

Inaugural Lecture
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African international relations: reflections on theory and practice

17 February 2023

Africans need to be collectively responsible for the fate of Africa in the post-colonial age.

Ali Mazrui, 1995

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1 Introduction

One What is the purpose of the inaugural lecture?

The rite of passage to become a professor in a university has "for hundreds of years included the test of having to profess one's knowledge to a broad audience and fellow academics"¹. Indeed, the origin of the title 'professor' comes from the need to profess or declare publicly one's knowledge. It is no simple matter. It requires an ability to conceptualise highly technical and abstract matters and to express them in commonly used language, allowing people who have not had the privilege to grapple with the subject for extended periods to grasp the elements at play quickly.

The inaugural lecture is thus a platform for newly appointed professors to share their brilliant discoveries, innovative ideas, and deep insights with the public and the larger academic community. Quite a challenge!

Two My lecture in a nutshell

African scholars of international relations are obliged to interpret the world they live in for the benefit of Africans. This obligation arises from the privileged position they occupy in their social environment. In undertaking this public service, and the associated task of building responsive capacity, they must be clear about their paradigmatic lenses. They cannot be indifferent to Africa's history of slavery, colonialism, and empire. It is preferable to use – or develop – African-inspired theoretical lenses. If they don't, they risk reproducing Eurocentric worldviews shaped overwhelmingly by their social scientists.

What do I mean by this? We live in an international environment characterised by volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity (VUCA). This world, the product of the clash of declining and rising empires, demands an explanation from specialists of why and how we have arrived at this state and what will happen next. Would international relations and foreign policy specialists be able to do so? Could they interpret the world and offer words of comfort or warning? What else is the purpose of an African international relations professor? For any scholar associated with UNISA, the context is important: interpreting the world and its impact requires African lenses, but which lenses precisely, one might ask, and ultimately, to what purpose? What can Africans do to alter their most unfavourable place in the world?

To expect the subspecies of social scientist known as the international relations scholar to deliver on such high expectations would be dangerous. Don't forget, this mostly Western oriented scholarly community (in service of empire, some would say) actively undermined the communist project. However, few, if any, of their members could predict the fall of the Berlin Wall. Worse, their triumphalist declarations of the so-called 'end of history' and the success of democracy and the free

¹ See <https://www.wits.ac.za/about-wits/inaugural-lectures/>

market did not do the Russians or Iraqis any good, nor did they address persistent and deepening inequalities between the global North and South.²

Paradoxically, members of this scholarly community have analysed the 1962 standoff between the Soviet Union and America – dubbed the Cuban (or Caribbean) Missile crisis - with much insight. It is a significant intellectual achievement and inspired my PhD and interest in crisis decision-making.³ Nevertheless, this scholarly community could not foresee 9/11. Neither did they anticipate or warn of the consequences of vindictive imperialism – namely, the Global War on Terror and its bastard child, the Islamic State. As Iraq descended into hell, they either stood by or actively encouraged war.

Now, here we are, at the precipice of another historical turning point. The West and Russia are at each other's throats. As Ukraine descends into hell, this scholarly community actively encourages war.⁴

I will examine the portfolio of intellectual tools at our disposal to make sense of these 'turning points' (or 'inflection points' as the Americans see it). I will reflect on the tools that assisted me in my academic career and as I worked with the new democratic South African government to forge an innovative new foreign policy based on the international relations experience and ethos of the liberation movement.

I will also question the purpose of having a foreign policy and strategy. To what extent are we able to promote our national interests abroad? Can we attract what we need, export what we make, defend our assets, and protect our people from exploitation and abuse? Do ethics and values count for much in facing an anarchic society?

2 The world we live in

Humanity hardly had time to comprehend the impact of the global Covid-19 pandemic when underlying post-Cold War tensions between Russia and members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) surfaced. The United States of America (USA) intensified its intent to isolate Russia by supporting the integration of peripheral parts of the former Soviet Union into European and Atlantic institutions. Not for the first time, Russia pushed back against what it perceived as an encroachment on its sphere of influence.

² Fukuyama, F (1992) *The end of history and the last man*. New York: Free Press.

³ Allison, G (1971) *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company. This book shaped foreign policy analysis for decades. As classified material became available and in particular Soviet material following the end of the Cold War, Allison updated his original text – the version I used for my PhD. See Allison, G and P Zelikow (1999) *Essence of Decision* (second edition).

⁴ A good indicator of this kind of policy advice is offered by the 'Foreign Affairs magazine' published by the Council on Foreign Relations. This is a think-tank whose intellectual fervor shapes and reflects the preferences of the American foreign policy elite.

Following a series of crisis events, on 24 February 2022, Russia unleashed a full-spectrum war on Ukraine. On this day, the world changed. Writing soon after the invasion started in full, a commentator noted: "history has accelerated; the impossible has become possible. Shifts that no one imagined weeks ago are unfolding with incredible speed".⁵ The strategic calculations informing the USA, the European Union, NATO, Russia, the Ukraine government, and other influential players such as China or Turkey are under scrutiny by experts and the public alike. Indeed, the conflagration – increasingly dangerous and cruel - has severe consequences for the world at large.

What are these shifts?

The Western liberal rules-based world order - meant to make the world safe for democracy and capitalism – is on the back foot, and its failures result in deepening division and conflict between and amongst North and South.

Multilateral diplomacy appears unable to ensure international peace and security, manage financial stability, or act meaningfully on climate change. The most recent G20 meeting communique failed to make mention of the African Union – an aspiring member. The Ukraine crisis has enfeebled the United Nations. Can the system be reformed?

The activities of the world's mega arms manufacturers and dealers (particularly the five permanent members of the UN Security Council) keep the world in a perpetual state of conflict, further complicated by organised crime and the trafficking of arms and ammunition. Can this exploitative and corrupt stranglehold be broken?

Will conflict escalate, mutate, and spread – to include weapons of mass destruction?

Are these apparent failures a temporary setback for the 'rules-based liberal world order'? Will *Davos-man* restore or recalibrate order? Or will the world face a Cold War 2.0? Critically, how do we calculate the impact on Africa?

The above vignette of where I think we are, comes from applying a particular theoretical framework. Informed audience members will be able to discern that this is perhaps a version of neorealism interspersed with liberal internationalism. World Systems Theory provides context. Understanding the impact of global change on Africa is paramount in my analysis. So, overall, I prefer to apply an eclectic approach informed by a postpositivist epistemology.

