its treatment at the hands of the fund represents a recent example of the politicised role the fund has played, and continues to play.

The case of Zimbabwe

The case of Zimbabwe also reflects the IMF's struggle to remain relevant in a global economy in which sources of external funding for countries in need have diversified. For example, rather than subject themselves to IMF support, some poor countries have started to leverage balance-of-payment support directly from parallel financial markets, with a notable degree of success. By deploying capital sourced from private institutions, currency swaps, and cheap reciprocal bilateral loans from friendly third parties, countries such as Zimbabwe have successfully paid off outstanding debts to the IMF.

Yet others, such as Argentina and Bolivia, are relying on increasingly affluent and 'benevolent' neighbours such as Venezuela to pay off their debts to the IMF ahead of schedule. There is also a notable trend among countries



An anti-IMF protest in Prague ... a global financial order that thrives on crises in poor countries should not be resuscitated. AP Photo/Jerome Delay

such as Angola, Bolivia, Russia, Venezuela, and Zimbabwe to adopt 'resource nationalism', aimed at exercising greater domestic control over domestic natural resources. The idea is to use the wind-fall from buoyant world commodity prices to kick-start a separate path of development funded independently of the IMF. This explains why the same countries have increasingly used energy, gold, oil, and platinum 'diplomacy' as a tool of foreign policy or lever to attract foreign direct investment (FDI) without the IMF's 'stamp of approval'.

Most profound threat

The most profound threat to the IMF has come from the countercyclical strategies adopted by Asian countries since the financial crisis of the late 1990s. Since then, Asian countries have adopted currency-swapping mechanisms and built up foreign reserves as a form of insurance against future meltdowns. In par-

ticular, reserve accumulation has been effective in helping Asian countries to avoid having to beg for help from the IMF. The success of such Asian countercyclical initiatives has seen other developing countries adopt similar measures aimed at bypassing the IMF. By building its foreign reserves from an estimated US\$15,5 billion in 2005 to US\$21,2 billion in 2006, SA has successfully resisted subtle overtures for loans from the IMF, despite efforts to co-opt its economic managers into the bureaucracy of the IFIs.

Also, in May 2006, Nigeria significantly reduced the size of its overall debt to the IMF. Brazil, which has since turned its back on IMF tutelage, paid its multi-billion dollar loans in 2006, while Turkey and Indonesia are planning to pay their debts ahead of schedule. Although a member of the G-8, Russia is also increasingly using 'oil and gas diplomacy' to assert its position in global economic affairs. In recent years,

Russia has also built up an estimated US\$300 billion in savings since the end of the crisis in the late 1990s.

These developments are happening against the backdrop of growing fears about the possible collapse of the dollar, especially in the light of the ballooning US budget deficit, which reached US\$427 billion in 2005. It is reported that several emerging market economies are rethinking their use of the dollar as their preferred store of foreign reserves and currency of choice. This factor partly explains the worldwide rise in base metal prices. For example, countries such as China, India, and Venezuela have reportedly expressed support for Iran's plans to establish its own electronic international oil bourse where oil will be sold in Euros rather than US dollars. Such an arrangement will change the 1940s agreement reached between OPEC and the US to buy and sell oil only in US dollars. If this were to happen, a stampede would occur, with countries switching sales of oil from US dollars. More importantly, the dollar would plummet, and with it the US economy. Some analysts argue that this is the main reason why the US wants to attack Iran.

Viability problems

As the biggest debtor countries pay off their debts ahead of schedule, turning their backs on the IMF in the process, the global lender's finances have become strained. Ironically, as more countries have become prosperous and less reliant on credit, the IMF has started to experience viability problems. In particular, payments by Brazil and Argentina, the fund's largest debtors, have left it facing an operating shortfall of US\$110 million in 2006. The obvious conclusion is that the fund has in the past actually been benefiting from the very crises it was meant to resolve or pre-empt.

Thus a lack of big clients, a growing financial crunch, and a general loss of influence largely explains why the IMF's major shareholders have suddenly jumped on to the bandwagon of govern-

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Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi

The Minister of Public Service and Administration, Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi, has led the APRM process in SA, and has played a key role in civil service reform in SA and elsewhere in Africa. She commented on these issues in an interview in Pretoria with IGD staffers **Che Ajulu, Francis Ikome and Siphamandla Zondi**

Before being appointed as Minister of Public Service and Administration in 1999, Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi served as Deputy Minister of Welfare and Population from 1995 to 1996, and Minister for the same portfolio from 1996 to 1999.

While in exile from 1980 onwards, she worked in the global solidarity movement against apartheid using the World Lutheran Federation as her platform. On her return to SA in 1990, she played an active role in the peace negotiations, serving as a member of the SACP delegation to CODESA.

Besides her domestic activities, she is vice-president of the UN's Committee of Experts on Public Administration, a member of the management board of the Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management (CAPAM), and chairperson of the International Institute of Administrative Sciences (IIAS) Working Group on Administering Global Governance.

What exactly is your role as minister overseeing the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) process in SA?

For purposes of clarity, I don't consider myself to be the minister in charge of this process. I see my role as that of focal point responsible for the country self-assessment process that brings together all role players, especially those elected to serve on the ANC's national general council (NGC). The NGC has 29 members, nine of whom are from the executive, including ministers and deputy ministers.

The focal point is a requirement of the guidelines drafted by the APRM eminent persons panel. These guidelines stipulate that the head of state

should appoint a focal point that reports directly to him/her and is directly involved in overseeing the review process. However, the focal point does not necessarily have to be a member of the executive; it could also be a representative of civil society, but in our case we chose to locate the focal point in the executive. This choice has proven to be quite positive, partly because it provides an opportunity for dialogue between the government and civil society. This is important especially within the broader debate on the role of the state, and redefining the role of government within the state.

Although driven by government, the APRM process ought to be transparent and inclusive. How has the SA process been structured and managed?

I don't think a government-driven process should be perceived as negative. Generally, the perception is that the government will unilaterally drive this process. However, from the onset the government assured the participation of the general populace and stakeholders by ensuring that the review process was as inclusive as possible. We put in place provincial processes led by the provincial governing councils that include members of civil society. Moreover, the civil society component of the NGC is drawn from the SA Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) chapter of the AU. As a result, the representation of various stakeholders in the review process reflects and mirrors the requirements of the ECOSOCC chapter.

Significantly, through the entire process the government has also ensured interaction with all sectors of society, and, having completed the country self-assessment report, we can say without

any contradiction that we have reached all sectors of society. We may not have reached all individuals in the country, but we definitely consulted all the sectors. The extent to and depth with which we consulted the various sectors may vary, but the point remains that our efforts were focused towards being as consultative as possible. We also provided space for input from the different government structures, such as the legislature.

Initially, the consultation with parliament proved difficult partly because it was also supposed to present an independent report. However, that changed and we used the parliamentary process as part of an outreach programme, because they had gone through a process of public hearings in addition to the other parliamentary consultations. At that level we received a parliamentary report compiled by the relevant parliamentary subcommittee, and reports from other government branches and non-governmental sectors.

In our report on the implementation process we indicate the extent to which we have reached out to sectors of society, and reflect on our research strategy and process. We received submissions from the provinces, civil sectors, women, the disabled, youth, children, labour, culture, the aged, faith-based institutions, and the trade union federations COSATU and FEDUSA.

Institutional participation was also very broad, and through the provinces and community development workers we had direct representation and input from members of community. This was done by simplifying the questionnaires and translating them into the 11 official languages. This information was collated by community development workers. As part of the post-country assessment,

we have a team collating all the input from community development workers so that we can also archive the analysis and the detail for future use.

We also used the media to popularise the APRM process. Some provinces had weekly APRM slots on the various regional radio stations and outside broadcasts through the SABC. Something uniquely South African was an APRM song by people from the disabled sector which was aired on long-distance taxis and several radio stations.

Appreciating the enormity of the task, we set up a secretariat within the Department of Public Service and Administration, appointed contract workers, and seconded two people from the SA ECOSOC chapter responsible for technical work, logistical support, and co-ordination to support the provincial structures and the governing council. We also set up a research secretariat directly accountable to the focal point and governing council chaired by Zanele Twala of the SA NGO Coalition (SANGOCO). These structures were well equipped to support the work required.

The time frames were a major challenge. According to the APRM guidelines, the process is supposed to be completed within nine months, or at least a year. We thought this was a feasible target, given the credibility of our data and existing sources of information and infrastructure. That said, we still experienced difficulties in meeting the deadlines, and eventually acknowledged that the time lines were quite tough. As much as we have managed to hand in our report to Prof Adebayo Adedeji (head of the Eminent Persons Review Team), we had a governing council meeting recently and are still looking at gaps that need refining in both the implementation process report and the programme of action.

Against this background, I would strongly argue that the process has not been dominated by government. Furthermore, we met on a regular basis as the governing council and through this process received input from the various sectors. If the sectors had weak representations, that is reflective of the problem within those sectors and cannot be



Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi addresses the APRM conference held at Midrand in September 2005.
Arnold Pronto / Business Day

blamed on government. However, an assessment of the country report points to the need to strengthen civil society structures and non-governmental organisations. Overall, government has not been overbearing, and as I mentioned earlier, I don't think there is anything wrong with having a representative of government being either a focal point or chairperson. After all, I am an elected representative through my party.

What would you describe as the key findings and outcomes of the APRM process?

As a country we have been clear from the outset about where we want to go, and how we want to get there. A close look at the thematic areas such as democracy and governance indicate that we have regular credible elections based on clear party programmes that capture the vision premised on our constitution. This process confirms that there is consensus among the general populace. This does not necessarily mean that we don't disagree and even differ vehemently on a wide range of issues. However, these differences should be understood in the context of a strong and vibrant democracy.

Importantly, the APRM process has

highlighted differences around the process, degree and extent of implementation. What has emerged out the programme of action is the need to do certain things in order to ensure that when we have a national dialogue, we know that we are talking about the same things. For example, there is a need for a common definition and measurement of poverty, because at the moment there is a difference of opinion. Similarly, much as there is national consensus on social economic development, it is quite clear that the challenge lies in implementation. Regarding civil society, it emerged that we need to strengthen the capacity of civil groupings; hence the recommendation that we need to audit civil society programmes taking place in the country and their ability to implement these programmes. The other issues that arose – such as access to justice, corporate governance legislation, and access to services – were quite predictable.

Given the executive's goal to create a developmental state, how relevant is the APRM process to SA's development challenges?

The goal to create a developmental state is constitutionally enshrined, and chapter 10 of the Public Administration Act stipulates that we need to ensure that that goal is achieved. The APRM process has deepened the discussion and debate on the developmental state. In the entire review process, there has been no recommendation to counter the developmental initiative. The overall report sets out to ensure that the assessment and programme of action are premised on a non-sexist, non-racial, and unified country. The APRM thus deepens the debate on the developmental state, and highlights the cross-cutting responsibility and partnership among government, society and business.

The review from different sectors clearly indicates the reality of inequity in SA, and the need to overcome this. In our instance, a developmental state needs to be redistributive, based on a very strong human rights framework. Therefore, we are not looking at the East Asian model of developmental

states but rather at a home-grown developmental agenda that takes into account the broader global realities and the history of the country.

Other country reviews have run into various problems in respect of deadlines. In SA's case, what has been done differently to avoid similar delays?

The delays and glitches in review processes vary from country to country. The successes of these processes are dependent on the capacity of the AU, NEPAD, and the Peer Review secretariat. The delay with the Rwandese process was due to the absence of President Kagame at the heads of state and government meeting in Sudan. The cause of the delay was that President Obasanjo was reluctant to review a peer in his absence. In my view, this was actually very positive. Obasanjo's decision indicated that the heads of state are serious about the review process in its totality. Kenya's delay, based on our reflections with them, was largely a product of the size of the governing council and the fact that it was primarily composed of individuals rather than sectors and constituency representatives. Therefore, Kenya's selection process for and composition of the governing council has created several challenges resulting in the delay in drafting their programme of action.

In the case of SA, we managed to trim the size of our governing council to a smaller number to avoid deadlocks and disagreements that would emerge under larger groups. That said, we have looked at lessons of other countries and established our direction based on our unique context. One of the major lessons was our engagement with Technical Support Agencies (TSA). We had running battles in the media from the onset, especially on the government-led process. To accommodate their concerns, we commissioned and appointed research institutes and formed TSAs in the various thematic areas. However, when they compiled the first research report it was dominated by their own views. It was clear that they were using the platform to push their own agendas. To avoid this we opened up the process

and included multidisciplinary teams to complement the TSA's work.

