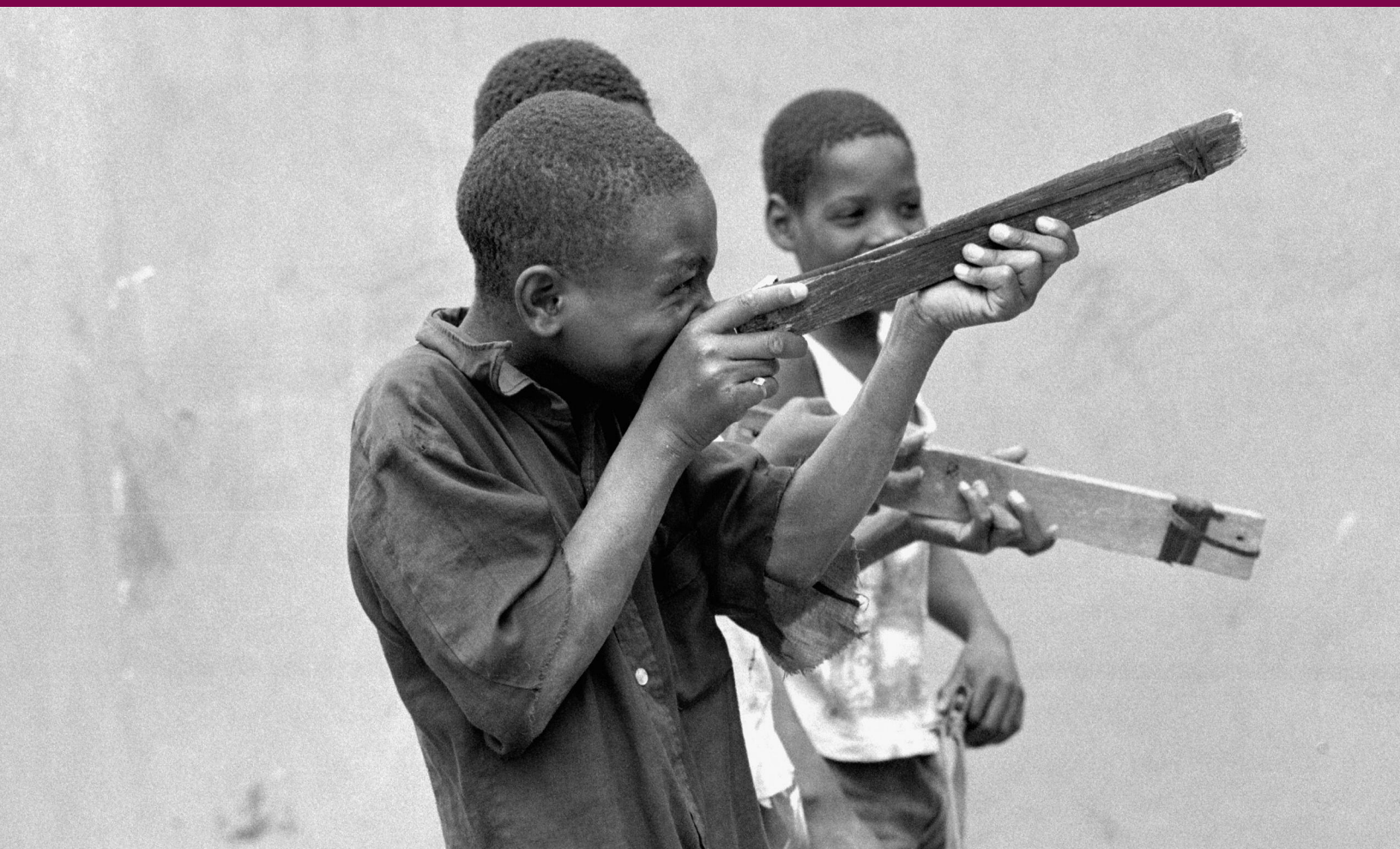


Southern Africa: Threats and Capabilities

Africa Program Working Paper Series

Gavin Cawthra

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Cover Photo: Boys playing with toy guns in a suburb of Maputo, Mozambique, October 28, 1994.
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Foreword

IPI is pleased to introduce a new series of working papers on regional capacities to respond to security challenges in Africa. The broad range of United Nations, African Union, and subregional peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peacebuilding initiatives in Africa underscore a new sense of multilayered partnership in the search for the peaceful resolution of conflicts in Africa. As the total number of conflicts on the continent has been significantly reduced in the past decade, there is widespread recognition of the opportunities for a more stable and peaceful future for Africa. But there is also a profound awareness of the fragility of recent peace agreements, whether in Kenya, Liberia, or Côte d'Ivoire. Furthermore, continued violence in the Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Zimbabwe; the long absence of a viable central government in Somalia; and continued tensions between Ethiopia and Eritrea—to name only a few cases—reflect the legacy of unresolved historic disputes and ongoing power struggles.

The United Nations Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) has selected Burundi and Sierra Leone for its first efforts, and will shortly be addressing the security challenges facing Guinea-Bissau which has become a major transit point for narcotics traffic between South America and Europe. Yet, the impact of the PBC on promoting good governance and facilitating economic growth remains to be determined. In sum, progress toward sustainable peace and meaningful economic development in Africa remains checkered and uncertain.

On April 11-12, 2008, IPI and the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Centre co-hosted a meeting of African civil society representatives and academics in Accra, Ghana, to consider “Security Challenges in Africa: Regional Capacities to Respond”; and on June 1-3, 2008, IPI held a seminar in cooperation with the Austrian Ministry of Defense and the Austrian Ministry of European and International Affairs entitled “Coping with Crisis in Africa: Strengthening Multilateral Capacity for Peace and Security.” Each meeting sought to identify the most important trends facing the continent and to propose effective and far-reaching strategic approaches to meet the new challenges facing Africa in the twenty-first century. Five key points emerged from these discussions:

- 1) Multiple global challenges in a rapidly changing world confront Africa. No part of the globe suffers more from global warming; no population is more at risk from rising food and energy prices; and Africans are severely affected by the inequities of the current international trading system. At the same time, Africans must face the consequences of misgovernance, corruption, interstate and intrastate conflicts of the post-Cold War era, and the urgent need to repair or replace failed or failing states.
- 2) Which Africa—2008, 2020, or 2050? While addressing the crises of today, there is an urgent need to look into the future. By 2050 there will be an estimated 1.9 billion people on the continent. The pace of international change is accelerating, but the development of institutional capacities in the African Union and African subregional organizations to respond to new challenges remains challenging and slow. How can the strengthening of these capacities be accelerated? How can comparative advantages among international, continental, and subregional organizations be identified and strengthened?
- 3) Whose Responsibility? Negotiating the proper balance between the responsibility of the state and the responsibility of the international community in the face of intrastate ethnic violence remains a topic of vigorous discussion. Yet, it is now widely accepted, in the aftermath of the tragedies of the 1990s, that the international community cannot simply stand aside in the face of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity. The AU Constitutive Act of 2000 established the right of intervention by the Union to stop genocide, war crimes, or crimes against humanity occurring in one of its member states. And

in September 2005, a summit of world leaders endorsed the concept of the Responsibility to Protect (RtoP). But RtoP is not primarily about military intervention. The idea of “sovereignty as responsibility” puts the stress on building the capacity of states to prevent these crimes and violations in the first place. All states need to be responsible for the safety and wellbeing of their populations, but if they manifestly fail to do so, the broader international community must act. The ongoing violence in Darfur and the difficulties in the deployment of UNAMID (African Union/United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur) reflect how difficult the transformation of words into deeds remains. What more needs to be done to give the African Union, the regional economic communities, and African states the capacity to implement these commitments? And what can international actors do to assist them in this regard?

- 4) **New Actors, Old Conflicts: Key European states, the European Union, and the United States have evinced new interest in strengthening African conflict management capacities. At the same time, China and India, the new actors on the continent, are making major investments in African infrastructure and economic development. While cognizant of African perceptions, arising from Europe’s colonial past in Africa, there is an opportunity to forge new partnerships based on contemporary realities. To what extent can these divergent interests be harmonized? To what extent can historic suspicion and distrust be replaced by cooperative agendas based on a common interest in ending old conflicts and producing sustainable economic agendas?**
- 5) **Peacekeeping is Not Enough—Creating the Bridge to Peacebuilding: Deployment of UN and African Union peacekeepers to address ongoing conflicts is important but insufficient to meet the challenges ahead. Nor is governmental and international institutional engagement sufficient. The agenda for postconflict reconstruction will be long and arduous. Incentives and encouragement—material and moral—should be created for the involvement of African civil society, international nongovernmental organizations, and the African diaspora in the future of the continent. This will require new openness on the part of the African Union, regional economic communities, and African governments, as well as on the part of outside actors.**

Many if not all of the most critical challenges to human and international security today have particular relevance to the African continent. Africa’s future will be directly affected by the ongoing international debates over climate change and food insecurity; over how to respond to increased population pressures and the demands of international migration; and over the global impact of the health pandemics that have taken an enormous economic as well as human toll on the continent.

These papers form a part of the IPI Africa Program’s four year initiative of research and policy facilitation intended to generate fresh thinking about the multiple challenges facing the African continent in the coming years and decades. Each of the five papers in this series seeks to address one or more aspects of the issues outlined above from the perspective of challenges facing one particular region: North Africa, Southern Africa, Central Africa, Eastern Africa, and West Africa. Yet as the series illustrates, there are many commonalities among the crises and challenges in each region. It is my hope that as you read this paper, and the others in the series, you will give thoughtful consideration to how all of us can best contribute to strengthening African continental and regional capacities in the interest of Africa itself and its many friends around the globe.



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Introduction

The southern African region is now generally defined in political terms as those countries that are members of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) (the geographic definition is usually somewhat more limited). Currently there are fifteen member states of the SADC: Angola, Botswana, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, the Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

These countries are disparate in many ways: they vary greatly in size, population, and levels of economic growth, and include some of the poorest countries in the world, but also some of the richest in Africa. Six of them are landlocked; two of them are Indian Ocean islands. They share a common history of colonization—variously involving French, British, Belgian, and German imperial powers—and this continues to impact significantly on the nature of governance and politics in the region. Many, but not all, of the countries of the region experienced periods of European settler colonialism, resulting in armed liberation struggles for independence. Several of them also endured apartheid or various forms of racial segregation and oppression as a result of that history of settler colonialism.

Conflict and war has marked the region considerably, particularly conflicts over apartheid and colonialism, which engulfed most of southern Africa and led to millions of deaths. Angola and Mozambique suffered further from post-independence civil wars, fueled in part by South Africa and Rhodesia. After a bloody civil war following the collapse of Mobutu Sese-Seko's authoritarian regime in the DRC in the second half of the 1990s, however, the region is, for the first time in forty years, almost completely at peace, except for residual conflicts in the east of the DRC. Nevertheless, there remain profound threats to human and state security, many of them fueled by poverty, marginalization, and the weakness of states.



Map of Southern Africa

South Africa dominates the region—its economy is bigger than that of all other SADC members combined—and many, but not all, of the countries in the region have historical ties to South Africa through migrant labor for its mines and industries. There are also some ethnic kinships as a result of the spread of peoples through war and conquest over the centuries.

A quarter of a century or so ago, all the countries in the region, with the notable exceptions of Botswana and Mauritius, were under various forms of authoritarian, apartheid, or one-party rule. Now, excepting Swaziland, which is a monarchy, all are at least nominally multiparty parliamentary democracies. Democratization has thus been the most noticeable political trend in the post-apartheid, post-Cold War era. However, democracy has not necessarily brought stability and development, and is fragile in many countries. Progress has been uneven and in some cases countries appear to be trapped in a particular phase of democratic transition, or even facing democratic reversals. The collapse of authoritarianism has also in some cases—most noticeably in the DRC—led to extremely violent conflict and the unleashing of ethnic conflict and warlordism. Indeed, between three and seven million people were killed in the DRC wars.

Cooperation in the region has been driven by two main factors: economics and conflict. In the 1970s, the Front Lines States organization, a loose political alliance, was established to combat the minority-ruled states. After Zimbabwe's independence in 1980, the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC) was established, mainly to provide economic self-sufficiency. With South Africa's emergence as a democracy in the mid-1990s, the organization became the Southern African Development Community (SADC), with the aim of promoting economic integration. The SADC also has a political and security agenda, and a number of security cooperation arrangements have been put in place. These include a mutual defense and nonaggression pact; a wide-ranging treaty of security cooperation; and, most recently, a combined SADC standby brigade for peace support operations. This provides a framework for dealing cooperatively with the complex threats facing the region.