What can we say about theory as practised in this part of the world? South African and, indeed, students of IR and FP across the continent will be aware of the sometimes-intoxicating power and

⁵ Applebaum, A (2022) 'The impossible suddenly became possible', *The Atlantic*, accessed at <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2022/03/putins-war-dispelled-the-worlds-illusions/623335/>

influence of Western narratives relating to relations between nations. A cursory glance at journal articles, curricula and textbooks reveals that despite the best efforts of individuals, many international relations and foreign policy scholarly communities at home continue to embrace (and reproduce) the Western ways of understanding the world.

I do not intend to dwell on exploring the strengths and weaknesses of the mainstream paradigms we call (i) Realism and Neorealism, (ii) Idealism or Neoliberal Institutionalism, (iii) Dependency Theory and World Systems Theory, and (iv) Critical Theory from which emerged feminist IR, new regionalism, postcolonialism and decoloniality, and constructivism, amongst others.⁶

These frameworks, paradigms or, as some might even say, ideological orientations are the focus of many an undergraduate student's reading. American and European colleagues have made the debates between these 'schools' a perpetual growth industry which keeps their journals going. More cynically, following Robert Cox's memorable phrase that 'theory is always for someone and some purpose', it is important to observe how the rulers of powerful nations encourage officials to be trained in particular intellectual frameworks in order to enhance the status, standing, power and influence of its ruling class.⁷ Remarkably, thousands of PhDs in political science and strategic studies were and continue to be in service of America's 'manifest destiny', which we understand to be imperial (over)reach. Perhaps one can say the same of all imperial powers, whether declining or emerging. One can only imagine the intellectual brainpower creating and implementing the grandiose Chinese Belt-and-Road Initiative.

The theologian Reinhold Niebuhr, famous for his book titled *Moral man and immoral society*, captured, for me, the ethos of Western IR thinking, already prevalent in 1944:

Pure idealists (children of light) underestimate the perennial power of particular and parochial loyalties, operating as a counterforce against the achievement of a wider community.

But the realists (children of darkness) are usually so impressed by the power of these perennial forces that they fail to recognise the novel and unique elements in a revolutionary world situation.

The idealists erroneously imagine that a new situation automatically generates the resources for the solution of its problem. The realists erroneously discount the destructive, as well as the creative, power of a revolutionary situation.⁸

Paradoxically, the victims of colonialism, imperialism and racism, rather than privileged theorists in imperial settings, rose to offer alternative ways of understanding the world. This combustion of ideas must continue to animate the thinking of our international relations and foreign policy scholars. There is much to be said for cosmopolitanism – defining the essence of international society in terms of social bonds that link people, communities, and societies. Indeed, we should not shy away from engaging Northern narratives, but as President Mbeki stated clearly in 2001:

⁶ Viotti, P and M Kauppi (eds) *International Relations Theory: Realism, Pluralism, Globalism*. New York: Macmillan.

⁷ Cox, R (1983) Gramsci, Hegemony and International Relations: An Essay in Method (1983) *Millennium* 12.2. ⁸ As quoted by Baldwin, D (ed)(1993) *Neorealism and neoliberalism: the contemporary debate*. New York, Columbia University Press.

... we have a duty to define ourselves. We speak about the need for the African Renaissance so that we ourselves, and not another, determine who we are, what we stand for, what our vision and hopes are, how we do things, what programmes we have to adopt to make our lives worth living, who we relate to and how.⁸

Africa has its share of magnificent thinkers who strive to make sense of the world, and Africa's place in it, with predominantly indigenous intellectual lenses. Consider for a moment the contributions of Albert Camus, Louis Althusser, Jacques Derrida and Frantz Fanon (yes, all Algerian), Achille Mbembe, Ernest Wamba dia Wamba, Kwame Nkrumah, WEB du Bois, Leopold Senghor, Ngugi wa Thiongo, Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, Cheikh Anta Diop, Eskia Mphahlele, John Dube, Steve Biko, Julius Nyerere, Thabo Mbeki, Horace Campbell, amongst others.

Inspired by the Thabo Mbeki presidency, a younger generation of Africanists undertook to explore, assess, and deepen the analysis of Africa's place in the world. This 'Africa Rise Up! Oeuvre, led by Chris Landsberg and Siphamandla Zondi, is now well established.⁹ But, an earlier intellectual impulse was provided by none other than the late prof Ali Mazrui, the keynote speaker at the launch in 1995 of the Foundation for Global Dialogue! The FDG evolved into the Institute for Global Dialogue (IGD) and is now part of the UNISA family of international relations and foreign policy specialists.¹⁰

I recall that his lecture – which I helped organise - ruffled feathers because he proposed the revival of the Trusteeship concept. With great foresight, he called for the establishment of an African Security Council, a Pan-African emergency force, and an African High Commissioner for Refugees. As we know, following a unique combustion of intellectual fervour amongst influential African leaders, including President Mbeki, in 2002, the African Union was born amidst great fanfare and hope for its ability to drive the African Renaissance.

To return to Professor Mazrui and his 1995 lecture twenty-eight years ago, he came to these conclusions:

What is the connection between the erosion of the state and the decline of race?

A significant cause is the continuing expansion and globalisation of capitalism. Capitalism has been eroding the exclusivity of state sovereignty. The global marketplace is dictating its own terms to governments and nation-states.

However, as capitalism was weakening the state and race, it was inadvertently releasing other cultural forces: consciousness of ancestry, ethnicity and tribal origins, and primordial forces of religion.

⁸ Mbeki, T (2002) *Africa Define Yourself*. Cape Town: Mafube

⁹ See for example Landsberg, C (ed) (2018) *Africa Rise Up! Prospects on African Renewal*. Johannesburg: Real African Publishers and TMALI; Zondi, S (2018) *Decolonising International Relations and Its Theory: A Critical Conceptual Meditation*, *Politikon*, 45:1, 16-31.

¹⁰ For an assessment of the IGD, see Siko, J (2014) *Inside South Africa's Foreign Policy: diplomacy from Smuts to Mbeki*. London: IB Tauris.

The question now arises whether capitalism has inadvertently released forces that will, in time, check its seemingly relentless expansion.

The question is wide open – and South Africa might well be one of the global laboratories of such momentous social changes.¹¹

3 Can we practice what we preach?

How do we respond to Ali Mazrui's question?

South Africa might very well be the testing ground for how social change is or can be managed or mismanaged. But, the truth is that its once exemplary standing as a progressive force for change, whether in Africa, the global South or more broadly, has diminished to the extent that South Africa's foreign policy behaviour is marked by ceremonial summitry and transactional relations.

