

**HARARE  
ZIMBABWE  
11-13 MARCH  
1992**

**REPORT OF  
PROCEEDINGS OF THE  
SEMINAR ON PEACE AND  
SECURITY IN THE  
SOUTHERN AFRICA REGION**

**INSTITUTE OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES**

**SPECIAL PAPER SERIES: ISSUE NUMBER 8**



**University of Zimbabwe  
P.O. Box 880 HARARE**

**SPECIAL PAPER SERIES**

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**ZIMBABWE INSTITUTE OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES  
HARARE, 1992**

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P O Box 880

Harare

Zimbabwe

First Printing 1992

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Printed & Published in Zimbabwe

The Seminar was held at the HARARE HOLIDAY INN from 11-13 March 1992.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The Department of Southern Africa and International Relations, ZIDS, would like to thank the Institute for sponsoring the Seminar on Peace and Security in Southern Africa. Thanks are due also to the following, who served as chairpersons for different sessions: Dr A. M. Rukobo (Director, ZIDS); Dr L. J. Ching'ambo (SAPES Trust); Dr T.O. Chirawu (Deputy Director, National Museums and Monuments); and Mr B. K. Chakaodza (Senior Researcher, ZIDS). The Department is indebted to Mr Henry Chiwawa and Mrs Naomi Wekwete - both researchers at ZIDS - and Seminar Secretaries Ms Mavis Musakwa and Ms Noreen Tembo for their support and assistance in organising the seminar at various stages.

**Donald P. Chimanikire**

**Seminar Co-ordinator-cum-Rapporteur**

**SAPES TRUST RESEARCH PROPOSAL: PEACE AND SECURITY  
IN POST-APARTHEID SOUTHERN AFRICA .....38**

by Dr Lloyd John Ching'ambo, SAPES Trust

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Seminar on Peace and Security in Southern Africa was opened by the Director of the Zimbabwe Institute of Development Studies, Dr. A .M. Rukobo, who outlined the objectives of the seminar. These included the identification, analysis and assessment of some of the new strategies for conflict resolution and economic development in Southern Africa prompted by the changing political situation in South Africa and the international economic landscape. A powerful delegation numbering more than 40, drawn from the academia, Government policy-makers, the Church and the diplomatic community in Harare, participated in the three-day seminar.

# **SAPES TRUST RESEARCH: PEACE AND SECURITY IN POST - APARTHEID SOUTHERN AFRICA**

**Lloyd John Ching'ambo**

- *SAPES Trust*

## **Introduction**

This statement is the third on the subject of peace and security in Southern Africa in the post-apartheid era. (The Southern African region is taken to encompass the SADCC region and South Africa.) The debate was launched by Maga Sejanemane in *SAPEM*, Vol. 4, No. 12, 1991. The second contribution came from Severine Rugumamu and was published in *SAPEM*, Vol. 5, No. 2, 1991. Broadly, Dr Sejanemane's article dealt with conceptual issues while Dr Rugumamu looked at the problems associated with attempts to analyse national security in Africa. Besides these two, a third contribution in the form of a research proposal was submitted to SAPES Trust by Dr Agostinho Zacarias. This statement reflects many of the ideas contained in the three contributions.

## **Current Regional Security Debate in Southern Africa**

It is now almost certain, following the March 17 1992 whites-only referendum in which they overwhelmingly voted to back President de Klerk in his quest to achieve a negotiated settlement through CODESA, that South Africa's long and arduous journey towards majority rule is nearing an end. Against this background, it is imperative that we begin to review and reassess the security question in the region. For the region to benefit from the fundamental global and regional changes which have occurred, we need to:

- formulate new strategies to ensure lasting peace and security;
- urgently address the disarmament issue so that resources can effectively be redeployed towards regional development;
- review, collectively, strategies that have a better chance of stimulating growth and development at both the national and regional levels.

Currently, there are two schools of thought about the region in the post-apartheid era. The first one is an old thesis. It suggests that although SA would no longer pose a military threat as it did before De Klerk came to power, its considerable superiority (technological, etc.) will continue to be a source of economic destabilisation. Thus, whichever group comes to power, SADCC states will continue to be vulnerable. SA will always seek to utilise its powerful economic leverages to suggest that, although formal (or institutional) apartheid as we have known it is officially dead, the region will not escape economic apartheid.