Corruption is a great challenge to good governance on the continent and in this country. What are key elements of the anti-corruption drive, which you are leading?

The fight against corruption is guided by our constitution and the need to create an environment of integrity within the public sector and within our society. Therefore, our anti-corruption programmes are informed by the constitutional guidelines. The overall thrust of the national anti-corruption forum is to inform society of its responsibility to take forward the fight against anti-corruption. Most importantly, for the government to sufficiently address the quest for distribution and redistribution, there is a need to deal with the ills and evils in society, and cultivate a culture of integrity and a common aspiration to these values. However, to assume that we can completely root out corruption is also idealistic, and therefore our focus is to create clear control frameworks and a regulatory environment, and to ensure compliance. The most important element in the government's fight against corruption is the involvement and buy-in from the general public. In this context, the national anti-corruption forum is a vehicle that brings together all civil society groupings in the fight against corruption.

Importantly, civil society groupings have just published a report entitled *The Grand Apartheid Corruption Report* which identifies corruption in the past, especially within the civil service. As government we welcome and support this report, because we think there is a need for better understanding and appreciation that corruption is not a post-1994 phenomenon. At the last anti-corruption summit in March 2005, we focused on various programmes in partnership with the private and public sectors. Importantly, within government, there are a range of agencies working on the anti-corruption campaign and we have also put in place interdepartmental mechanisms to address corruption within the civil service.

In a joint study with the UN, the

National Anti-Corruption Forum has established that the perception of corruption is generally much higher than the incidence, because people tend to refer to anecdotes. As a result, the president challenged the role players to develop new indicators to measure corruption rather than relying on perception-based surveys. This is not to suggest that perception-based surveys are completely useless. However, in the case of corruption surveys, there is a need to move beyond them and focus more on unambiguous indicators that can provide a strong basis for policy formulation.

SA, through your office, has played an active role in the Pan-African Public Service Ministerial Initiative. What would you consider to be crucial challenges and major outcomes in this area?

The Pan-African Ministers of Public Service (PAMPS) emanated from meetings initiated by Morocco, and in 1994 the body drafted a public civil service charter. This charter set to address issues such as: norms and ethics for public servants; conditions of service; and areas of conflict. However, this charter was not adopted until 2000 and was rather ambitious given (a) the lack of homogenous civil service system on the continent; (b) the different colonial and historical backgrounds – some countries adopted both French or Westminster/Commonwealth approaches to public service systems; and (c) the different legislative codes.

In December 2005 the PAMPS met in Addis Ababa for the first time under the auspices of the AU as part of the transformation from a Pan-African Ministers' forum to a specialised technical committee of the AU. At this meeting we took a decision to celebrate and declare 23 June as Africa Public Service Day. The SADC public service initiative was co-ordinated via a satellite link between five SADC member countries (Lesotho, Namibia, Mauritius, Swaziland, and SA) to discuss a range of issues such as an ethical public service, service delivery, accessibility of services in rural areas, transparency, and the use of information and communication technology (ICT)



COSATU members protest against poverty and unemployment ... 'there is a need for a common definition and measurement of poverty'. AP Photo/Themba Hadebe

in service delivery. In terms of the programmes within the continent, our focus has been geared towards capacity-building, human capital development, human resources, and the anti-corruption programme which is currently chaired by Nigeria.

Under the guidance of the Public Service and Administration Ministers, we also launched the African Management Development Institution which extends to schools of public service and supports public service programmes around the continent. These programmes also focus on Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and the need for cooperation at subregional and regional levels in restructuring public service administration, overcoming problems of equitable resource allocation, ensuring respect for the rule of law, and rolling out infrastructure programmes. This is part of an initiative to build strong administrations that challenge undue influences from donors and other external factors. At a national level, we are also looking at the possibil-

ity of developing our own database to assess the needs within the public service in partnership with the UNDP.

You have been in charge of a successful transformation of the public service in SA. What major lessons have been learnt, and what notable challenges remain?

Firstly, the principal lesson in public administration is that reform and transformation is not an event but a process that is continuously evolving. The reform process that started in 1994 with the amalgamation of an ethnically and racially based public service into a unitary one was merely the beginning of a long-term engagement. Retrospectively, it was much easier to bring together institutions and establish common legislative and regulative frameworks. However, it takes much longer to transform institutional culture and attitudes. Secondly, transformation needs to be context-based. As much as we can draw on international experiences, it's quite

evident that these experiences cannot be replicated and can only serve as guidelines.

Thirdly, the reform process should be deeply researched in order to set realistic targets and also provide a base that informs the review and assessment of the reform process. One of the main achievements was that we were able to take major leaps into the unknown (in terms of practice) and the known (in terms of what outcomes we wanted). In our transformation process, we pursued issues that some governments would have been reluctant to engage. For example, we inherited a centralised public service commission which we transformed by effectively separating the Department of Public Service from other government departments. The decentralisation process practically gave individual members of the executive, departmental heads, and executing authorities the power to independently manage departmental functions such as human resources, and the power to appoint senior staff. This meant that the Department of Public Service no longer had central authority and control over other government departments. However, in certain instances the lack of adequate capacity has led to problems in departmental appointments.

Lastly, we managed to change the face of public administration dramatically in a very short period of time to a situation which now reflects the demographics of the country. However, this process was not accompanied by the mentorship arrangement to support the lateral entrance of South Africans from previously disadvantaged backgrounds into the public service. We also did away with entrance exams for the public service, and uniform induction. I am of the opinion that we need to reintroduce these back into the system. Nonetheless, the induction should be informed by historical context, and should therefore not be ahistorical and apolitical.

The concept of a single public service is a cross-cutting theme in your transformation agenda. Can you elaborate on this concept?

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Pretoria, Paris, and the crisis in Côte d'Ivoire

Following growing distrust among Ivorians of their former colonial master, the centre of the peacemaking process has moved from Paris to Pretoria. **Adekeye Adebajo** traces the development of this long-standing West African conflict

FOR four decades, France behaved like a 'pyromaniac fireman' in its former colonies, propping up autocrats such as Zaire's Mobutu Sese Seko – and, more recently, Chad's Idris Deby – and shuffling around regimes. French sensitivities at SA's lead role in this traditional Gallic *chasse gardée* (private hunting ground) burst into the open when president Jacques Chirac – during a visit to Senegal in February 2005 – complained that the peace process was too slow because the South Africans did not understand 'the soul and psychology of West Africans'.

Arrogance and insensitivity

Regional actors, not least SA's Thabo Mbeki, were taken aback by the arrogance and insensitivity of this statement, which underlined the continuing paternalism with which some Gaullistes still regard their former colonies. SA's deputy minister of foreign affairs, Aziz Pahad, quipped that Pretoria had achieved more in three months than Paris had done in two years. Some of the key role players in Côte d'Ivoire – particularly the government of Laurent Gbagbo – have also regarded the UN with suspicion because of France's influence as one of the five veto-wielding permanent members of the Security Council, and have sought to balance this by calling for a stronger SA role. Significantly, no Ivorian peace conference has been held in France since 2003, and the centre of peacemaking has moved from Paris to Pretoria as Mbeki has taken up the reins of the key external mediator.

The tensions between Pretoria and Paris vividly illustrate the changing security dynamics of post-Cold War

Africa, with Côte d'Ivoire providing the stage for this epic drama. SA has led peacemaking efforts in this West African country since 2004, and it is worth untangling the complicated threads of this protracted conflict.

The descent of Côte d'Ivoire – formerly an oasis of calm in West Africa's troubled waters – into conflict took many observers by surprise. Though operating an autocratic, patrimonial political system, Félix Houphouët-Boigny, the Ivorian leader from 1960 to 1993, managed the political system with great dexterity, and adopted an enlightened policy towards the country's many immigrants, estimated at a quarter of the population. He died in December 1993. His political heirs – Henri Konan Bédié, General Robert Guei, and Laurent Gbagbo – showed less political skill and foresight than *le vieux* ('the old man'): among other things, they instituted a xenophobic policy of *Ivoirité* that discriminated against Ivorians of mixed parentage and 'foreigners,' many of whom had been born in Côte d'Ivoire

The descent of Côte d'Ivoire – formerly an oasis of calm in West Africa's troubled waters – into conflict took many observers by surprise

or lived in the country for a long time.

The exclusion of the former premier Alassane Ouattara (who apparently had one parent born in Burkina Faso) from the presidential elections in November 2000 alienated many of his northern Muslim constituents, while Gbagbo – whose flawed election under the Ivorian Patriotic Front (FPI), boycotted by most people in the North, had been ques-

tioned by France – dismissed about 200 mostly northern soldiers from the army. These tensions eventually culminated in a coup attempt by largely northern officers in September 2002 and the emergence of two rebel factions: the Mouvement pour la Justice et la Paix (MJP) and the Mouvement Populaire Ivoirien du Grand Ouest (MPIGO); both later became known as the Forces Nouvelles. Gbagbo accused Burkina Faso and Liberia of fomenting the rebellion, while Liberia's leader at the time, Charles Taylor, accused Côte d'Ivoire of backing Liberia's Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL) rebels. Liberian and Sierra Leonean fighters were reported to be fighting on the side of both the government and rebels in the Ivorian conflict. The war spilled 125 000 Ivorian refugees into Liberia, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, and Burkina Faso.

Peacemaking: too many cooks?

Mediation efforts by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in Accra, Ghana, and Lomé, Togo, eventually led to the brokering of the Linas-Marcoussis accord in France in January 2003. This accord established a transitional government with a neutral prime minister, Seydou Diarra – a respected Northern former diplomat – mandated to oversee the disarmament of the rebels, and organise elections. Gbagbo and his supporters felt they had been railroaded into this accord, and resented being treated on a par with the rebels, thus setting the scene for the first anti-French demonstrations in Abidjan. France, which – as part of its neocolonial strategy in the region – has maintained a permanent military base in Côte d'Ivoire



A rally in Abidjan in support of Laurent Gbagbo ... Ivorians have also demonstrated violently against French interests. BONGO/AFR/MAXPPP

since the country's independence in 1960, deployed about 4 600 Licorne troops to monitor the cease-fire. Some 1 288 troops from largely francophone Senegal, Niger, Togo, Benin, and Ghana, known as the ECOWAS Mission in Côte d'Ivoire (ECOMICI), were also deployed in the country by early 2003. Nigeria, which had been the backbone of the ECOWAS missions in Liberia and Sierra Leone, would contribute just five troops to a UN mission in Côte d'Ivoire, underlining its historical rivalry for leadership of West Africa with both Paris and Abidjan.

Part of the complication of the Ivorian case lay in the proliferation of external mediators, which raised obvious questions about too many cooks spoiling the broth. Ghana's John Kufuor, Nigeria's Olusegun Obasanjo, Gabon's Omar Bongo, Sierra Leone's Ahmed Kabbah, Togo's Gnassingbé Eyadéma,

and Niger's Mamadou Tandja have all been involved in peacemaking efforts, and SA, ECOWAS, the AU and the UN all nominated their own special envoys to Côte d'Ivoire. As AU chair, Obasanjo appointed Mbeki as the organisation's mediator in November 2004, bringing some focus to the peacemaking process. Mbeki visited Abidjan and called the parties to Pretoria to discuss their differences. The Ivorian factions had gone to Accra in July 2004 for a meeting chaired by Kufuor and UN secretary-general Kofi Annan, and attended by 13 African heads of state. The Accra III accord that emerged set a new timetable for implementing the Marcoussis accord: amending discriminatory nationality and electoral laws by September 2004, and starting the disarmament process by October 2004. Both deadlines were missed.

The ECOWAS mission in Côte d'Ivoire

was largely financed and equipped by France which used its permanent seat on the UN Security Council to secure a substantial UN peacekeeping force in Côte d'Ivoire. In February 2004 the \$400 million-a-year, 6 240-strong UN mission in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) was established. The mission was mandated to work alongside the 4 600 French troops to maintain a 'zone of confidence' between government and rebel troops and to implement the Marcoussis peace accord. UNOCI was also tasked to oversee the disarmament of 26 000 Forces Nouvelles troops and 4 000 government soldiers. The peacekeepers further provided security to opposition politicians in the Ivorian capital of Abidjan. The Senegalese general Abdoulaye Fall was named force commander of UNOCI which also included a 700-strong contingent from Morocco, one of France's most reliable African allies. The small ECOWAS force was 'rehatted' under this new UN mission.

