

## OPINION

### Civil society participation in the AU and NEPAD

Jakkie Cilliers and Kathryn Sturman

THE politics of the lowest common denominator is an enduring problem for multilateral arrangements such as the African Union (AU) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). Turning regional organisations into agents for change and transformation is difficult when the principles and decisions of these institutions depend on the collective will of the leaders of their member states. If many of the AU member states are not accountable to their own citizens, how can the organisation ensure popular participation in and greater transparency of its institutions at a continental level? And how could Africa-wide programmes such as NEPAD work to change the practice of leadership at the national level?

These are key questions underlying the apparently technical process of designing new modalities for civil society engagement with the AU, and for the NEPAD African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). Within the AU this includes determining the composition and powers of the Pan-African Parliament (PAP) and the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC), as well as revised criteria for observer status to all AU bodies. While NEPAD has been adopted as an official programme of the AU, two different approaches are discernible: the inclusivity of the AU – incorporating all but one of the 54 countries of Africa on the OAU's principle of unity – versus the exclusivity of NEPAD, whereby a few countries only have signed up for peer review on the basis of a declaration on democracy, political, economic and corporate governance.

#### Third wave

The OAU had a reputation as a 'trade union of presidents'. The third wave of democratisation in the early 1990s brought demands for greater popular participation and accountability in governance, expressed, for instance, in the Arusha charter for popular participation in development and transformation of 1990. The Constitutive Act of the AU (CAAU) took this further in its principles and objectives:

'... to build a partnership between governments and all segments of civil society ... promote democratic principles and institutions, popular participation and good governance ... [and] participation of the African peoples in the activities of the Union'.

How to translate these principles into genuine working partnerships between the AU and African civil society organisations (CSOs) has been taken up by an AU-civil society provisional working group, elected by the second of two OAU-civil society conferences held in Addis Ababa in June 2001 and 2002. This group has focused its attention on ECOSOCC as the primary vehicle for the formal representation of civil society within the AU. The group met in Ghana towards the end of 2002, and again in Addis Ababa in June 2003, to give input into the statutes of ECOSOCC.

At a subsequent pre-summit civil society meeting held on the fringes of the AU Maputo summit from 27 June to 2 July 2003, participants expressed the feeling that the process had been 'rushed', and that far wider input from civil society should be can-

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vassed. The executive council of the AU summit decided not to adopt the statutes, and requested the chairperson of the AU commission to widen consultations with civil society before resubmitting the document to the next executive council meeting on 15-16 March 2004. ECOSOCC could be established soon after this adoption of the statutes, as, unlike a protocol, they will be effective immediately after adoption, and do not require a lengthy process of legal ratification by member states.

The CAAU envisages ECOSOCC as 'an advisory organ composed of different social and professional groups of the Member States of the Union'. According to the draft statutes of ECOSOCC, the council will comprise representatives of 150 CSOs representing social groups such as women, youth, the elderly and disabled persons; professional groups such as doctors, lawyers, media and business organisations; NGOs and community-based organisations; organisations of workers and employers; and traditional leaders, academia, and religious and cultural associations.

### Selection committee

Of the 150 members, two will represent each member state; 24 will represent transitional sectoral CSOs selected at a regional and continental level; and 20 will represent the African diaspora. A 50 per cent gender equality principle applies. Importantly, the draft protocol provides for a selection committee, made up of representatives of CSOs, to invite candidatures for membership, and process applications. This is vital to establishing the independence of ECOSOCC, as there is a danger that, if the selection of members is left to the AU assembly, as suggested by article 22(2) of the CAAU, they will select 'sweetheart' organisations to offer the advice they will find most palatable.

An important consideration for ECOSOCC is the relative weight to be attached to the advisory function on the one hand,

and representivity on the other. The larger the organisation, and the greater the focus on representivity, the more difficult the advisory function becomes. The obvious danger of regarding ECOSOCC as the primary vehicle for civil society engagement is that it could serve to co-opt and marginalise NGOs – particularly those engaged in the more sensitive areas such as advocacy in support of anti-corruption and the advance of democracy, conflict prevention, and human rights issues – possibly closing off their ability to seek accreditation and observer status to those AU structures that deal with good governance, democracy, human rights, and peace and security.

While the establishment of ECOSOCC remains at least six months away, the Pan-African Parliament was inaugurated in Addis Ababa on 15 March 2004. Article 2 of the PAP protocol states that the parliamentarians shall represent all the people of Africa. In truth, though, most will be representing the ruling parties of their member states, and are unlikely to differ markedly from the policies of their governments. The PAP can only be as democratic, representative, and independent as the national parliaments from which its members are drawn. Independence cannot be built at the regional level if it doesn't exist at the national level.

While there is a stipulation that the five MPs chosen from each country must 'reflect the diversity of political opinions in each national parliament or deliberative organ', there are barriers to the election of opposition political parties to national parliaments in several countries, while many other legislatures are dominated by one party with an overwhelming majority of seats. Even in SA, the ANC used its majority in the national assembly to ensure that no representative from the official opposition party, the Democratic Alliance, was elected to the PAP. Boy Geldenhuys of the New National Party – currently in a coalition with the ANC in the Western Cape – was chosen over the DA's representative.

The 'criteria for granting OAU observer status' were adopted in Cairo in 1993, and the Organisation subsequently granted observer status to a number of civil society organisations as well as concluding memoranda of understanding and co-operation agreements with others. However, the rights of observers and partners were limited, and the criteria for accreditation narrow and restrictive.

The AU-civil society provisional working group (PWG) recommended that accreditation to the AU should be an open, transparent, and technical process, free from political interference by individual member states and subject to appeal to an independent accreditation committee. To date, however, there has been little transparency in the AU's revision of these criteria. A document has been drafted, but has not yet been made available for comment by either the PWG or broader civil society. It is hoped that the third AU-civil society PWG meeting, to be held in Cairo on 19-21 April, will address this issue and prepare input for the expert's meeting on the crite-



An anti-NEPAD demonstrator outside an AU summit in Durban ... popular participation in AU and NEPAD activities must be improved if these initiatives are to succeed. (AP Photo/Obed Zilwa)



Ugandan president Yoweri Museveni, left, Kenyan president Mwai Kibaki, centre, and Rwandan president Paul Kagame at a NEPAD summit in Nairobi ... steps are under way to prevent the AU from turning into another trade union of presidents. AP Photo/Khalil Senosi

ria for granting observer status with the AU, scheduled for 17-19 May.

While civil society demands greater transparency and accountability from governments, governments in turn often question the legitimacy and credibility of organisations that claim to represent civil society. Admittedly, it is easy for anyone with a computer, a fax machine, and internet access to set themselves up as a 'voice' of civil society. The AU-civil society PWG has therefore also drafted a code of ethics and conduct for CSOs seeking accreditation to the AU to set clear standards of accountability, credibility, and transparency. However, CSOs should also be aware of the danger of this kind of code becoming a form of 'self-censorship' of their participation in the structures of the AU.

Since its inception in 2001, NEPAD has been criticised as a top-down, elitist plan driven by African leaders with little consultation of civil society. This charge was met with the launch of NEPAD 'outreach' programmes in SA, Nigeria, Senegal, and Algeria. While one could argue that consultation of civil society is a bottomless well – that there can never be enough consultation – this debate is essentially based on a misconception of the concept of NEPAD. It could be argued that the architects of NEPAD never intended it to be a consultative process.

Rather, NEPAD is 'a pledge by African leaders' to place their countries on a path of sustainable growth and development. Article 47 states: 'We believe that while African leaders derive their mandates from their people, it is their role to ... lead the processes of implementation', while the 'Appeal to African peoples' is that 'we are asking the African peoples to support the implementation of this initiative by setting up structures for organisation, mobilisation and action'. This conceptualisation presents an obvious dilemma for civil society: how to buy into commendable ideas of NEPAD without selling out their independence from African governments.

The various components of civil society at all levels – from

grass roots organisations to policy think-tanks, from churches to the private sector – have vital contributions to make in NEPAD's priority areas. They should do so as a matter of course, with or without repackaging every initiative as a 'NEPAD project'. At the same time, the formulation of the plan as a 'pledge by African leaders' offers a position of critical distance to civil society to play the role of judge and jury over NEPAD. While civil society should participate in the consultations by the country review teams, they should have realistic expectations of what will come out of this government-to-government exercise in "peer learning". Alternative reviews of the NEPAD countries' adherence to their stated commitments should be recognised as a helpful contribution to the APRM process.

### Areas of contention

The composition and workings of the PAP, ECOSOCC, and the APRM, and criteria for AU accreditation are just some of the areas of contention that should be taken up in the negotiation of space for greater civil society engagement. At the same time, civil society should be realistic about the fact that the AU is an intergovernmental organisation, and that it is the heads of state who will ultimately decide the pace and scope of democratic reforms. Similarly, NEPAD is, first and foremost, 'a pledge by Africa's leaders' to improve their governance. The value of confidence-building work and support on a practical level from NGOs to the overburdened staff of the AU Commission and the NEPAD secretariat should not be underestimated. Acting responsibly and timeously, African civil society can meet governments halfway, and make a positive contribution to the stability and development of the continent. ■

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# Oman or bust?

## Prospects for the Doha Round

Following the failure of Cancun, intensive behind-the-scenes negotiations have improved prospects for the remainder of the WTO's Doha Round. However, the negotiations remain bedevilled by the divergent expectations of developed and developing countries. **Peter Draper** sorts through the tangle of issues surrounding this crucial phase in the life of the WTO

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*Forecasts are ... inherently unreliable. Were they otherwise, those responsible for them would never give them to the public; that would be an act of unimaginable generosity, for were they kept for the pecuniary use of the men, women or organizations making them, the resulting accretions of wealth would be nearly infinite. – John Kenneth Galbraith*

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**A** DEGREE of optimism has returned to Geneva as Robert Zoellick, the US trade representative, embarks on his world tour to drum up support for his vision of the Doha Round of the WTO. He hopes it will culminate in a successful ministerial meeting at the end of this year, most likely in Oman. But Galbraith's caveat is particularly apposite in the case of the WTO – for who would dare to forecast the fortunes of the Doha development agenda (DDA)?

### Development agenda

Doha is as much about spirit as about substance. The subtitle 'development agenda' is at the heart of this dichotomy, giving rise to divergent expectations on all sides. This is most obviously reflected in discussions over 'special and differential treatment' (SDT) for developing countries, a philosophical issue at the heart of the WTO. African trade ministers, in particular, have placed much political capital in securing less onerous rules and commitments than their developed country counterparts on the questionable basis that trade liberalisation is not appropriate for their level of development. Pre-Cancun a host of proposals were put forward to advance this agenda. Implicitly underpinning this approach is the view, sometimes explicitly expressed, that, in essence, the WTO is, or should be, a development agency.

Developed countries, on the other hand, primarily view the WTO as a means of progressively liberalising trade through the exchange of reciprocal concessions. Their approach, refined over many decades of general agreement on tariffs and trade (GATT) negotiations, is essentially mercantilist.

These differences have also been played out in discussions

over the so-called 'implementation agenda'. This arises from some developing countries' complaints that the obligations they undertook during the Uruguay Round are unfair and/or difficult to implement, while, in areas such as the agreement on textiles and clothing, developed countries are accused of hypocritically failing to implement their obligations. African countries, together with 'like-minded' partners found predominantly in south Asia, have pursued an ambitious list of implementation issues in an attempt to 'rebalance' the rules.

Developed countries, citing the importance of maintaining the multilateral trading system's integrity, remain unwilling to make substantial concessions on either SDT or implementation, except, possibly, in the case of least developed countries (LDCs). Thus far they have refused to accept any of the more 'commercially meaningful' SDT and implementation proposals tabled. They are unlikely to agree to much beyond allowing for asymmetry in levels of commitments and longer transition periods to implement new agreements, coupled with doses of capacity-building assistance tied to such implementation.

These philosophical divergences are reflected in the DDA's 'meat': the market access agenda. This comprises negotiations in three areas: industrial goods, agricultural goods, and services.

Tariffs are the key focus in the negotiations over industrial goods. The US has advanced an ambitious proposal, advocating zero tariffs worldwide by 2015. The EU and Japan are also pushing for major tariff reductions in developing countries. These proposals are broadly supported by developing countries that have significant export sectors and have substantially liberalised

their economies, including China and Mexico.

