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THE RELEVANCE OF STRATEGIC CULTURE FOR SOUTHERN AFRICAN SECURITY IN THE 1990s

INTRODUCTION

During the Cold War the dominant concern of international relations including the sub-fields of strategic and security studies was the East-West struggle. This conflict was conceived primarily in terms of the potential for interstate war pitting the United States against the [former] Soviet Union and involving their respective allies. While studies of conflict and security in the Third World were not entirely ignored, they were seen as tangential and had little influence on the central preoccupations of the discipline (Nolutshungu, 1994). Also, while some scholars recognised that security contained non-military aspects, analysts working within the dominant 'realist' paradigm focused almost exclusively on its political and military dimensions. In short, the agenda of security studies was held captive by realist-inspired military concerns with the superpower conflict its central focus.

The demise of the East-West conflict has eroded this basic global reference point and dramatically altered the agenda of security studies. Yet, serious theoretical reflection on non-military and non-state relations remains embryonic. Current attempts to understand the problems of security in Southern Africa are thus faced with profound challenges. Analysts must recast received

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theory in a manner which sheds light on the changing global environment and encompasses the broadening range of security threats across the subcontinent. But to shift conceptions, challenge must also be seen as opportunity.

Current discourses in security studies are in fact attempting to meet these challenges. These represent part of a broader (post-modernist) intellectual project aimed at reconstructing conventional wisdom to overcome the 'crisis of representation' which pervades the social sciences. Although post-modernist discourse encourages the creation of a more liberating and reflexive intellectual environment, it remains a heuristic and sensitising endeavour. It is, in other words, '... an enthusiasm of newly initiated departures rather than a celebration of safe arrivals' (Lapid, 1989:258).

For students of international relations, one positive consequence of the end of the Cold War is that security thinking has been released from the intellectual straitjacket imposed by the bipolar world. The concept - and therefore the agenda - of security has consequently been expanded both 'horizontally' and 'vertically' (Booth, 1994: 3). It has been widened to include categories such as democracy, economic development, environmental degradation, in addition to its traditional military focus. Moreover, analysts now acknowledge that the state is not the only referent; human and transnational security concerns are critical reference points as well.

In the wake of the Cold War, students of international relations are compelled to recast their assumptions and theoretical frameworks to explain new patterns of global peace and security. It is within this emerging theoretical milieu and historical context that the renovated concept of 'strategic culture' promises a fresh, new approach to unravelling some of the issues of conflict and peace in Southern Africa:

The concept of strategic culture refers to a nation's traditional attitudes and behaviour with respect to the threat and use of force. It refers to patterns of thought and practices which are persistent over time (and hence deserve to be labelled *culture* rather than mere *policy*). . . strategic culture shapes but does not determine behaviour on war and peace issues.(original emphasis, Booth, 1994a: 8)

It is important to recognise that this concept simply provides the basis for a framework to guide analysis through the maze of security issues in the region. While it establishes a set of questions which broadly inform the manner in which regional security concerns are approached, the relative weight and priority of discrete concerns - as well as policy prescription - can only be ascertained in the context of concrete, practical research. Before defining and examining the direct relevance of the concept of strategic culture to southern Africa, the paper briefly outlines the region's range of security threats.

THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

Security and peace in Southern Africa have been elusive. The region inherited from colonialism a conflict-prone environment. This includes, among other things, distorted and dependent economic structures, incoherent social compositions, fragile institutions, and external power interventions which have been permanent threats to peace and security. In these circums-tances, weak post-colonial regimes were consumed with regime survival rather than effectively addressing issues of social integra-tion, nation-building, democracy and economic restructuring (Rugumamu, 1993).

In unravelling this complex matrix, three basic conceptions are critical. First, a historical perspective, which appreciates how colonialism and apartheid created the basis of the region's present insecurity, is necessary. Second, the approach must recognise that

internal and external sources of insecurity are inextricably linked and that disentangling them is impossible. Finally, while sources of insecurity are political, social, environmental and economic, in reality, these interact dynamically and distinctions can become blurred. They feed off one another, exacerbating and compli- cating both the range and nature of regional security threats.