The public tends to remember scandals rather than mundane yet professional diplomatic work. Several of the more conspicuous scandals involve, in particular, the behaviour of some of our esteemed diplomats. Recall the Gupta landing at Waterkloof and the posting of an implicated foreign ministry official to a prominent diplomatic mission in the West. Or the deployment of a disgraced intelligence official to a prestigious diplomatic posting in the East. Refusing the Dalai Lama a visa to visit his friend in Cape Town and allowing alleged war criminal El Bashir to attend an AU meeting in Pretoria and then escape? Threatening to leave the International Criminal Court but then forgetting about it? Buying non-existent prime property in New York for diplomatic purposes? Allowing our diplomatic missions to be run down to the extent that enormous resources are required for repair? Most damaging, perhaps, voting with the mighty North in the UN Security Council to effect regime change in Libya?

What can we learn from irate Gramscians, wary Pan Africanists, mild-mannered 'middle power' analysts, academic imbondis, apologetic journalists, cautious think-tank directors and frustrated diplomats?

Let me respond to Mazrui's probing questions with three insights.

One Policy: worth the paper it is written on?

In contrast to the lament by opposition politicians and popular analysts, I believe it is worth reading the ruling party's policy documents. By the same token, it is worth examining the government's formal position on international relations and foreign policy. Here is what I see.

¹¹ Mazrui, A (1995) The erosion of the state and the decline of race: Bismarck to Boutros; Othello to OJ Simpson. Inaugural address. Johannesburg: Foundation for Global Dialogue.

The ANC worldview professes progressive internationalism, an approach to global relations anchored in the pursuit of global solidarity, social justice, joint development, and human security.

Progressive internationalism 'envisages a just, equitable, non-racial, non-patriarchal, diverse, democratic and equal world system.'

For the fundamental transformation of the global balance of forces, advocacy is required - a radical restructuring of global governance and a progressive global movement.

As the ANC points out, these principles have informed its stance in its history as a liberation movement since its formation in 1912, affirmed at successive conferences.

However, the 2022 discussion document also highlights a range of challenges, failures, and shortcomings – especially the failure to mobilise 'progressive forces' on the continent, the inability to work together and speak as one, policy drift, and capacity constraints at headquarters. If the ANC wants to renew, then this is part of the task.

What about the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO)? Much can be gleaned from its annual performance plans (APP).

The latest APP identifies the government's strategic approach as one whereby 'South Africa is required to engage strategically in an uncertain international environment' and, moreover, 'use its strong bilateral footprint and respected multilateral presence' to continue to advance the interests and values of South Africa, Africa and the Global South.¹²

It notes that South Africa's multilateral engagements are premised on the need to advance its national interest and safeguard its national positions, advance the development priorities of developing countries and promote an equitable rules-based multilateral system.

It further notes that South Africa's national interest is based on promoting her people's wellbeing, socio-economic development and upliftment, and advancing the prosperity of the region and the continent within a better world. The Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan (ERRP) remains the standard programme to rebuild the economy.

Groupings of the South share the need to restructure the global political, economic and financial architecture to be more balanced, representative, inclusive and equitable.

¹² Department of International Relations and Cooperation Annual Performance Plan 2022-2023, accessed at http://www.dirco.gov.za/departement/annual_performance_plan/index.htm

What about the 'African Agenda'? DIRCO sees the priorities as follows.

- A united and politically cohesive continent that works towards shared prosperity and sustainable development.
- Enhanced regional integration with increased and balanced trade within the SADC and on the continent by supporting the commencement of trading under the African Continental Free Trade Area. The Free Trade Agreement is about Africa taking charge of its destiny and growing its economies faster. South African companies are poised to play a vital role in taking up the opportunities that this presents for preferential access to other African markets.
- Promoting peace, security and stability on the continent.
- Capitalising on South Africa's membership and engagements in various international fora to advance the African Agenda.

However, we also learn from parliamentary portfolio committee meetings – where our diplomatic service is held to account – of persistent challenges and failures with the department's ability to perform. Causes include the economic squeeze and budget limitations, financial and human resource management challenges, the poor quality and misbehaviour of several ambassadors and diplomats, over-reach with servicing endless bilateral and multilateral engagements ('symbolic and procedural diplomacy'), and policy disarray.

My overall conclusion is that despite ambitions to play a leadership role in Africa (and the Global South), South Africa's international relations outlook and foreign policy tools are no longer calibrated to give effect to the ambition. Much will have to change if South Africa is to re-emerge as a global norm-setter, regional leader, peacemaker and peacekeeper.

Two Public engagement: hide and seek?

In a recent radio debate, Patrick Bond and I discussed the question of BRICS and South Africa's role in it. Bond, who popularised the 'talk left, walk right' phraseology¹³ views me as a 'mild-mannered local foreign policy realist'. He was scathing in his analysis of South Africa's foreign policy and, in particular, scorned the ruling party and its leadership. Money buys policy, he suggested. Corrupt practices are at the heart of South Africa's foreign posture. This is because South Africa occupies a semi-peripheral position within imperialism and acts out its role as a sub-imperial regime, behaving like a deputy sheriff on behalf of imperialist forces, whether Chinese, Russian or American. In my view, Ian Taylor offers a more thoughtful analysis of emerging powers and their socialisation into the dominant capitalist system.¹⁴

¹³ Bond, P (2004) *Talk left, walk right: South Africa's frustrated global reforms*. Durban: UKZN Press.

¹⁴ Taylor, I (2017) *Global Governance and Transnationalising Capitalist Hegemony: The Myth of the "Emerging Powers"* London: Routledge.

Upon hearing the extent of this polemic, the Foreign Ministry demanded a 'right of reply'. Soon after, a programme was dedicated to the same theme with input from two respected departmental diplomats. What they did was to provide the 'formal' narrative – or party line, as people say – painting a glowing picture of a successful and globally respected South Africa shaping international agendas and leading Global South initiatives.

This was a disappointing turn of events. There is truth in many of the claims and counterclaims (and let me confess that I was particularly critical of leadership and analytical deficits in the department). However, it is not healthy for our foreign policy colleagues to avoid common platforms to engage on matters of national importance. In fact, there is little political appetite for such structured conversations, given that the term of the South African Council on International Relations (SACOIR) (2015-2020) was never renewed or replaced by a similar dialogue forum.