Violent demonstrations

UNOCI was rocked in November 2004 when government soldiers attacked Forces Nouvelles positions and killed nine French soldiers in the northern city of Bouaké. French troops destroyed the entire Ivorian air force of nine planes, resulting in violent demonstrations against French interests and a mass evacuation of about 10 000 mostly French citizens from Côte d'Ivoire. Jittery French troops killed about 50 government-backed 'Young Patriot' demonstrators outside Abidjan's Hotel Ivoire. These violent demonstrations by government-backed and other militias have continued throughout the conflict, sometimes resulting in the killing of innocent civilians.

The distrust between the former colonial master and many Ivorians – fanned by a government that feared that Paris was bent on its removal – reached new heights. Gbagbo's supporters accused France of trying to 'recolonise' the country by using 'agents' such as Burkina Faso. The Forces Nouvelles rebels accused Guinea of backing the government militarily. While Gbagbo talked of leaving the French-dominated

CFA (Communauté Financière Africaine) franc currency zone, his hard-line speaker of parliament, Mamadou Coulibaly, called for a complete break with the former colonial power. Gbagbo was further angered when France pushed the Security Council to impose an arms embargo and legal sanctions supported by largely francophone countries and Nigeria at a regional summit in Abuja. There were also splits between the Forces Nouvelles rebels which sometimes resulted in military clashes. Both the UN and Licorne troops came under attack and frequently had their freedom of movement restricted by the warring factions.

Arms embargo

Ratcheting up the pressure, the UN Security Council finally imposed an arms (and, a year later, diamond) embargo on all the factions by December 2004, and unveiled the threat of travel sanctions and a freezing of financial assets of individuals obstructing the peace process. Within the Security Council, France pushed strongly for individual sanctions, while Russia, China, and Algeria were opposed to both these measures as well as further actions to tighten the arms embargo. Mbeki also successfully urged the council to hold off individual sanctions to give his mediation efforts

time to bear fruit. A tripartite monitoring group of ECOWAS, the AU, and the UN started submitting fortnightly monitoring reports. The main source of problems was that Gbagbo refused to empower his prime minister, Seydou Diarra, with decision-making powers, and dragged his feet on amending laws that would have allowed his rival, Alasane Ouattara, to participate in elections. Rebel leader Guillaume Soro, along with the Coalition des Marcoussistes opposition parties, refused to disarm until the laws had been passed. Along with other opposition politicians, Soro frequently walked out of his ministerial post in Abidjan to protest what they perceived to be Gbagbo's recalcitrance in implementing the peace accords.

By 2005 the epicentre of conflict in West Africa appeared to have shifted from Liberia to Côte d'Ivoire. Côte d'Ivoire's volatile western region saw ethnic and community-based militias continue to clash violently, while the 'zone of confidence' continued to be violated, mainly by the rebel Forces Nouvelles. In August 2005 the government-backed 'Young Patriots' militia attacked the vehicle of the UN special representative, Pierre Schori. The UN mission also reported an eight-fold increase in the limiting of its peacekeepers' freedom of movement between June and July 2005, and a Moroccan UN peace-

keeper was murdered in the northern town of Bouaké a month later. Gbagbo's government, Bédié's Democratic Party of Côte d'Ivoire (PDCI), Ouattara's Rally of Republicans (RPR), and Soro's Forces Nouvelles continued to squabble over the implementation of the Pretoria Agreement of June 2005, which set new timetables for implementing Marcoussis and Accra III. This resulted in the failure to achieve disarmament targets in August 2005, and the postponement of elections which had been scheduled for October 2005.

Consistent with the Pretoria accord, Mbeki had urged Gbagbo to use his exceptional powers to amend discriminatory laws (on nationality, identification, the Human Rights Commission, and the print media) in July 2005, when it became clear that the Ivorian parliament would not amend them. After Gbagbo adopted these laws by decree, Soro and the Group of Seven (G-7) opposition parties challenged these measures. These politicians argued that certain groups in Côte d'Ivoire were still deprived of their rights under the nationality law, and that the country's Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) needed to have clear primacy over the National Institute of Statistics in organising elections. Gbagbo further amended the laws on the IEC, the nationality code, and the naturalisation law – again by decree – in August 2005, but this failed to break the deadlock.

After an SA statement blaming Soro for blocking the peace process, the Forces Nouvelles withdrew from Mbeki's mediation efforts, accusing him of bias towards Gbagbo. The rebel group then urged Obasanjo as AU chair to find an alternative solution to the impasse. These events unfortunately coincided with tensions between SA and Nigeria over regional diplomatic issues and the acrimonious battle for an African seat on a reformed UN Security Council (a measure that failed to secure enough support during the UN General Assembly session between September and December 2005). At a meeting of the AU's 15-member Peace and Security Council (PSC) on the margins of the UN General Assem-



Ivorian president Laurent Gbagbo and French president Jacques Chirac after talks in Paris ... the centre of Ivorian peacemaking has moved from Paris to Pretoria. AP Photo/Michel Euler

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Fighting for survival

While multiparty democracies have been revived in southern Africa, opposition parties face a formidable range of challenges which tilt the political playing field against them,

writes **Khabele Matlosa**

TODAY, a decade after the political transition of the early 1990s, a debate is emerging in southern Africa over the role of political parties in the democratisation process. This article contributes to this debate by examining conditions in opposition political parties in the current multiparty dispensation. My main contention is that, while political parties play a key role in building and sustaining democracies, parties in opposition to the ruling party tend to face much more daunting challenges than the latter.

Historical evolution

This is largely attributable to the historical evolution of these parties. Since the early 1990s, the fortunes of opposition parties have progressed through a brief spell of multiparty politics after the countries in the region gained independence, through a prolonged period of one-party rule, to the current return to multiparty systems. Current versions of the multiparty system is also notable for a 'dominant party' syndrome, which presents opposition parties with yet another challenge.

Upon achieving political independence in the 1960s, the majority of SADC countries adopted a relatively stable multiparty system, and the new dispensation was ushered in by multiparty elections. However, this embryonic liberal democracy proved to be short-lived. During the mid-1960s, almost all states in the region (except for Botswana and Mauritius) abandoned the multiparty liberal democratic framework and adopted a one-party system. Kenneth Kaunda's Zambia and Julius Nyerere's Tanzania were at the forefront of this development, justifying one-party rule within the framework of 'humanism' and 'African socialism' (*ujamaa*) respec-

tively. The arguments commonly presented by proponents of the one-party state included the imperatives to focus attention on economic development; to prioritise nation-building and reconciliation in the aftermath of colonial occupation; and to reduce the intensity of political competition, which was perceived as divisive and inimical to economic growth and national harmony. In most of the countries where the single-party tradition held sway, their leaders argued that this type of regime was best suited to southern Africa. As Peter Wan-yande has written, the western model of multiparty liberal democracy was generally perceived as antithetical to the two priorities of economic growth and nation-building.

The one-party system was part of the early institutionalisation of various sorts of authoritarian rule in the region. It enabled the ruling party not only to exercise unfettered political hegemony over the state and society, but also to subsume the organs of civil society, such as trade unions and farmers' associations. Under the one-party system, therefore, opposition parties were either prohibited or subjected to crippling restrictions by the party in power.

Since the political transitions of the early 1990s, in which multiparty liberal democratic frameworks were reintroduced, opposition parties have become a feature of the democratic process. In almost all SADC countries, there are opposition parties that contest elections and take part in various other democratic processes. However, in general the ruling parties enjoy a monopoly over the control of the state.

Given the political hegemony of these dominant parties, those in opposition often find themselves unable to make much headway in the electoral strongholds of the parties in power. This

could explain why at present all political parties, and especially opposition parties, face a crisis of legitimacy in the eyes of the public. Furthermore, opposition parties find themselves unable to hold ruling parties to account, whether through parliamentary or extra-parliamentary means.

As already mentioned, the most important of the many and varied challenges that opposition parties face today are party leadership, intra-party democracy, party funding, gender equality, and inter-party relations.

Every organisation is as good as its leader. This principle applies to opposition political parties too. The effectiveness and sustainability of opposition parties are heavily dependent upon the personalities and political style of their central figures. Because the rationale for the existence of opposition parties is to contest the way in which the current government administers the state, how badly or well each opposition party performs this primary task depends on how dynamic, democratic and visionary its leader is. These qualities determine both the nature and the approach of opposition parties. Therefore, the party's leader can be either a political asset or liability.

Most serious problems

By and large, the most serious problems confronting those who lead opposition parties relate to their internal structure, the party hierarchy and the setting up of mechanisms to ensure accountability; the formulation of ethical codes of conduct for both the elite and the party rank and file; programme and policy development; international and regional networking between parties; the forming of national coalitions of parties; party relations with electoral management bodies (EMBs) and civil society

organisations (CSOs); and communication strategies.

Information collected from various countries in the SADC region suggests that opposition political parties also face the daunting task of attempting to convert the vision of leaders who promote accountable and transparent government into an institutional form that fosters a democratic culture within the party as well as among the general public. In other words, democracy both at the macro-level of the nation and the micro-level of the political parties requires democrats. It is therefore imperative that the leaders of opposition parties should practise and as well as preach democratic values.

Democratic values

The manner in which opposition parties act, whether prior to, during or between elections, tends to be determined by the extent to which they have internalised democratic values. For example, the way in which a party's leaders choose which candidates to nominate for elections is often fraught with controversy. The greatest sources of contention, which can even bring about splits in opposition parties, include the criteria set to determine the eligibility of possible candidates; the procedure followed; and the type of voting system used to select candidates. Another problem raised by primary elections concerns whether the elite control the selection process, or whether the ordinary members of the party are allowed to influence such decisions.

These difficulties are experienced in almost all the SADC states, regardless of the electoral model each one follows. However, they are more evident in those countries that use the British first-past-the-post (FPTP) system, which makes it possible for candidates to contest elections in an independent capacity. As a result, when party members become disgruntled because their leaders exercise too much control over the candidate nomination process, they simply desert the party and put themselves forward as independent candidates. This in part explains why, after the general election held in May 2004,

Malawi's parliament contained more independents than party members.

The challenge for party leaders who wish to retain the loyalty of their followers revolves around the degree of openness they display when nominations for candidates are made. Parties need to involve their grass-roots members, to ensure collective ownership of nominations and party lists. It would be even better if an independent and impartial body were to be engaged to monitor party nominations and the drawing up of party lists. One of the most disturbing consequences of a lack of internal democracy within opposition parties is the ever-increasing level of conflict within them. At times this leads to political violence and the fragmentation of these parties, as was illustrated by the split in the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) in Zimbabwe November 2005.

Party funding presents yet another hurdle for opposition political parties in southern Africa. Research by Tom Lodge, Mohamed Salih, and the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) shows that public funding for campaigning prior to elections is crucial to the nurturing and consolidation of democracy, because it puts all parties on an equal footing. Some of the contentious issues raised by party funding are: sources of party funding; levels of funding; levels of income and expenditure; the role of the National Electoral Commission and local branches in the fund-raising process; the differences in funding levels during

ing or not, ruling parties often use state resources to gain political mileage in elections. This perpetuates the dominant party syndrome.

While public funding for political parties remains problematic, an even greater difficulty relates to the private funding of parties. In a recent study undertaken by the Institute for Democracy in South Africa (IDASA), three possible options for dealing with private funding were suggested. The first is a highly regulated system in which no private funding is allowed. The second is a *laissez-faire* situation in which private funding is unregulated (as is the situation in a number of SADC countries at present). The third is a middle-ground option in which private funding is allowed, but within certain limits, and governed by a regulatory framework requiring political parties to demonstrate accountability and disclose all funding.

There are no straightforward solutions to the complex issue of party funding, especially private funding of parties, whether in government or opposition.

Gender equality

Gender equality is a prerequisite for the entrenchment and institutionalisation of intra-party democracy. The SADC member states took a positive step towards this goal when they signed the Gender and Development Declaration in Blantyre, Malawi, in 1997. In doing so they committed themselves individually and collectively to various policy measures, including the following:

- achieving equal gender representation in all key organs of the state, and ensuring that by 2005 at least 30% of appointees to key political and decision-making structures are women;
- promoting women's full access to, and control over, productive resources, to reduce the level of poverty among women;
- repealing and reforming all laws which subject women to discrimination, and amending constitutions and changing social practices accordingly; and
- taking urgent measures to prevent and deal with the increasing lev-

Party funding presents yet another hurdle for opposition political parties in southern Africa

and in between elections; funding for women's and youth wings; the nature of fund-raising strategies; the asset bases of parties; and their financial reporting and accountability.