There is merit to the above statement. However, it ignores one essential point: that the objectives, environment and factors that made SA act in the way it did have slowly been

changing. It follows therefore that new relationships between SA and its neighbours at the bilateral and collective levels will emerge (where they have not yet started to shape up). True, SA's hegemonic strengths and powers are still in place. But their presence need not be a source of instability for SADC or oppression of its neighbours (see also Nyong'o, 1990). During the Total Strategy Era, SA deployed its superiority in all its forms as an instrument of coercion. This economic superiority could now be put to better use developing the region. Indications are that SA is committed to working with its neighbours on an equal footing (refer to Chingambo, 1992).

The second concerns the inadequacy or non-existence of realistic regional institutions through which some of SADC's, FLS vulnerabilities *vis-a-vis* SA might be addressed. The emerging consensus seems to be that, with SA coming out of international isolation, existing regional institutions (which had survived only because of the perceived common enemy) will wither away unless they undergo major transformation. In the absence of a common enemy, coupled with the fact that existing institutions have not really proven their economic worth, countries would find it difficult to justify their continued membership. Moreover, association with SA - at a bilateral level or through organisations such as SACU - may prove more attractive.

This trend is already in evidence. Zambia and Mozambique are in the forefront in their wish for immediate intercourse with SA. Similarly, Zimbabwe has taken major steps to enhance or protect the existing bilateral arrangements with Pretoria (see *Business Herald*, April 28, 1992.) Angola has already initiated moves to engage in economic relations with SA. These include plans to sell oil directly to SA and engaging South African companies in its reconstruction efforts. Housing projects are said to be priority programmes in which Angola needs urgent help. Angola is understood to be particularly keen to acquire SA's technology for prefabricated houses. Further, the two have already signed a co-operation agreement under which SA has offered to train 140 000 soldiers in civilian skills. In this regard 13 Angolan soldiers have just completed a six-week leadership training course in Bloemfontein (refer to the *Sunday Times*, May 17 1992: 8).

### **Conceptual Issues**

Conceptually, there is little agreement among analysts and academics as to the exact meaning of the terms peace and security. These concepts have wide meanings and can mean different things in different situations. For instance, peace can mean: social peace (absence of riots and strikes); economic peace (low unemployment or absence of it, absence of inflation, equitable distribution of national income, etc); psychological peace (this involves perceptions and refers to the absence or presence of perceived threat); etc. It is also important to bear in mind that overall peace means that both domestic and external environments are peaceful. Similarly, security refers to many things such as: food security, health security, water security, income security, etc. One therefore needs to define clearly the context in which the terms are being used to avoid confusion.

In our context, there are three broad definitions or rather conceptions of security. These are the classical, "modern" and what I have termed the Third World view. The classical view refers mostly to military security of a country. Trager and Kronenberg (1973), for example, define security as that part of government policy whose objective is to create favourable national and international political conditions for protecting or extending a country's vital interests against existing and potential external threats and adversaries. The vital interests implied here are national sovereignty, territorial integrity and the



survival of people within national boundaries. (Over time, issues of ideology, protection of the national economy and, recently, environment have been added.) See also work by Lippman (1991). Clearly, the classical conception of security is incomplete and in a way misleading.

The "modern" view promotes economic security. Some of the notable proponents of this view include MacNamara (1968), Krause and Nye (1975), Bock (1966) and recently Goldenhus (1981). MacNamara (a well known critic of the classical concept of security) has put forward a rather interesting definition.

According to him:

Security means development. Security is not military hardware, though it may include it; security is not military force though it may involve it; security is not traditional military activity, though it may encompass it. Security is development, and without development there can be no security.

As observed with the classical theory, the economic conception of national security suffers from major, and in some ways similar, weaknesses. The first weakness is the fact that it too adopts a very narrow-minded view of security. It is, however, more flexible than the classical definition in that it acknowledges or incorporates military aspects. Secondly, while it is more conceptually advanced than the classical view, it suffers from its insistence that national security is a function of the level of development. This implies that security increases in direct proportion to development. This is obviously not correct. Indeed if economic development was all it took, then countries like Japan, South Korea, Germany and America, among others, would long since have achieved lasting peace and security.

The Third World view combines attributes of the classical and modern view of security, plus other factors that (may) affect peace and security in Third World countries (Azar and Moon, *op. cit.*). In other words, peace and security is now conceived as a product of a dynamic interaction between many forces - external and internal.