However, a number of significant developing countries, including India and Egypt, are resisting substantial tariff liberalisation. And the great majority of developing countries, notably the poorest 100 or so, also don't want to substantially liberalise their tariff regimes. They fear that further tariff liberalisation in the north will reduce their preference margins under the various preferential tariff schemes available to them.

These negotiations are being played out in the form of haggling over arcane tariff reduction formulas, ranging from the ambitious to the sedentary. Complicating matters is the desire, generally expressed by all members, to reduce tariff escalation and tariff peaks alongside overall tariff levels. The former pro-

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**A number of significant developing countries, including India and Egypt, are resisting substantial tariff liberalisation.**



A Kenyan delegate, George Odour Ong'wen, speaks to the press after the collapse of the WTO talks at Cancun, Mexico, in September 2003 ... since then, major powers have worked hard to improve the outlook for the rest of the Doha Round. AP Photo/Victor Ruiz

gressively discriminates against the processing of raw materials, while the latter effectively shuts out products which domestic producers find difficult to compete against.

Depending on the final compromise, the effects could be significant for developing countries as they will probably be called upon to liberalise proportionately more, given that their tariff levels are currently substantially higher than those to be found in the north. LDCs are likely to be exempted from major reductions, but will be expected to bind (set ceilings on) their tariff regimes.

Services are of central importance to modern economies, covering everything from telecommunications to transport, energy, education, finance, and tourism (to name a few). During the Uruguay round, developing countries did not make substantial commitments in this area, owing to the structure of the general agreement on trade in services (GATS). This allowed countries to decide which subsectors they wish to make commitments in through a so-called 'positive listing' approach. This contrasts with the 'negative listing' approach, whereby everything is included unless specifically taken off the table.

Owing to the limited access to developing country markets achieved during the Uruguay round, OECD countries are pushing this agenda. However, given the GATS's voluntary nature, major liberalisation is unlikely to occur. That largely explains why this area of the DDA has been relatively uncontroversial.

This is a pity, as greater services liberalisation has the poten-

tial to kick-start development in many economies, not least in Africa. Greater competition in providing key infrastructural services in particular would be very beneficial.

### Most difficult area

Agriculture is the most difficult area of negotiation. Many developing countries justifiably want greater access to OECD agricultural markets, and reduced subsidisation there. However, owing to the central role that agriculture plays in their economies, some key developing countries, such as India and China, are not prepared to offer significant liberalisation in return.

Narrowly defined 'market access' negotiations are confined to agricultural tariffs, including escalation and peaks. Again, the parties are haggling over a formula approach to tariff reduction. One of the few positive issues to emerge from Cancun was agreement between the US, EU, and G20 on a 'blended' formula approach to tariff reduction. This is likely to comprise a mix of minimum tariff cuts designed to reduce peaks, average cuts designed to lower overall protection, and protection for 'strategic products' as demanded by India, among others.

However, this apparent convergence is insufficient to unlock the negotiations owing to the pernicious presence of northern agriculture subsidies. These take two broad forms: domestic support, and export subsidies. The latter have proven to be the most



**Demonstrators taunt Mexican riot police guarding the WTO meeting in Cancun – agriculture remains the most difficult area of negotiation. AP Photo/Laura Rauch**

contentious and difficult to crack. No resolution is in sight. There was some movement on the former prior to and at Cancun, notably the EU's move to decouple production from subsidisation. But much remains to be done to reduce the trade-distorting impact many subsidies have.

Given the linkages among high tariffs, domestic support, and export subsidies, most of the necessary negotiating 'movement' has to occur here in order to unlock other negotiating areas. Ironically, the subsidy junkies have tacit allies in the form of 'net food importing developing countries', several of which are African. These poor countries rely on imports of subsidised food to maintain food security. Adding them to the group of poor preference-reliant countries reveals a large group of developing countries at the cusp of a Faustian bargain on agriculture with the EU.

## G20 position

At Cancun, the G20 position on agriculture was one of extreme offence and extreme defence. It pressed for significantly greater developed country liberalisation, but rejected meaningful liberalisation of its own markets. G20 members argue that their pressure elicited major EU and US concessions on agriculture. Detractors argue that the G20 polarised Cancun along north-south lines.

In this light, Zoellick's road-show is interesting. It may reflect a US attempt to isolate the EU by returning to traditional US positions on agricultural liberalisation. Or, in the context of US election year politics in which agricultural liberalisation is politically sensitive, some commentators detect continued US-EU co-oper-

ation behind his move.

It is too early in the DDA to predict with any degree of precision what kind of agreements will be reached in the market access negotiations. Much depends on what happens in other negotiating groups, particularly the Singapore issues (competition, investment, government procurement, and trade facilitation). These have attracted considerable controversy. Depending on who you talk to, these issues are either about establishing minimal rules in an effort to harmonise trade procedures (the EU position), or about levering open developing country markets for exploitation by multinational corporations from the developed world (anti-market NGOs).

At Cancun, agreement on a new agriculture text was thwarted by the refusal of the African-Caribbean-Pacific (ACP) and LDC groupings to negotiate on any of the 'Singapore issues', despite last-minute EU concessions to drop competition and investment. Since then, the EU has not firmly indicated whether it is sticking to those concessions. So this is clearly an area that will need to be resolved if the DDA is to be put back on track.

Finally, the most contentious issue on the 'rules' agenda is regulations governing anti-dumping investigations. The US congress remains implacably opposed to any diminu-

tion of its existing rights and the administration's 'space' to freely apply this tool, notwithstanding evidence to the effect that US companies are now major targets in many key markets.

The failure to reach agreement at Cancun leaves trade negotiators at the status quo ante. In the short term, developing countries will continue to suffer the adverse economic effects of an unbalanced multilateral trading regime. Yet fundamental reform

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of that regime is an objective worth waiting for. And, as noted above, Cancun's failure obscures some progress in areas of particular concern to developing countries. However, these worthy objectives are hostage to a great deal of uncertainty as to whether the Doha Round will be successful, and on what terms. The challenges are structural, and go to the heart of the multilateral trading system's future.

The inherent risk in the G20 strategy was that it could provoke a backlash in the US. Unfortunately, the G20's inability to offer concessions, and its polarisation of the ministerial along north-south lines, elicited just such a reaction. The danger ahead is that petulant finger-pointing and strong-arm tactics, rather than pragmatic, far-sighted engagement, will determine US attitudes towards G20 majors.

In the context of the Free Trade Area of the Americas negotiations, heavy pressure was brought to bear on Latin American G20 members to peel away from the Brazil-led group. These developments form part of a broader US strategy to prioritise regional and bilateral negotiations over the multilateral process.

## Geopolitical dynamics

The US will probably not be able to achieve all it wants through bilateralism and regionalism. In the Free Trade Area of the Americas negotiations Brazil has so far successfully resisted the US agenda, owing principally to its difficulties with US agricultural policy. Yet in the US's FTA negotiations with Australia, agriculture, contrary to widespread expectations, did not prove to be a showstopper. These contrasting stances probably reflect different geopolitical dynamics at play. It will be interesting to see how SA positions itself in its bilateral FTA negotiations with the US.

In this light, Zoellick's initiative is necessarily more nuanced and diplomatic. However, it is unlikely, in the short to medium term, to unlock the process (see below). Furthermore, it is doubtful whether he has sufficient domestic leverage to pull it off: the administration is focused on geopolitics, and election-year politics will probably prevent further compromises. And Keynes observed that, in the long run, we will all be dead.

Meanwhile, the EU (and its hard-core subsidy junky allies) are increasingly isolated. At Cancun, its Doha Round strategy backfired. Perhaps alarmingly, there are signs of the EU back-tracking on its Cancun concessions on the Singapore issues. In the meantime, it attributes Cancun's failure to 'medieval' decision-making procedures, and wants WTO members to grasp the nettle of institutional reform. Critics argue that, at this stage, this would further distract attention from the negotiating issues. Cynics would add that this is just what the EU has in mind.

In this context it is encouraging that the US is taking the lead to restart negotiations. However, the forces arrayed against this are significant.

The US presidential and congressional elections road show is in full swing. The exclusion of sugar from the recently concluded US-Australia negotiations confirms that there is unlikely to be any further US movement on agricultural subsidies before 2005. Furthermore, it is likely that a new US trade representative

will take the helm of the USTR in 2005, perhaps with a new set of priorities. It would take at least six to nine months for a new USTR team to be put in place, and get up to speed on the issues.

More importantly, what kind of administration will replace 'Bush 1'? If 'Bush 2', by what margin? Will the Republicans retain control of congress? Will this presidential-congressional alignment make the next administration more or less beholden to the agricultural lobby?

What if the Democrats win the White House, and perhaps one or both houses of congress? Unfortunately, old-style protectionism from the unions and new-style NGOs has gained ground over freer-trading centrists within the Democrat tent. This makes serious agricultural reform less likely than under a Republican administration and a Republican-controlled congress. Furthermore, a Democrat administration would push harder on environmental and labour standards issues. Those are as controversial as the Singapore issues for most developing countries, and would make for further gridlock. Hence, on balance, Democrat majorities in the White House and congress could push US trade policy in a more protectionist, less development-friendly direction.

The year 2007 is the generally accepted cut-off date for the Doha Round to conclude. In that year, trade promotion authority (TPA), granted by congress and giving the US president wide-ranging powers to negotiate trade deals, expires. Congress's historic consensus over free trade is dissipating in the wake of record trade deficits. Congress granted trade promotion authority to Bush by a margin of one vote. It is up for renewal

by June 2005 - and will be too close to call.

Meanwhile, 10 new states will formally join the EU midway through 2004. The political ramifications of this process have already mired the constitutional convention talks in controversy. These shifting dynamics are reflected in the evolving battle over the commission's next budget, covering the 2007-13 period. Therefore, the EU will increasingly turn inwards as it redefines itself. And the EU will probably have a new trade commissioner by year-end. There is no guarantee that s/he will be less protectionist on agriculture.

## Common cause

The newly acceded countries, once having tasted subsidies and progressively receiving more over time until they equally share in them by 2013, might well oppose further CAP reform. Led by Poland, they could find common cause in this with France, Ireland, and the Mediterranean countries.

Offsetting this, the EU's desire to be seen as a key supporter of multilateralism could be a swing factor, given that further CAP reform would be well-received by developing countries. But is this politically possible? That remains to be seen. It will depend on a more concerted and determined push by the freer-trading northern European countries within the EU. In this light, the recent emergence of the tripartite 'directoire' comprising France, Germany, and the UK may offer some prospect for reforming the CAP.

In the longer term, the US and EU face rising budgetary pressures: in the US from tax cuts and war expenditures; in the EU

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The US trade representative, Robert Zoellick, left, and the SA minister of trade and industry, Alec Erwin, during the former's world tour to drum up support for his vision of the Doha Round – developed and developing countries have conflicting perceptions of the WTO's role. AP Photo/Obed Zilwa

from eastward expansion, and rising pension fund deficits in key member states. So will reduced expenditures on agricultural subsidies be required at some point in the future? In the interests of the multilateral trading system, this should take place in the 2005-7 window.

But this is too optimistic. For decades, it has been argued that high levels of support to a shrinking agricultural sector will prove unsustainable in developed countries. Furthermore, the recent Franco-German deal fixed overall levels of CAP expenditure until 2013, making it likely that any budget cuts will be taken from regional development assistance instead.

On top of all these difficulties in the two key trading powers, transatlantic relations are under serious strain. Stemming largely from security considerations, these widening fissures will increasingly penetrate the broader multilateral trade agenda. The longer-term issue is how this will be managed.

One scenario, gaining currency in think-tank circles, could see a push to consolidate the North Atlantic economic space through a free trade agreement.

Another, already unfolding, could see a dangerous escalation in trade disputes. Thus the WTO could either be increasingly marginalised or bogged down in litigation, with a potential for both. One example is the expiration of the 'peace clause', article XIII of the agreement on agriculture. This essentially prevents countries from lodging WTO dispute settlement mechanism cases against the major agricultural subsidisers. A string of such cases, lodged by the bigger developing countries, would not go unanswered. This issue is now being seriously tested by Brazil, which has lodged a case against US cotton subsidies. A WTO panel will shortly rule on it, and its findings will be closely watched.

Developments in Asia are hardly encouraging. Japan has

shown no flexibility at all on agricultural subsidies and tariffs, and precious little on the Singapore issues where it is a key demandeur. China, notwithstanding its desire to be seen as a good WTO citizen, made major concessions in its WTO accession agreement, and is reluctant to take on many more. Meanwhile, in East Asia the rush towards bilateralism and possible formation of a broader 'east Asian economic caucus' is gathering pace.