We are privileged to have a strong and diverse intellectual culture of international relations and foreign policy research and analysis – several think tanks, journals, and regular reviews – but at times, it feels as if the academics and diplomats live in parallel worlds. This is one of the pertinent points made in the foreign policy review by the Ministerial Review Panel and chaired by Mr Aziz Pahad.¹⁵ The report is now largely forgotten, along with the reports by SACOIR and important proposals for a professional diplomatic training and education regime.

There is much work to be done. Former President Mbeki – one of the architects of the AU and NEPAD - lamented the situation when recently asked to reflect on the state of the African revival project and South Africa's role in it.¹⁶ He commented:

In 2009, South Africa effectively underwent a change of government. This is when South Africa's Africa policy experienced a decline. It started with bilateral relations in the context of the NEPAD process. We had also sought to build good relations with our neighbouring countries in SADC. [the example of promoting cross-border regional tourism]. But even that system of bilateral relations began to untangle, and effectively ceased to exist. It was part of the process of South Africa's retreat from a coherent Africa policy.

In one manifestation, when we were contending for the chair of the AU Commission, we said the reason we didn't win the first round was because of the Francophone factor. South Africa cannot talk politics of this kind, but we did.

In terms of our thinking about where South Africa should be in relation to Africa, we should go back to these kinds of issues, to assess: Where were we? Where did we want to get to? Why didn't we get there? Why did we fail? Part of this arises in the context of the persistent question: How do we become active agents of our own development?

I believe Mazrui and Mbeki's questions are correct regarding rethinking South Africa's international relations posture and foreign policy practice. In my conclusion, I hope to point to the features of a

¹⁵ See http://www.dirco.gov.za/docs/2019/foreign_policy_review_report0417.pdf

¹⁶ Mbeki, T (2021) South Africa's role in Africa: looking back and forward. In Le Pere, G and A van Nieuwkerk (eds) South Africa's Africa agenda: prospects and challenges. Johannesburg: Concerned Africans Forum and Friedrich Ebert Foundation.

comprehensive response which ought to animate the research and policy development agendas of our international relations and foreign policy scholarly community as well as the next generation of diplomats.

Three Who must protect us?

South Africa suffers from a decaying security sector – an essential component in exercising power and influence and pursuing national interests at home and abroad.

As South Africa grapples with consolidating its transition to democracy, it needs a professional security sector to protect its interests and secure its people. This sector is compromised by corruption, political abuse, and weak oversight of its performance. Consider two key stakeholders: defence and intelligence.¹⁷ Both are integral to peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding activities, which are key features of South Africa's Africa policy.

Defence

The defence sector of the Republic of South Africa established a defence review process on which basis a new Defence Act was enacted in 2000. In 1994, the government reduced the size of the defence forces from 100 000 to 74 000 to make the force affordable. Additionally, a defence policy was also established. Thus, the transformation and overhaul of the defence sector included reviewing legal frameworks, codes of conduct, size, role and practice norms.

The Parliament of South Africa has a relatively strong oversight system that includes approval of defence budgets and reviewing the President's decision to deploy. However, there are questions about the capacity of MPs to scrutinise and advise on SANDC performance, budgets, planning, monitoring and evaluation. The relationship between the executive and the legislature under a dominant one-party system has meant that Parliament has not always had an independent voice.

Overall, our defence force is in trouble. Apart from recurrent and deepening budget cuts, the defence force has a problematic history. The arms procurement package of the 1990s, Operation Boleas of 1998, the unbecoming behaviour of peacekeeping troops (the most recent example being the Cabo Delgado incident), the CAR imbroglio ('the 'battle for Bangui'), and the failed implementation of the 2015 Defence Review are examples of serious management challenges and failures.¹⁸

¹⁷ Drawn from an unpublished paper I wrote entitled 'The perilous state of the Security Sector in South Africa' for a workshop entitled 'South Africa: between promise and peril' University of the Free State 11-12 February 2019.

¹⁸ See Erika Gibson 'SANDF marchers into irrelevance', Business Day 7 July 2022, <https://www.businesslive.co.za/fm/features/2022-07-07-sandf-marches-to-irrelevance/>; and Helmoed Romer Heitman 'SA's military is on a downward spiral towards becoming a mere militia', Business Day 14 February 2022, <https://www.businesslive.co.za/bd/opinion/2022-02-14-helmoed-romer-heitman-sas-military-is-on-a-downward-spiral-towards-becoming-a-mere-militia/>

Intelligence

The South African government has a comprehensive governance framework for its intelligence services based on a broader definition of security and national interests. Robust internal and external oversight mechanisms were developed following the adoption of a white paper on intelligence in 1994. The oversight mechanisms include a provision for a review of intelligence operations by a designated judge, particularly when the service intends to use intrusive methods of investigation (ibid). However, the Intelligence sector has become politicised under successive ruling party administrations and subject to abuse by ruling elites due to their internal power struggles.

In 2018 a colleague argued that not only has the State Security Agency become highly politicised during Zuma's reign, but it has also declined in performance and, by implication,

in usefulness.¹⁹ He noted that should the Ramaphosa Presidency still feel the need for such a capacity, it will have to cleanse the organisation and initiate a systematic refocusing exercise.

Several issues must be addressed — first, a highly politicised intelligence department. Postapartheid, NIS has become an unthinking instrument in the hands of the ruling party, especially Zuma and company. Afraid to differ from its political masters, many a senior member is only too eager to land one of the many foreign postings on offer, where pay is excellent and work stress minimal.

A second problem is the quality and stability of the SSA leadership. Its directors-general have been a varied bunch over the years. The main problem, however, has been the revolving door approach. Neither president Mbeki nor Zuma kept ministers responsible for intelligence in place for long, resulting in a disruptive impact on the structure of the SSA (and its predecessors, the South African Secret Service – foreign intelligence – and the National Intelligence Agency – domestic intelligence). The net result is seven ministers and more than ten directors-general since 1994. No intelligence service can afford such volatility, which has had a cascading effect on other appointments (not to mention motivation) within the SSA. The consequence has been a decline in performance and professionalism.

Another sign of the decline of the SSA has been the minister's annual report to Parliament. These statements have become nothing more than poorly executed cut-and-paste jobs – leaving the country with an unintelligible and unsystematic account of what threats it faces and how they will be countered.

The country needs a new intelligence leadership and architecture that is small and smart, apolitical and fearless, respected by its international peers, and unafraid to convey unpopular messages.

¹⁹ <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/opinionista/2018-02-05-ramaphosa-will-need-to-tackle-the-state-securityagency/>

President Ramaphosa's high-level review panel to assess the mandate, capacity, and organisational integrity of the State Security Agency (SSA)²⁰ made similar recommendations. The impact of its findings and recommendations now depends on the political dynamics of the ruling party.