Major Human and International Security Threats in the Region

A vast range of often interconnected issues can be identified as causes of insecurity or factors that contribute to insecurity in the region, and it is difficult to do them all justice here. What follows is therefore necessarily schematic and selective.¹

POVERTY, INEQUALITY, AND MARGINALIZATION

Overwhelming poverty, marginalization, and inequality within and between states, exacerbated in many cases by globalization, remains the bedrock of human insecurity in southern Africa, as elsewhere in Africa. Most southern African states are characterized by massive (and often increasing) poverty and inequality. Most are indebted and dependent on aid, trade, and investment flows from developed countries, resulting in a lack of "horizontal integration," "debt traps," and dependence. While rates of economic growth have increased in many countries in recent years, this has been accompanied by deepening inequality. If

the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Human Development Index (HDI) can be taken as a measure of human security, then southern Africans suffer deeply from human insecurity. HDI indexes also tend to lag behind GDP indicators, reflecting that even where wealth exists, such as in South Africa, it has not been translated into human development. Despite general increases in per capita incomes, 70 percent of the region's population lives on less than \$2 per day and 40 percent lives on less than \$1 per day.

Unemployment in most African countries is exceptionally high, even in the most developed economies such as South Africa (where it is over 20 percent according to government statistics), and most economies are dominated by the informal sector and by subsistence agriculture. This situation, compounded by low levels of education and literacy, makes for limited life chances.

Human development challenges have been exacerbated by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, which is worse in southern Africa than anywhere else. The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) calculated in 2006 that there were nearly 14.8 million people in SADC countries with HIV, an overall prevalence rate of 15.4 percent (ranging from 0.5 percent in Madagascar to 33.4 percent in Swaziland), and that over a million people died of AIDS in 2005—around 3,000 per day.² While there is little evidence that the pandemic is leading to state collapse, it clearly puts additional pressures on states to meet the human security needs of citizens, particularly on its ability to deliver at a local level.

GOVERNANCE ISSUES

Apart from poverty and underdevelopment, weaknesses and failures of governance probably constitute the single most important threat to the security of both citizens and states. As discussed above, while the vast majority of African states have embarked on democratic transitions, these efforts have not necessarily culminated in consolidated democracies, or for that matter improvements in human security, at least when it comes to "freedom from want." In the SADC region, HDI indicators have declined overall since 1990 despite (or perhaps because of) democratization.³ Traditions of one-

1 Gavin Cawthra, "Key Challenges for Southern African Development Community Cooperation," in *Proceedings of the 2006 FOPRISA Annual Conference*, edited by Jonathan Mayuyka Kaunda (Gaborone: Botswana Institute for Development Policy Analysis, 2007).

2 UNAIDS, *Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic 2006*, UN Doc.UNAIDS/06.20E, May 2006, available at www.unaids.org.

party governance and authoritarianism run deep; old patterns of behavior, where the party is supreme are profoundly entrenched. This is exacerbated in countries where former liberation movements or former ruling parties under one-party constitutions continue to hold power. This makes democratic transitions difficult, in Zimbabwe, for example, where the former liberation movement has arrogated to itself a “right to rule” and a liberation elite has become embedded in the state, and thus resists change. There are additional problems of governance where former liberation movements are electorally dominant to the extent that it is difficult to envisage any other party coming to power in the medium term—for example, in Namibia or South Africa. While the liberation tradition provides a nation-building “glue,” it also encourages nepotism and corruption as checks and balances are weak.

Executive and, particularly, parliamentary oversight often remain weak in practice. In part this is caused by a lack of expertise and confidence within national parliaments and in part by historical legacies; and while most governments formally adhere to accepted norms of good governance, in practice this is often not the case. Corruption, nepotism, informality, and presidentialism remain rife, especially in countries such as the DRC and Angola, where elites continue to rule in nontransparent ways. This extends to the security sector, and the actual practice of security sector governance often remains opaque and personalized. Related to this, there is in many countries a lack of military and security professionalism, with soldiers and other security personnel violating human rights; carrying out abuses in support of particular political causes or self-interest; and extracting resources for their own survival or self-enrichment.

Transitions from war to peace, from authoritarianism or one-party rule to democracy, from a socialist to a capitalist orientation, have proved extremely difficult and in some cases have been associated with new forms of conflict. Until recently, violent internecine and fratricidal conflicts have continued to plague the region. While these conflicts have ended, with the important exception of the eastern DRC, disarmament, demobilization,

and reintegration (DDR) has proved challenging and is often incomplete. While not a cause of conflict per se, the continued proliferation of small arms and light weapons certainly makes it easier for conflicts to escalate should they begin.

Although successful military coups have been very few in recent years, the military continues to threaten democratic rule through attempted coups and by exerting hidden forms of political influence and interference. The Security Sector Reform (SSR) agenda has been taken on board by many southern African countries, but application and results have been mixed. The challenges of consolidating democratic political control over the military in Africa thus remain.

CRIME, TERROR, RESOURCE SCARCITY, AND OTHER ISSUES

Whereas it is debatable whether environmental issues on their own constitute security challenges, they can certainly create security problems. Water is a particular source of conflict in the SADC region—especially in dry countries such as Namibia, Botswana, and South Africa. Land is also a major source of conflict. In southern Africa, much of the conflict revolves around efforts by postliberation governments to restore land taken by settler colonialists to the indigenous population and to redistribute land in the interests of agrarian reform. These conflicts have been particularly acute in Zimbabwe, but may also arise in South Africa and Namibia. Climate change is likely to exacerbate environmental threats to security considerably; there is strong evidence that floods and droughts over large parts of southern Africa are likely to intensify as global warming impacts on the region. This will put considerable pressure on communities and governments.

Food security is a particularly tough challenge. Production of cereals in the region has stagnated over the last fifteen years, while the population of the region has increased by 40 percent, putting huge pressure on food supplies. The number of undernourished people is increasing; per capita energy and protein intake is well below recommended levels; and imports of food and food aid have doubled over the last fifteen years.⁴

3 Gavin Cawthra, Khabele Matlosa, and Antoni van Nieuwkerk, “Conclusion,” in *Security and Democracy in Southern Africa*, edited by Gavin Cawthra, Andre du Pisani, and Abillah Omari (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 2007), pp.233-249.