Opposition political parties are expected to ensure that public funds are used for the benefit of the citizenry in a transparent, accountable and responsive manner. In contrast, whether a country makes legal provision for party fund-



A SADC Observer Mission headed by Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka – now SA deputy president – tries to gain entry to a polling station in Harare ... the 'dominant party' syndrome presents major challenges in southern Africa. Nadine Hutton/PictureNET Africa

els of violence against women and children.

These commitments can be achieved and sustained only if political parties, whether in office or in opposition, create an appropriate environment for gender parity. Research into current conditions in SADC countries suggests that women tend to be marginalised by the male-dominated leadership structures of political parties. As a result they are passed over as candidates both for elections and for leadership positions in the parties to which they belong. They tend to be relegated to the women's leagues, which play a supportive, subordinate role in relation to the executive structures, which are staffed by men.

Statistical evidence indicates that under the FPTP electoral model, women tend to be given a raw deal in terms of representation, both within parties and in national assemblies. In contrast, proportional representation systems tend to be much more conducive to the greater participation and representation of women at all levels of political activity. However, although they can play some role in assisting or discouraging the political empowerment of women, electoral models on their own are insuf-

ficient to prompt or deter parties from achieving gender parity. Various other factors play a role. These include gender quotas and the political commitment to gender equality of the leaders of any given party.

Party alliances

Opposition parties have not as yet discovered a way to build mutually reinforcing interrelationships. In a study of party alliances and coalitions over the last three years, Denis Kadima has found that only three countries in the SADC region (Mozambique, SA and Malawi) have an entrenched political tradition of associations between parties. The remaining SADC states have not yet followed suit. However, countries such as Zambia, Lesotho, and Botswana have recently made moves in this direction. Their success will be tested in the next general elections, which are scheduled for 2006, 2007, and 2009 respectively. The point is that opposition parties find it difficult to relate to each other and to design mutually beneficial pacts, even though these may increase their electoral strength and prevent the splitting of the opposition vote.

The dilemmas facing opposition parties in southern Africa today cannot be fully explained without reference to their historical background and the contemporary history of party systems in the region. The colonial setting within which these parties first emerged was not democratic, and therefore did not provide an environment in which they could mature. Further, the colonial regimes were autocratic, and crushed any opposition.

Since the SADC countries gained independence, the region has undergone three broad political phases, all of which have affected the way in which opposition parties operate. These were the initial, short-lived multiparty system (from the early 1960s to the mid-1960s); protracted one-party rule (from the mid-1960s to the late 1980s); and the reinstatement of a multiparty system (from the 1990s onwards). However, within the current multiparty dispensation, opposition parties face a plethora of challenges that hamper their effectiveness. ■

Dr Khabele Matlosa is research director at the Electoral Institute of Southern Africa (EISA).

Steep climb for Nepal

The reintroduction of multiparty democracy after a decade of civil war has raised hopes of a brighter future for Nepal – but the peace process still needs to be consolidated, writes **Rita Rai**

IN APRIL this year, three weeks of bloodshed and mass unrest in Nepal culminated in King Gyanendra's capitulation, and a hard-earned victory for democracy. The ceasefire not only ended the triangular power struggle among the monarchy, political parties, and Maoist resistance, but also opened the door to a serious peace process. Compelled to acknowledge the 'spirit of the peoples' movement', King Gyanendra surrendered absolute rule when he accepted popular sovereignty, re-established parliament, and invited the majority seven-party alliance to implement its road map, whose main thrust is the election of a constituent assembly to redraft the constitution in line with the parties' five-month-old agreement with the Maoist resistance.

Enormous challenges

However, this is just the start of the new beginning. This small Himalayan nation faces enormous challenges relating to the sustainable restoration of democracy, the continuation of a successful and enduring peace process, and economic development. Tucked between the two powerhouses of the Asian continent, China and India, Nepal is one of the poorest countries in the world; its population of 26.5 million has an average per capita income of about US\$250 a year. The economy is predominantly agricultural, since about 86 per cent of Nepalese live in rural areas. It also relies strongly on foreign aid and tourism.

Nepal is a highly plural society with diverse ethnic, caste, linguistic, and religious communities. It is also deeply divided, with poverty, education, and human development cleavages coinciding with caste, ethnicity and gender.

Prior to the first ever multiparty elections in 1990, Nepal was under abso-

lute monarchic rule, in alliance with an urban ruling class. The kingdom had failed its people for almost half a century. The challenges of national reunification and economic development in a very diverse country with weak state institutions were never addressed. Rather, the system reproduced the monopolistic rule of one ruling class representing one language and culture over the country's diverse social and cultural interests. The state failed to respect people's rights to self-determination and the preservation of their cultures, languages and traditions. Instead, they were taught to venerate the royal family and the ruling class.

For decades, the people of Nepal regarded the king as the reincarnation of a Hindu deity, and a symbol of their protection and national unity. Meanwhile, their own living standards steadily deteriorated, and their children lost access to even the most basic rights to education and health.

The idea of Nepalese nationalism remains hollow, and there is a near-absence of liberal democratic norms.

The idea of Nepalese nationalism remains hollow, and there is a near-absence of liberal democratic norms

This accounts in part for the emergence of a culture of resistance and the popular revolt in 1990 that helped to usher in a multiparty democracy. The new-found democracy inspired hope among the masses of an inclusive political system that would address their needs and desires, ignored for so long by the government in Kathmandu. The optimism among Nepalese was reminiscent of popular sentiment in African countries during decolonisation in the 1960s.

But this euphoria was short-lived,

as people soon realised that the newly installed 'democratic' government was the same old devil in a new outfit. The new political system began to crumble as a result of bad economic policies and planning, which continued to exclude large sections of the rural population as well as various minorities from the mainstream of economic and social development. The new politics were increasingly defined by corruption, nepotism, and favouritism. Practices of transparency, accountability, and social responsibility gradually diminished. As a result, income disparities increased and inequitable access to natural resources worsened, thus further widening the divide between the rich and the poor. Landlessness and social discrimination on the basis of caste, ethnicity, gender, and geography persisted, and people's faith in and support for democracy were slowly eroded.

Popular grievances over bad governance and exclusionary politics led to another watershed event in Nepalese politics. In February 1996 the Communist Party of Nepal (CPN Maoists) started a *janauddha* (peoples' war).

Its demands included 'public welfare, nationalism, a new constitution drafted by a constituent assembly, a republican state, and abrogation of all the unequal treaties with foreign governments'. Initially, its goal was to 'achieve communism by means of surrounding the city from the countryside and solving the basic contradictions of Nepalese people based on feudalism, imperialism and comprador bureaucratic capitalism'.

Its strategy has been based on what it calls the Prachanda Path: 'to provide leadership to the anti-feudal and anti-imperialist democratic revolution of Nepalese people' by means of Mao Tse-Tung's three-stage guerrilla war: strategic defence, strategic stalemate, and



Nepalese activists celebrate in Katmandu after the democratic reforms announced in April ... however, Nepal could easily lapse back into conflict. AP Photo/ Manish Swarup

strategic offence. The Maoist movement soon gained mass popularity in the rural areas, where boundaries of caste, ethnicity, language or religion were more fluid. This was particularly the case in western Nepal, the most neglected and politically and economically isolated region.

The party's initial campaign against social evils such as gambling, trafficking in women, domestic violence, smuggling, and so on added to its popularity. Persistent political, economic and social inequalities enabled the Maoists to mobilise the neglected janajatis (ethnic groups), women, and Dalits (untouchables) as well the underprivileged and unemployed.

Ten years of 'peoples' war' have ravaged the tiny Himalayan nation, and undermined whatever economic momentum existed previously. Infrastructure worth millions of dollars has been damaged. The country also became highly militarised. Public revenue was increasingly diverted from socioeconomic development to defence, with adverse consequences for humanitarian and developmental needs. During the past ten years, Amnesty International recorded the worst human rights violations in the country's history, committed by the Maoists as well as the state army, the Royal Nepal Army (RNA). Both parties were guilty of executions, torture, random arrests, and abductions.

The conflict has claimed about 13 000 Nepali lives, including those of more than 400 children, and some 200 000 people have been displaced.

Endorsed by the international community, and fervently supported by urban Nepalese, the Seven Party Alliance (SPA) of April 2006 brought hope for a new dawn in Nepal. However, it soon became clear that major challenges needed to be surmounted if a peace process was to endure.

12-point understanding

First, Nepalese has been wary of the promises and level of commitment of the SPA. The April events reminded them of the 1990s euphoria over the promise of democracy and prosperity that soon turned into despair for most of the population. The April victory would not have been possible without a pact known as the '12-Point Understanding' between the SPA and CPN (Maoists). It reflected a commitment to democratic norms and values, including a competitive multiparty system, civil liberties, fundamental human rights, press freedom, and the rule of law. Most importantly, it formally recognised the CPN Maoists as a political party, and provided for its inclusion in political decision-making.

However, the SPA and CPN Maoists continued to disagree on a number of issues, including the future role of the monarchy as well as disarmament. The Maoists' unilateral three-month ceasefire was not reciprocated, and there was no response to their demand for the release of political prisoners. Since then, the mistrust between the two parties has been growing, and the cracks are becoming increasingly apparent. In June the SPA leader, PM Koirala, and the Maoist supreme, Pushpa Kamal Dahal (alias Prachanda), negotiated an eight-point agreement, said to be a more detailed and elaborate version of the '12-point Understanding'. However, there seems to be a lack of commitment to the agreement, especially among members of the SPA. The issue of how it should be implemented remains hotly debated, with parliament further undermining the start of a successful peace



Pro-democracy students demonstrate against King Gyanendra ... the future of the monarchy remains a high charged issue. AP Photo/Binod Joshi

process and the integration of the Maoist party into the political mainstream.

The legitimacy of the current Koirala government, and the degree to which Koirala himself can contribute to the peace process, are also questionable. Three months after the April ceasefire he has failed to consolidate political reconciliation. The ageing and ailing prime minister comes from an elite background; his family has been politically active since the advent of Nepali nationalism in the 1940s. His leadership failed during the 1990s, when the task of managing the intricacies of democratic governance was undermined by his inability to build a successful pact with other parties. After a few years his own party members disowned him, accusing him of corruption and of amassing excessive power. His capacity to generate fresh ideas under current circumstances is uncertain.

A lack of firm leadership and institutional infighting could easily cause the country to lapse back into conflict. In 1990 the Maoist leadership was expelled from the process to draft a new constitution, and political parties rapidly resorted to squandering state money and engaging in personal politicking. All these factors and forces combined into a potent recipe for launching the 'peoples' war', that endured for a decade.

The patience and co-operation shown by the Maoist party has been a major positive factor. In the past few months, it has demonstrated a significant change in approach, and its willingness to be flexible. It has moved away from its initial demand for a socialist economy, and agreed to accept free market principles. It remains well-organised and has become more pragmatic in order to gain tactical advantages from a shifting political landscape.

Institutional restructuring

Even though revolutionary in its original ideas and demands, the CPN Maoists are led by intellectuals, academics and philosophers. They have attributes that are clearly absent among present Nepalese politicians, and this is perhaps one of the reasons why Nepalese politics have stagnated so dramatically. A complete institutional restructuring is vital, rather than tinkering with the old system which has caused ordinary Nepals such anguish. The crafting of the final constitution must be an inclusive, popularly endorsed and popularly driven process, unambiguously approved by the people of Nepal.

The future role of the monarchy is also unresolved; even the eight-point agreement has failed to propose a

coherent plan on this score. Nepal remained under monarchic rule from the late 1940s until the instalment of multiparty democracy in the 1990s. As the conflict intensified, and political parties remained unable to resolve the situation, Nepal once again came under absolute royal rule after a palace coup staged by King Gyanendra in February 2005. He dismissed the government, and declared a countrywide state of emergency.

Addressing the nation over national television and radio, the king declared: 'Instead of preparing the electorate and political parties for elections and laying the necessary legal, managerial and technical groundwork, time was wasted on paying lip service to the urgency of holding elections.' He invited the Maoists to lay down their arms and 'return to the mainstream of national politics peacefully'. This abrupt usurpation of authority was very unpopular, and was sharply criticised internally as well as by the international community.

