

# DEFENCE DIPLOMACY & NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY

## Views from the Global South

EDITORS

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# Epilogue

## Introduction

An astute observer of international politics, in following global events unfolding over the past 50 years, remarked not so much tongue-in-cheek that the fallacy of a unipolar world was evident for decades including during the Cold War, and the phenomenon is becoming more evident day by day. He suggests that ‘the process of globalisation to the extent that it exists ... has been proven to be far from linear. Some general trends may be observed by some, but there are visible signs of deglobalisation in various areas such as political-military and economic spheres’.<sup>1</sup> His statement reminds one of an argument once posed by the sociologist, Anthony Giddens, cautioning theorists that the globalisation of (social) life also implies fragmentation and alienation on various socio- and political levels, which is likely to invite conflict rather than peaceful existence.

This collected volume through various contributions touches on how the post-1945, post-decolonisation and post-Cold War era transformed power, diplomatic and strategic relations and defence diplomacy in the “Global South”. As the assassination of an Iranian general in Iraq by a US drone attack in January 2020 illustrates, the space of global politics remains tense, if not explosive. If not for Iranian restraint, this thoughtless act of aggression outside the parameters of international law could have led to some conflict of magnitude.

One may argue that the then Cold War divide made conflict more containable and perhaps predictable. The consequences of the Cold War conflicts in the “Third World”, however, were enormous in human and material terms be it through so-called proxy wars or direct intervention by powers that perceived themselves as Gladiator-World Saviours (for example, the US involvement in Vietnam and US involvement in enforced regime changes in Latin-America). Despite a brief moment of (perhaps delusional) optimism following the end of the Cold War, the present context remains one of tension, increasing fragmentation and fragile relations that can change in a moment through one single un-reflected-upon military act.

## The United Nations and the Security Council

On 1 January 2020, the estimated total of the world population was 7,763,035,303 persons. About 36 percent of these live in China and India. Twelve countries, the United States, Indonesia, Brazil, Pakistan, Nigeria, Bangladesh, the Russian Federation, Mexico, Japan, Ethiopia, The Philippines, and Egypt in descending order have each more than 100 million inhabitants.<sup>2</sup> Only three of these 14 countries have a permanent seat in the UN Security

Council. By far the most strategic institution of the United Nations, it does not reflect the real economic, political, economic, military, demographic and the power potential of its member states. Especially, the permanent seat of Great Britain and that of France are remarkable, given the fact that India, Indonesia, Brazil, Nigeria, the entire Middle East and the entire Latin America and Caribbean region are not represented. Of the block of the five BRICS countries, Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, only three have a permanent seat. To manage global conflict, it is perhaps fitting to mention that large scale reform around the UN Security Council in terms of representation is necessary. For example, should Brexit become a reality, one can rightly ask whether the UK should still have a seat in the Security Council? This would even be more pertinent if Scotland in their next referendum choose to break away from the UK. The Security Council should also be extended to include other influential states from the South. Such a step would allow for a more inclusive balance of power and broader consultation on conflict and defence matters in the Security Council.

### **Latin America and the Caribbean**

In Latin America, the Cold War represented a period in which military coups became institutionalised. The first institutional coup was that of 1962 in Peru. Brazil followed in 1964; a coup planned after explicit consultation with both the national elites and US government representatives. The Brazilian example gave rise to a succession of Latin American dictatorships, subsequently known as ‘national security regimes’, established by right-wing military leaders, in which the appointment of cabinet members in the successive military or civil-military governments went hand in glove with internal promotions in one or other branch of the armed forces. In almost all of Latin America, Peru as exception (1968-1980), national security or ultra-right repressive regimes came to power. Even in the first years of the democratic transitions at the end of the Cold War, there were countries with military-approved governments or co-governments, for instance in Brazil, El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala. The late 1980s and 1990s saw transition to democracy, notably in Argentina and Chile. The era of transition from authoritarian rule to democracy was not to last forever in all Latin-American states. In Honduras (2009) and Bolivia (2019), the armed forces were ‘invited’ or ‘co-invited’ to stage coups. Are we potentially seeing a regression of democratic politics in Latin America? This is a question worth contemplation.