4 Centre for Conflict Resolution, “Southern Africa: Building an Effective Security and Governance Architecture for the 21st Century,” (Cape Town, 2007), p.27.

A number of security challenges may be identified within the broad theme of population and demography. Whereas the HIV/AIDS pandemic is slowing population growth, it is not doing so in a benign way—it affects in large part the most productive sectors of the populace, devastating family and household structures. As noted above, this has a negative impact on the delivery of services such as health and education. It is often assumed that it also unduly affects the security capacities of the state, particularly with regard to the militaries, as they are regarded as having higher rates of HIV/AIDS infection than other sectors of society, although new research suggests that this might not be the case.⁵

Rapid population growth has been accompanied by even more rapid urbanization, resulting in a huge underclass of mostly unemployed urban or semi-urban residents, many of whom are youths. This creates political tensions and potential instability; in Zimbabwe, for example, the youth are often seen by the generation who fought for liberation as a potential threat to the unity of the country.

Gender and ethnicity remain larger fault lines, however. It would be difficult to see gender as a cause of interstate conflict, but the marginalization and oppression of women is certainly a major factor in human insecurity, including domestic violence, sexual exploitation, and exploitation of women in the work and home environments.

Crime of various types has escalated in southern African countries in recent decades, partly propelled by urbanization, globalization, and the breakdown of community and family structures. This has been exacerbated by the collapse of authoritarian regimes, and the emergence of liberal market economies; local and international criminals have exploited the concomitant removal of social controls and the increase in cross-border movements. Migration and social change have also contributed to the proliferation of international criminal syndicates. Crime is now perceived as an immediate and pervasive security threat throughout the region, and manifests itself in a wide range of activities including smuggling; car hijacking and theft; armed robbery; narcotics;

counterfeiting; human trafficking; and so on. Much of this is carried out by criminal syndicates that operate across borders and in many cases with international links, particularly to Italian, Russian, and Chinese criminal organizations.⁶

Border issues also affect security. Many southern African countries have borders that are artificial and porous. In most cases the borders, which were drawn by the colonial powers, cut across ethno-linguistic identities. Most borders are not effectively monitored and controlled, and, coupled with the conflict-drivers listed above, this has resulted in extensive cross-border crime, as well as the flow of refugees across borders: for example, there are tens of thousands of Rwandan and DRC refugees in Tanzania, while South Africa hosts three million illegal Zimbabweans, with two to three thousand attempting to cross the border every night.⁷

Although often neglected—as all eyes in Africa tend to be on the mainland—littoral and island states face a range of maritime security issues. These include smuggling, illegal exploitation of fishing stocks, and environmental degradation, including global warming, which could affect sea levels.

Finally, terrorism and the US-driven war on terror pose new challenges. Although relatively low on the list of threats of most southern African countries—because of the enormity of the development and governance challenges—there is evidence that international terrorist networks are spreading, while a number of terrorist attacks have been carried out over the past fifteen years in South Africa and Tanzania. The US response, the war on terror, has created different challenges that have placed southern African states under enormous pressure to divert scarce resources into this campaign, and to enact often complex and costly measures to combat money-laundering and other international threats, which in some cases has provoked domestic political opposition, for example in Mauritius and South Africa.

FLASHPOINTS AND RISKS

As can be seen from the above discussion, the threats to security in Africa and the SADC are not

⁵ SouthScan, May 18, 2007, available at www.southscan.net.

⁶ Joao Paulo Borges Coelho, “Public Safety Dimensions of Security Cooperation in the Southern African Development Community,” in *Proceedings of the 2006 FOPRISA Annual Conference*, pp.85-105.

⁷ SouthScan, July 13, 2007, available at www.southscan.net.

primarily military (and certainly do not involve threats of external aggression), but revolve mainly around poverty and underdevelopment, governance and crime. Many of these issues are interlinked and any of them (or any combination of them) can provide a potential flashpoint which could lead to an escalation of conflict. Poverty and marginalization, for example, underpin periodic riots and violent protests that sweep urban areas and are also a breeding ground for crime; governance failures precipitated the civil war in the DRC and may precipitate conflict in Zimbabwe; crime is a major driver of insecurity and instability in the region, including wealthier countries such as South Africa and Mauritius.

Southern Africa does not appear to be unique in this regard; the drivers of insecurity are similar in other parts of Africa, although there may be local variations.⁸ Furthermore, many of the security threats are global in nature: terrorism, crime, and environmental degradation do not respect borders and are international phenomena.

There are considerable variations in the region. South Africa, Botswana, Mauritius, and Namibia are classified as middle-income countries, although wealth is unevenly distributed. Other countries in the region (notably Mozambique, the DRC, Madagascar, and Malawi) are among the poorest on earth. However, even within the wealthier countries (with the possible exception of Mauritius), poverty remains a major threat because of inequalities that are among the most severe in the world (South Africa in particular regularly comes at the top or near the top of the Gini coefficient measure of inequality).⁹

Effective democratic governance—the most sustained in Africa—has been established in Mauritius and Botswana since independence in the 1960s (although there remain “democratic deficits” in both countries). The DRC is perilously close to being a failed state and the writ of government remains largely ineffectual, with most of the country being, in effect, ungoverned. Zimbabwe, once the second-most important economy in the region after South Africa (it is now somewhere near the bottom) and an exemplar of effective governance in Africa, has suffered a perilous

decline, which is largely the result of policy and governance failures. While it manages to remain functional as a state, its economic collapse puts immense pressure on social cohesion and governance. Angola is still struggling to recover from the legacy of over thirty years of war and its democracy remains fragile. Similarly, democratic consolidation in Malawi, Zambia, Mozambique, and other countries undergoing transitions remains fragile.

Capacity for Preventing and Managing Security Challenges

A wide range of actors within the region have shouldered the burden of dealing with threats to security. The focus of this section will be on multilateral institutions, but attention will first be paid to the states that play key roles in conflict prevention, management, and resolution (of course, as well as in contributing to conflict); and the active community of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) dealing with peace and security issues, especially in South Africa.