The Maoists have stuck to their initial demands that Nepal should become a republic, and that the special privileges enjoyed by the king and his family should be abolished. Ordinary Nepalese are divided on this issue: some support

continued on page 37

Climate change in Africa: what policy-makers need to know

Climate change may have major unforeseen effects on African countries and their economies which need to be thoroughly investigated, writes **Anthony R Turton**

AFRICA faces major development challenges, among them sourcing enough water to sustain modern economies. The World Bank document *Water for Responsible Growth* (2006) shows that assured water supply is a key prerequisite for sustained economic development, and points out that most industrial countries have efficiently harnessed their hydrologies. So what about southern Africa, where the four most economically developed countries – SA, Namibia, Botswana, and Zimbabwe – have all reached a point where water supplies are threatening to limit economic growth, and hence potentially compromise political stability? This article explores key aspects of the situation in the southern African hydropolitical complex which policy-makers need to understand and take into account when planning the continent's future.

Development constraints

The World Bank refers to Africa as being 'held hostage by hydrology', but what does this really mean? Simply stated, southern Africa is constrained by limited water supplies, defined in terms of both time and space. Spatially, water is unevenly distributed, with high rainfall in the northern parts, centred on the DRC, but tapering off in a dramatic gradient to the south. This is depicted in figure 1, with the global average of 860 mm/yr shown as a red line. Two important development constraints are evident. Firstly, the unequal distribution of rainfall is patently obvious.

Secondly, and probably more importantly, the four most economically developed countries are all on the 'wrong' side of the global average. What this map does not show is that rainfall in this region is highly erratic, with annual volumes deviating by as much as 140% above and 30% below the 'norm'. These physical elements – spatial, temporal, and cyclicity – constitute what the World Bank refers to as 'difficult hydrologies'.

Another piece of the policy-related puzzle is associated with a key conversion equation. Known technically as the ratio of Mean Annual Precipitation (MAP) to Mean Annual Runoff (MAR), this is a fundamental defining factor in southern Africa's 'difficult hydrology'. In lay terms, this refers to the portion of annual average rainfall that eventually flows down rivers, and can therefore be harnessed for economic purposes. Some authors refer to this as Blue Water.

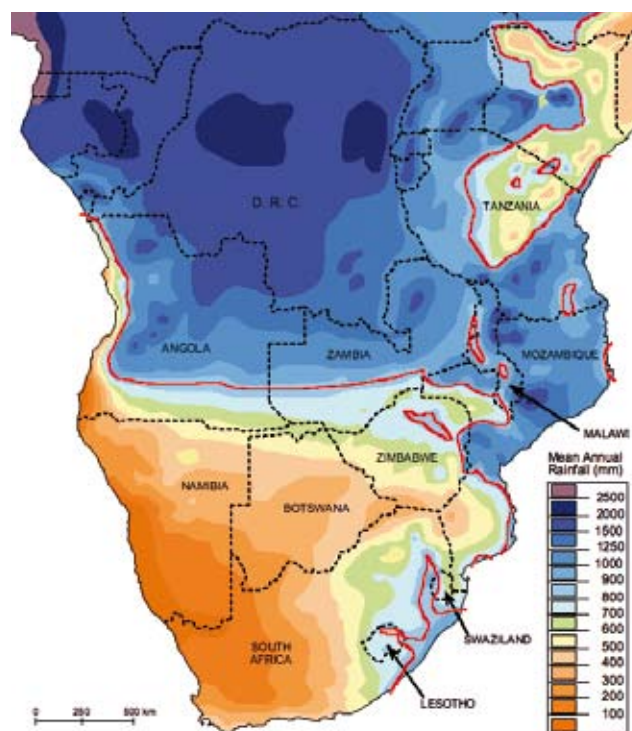
Water is a fugitive resource. National economic planners think of water resources as a stock, reflected in statistical data such as flows of a given river expressed as so many cubic

kilometres a year. But in reality it is a flux, changing in both space and time, being recycled in what is known technically as the hydrological cycle. The current reality is presented in figure 1.

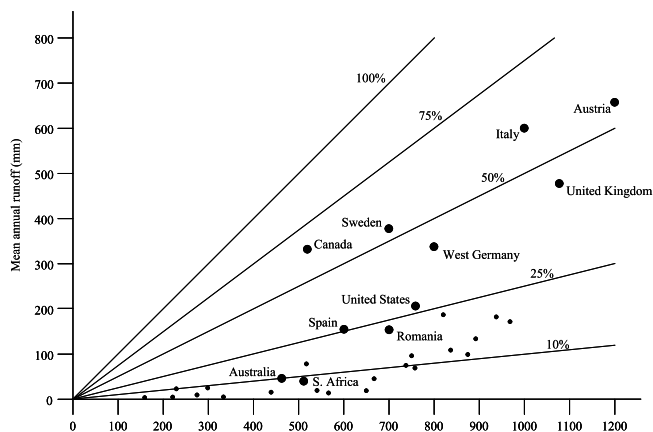
Figure 2 tells a vivid story about southern Africa's 'difficult hydrology'. On average, SA receives a similar volume of precipitation as Canada (a bit over 500 mm/yr). However, while in Canada about 325 mm/yr is converted into runoff, the figure for SA is a paltry 25 mm/yr. In fact, southern Africa and Australia have the lowest conversions of MAP to MAR in the world – a key fact for economic planners.

In order to better understand this fundamental constraint, a few more facts are needed. Rivers pulse in line with cycles of flood and drought. Dams are needed to smooth this pulsing – they hold back floods, clipping off the peaks and storing that water for use in the ebbs of the 'normal' hydrograph, thereby allowing it to be harnessed economically. However, a thresh-

Figure 1: Annual rainfall over southern Africa



Note: The red line shows the global average of 860 mm/yr. Map courtesy of Pete Ashton, CSIR

Figure 2: Global MAP:MAR ratios in selected countries

Only a small fraction of water that falls as rainfall (horizontal axis) becomes stream flow in rivers (vertical axis). The lines radiating from the nexus are percentile conversions, with the large named dots representing average conditions for the specific country concerned. The unnamed smaller dots clustered around the tenth percentile represent different rivers in southern Africa. Drawn from J O'Keeffe, M Uys and M N Bruton, *Freshwater Systems*, in R F Fuggle and M A Rabie (eds), *Environmental Management in South Africa* (1992).

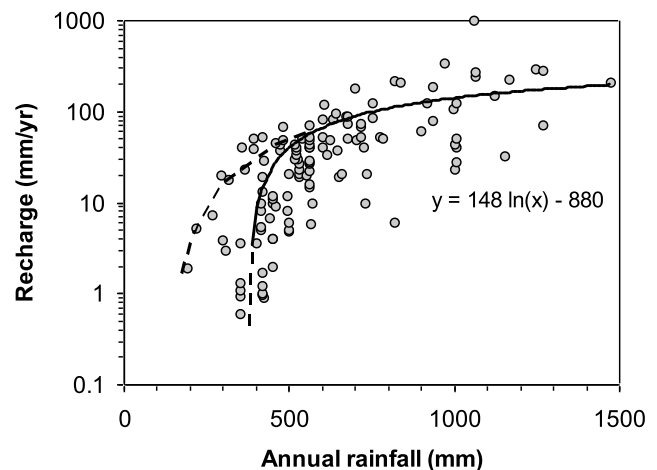
old kicks in at around 60% of stream flow: beyond that, costs rise sharply, and cost: benefit ratios decline.

SA is currently capturing about 62% of available stream flow, so we are on that threshold already. Beyond that it not only becomes increasingly uneconomical to harness water resources, but also ecologically destructive. Rivers support ecosystems, and these perform helpful social functions by cleaning up the waste caused by human habitation. Every water treatment process harnessed by engineers at a certain cost merely mimics what nature does for free. The preservation of ecosystem integrity is what prevents a work-horse river from becoming an open sewer. Ecologically intact rivers act as environmental sinks, saving money for a variety of actions such as assimilating our waste, and reducing the cost of treatment that would otherwise be passed on to society.

River basins

The relevance of this becomes evident when one understands that the ecologies within river basins in southern Africa have evolved over millions of years to survive the variability of those rivers. In fact, variability is the biophysical trigger that causes major events such as spawning to occur. Once dams are introduced into the system, variability decreases and, with the loss of flood pulses, biodiversity crashes in a magnitude disproportional to the degree of actual physical change. This is known technically as non-linearity, and is a fundamental component of the so-called precautionary principle on which the notion of sustainable development is based.

We now need to look at the groundwater fraction. A small portion of rainfall that does not evaporate immediately filters into the earth, where it eventually finds its way into aquifers

Figure 3: Rainfall versus groundwater recharge in southern Africa

The relationship between rainfall (horizontal axis) and groundwater recharge (vertical axis) is non-linear in southern Africa, with a major threshold occurring below the 500 mm mark. Drawn from H E Beekman, A S M Gieske & E T Selaolo, *Groundwater Recharge Studies in Botswana, 1987–1996*, *Journal of Earth Science*, 3, 1996.

as ground water. The rate of infiltration into aquifers is non-linear, as shown in figure 3. It is a scatter plot showing measured recharge as a function of rainfall. At about 500mm of precipitation, a threshold is reached, with a dramatic change in the fundamental relationship between rainfall and recharge. To assess the significance of this, we need to understand firstly that large parts of southern Africa have little reliable surface water, and are thus heavily reliant on groundwater. It is in this context that global climate change becomes such a key issue. The Hadley General Circulation Model (HADCM3) is a respected tool used by climatologists, and mainstream climate change scientists in Africa believe its Scenario A2 is the most likely (figure 4).

In general, places likely to become hotter are also likely to become wetter; a warmer environment evaporates more water, so the linkage is elementary. However, due to a variety of other factors – such as altitude, distance from the sea, ratio of sea surface to land surface, and prevailing winds – a hotter southern Africa will also become a drier place. This is unique in global climate change predictions, and something we need to take very seriously from a policy-making perspective.

Economic viability

Why? Global climate change will have a major impact on Africa's economic viability. It will change the already 'difficult hydrologies' into nightmarish ones, and unlock a range of as yet unforeseen consequences, caused by increases in the magnitude and duration of extreme events such as droughts and floods. Stated simplistically, droughts will become worse and last longer, floods will become more violent and extreme, and large parts of the continent will be desiccated.

One such unexpected consequence may occur in the mining sector, an important activity in large parts of Africa. A recent scientific report entitled *An Assessment of Sources, Pathways, Mechanisms and Risks of Current and Potential Future Pollution of Water and Sediments in Gold Mining Areas of the Wonderfonteinspruit Catchment* has shown that gold mining is often associated with uranium, and therefore radioactivity. While little is known of the full geographic extent of the problem at the continental level, we do know that this radioactive material is trapped in the sediment of rivers downstream of some gold mining activities. We also know that it is generally prevented from spreading further because it is trapped in this sediment bed. This is a classic example of an environmental sink at work.

What we do not yet know is how (or indeed if) this radioactivity enters food chains, say, via irrigation water or normal ecological food webs. We also do not know what will happen if these sediments are dried out and allowed to blow around as dust particles, potentially contaminating other land, as occurred in the case of the Aral Sea where toxins trapped in sediment became airborne after desiccation.

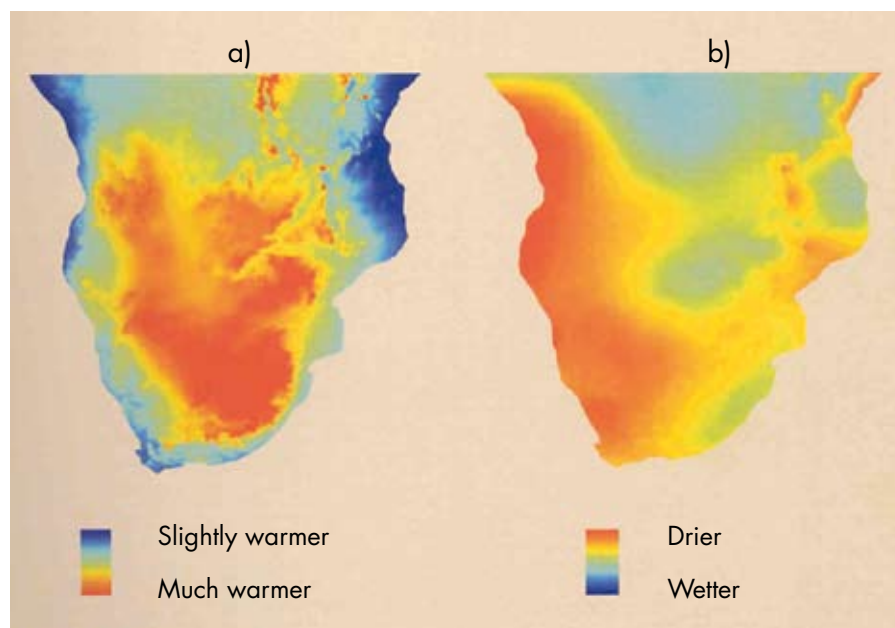
Pollutants

Climate change will change stream flow regimes in rivers, some of which have radioactive contaminants trapped in the sediment. During periods of prolonged drought, this material could become airborne, whereas during periods of flood it could move downstream into dams and possibly irrigation systems, far away from the mining activities. Radioactive and other pollutants could also become concentrated in water due to the loss of natural dilution, further compounding the problem of treatment to potable standards.