In post-Cold War Latin America, dictatorial military regimes had been succeeded by elected civilian governments. Democratic transitions considerably diminished the political influence of the armed forces. Sometimes outgoing military governments arranged their own transition pacts with the incoming civilian government implying a kind of co-governance in the shadows of power. Arguably, however, military influence in civil politics has been substantially diminished.

Whatever efforts the outgoing military could mobilise, the final outcome was a significant reduction of political influence, accompanied with sharp cutback of budget, personnel and equipment which occurred in most Latin American countries. This generic transition to democracy implied significant change for the once powerful and centralised authoritarian regimes, the loss of the de facto monopoly on intelligence matters and direct influence of, or control of government. In general, it was a process of gradual but controlled conversion. Especially after the Central American peace agreements in the 1990s and the electoral defeat of the Sandinista government in Nicaragua, the reduction in military spending was dramatic: in cases standing armies of 55,000 to 280,000 officers and troops became “miniature” armies of 10,000 to 15,000.

Over the entire region, the armed forces decreased: at present, the armed forces in the largest countries and with the largest population, are relatively small: 334,000 in Brazil whose population is 212 million; 268,000 in Colombia with a population of nearly 50 million; 265,000 in Mexico with a much larger population of 128 million; and 195,000 in Venezuela with a population of 31 million. The exception seems to be Colombia. The bloated armed force of Colombia is partially explained by its warfare against two guerrilla movements (the ERP and until 2016 the FARC) and more than 50 organised private armies of criminal gangs, not counting local militias along the entire Pacific coast.

Predictably, military expenditure is the highest in Brazil. Brazil spends nearly 45 percent of all Latin American and Caribbean national defence spending. Second, third and fourth places are held by Colombia, Mexico and Venezuela. The long-term percentage of the military budget of the GDP between 2006 and 2017 is around three percent in the case of Colombia and 1,5 percent in the case of Brazil and Honduras. All other countries spent considerably less.<sup>3</sup>

Only Brazil has a significant military industrial complex and a space programme. Chile’s military budget until 2020 was guaranteed by the ten percent of the copper revenues. This new ‘strategic contingency fund’ fuelling the military budget will be administered by the Central Bank in Chile, the erstwhile dictatorship of the Pinochet brutal military rule.

There was always suspicion about the establishment of American territorial bases in the years of the Pink Tide of nationalist-leftists government (c.2000–c.2015). But in May 2017, it was announced that American forces will lead an unprecedented joint exercise with the armies of Brazil, Colombia and Peru. The returning military influence in the region goes together with an enormous commercial, economic and development assistance programme by China. It seems that some balance between East and West is maintained in terms of cooperation, with Chinese investment and commercial cooperation likely to increase in the region.

The once important ALBA-country system is diminishing in political influence due to falling oil revenues of Venezuela and the withdrawal of Ecuador (2018) and Bolivia (2019).

In the three remaining larger countries, namely Cuba, Nicaragua and Venezuela, the armed forces maintain an “osmosis type” of relation with the political system and the economy.

During the last two decades of civilian rule, problems of persistent inequality, corruption, institutional fragility and high levels of violence (not so much political as criminal) and insecurity continued and may open a leeway to military institutions to once again expand their influence if not well managed. Brazil’s new civilian government with a retired army captain as president who with nostalgia speaks of the good years of dictatorship as does his vice-president, a retired general, is an example.

Relations between Latin American countries and the USA remain hovering between acceptance and hostility and in cases are contradictory or opaque. The Trump fundamentalism and xenophobia against people entering the USA via Mexico remains a bone of contention and most likely tensions will rise in magnitude as the US (apartheid-like) Wall is erected.

Future developments in the economy play a large role. Any decline in the economy of the USA may impact on Latin America and there seem to be indications that an economic decline in the USA will not be easily arrested. Capitalism on a credit card has become expensive – even untenable. Then there is the uneasy truth to be kept in mind: Major or hegemonic powers in (economic) decline, frequently tend to become more aggressive in military posture as their own feelings of insecurity increase. The US is no exception here. Developments here are to be carefully monitored and analysed as there is no crystal ball to read the future in the region.