And the global economy offers little comfort. In the US, spiraling fiscal and current account deficits are promoting downward pressure on the dollar. This is ratcheting up protectionist pressures in their import-competing manufacturing industries. Thus trade has moved to centre stage in the US presidential elections. China is the current whipping boy of protectionist US forces, promoting a potential backlash there. Furthermore, the falling dollar is promoting Euro appreciation, and might lead to substantial appreciation of the yen. This would throw the Euro-area and Japanese economic recoveries into doubt. Therefore, protectionist pressures in all three economic poles are likely to remain strong, and perhaps increase.

So, as far as the major trading powers are concerned, the medium-term picture is not good.

### Enlightened leadership

So, as far as the major trading powers are concerned, the medium-term picture is not good. Much will depend on enlightened political leadership there – a commodity in short supply.

These developments put the ball squarely in the court of the developing countries. Can the G20 get the Doha Round back on track?

Differences within the G20 are large. Brazil, other Latin Amer-

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## Tilting the balance

The US invasion of Iraq has profound consequences for international relations. **Kingsley Moghalu** explores the implications of this momentous event and a unipolar world order for the UN, the international community, and, ultimately, prospects for world peace

*In the beginning, the hotels were empty, but the spirit of (Woodrow) Wilson hovered over Lake Geneva. Darkness was everywhere, and the nations were separated by an abyss. The spirit of Wilson said: 'Let there be light!' Secret diplomacy disappeared at once! Three thousand journalists were accredited to the League of Nations, and Cook's Travel Agency began regular tours. Then the spirit created permanent delegates, visiting experts, lawyers, and international civil servants ... And the spirit blessed them and said, 'Be fruitful and multiply.'* – Alois Derso and Emery Kelen, *The Geneva Testament* (1931).

**T**HIS humorous jibe at the gap between rhetoric and reality that accompanied the creation of the League of Nations at the initiative of then US president Woodrow Wilson, and the attempts to outlaw war following World War I, is a pointer to the limitations of the international society. The League did not last long, and the expansionism of Adolf Hitler's Third Reich led to a second world war only 20 years after the first. The League of Nations was succeeded by the UN – the latter created by a victorious coalition led by another American president, Franklin Roosevelt. But the UN charter reflected the realities of power politics at the time, anchoring real authority in the area of international peace and security in the hands of the five permanent members of its security council.

### Burning question

Today, just how well the UN is adapted to current and future global challenges is a burning question. The international crisis

generated by the US invasion of Iraq captures the tension between the 'international community' as represented at the UN, and the role of power and its attendant interests in world politics. The invasion will have profound consequences for international relations. It will especially impact on international law, the role of the UN, and US foreign policy. This essay explores, at a conceptual level, why this momentous event has occurred, and what its implications are. It is only such an understanding that can give us unemotional insights into the nature and future of the international order.

In searching for conceptual clarity, we have no better guide than the late Hedley Bull's seminal *The anarchical society*, published in 1977. Bull argued that we live in a world made up of a society of states, which see themselves as bound by a common set of rules because they recognise common interests and, in some cases, common values. But this 'society' is limited by the actual practice of states, and is only one of several elements in

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world politics, and by no means the dominant one. Another is states of war, which the philosopher Thomas Hobbes believed was the most important. Yet others are power (especially the balance of its distribution), international law, and the pull towards a utopian world order based not on the states system but on individuals, as a civil society of mankind.

Of all these factors, the role of power (military and economic) and its relationship to international law is the most important, as we strain to see through the fog created by the war in Iraq. A bal-

ance of power was a major feature of international relations in the 19th and 20th centuries. The 18th-century Swiss jurist Emmerich de Vattel defined the balance of power as 'a state of affairs such that no power is in a position where it is preponderant and can lay down the law to others'.

### Balance of power

The 19th-century balance of power was essentially a European one, involving Britain, France, Austria-Hungary, Russia, and Prussia-Germany. Its collapse eventually led to World War 1 and the creation of the League of Nations. The 20th-century balance was embedded in the Cold War and nuclear deterrence between the US and Soviet Union. China represented an additional pole of power. Following the implosion of the Soviet Union, and the dissolution of the Cold War, the world is left with an American power that is not only dominant but has practically no effective counterweight in sight. China

remains a major global power, though for now an inward-looking one. Europe is partly allied to the hegemonic power, and partly opposed to it – the German sociologist Karl Otto Hondrich has described its position as that of 'a broker between supremacy and powerlessness'.

Bull's point that a balance of power protects the world from being transformed into a universal empire is true not in the traditional sense, but only insofar as the dominance of American values can be regarded as a *pax Americana*. The exercise of American military power has important constraints, both internal (it is a liberal democracy) and external. It is highly unlikely that the US will seek to occupy every state that disagrees with its policies or values. Imperial overstretch, that old scourge of empires, would inevitably follow. The problem with a



**Iraqi children and US soldiers in Baghdad ... the invasion has fundamentally changed the international order.** Joao Silva /PictureNET Africa

unipolar world is that international law – a significant component of the maintenance of order in world politics – can become a major casualty. In such a world, international law can be violated, with little direct consequence to the hegemonic power. Far from consolidating order, such use of power, even in the name of freedom, human rights, and liberal democracy, will rather increase disorder. One view of international relations is that the effective functioning of international law and diplomatic intercourse depend to a large degree on the existence of a balance of power – or at least a staggered distribution of it. It is probably more accurate to say that, especially in matters

of national security and the use of force, the stability of the international system depends more on the way in which a hegemonic power understands its long-term interests than on obedience to international law.

### Misunderstanding

This is where the dynamics of power confront the nature of international law. The disappointment that many outside the US felt at the American invasion of Iraq stems mainly from a faith in international law that misunderstands its fundamental nature. Theorists have expended much ink on whether international law,

lacking as it does the centralised, coercive power or structure of law in the municipal sphere – a government with power to legislate, police and prisons to enforce – is indeed law. It is, but for different reasons. States obey and respect international law because, first, as Hans Kelsen has argued, members of the international society of states can enforce it on their own in certain circumstances; second, they believe it is in their national interest to do so; and third, because of the influence of international or domestic public opinion – the interstate equivalent of peer pressure. No state, however powerful, wants to be viewed as a habitual law-breaker. Which is why, whatever its real motives, the US has justified its action in Iraq as an exercise of its right to pre-emptive self-defence. It also argues that it acted to enforce international law, represented by the UN security council resolutions it believed Saddam had serially violated.

### Voting rights

While international law as a ‘social reality’ is an important factor in the international society, it is not necessarily a dominant one in world politics. Seen from this sociological perspective, international law actually legitimises hierarchies established by the distribution of power, despite the formal sovereign equality of states in the UN. Voting rights in the IMF and World Bank are not equal, and ‘states of chief industrial importance’ have special privileges in the ILO. International law often binds the weak more effectively than the strong. For these reasons, the nature of international law allows it to be constantly ‘updated’, thus even adapting it to violations in certain circumstances. A practical example is that of the impact of the war on terror on the inviolability of diplomatic envoys; some states are now overriding this when they believe this will help to safeguard their citizens. Once sacrosanct in international law (the Vienna Conventions), diplomatic immunity is now routinely violated in the course of body and luggage searches at airports in countries that believe themselves to be threatened by terrorism.

### Controversial notion

Pre-emptive self-defence is a controversial notion, but one that actually has

some support in the works of influential international lawyers of centuries past, and in customary international law. Hugo Grotius, the Dutch jurist regarded as the father of international law, argued in his book *On the law of war and peace*, published in 1625, that it was legitimate 'to kill him who is preparing to kill'. There is a certain analogy between this statement and US president George Bush's assertion that 'the violent restraint of violent men' is sometimes necessary. Vattel later wrote that: 'A nation has the right to resist the injury another seeks to inflict upon it, and to use force against the aggressor. It may even anticipate the other's design: he pre-empting state, however, needs to 'be careful not to act upon vague or doubtful suspicions, lest it should run the risk of becoming itself the aggressor'.

## Political problems

Vattel may have anticipated situations such as the one today: at the time of writing, the weapons of mass destruction (WMD) that Saddam Hussein was presumed to have in his possession had yet to be found. This has created political problems for the US, and even more so for Britain's prime minister, Tony Blair, who consistently based his case for joining the invasion of Iraq on the imminent danger from Saddam's WMD. Time will tell whether or not Saddam had WMD. But when, in 1837, Britain attacked an American ship, the *Caroline*, in American waters, and argued pre-emptive self-defence, the American secretary of state, Daniel Webster, argued that the doctrine was applicable only where 'the necessity for self-defence is instant, overwhelming, and leaving no choice of means and no moment for deliberation'.

## UN charter

This brings us back to the UN charter and the future of this organisation in world politics. That the world body has been wounded by the Iraq crisis cannot be doubted. But hasty obituaries were decidedly premature. For one, as noted earlier, it is far more elastic and adaptive than the high-minded League of Nations. For another, the US, despite its power, frequently needs the legitimacy conferred by the UN. Although, in invading Iraq, it

ultimately acted on its own, together with a 'coalition of the willing', the US sought that legitimacy in the form of an authorising UN resolution - without success. In a recent article in *Foreign Affairs*, entitled 'Why the US needs the UN', UN under-secretary-General Shashi Tharoor

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**The way forward does not lie in the balance of power of bygone years. Rather, it lies in a balanced approach in which the world's hegemon, only benefits from special circumstances, but also assumes special responsibilities of global leadership**

noted that all states acted unilaterally and multilaterally at different times. (Lest we forget, the late Julius Nyerere, former president of Tanzania, unilaterally invaded Uganda in 1979, and toppled the Ugandan dictator Idi Amin, in contravention of the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of African states that was a bedrock of the charter of the OAU.) The US desire for the UN to return to Iraq is proof that these two realities can coexist comfortably. That is the real nature of the international society. The US may be the world's hegemon, but the loci of power and legitimacy are not always the same.

In September last year, the UN secretary-general, Kofi Annan, told the general assembly that the international system had reached a 'fork in the road' with the Iraq crisis. The blue-ribbon panel he has set up to review the future of the UN is not just another panel: its report will have a major bearing on the future direction of the international society. It is possible, perhaps even likely, that it will demonstrate the argument made earlier about the adaptable nature of international law by adopting a new standard of self-defence that includes pre-emptive military action in clearly defined circumstances. But it will probably balance that likelihood by calling attention to the major structural issues that make the international society still somewhat anarchical: the problems of poverty, disease, and perennial conflict between Israel and Palestine that serves as a convenient and unfortunate excuse for terrorism.

There are those who lament a unipolar world. But we need to remember that

balance-of-power systems, despite their advantages, have historically not guaranteed international order. Then there are those who believe that the global distribution of power is the problem, not the solution; that the dominance of the US is a better guarantee of global stability, because America's use of power is far more responsible than that of its adversaries, and the energies that go into maintaining a multipolar balance detract from real progress. If the reality, then, is that there is no foreseeable challenge to American power, have we arrived at what, to paraphrase Francis Fukuyama speaking of the triumph of liberal capitalism, can be described as the end of history, and the last power?

Will this effectively maintain order in a world in which military might is no longer required to wreak havoc? A 'dirty' radioactive bomb and a potent stew of biological and chemical weapons in the hands of non-state actors with a grievance and a violent agenda is all that is required to upset the balance. And it has yet to be seen if we can hope for stability in a 'global order' that pays lip service to the aspirations of four billion people who live outside the gilded cage that the war on terror seeks to protect.