The public tends to dismiss global climate change as the stuff bad movies are made of. However, for regions of the world that are already water-stressed, this is a major cause for concern. For regions where mining has been an important activity, this adds a new dimension with moral, economic, social and other implications.

We simply don't know enough about these complexities. We do know, for example, that development is constrained by 'difficult hydrologies', and we can realistically expect these to become more problematic. We also know that we are approaching thresholds beyond which non-linearity kicks in and the outcome becomes unpredictable. Three of these non-linearities – the conversion of MAP to MAR, the ecological collapse after roughly two thirds of the streamflow has been

Figure 4: The HADCM3 Global Climate Change model using the IPCC SRES A2 Scenario



Note: This scenario predicts a hotter (Map a) and drier (Map b) southern Africa by 2050, although the exact dynamics are still being debated. This has serious implications for both stream flow and groundwater recharge. Drawn from R J Scholes & R Biggs, *Ecosystem services in Southern Africa: A regional assessment* (2004).

captured in dams, and the dramatic drop-off in groundwater recharge below 400 mm/yr – confront us right now.

Long-term costs

We are starting to find out about the true cost of mining in the form of long-term environmental mitigation costs. What we know already suggests that these long-term costs could conceivably exceed the benefit derived from mining in the first place, as occurred with asbestos and potentially with uranium in the former East Germany. We do not yet know the true situation in the gold mining industry, specifically whether the radioactive waste in some rivers could move through society as a direct result of the extreme events associated with global climate change.

All this suggests that we should apply due diligence and investigate these issues in a responsible way in order to best inform the decision-makers.

We don't know enough about these dynamics, so the precautionary principle suggests that we should apply our best scientific minds to solving the problem. Significantly, in SA we have a healthy relationship among science, government and society, and regulating authorities are becoming more reflexive in their approach. ■

Anthony R Turton is research group leader: water resource governance systems, natural resources and the environment, Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR).

The transition in the DRC

Thomas Lohaka, former president of the Congolese National Assembly, comments on the role of parliament and other aspects of the DRC's transition to democracy

This is an edited version of an interview conducted by IGD staff members Dr Francis Ikome, Dr Siphamandla Zondi, and Che Ajulu as part of the IGD's follow-up dialogue on the transition in the DRC held in Kinshasa earlier this year. While a new parliament has since been elected, Lohaka's views remain a relevant summary of the challenges facing the post-transition DRC.

The role of parliament: The primary role of parliament is to make laws. In this regard, 95% of the requirements [in respect of the political transition in the DRC] have been achieved. For example 95% of necessary state laws have already been passed. The only important law yet to be passed is that regarding control over the judiciary.

Parliament's secondary role is to provide direction, and to help introduce a semblance of order and security, especially in a country with a history of instability and a lack of democratic institutions. It also has the important role of overseeing freedom of speech, and providing the necessary platform for people's representatives to express their views. To this end, as president of parliament I have an obligation to ensure that objectivity prevails by performing my national duties, and detaching the institution from partisan positions. The previous president of parliament did a lot of work to improve its functioning and legitimacy. What remains to be done now is to consolidate his achievements.

Addressing the gap between voters and parliament: This heavily depends on the will of the politicians and the people to work together in creating a winning team. For example, a football team cannot function if everybody wants to be the goal scorer, and earn all the glory alone. Successful football

teams are based on a division of labour, and a goal by any individual player is important to the entire team. Similarly, all politicians should work together towards the unity, prosperity, and development of the Congo.

Protecting Congo's national resources: As Congolese, we first need to identify our national interests, and then establish relationships with external actors on the basis of key strategic objectives. To this end there are two important components: vital interest, and fundamental interest. As regards our vital interest, we need to ensure ownership of our strategic national resources. We have to ensure that the government retains ownership of the Inga Dam for example, because it is a vital source of energy for the Congo and the subregion.

Fundamental driven interests are based on establishing strategic relationships based on the primary interest. For example, copper from Katanga is exported through Angola. It is therefore important to maintain strategic and friendly relations with Angola. Once these interests are defined, the government can establish relationships based on a clear set of strategic objectives.

Most importantly, bilateral relations should not be personalised; they must be based on consultations within democratic institutions such as parliament. In the past, Congo's bilateral relations were informed by Mobutu's personal interest rather than the national agenda. As we slowly establish democracy in the Congo, there is a need to transform our society and create a culture of consultation with the people. However, these consultations will not be legitimate unless politicians are elected by the people. For example, I became a member of parliament because my party signed the peace agreement – hence I am only accountable to my party. This will eventually change when, in our

forthcoming elections, a new parliament will be elected; from then on, parliamentarians will be directly answerable to the people.

Relationship between the judiciary, legislature and executive: We have not decided on the structure of these three very important democratic institutions. The debate is still raging on as to whether the relationship between the three should be collaborative, with elements of a separation of power. Historically, our political structure has always been centralised around the executive. However, under the transition we have managed to build consensus on power-sharing, allowing every political party to participate equally in decision-making processes. Based on the Pretoria Agreement, we have also managed to develop a new constitution that was recently promulgated into law. As political leaders we need to start cultivating a culture of respect for the constitution, the judiciary, and the laws of the nation which we have now put into place.

SA is a very good example of a nation where politicians respect the constitution and the rule of law. As a mediator in the Congolese peace process, SA has consistently advised that political parties in the Congo need to respect the constitution whether or not its prescriptions are against their personal agendas. It is in the long-term interest of Congolese to respect the rule of law. Nobody has monopoly over violence in the Congo. We all have the ability to cause chaos, and for that reason we should all respect the laws of the country to avoid sliding back into conflict. History shows that Congo cannot be successfully ruled by any dictator. Mobutu's apparent short-term successes were because of the support from western powers. Once that support was withdrawn, he lost control of the entire country. Any other Congolese leader who attempts

to go the Mobutu route will suffer the same fate.

Transforming parliament into a truly democratic institution: The transformation of parliament into a truly democratic institution will be complete once the elections have taken place, and politicians have been legitimately elected to parliament. At the moment, parliament is made up of members of political parties that signed the peace agreement. Most importantly, the rules of parliament are now clearly defined in our new constitution. In the past, the 'politics of the belly' led to the betrayal of the electorate partly because of 'political mobility' whereby politicians were allowed to switch parties and not lose their seats. The new constitution clearly states that once elected, a politician will lose his/her mandate if he/she decides to change political parties. This will protect the legislature from 'floor-crossing', and ensure that people don't get into politics simply for personal gain. In the long run, this will hopefully stabilise parliament as well as other aspects of Congolese politics.

Security: The security of the Congo and the Congolese people is the responsibility of the ministry of internal security. If the legislature feels that the ministry has

failed to deliver on its mandate, we can use parliament as a platform to effect changes. Given our porous border, we need to establish cordial relationships with our neighbours (Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda and Burundi) to ensure that we can co-operate on matters of regional security. For example, Rwanda is concerned about the presence of the 'interahamwe' in the Kivus. We need to get rid of this excuse so that we can easily expose any other vested interest that it may harbour. Rwanda's other stated reason for intervention in the Congo is that it needs to protect Congolese Tutsi. To this end the Congolese government needs to ensure that all ethnic groups are accorded equal rights. If this is done, any further Rwandan intervention in the DRC would be seen in its correct perspective – exploitation of the plight of the Congolese Tutsi to pursue its own national interest.

Resource curse: The Congo is blessed with a wealth of natural resources; unfortunately, past leaders have used this resource base to enrich themselves and oppress the people. During the war, several contracts were awarded to private businesses without authorisation by the central government. At the time, some of the provinces were operating almost autonomously because of

the lack of communication with the central government in Kinshasa. Local politicians, rebel group leaders, and various militias took advantage of the lack of communication infrastructure to sign irregular and unacceptable mining and other natural resources exploitation deals. In order to address the numerous irregularities and corruption in the mineral and energy sector, parliament has established a commission (the Lutundula Commission) to evaluate the business agreements and contracts signed by various actors during the war. We therefore need to revisit and review most of these contracts, and look at signing business deals that can benefit the entire country and its people rather than individuals.

DRC's membership of multiple regional communities: The subregional blocs and colonial borders bequeathed to Africa are arbitrary, as reflected in their splitting of peoples who share common ethnic, linguistic, and cultural identities. The DRC's geographical location and its sheer size are such that its peoples share common values and even resources with groups of people from the four regions of the continent: North, East, West and South. For example, when the SA mediators were having conversations in their local languages, Congolese from Katanga could understand what they were saying. The same applies to Congo Brazzaville, with which we have very close ethnic and cultural linkages, as well as Rwanda, Burundi, and Uganda. What is important, therefore, is to identify and encourage co-operation, which is vital for the development of the various regional groupings and the continent at large. Congo is an important and geostrategic partner that should serve as the gateway to Northern, Eastern, Western and Southern Africa. However, for several years the Congo, because of its turbulent history and its failure to build the necessary infrastructure, has been a major obstacle to the establishment of the economic and communication linkages required for continental integration. To this end we need to work together with other African countries, irrespective of their subregional location, to invest in



Voters check examples of the complicated ballot paper for the DRC elections held on 30 July 2006 ... new parliament will hopefully help to consolidate democracy in the Congo. Naashon Zalk/PictureNET Africa

In Full Flight

This book casts welcome new light on the foreign policy options of transitional states,
writes **Michele Ruiters**

SA's transition from pariah state to respected global citizen has been a fairly smooth process. After being ostracised for more than 20 years, it needed to reposition itself strategically in a changing political and economic environment marked by globalisation and neoliberal ideals. This has not been easy, as the young state has continued to grapple with moral issues related to HIV/AIDS, the multiple legacy of apartheid policies, and its potential role on the continent and beyond. The SA state is well-situated, both politically and economically, to play a leading role in regional, continental, and international political and economic fora, but it constantly navigates its way between what a developing and developmental state needs to do in normative terms, and what it needs to do to as a rational state actor.

Political dilemma

This new work reviews the political dilemma faced by the SA state, and in fact all others. Does the state fulfil its role as provider of socioeconomic benefits, or is it biased towards meeting elite expectations? If the government chooses the latter, it could be unseated in the next election; if it chooses the former, it could become too inward-looking. Thus each chapter provides a background to the early discussions of SA's role as an 'African' state and its potential role as a 'norm-promoting' emerging middle power.

As a foundation for discussion, the book uses the foreign policy principles spelled out by then ANC president Nelson Mandela in 1993 to interrogate the present status of SA foreign policy, and argues that the state needs to keep in mind those rights-based discourses, but also needs to balance them with the choices it makes within a competitive global economy. Mandela's principles



In Full Flight – SA Foreign Policy after Apartheid
Walter Carlsnaes and Philip Nel (eds)
Midrand: IGD (2006)

included building democracy and peace worldwide, promoting a human-centred approach to foreign policy-making, respect for international law, respect for the interests of the African continent, and promoting broader co-operation in an interconnected world.

In Full Flight is divided into four parts, each of which sketches the milieu in which SA foreign policy is made, the actors who feed into the policy-making process, how and by whom the policy agenda is determined, the content of resultant policies, and whether they have succeeded or not. The thread that runs through each of the contributions points to a dilemma faced by SA in particular and all states in general: should it accept its role as continental and regional hegemon, or should it continue to promote multilateral relations in order to resolve political conflicts, address economic inequalities, and end global inequality?

The book is novel in that it proposes future policy frameworks that consider the role of ideas (Philip Nel) and of

discourse in creating a new reality and new world order. Audie Klotz posits that states could construct new state identities that change their position within the global arena, while Mervyn Frost argues that a state could become a 'norm entrepreneur' and promote its interests through rights-based policies that benefit all its partners. Each author systematically ties SA foreign policy to its domestic responsibilities, regional development aspirations, and search for a more significant international role. Much of the book concentrates on the Mbeki administration, and thus minimises the ground-breaking role played by the first ANC-led government.