I conclude that the country needs to turn its security sector around and advance its national, foreign and security interests based on a coherent and integrated set of policy frameworks and strategies. Establishing a national security policy and strategy based on a firm understanding of the national interest will allow for any lost ground to be recovered.

4 What is to be done?

One On theory

I offer the following sets of theoretical orientations to assist the researcher, analyst and student of Africa's place in the world. It offers a blend of Western concepts and approaches tempered by African epistemologies. A synthesis might be a bridge too far.

'African International Relations' is the provocative title of one of the very few academic treatises on international relations and Africa, written by Africans in the mid-1980s.²¹ The editors argue that the study of African IR is only beginning to attract scholars' and students' interest. They note, "This fact is underscored by the lack of relevant texts on the subject and by the absence of debate on the theoretical framework for the study of African IR". They prefer to work with 'power theory' or 'power politics', referring to the concern of African rulers to preserve sovereignty and independence and the struggle against dependency.

The contribution of two non-African international relations scholars took the debate forward. Amitav Acharya and Barry Buzan propose a non-Western IR theory (NWIRT) approach with four main elements.²² First, the main current theories of IR are too deeply rooted in and beholden to the West's history, intellectual tradition, and agency claims to accord little more than a marginal place to those of the non-Western world. In this situation, these supposedly universal theories fail to capture and explain the key trends and puzzles of international relations in the non-Western world. Second, the NWIRT approach identifies the reasons for the underdevelopment of IR theory outside of the West, including cultural, political, and institutional factors when viewed against the hegemonic status of established IR theories. The third element of the NWIRT approach is to identify some of the possible sources of bringing the non-Western world into IR theory, including but not limited to indigenous history and culture, the ideas of nationalist leaders, distinctive local and regional interaction patterns, and the writings of scholars of distinction working in or about different regions.

²⁰ <https://www.iol.co.za/news/politics/ramaphosa-appoints-panel-to-review-statesecurityagency-15487500>

²¹ Ojo, O, D Korwa and C Utete (eds)(1985) African International Relations. London: Longman.

²² Acharya, A (2014) Rethinking power, institutions and ideas in world politics: Whose IR? London: Routledge.

The final element is that the new international relations theory cannot and need not supplant western IR theory. It should aim to enrich Western IR theory with the voices and experiences of the non-Western world, including their aims and their claims to agency in the global and regional order. To illustrate, in Asli Calkivik's chapter on foreign policy in the exciting new publication entitled *International Relations from the Global South* (2020), she writes "What the discipline recalls as the 'Cuban missile crisis' appears as the 'Caribbean crisis' in Soviet accounts and as the 'October crisis' in Cuban accounts."²³

Inspired by Acharya and Buzan, Rhodes University scholars collaborated with others to produce *Africa in Global International Relations*, exploring the possibilities of an international relations paradigm which recognises the value of non-Western insights.²⁴

These reflections set the scene for an early 2000s contribution to foreign policy analysis in the African setting. In *African Foreign Policies*, Gilbert Khadiagala and Terrence Lyons write that studies of African foreign policy seek to shed light on actors, contexts, and outcomes.²⁶ This focus, I believe, is worth emphasising, and I will spend some time outlining the editors' framework of analysis.

- Foreign policymakers attempt to reconcile domestic interests with external circumstances, taking account of available means, resources, and institutions for doing so. Critical to understanding FP are specific domestic and external contexts and the interaction between these two environments.
- As major players in foreign policy, elites operate within institutions that continually constrain them. However, these policymakers can frequently work around such limits and manage the tensions between domestic and International Society.
- Outcomes are interesting because they answered far-reaching questions about how elites achieve their foreign policy goals, specifically how they balance means and objectives.
- Despite the post-colonial conundrum of multiple motives and meagre means, African elites have treated foreign policy as a way for nation-states to become effective participants and claimants in the international arena.

African foreign policy has been essentially a matter of deliberate action by elites. Limited by a dearth of resources and competing domestic concerns of Nation and State Building, African elites, for the most part, have chosen to participate in external realms. After independence, foreign policymakers sought to resolve the choice (and often tradeoffs) between national and continental identity, sovereignty and supranationalism, and differentiation and integration. Through sovereignty, national identity, and differentiation, African states sought to maximise individual political autonomy, strengthen territorial borders, and guarantee unilateral advantages from privileged relations with external actors. Thus the competing choices and practices of nationalism and Pan-Africanism have

²³ Calkivik, A (2020) Foreign Policy in Tickner, A and K Smith (eds) *International Relations for the Global South: Worlds of Difference*. Oxon: Routledge.

²⁴ Bischoff, P, Aning, K and A Acharya (eds)(2016) *Africa in Global International Relations*. London: Routledge.

²⁶ Khadiagala, G and T Lyons (eds)(2001) *African Foreign Policies: power and process*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner.

coexisted, though uneasily, in African foreign policy, a testimony to the success of elites in straddling these broad concerns.

I conclude that we have much to gain from how the traditional, Western-dominated study of international relations and foreign policy has been enriched by critical theory and challenged by Pan-Africanism. There is no synthesis of these various paradigms, nor should there be – they are epistemologically incompatible. Perhaps the value in reflecting on such diverse

theoretical approaches is that Africans have opportunities to use deep insights across disciplinary approaches to address the key challenge of our times: promoting Africa as a strong, united, resilient and influential global player and partner. Once we understand Africa's place in the world as a member of the global South, we can proceed, working with fellow global South members India, China, Brazil, Indonesia, and various others – in tackling global issues to benefit our people.

For me, inter-paradigmatic debates (the favourite pastime of American political scientists) are less important than paying attention to the real African revival agenda – how to achieve peace and security, growth and development, and democratic governance. In the next section, I review aspects of my academic career as an illustration of this approach.

Two Reflections on my career

I was privileged to have had a hand in several African-oriented academic publications. The first, published in the early 1990s, is titled *Power, Wealth and Global Equity: An International relations Textbook for Africa*.²⁵ In this publication, commissioned by the IGD, the editors dedicate the book "to the thousands of students in Africa who study the fascinating subject of IR, often under very difficult personal and academic conditions". I could never determine the number of copies sold and where, but the fact that the publishers decided on a third edition points to success. Sadly, the IR textbook – tailor-made for African students – no longer exists. Perhaps to compensate, and following the Ukraine war, one of my first activities after being appointed at the TM School was to arrange for a public lecture on the question of global (dis)order, presented by the eminent African international relations scholar Professor Funmi Olonisaken. Her lecture inspired me to design a book project on the theme of global (dis)order and its impact on Africa with co-editor Sibusiso Vil-Nkomo.