## Anarchy

A certain degree of anarchy will always exist in an international society based on sovereign states and mobile non-state actors pursuing frequently divergent interests. We must manage that anarchy by addressing the fundamental issues that exacerbate it. The way forward does not lie in the balance of power of bygone years. Rather, it lies in a balanced approach in which the world's hegemon, by virtue of its unique power, not only benefits from special circumstances, but also assumes special responsibilities of global leadership. In so doing, we will ensure, not a utopian world of serene peace, but peace in the sense of an absence of the conflict that attends the world of disorder in which we live now. ■

*Kingsley Moghalu, an international lawyer, is head of resource mobilisation and global partnerships of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, based in Geneva, Switzerland. These are his personal views.*

# Cheryl Carolus

As chief executive officer of SA Tourism, Cheryl Carolus plays a key role in developing this increasingly important economic sector. **XXXXX** spoke to her at the organisation's offices in Sandton, Johannesburg

*Cheryl Carolus studied at the University of Western Cape, where she played an active role in student politics. She began to work as a secondary school teacher in 1979, but continued her political activities, and became provincial secretary of the UDF Western Cape in 1983, and national co-ordinator of the UDF in 1985. In 1990 she was elected as a full-time member of the ANC's national executive committee, and thereafter held a number of posts in that organisation, rising to acting secretary general in 1997. From 1990 to 1994 she was one of two women members of Nelson Mandela's negotiating team. In 1998 she was appointed as the SA's high commissioner to the United Kingdom. She was appointed to her present post in November 2001.*

*Given your experience as SA's high commissioner to the UK, how do you believe SA is perceived in the UK and Europe?*

When I first arrived in London, I was taken aback by the extent of ignorance about our country and society. This has begun to turn around; people feel more confident about travelling to SA, and the travel industry is more confident about selling SA. As a result, we have seen a large increase in the number of tourists visiting this country. I think this has something to do with the fact that they understand that we are actually a modern, sophisticated, African democracy, a safe destination, and a very beautiful and culturally diverse country.

*To what extent does crime challenge SA's attractiveness as a tourist destination?*

There is still a hangover about safety in SA. I believe South Africans take the question of safety very seriously; we want to build a society that is safe for ourselves, and also for other people. Therefore, the government has put in place a number of initiatives to improve safety. The national, provincial, and city authorities are pooling their resources to improve levels of safety in our major cities. For example, central Johannesburg is now monitored with CCTV cameras, and the city has a municipal police force which is expanding every year.

In Mpumalanga, seat of the Kruger Park and other famous tourist destinations, communities have, in collaboration with local authorities, begun a system of tourist monitoring. Local people say they understand the value of tourism, and want to ensure that Mpumalanga is a safe and welcoming environment. In this way, communities in Mpumalanga are beefing up the efforts of national, provincial, and local authorities. This is happening in Durban as well.

It is also important to retain a sense of perspective. If you consider that we had more than 6 million visitors last year, the number of people who were affected by crime was negligible. Com-

parisons show that we are no worse in this respect than any other major tourist destination, including New York and London.

*How significant is tourism to the SA economy?*

Our past has given us a far more complex set of social relations than those of most other societies. Since 1994, we have proven that we have a durable and robust democracy, anchored by groundbreaking institutions. We have set an example of how to mobilise institutions for mediating such complex relations.

However, we are still threatened by poverty and inequality. This is why our government has emphasised the creation of sustainable jobs, which is the best way to get people out of poverty. The other way is to find the fastest way of giving people a stake in the economy, and in social life. At the job summit, attended by the government, the private sector, and civil society, tourism was among five sectors earmarked for growth and job creation, and this was confirmed at the more recent growth and development summit. We at SA Tourism understand that tourism is far more important here than in many other countries. We need to see it as a key economic sector that will help us to meet our social needs.

Some of the challenges are more difficult now, because we have the opportunity to build a different society. I want to play a role in the ongoing transformation of this country, and tourism is one of the most exciting and fun ways to do it. It gives people multiple levels of entry, regardless of the legacy of apartheid. We are encouraging people not to be complacent about their academic qualifications, and to use the opportunities created through the SETA\*\* and the secu-

**I believe South Africans take the question of safety very seriously; we want to build a society that is safe for ourselves, and also other people**



**Cheryl Carolus ... tourism is a key economic sector that will help SA meet its social needs.**

rity levy that the government imposes on employers. A high skills base in the tourist sector will help to make it world class, and we are really impressing this on employers in the sector. However, even if you have a low skills base, you can actually enter the job market in tourism. The same applies to access to finance. Even with very limited financial resources, you can enter tourism, by becoming a tour guide, for example. Tourism gives people access, and there's no ceiling at the top or the bottom.

At the moment, tourism contributes more than R71 billion to our economy, and provides 3 per cent of formal jobs. But much tourist activity is informal, and is not reflected in the official figures. We are working with the national treasury to develop a set of national accounts, called a tourism satellite account, which will

help us to accurately measure our income from this sector.

*What role does SA Tourism play in promoting Africa and NEPAD?*

SA is marketing itself as a confident, world-class, African destination. It is very important for us to address people's lack of information and wrong impressions

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**We need to move towards a cultural marketing policy as the basis of projecting SA as more than just a tourist destination.**

about Africa in the course of our marketing effort. There are many issues in Africa

that need to be addressed, such as wars and famine. On the positive side, during xxx xxxxx,\*\* [period needed] more than 50 general elections have been held which have been certified as completely free and fair. The message that emerges from these elections is that Africans actually embrace the concept of free and fair elections. By the same token, we and the world need to remember that the vast majority of Africans are determined to build a better life for themselves, and a better future for their continent. They understand that the way to do this is through democratic institutions, and through building viable economies.

NEPAD is a programme in terms of which Africans are assuming responsibility for the challenges, problems, and opportunities presented by their continent. It defines tourism as one of eight pillars of economic development, in terms of which dignified jobs are being created for people as a sustainable way of securing democracies. We and the department of environmental affairs and tourism (DEAT) therefore play a very active role in NEPAD.

NEPAD also encourages regions in Africa to strengthen their co-operation as part of becoming more globally competitive. There is a body called the Regional Tourism Organisation of SA (RETOSA), which is the SADC body concerned with tourism. We participate in RETOSA through DEAT, and help to market the whole region, which we regard as part of our competitive advantage. When people fly to one of our countries, it is to our advantage to offer them a holiday experience that encompasses more than one country. We are also trying to ensure consistent levels of quality throughout the region. A lot of co-operation is taking place to ensure that the Grading Council works efficiently, not only in SA but also in SA, thus helping to maintain high and predictable levels of quality.

According to the government's ten-year review, we need to move towards a cultural marketing policy as the basis of projecting SA as more than just a tourist destination. What are the distinctive features of SA culture that are worthy of being marketed abroad?

For us, culture is integral to tourism. People travel to experience different cultures. When these experiences are positive, it encourages them to

embrace and celebrate cultural diversity. SA is a wonderful example, and leads the world in showing how diversity can be a strength, and part of a country's competitive advantage. The business community, for example, in defining its corporate identity and how it functions, is beginning to tap into SA's diversity. For these reasons, cultural diversity is part of SA Tourism's marketing effort, and a unique selling proposition.

One of the compelling reasons why tourists should come to SA is that they will experience our diversity as a quality product. Elsewhere in the world, cultural diversity has sadly become very undignified for communities, when their culture is treated as a commodity and not as a lifestyle that should be celebrated. We offer 11 official languages, and many more cultural groups. Tourists are encouraged to immerse themselves in this experience. This diversity has become one of our strongest selling points. It's one of those visible demonstrations where, right up to the most formal institutions, people are confident about their diverse identities, and this deserves to be celebrated.

*SA Tourism doesn't have offices elsewhere in Africa. What does this imply about your priorities? Could you reflect on the importance of tourism to SA from within Africa?*

Having an office is not an indication of our presence in a market. It is about how we use our very limited resources to good effect. We had an office in Harare, which we closed down in March 2003. The most cost-effective way to market and service Africa is out of Johannesburg, because it has the best airlift. For the first time we have an Africa portfolio, and have launched campaigns in markets in which SA has never operated before, such as Kenya, Tanzania, and Nigeria. We can do this far more efficiently by working out of Johannesburg. A number of other businesses, both SA and foreign, have discovered that African operations are most sensibly run out of Johannesburg. We have expanded this tremendously, and have trebled our budget for Africa.

*What are the most notable achievements of SA tourism under your leadership?*

We have recruited some very smart people. I feel good about the fact that, when we now advertise a job, the most skilled marketers in the country want to work with us. Every three years we invite ad agencies to pitch for our account; in the most recent round, 27 companies tendered, because, according to them, this is one of the most prestigious accounts to hold. Besides the financial considerations, it is seen as a great national effort, and an organisation that knows how to do business, and is world class.

Secondly, SA was previously a very fragmented destination, and consequently we did not maximise our opportunities. At the second national tourism conference, which the minister has convened, we will look at where we have come from over the past year, and the challenges of the year ahead. The public-private partnership in this sector is growing from strength to strength. As a parastatal body, committed to marketing our destination, we have built relations with the private sector both in the SA industry and in foreign markets.

Our destination's credibility has grown. Other partners in government itself are becoming aligned to this effort. It's not only the DEAT, but also the department of home affairs where the visa regime, for example, is being streamlined and aligned with the markets we are targeting. We are also looking towards the department of trade and industry (DTI), whose investment strategy is about developing our global competitiveness and competitive advantage.

But most important is our partnerships with communities. This is a two-way process, in which communities, for their part, come to understand the benefits of tourism and how they need to organise themselves to maximise its potential benefit. In 1994-8, tourist arrivals increased dramatically, largely because of 'Madiba magic'. In 1998-2000, however, tourism flattened out, and actually showed negative growth in 2000-1. That is when I came on board and changed the whole team at SA Tourism, and we are now defying gravity.

The proof of the pudding is in the eating. All our achievements, such as the partnerships we've developed, playing smarter, and knowing how to use limited resources, all boil down to one crucial

factor: we have a growth strategy at SA Tourism that is based on hard data. In the past, decisions and budget allocations were based on anecdote. We now invest up to 10 per cent year-on-year pm market research, managing our in-house strategic research unit, working with the industry to set and monitor targets, and making sure that we achieve them. This tourism growth strategy was developed by us in partnership with the industry, and we submitted it to cabinet, which adopted it. We have a cluster in government where all concerned government departments look at global competitiveness and how you use the tourism growth strategy as a tool to ensure that we are globally competitive.

*How would you rate the level of co-operation and co-ordination between SA Tourism and the DEAT?*

The relationship is excellent. Technically we are a not-for-profit company, but the government and the minister of environmental affairs and tourism are the sole shareholders. Sometimes this could make for a bad relationship. However, DEAT is our strongest and most important partner, not only on paper but also in practice. In the minister, Mohamed Valli Moosa, we have a great visionary who leads from the front. We also have a director-general who understands the importance of making tourism work. Moreover, the department understands our role and makes a big input into how we ensure that tourism is mindful of our environmental concerns. The pristine natural beauty of our country is one of our important selling points, and we have every intention to keep it that way. It makes therefore absolute sense for us and DEAT to maximise the opportunities and minimise potential threats through our nature conservation effort.

The DEAT leads all these processes in government, as well as the adoption of the tourism growth strategy by the cabinet. It led the discussion around how we increase our airlift. The minister is also a very good lobbyist for our budget; he has managed once again to get additional funding for us in Trevor Manuel's mid-term review. We are very happy with the department and the minister. It is, without a doubt, the most important and most rewarding relationship we have. ■

## Great expectations

The demise of West Africa's warlords has raised hopes that violence will begin to abate, and governance improved. However, writes **Adekeye Adebajo**, key role players will have to take up major challenges before the hard-pressed citizens of this turbulent subregion could begin to benefit from greater peace and security

**F**OLLOWING the demise of West Africa's most ruthless warlords, hopes have been raised that a *Pax West Africana* may finally take root in one of the world's most volatile and unstable subregions. In August 2003, faced with a rebellion that was threatening to topple his regime, Charles Taylor unexpectedly ceded power in Liberia and went into exile in Nigeria. However, Taylor still has a war crimes indictment from a special court for Sierra Leone hanging over his head. Foday Sankoh and Sam Bockarie, two of the most vicious warlords of Sierra Leone's brutal Revolutionary United Front (RUF) rebel movement, and fellow war crimes indictees, died in 2003, as reportedly did Johnny Paul Koromah, a war crime indictee and former *putschist* who held power between July 1997 and February 1998 in an unholy 'sobel' (soldiers and rebels) alliance with the RUF.

Further increasing hopes for stability in West Africa, democratic rule has been restored to Nigeria, Niger, Mali, and Sierra Leone after decades of military and civilian misrule, while Ghana and Senegal have both experienced peaceful democratic transfers of power - *alternance* - after decades of dominant-party rule and, in the case of Ghana, military autocracy. But recent *coups d'état* in Guinea-Bissau and Côte d'Ivoire - formerly an island of tranquillity in West Africa's sea of troubles - and continuing autocratic practices in Burkina Faso, Gambia, Guinea, and Togo suggest that the great expectations unleashed by the twilight of West Africa's warlords and the emergence of more democratic rule in many parts of the subregion may not end the hard times that West Africa's 230 million citizens have endured during the past four post-independence decades.