Zimbabwean question

A second thread running through the book, though not as evident as the first, is that of SA policy with regard to Zimbabwe. Several authors juxtapose SA's call for a rights-based discourse with its apparent lack of a significant response to the Zimbabwean question. They criticise SA's quiet diplomacy, 'softly-softly' approach, and behind the scenes politicking, and argue that as a norms entrepreneur it should be more critical of Zimbabwe. There is no chapter specifically dedicated to Zimbabwe, but numerous authors highlight the contradiction in SA foreign policy through the Zimbabwean example.

Part 4 presents an interesting and novel array of alternative foreign policy actors who could play roles as policy-makers and brokers. Scarlett Cornelissen highlights the foreign policy role cities and provincial governments play when they enter into twinning relations with cities and regions abroad.

Janis van der Westhuizen suggests that new opportunities exist for states to market themselves as a destination

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Power, Wealth and Global Equity

This latest edition is a valuable contribution to the theoretical understanding of international relations as well as its teaching, writes **Mzukisi Qobo**

THIS book – the third edition of an IR textbook for African students – contributes significantly to the broader study of Africa in an increasingly interdependent global system. It is also a useful pedagogical tool for students of IR with an interest in its relevance for Africa.

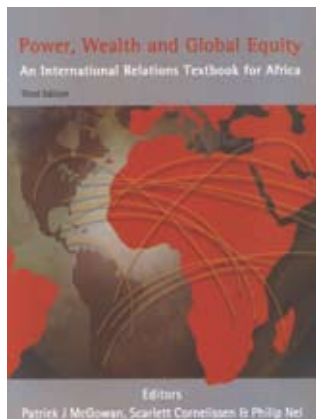
It is divided into two parts, entitled the principles of IR, and Africa's IR. The first three chapters deal with the study of IR, theories of IR, and morality and ethics in IR. Setting the tone for the rest of the book, the first chapter delineates the interdependence of the global system, and highlights the costs and benefits of existing in such a world. Any relevant discussion of IR since the Cold War has to begin with globalisation; accordingly, this chapter emphasises that we live in a closely knit global network.

Norms and values

Chapter 3 demonstrates that norms and values are intrinsic to IR. Normative thinking in IR, Nel argues, enables us to '... identify appropriate standards or criteria that can help us decide whether a course of action or a state of affairs is right or wrong'.

A related theme in part 1 is imbalances in the global system, existing not only in material structures, but more fundamentally in the realm of ideas. While, as the book's title reflects, this is clearly its central focus, its critique of western epistemology in IR is muted. Yet it is in the realm of knowledge and ideas that hierarchical ordering is most pronounced.

For example, due to its dominance by European and American scholars, IR theory has given inordinate attention to areas of the globe regarded as the centre, especially the OECD, with Africa being relegated to the category of 'area studies'. Thus, for a very long



Patrick J McGowan, Scarlett Cornelissen
and Philip Nel
*Power, Wealth and Global Equity:
An international relations textbook
for Africa (third edition)*
Cape Town: Juta (2006)

time, IR theory remained unreflective in its assumptions about 'marginal' spaces, and assumed that Europe, or more generally the OECD, is the only centre from which to view the world.

Even now, there is still a very slow movement towards a pluralism of centres, and recognising theoretical innovations from Africa. This 'Northern' hegemony or 'gate-keeping' over structures of knowledge has forced scholars who are external to its world to work within its strictures if they are to receive recognition. A number of commentators, even from the North, have acknowledged the default hegemonic position of western knowledge in IR.

It is generally acknowledged that the dominant ideas about IR have always originated in the rich and powerful parts of the world rather than in its poorer or weaker areas. Accordingly, IR has shown a disproportionate obsession with issues to do with the OECD 'club', except for specialised discussions of security, trade, and aid. Although these issues are themselves peripheral-

ised, they have opened an entry point for Africanist scholars to theorise about Africa, albeit within the established outlines of traditional IR theory.

More still needs to be done if global knowledge structures are to sufficiently reflect African knowledge and experiences. Borrowing from Ngugi Wa Wathiong'o's book *Moving the Centre: The Struggle for Cultural Freedoms* (1993), it is fair to observe that African or Africanist scholars have not sufficiently asserted their right to define a subject most familiar to them, and its relationship to the 'external' world, from their own centres in Africa. In *Africa Works: Disorder as a Political Instrument* (1999), Patrick Chabal and Pascal Daloz make a similar point when they contend that it is the lens of modernity that blurs our understanding of African identities, and gives us a westernised view of development.

This is not to suggest that there are readily available alternative routes to appropriating the spaces of knowledge, and re-scripting them in ways that fit some predefined notion of African scholarship; however, boundaries of intellectual creativity and scholarship need to be broadened to accommodate a plurality of voices in IR scholarship. Amplifying African experiences through established OECD-centric knowledge is not satisfactory.

African scholars

It is against this background that this edition should be evaluated. Although it does not pretend to shift boundaries, it makes an important contribution to debates on IR and Africa; while it builds on previous editions, it contains engaging and reflective chapters by African and Africanist scholars, which throws fresh light on Africa's challenges from an African perspective.

As noted earlier, part 1 is devoted

to theory, and revisits some of the key concepts in IR. The discussions reveal the dynamic nature of this discipline and the texture of its explanatory force, especially in dealing with complex questions of a heuristic and policy nature. Chapters 4 to 7 deal with the evolution of the global political economy; states and the inter-state system; foreign policy and diplomacy; international organisations; the role of nonstate actors in IR; and globalisation and the South. All of these reflect the core theme of interlinkages between the domestic and the global, politics and economics, and state and non-state actors.

For example, chapter 5 provides a sharp and critical reflection on the constitution of the international system, locating its origins not in the Treaty of Westphalia, as is often assumed, but some 700–800 years later at the end of the feudal era in Europe. The discussion links the development of the international system with the expansion of trade, evolution of the legal system, and development of towns and cities in Europe.

This chapter also considers the nature of state interactions and some of the key variables that define power relations among states: population size, territorial size, military might, and economic power. Financial structure and knowledge structure, as discussed by

Susan Strange in *States and Markets* (1988), could be added.

Chapter 6 builds neatly on the previous one to discuss concepts such as diplomacy and foreign policy, offering a critical examination of these, and giving them a more precise definition. It begins with some of the foreign policy challenges that confronted SA as it integrated with the global system in the early 1990s.

Seismic changes

Importantly, this chapter reflects on how our understanding of foreign policy has shifted with the seismic changes in the global system, especially against the backdrop of its increasing globalisation. This theme is also discussed in greater detail in chapter 14, which examines various phases of SA's foreign policy from Mandela to Mbeki, and the paradoxes that underpin both its domestic institutional architecture as well as its regional projection.

Part 2 moves away from the generalities of theory to focus on Africa. It contains a diverse set of complementary offerings, with some of the chapters dealing with the historiography of the continent and some engaging with its contemporary challenges, including conflict and conflict resolution.

Three chapters examine the regional subsystems of southern Africa, West Africa, and East Africa. They provide outlines of a framework that could be further developed to undertake a subregional comparative study in sub-Saharan Africa, and to look in particular at the role of regional core states or hegemons in shaping the political and economic character of the continent.

One glaring omission is a detailed discussion of the role of external powers such as the US, the EU, and China in shaping the calculus of power among African elites. In what ways will these powers influence Africa's development, and its external relations? How do African elites capture these relationships, and instrumentalise them to further their own political ends? And what are the normative categories underlying these new sets of political and commercial relationships with external powers?

Nonetheless, as a textbook primarily aimed at undergraduate IR students, this volume is a valuable contribution to the theoretical understanding of IR as well as its teaching. It will also be a useful tool for foreign policy practitioners. ■

Dr Mzukisi Qobo is a Mellon research fellow in the department of politics at the University of Stellenbosch.

The crisis in Côte d'Ivoire – continued from page 22

bly in September 2005, ECOWAS was tasked with overcoming this impasse: a clear attempt to shift the locus of peace-making from SA to Nigeria. Mbeki and Obasanjo jointly visited Côte d'Ivoire in November and December 2005 to meet all the parties, and eventually convinced them to agree on a new prime minister, the technocrat Charles Konan Banny, to replace Diarra.

The stalemate over implementing disarmament and the amended laws has continued. Elections scheduled for October 2005 had to be postponed by a year. The distrust between the Ivorian parties remained strong, and divisions between the regional mediators did not help. In December 2004, Kofi Annan had asked the UN Security Council to deploy an

additional 1 226 peacekeepers. The Council approved only 850 troops, who arrived in January 2006. Annan, pushed by France, asked for a further 3 400 peacekeepers to maintain security in the volatile country. Washington agreed to consider an increase of 1 500–2 000 troops but resisted the increase that Paris was strongly pushing for.

With other African members of the Council (Tanzania, Ghana and Congo-Brazzaville), the US insisted that the UN mission in Liberia should not be weakened by redeploying peacekeepers from Liberia to Côte d'Ivoire – as France had suggested – to bolster UNOCI. After UN and AU representatives had called for the Ivorian parliament (whose term had expired) to be dissolved, violent dem-

onstrations by the 'Young Patriots' in Abidjan and the West of the country targeted UN and French interests in January 2006. A month later, the UN Security Council's sanctions committee fingered two leaders of the 'Young Patriots' and a *Forces Nouvelles* commander.

It seems that the UN Security Council will have to continue these and other sanctions against 'spoilers' if this mission is to succeed. A strengthened UN mission and close diplomatic co-ordination between SA and its regional and external partners will also be crucial to achieving the UN's goals in Côte d'Ivoire. ■

Dr Adekeye Adebajo is executive director of the Centre for Conflict Resolution (CCR) at the University of Cape Town.

Broader vision needed for 2010 – continued from page 4

by linking their names to a variety of cultural events surrounding the tournament.

The cultural impact of the World Cup on the host communities and the world at large could be tremendous, provided we have a powerful moral argument to offer the world. This spectacular peak-time event will attract international media recognition for SA and hopefully for the continent.

This being the case, we should turn

the event into a large-scale cultural festival with mass popular and international appeal. Continental and diasporic artists, intellectuals, musicians, fashion designers, writers, architects, former football stars should be involved.

In the face of the nihilistic vision of emptiness propelled by the 'war on terror', what exactly should we be celebrating if not a moment of cultural re-enchantment, and a political re-dedication to the project of a world free of

the burden of race? We should use this global event as a moment of cultural exuberance – a historic moment in the chronology of our life as a nation, the first modern Afropolitan nation, a universal nation. ■

Achille Mbembe is a research professor in history and politics at the University of the Witwatersrand, and a senior researcher at the Witwatersrand Institute for Social and Economic Research (WISER).

Interview – continued from page 33

the development of infrastructure and communication. In this regard, rather than being seen as a problem, Congo's membership of multiple regional economic communities should be seen as an opportunity for facilitating linkages among various regional blocs, needed for the long-standing ideal of continental economic integration.

Moreover, Congo's membership of different regional groupings provides it with an opportunity to learn from the positive experiences of countries in the various regions. For example, its membership of the SADC could provide it with the opportunity to benefit from

the growing culture of democracy in a majority of the countries of the region.

The role of the AU: At the moment the AU seems to be facing two major problems: a lack of resources, and a lack of a clear vision. However, the OAU came a long way, and the AU has managed to evolve into a more progressive and proactive continental body. We have progressed from embracing dictators and bandits such as Amin Dada, Mobutu, and Bokassa to having the courage to condemn and denounce dictatorship and human rights violations. Despite the numerous challenges the continent

still faces, this is a clear sign that it has a brighter future.

Conclusion: I have confidence in Congolese politicians, and their understanding of the political situation in our country. I am thankful to the international community, particularly SA and its people, for the assistance they have continued to give the Congolese nation, aimed at helping this beautiful country of ours to take off. I have faith in a peaceful end to the DRC's political transition via free, fair, and transparent elections. ■

Steep climb for Nepal – continued from page 28

a republic, and others still believe in a symbolic and ceremonial role for the monarch in politics and larger society. However, since February 2005, even Gyanendra's symbolic image as a monarch has been sullied. The events that led to his enthronement remain dubious, and critics have demanded that they should be intensively investigated.

Even though the question of the role of the monarchy is emotionally highly charged, it requires proper closure. Skeptics believe that the king's abdication has been a tactical retreat rather than a surrender. The king and his patrons have the potential to fight a rearguard action in defence of the monarchy. They might also prey on party divisions and weaknesses to resurrect

their attempts at divide and rule. The king's network of patronage extends into the RNA, the judiciary and civil service, the mainstream parties, feudal elites, relatives and clan members, and business interests. As a result, he remains a serious political role player.