## Africa

Africa’s history ever since Muslim expansion and Western colonialism has seen many torturous events and historical permutations. From an era of liberation struggles, some of them extremely brutal and dislocating such as Algeria and Zimbabwe, many African states after independence became autocracies or one party states. Some were more successfully run than others. Compare the stable rule of Tanzania under Julius Nyerere and Zambia under Kenneth Kaunda with brutal rule in Uganda and Somalia. Africa became vulnerable to the coup syndrome with Nigeria, Ethiopia, Ghana, and Burkina Faso as examples. Some military regimes were stable and reflected a fairly good human rights record such as Burkina Faso under Thomas Sankara, a visionary leader. Sankara, however, was not pliant to the West (especially France). His outspoken dream of a Burkina Faso detached from French neocolonial economic rule led to a coup d’état and his death, bringing a more pliable leader to power who remained in the French sphere of neocolonial influence. In Uganda, under the brutal rule of the dictator Idi Amin Dada thousands perished until Amin was overthrown through the intervention of Julius Nyerere (Mwalimu) of Tanzania.

In many states, corruption became endemic after independence with Zaire under Mobutu and the Central African Republic under Bokassa as examples. There were some success stories too. Zambia became independent from Britain without an armed struggle but rather a “negotiated independence” after civil resistance and labour strikes. In Botswana, under Sir Seretse Khama, the same occurred. Botswana reflects a constitutional state with stable rule, little corruption and a good economic growth rate. That corruption on the continent is far from defeated can be seen in Nigeria and in southern Africa, South Africa under the rule of Jacob Zuma is an example.

The case studies on Africa included in this volume are all from southern Africa. After an anti-colonial struggle that started in 1894 against the German colonisers, Namibia’s struggle for liberation continued during the rule of the Union of South Africa (1915-1947). Sporadic revolts such in northern Namibia by Herero and Ovambo people as well as the Bondelswarts rebellion of 1921 in the south of Namibia were suppressed, amongst others by using the newly established South African Air Force. When the South West African People’s Organization (SWAPO) started their armed struggle in earnest in 1966, conflict escalated in the region. The Cold War myopia played no small role in this. South Africa, now under minority apartheid rule, was feverishly anti-communist and viewed itself as a Western ally. The “black danger” (Afrikaans: *swart gevaar*) and a deep dislike for communism, the “red danger” (Afrikaans: *Rooi Gevaar*), conflated into an ideology-driven South Africa mobilised to uphold the white state. The struggle by SWAPO and its People’s Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) was interpreted as part of the red danger and total communist onslaught (Afrikaans: *Totale Aanslag*). Others interpreted it as a proxy war. The Cold War mania came as manna from heaven for the apartheid government that declared itself as an ally of the West fighting a communist/Marxist-Leninist threat spearheaded by Moscow.

South Africa’s invasion in Angola (1975), with the knowledge of the USA, was to set the scene for further bloodletting. The Republic of Cuba became involved to support the Angolan government. In Angola, the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) came to power in November 1975 following the hasty departure of the colonialist Portuguese forces after a bloodless coup against the dictatorship of Caetano. South Africa’s alliance with anti-Luanda forces with covert support by the West for Jonas Savimbi’s rebel movement increased the turmoil in Angola. The Soviet Union was forced largely through Castro’s commitment to Africa to support the government in Luanda. The military support for the MPLA heightened tensions. South African forces claimed that their fight against SWAPO guerrillas necessitated strong action. In countering the SWAPO threat, South Africa’s involvement was to escalate. SWAPO in turn infiltrated northern Namibia relentlessly. South African involvement with covert Western support (i.e. Reagan’s policy of “constructive engagement”) led to economic instability and large scale social dislocation

in Angola, the consequences still lasting today. The South African military had a more or less permanent presence in Angola through some large-scale operations and perhaps hundreds of smaller ones. Savimbi's Union for the Total Independence of Angola (Unita) became a favourite proxy of South Africa and apartheid's tacit supporters.