This article assesses security in West Africa through six inter-related developments that define the subregion's security and governance landscape:

- the demise of the subregion's warlords;
- the re-emergence of military coups as a form of regime change and the 'civilianisation' of military regimes through often dubious political means;
- the significance of the more legitimate return to power of three former military rulers in Benin, Nigeria, and Mali;
- the uncertainties about whether West Africa's aspiring hegemon, Nigeria, will be a force for stability or instability in the subregion;
- the return of UN peacekeepers to West Africa to relieve the overburdened, ill-equipped, and poorly funded peacekeepers of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS); and
- the uncertainties about whether France, the *gendarme d'Afrique* (Africa's policeman) during the Cold War, will

resume its neo-colonial interventionist practices of the past four decades.

Each of these developments will be examined in turn, before concluding with some brief recommendations for establishing a durable *Pax West Africana*.

### Twilight of the warlords

Four of West Africa's most ruthless warlords - Taylor, Sankoh, Bockarie, and Koromah - have either died or gone into exile. These four individuals must bear great responsibility for the destabilisa-



Nigerian president Olusegun Obasanjo - one of three West African military autocrats who have turned into civilian democrats. AP Photo/Tom Hanson



Sierra Leoneans cheer west African soldiers forming part of a domestic peacekeeping force – since then, the return of UN peacekeepers to the region has boosted hopes for peace. AP Photo/David Guttenfelder

tion of the subregion during the 1990s: they fomented rebellions, instigated coups, and fuelled civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone which threatened to engulf the entire subregion. Both conflicts lasted for nearly a decade, leading to nearly 300 000 deaths, spilling more than 1,2 million refugees across national borders, and creating instability in Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire. West Africa's decade of warlordism also bred a culture of impunity as unemployed youths became the cannon fodder for the subregion's warlords, committing horrendous crimes against innocent civilians.

It is these acts of impunity that the special court for Sierra Leone, established with UN assistance in 2002, has sought to end. Led by Britain and the US, the UN security council imposed economic and travel sanctions as well as an arms embargo on Taylor's regime in May 2001. Although ECOWAS leaders opposed these sanctions at the time, the punitive measures appear to have had a major impact in ending the arms-for-diamond trade between Taylor and the RUF. They also weakened his regime tremendously, and thus helped to end the wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone. While the opposition of West Africa's leaders to sanctions against Taylor, and the granting of political asylum to Taylor by Nigeria, underlined the traditional reluctance of the continent's leaders to punish each other, the clumsy attempt by David Crane, the American prosecutor in the special court, to arrest Taylor in Ghana while attending a peace conference in 2003, and the US Congress's infantile \$2 million bounty on Taylor's head, both revealed outsiders' lack of understanding of the dynamics of diplomacy in this subregion.

The exit of West Africa's most ruthless warlords may help to improve the security situation in the subregion. Yet continuing instability and the emergence of a new crop of warlords in Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire, and Guinea-Bissau suggests that the root causes of these conflicts – failures of economic development, political autocracy, military misrule, ethnic favouritism, and foreign meddling – must be tackled before warlordism can be effectively eradicated in West Africa.

### The return of the men on horseback

West Africa is the most coup-prone subregion in Africa: it has accounted for 41 of the 75 coups since independence, while its states are less than a third of those on the continent. Seven of the 15 current ECOWAS leaders initially came to power through the barrel of a gun. In West Africa, only Cape Verde and Senegal have avoided the triumphant riding on to the national stage of the 'men on horseback' (the military). With the exception of the reformist regimes of Ghana's Jerry Rawlings (1981–2000) and Burkina Faso's Thomas Sankara (1983–7), many of the subregion's military rulers have proved themselves to be horsemen of West Africa's apocalypse, failing to transform society, often establishing ethnic-based armies, and relying on corrupt mandarins and opportunistic politicians to prop up their regimes.

After ECOWAS leaders established a security mechanism in December 1999 that barred unconstitutional changes of



regime, and the OAU prevented military regimes from Côte d'Ivoire and Comoros from attending its summit in 2000, the hope was that West Africa's military brass hats would remain in their barracks. But the attempted military coup in Côte d'Ivoire of September 2002, which resulted in a fully fledged civil war and de facto partition of the country between government and rebels, shattered such illusions. Côte d'Ivoire perfectly symbolised the 'sobel' phenomenon of the *lumpenmilitariat* in West Africa. As in Liberia, with Master-Sergeant Samuel Doe's coup in 1980, and Sierra Leone's coup by Captain Valentine Strasser in 1992, poorly paid, lower-ranking soldiers from humble socio-economic origins attempted to wrest power away from the government by marching on to the capital. In all three cases, autocratic governance had systematically excluded key groups from power. In the case of Côte d'Ivoire, Laurent Gbagbo had promoted a xenophobic and exclusionary policy of *Ivoirité* which discriminated against the country's large immigrant population and Ivoirians who had one foreign parent. Northern soldiers whom Gbagbo had dismissed from the army led the coup attempt, which mutated into a rebellion.

A coup is, of course, itself a form of rebellion against a sitting government, and the failure to topple a government has often led to the act being declared treasonous, as has been the case with countless regimes in Nigeria, the most coup-prone of West Africa's states. In Guinea-Bissau in 1998, General Ansumane Mane, the country's chief of staff, staged a rebellion against Joao Vieira who had himself seized power through a putsch in 1980. Mane eventually succeeded in ousting Vieira under the nose of a weak ECOWAS peacekeeping force (consisting of Benin, Niger, Togo, and Gambia) in 1999, before handing over power to an elected regime. In September 2003, a group of military officers in Guinea-Bissau also managed to topple the democratically elected but erratic Kumba Yala. The putschists thereafter handed power back to a civilian regime. Even though, as with Mane's regime, soldiers may continue to wield power behind the scene, the fact that they felt compelled to install a civilian regime and announce a democratic transition is a positive development, since overt military rule is now becoming anachronistic in Africa. The AU and the UN refused to recognise the government in Bissau. The men on horseback can still return to interrupt politics, but they often have to ride back to their barracks after a brief interlude.

A more disturbing trend in West Africa is the attempt by former military rulers to remove their uniforms and adopt civilian garb in a bid to legitimise their rule through elections of often dubious legitimacy. [These are often military emperors in ill-fitting civilian clothes.] Gambia's Yahya Jammeh, Burkina Faso's Blaise Compaoré, Guinea's Lansana Conté, and Togo's Gnassingbé Eyadéma all fall in this category. Nigeria's ruthless autocrat between 1993 and 1998, General Sani Abacha, had also arranged for five government-created political parties – famously dubbed 'five fingers of a leprous hand' – to adopt him as their sole presidential candidate before his sudden death in June 1998.

### The return of three kings

Three of West Africa's former military autocrats have made more legitimate transitions from military autocrats to civilian



**The French president, Jacques Chirac, holds a baby while Mali's president, Toumani Toure, looks on ... France seems intent upon continuing its neo-colonial role in Africa. AP Photo/Patrick Kovarikl**

democrats: Benin's Mathieu Kérékou, Nigeria's Olusegun Obasanjo, and Mali's Amadou Touré. After seizing power in a military coup in 1972, Kérékou gave up power in 1990 and thereafter lost elections to his arch-rival Nicéphore Soglo. Benin's former strong man was, however, able to take power back from the Soglo in 1996, before being re-elected in 2001. Nigeria's Obasanjo became a globe-trotting statesman after becoming the first Nigerian military ruler (and only the third African head of state at the time) to hand over power voluntarily in 1979. Obasanjo was elected president (after three years in General Abacha's prison) 20 years later (and again in a flawed election in 2003), and has again become a globe-trotting leader. General Touré, the popular leader of a coup in 1991 that toppled the ossified dictatorship of General Moussa Traoré and handed power to the democratically elected Alpha Konaré (now chairman of the AU commission), was himself elected as president in 2003. All three leaders realised that there was life after vacating state house. But the stakes are often high in the politics of this subregion, and leaders are obsessed with their personal survival amid threats from military and political rivals and fears of retribution if they leave office.

One of the most remarkable features of contemporary Nigeria is the difficulty of distinguishing between soldiers and politicians. Many of Nigeria's generals have entered the political arena and are well represented in the presidency, parliament, and the top echelons of political parties. Many of these individuals have enriched themselves by raiding the national treasury during periods of military rule. The fact that General

Abacha was discovered to have stashed away \$3 billion (a third of the country's annual oil revenues) in foreign bank accounts heightened such suspicions. All four of the major presidential candidates – Obasanjo, Muhammadu Buhari, Ike Nwachukwu, and Odumegwu Ojukwu – in Nigeria's last presidential elections were retired senior military officers. Nigeria thus has a group of retired officers who have constituted themselves into a new political class and are prepared to use often ill-gotten wealth to buy political power. General Ibrahim Babangida, Nigeria's military ruler between 1985 and 1993, who is widely believed to be one of the country's richest individuals, is thought to be preparing a presidential bid in 2007.

## Gulliver's troubles

A major feature of West Africa's security landscape in the 1990s was Nigeria's leadership of two military interventions under the auspices of ECOMOG, the ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring Group, in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Nigeria accounted for over 70 per cent of the troops and 90 per cent of the funding for both missions. It accounts for more than half of West Africa's population and economy, and its 94 500-strong army dwarfs the combined military strengths of its 14 neighbours. Nigeria spent 11 years and more than \$1 billion on ECOMOG, suffering nearly 1 000 peacekeeping fatalities in the process. The civilian regime of Obasanjo, unlike the military oligarchies that preceded it, was unable to keep the costs and casualties of these missions from parliament, the public, and the press. Nigeria's president thus withdrew 8 500 Nigerian troops from Sierra Leone and subsumed the remaining 3 500 under a UN peacekeeping mission (UNAMSIL), clearly signaling that Nigeria could not continue to bear the burden of peacekeeping costs estimated at \$1 million a day.

Nigeria's growing wariness about subregional peacekeeping was also evident in its decision not to contribute troops to the ECOWAS peacekeeping mission to Guinea-Bissau in 1999, and in Abuja's insistence that the UN take over the financial burden of, and contribute peacekeepers to, the Nigerian-led ECOWAS force that re-entered Liberia in August 2003. The UN mission in Liberia (UNMIL) took over Nigeria's responsibilities in October 2003. Nigeria's domestic problems, involving about 10 000 deaths over the past four years related to ethnic and religious strife, army massacres in Odi and Gbeji, and an external debt of US\$30 billion means that it is unclear whether West Africa's Gulliver will be a force for stability or instability in a subregion in which it has made tremendous peacekeeping sacrifices over the last decade. Nigeria itself may become in need of peacekeeping if its own complex internal problems are not carefully managed.

## The return of the blue helmets

After debacles in Somalia and Rwanda in the 1990s, the UN security council practically abandoned Africa to its fate even as it continued to contribute to 'rich men's wars' in the Balkans, a region which its powerful members saw as more

strategically important than Africa. Former UN secretary-general Boutros Boutros-Ghali's request to the SC for UN peacekeeping missions in Liberia and Burundi in 1995 was met with an eloquent silence, as did the frequent requests from ECOWAS leaders for UN peacekeepers in Sierra Leone. Following the withdrawal of most of Nigeria's troops from that country, British diplomacy was instrumental in establishing a 20 000-strong UN peacekeeping force by 2000, which eventually helped to end a decade-long conflict by 2002. The British also sent a small contingent to Freetown in May 2000, which was instrumental in stabilising a crumbling UN peacekeeping mission.

By December 2003, the UN had reduced its troops in Sierra Leone to 11 528 and transferred many peacekeepers to its mission in Liberia which, once at its full strength of 15 000, will become the largest peacekeeping mission in the world. The mission in Liberia was established with strong American support, with the US sending a warship and some troops to provide logistical assistance to Nigerian peacekeepers and the UN mission headed by an American, Jacques Klein. UNMIL is expected to oversee the disarmament of Liberia's factions, and help organise elections by 2005. The UN also established a mission in Côte d'Ivoire (MINUCI) with about 70 military liaison officers. At the time of writing, the UN secretary-general, with

strong French prodding, proposed the deployment of a 6 240-strong UN peacekeeping force in the country to work alongside 4 000 French troops who are currently separating the government and rebels. If accepted, a 1 478-strong ECOWAS peacekeeping force in Côte d'Ivoire (ECOMCI) from Senegal, Ghana, Niger, Togo, and Benin would be subsumed under the new UN mission. Significantly, it took the support of Britain, the US, and France – three western 'godfathers', all permanent members of the UN security council – to establish a UN presence in their former 'colonies'.