Another major challenge facing post-conflict Nepal is that of demilitarisation. There are an estimated 10 000 – 15 000 armed Maoist cadres, including women and children, who remain capable of participating in an effective guerrilla war. The source of their arms has not been conclusively established. Most weapons are presumed to have been looted from the army, supplied by Maoist comrades in India, or bought on the black market with money robbed from local banks.

After the king's assumption of absolute power, and his aggressive crack-down on the Maoist insurgency, the RNA was also expanded dramatically, and many senior commanders and others are still loyal to the king. The militarisation process has also affected the rural population through the 'Civil Military National Campaign' as well as the Village Defence Forces which were launched in November 2003, and committed serious human rights abuses.

Under such circumstances the task of demilitarisation, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) has become a daunting one. However, most attention has been paid to merging the two armies rather than to DDR. This has also been a highly contested issue. While the

CPN Maoist Party wants a fair merger under international supervision, political parties are reluctant to join forces

with an ideologically indoctrinated contingent that owes its loyalty to one party only. The important task in the interim is to freeze all further RNA extension and procurement plans, and to decline external offers of military aid.

The issue of legal retribution for gross human rights violations can only be dealt with through cautious diplomacy and a truth and reconciliation commission, rather than punitive measures. Those who tell the truth and hand over their arms should be granted amnesty. During the ten years of bloody conflict, extreme indoctrination, violence and hatred have become the norm for Nepalese, many of them children. A haphazard and ill-considered attempt to address such issues is bound to haunt

future peace and stability. Only through confidence-building measures such as a truth and reconciliation commission will it be possible to realize a successful DDR process at all levels. These preliminary steps can, therefore, pave the way towards a merger of the RNA and the peoples' army on the basis of their capabilities and qualifications. The international community needs to play a key role in this process by providing the necessary resources, including mediation facilities.

At the core of all these challenges remains the monumental task of stimulating economic growth and development. The civil war has undermined growth for more than a decade, and prevented Nepal from benefiting from economic globalisation. Achieving this will not be easy in a country where 80% of the population rely on agriculture,

and have been further impoverished by political conflict. However, Nepal's positioning between China and India could provide the stimulus for its economic revival. India exercises great economic, political and cultural influence over Nepal, and China is increasingly realising its geo-strategic importance in the region. These considerations provide a firm basis for higher levels of investment and trade from these two giant neighbours.

The future of this incomparably beautiful country remains uncertain. But what is clear is that progress towards peace and prosperity will only be made if all the role-players take the right decisions at this crucial juncture. ■

Rita Raj, who was born in Nepal, is an IGD intern and an MA student at the University of the Witwatersrand.

Are the IFIs worth saving? – continued from page 15

ance reforms. However, there is a real danger that the IMF will increasingly turn on the squeeze on small Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC)s in order to survive; hence its vicious treatment of Zimbabwe. This unfortunate development will assume greater permanence if emerging economies such as China, India, Brazil, Argentina, SA, Nigeria and Turkey allow themselves to be co-opted through the lure of greater voting pow-

ers and privileges in respect of the fund.

A global financial architecture that thrives on crises in poor countries should not be resuscitated. Instead of tinkering with a failed global financial order, countries such as China should help the G-77 to replicate alternative and countercyclical regional mechanisms such as those adopted by Asian countries following the financial crisis of the late 1990s. Also, as uncertain-

ties around the US dollar increase, poor countries should quietly store their wealth in more secure currencies, such as the Euro. Then only those countries that benefited from the IMF's traditional role as a debt collecting agency for its major shareholders would regret its demise. ■

Dr Nhamo Samasuwo directs the IGD's multilateral programme.

History weighs heavily on Middle East – continued from page 7

a result, and it continued its campaign against Israeli occupation in the south of Lebanon; Israel maintained a security barrier that had annexed about 10% of southern Lebanon.

Israeli hostilities in Lebanon continued, and Israeli commandos captured prominent Hezbollah leaders and many foot soldiers. The Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon in 2000 was portrayed as a unilateral action, but was celebrated by Hezbollah as a landmark victory. However, Hezbollah never accepted the withdrawal as complete, and continued fighting to liberate the Sheeba Farms district still under Israeli control.

Hostilities between Hezbollah and Israel continued, resulting in the capture and imprisonment of about 1 000 Lebanese fighters and activists, many of whom still languish in Israeli prisons today. Before the current impasse, Hezbollah had successfully exchanged captured Israeli soldiers for some of its own members imprisoned in Israel. The latest incident therefore fits into a long and constantly unfolding war of attrition between the two parties. The situation in Gaza is remarkably similar.

While Israel marketed its unilateral disengagement from Gaza, implemented last year, as a significant concession

to the peace process, closer analysis reveals that it was in fact part of a broader plan to disengage completely from Palestine, and unilaterally determine the future borders of a Palestinian state. The chief architect of this plan was the former Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon.

The surprise victory

However, events were complicated by the surprise victory of Hamas in the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) elections of January 2006. Hamas's entry into the political sphere was initiated by

a unilateral declaration of a ceasefire in December 2005, which was respected until the abduction of the Israeli corporal on 25 June 2006. Throughout this period Israel continued hostilities against Palestinians, particularly in Gaza.

Clampdown

The Hamas election victory was met with an immediate clampdown, and the Israeli and US administrations did everything in their power to undermine the Palestinian Authority (PA) through the imposition of sanctions and the withholding of Palestinian tax revenues. The idea was to squeeze the newly elected PA out of the political equation as it showed no sign of the compliance characteristic of the previous PA led by Mahmud Abbas's Fatah Party.

Israel continued its military aggression against Hamas, killing its members and some civilians, and expanding its programme of targeted assassinations. In June of this year alone, nine people were assassinated, among them Jamal Abu Samhadana, one of the movement's most prominent military leaders. However, all Palestinian factions, including Hamas, declared an end to the unilateral Palestinian truce in the wake of the massacre of an entire Palestinian family on Gaza beach on 9 June 2006 by an

artillery shell fired from an Israeli warship off the coast.

The Israeli response to the capture of its soldier was clearly not only about freeing him; the incident gave it the opportunity to crush Hamas. This is evidenced by the manner in which events have unfolded. It is extremely significant that the Israeli incursion occurred when the various Palestinian factions were close to reaching consensus on a unified political agenda outlined in the Prisoners document. Such unity posed a grave threat to Israel's unilateral convergence plan, and made the removal of Hamas even more urgent.

The current crisis shows no sign of abating in the short term. What is certain is that any ceasefire reached will be predicated upon how Israel manages to maintain its political advantage over the Palestinians and Lebanese. Moreover, such an agenda is most likely to be facilitated by the US, Israel's strongest ally.

One of the most important lessons to be learnt from historical analysis is that the link between policy and fundamental political values is a crucial sphere of contestation. To recognise this is to acknowledge that policy formation has a *poetic* as well as a *political* function. The *poetics* of policy formation concedes that policy – as a function of *poesis*, meaning to create or form

– can only be formulated with an image of an authentic ideal-type in mind. As such, policy advice that accords with deeply held political convictions must be benchmarked against the values that inform these convictions.

Fundamental values

By contrast, the *politics* of policy formation feeds upon the bane of current events. In most instances, it merely seeks to resolve contingent events by defusing contestation. The crucial element of benchmarking policy advice against fundamental political values is easily lost, resulting in policy that is often a grotesque representation of what a country stands for. Any endeavour that seeks to address policy should be predicated upon a conscious awareness of this; such self-reflexivity serves not only as a guide but also as a corrective. In times of war, both aspects are indispensable, not only for the protagonists but for all who witness the carnage, and endeavour to bring it to an end. ■

Aslam Farouk-Alli is an independent political analyst. He has spent three years in the Middle East as a student of the Arabic language and culture, and has lectured in religion and Arabic at the University of Cape Town.

Interview – continued from page 19

The single public service concept is premised on ensuring that inter-governmental relations work in practice, and that people can receive services at their convenience and not at the convenience of public servants.

It is also about the ability to redeploy public servants where they are most needed. In this regard, there is a provision within the current regulatory framework which allows the Minister for Public Service and Administration, in consultation with a member of the executive, to redeploy a senior manager to any point of service delivery, in the public interest.

In the long term, we will ensure that

public servants are appointed to the service and not the post. For this to happen, we need to ensure that conditions of service are aligned across the board. For example, for top officials in local government, redeployment to the public service would result in salary loss depending on whether it is a small or large municipality. In a nutshell, a single public service is about ensuring that all public services are aligned, harmonised in the interest of service delivery, and putting in place multipurpose community centres (*Batho Pele*) of service provision for the convenience of citizens.

Given the significance of public service

reform, what is the interface with SA's continental diplomacy?

At a continental level, we have been working in the DRC for almost a year, and assisting them in restructuring public service institutions. This was based on a request from the DRC to assist in rebuilding public administration with a special focus on the census, improving anti-corruption measures, and setting up a management development institute. At the beginning, our consultations were geared towards assessing the conditions in the DRC to ensure that the restructuring process is based on the context of the country's historical background.

Based on our groundwork, it was evident that the DRC government had no database of the number of public servants on its payroll. Moreover, the government was paying civil servants in cash and was obviously vulnerable to corrupt officials. Therefore, the need for a public service census emerged as clear priority, especially with regards to improving payment of public servants and management of human resources.

Thus far we have managed to assist in compiling a cohesive database of

civil servants employed in Kinshasa and should be hopefully moving to other administrative regions in the country. This process has been slow but we are working round the clock to make sure that we meet the deadlines. Most importantly, our government in partnership with other donors have invested extensive resources and are working hand-in-hand to ensure that the basic structures are in place in preparation for the elections. ■

In Full Flight – continued from page 34

of choice for international conferences, meetings and events, thereby boosting their positions as regional leaders. Paul Bischoff highlights South Africa's leading role as peacemaker and peace-builder, but argues that future missions should be co-ordinated by security communities in which all involved states collaboratively determine which measures should be taken to address conflict in the region. Lastly, Adam Habib and Nthakeng Selinyane insist that SA take up its role as a regional hegemon, but also propose that civil society should play a watchdog role over international relations which would limit the potential for unbridled expressions of power. These new initiatives indicate a move away from the statist approach that has long characterised foreign policy debates towards a broader theory of which actors could develop policies.

Unique frameworks

In Full Flight presents unique frameworks through which SA and other foreign policy scholars and policy-makers could construct new world views and parameters in international relations. One criticism that could be made is that gender does not permeate the debate about foreign policy and international relations in this volume. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and, as a result, various NEPAD and AU projects have increasingly focused international attention on improving the lives of women and the girl child. Debates around women's roles in the political

sphere are becoming increasingly topical as more women take up leadership positions in governments and multilateral organisations.

Thus, while *In Full Flight* has moved away from the dominant security-oriented approach to states and their relations, it could have filled an awkward lacuna found in most foreign policy scholarship by examining SA foreign policy through a gendered lens. Some of the questions that could be dealt with in a follow-up edition could include: what role could women, who are the most affected by conflict and war, play in foreign policy formulation? Does a developmental state mark an intellectual and practical move away from masculinist constructions of the state? And could women's leadership in multilateral institutions such as NEPAD, SADC, the AU or UN create a new kind of politics that could alter the way in which diplomacy is conducted?

Be that as it may, *In Full Flight* more than adequately provides us with an understanding of how transitional states determine who they are in relation to other states, what their level of interaction should be with other states, and what their role should be in relation to the world political and economic system. It suggests unique ways in which SA and other transitional states could create new identities, new approaches to state-building, and, ultimately, a new world order. ■

Dr Michele Ruiters is a senior researcher for the IGD's multilateral programme.

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Institute for Global Dialogue
IGD House, Block 12
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Executive director
Dr Garth le Pere

Multilateral analysis

Director: Dr Nhamo Samasuwo
Senior researchers: Dr Michele
Ruiters, Michelle Pressend,
Brendan Vickers

Africa research

Director: Dr Siphamandla Zondi
Senior researchers: Dr Francis Ikome,
Dr Timothy Othieno
Researcher: Che Ajulu

Finance and administration

Director: Pieter du Preez
Manager: Namhla Tshetu

Personal assistant
Cynthia Sinclair

Administrative assistant
Nomfundo Tshabalala

Tel (011) 315 1299
Fax (011) 315 1249
e-mail: info@igd.org.za
www.igd.org.za

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