Following the 'Africa Rise Up!' approach, infused with solid policy advisory content, another input was made in 2021 when the Concerned Africans Forum and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation worked together to produce a collection of essays reflecting on South Africa's Africa agenda.²⁶ Edited by Garth le Pere and myself, the publication called on African intellectuals to define a progressive South African leadership role in Africa. The editors argued that such a role ought to rest on three building blocks: a 'house cleaning' phase focusing on the revival of Pan-Africanism and a rethink of effective African leadership; an 'engaging the world' phase to focus on the idea of co-creating a new global

²⁵ McGowan, P, S Cornelissen and P Nel (eds)(2006) *Power, Wealth and Global Equity: An International Relations Textbook for Africa* (Third Edition). Cape Town: UCT Press.

²⁶ Le Pere, G and A van Nieuwkerk (2021) *South Africa's Africa Agenda: Prospects and challenges*. Johannesburg: CAF and FES.

order and maximising the benefits of multilateralism; and a 're-setting SA foreign policy' phase with a focus on reinvigorated comprehensive regional integration and supporting African governance institutions in line with the vision of Agenda 2063. A range of practical proposals complemented each proposed phase.

My research interests took me to the foreign and security policy terrain.

I contributed to one strand of foreign policy analysis in the African setting. My PhD focused on post-apartheid foreign policy crisis decision-making. This theme attracted some follow-up research, and three initiatives, in particular, are worth mentioning. Christopher Williams produced an outstanding PhD on South African foreign policy decision-making. Although he recently argued that this avenue of research has stagnated, much potential exists because of the accessibility of previously classified archival documents and the availability of policymakers for research interviews.²⁷ In a similar vein, Tshepo Mokhawa is a PhD candidate at the University of the Witwatersrand exploring the role of epistemic communities in the formulation of South African foreign policy. Following a stint as a ministerial advisor at DIRCO, Eddy Maloka wrote a book on foreign policy inspired (he told me) by my original PhD framework of analysis.²⁸ His reflections reveal a department in deep crisis ravaged by ruling party politics. I address some of these departmental dynamics below.

I followed up on the original research theme and focused on crisis decision-making in African settings.²⁹ I explored how elected leaders managed crises such as the Ebola pandemic in West Africa and the more recent Covid-19 crisis in South Africa. As Williams points out, and from my experience, progress depends on access to documents and interviews with agreeable decision-makers. Obstacles include classified documentation, political gatekeeping and the sad reality that a generation of foreign policy decision-makers is passing.

In tandem with focusing on international relations and foreign policy analysis in the African setting, I expanded my interest to African security themes. The study of national and regional security – with a specialisation in the affairs of SADC – keeps me busy. It is worth pointing out that theoretical and conceptual explorations of foreign and security policy and practice have a very practical element. Decision-makers responsible for shaping and managing foreign and national security agendas require academic and policy development support, and I quickly responded to the call for assistance. Paradoxically, the one sought after journal article I wrote – on South Africa's national interest – read

²⁷ Williams, C (2021) 'Re-evaluating South African Foreign Policy Decision-Making: archives, architects and the promise of another wave' in *Politikon*, 48:4, 547-571.

²⁸ Maloka, E (2019) *When Foreign Becomes Domestic: The interplay of national interests, Pan-Africanism and Internationalism in South Africa's foreign policy*. Johannesburg: Ssali Publishing House.

²⁹ 'African crisis leadership: case study from West Africa' with Bongwiwe Ngcobo in Everatt, D (ed) (2019) *Governance and the postcolony: views from Africa*. Wits University Press; 'Why our political leadership has fallen short in a time of crisis' in Du Toit, P (2020) *South Africa beyond Covid-1: Trends, change and recovery*. Johannesburg: Jonathan Ball; and 'The crisis of our lifetime: Africa's strategic options', *Africa Insight*, Vol 51 (1), 2021.

by students and practitioners alike, was published in a journal that was not accredited at the time and, in terms of promotion prospects, meant little!³⁰

The time I have spent with SAIIA and the IGD, the South African Council on International Affairs, and more recently, the Presidential High-level Panel into the State Security Agency have given me insights which will continue to percolate into my lecturing and writing. Before that, I was a contributor to foreign and defence policy frameworks. Long before that, I worked with a team including Peter Vale, Aziz Pahad, Thabo Mbeki, Gary van Staden, Laurie Nathan, and others to develop the ANC's well-known foreign policy principles. The same is true for the work I have done with the SADC Secretariat and the African Peer Review Mechanism Secretariat in Midrand. I am privileged to have engaged all the Executive Secretaries of the SADC. This career trajectory has made me a 'pracademic'.

A *pracademic* (practitioner-academic or academic-practitioner) is an academic and active practitioner in their subject area. Indeed, it is a term reserved for those who venture into the *VUCA* world of decision-making and messy problem-solving. This is a moniker Gavin Cawthra used to describe the work of the Southern African Defence and Security Management (SADEM) network. The network – managed by Gavin and myself - might have fallen on hard times due to resource constraints, but remarkably, the academics and practitioners associated with the network continue to contribute to the biennial Southern African Security Review, supported in no small measure by the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.³¹

It is opportune, at this point, to pay tribute to departed colleagues and comrades who shaped my career. They include Patrick McGowan and John Barratt, who contributed to the early contours of the South African study of international relations and foreign policy. The legendary Professor Mungala, who introduced many of us to the complexities of the DRC, and Rocky Williams, passionate about African Civil-Military Relations. Martin Rupiah, a humane supervisor and Ian Taylor, a prolific scholar and passionate Africanist. George Nene, who tragically died before we could capture his memoirs. Dumisani Khumalo, who revealed the inner workings of the UN Security Council to us, and Soks Sikupa, who introduced me to the intricacies of intelligence. Gary van Staden, a brave journalist and influential political analyst, and Frene Ginwala, with whom I worked to produce a book on human security from an African perspective. She was a hard taskmaster. I salute them all.

In undertaking this kind of work, it is worth reflecting on the contribution of another nonAfrican scholar. Roland Dannreuther asked, 'what is the role of an academic security analyst?'.³² In his view, the principal challenge for the analyst in the National and International Security field is making critical judgments, both empirical and normative. He sees the challenge at three levels:

- to understand the nature of the perceptions and the reality of the dominant security threats and concerns;

³⁰ Van Nieuwkerk, A (2004) South Africa's National Interest. African Security Review 13.2.