## The strange reappearance of the gendarme

France's role in West Africa and Africa in general has historically been one of neo-colonial domination, with the Gallic nation tying the currencies of its former colonies (the CFA franc) to the French franc, exercising political control over local puppets, receiving political campaign funds from assorted despots, and establishing permanent military bases in Côte d'Ivoire and Senegal from which interventions were launched. Having intervened militarily in Africa more than 30 times during the Cold War, changing countless regimes, France's opposition to America's invasion of Iraq in 2003 appears ironic and hypocritical. The idea of France as a defender of the sovereign rights of states seems about as plausible as a pyromaniac fireman condemning the acts of a deranged arsonist.

Three events eventually damaged France's cosy, neo-colonial relationship with its former African colonies. The first was its devaluation of the CFA franc by 50 per cent in 1994 without

*Continued on page 27*

## New scramble for Africa

The EU is turning away from multilateral agreements, seeking instead to negotiate economic partnership agreements with individual African countries, or smaller groups of countries. **Shannon Field** argues that this amounts to a new form of divide and rule, concealing a desire to exploit local markets

**T**HE scramble for Africa has shifted from a race for human and mineral resources to one for markets. The EU and the US now find themselves competing for market share in Africa, exploiting open markets on the continent in any way they can. The commitment to multilateral trade negotiations has largely given way to divide-and-rule tactics in terms of which trade agreements are sought at the bilateral or regional level, thus preventing poorer countries from negotiating as a bloc – often their only source of political strength. These tactics proved their utility during colonial times, as the colonial powers manipulated relationships and the balance of power

in order to ensure that their interests were served. It seems as if major developed powers are succeeding with the same strategy today, ensuring that countries with weak bargaining power will be forced to make greater concessions in negotiations in which the stronger power (often the donor) makes demands of the weaker (the recipient).

The US has probably been the most forthright in pronouncing its intentions in pursuit of its trading objectives. After the collapse of the 5th WTO ministerial in Cancun, the US trade representative, Robert Zoellick stated: 'The US has an agenda on multiple fronts. We are going to keep opening markets one way or

another.' The US believes it will more easily achieve its objectives bilaterally, rather than via the 'unruly' multilateral system.

While the EU initially confirmed its commitment to the multilateral system, it has similarly pursued a policy to maximise its gains via whichever forum serves its purposes – hence its push to conclude economic partnership agreements (EPAs) with individual nations or regions on the basis of the Cotonou agreement. This will enable it to gain concessions it could not secure at Cancun. EPAs are reciprocal free trade arrangements between the EU and an Africa-Caribbean-Pacific (ACP) country, or group of countries. They seek to remove barriers to trade between the EU and the ACP, and typically include WTO-compatible free trade arrangements.

Given their inadequate public utilities, poor public infrastructure, and poor productivity, developing countries in Africa are poorly placed for free trade with an economic giant such as the EU. Should manufacturers in developing countries be exposed to increased competition from EU-based industries, they will find themselves disadvantaged by their lack of economies of scale, and poorer access to the latest technologies.

EPAs would have particularly negative effects on SADC economies by increasing job losses, accelerating deindustrialisation, and suffocating the small to medium-scale enterprises that form the backbone of those economies.

Developing countries are aware of the potential impact of EPAs on their economies, and have learnt the lesson of Cancun – that, as a bloc, the developing world had the power to resist the demands of developed countries. As a result, ACP countries called for a binding agreement with the EU on common principles before regional negotiations could begin. No binding outcome emerged from the first round of ACP-EU negotiations, however, and regional negotiations have started.



Prega Ramsamy, SADC's executive secretary, addresses an EU-SADC meeting in Maputo, Mozambique ... the commitments the EU is pressing for do not seem to be in Africa's best interests. AP Photo/Amancio Vilanculo.



**A failed maize crop in Kaundama, Malawi ... developing countries in Africa are poorly placed for free trade with an economic giant such as the EU. Joao Silva/PictureNET Africa**

The EU will probably insist that regions open up 90 per cent of trade over 12 years. Under Cotonou, however, the ACP should be able to decide to open up more slowly, and to exclude sensitive sectors. Free trade could drive African producers out of national and regional markets as EU goods, made cheaper by common agricultural policy (CAP) subsidies, flood local markets.

The ACP would like tariff reductions to be linked to the attainment of development goals, but the EU has so far refused. SADC in particular has pushed for reciprocity in respect of the human development index, debt servicing, poverty indices, and shifts in commodity dependence.

The EU would like to see services negotiated in all sectors by 2006 at the latest, but many argue that the ACP countries should be allowed to preclude liberalisation in important public sectors such as health, education, and service provision. While, on the one hand, developing countries are calling for funds to support ACP service sector development, the EU continues to maintain that such assistance is not necessary. Similarly, ACP countries have recommended that processing, marketing, distribution, and transport programmes should be in place before free trade is phased in, but the EU claims that these things can be done after the EPAs have been set in motion.

A region such as SADC will find it very

difficult to implement a free trade agreement (FTA) while its trade policies remain as disjointed, and markets and economies as poorly integrated, as they currently are. SADC cannot negotiate a FTA unless it is a customs union, and it will only be a free trade area in 2008. SADC countries currently participate in three subregional trading arrangements: the Southern Africa Customs Union (SACU), the Community of Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), and SADC. South Africa has already concluded a free trade agreement with the EU, and, given their membership of SACU, Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, and Swaziland are de facto linked to it as well. However, other SADC member states should form alliances with other regional partners for jointly negotiating an EPA. SADC itself does not have a mandate to negotiate such an agreement, and lacks the capacity to do so effectively.

In any future negotiation of an EPA, southern African countries will need to be wary of EU attempts to force the inclusion of the so-called 'Singapore' issues. The EU's insistence at Cancun on xxxxx investment, xxxxxx competition policy, trade facilitation, and transparency in public procurement contributed to the breakdown of that meeting. In particular, the EU can be expected to press for transparent public procurement. However, the liberalisation of procurement could undermine

the rights of individual countries to determine domestic economic priorities; developing countries may be forced to advertise tenders throughout the EU, and may not be able to prefer local companies for domestic contracts. This will allow European companies to squeeze out local firms. Discrimination between foreign and domestic firms is one of the tools of industrial policy in many developing countries.

Developing countries should also be able to limit foreign ownership, require local employment, and insist on joint ventures. Investment liberalisation is a product, not a cause, of development, and should only be sought once a country reaches a certain level of competitiveness. Countries in the north did not liberalise their investment regimes until their economies were fairly advanced. The question remains, why should this be expected of African countries while they are still dealing with the challenges of reducing poverty, and finding paths to sustainable development?

There seem to be no areas in which the commitments the EU is pressing for in the EPA negotiations are in the best interests of developing countries in Africa. Both policy-makers and civil society need to realise that this is a new battleground, where the capacity to negotiate really counts. ■

*Shannon Field is deputy director of the IGD.*

## 'Crossing the river'

The liberalisation of China's economy has been spectacularly successful; however, writes **Carla Freeman**, worker's protests in Liaoning province show that China's reform strategy has had very different consequences for different parts of the country, and suggest that unrest may spread as it adapts to the WTO regime

CHINA's programme of economic reform has been astoundingly successful. Over the past two and a half decades, the country has sustained breathtaking economic change, while remaining remarkably stable socially. Today, Beijing as well as China's major coastal cities are buzzing with commercial activity, much of it driven by increasingly sophisticated technologies. The country's accession in late 2001 to WTO has opened its domestic markets to international competition to an unprecedented degree, and cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou have appeared ready and waiting to take it on.

### Social instability

Reports from other regions, however, tell a different story. Liaoning province, in north east China, has experienced large-scale, often violent, workers' protests in recent years, which suggest that China's economic reforms may have entered their most vulnerable stage to date. For one, the protests may be the harbingers of more widespread social instability now that China forms part of the WTO regime. Their concentration in Liaoning is also a reminder that China's reform strategy has had very different consequences for different parts of the country. This unevenness in development and the scope of reform could have potentially high costs, as the country's economic growth is ever more globally organised, and as it seeks to implement the regulatory norms imposed by the terms of its WTO accession throughout the country.

Liaoning, with China's other north-eastern provinces, Heilongjiang and Jilin, has seen its heavily state-owned industrial economy malingering during the reform period. Now, in the face of the economic liberalisation, openness to global competition, and other implications of WTO membership, its economic rejuvenation has become crucial to

China's ability to sustain its economic transformation.

### Heavy industry

Liaoning is a coastal province, and is home to six ports, including Dalian – one of the country's busiest. With a population of about 42 million people, Liaoning is the most populous province in north east China, and the region's most industrially powerful. Its industries include such heavily capitalised enterprises as steel mills, petrochemical enterprises, heavy machinery and electronics producers, automobile plants, shipbuilders, and aircraft manufacturers. Many of these industries predate the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC). Anshan Steel was established when Liaoning was under Japanese control following the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5. During

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### Liaoning's economic stagnation reflects some of the tradeoffs of China's reform strategy

the First Five-Year Plan (1953-7), its industrial economy was further developed with Soviet assistance — of the 156 major industrial projects undertaken in this period, 24 were located in this province.

Liaoning's industries were once considered to be among the 'jewels' of China's planned economy. In 2000 about a tenth of China's large state-owned enterprises (SOEs) were based in Liaoning, and the province still accounted for a disproportionate share of the country's heavy industrial production, producing 24 per cent of the national total that year.

However, its share of total domestic industrial production has fallen significantly since 1978 (from nearly 10 per cent of the national total to only 5.3 per cent in 2000), and, as China has liberalised its economy, its state-owned firms

have increasingly operated in the red. When the reform period began, Liaoning was among the top five top five provinces in China in terms of average incomes; today, it is 19th. Now, it is known as a 'rust-belt' province. Reports on provincial development at times refer poignantly to the province's loss of economic status, or disparage it as a 'last bastion of the planned economy'.

### Economic stagnation

Liaoning's economic stagnation reflects some of the tradeoffs of China's reform strategy. While key to enlivening China's developing markets amid relative social stability, this strategy's hallmark of decentralisation has also contributed to widening regional differences in levels of economic development and the scope of market-oriented reforms. Enabled by a policy environment characterised by administrative fiat and the inconsistent enforcement of regulations, decentralisation has also accommodated not only considerable variation in the ways in which provinces have interpreted and implemented central policy, but also considerable diversity in their interactions with the central authorities in Beijing.

For Liaoning, decentralisation shaped its reform experience, and thus its ability to take on the challenges posed by China's WTO membership, in several crucial ways. Many coastal provinces seized on Beijing's encouragement of local innovations to encourage their economies to 'grow out of the plan'. However, because of the weight of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) in Liaoning's economy, and their role within the national economy as a whole, its reform experience has remained closely tied to the politics of SOE reform within the Chinese government. In the early 1980s, the province introduced policies to boost the efficiency and profitability of state-owned

enterprises, and local innovations in enterprise reform were encouraged. The first bankruptcy case in China occurred in Shenyang in 1986, for example, even before the bankruptcy law was in force. However, reform stalled as concerns at both the national and local level about the implications of bankruptcy and related job losses for social stability offered a powerful incentive to prop up loss-making firms with soft loans. At the same time, for some senior Chinese leaders, allowing the province to pursue a slower path to reform was acceptable, even desirable, as was continuing to nurture the close ties between industries in the provinces and their supervising ministries in Beijing.

### Sensitive location

There were many reasons for this, among them wariness on the part of some highly placed Chinese leaders over the extent to which the province, given its strategically sensitive location near Russia and the Korean Peninsula, should see its economy 'disconnected' from state control. Moreover, the region's state industries remained an important source of income to a government whose system of tax collection was still in its infancy. A cautious approach to dismantling the province's state-owned sector also had important support from more conservative leader-

ship within the central government, who had ideological concerns about marketising the Chinese economy. Industrial leaders recognised these concerns as leverage against demands from market reformers. As a result, while provincial statistics indicated that enterprise reforms such as the contract system had been widely introduced in Liaoning, the state in fact

### The sustained role of the state sector in the provincial economy preserved a political culture of relying on central authorities

retained control over enterprise management, including organisational structure and employment, into the 1990s. Official statistics indicate that only 24 per cent of total provincial GDP in 2000 was generated by the non-state sector, well below the national average of about 33 per cent.