Between 1966 and 1988 South African forces embarked on numerous large scale (semi-) conventional operations against SWAPO that also led to military conflicts with MPLA's armed forces (or FAPLA). Especially with Botha in power, the war in Angola gained in importance and the State Security Council decided that Pretoria will take all measures, diplomatic, economic and especially military to dislodge Swapo and weaken the MPLA government. Post 1979, numerous large-scale operations that were undertaken included, amongst others, Operation Sceptic ("Smokeshell"), Operation Protea (hundreds of Swapo and Fapla soldiers killed), Operation Daisy (1981), Operations Super, Meebos, Phoenix and Boswilger (between 1982 and 1985). The battles at Cuito Cuanavale, Lomba and Tumpo of 1987 and 1988 finally brought about a stalemate, perhaps describable as a technical defeat to apartheid forces, though at high costs to the Angolan forces. Namibia finally became independent after a century of struggle against colonialism. In accordance with the UN General Assembly Resolution 435, Namibia became independent in March 1990 having seen its first free elections in 1989. Peace could have been achieved earlier, but the USA's policy of constructive engagement was to lengthen the suffering.

One of the historic ironies (if not a tragedy) of the Namibian struggle for independence is that if apartheid had relinquished their hold on the mandate for South West Africa in the 1970s as demanded by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), the debilitating conflict that spilled over numerous borders could have been terminated. Instead, against the wishes of the Namibian people themselves, the United Nations and the Non-Aligned Movement, Pretoria virtually colonised Namibia as a perceived "fifth province". The UN Security Council remained divided, which prolonged an unnecessary war. In the end, Pretoria made a fatal strategic misjudgement. The South African state was not fighting "terrorists", "Marxists" or dupes of Moscow, but a determined Namibian people intent on independence after nearly a century of struggle. Ironically, the authoritarian government and the security establishment of South Africa became proxies for the US during this period.

Today, Namibia like Botswana, its neighbouring country, is a stable constitutional state. It is a dominant party system with SWAPO holding on to power that seems to be slowly eroding. In terms of foreign and defence diplomacy, Namibia is following an independent pathway. Managing foreign relations tends to be pragmatic rather than ideological. The country maintains relations and exchanges with countries in the EU (especially Germany), Russia, China and even North Korea setting an example of independent thinking on the continent. Despite challenges such as poverty, economic growth, and some corruption (not comparable with its neighbouring state South Africa), Namibia seems to hold. The

Namibian Defence Force (NDF) is small and the purpose is national defence. The country faces no external enemies and forms part of the Southern African Security architecture.

The next case study, South Africa, as one of the so-called large states in Africa, followed a somewhat different trajectory. Colonial conquest first by the Dutch and then British determined its future political development. Indigenous black resistance was subdued by military force, whether it came from the Zulu, Xhosa or other people. Even the Boer Republics that stubbornly held onto their independence became a target after the discovery of gold in the Transvaal (today Gauteng Province). The Anglo-Boer War (South African War) broke out in October 1899 and lasted three torturous years until 1902. The extended guerrilla face of the war was marked by a scorched earth policy by the British with thousands of white and black people dying in concentration camps. What some termed the last of the gentleman's wars and others the first of the total wars (but was in fact a resource war) again had a major influence on the future. Peace was concluded in 1902. The end of the Anglo-Boer War saw a country marked by struggle between white indigenous people (Afrikaners) and the British. The "land of Boer against Brit" now became the land of Boer and Brit (even if the relationships between the two races were strained and somewhat uneasy). The Union of South Africa came into being in 1910.

Despite protest and initially liberal resistance by black people against lack of citizenship, the white controlled government of Smuts and later the National Party with its policy of racial segregation (apartheid) was not to give way. This was not made easier by the rise of Afrikaner Nationalism that led to the creation of a state where apartheid as a comprehensive project of social engineering was implemented from 1948 onwards. The rights and land of black people were whittled away with the comprehensive and notorious land acts of 1913 and 1936. Despite black people taking part as contingents in both the First and Second World Wars together with South African soldiers, no compromise was made and right to equal citizenship did not materialise. Passive resistance that marked the 1950s was to turn into an armed struggle and underground mobilisation by the 1960s.