³¹ Working with SADSEM colleagues and FES Maputo, I was involved in the production of the various editions of the SASR: 2013, 2015, 2018, 2020. The current edition, to be published in coming months, focuses on African experiences of Violent Extremism with a focus on Mozambique.

³² Dannreuther, R (2013) International Security: the contemporary agenda. Second edition. Cambridge: Polity Press.

- to exercise judgment as to their significance and prioritisation without falling into the trap of either exaggeration or underestimation; and
- to exercise moral judgment as to how security policies can promote the needs not only of National and International Security but also of other critical values, such as freedom, prosperity and justice.

This is a significant and demanding challenge.

Three On diplomatic practice

Following the outcomes of the Zondo Commission into state capture, our international relations and foreign policy community has come alive academically and intellectually, realising that the ruling class's behaviour at home reverberates abroad and directly impacts the country's growth and development prospects.³³ Misrule at home diminishes the nation's standing abroad. Under President Mandela, members of the political class were sought after worldwide as credible peacemakers. As we argued above, this is no longer the case.

Fortunately, investigative journalists and a revived parliamentary oversight role ensure that arrogant officials taking Africa for granted, bypassing governance institutions in search of a more prominent role on the global stage, or acting to benefit personally from diplomatic largesse have nowhere to hide. A lively civil society, a range of political parties, world-class academics, and several productive think tanks keep the ruling elite on its toes and often generate new knowledge that is indispensable in helping shape responses to the VUCA world. For this reason, DIRCO ought to re-establish the Council on Foreign Relations and forge firm partnerships with academia to enhance the training of African diplomats. The same logic is valid for the Security Sector.

Four Politics and diplomacy

In terms of international relations, the central contradiction for the ruling party relates to the challenge of balancing 'progressive internationalism' - the need to transform global order - with the reality of participating meaningfully in the so-called rules-based liberal world order. It is a South/North clash of ideas, and South Africa is straddling both sides, with some difficulty, to serve the national interest, which has poverty reduction at its core.

Under these difficult conditions and seeming contradictions between the ruling party and government positions, the Ramaphosa administration is doing its best to represent South Africa at the United Nations, the European Union, the African Union, the BRICS alliance, and the Group of 20. Even though it appears the president has a narrow foreign policy focus – investment and continental free trade – he has his own unique, albeit controversial,

³³ Reports of the the Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Allegations of State Capture, Corruption and Fraud in the Public Sector including Organs of State are available at <https://www.statecapture.org.za/>

leadership style.³⁴ Whether he can fully exploit the opportunities provided by the global disorder – principally, to elevate Africa as an equal partner in matters of global governance – remains to be seen. A recent publication on Ramaphosa's foreign policy notes that his notion of a New Dawn as the clarion call for his presidency is yet to manifest fully in South Africa's foreign policy.³⁵ This theme is worthy of ongoing comprehensive research.

5 Conclusion: proposals for a progressive South African leadership role in international affairs

If we are to give effect to the call from the Mazrui and Mbeki duo, South Africa should dedicate soft and hard resources to lead on five tasks, explored below. Taken together as an agenda for deep reform, South Africa might be able to rediscover its self-worth and give effect to its historical imperative of contributing to Africa's peace and security, economic development, and good governance.

One Peacemaking and democracy promotion

Internationally, nothing is more important than finding a negotiated resolution to the conflict between Russia and NATO. Instead of the militarisation of societies, tension needs to be deescalated. Ukraine needs a peace process. Although it is naive to expect a peaceful outcome any time soon - I recall the Dutch Prime Minister telling CNN that "... we can only stop when the war stops, with a successful outcome for Ukraine, and Russia losing the war..." - nothing prevents South Africa from actively exercising bridge-building diplomacy – that is, engaging its BRICS and Western partners in an effort to bring the warring parties to the bargaining table.

In Africa, sustained attention needs to be given to peace processes in Ethiopia, Sudan and South Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In Southern Africa, democracy requires support in Lesotho, Eswatini, Zimbabwe and Madagascar. In West Africa, a peaceful and credible election in Nigeria is critical for national and regional stability. Throughout Africa, violent extremism and cross-border organised crime are on the rise and require coordinated responses from the AU and the Regional Economic Communities.

South Africa's former deputy president, Dr Phumzile Mlambo Ngcuka, appointed by the AU to its Panel of the Wise, recently worked with fellow panel members Obasanjo and Kenyatta, and a team of

³⁴ Richard Calland, who explored his decision-making style in a recent publication, paints a less-than flattering picture, highlighting effective consensus-building but also fence-sitting, procrastination, and hesitancy. See Calland, R and M Sithole (2022) *The Presidents: From Mandela to Ramaphosa: Leadership in the Age of Crisis*. Johannesburg: Penguin Random House.

³⁵ Masters, L, Van Wyk, J and P Mthembu (2022) *South African foreign policy review volume 4: Ramaphosa and a new dawn for South African foreign policy*. Pretoria: Human Science Research Council Press.

analysts, to bring the warring parties in Ethiopia and Tigray to the negotiating table.³⁶ A peace agreement is now being implemented. Such is the role of the pracademic.

Two Peacekeeping

South Africa has little choice but to pay attention to the volatile Great Lakes Region, particularly the eastern DRC and northern Mozambique. It has committed personnel and assets under UN, AU and SADC mandates. Despite the enormous costs associated with managing regional conflicts with the potential for spillover, the country is expected, by its neighbours and partners, to lead. Elsewhere I argue that a precondition of such a role is a revitalised security sector backed up by a fresh national security architecture.

Three Institutional reforms

Observers of African politics opine that with the volatile international environment, its impact on African food and energy security, and a disturbing re-appearance of coups d' etats in West Africa, there is a need to assess whether governance and management structures are 'fit for purpose'. These include the African Peace and Security Architecture, the African Governance Architecture, the AU's Agenda 2063, and, closer to home, the peace and security decision-making structures of the SADC Secretariat.