### **Theoretical Overview and Statement of the Problem**

The study of national security in Africa has been characterised by inappropriate conceptualisation of the problem and the use of traditional Western models of analysis. The problems regarding these models are eloquently enumerated by Rugumamu (1991: 51-52)

Briefly, there are four major drawbacks associated with Western models of national security with regard to African countries. As is already apparent, Western conceptions of security environment fall far short of what obtains in Africa. But both Africa's external threats and the alliances that countries accede to are generally different from those perceived under Western approaches. Specifically, Africa's external threats to national security come from a combination of external and internal factors. These include disputed national boundaries; foreign power interventions; aid conditionality (like current donors' demands that recipients must democratise and implement economic structural adjustment programmes); economic and technological backwardness; and ethnic and religious cleavages, among others.

Similarly, the alliances that African countries enter into are significantly different from

those in the West. In Africa, alliances are unequal; usually between the large and the economically weak states. Such a relationship leaves the poorer country rather compromised since it cannot enjoy autonomy and thus independence of action.

The second drawback is their emphasis on partial aspects of security. While not discounting the importance of the military factor, for example, military power alone does not explain nor could it solve Africa's complex security problems. What has, in fact, been observed is that:

... obsession with the accumulation of military power by some African governments has entailed extensive trade-offs with domestic, social, political and economic issues which have eventually undermined the overall national security *per se*. (Rugumamu, *op cit*: 51).

Refer too to Ross (1988: 142-87) and Arlinghaus (1988 1-5) for a detailed analysis of the issue. Generally speaking, the tendency in Africa (particularly in military and one-party dictatorships) is to use the military as an apparatus of suppression. Thus military power is often used for keeping regimes in power than to maintain national security.

The third major weakness concerns lack of legitimacy among African regimes. Under the current continent-wide agitation for multi-party politics, this is easy to see and appreciate. In Western countries, governments are democratically elected and as such are broadly supported and respected by their people. Moreover, the rule of law is widely accepted and upheld. Consequently, governments enjoy broad-based legitimacy. See Morgenthau (1985: 147-169). This translates into low internal political stresses and vulnerability. Put differently, it means that the exercising of state authority is not resented by the electorate. Where it is challenged, this would be done legitimately.

In Africa, though, the situation is totally different. The structural political rigidities of one-party state systems and military regimes, plus a host of other intractable factors such as poverty, tribal or ethnic conflicts, economic underdevelopment, corruption, resource scarcity, and others have combined to create a legitimacy crisis. In addition, many African governments lack "functional competence", an essential ingredient in the creation and maintenance of a broad-based legitimacy. As noted above, lack of legitimacy affects political authority or acceptability. It leads to significant internal threats in the form of strikes, political protests, sabotage and rebellions. National security suffers greatly as a result. An important point to stress here is that legitimacy is essential to any nation's security management system. It is what determines a country's character, moral convictions and, ultimately, its survival as a nation-state.

The fourth weakness concerns the way states are perceived in Africa. While under Western scholarship, national security assumes unitary nation-state actor and that the activities of the state are in pursuance of commonly held national goals and interests.

The concept does not often exist on the continent. This is brought about by a number of factors. The legacy of the scramble for Africa for instance created many incompatible nation-states to the extent that some countries are still contesting state boundaries. Examples abound all over Africa. Within Southern Africa, border problems of varying degrees exist (or lie dormant ready to ignite at the slightest provocation). There are observable tensions between Zambia and Zaire; Namibia and Botswana; Namibia and SA (over the Walvis Bay). Malawi's territorial claims of the mid-1960s against Zambia's eastern border appear to have blown over. But one cannot be too sure where such matters are concerned. Consequently, the potential for insecurity abounds (Zartman,

1966: 105-112), making Africa's security problem both complex and difficult to analyse and, therefore, requires sensitivity in its handling.

### **Security as a Holistic Concept**

Consequent upon the above, and to fully reflect all the issues likely to affect peace and security in the Southern African region, SAPES views security as a holistic concept. As already noted, Africa's unique security problem is all-embracing and encompasses, *inter alia*:

- Military security
- Food security
- Health security
- Security from discrimination (gender, racial, etc)
- Security of identity
- Security from border disputes
- Security from drought (desertification, etc).

Peace and security are not determined by a few factors but by an active interaction of a range of them. (The relative importance of these factors will vary according to circumstances prevailing any particular time.) If therefore peace and security are to be guaranteed, people and nations need to ensure that all possible factors likely to threaten it are explored.