Further, despite dozens of UNGA Resolutions, Pretoria doggedly clung to the apartheid-ideology and Namibia. The armed struggle, mass mobilisation and underground organisation of the African National Congress (ANC) and Pan Africanist Congress were repressed through a barrage of security laws frequently justified as necessary to suppress "terrorists", Marxist/Leninist types and dupes of Moscow. The rising Black Consciousness Movement (BCM) from 1976 onwards, was likewise severely repressed. Under the motto of Total Onslaught and a total national security strategy, the white state moved from resemblances of a police state to a highly militarised state ensconced in a garrison mentality between 1963 and 1989. Only in 1990 after decades of struggle, international pressure (a lot of it initially spearheaded by African countries and the Non-Aligned Movement) led to the mould being broken. Thousands of detentions, the torture and killing of prisoners, and



covert operations by shady security forces against activists could not beat the combination of international sanctions, an arms embargo, and boycotts of South African products, diplomatic isolation, disinvestment, mass protest and a limited armed struggle. Things were falling apart; the centre could not hold.

Under manifold pressures and a declining economy in South Africa, the liberation movements were unbanned in 1990 and a lengthy, tension ridden (and sometimes violence filled) period started. The ANC committed itself to negotiations. South Africa saw a negotiated transition to a constitutional state between 1992 and 1996 when the new constitution was accepted. South Africa was finally “free” from colonialism and apartheid, the latter sometimes described as colonialism of a special type. The legacy in terms of human development and education was horrendous and social challenges abounded. The dominant party, the African National Congress, was in government, now facing immense challenges on numerous levels. Thanks to a statesman like President Nelson Mandela, South Africa returned and was welcomed into the international community. Likewise held for Africa, though some states (such as Nigeria and Angola) had some reservations about the new kid on the block.

As pointed out in the chapter on South Africa, various experiments with the economy on a spectrum from (radical) social democratic and liberal capitalism were undertaken. The role and posture of the security and military forces changed to that of a force in a democracy and some levels of civil control over the military were instituted. Whereas under President Mandela’s foreign policy was aimed at re-entering the global world and gaining recognition in Africa, foreign policy under President Thabo Mbeki became more directed towards Africa. Mbeki’s ideal of an African Renaissance and an African Peer Review Mechanism was welcomed by some and viewed with scepticism by others on the continent. Under the disastrous rule of Zuma, foreign policy got less attention because of internal squabbles, protest against service delivery and expanding corruption; the latter phenomenon to such an extent that some talk about state capture. After the fall of Zuma, President Cyril Ramaphosa indeed inherited a precarious state and society.

South Africa’s defence diplomacy remains mainly value driven (conflict resolution and re-construction oriented), favouring negotiation and diplomacy before military force.

The South African Constitution, the White Paper on Defence and the Defence Review mandate stemming from the 1990s direct the functions of the Department of Defence and Military Veterans (DDMV) and the South African National Defence Force (SANDF). Promoting security includes regional security through defence cooperation with the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and to provide capacity for regional and international peace-support operations.

As much as foreign policy and defence diplomacy are closely intertwined, so is the notion of creating conditions for peace. Peace diplomacy is not a common concept but related to defence diplomacy. Peace diplomacy can be seen as the activities associated with peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Arguably, South Africa's current military diplomatic approaches fall within the ambit of peace diplomacy.

Keeping the above in mind, bi- and multilateral involvement by South Africa in peacemaking, governance, development and post-conflict reconstruction processes is taking place in at least 18 countries on the continent. Since 2010, South Africa has participated in several peace-support operations while the philosophy is to maintain a mission-based force. Operational commitments outside the country reflect international and regional cooperation aims and peace support operations.

In discussing South Africa, the African Standby Force (ASF) needs to be mentioned. The greatest obstacle in establishing and maintaining such a force remains finances, followed by coordination and leadership. Streamlining coordination between the militaries of states, regional organisations and the African Union (AU) in terms of dedicated mission-orientated operations will need continuous attention. The challenge is to deliver effectively on expectations without overstretch. This means a long-term national security strategy for South Africa and continuous close alignment with its defence diplomacy to facilitate interaction with partner states. Simultaneously, time frames need to be planned, closely coordinated and adhered to in efforts undertaken in, or by, SADC and the AU/ASF. Within the financial and budgetary constraints and aware of the asymmetric nature of contributing states, a block-by-block approach is necessary, together with a commonly accepted strategy derived from an agreed-upon vision. The military leadership of forces to be deployed for peace missions and/or socio-economic reconstruction or policing need more say on *entrée*/exit dates and strategies.

Since 2000, Africa has seen roughly 50 peacekeeping operations in 18 countries. Partnership peacekeeping rose in prominence. Peace operations took place both as attempts at conflict resolution and retro-actively after conflict broke out or escalated.