STATES

South Africa, as the regional hegemon, has a critical role to play: it is able to project military power, it dominates the region economically, and following its remarkably peaceful transition to democracy, it has a wealth of experience in conflict resolution and democratic transition to draw on. However, it is hampered in its ability to act in the region by two main factors. First, its past: during the apartheid era, South Africa was at war with Angola, sought to destabilize its neighbors, and illegally occupied Namibia. The original SADC was set up specifically to counter South African hegemony, and even though South Africa has joined the new SADC and sought to pursue peaceful relations with its neighbors, fears of South African domination remain widespread in the region. This has not been helped by some inept and heavy-handed South African interventions, notably in Lesotho in 1997. Second, South Africa remains in the thrall of its own internal transformations. Its military, for

8 Kwesi Aning, “Africa: Confronting Complex Threats,” Coping with Crisis working paper series (New York: International Peace Academy, February 2007).

9 UNDP, *Human Development Report 2007/2008*. Gini Coefficient data available at <http://hdrstats.undp.org/indicators/147.html>.

instance, initially found it impossible to deploy on peace operations, given its preoccupation with transformation, including the need to integrate eight different armed formations (many of whom were historical adversaries), while its diplomatic corps had been isolated from Africa for many years and also faced challenges of transformation.

South Africa's attempts to export its domestic conflict resolution model, based on compromise, have also proved problematic, notably in Angola and at times in the DRC, where military options were instead pursued by its neighbors and eventually proved successful. Nevertheless, South Africa's diplomacy—backed by a willingness to deploy military and economic resources—has eventually prevailed in the DRC and elsewhere.

Other countries in the region have also gained expertise and a track record in conflict resolution. Mozambique and Zambia, for example, have both played leading roles in attempting, sometimes successfully, to broker peace agreements in neighboring countries. On the other hand, countries such as Zimbabwe, Angola, and Namibia have been willing and able to deploy military force to bring conflicts to an end by forcing a military victory (albeit it partial), notably in the DRC.

NONGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

The influence and impact of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) on peace and conflict is minor, but some South Africa-based NGOs have nevertheless at times played facilitating or capacity-building roles in addressing threats and conflicts. The awkwardly-named African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) specializes in conflict resolution and has played a role *inter alia* in Burundi; the Centre for Conflict Resolution (CCR) likewise has intervened in the Great Lakes conflict; the Institute for Security Studies (ISS), while not directly engaging in conflict resolution, has produced a vast amount of research into peace and conflict issues; and the Southern African Defence and Security Management Network (SADSEM) has trained over 3,000 military and police officers and senior government officials in security sector governance.

THE UNITED NATIONS

As well as carrying out preventive diplomacy and conflict resolution (although these tasks have often been devolved to the African Union or SADC) the

United Nations (UN) has been responsible for a number of major peace support operations in southern Africa. The mission in the DRC from 1960-1964 was archetypal (even if the Congo was not yet the DRC and it was not yet officially in southern Africa, and even if the mission ended in disaster). The UN again went into the DRC through the establishment of the UN Mission in the Congo (MONUC) in November 1999, which involved the eventual deployment of nearly 18,000 peacekeepers (the biggest UN deployment ever) and a complex set of tasks including DDR, using force to protect civilians, and cajoling the country to elections. It is notable, however, that the Lusaka Agreement that led to the deployment of the UN was brokered by SADC, while it was South Africa with the Sun City accords that really made the diplomatic breakthrough.

The UN was also a critical factor in the successful transitions to peace and democracy in Namibia (1989-1990) and Mozambique (1992-1994). In both cases, internationally negotiated agreements (largely outside of the UN auspices) resulted in the need to deploy multinational forces to fulfill a complex set of tasks, including repatriation of refugees, DDR, transitional administration, and elections. These operations were both successful.

The same cannot be said of the UN involvement in the Angola civil war, through four missions between 1992 and 1999 (UNAVEM I-IV), each of which culminated in different degrees of failure, largely due to a lack of will and an inability to deploy sufficient resources. The conflict was eventually resolved by a military and political victory for the ruling party.

While the UN's track record in the region is thus mixed, it remains an important actor, and it will be argued in this paper that no matter how effective AU or SADC capacities become, the UN will need to remain "seized of the matter," to use Security Council parlance, that is southern Africa.

THE AFRICAN UNION

The African Union (AU) has, largely through its Peace and Security Council (PSC), put in place a wide-ranging set of capabilities to deal with conflict prevention, resolution, and termination, as well as postconflict peacebuilding. In many ways, it seeks to replicate the UN at a regional level, and has further taken the step of authorizing intervention

(including of the military variety) in extreme circumstances of threats to state or human security.

The AU has played an important role attempting to resolve southern African conflicts, although it is important to note that in most cases it has simply provided an umbrella, or played an authorizing role, in the intervention of SADC or SADC member states. It has also acted under the authority of the UN to attempt secure peace agreements: in the cases of UN intervention listed above it was often the AU that played a brokering role. For example, in Burundi, after negotiations involving several actors, the AU established a framework for deploying a peace mission, the African Mission in Burundi (AMIB) in 2003. This was led by South Africa, ostensibly with involvement from Ethiopia and Mozambique, but eventually resulted in its replacement in 2004 by a UN mission, in which South Africa continued to participate.¹⁰

THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY

The objectives of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), as defined in its founding 1992 treaty, are not only economic, including as they do the promotion of common political values, systems, and institutions, and the promotion and defense of peace and security. SADC is legally able to take on such security functions by virtue of its recognition as a regional economic community (REC) by the AU: in effect, the AU devolves functions under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter to the RECs. However, enforcement actions, possible in international law under Chapter VII of the Charter, should be carried out only with the approval, not merely of the AU, but also of the UN Security Council.

An important characteristic of SADC's approach to security is that it is an interstate organization premised on the notion of "sovereign equality" of states as well as "non-interference in internal affairs." It is hardly surprising therefore that SADC focuses on state security rather than human security. However, there is a tension in the Treaty (as in the UN Charter) between the assertion of sovereignty and the provision for promoting human rights—how this is supposed to be done without dealing with sovereign states' internal

affairs is unclear, as will be explored later.

A variety of different forms of security cooperation at the interstate level may be identified and SADC has taken them all on, to greater or lesser degrees. These include common or collaborative security, where states agree to peaceful cooperation to enhance mutual security; collective security, where states agree not merely to peaceful cooperation but also to the possible use of force in terms of the UN Charter, mostly through peace support operations; and collective self-defense, which entails mutual defense pacts for protection against external aggression.