In turn, the sustained role of the state sector in the provincial economy preserved a political culture of relying on central authorities, such as the industrial ministries responsible for overseeing state firms - known informally as 'mother-in-laws.' The region's leaders, both enterprise managers and political leaders, tended to wait for specific instructions before taking action, or as some authorities in Bei-

jing put it, to '*deng, kao, yao,*' or 'wait for directions, rely on the state, and ask for assistance'. As one of Liaoning's first party secretaries has stated: 'While implementing policies, the Cantonese people think about which things must not be done; but the people of Liaoning think about which things are permitted. We dare to do only those things that have been put forward in documents.'

Systematic efforts by central authorities to restructure the province's economy began less than a decade ago. Following the creation of a national leading group headed by the State Economic and Trade Commission to oversee reform of the state sector in 1997, premier Zhu Rongji led efforts to implement policies for enterprise reform as a crucial step towards strengthening the government's fiscal power and ability to make effective monetary policy. Ministerial restructuring at the central government level severed the ties between centrally managed enterprises in the province and central departments. Direct administrative oversight was replaced with administrative 'guidance' under which, with central technical and financial assistance, some of the province's largest firms began to restructure themselves along corporate lines.

### Opportunistic behaviour

Reducing the influence of the state across the province's economy proved to be more challenging. Indeed, one study of SOE reform in China concluded that industrial restructuring was largely left to enterprise managers and supervising agencies at the local level. The unfortunate result was to increase opportunistic behaviour, rather than market mechanisms. Regulatory departments, for example, issued regulations designed to protect the firms they once controlled, often to make illicit profits. Rent-seeking activities by officials worsened as personal ties replaced once formal relationships between departments and firms. Senior provincial officials in Liaoning themselves complained that bureaucratic interference was hampering the development of the private sector, which, as noted earlier, lagged behind that in the rest of the country. When, in 2000, Shenyang's mayor, Mu Suixin, and other municipal officials were arrested on charges of accepting huge amounts of money in bribes, among



A man makes a phone call beside a site cleared for a new high-rise building in Beijing ... while major Chinese centres are integrating with the world market economy, industrial provinces in the north east are stagnating. AP Photo/Greg Baker



**A McDonalds restaurant and Starbucks Coffee outlet side-by-side in Beijing ... following China's accession to the WTO, Chinese consumers have freer access to foreign goods and services. AP Photo/Greg Baker**

other criminal activities, official reports also threw economic progress in Shenyang into question, and cast a shadow over the whole provincial leadership. Only half of the deputies who attended the 12th People's Congress of Shenyang in February 2001 voted in favour of the annual work report of the municipal people's intermediate court - a nationally unprecedented development.

### **Public gestures**

As China's accession to the WTO became imminent, some provinces and localities chose to signal their preparations for the impending impact of the WTO regime on their economies with very public gestures. In late 2000, Shanghai established the Shanghai WTO Affairs Consultation Centre and the Standardisation Research Institute to conduct research and monitor progress on standardisation issues, and develop a database of national and international standards. Five months later, a WTO-sanctioned Shanghai WTO Affairs Data Centre was established. Through the Marco Polo Award Foundation, Tianjin inaugurated a WTO-China Forum with participation from Beijing,

Chongqing, Shanghai, and Xi'an. Chongqing later established a WTO Co-ordination Office. Other provincial initiatives included the Jiangsu WTO Research Consultation Centre within its Academy of Social Sciences, and Hainan's centre for WTO information in its China Reform and Development Academy in Haikou. As early as November 1999, Guangdong participated in meetings with the WTO Research Institute in Beijing on how to prepare the province for the market opportunities associated with WTO membership, and established a Guangdong China Marine Arbitration Committee to help arbitrate trade disputes concerning commerce in the South China Sea.

In contrast, Liaoning's officials gave little indication that they were prepared to be similarly proactive. Rongji had made it clear that accession to the WTO and reform of the state sector were directly connected, stating that the 'speed of state-owned enterprise reform and the process of China's entry into the WTO are in complement to each other, and mutually advancing'. Only a year before accession, however, the head of the province's Provincial Planning Commission reflected on the implications of WTO

entry for the province as if it were a novel prospect, writing: 'We must deeply investigate the implications of China's WTO accession for our province, begin now to prepare, and adjust our economic structure rapidly.'

Other officials demonstrated little understanding of the significance of the WTO regime, calling for protectionist measures, for example. They also looked to Beijing for support, reportedly pushing for the inclusion of the western part of the province under the 'Go West' policy, a major western development initiative by the national capital. They argued that the region confronted many of the same issues as western China and, particularly given its historical contribution to national development, deserved similar emphasis.

Beijing was not unresponsive to the implications for Liaoning of WTO accession, recognising that it faced daunting structural challenges and that, given the imperative of local co-operation in implementing policies related to such WTO principles as 'national treatment', it has to bring the province on board. For one, the centre has used the familiar strategy of

*Continued on page 28*

## Timely study of new security regime

In this timely new book, analysts explore issues surrounding the proposed new security framework under the AU; in doing so, they may help policy-makers to make the new security regime as effective as possible, and stimulate a broader debate about policy-making in this key area. By **Manelisi Genge**

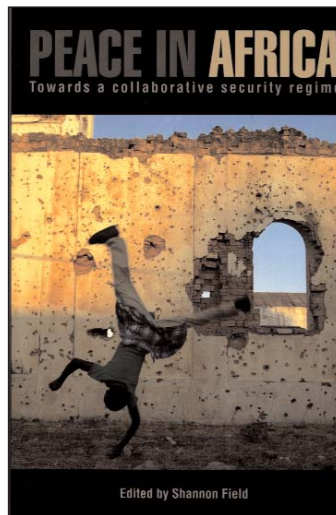
**T**HERE is a considerable body of literature on security in Africa, addressing a variety of security-related topics such as conflict resolution, conflict prevention, peace-making and peace-keeping, disarmament, de-mining, environmental security, land issues, conflict over water and energy resources, demobilisation, reintegration and resettlement, and post-conflict reconstruction.

Some studies emphasise the role of the UN security council and UN agencies in maintaining security on the continent. However, the diminishing role of the security council as the principal guarantor of global security has resulted in regional organisations attempting to play a more active role in maintaining security among member states.

### Standby force

In Africa, this trend has manifested itself in the proposed creation of a peace and security council (PSC) under the recently established African Union (AU). The PSC is meant to promote peace, security, and stability in Africa, implement peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction, co-ordinate and harmonise continental efforts to prevent and combat terrorism, develop a common defence policy, and protect human rights. In short, the PSC will be charged with preventing, managing, and resolving conflicts in Africa. It is meant to fulfil its mandate by utilising an African standby force and an early warning mechanism.

*Peace in Africa* is a collection of essays which explore the issue of how best to conceptualise and construct an effective PSC. Until now, scholars exploring collaborative security in Africa have tended to focus on the role of regional economic communities (RECs). By concentrating on the continent-wide security architecture envisaged under the AU, this



*Peace in Africa: towards a collaborative security regime*  
 Edited by Shannon Field  
 Institute for Global Dialogue, 2004

book charts a new direction in the study of security in Africa.

When, in July 2002, African leaders adopted the protocol on the establishment of the PSC at the inaugural summit of the AU, this marked a significant new attempt to assume control of security on a continent-wide basis. This book makes a valuable contribution to developing this key feature of the AU. Subjects dealt with include:

- conceptual issues surrounding the notion of regional security;
- implications of the AU and NEPAD for a collaborative security framework in Africa;
- the potential role of the AU's panel of the wise in mediating conflicts;
- comparative security arrangements in the Americas, Asia, and the Gulf;
- possible European role models for Africa;
- Issues surrounding the formation, funding, and equipping of a standby force; and
- the potential role of subregional organisations in maintaining African security.

The study draws on insights from regional security frameworks and mechanisms outside Africa, highlighting their successes and failures. Some of the chapters use a historical approach to elucidate the challenges facing the proposed PSC and standby force.

While sound in theory, some of the proposals in the book may be difficult to realise in practice. For example, the proposal that the standby force be placed under a single, unified command, subjected to a single military doctrine, and that all its equipment should be interoperable and compatible makes logistical sense. However, given the scope and diversity of military activity in Africa, it will be very difficult to implement.

### Crucial aspects

The two most crucial aspects which will make or break the proposed PSC and its standby force are finances, and the political will or otherwise of African leaders. These aspects also receive scholarly attention in this book. The chapter dealing with the financing of the PSC and its standby force makes the following pertinent observations:

- Africans should learn to finance their own national and common security, rather than relying on foreign aid.
- African leaders must organise their countries' economies and governance systems.
- The weakness of African economies undermines the ability of African governments to finance peace and security programmes.
- Investments in cost-effective disarmament and demobilisation campaigns constitute an important source of finance.
- Africans can overcome their financial challenges by improving their capaci-

*Continued on page 27*



# Africa's possible futures explored

This new scenario exercise provides a stimulating and provocative account of the different ways in which Africa may develop over the next 20 years,  
writes **Garth le Pere**

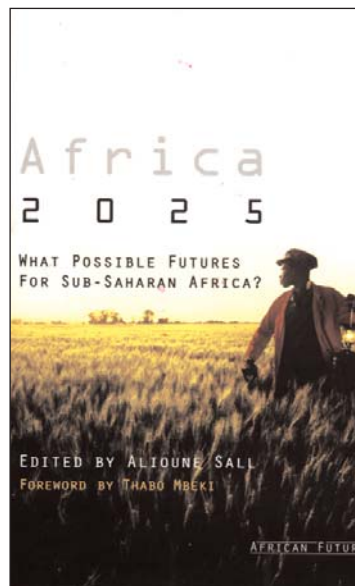
A RECENT scenario exercise, conducted under the auspices of the UNDP's African futures programmes, provides a refreshing and engaging appraisal of the different ways in which Africa may develop over the next 20 years. Considering the complexity of Africa's existential terrain, the study is elegant in its analysis, and prescient in mapping its future. As president Thabo Mbeki states in the preface: 'Without this document, without the unthinkable, it is likely that we would not be forewarned and forearmed.'

## Two dimensions

The study accomplishes this on the basis of two analytical dimensions. The first is a 'status report' which examines crucial factors that shape and influence the African environment. These can be summarised as follows:

- **Demographics:** Africa has increasing mortality rates, and declining fertility rates. Rapid urbanisation and the HIV/Aids pandemic are likely to compound these trends.
- **Economics:** Rent-seeking remains prevalent, while levels of productivity and value-added activity remain low. Large numbers of people depend on the informal sector, or 'popular economy'. This explains Africa's weak integration with the global economy.
- **Societies:** The lineage system is the dominant mode of social organisation. Its relational logic dictates minimising risks rather than maximising profit and productivity, or promoting entrepreneurship.
- **Governance:** Democratic norms and practices are gradually taking root. However, corruption, war, and endemic violence continue to compromise Africa's democratic prospects.

Based on these considerations, the study then proceeds to its second dimension, namely four lively scenarios, or possible paths into the future. All four scenarios



*Africa 2025: What possible futures for sub-Saharan Africa?*  
Edited by Alioune Sall  
UNISA Press, 2003

are centred on metaphors involving lions, as symbols of strength and resilience but also as creatures of habit and custom. According to these scenarios, this is what Africa might look like in 2025:

- **Scenario 1 - The lions are trapped:** African countries find it very difficult to escape from their current travails and dilemmas. All the factors considered in the status report conspire to 'trap' them in the status quo, but it is the dead weight of history and tradition that is the main constraint. The overwhelming dictates of the lineage system are anathema to the logic of the market and the imperatives of economic growth. The popular economy plays a dominant role; poverty remains widespread, although agricultural production improves. Governments and their poor management of public resources are unable to respond to the demands of service delivery, especially in the areas of education and health. New religious and faith communities

provide a sanctuary of security and belonging.

- **Scenario 2 - The lions are hungry:** This is the 'worst-case' scenario, characterised by lawlessness, violence, war, widespread hunger, disease and poverty, warlord banditry, and predatory looting and plunder. An inability to manage the challenges presented in scenario 1 may lead to this apocalyptic and chaotic universe. Here Africa drops off the global map, and experiences a drop in foreign aid and investment. States are weak at best; at worst, they are hollow shells. There is deep social alienation as a consequence of the erosion of lineage systems, and people live in a constant state of fear as the popular economy becomes increasingly criminalised. Africa becomes the locality of choice in the global illegal arms and drugs bazaar, and HIV/AIDS rages unchecked. Life is meaningless, and survival precarious.