These peace operations were conducted by the UN, AU, EU and the Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS), with the UN as the dominant player. Since the AU increased its involvement in 2003, it has deployed 40,000 peacekeepers in multipartnership or hybrid peacekeeping missions. At any given stage, South Africa contributed close to 3,000 members to peace operations on the continent, thus around ten percent. The reality is that future success will depend on: well-coordinated, planned and executed operations that are cost effective within a definite time frame; to what degree asymmetrical states can contribute to each mission; the effectiveness of civil oversight; and to what extent military

leaders have input in deployment strategies, time frames (both 'in' and 'out') versus available funding, material capacity and skilled resources. Most importantly, success will depend on future multistate cooperation within the current budgetary constraints.

To conclude: the transition to a constitutional democracy allowed South Africa to re-enter African and world politics. Between 1990 and 2020 South Africa transformed from a hegemon to benevolent partner on the continent. This new diplomatic posture resulted in a context where the defence diplomacy of South Africa in following foreign policy complemented the country's role as peacemaker and potential agent for change. South Africa's involvement in the region and Africa has carved out a role for the country as a potential peace multiplier.

In terms of the military, the defence posture changed from one of apartheid aggression to a peaceful defence posture. Defence in a democracy was the guideline for the re-professionalisation and reform of the military. Previous liberation movements (non-statutory forces), the militaries from the "independent" homelands and the South African Defence Force (SADF) were integrated while simultaneously demobilisation and rationalisation took place. A Defence Review Process (DRP) was undertaken during 1997/1998 which included civil participation. Since then a second defence review process was undertaken during 2014/2015. Unfortunately, little of the latter review's recommendations were implemented. The arms deal that took place to replace obsolete arms between 1994 and 1999 (navy and air force especially) was controversial. Some suggested that the new arms were far too expensive and more suitable for a military that was threatened by conventional foreign aggression and South Africa had no enemies and hence faced no immediate or conventional threat. The arms deal was also marked by corruption, which marred the process and the image of the military.

It has to be mentioned though that despite severe budget cuts in defence spending, the South African government delivers on its obligations to peacekeeping on the continent. In this sense, as well as involvement with regular military operations with neighbouring states and naval exercises with navies from Western countries, Latin-America and China, South Africa maintains an outward peace-orientated military diplomacy and forms a noticeable part of the southern African and African security architecture.

In terms of foreign diplomacy, South Africa seems to have a balanced approach in keeping bi- and multilateral relations with both East and West as well as African states. Trade relations include the UK, Germany, The Netherlands, France, and Spain as well as India, China and numerous other states in the East. In BRICS, South Africa keeps its contacts including bilateral agreements with Latin-America. In terms of previous "comrades in arms", South Africa maintains strong relations with Cuba and fully supports the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and attaining its freedom from Israeli repression and domination.

The third case study on southern Africa remains both interesting and complex, if not somewhat tragic. Zimbabwe (previously Rhodesia) gained independence in 1980 after a long and brutal liberation struggle (*Chimurenga*) against the minority government of Ian Smith. The country had much potential regarding agriculture and the economy, though small in measure of scale when compared to South Africa. The first Prime Minister, Robert Gabriel Mugabe, was well educated and committed to socialism and preached reconciliation. However, when Mugabe became President he ruled increasingly as a dictator, despite initial promises of reconciliation with former enemies. Josiah Nkomo, an erstwhile partner, was sidelined and eventually ousted in a process that included the killing of thousands of people in western Zimbabwe. Opposition parties were severely restricted. Mugabe's brutal rule received much criticism from the West as well as some African states. Mugabe craved and clung to power until he was removed and replaced by a new ruler, a previous military ally, now turned president. It is clear, however, that the coup-like removal of Mugabe did not open much space for democracy. For the people of Zimbabwe it remains a case of democracy deferred. Some argue that it was not such much Mugabe's economic policy (a mixed economy complemented with socialist jargon) but Mugabe's disastrous personal style, corruption and blatant cronyism that led to the implosion of the Zimbabwean economy. Belated land-reform was implemented without planning and education/training of the incumbent farmers. Land reform was also marked by corruption and cronyism. Senile and intolerant, Mugabe's rule undermined governance and social equality as well as economic growth while he doggedly centralised power and eventually even alienated the military, his strongest support base. Zimbabwe's struggle may have been won for independence, but it is clear the end of a liberation struggle did not mean entrenching democracy. Zimbabwe still faces huge challenges, which some say will hardly be corrected by a new president, an ex-military general who is facing sporadic protest. In terms of our case studies, Zimbabwe remains the "weakest link".