The principal instrument for dealing with security challenges is the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation (OPDSC). Although it was mandated by the 1996 SADC Summit, the OPDSC in practice only became operational with the signing of the governing Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation in August 2001, the implementation of which is the principal responsibility of the Organ. The functioning of the Organ is in turn defined by the Strategic Indicative Plan for the Organ (SIPO), which sets out a detailed program of activities against key political, defense, public security (policing), and state security objectives.¹¹

The Organ operates at the level of heads of state, through a troika, which reports to the SADC summit. In practice, a ministerial committee, which in turn reports to the troika, makes the key decisions. The committee consists of ministers responsible for defense, policing, and intelligence from all fifteen SADC states. Operationally, work is carried out through two committees of senior officials, the Interstate Politics and Diplomacy Committee (ISPDC) and the Interstate Defence and Security Committee (ISDSC).

The Protocol, and hence the Organ, deal with a comprehensive range of security cooperation based on principles of common and collective security as well as mutual defense. It also serves as a framework for implementing the SADC Brigade (SADCBRIG), the operational arm in southern Africa of the AU's Peace and Security Council. SADCBRIG has a wide range of security responsibilities, especially for future peace support

10 Centre for Conflict Resolution, "The United Nations and Africa: Peace, Development and Human Security," (Cape Town, 2006), pp. 23-25.

11 SADC, *Strategic Indicative Plan for the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation*, (Gaborone: Southern African Development Community, 2004).

operations, including rapid deployment and eventually participation in multifunctional peace support operations, including policing and civilian postconflict peacebuilding activities. It is structured around a small headquarters and planning element at SADC headquarters in Gaborone, supported by an Early Warning System, and with military and other units based in member states but earmarked for deployment in the brigade.

The Protocol empowers the Organ to deal both with interstate conflict and “significant” intrastate conflicts, such as civil wars, military coups, gross human rights violations, ethnic cleansing, and large-scale communal violence. The “right to intervene” is in line with recent international thinking on the “responsibility to protect” the citizens of states in extreme circumstances even if states claim sovereignty, and with similar provisions of the AU. It will not be easy to implement, however, since criteria for intervention, the decision-making around it, and the nature of the forces to be deployed will continue to be vexed issues.

A further framework determining the nature of the OPDSC is the Mutual Defence Pact, signed in August 2003. This commits member states to developing both individual and collective defense capabilities; to cooperate on defense training, research and intelligence; and provides for collective action in the event of an armed attack on a SADC state. However, as it does not specify what form this action might take, the OPDSC stops short of requiring automatic collective military action.¹²

That the Pact is also, in effect, a nonaggression treaty is often overlooked. Signatories are committed “not to nurture, harbor or support” individuals or groups “whose aim is to destabilize the political, military, territorial and economic or social security of a State Party or overthrow the legitimate government.”¹³ While this is of course a confidence building measure, it could be argued that the wide sweep of the clause may potentially be used against legitimate opposition groups.

It is too early to tell how exactly the Protocol and the Mutual Defence Pact will be applied in practice—for example, what the “threshold” for intervention might be; how “complex emergencies”

might be dealt with; and how the relationship between SADCBRIG, the AU’s Peace and Security Council, and the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) in New York might be managed in operational terms. Previous interventions carried out in the name of SADC, such as those in the DRC and Lesotho in 1997, took place before the legal instruments were in place, and SADC did not respond to claims by the DRC in 2005 that it was the target of aggression from Rwanda.

ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND CAPACITIES

It is clear from the above analysis that a wide range of actors—NGOs, states, regional structures, and international organizations—are involved in dealing with threats and conflicts in southern Africa. All of them enjoy some sort of formal or informal mandate to do so, and in many cases, it is the informal processes that prevail.

There remain, however, serious challenges with regard to the coordination of these various activities, and major gaps in capacity. NGOs are largely South Africa-based and have only a minor positive influence. South Africa’s role is both problematic and contested: it could play a much more influential role, bringing to bear its economic, military, and diplomatic powers in concert, were it not so engrossed with internal transformation issues and crippled by its past (on the other hand, it could move from being a benign hegemon to an oppressive one given free rein).

The UN has played an important role in conflict resolution in the region, although it has not always been successful (in Angola in particular it is regarded with disdain). Even if only for purely formalistic reasons—such as international law—the UN will need to remain engaged in the region. However, there are also important issues related to capacity that will require its continued participation.

The AU has also been an important actor, although as SADC has become more effective, much of its work has been devolved to the subregional organization. It remains, however, an important provider of legitimacy, experience, and expertise.

12 SADC, *Mutual Defence Pact* (Gaborone: Southern African Development Community, 2003), Article 6.

13 *Ibid.*, Article 8.

Ultimately, SADC is quite a weak organization. It has put in place an admirable set of treaties, protocols, and arrangements to deal with stability and security in the region, which are wide-ranging and probably constitute best practice internationally. The challenge is to implement these, and this requires both political will and resources.

Scenarios and Prognosis

A number of scenario-building exercises have been carried out in recent years in southern Africa. Most of them have concerned South Africa. There is one exception: in 2004 the South Africa-based NGO, the Institute for Global Dialogue, published a scenario exercise, “Southern Africa 2020: Five Scenarios,” which specifically focused on the SADC region, and was based on the scenario-modeling approach of Peter Schwartz.¹⁴ This developed, as its name suggests, five scenarios: “Danger! Ngozi! Kotsi!,” which envisaged a region plunged into multifaceted violent conflict; “Market Madness,” in which the region was driven by globalization and “unbridled private sector economic activity” which subordinated states to a minor role; “Regional Renaissance” driven by visionary leadership; “The Slow Slide” in which sociopolitical decay prevailed while ruling groups concentrated on advancing their own interests; and finally “Poor but Proud” in which a survival-based approach leads to a region that remains poor but relatively peaceful and stable, with ineffective states and an emphasis on informal economies.

This paper posits four scenarios: a worst case, a middle case tending toward decline, a middle case tending toward improvement, and a best case. It then looks at the likely outcomes of each over the middle to long term.