Four Representing Africa on the global stage

To what extent can African leaders forge common positions and engage multilateral institutions of global governance to defend and promote Africa's economic, trade, developmental, and peace and security interests? It is a vexing question given the low levels of continental integration, politically and economically. Complicating the matter for our diplomats is the hypocritical behaviour of dominant powers – recall the failed attempt to get an IP waiver for Covid-19 vaccine production in Africa? Or, more recently, the lukewarm response to the proposal to give the AU a seat at the table of the G20? Perhaps the most controversial is the 'invitation' by the West for South Africa and other prominent members of the global South to undertake a 'just transition' to a low-carbon economy, whilst the same sponsors are rethinking their commitments to decarbonisation. Reflecting on the factors that enabled the creation of the AU, NEPAD and substantive participation at the level of global governance, it is perhaps time to build another 'coalition of the willing' involving influential countries and leaders on the continent. I will start by looking at the potential of South Africa, Nigeria, Algeria, Kenya and Mauritius.

³⁶ African Union (2022) 'AUC Chairperson welcomes the commitment of the two parties to the restoration of peace in Ethiopia', accessed at <https://au.int/en/pressreleases/20221006/auc-chairperson-welcomescommitment-two-parties-restoration-peace-ethiopia>

Five Security Sector Reform

Diplomats are meant to promote and protect the country's national interests abroad, including national security. Reforming the security sector is an imperative for socioeconomic recovery, and its role must be integrated into the country's International Relations and Foreign Policy activities. Healthy civil-military relations and human security are two sides of the same coin and cannot be seen in isolation from regional, continental and global dynamics.

Indeed, national security is the first and most important obligation of government. It involves not just the safety of the country and its citizens. It is a matter of guarding national values and interests against internal and external dangers.

However, reforming a security sector – particularly its defence, intelligence, policing, justice, home affairs and oversight elements – is notoriously difficult. Often driven by foreign interests, such intervention is meant to bring stability to a fragile country to address the bigger questions of recovery leading to democracy and development. However, such projects are often template-driven, devoid of local ownership, or predicated on a 'capable state' for implementation.

South Africa undertook its own security sector reform as part of the political transition from apartheid to democracy. Much was achieved. The ability of former enemies to find ways to work together pragmatically in the broader national interest became an inspiration for others to follow. Yet, analysts and those working from within pointed to apparent flaws in the reform process. Old habits die hard, particularly in the secretive world of intelligence. Adopting a shared strategic culture of decision-making to encompass effective and efficient governance – control and oversight – of the security sector in a democracy was not accepted by all and led to political abuse and mismanagement, as revealed in detail in recent times.

Now, an opportunity exists to undertake the necessary national security reform to meet the expectation of the architects of our constitutional democracy, namely "the resolve of South Africans, as individuals and as a nation, to live as equals, to live in peace and harmony, to be free from fear and want and to seek a better life."

We have a good idea of the problems we face with a dysfunctional security sector. The real question is how to turn it around. One school of thought holds that incremental change is the safest way. The advice is to undertake step-by-step changes, sector by sector. Indeed, getting the building blocks of an effective and efficient security sector in place, marked by civilian oversight, is appealing.

Nevertheless, the orchestrated mayhem of July 2021 demonstrates the limitations of such an approach. Any significant threat to national security requires an integrated response. In its absence, maximum damage is wrought where the government is ill-informed (intelligence failure), and the one hand of the state (police) does not know or ignores, the intent of the other (defence).

Therefore, we must examine the other option – a coordinated, integrated security sector reform process. Much of the initial thinking is complete. The published report of the highlevel presidential panel on the State Security Agency (SSA) offers a glimpse, as do aspects of the 2015 Defence Review and recommendations by a post-Marikana massacre expert panel. None of these received the necessary attention from the government – with dire consequences, as demonstrated by the 2021 'failed insurrection'.

There is no time to lose.

The architecture to bring about the necessary reform is shaping up. The Achilles heel of the SSA – political interference – was recognised when President Ramaphosa announced that he was 'doing away' with the Ministry of State Security and placing political responsibility for the SSA in the Presidency. A minister and deputy in the Presidency now provide for democratic oversight via parliamentary processes. It might be a temporary solution because, in reality, a national security advisor (NSA), also situated in the Presidency, drives the project, which is standard practice in democratic societies worldwide. President Ramaphosa also re-instituted the National Security Council (NSC). The role of the NSC is to advise and support the President and cabinet on national security matters.

The close cooperation of the SSA, NSC and NSA is necessary to alert the government of threats and dangers to the nation. Beyond the immediate, this team is meant to develop national security strategy, national interests and national security policy. However, these are not yet entirely in place and need urgent attention. This is because a national security policy framework, informed by a well-crafted national interest doctrine and refreshed national development plan, will provide the overall guidance for the various elements of the security sector to find their feet.

Apart from implementing the key recommendations of the high-level panel to professionalise the state's intelligence services, this emerging structure and its management team need to conceive a strategy to (i) urgently stabilise and reform SAPS (in particular, its leadership failures and compromised crime intelligence), (ii) stabilise the criminal justice system, (iii) upskill Home Affairs to undertake its national security mandate properly, and (iv) allow Defence the ability to 'protect and defend' with confidence. Appropriate resources must be allocated in all cases for effective and efficient performance. To this task list, we can add the need to clarify the future of South Africa's collapsing defence industry – and an assessment of the resource-heavy Border Management Authority.

In this context, the reform team could do well to consider new tools for governing security, including the notion of 'anticipatory governance'.³⁷ AG is addressed explicitly in national security policy analyses. AG is envisioned as governance that can manage crises *ex-ante* ("before the event") to prevent destabilising effects. This perspective focuses on the adaptive capacity of national planning systems. The future is conceived of as containing reducible risks, which can be acted upon and

³⁷ Building anticipatory governance in SADC: Post Covid-19 conflict and defence outlook, SAIIA Occasional Paper 323. Johannesburg: South African Institute of International Affairs, 2021

mitigated through improved planning processes in the present. This approach deals with "plausible futures, enhanced preparedness, and navigating uncertainty". AG uses innovative analysis tools such as strategic foresight and scenarios to identify the landscape of change.

Security sector reform is tantamount to working with 'complex priorities': combinations of complex challenges that are urgent, thematically related, interactive and resistant to treatment in isolation. Complex priorities form systems that must be managed concurrently. Short-range goals must be examined against long-term objectives. Complex priorities cannot be dealt with utilizing linear approaches based on individual elements of government. No single agency possesses the authority or the expertise needed to manage them. Complex priorities require an integrated approach to the formulation and execution of policy.

Finally!

For South Africa to recover and play a meaningful role in improving the lives of its people at home, those on the continent, and those in the global South, it must have a properly constructed national security edifice and mutually interlocking strategies that promote the national interest, national development, and our role in Africa, and globally.