Zimbabwe after the fall of President Mugabe is not yet in a period of transition from authoritarian rule to democracy. The "resignation" of President Mugabe under pressure from the military, the latter stopping short of a coup, does not imply the achievement of a stable or sustainable democracy in the near future. What evolved was a *change-within-government* and not a *regime change*. Democratic transition implies a change from an authoritarian regime to a (more) democratic regime including a change of the previous ruling party (or incumbent political elite) to new incumbents. The notion of transition implies that civil society, following elite-differences within the ruling party, moves with a significant extent into the public space at the moment of transition. In the political stalemate in Zimbabwe, civil society/the public/the civil community went to the streets but were not the main dynamo of the change. The civil community seemed to have been merely supporting the military in their attempt to force Mugabe out of Zimbabwe's power politics. A transition to democracy under current conditions remains remote.

To achieve economic sustainability and democracy remains a major challenge; in short, democracy has been deferred. Space for citizen politics may open up, but it remains to be seen whether the “new”/“old” elite that arose from recent internal differences will allow significant change. Any possible transition to democracy was clearly arrested. The advent of real political transition is marked by deep differences between and within the ruling elite and a relatively ineffectual opposition. Zimbabwe’s future is full of both risks and possibilities. Unfortunately, the role of the military which in training and competence is quite professional has been tarnished by Mugabe’s rule. In terms of peace operations and the Security Organ for Peace in southern Africa, Zimbabwe remains a factor, albeit not strong.

It seems that southern Africa does however reflect a certain level of stability. One trusts that this will remain so and spread to other African regions less fortunate and plagued by conflict.

In terms of the future, a lot remains to be done in enhancing the African Union’s ideals and in arresting intra-state wars. Some of these conflicts are worsened by wars of greed, wars for scarce resources and interstate rivalry. In some cases, foreign intervention worsens the situation, such as France in West-Africa and US attacks through drones in Somalia. Other states have seen more stability and this will hopefully increase. Much will depend on how political leadership deals with these tensions and takes ownership of peacemaking and peacebuilding on the continent while distancing themselves from those core countries that intervene in African affairs (in the case of France, numerous examples exist over the past decades).

### “The East”

There are some continuing regional and global issues that are likely to dominate the politics of Asia in the years to come. The election of American President Donald Trump forced Asia to confront a new reality. The ‘America First’ doctrine along with Trump’s policies towards Iran and North Korea, his efforts to redefine America’s role in NATO and the Indo-Pacific region and the trade war with China brought in new uncertainties. America’s role in Syria and Iran has had spillover effects on the order in the West Asian region. Secondly, several of the large Asian economies have felt the impact of the global slowdown. This slowdown has been compounded with the US-China trade war. In some cases, like India, it would have an adverse impact on the process of government’s reform agenda.

Third, is the increasingly assertive posture that China has started to take in the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean region. It is making efforts to create a footprint in the littoral states of the Indian Ocean with the Belt and Road initiative and close ties with Pakistan in

the form of China Pakistan Economic Corridor. On one hand, the Chinese investments in infrastructure development have been welcomed; however, on the other hand, the Asian countries have started to realise the implications of their inability to repay the loans. In the case of Sri Lanka, for example, the agreement with state-owned China Merchants Port Holdings to lease 70 percent stake of the strategically-located Hambantota port may plunge Sri Lanka further into the Chinese debt trap with Colombo turning to Beijing for fresh loans. In Myanmar, opposition to Chinese-backed projects is mounting due to a feeling that China is only interested in exploiting their natural resources. Myanmar has already suspended the Myitsone dam development in northern Myanmar.