WORST CASE: CATASTROPHE

In this scenario, the drivers of conflict identified earlier in this paper feed off each other in a vicious spiral to create a catastrophic collapse of states and society in the region. Poverty is exacerbated by globalization, and the marginalization of ethnic and social groups provides a potent cocktail for conflict and violence. Elections in several states lead to contested results which engender violent conflict;

often this leads to further violence as political parties tend to have ethnic bases. In key states, such as Zimbabwe, Angola, and the DRC, government loses its grip and elites concentrate on their own selfish interests while communal social forces are let loose. In these desperate circumstances, the militaries in a number of countries seize power through coups, promising to bring stability but in the long run only making things worse. In South Africa, the economy slumps while the political and economic elite ignore the warning signs of growing social instability and internecine violence in marginalized communities.

Eventually these anomic forces converge in a spiral of violence and disintegration. Conflicts in one country spread across borders to others, leading to interstate conflicts on the principle that “the friend of my enemy is my enemy.” The international community, having lost patience with, and interest in, Africa, stands aside, preferring to draw a ring around the problem rather than intervene. The regional organization, SADC, having long lost its way through being unable to mediate the conflicting interests of states, disintegrates. Eventually even the strongest state in the region, South Africa, reverts to the situation that threatened it in the 1980s: civil war and state collapse.

MIDDLE CASE SCENARIOS

Status Quo Tending Toward Decline

This envisages a continuation of current trends, although with a tendency toward greater authoritarianism or the entrenchment of one-party dominance, corruption, contested electoral processes, and less transparent forms of governance. Limited economic growth is accompanied by growing inequality and marginalization. Some states in the region (perhaps Angola and the DRC, for example) continue to strengthen and consolidate, while others (notably Zimbabwe) continue to weaken and unravel. Most carry on with “business as usual.” Periodic crises of governance are not sufficient to threaten the survival of most states, although waves of instability sweep the region, and some military coups are attempted (although they are not sustained). Food insecurity continues to increase, while global

¹⁴ Institute for Global Dialogue and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, *Southern Africa 2020: Five Scenarios*, (Johannesburg: Institute for Global Dialogue, 2004); Peter Schwartz, *The Art of the Long View: Planning for the Future in an Uncertain World* (New York: Doubleday, 1991).

warming results in more acute and more regular natural disasters, which states find it increasingly difficult to deal with.

SADC continues to exist, and gradually evolves into a free trade area, although this does not lead to much deeper political and security cooperation and the organization remains institutionally weak. As rationalization between the various regional economic communities takes place, some countries (Tanzania, Zambia perhaps) leave SADC. The UN gradually disengages from the region as peace and stability are consolidated in the DRC.

HIV/AIDS continues to be a scourge, hollowing out social and state capacities. In some of the most affected countries (Zimbabwe, Botswana, South Africa, and others), levels of infection peak and begin to decline, while in other states that were previously less affected (Angola, Mauritius, Madagascar), infection rates rise rapidly. Unemployment remains at current levels, as does poverty, although relative deprivation increases and this leads to periodic social unrest in urban areas, which sometimes spills over into violence. The region continues to be marginalized in the global political economy, reliant on commodity exports, and states increasingly cut individual deals with major trading partners, thus preventing any significant evolution of intraregional trade.

Elites continue to enrich themselves and grow increasingly isolated from the masses, leading to an increasing popular cynicism with politics and declining participation in democratic processes. However, none of this is sufficient to ensure that the status quo is upset. States remain basically functional, with one or two exceptions (e.g., in this scenario, collapse in Zimbabwe is likely), although their writs run very shallow, and the masses continue in survival mode.

Status Quo Tending Toward Improvement

This scenario builds upon the improvements in governance in the region in the past several years: SADC has put in place an electoral code of conduct which is generally adhered to; unconstitutional changes of government have been made unacceptable; and in many (although not all) countries, more open and accountable governance has been put in place while civil society organizations have become more active. If this trend continues, one

can expect an overall improvement in governance and, with it, almost certainly an improvement in stability and security. Attached to this is an assumption of continued growth in GDP per capita, gradual improvements in the provision of health services and education provision, and eventually an improvement in poverty-reduction and human security.

SADC will continue to institutionally consolidate and will become more willing as an organization to deal with governance issues, while regional networks of civil society and business organizations will gradually spread. The crisis in Zimbabwe will be partially resolved by a government of national unity and this in turn will have a stabilizing effect on neighboring countries. Nevertheless, overall there will be an incremental, not a dramatic, improvement in governance practices, economic growth, and poverty alleviation—for the most part it will be business as usual.

BEST CASE: RENAISSANCE

In this scenario, positive changes in the global political economy contribute to and reinforce local initiatives to boost good governance and economic growth. This assumes that somehow foreign direct investment will improve, economies in the region will grow at a rate that significantly outstrips population growth (say, an average of 6 percent), political stability will be accompanied by increasing democratic consolidation, and the region will remain stable and peaceful. SADC will become much more institutionalized, with an effective ability to deploy military and civil contingents to deter conflict and violence, and an equally effective diplomatic conflict resolution capability. The international community will remain engaged through a range of poverty-alleviation and peacebuilding activities, accompanied by debt relief and write-offs.

States will be led by a new generation of visionary leaders while the thriving private sector will enter into a wide range of developmental partnerships with state and other actors, based on growing high-tech and beneficiation industries. Intraregional trade will thrive in the tariff-free zone while a common monetary area will emerge. A better-organized civil society will interact creatively with the private sector and government to deliver wider and better social services. This “renaissance” will be

underpinned by the spread of effective primary, secondary, and tertiary education.

PROGNOSIS

It is almost inevitable in exercises of this type that the middle case options appear to be the most likely, if only because scenario building involves the ineluctable projection of current trends. Nevertheless, they remain fairly different in nature, with one tending toward national, regional, and institutional decline and the other tending toward progress.

It is certainly hoped that the worst-case scenario will not occur, and it does appear in southern Africa—at least when it comes to conflict—that the worst is over. The wars associated with the Cold War and apartheid in Angola, Mozambique, and elsewhere appear to have been almost completely resolved, while the conflict in the DRC (associated with a transition from authoritarian rule) appears to have largely been ended, although violence will continue to plague that country for many years to come. With its collapsed economy and collapsing polity, Zimbabwe inevitably sends danger signals, although it notable that so far the crisis has been largely contained within that country. Governance and economies remain weak in many countries, such as Zambia, Malawi, Mozambique, and Lesotho, but given that they have managed the first ten years of their transitions from one-party or authoritarian rule without a general collapse into violent, internecine conflict, the prognosis is cautiously optimistic.