## More optimistic

- **Scenario 3 - The lions come out of their den:** This is a more optimistic scenario in which Africa breaks the chains of tradition, habit, and custom. Production processes become more effective, thus unleashing entrepreneurial energies and talents, and gradually displacing the logic of lineage-based relations and the rent economy. Development is predicated on producing value-added goods and services for domestic consumption and export. Importantly, a new generation of ruling elites develop constructive partnerships with economic stakeholders. While traditional values are not forgotten, they are subordinated to economic development, which resembles the dramatic growth trajectory of the Asian Tigers. Here the state takes on a greater problem-solving role, providing improved education and health as well as better infrastruc-

ture, but also serving an important regulatory role. Religious communities thrive, especially those that preach an ethic of individual effort and the virtues of hard work and savings. However, the cold rationality and material benefits of this scenario come at the expense of the warmth and security of the lion's den.

- *Scenario 4 - The lions mark their territory:* This is a synthesis of the best of the worlds depicted in scenarios 1 and 3. The lions are able to venture forth into the world of competitive production, but also have a safe and secure anchor in tradition and custom. Here, African values and culture (the relational logic) are successfully

blended with the rational and impersonal demands of the market (the economic logic). If government alliances with economic stakeholders were important in the previous scenario, here alliances with cultural entrepreneurs become equally important. The popular economy is harnessed to improve productivity, but is also formalised through taxation. People are given a greater voice through decentralised governance, thus improving local service delivery and welfare.

Scenario exercises are tools aimed at helping a broad cross-section of social and political actors to imagine the unthinkable, and thus to unclog the arteries of lateral thinking. At a time when

Africa stands on the threshold of a more promising but uncertain future, this study is welcome, timely, and valuable. Are Napad and the AU capable of driving Africa to a better future? They must be, but given the many imponderables on this continent, things can also go terribly wrong. The scenarios have thus both forewarned and forearmed us.

The great challenge for all concerned with the future of this continent is to create an Africa which, in the inimitable words of Aimé Césaire, is '... rich with all the productive capacity of today, warm with all the brotherhood of old'. ■

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## Oman or bust? – continued from page 8

ican members, SA, China, and Thailand are generally pragmatic and constructive in the WTO. They have a mix of offensive and defensive positions, and are willing to compromise and make trade-offs. India, along with Indonesia, the Philippines, Pakistan, Egypt, and Nigeria, are defensive and inflexible.

The price of G20 unity in Cancun was for the pragmatists to move towards the Indian position. While India also had to move closer to the pragmatists' positions, the G20's uneasy compromise cannot hold unless India becomes more flexible. With Indian national elections due in 2004, in the context of a brittle domestic consensus in favour of limited further liberalisation, that seems questionable within the 2005-7 window.

It is simply not in the interests of the pragmatists to be held hostage to Indian obstructionism. They should indicate a willingness to further open their own markets, not only in agriculture but also in industrial goods and services, not least in the interests of opening up south-south trade.

It is vital to get priorities right. The real 'development' gains from the DDA are to be had from the core market access negotiations on agriculture, non-agricultural goods and services. Reducing tariff and non-tariff barriers to goods and services – including the barriers that throttle south-south trade – would deliver far bigger gains to developing countries than all the other items in the round put together. Even if they succeed, Brazilian

president Lula's ambitious proposals to form a free trade bloc among G20 countries would require these barriers to be dismantled. Even then, the Doha round would not move forward if the major trading powers were excluded.

The G20 must know that, if these conditions are not met, the WTO will become moribund, and real business will shift decisively to regional and bilateral negotiations. Liberalisation through preferential trade agreements is distorted, lopsided, and insubstantial – especially in agriculture. G20 agricultural exporters would have far less access to US, EU, and Japanese markets than they would through substantial, non-discriminatory multilateral liberalisation. And the world economy would be fractured into discriminatory and overlapping trade arrangements, probably revolving around US, EU, and China hubs. These would be shaped by power relationships, not by fair and balanced rules.

Only a minority of the WTO membership have the bargaining power and capacity to advance negotiations, particularly on the core market access agenda. These are the OECD countries, and about 20 to 25 advanced developing countries (many of them in the G20). Hence the key liberalising deals in the WTO must be done by the 30-plus countries, counting the EU as one, that account for over 80 per cent of international trade and an even bigger share of foreign direct investment.

The remaining 100-plus developing countries should be accorded generous

terms of special and differential treatment, provided they do not block negotiations. This should include, inter alia, the liberalisation of other markets through most favoured nation status, and preferably duty and quota-free access; no pressure to sign up for new obligations if they feel unready to do so; and an understanding that they will not be taken to dispute settlement if they breach existing obligations.

## Sword of Damascus

The quid pro quo is that small developing countries should not oppose those countries that wish to move ahead with negotiations on trade facilitation and government procurement, even if in the form of plurilateral agreements. Given that these issues are generally on the agenda, in any event it would make sense to participate in regional negotiations. Otherwise, they will, at some point, inherit agreements designed by others.

Even if these conditions are met, and the Doha Round gets back on track, negotiations will spill over into 2005-6, perhaps only getting serious in mid- to late 2005. That would leave just over a year to wrap up a deal before the expiry of trade promotion authority in the US – the sword of Damocles hanging over the WTO. ■

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ties to organise and mobilise. If institutions such as the AU and NEPAD are managed effectively, and in a sustainable manner, this will prove that Africans are effectively organised and mobilised for sustainable peace and development. Organisation, mobilisation, and self-determination are therefore key challenges.

- The head of the AU should address the question of financial management, or the flow and investment of surplus funds. This would include the collection and use of public funds in a manner consistent with the public interest.
- The harmonisation of foreign, defence and security, and trade and industry policies constitutes a recipe for peace and stability, and the much-needed creation of wealth and generation of

public revenue needed to finance and underpin peace and stability.

The last chapter makes the key point that the principal obstacle to the effective implementation of the proposed new AU security framework is a lack of commitment and political will on the part of member states. Therefore, the continent's political elites need to develop the political will to translate declarations into deeds, and enter into serious commitments around key questions such as development, democracy, human rights, and constitutional safeguards against the abuse of political power.

As is the case in most or all edited works, the various contributions are unevenly developed. Some readers may find the suggested lessons from other regions outside Africa neither convinc-

ing nor valid; for example, the claim that the security arrangements under the Organisation of American States (OAS) provides lessons relevant to Africa is highly debatable.

But, given its subject matter, this is a timely study. Policy-makers will find innovative ideas in this work as they grapple with the challenge of making the proposed continent-wide security system as effective as possible. The book could also spark a much-needed debate on the PSC among policy-makers, the diplomatic community, the private sector, and civil society, and is highly recommended to all these constituencies. ■

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consulting its African clients; the second, its discredited and sordid role in training, arming and assisting *génocidaires* in Rwanda in 1994; and the third, its ill-advised support for a sinking Mobutu Sese Seko in the 1990s long after it was politically expedient to do so. In West Africa, France has historically tried to prevent Nigeria from exerting strong influence over its former West African colonies, and sent arms to Biafran secessionists during the Nigerian civil war of 1967 to 1970 in a bid to break up the Nigerian federation. Paradoxically, sour political relations have coexisted with strong bilateral trade, with Paris's trade with Abuja already more than the combined total of its trade with its former West African colonies by the 1980s. Relations have improved somewhat in recent times, with Jacques Chirac becoming the first French leader to visit Nigeria in July 1999, and Obasanjo becoming a frequent visitor to the Elysée palace.

But there are still suspicions that France wants to continue to maintain a strong grip on its West African *chasse gardée* (private hunting-ground) through more covert means. France funded and equipped the largely francophone force

that was deployed in Guinea-Bissau (a member of the CFA franc zone since 1997) in 1999, and it has also been the largest funder of the ECOWAS mission in Côte d'Ivoire. Chirac, who once described democracy as a 'luxury' for Africa, is closely associated with the old Gaullist neo-colonial approach to dealing with the continent. The fact that France has a horrendous human rights record in dealing with African immigrants and asylum-seekers, and that nearly one in five French electors cast ballots for the openly racist Jean-Marie le Pen in the first round of presidential elections in 2002, should also be troubling signs for Africans, as Paris, a lucrative trading partner of the former apartheid regime in SA, tries to present itself as a friend of Africa.

### Towards a Pax West Africana

In conclusion, it is worth noting that there are signs of hope for West Africa, with the demise of warlords and military strongmen and the return of UN peacekeepers to the subregion. A Nigerian-led ECOWAS created a new security mechanism in 1999, and must now draw on its experiences in Liberia, Sierra Leone,

Guinea-Bissau, and Côte d'Ivoire to ensure its effectiveness. ECOWAS leaders will also have to develop a vision of promoting economic integration and development, and create political space for the involvement of civil society in conflict management and democratisation. Subregional leaders must observe common norms of democratic governance that can help subordinate their militaries under civilian rule, and prevent rebels from exploiting genuine grievances by taking up arms against the state. And, finally, external actors must contribute positively to peace-building efforts. Only then will warlords and 'sobels' disappear from the West African political landscape, allowing a durable *Pax West Africana* to emerge. ■

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## Crossing the river – continued from page 23

appointing new leaders, with the former mayor of Dalian, Bo Xilai, replacing Zhang Guoguang as provincial governor. Although he served as mayor of Dalian since 1993, Bo is a provincial outsider, with family roots in Shanxi. While in the Dalian post, he earned a reputation for managing municipal affairs in a firm, if at times flamboyant, manner, winning commendation from city residents and foreign businesses for his efforts. Under Bo's watch, Dalian not only developed its capacity as a port to rival Shanghai, but also benefited from his aggressive pursuit of foreign investment. Moreover, Bo, has a record of advocating the development of an effective social welfare system as a crucial step towards transforming SOEs into firms capable of competing in international markets.

### National programmes

Beijing also involved Liaoning in a number of new national programmes implemented in anticipation of WTO entry. Cities in Liaoning were among the 15 around the country selected as pilots for standardising export processing zones in order to make them consistent with 'international conventions' (and to 'minimise current procedures'.) Beijing also included Shenyang in the early stages of its construction of a system for regulating insurance. Shenyang's participation, with that of Harbin and Changchun, followed the opening of regulatory offices in Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou. In addition, Dalian, with Shanghai, Shenzhen, and Tianjin, was selected as one of the locations where foreign banks could begin to conduct *renminbi* business with Chinese enterprises two years after accession. Finally, Beijing made the province a pilot for new programmes to reform the social insurance system.

Despite these changes and programmes, as well as progress toward implementing programmes to ease the transition of workers off state rolls, unemployment has continued to rise. Nearly 25 per cent of China's urban poverty is concentrated in Liaoning and the north east. Liaoning has nearly one million people officially listed as unemployed, and more than 1,5 million workers categorised as waiting to find jobs. The

province also has nearly three million retired SOE workers, many of whom receive little or no income from pensions. Many of the nearly 10 million remaining SOE workers in the province are likely to join these groups. Therefore, the province faces the challenge of creating large numbers of new jobs as it closes down loss-making state firms.

Last year, Beijing introduced a new programme for the region that provincial leaders hope will remake the province into one of China's 'industrial engines'. During the third plenum of the 16th central committee of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), the Hu-led government put forward an ambitious strategic plan for north-eastern rejuvenation. During recent visits to the region, Premier Wen Jiabao has drawn parallels between the north-east programme and the 'Go West' strategy, suggesting that central authorities are responding to the region's political demands. The north east plan involves a considerably smaller allocation of central funds to the region than its western counterpart's 600 billion yuan. Central leaders have allocated 61 billion *yuan* to it on the principle that the region's rejuvenation should be funded principally by market-based investment.

### Nostalgia

Skeptics contend that the culture of bureaucratism associated with the state-owned economy will continue to dampen market-driven economic growth in the province. Certainly, even workers able to find work in the private sector are nostalgic about the 'cradle-to-grave' employment security they had enjoyed in the era of the 'iron rice bowl'.

While the central government's new programme to rejuvenate the province and the north east as a whole reflects the political as well as economic urgency of transforming the region, it could, ironically, help to prolong the region's historical reliance on central direction and support. Even as the rest of the country completes its journey 'across the river' to a market economy, Liaoning, and other north-eastern provinces, could remain many steps behind. ■

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