Terrorism continues to dominate the discourse on peace and stability. The dimension of Islamic State in its various manifestations, especially the intrusive cross-border nature of Islamic terror continues to be a source of concern. This is seen in the context of Pakistan's policies in Kashmir and India's refusal to negotiate with the separatist elements in the state. The complex battles in Syria that has witnessed several countries participating in the struggle, either for or against the Assad government or fight against the Islamic State are a part of this complexity. In Afghanistan, the Taliban continues to dominate the discourse on approach to peace and stability in the war-torn country.

While climate change has been on the global agenda, there is little sympathy for the Western activists who have promoted this agenda. These Asian economies are still in the process of industrialisation and need the use of natural resources like coal and oil. In terms of the BRICS forum, BRICS is growing slowly and has seen some radical changes in Brazil and India and much depends on how these modes of cooperation will evolve. There is little doubt that a growing BRICS can contribute to a better future for many on the globe. However, managing broader BRICS cooperation and increasing its influence will require wise and prudent leadership in the years to come. One may speculate that with Russia taking over the Chairmanship, more activity may arise and it will depend on how such interaction evolves.

What would be the drivers that dominate the regional scene in Asia in the years to come? At the regional level, the ongoing conflict in the Middle East is likely to dominate the security agenda in the years to come. The aspirations of Iran to be recognised as a major actor in the region have brought it in direct confrontation with the traditional balance of forces dominated by Saudi Arabia. Iran's skirmishes through its non-state allies in Lebanon, Yemen and Iraq and the counter moves by the US and Saudi Arabia are likely to continue over a period of time. In South Asia, India's concerns regarding cross-border terrorism from Pakistan are now being tackled by it in a more aggressive military posture. The continuing dominance of the military establishment in the new government of Pakistan means that this issue will fester in the coming years. This Indian assertive policy is also seen against Chinese intrusions along the border. Sri Lankan politics is yet to settle down.

The elections in Sri Lanka have thrown up new challenges of reconciliation between the Sinhalese majority and the Tamil minority. The Rohingya issue in Myanmar has seen a clash between the idea of national interest as interpreted by Myanmar's establishment and the proponents of human rights. American reluctance to play a dominant role in the Indo-Pacific region and a growing concern about China means that the regional powers are likely to enter into new security arrangements. Japan and Australia, actors that previously avoided active participation in the politics of Asia, are now shifting their priorities. The years to come promise a turbulent time for Asia.

## Conclusion

Current global developments are interconnected. Some powers rise while others decline. During the last three American presidential terms, especially that of Trump, relations within the NATO military treaty seem to have become one of increasingly strange bedfellows ('global partners'), one may argue. Is Trump's defence policy altering the entire world system of alignments, treaties and military and diplomatic conventions? Some would argue that under Trump the US is becoming more predictable, namely one can foresee an increasingly aggressive posture willing to export violence thousands of kilometres outside the US. Others may argue that the US has become more unpredictable. The same may, however, apply to a host of other international actors.

Will other NATO countries continue to tolerate Trump's one-sided actions and his paternalistic approach to the "smaller" NATO partners? Future developments here may be interesting as it is clear that relations are growing rather tense as different interests and views of a peaceful world amongst NATO members seem to diverge. An increasing aggressive policy by the USA, partly driven by the insecurities around its economic decline, may alienate other European partners that more and more seem to work on other constructive means to temper international conflicts.

Other powers are rising, some alliances slip away and new ones are formed. What will evolve on the global defence terrain with increasingly important international actors such as Brasilia, India, China, North Korea, Turkey and Iran? While one hegemon declines, other states may play a role in a multipolar world or a new hegemon may arise.

Is this the end of the beginning or the beginning of the end? Indeed, we face a tense future and a problematic if not potentially dangerous/disastrous changing world order as globalisation and de-globalisation seem to become intertwined phenomena. Only time can tell as historical and contemporary political and military permutations evolve.

THE EDITORS

## **Notes**

1. Skype interview with Professor Vladimir Shubin, 24 January 2020.
2. <https://countrymeters.info/en/World> [Accessed 6 January 2020].
3. Gerardo Hernández and Carlos-Alfonso Romero-Arias, 'La Guardia Nacional y la militarización de la seguridad pública en México', *URVIO Revista Latinoamericana de Estudios de Seguridad* 25, July-December 2019. <https://doi.org/10.17141/urvio.25.2019.3995> [Accessed 8 January 2020].