Unfortunately, the best-case scenario appears unlikely, mainly because of external circumstances beyond the control of local governance and security actors, no matter how visionary, integrated, effective, and efficient they become. It is highly unlikely that the current marginalization of southern Africa within the global political economy will change significantly—minor gains might be made in trade negotiations but they will be offset by larger losses as global inequality increases. It is unlikely also that climate change will be reversed, adding to the pressures on sustainable development.

Recommendations

The task of making recommendations is not easy, given the complexity and interrelatedness of

security threats in southern Africa, so this section will focus mainly on the multilateral dimensions of security cooperation and how these might be enhanced.

THE STATES OF THE REGION

First, many interventions need to take place at the level of the state. Democratic consolidation needs to be implemented, or where there is no formal democracy (as in Swaziland), transition needs to occur. All the attributes associated with good or effective governance need to be nurtured and enhanced. These include accountability, transparency, and responsiveness. In the security sector, the raft of issues associated with security sector reform—this sector’s equivalent of the good governance agenda—need to be implemented (such issues include civil control, parliamentary oversight, appropriate and transparent budgeting, security professionalism). States also need to develop their capacities to support the multinational agenda (see below) and to promote partnerships with civil society in conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Simultaneously, governments need to promote human security and human development—indeed, without this, effective governance and democracy are arguably hollow shells (and stability and security cannot be guaranteed).

THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE AFRICAN UNION

As noted earlier, the fact that SADC is developing a comprehensive approach to the prevention and resolution of conflict abrogates the role of neither the UN nor the AU. The UN Security Council remains primarily responsible for dealing with “threats to or breaches of the peace” in the region. In terms of Section VIII of the UN Charter, it is the AU which in the first instance has responsibility for dealing with regional security issues: in practice it has delegated much of this responsibility to the RECs, particularly so in southern Africa and West Africa.

A key issue is the relationship between SADC, the AU, and the UN. This goes beyond the basic issue of political mandate and “subsidiarity.” It also includes issues such as finance and logistics; and command and control of intervention forces. In the first instance, the architecture of the RECs and their relationship to the AU needs to be clarified: it is untenable in the long run that overlapping

memberships result in countries contributing to more than one of the AU's standby brigades.

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SADC faces many challenges with regard to its management of security. As can be seen above, a fairly comprehensive framework to deal with multifaceted threats has been put in place, but in many cases this remains unimplemented. Much depends on the political will of member states to ensure that commitments made on paper lead to concrete action. In the long run, success will also probably depend on the evolution of common values (democracy, the rule of law, respect for sovereignty, etc.). The most effective means of ensuring that common policies and procedures are implemented is to make sure that member states themselves want to see this happen. In this regard, cooperation needs to progress beyond mutual military assistance. Much progress has been made with establishing SADC BRIG for example, but political and social cooperation lags behind, and SADC has sometimes demonstrated a penchant for military interventions rather than longer-term political solutions.

Institution-building is crucial. SADC remains a weak organization, with a very small (and often overwhelmed) secretariat. The Strategic Indicative Plan for the Organ sets out an ambitious scheme for "operationalizing" the objectives of the Organ for Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, but this will require vastly more resources than are currently available, as well as the appointment of

staff and the establishment of organizational structures.

Conclusion

This paper has looked at the security challenges facing the southern African region, taking a wide view and arguing that such threats are not primarily military, but largely political, social, and economic in nature; and while there may be very strong external drivers of insecurity, it is internal dynamics that predominate.

This paper examined the—mostly multilateral—capacities for dealing with such threats. I argued that a comprehensive regional framework has been put in place, but that it has not necessarily been implemented, and even so, the existence of regional security mechanisms does not imply that the AU and the UN have been relieved of their responsibilities.

Examining the four potential scenarios described above, I argued that the future is most appropriately seen through the lens of the status quo, although better or worse outcomes may result. This will depend upon how priorities are drawn and implemented, especially with regard to the need to

- (1) develop state capacities for effective governance;
- (2) enhance the institutional capacity of SADC; and
- (3) improve the relationship between SADC, the AU, and the UN.

Further Reading

Cawthra, Gavin, Andre du Pisani, and Abillah Omari, eds. *Security and Democracy in Southern Africa*. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 2007.

The product of a collaborative research project carried out in seven southern African countries by local researchers, this book explores the complex relationship between security and democratization in the southern African region.

Centre for Conflict Resolution. *Southern Africa: Building an Effective Security and Governance Architecture for the 21st Century*. Cape Town, 2007.

A useful report on a conference of the same title, which involved a wide range of southern African and international participants. The report aimed to develop policy proposals for the enhancement of SADC's security functions.

Institute for Global Dialogue and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung. *Southern Africa 2020: Five Scenarios*. Johannesburg, 2004.

Using Peter Schwartz's methodology, this is one of the most systematic efforts to develop future scenarios for southern Africa. Although carried out a few years ago, its efforts to identify trends and issues remain very relevant.

Institute for Security Studies website. Available at www.iss.org.za.

The best website for security issues in Africa. As well as the numerous ISS publications dealing with southern African security issues (most of which are of high quality), it also contains all the relevant official SADC and other documents.

Kaunda, Jonathan Mayuyka, ed. *Proceedings of the 2006 FOPRISA Annual Conference*. Gaborone: Botswana Institute for Development Policy Analysis, 2007.

The bland title disguises the fact that this is state-of-the-art research in which a team of international and local researchers analyze and present findings relating to democratic practices, security cooperation, and trade policies in the Southern African Development Community.

Oosthuizen, Gabriel H. *The Southern African Development Community: The Organisation, Its Policies and Prospects*. Johannesburg: Institute for Global Dialogue, 2006.

The most comprehensive and accessible guide to the structures, procedures, policy frameworks, and goals of the Southern African Development Community. It includes a detailed treatment of its security institutions.

Solomon, Hussein, ed. *Towards a Common Defence and Security Policy in the Southern African Development Community*. Pretoria: Africa Institute of South Africa, 2004.

A collection of essays dealing with various aspects of security cooperation in southern Africa. Somewhat uneven (and now somewhat out of date), but it contains useful information and analysis.

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