Southern African countries are keen to pursue the peace and security issue. For example, four heads of state and government discussed the security issue during a PTA conference in Lusaka at the end of January 1992.

But because of their unique circumstances (occasioned by varying doses of exposure to South Africa's aggression), countries are likely to be interested in different aspects of peace and security issues. This means in simple terms that special national circumstances are expected to strongly influence how countries in the region view and deal with issues of peace and security. For example, given the devastation some of these countries have experienced over the last 10 years at the hands of SA, economic reconstruction is likely to assume top position on their agendas. Accordingly, one could speculate that Mozambique is probably keener on peace (from war with RENAMO) and food adequacy than any other aspect of security. Similarly, Angola (which has already made a breakthrough in its quest for peace) would be more concerned with achieving lasting peace in the country and, beyond that, development. Zambia on the other hand appears to have peace, redevelopment (of its ravaged economy) and democracy as its objectives while Zimbabwe would be more concerned with arresting the worsening economic situation brought about by drought and its economic structural adjustment programme.

This paper aims primarily at raising awareness about Southern Africa's conceptualisation of national and regional security. Second, it wishes to highlight the need to develop new approaches for studying and analysing security in Africa. Third, a study, to be launched soon, will mark the beginning of SAPES Trust's efforts to search

for management techniques in a bid to promote effective national and regional security.

### **Research Agenda: Potential Themes for Regional Security Research**

Some of the themes this study programme will address include:

#### *1. Re-assessment of Southern Africa*

Against the background of reduced tensions between and within countries (with some exceptions, e.g. Malawi, Mozambique and the continuing communal violence in SA) and the emergence of a warless era, the first major task of this project is to reassess Southern Africa in terms of future economic and political alignments. The project has two aims:

- To see how new relations can be nurtured so that regional peace and security becomes a common goal; and
- To facilitate the building of pragmatic regional institutions through which regional economic co-operation and development could be pursued.

#### *2. Identification of Sources of New Conflicts*

Even when apartheid is dead and buried, there is bound to be new conflicts and challenges to threaten or upset peace and security in the region. This project, therefore, will seek to identify potential threats to peace and security in the region and ways of dealing with them. Topping the agenda are issues such as disarmament. Of particular concern is how to syphon vast amounts of arms from private hands in countries that have seen protracted armed conflict. There are examples in Angola, Mozambique and SA of such arms being used in illegal activities like armed robberies, terrorist attacks, etc. This is a potentially dangerous issues that needs to be addressed urgently.

#### *3. Impact of Weak National Political Institutions*

Here, the project aims at examining how weak national political institutions may hamper attempts to foster a peaceful, non-conflict situation in the region.

#### *4. Role of International Factors*

During the Cold War, international factors played a key role in fostering confrontation and war in the region. This factor, however, has receded. The task here will be to investigate the impact of international factors as sources of new conflict in the region, and what countries, individually and collectively, could do to counter them. A major issue that comes to mind is the possible competition between major states for control of Africa's strategic resources, and how this might lead to instability in the region.

## 5. *Simmering Conflicts*

The region already has several potential conflict areas, barring the problems posed by SA over the years. The main ones are religious intolerance as between Moslems and Christians in Tanzania; and border conflicts or territorial claims, of which the Zaire-Zambia conflict is potentially the most dangerous. This project will therefore examine conflict resolution and attempt to develop conflict prevention mechanisms.

## 6. *Linkage: Development and Security*

Against the background of deteriorating economies evidenced by the imposition of structural adjustment programmes by the IMF and World Bank, coupled with the re-emergence of plural politics, there is great potential for violence and instability. As economic and social problems mount, people will increasingly resort to desperate measures to survive. The project will attempt to examine the linkage between development and security and seek ways, even under these difficult circumstances, to promote lasting peace and security nationally and regionally through joint or economic development programmes.

## **Conclusion**

The state of war that characterised the region and resulted in high concentrations of arms and other war arsenals, great loss of life and economic destruction is today largely over. Confrontation has given way to dialogue. Interdependence, economic co-operation and promotion of joint interests now characterise the whole region. Under these new circumstances, it has become imperative that new security considerations be made and new inter-state and regional relations worked out. In short, it has become necessary for peace and security to be perceived not as a national goal but a common (regional) one.

The project seeks to find a formula for achieving peace in the region. Further, it seeks to focus on economic relations between SA and other regional states regarding how best to restructure and reconstitute existing regional bodies so that they become agents for achieving equitable and balanced development.

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