Such conceptions suggest that attempts to uncover regional security dynamics must begin with a recognition of Southern Africa's position of economic dependence and political marginality within the global stratification system (Swatuk, 1994). By doing so in historical perspective, networks of power, interests and the process of state formation are exposed. The region's political threats emanate from arbitrarily created colonial boundaries which have at times resulted in inter-state border disputes as well as irredentist tendencies. While, the effects of apartheid-sponsored destabilisation have been debilitating and cannot be overstated, currently, conflict in the region, has become 'domesticised'.

African leaders have often been unable or unwilling to manage inherited colonial state institutions in a manner which fosters nation-building. At times, effective control over the state merely served narrow interests. But against the backdrop of the colonial policy to divide and rule, this conspired to exacerbate social and ethnic fragmentation of African society and bedevil genuine efforts at integration and nation-building. As a result, faltering legitimacy and weak political authority constrained African states' security performance and combined to deepen both external and internal threats and vulnerabilities to the state and people.

At the economic level, the region's threats are a function of both the operations of transnational corporations and the vagaries

of the global market system. The relationship between colonialism and peripheral capitalist development is the necessary starting point to understanding the region's current state of underdevelopment and dependency. Structures of production, investment and trade established during the colonial era have remained largely intact. Recently, Africa's importance as a source of strategic minerals and agricultural products has been reduced with the opening up of alternate sources in the former Soviet bloc and advancements in biotechnologically engineered substitutes for primary products.

The West is losing interest in Africa. A vicious cycle has created its own momentum: donor fatigue; growing impatience over corruption; economic mismanagement; seemingly intractable debt problems have combined to create the self-fulfilling prophecy and image - that Africa is a 'basket case'. Declining interest has further constrained the functional capacity of African leaders to reverse the downward spiral. Other sources of regional economic insecurity include: iniquitous ownership and development patterns; economic stagnation and decline; International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank sponsored structural adjustment programmes; as well as the prospect of regional cooperation based on unilateral liberalisation which threaten to polarise economic outcomes (Rugumamu, 1993).

Superpower rivalry and competition for global hegemony also impacted on Southern African security. Superpower intervention did not resolve local conflicts nor addressed the broader problems of the continent. Rather it aimed to satisfy the superpower's narrow interests. In the race to win and maintain allies or secure military bases, the superpowers participated directly or indirectly through their surrogates in domestic and regional politics. Massive arms transfers were used not only as payment for military bases, but also as a means of maintaining and propping up political

allies. Cynical interpretations also suggest that the superpowers used proxy wars in Africa to test the effectiveness of their strategic weapon systems (Rugumamu, 1993). The realist dictum of the need to secure the national interest by building up military capacity has not been borne out in Africa. In fact, the military has been as much a cause of insecurity by suppressing democracy and redirecting scarce resources away from urgent socio-economic needs. In numerous cases, the militarisation of African society has led to untold human carnage and suffering.

Peace and security in Southern Africa continue to be partially defined by this rivalry. Conflicts sowed by the Cold War continue and underline the fact that old legacies die hard. The emergence of a political and military unipolar world has not made these conditions less onerous. Attempts at economic restructuring, reha-bilitation of devastated economies, resettling millions of refugees, returning exiles and demobilising soldiers, as well as managing competitive politics at the national level, have been delayed at great cost and detriment to the region (Mandaza, 1992).

Broadening the concept of security from overt/external threats acknowledges that the security agenda now encompasses issues such as poverty, disease, environmental degradation, drugs and human rights violations. It is against this background that attempts are now being made to recast the region's security *problematic* in a holistic manner. Security in Southern Africa should be explained as a product of a dynamic interplay between internal, external, political, economic, social and environmental threats.

DEFINING STRATEGIC CULTURE[1]

As noted, strategic culture refers to a nation's - or subnational group's - traditional attitudes and patterns of behaviour with

[1]   This section relies heavily on Ken Booth's discussion of strategic culture as outlined in his proposal for the book Booth and Trood (eds) *Strategic Cultures in the Asia-Pacific Region*, forthcoming.

respect to the threat and use of force. This implies that attitudes and behavioral patterns are created by a particular socialisation process and incorporate a set of general beliefs which persist over time and resist change. While strategic cultural inputs are related to policy outputs, the link is indirect and often obscure. Nevertheless, it is important to recognise that human collectivities (like individuals) have subjectivities, although these are not always readily apparent.

At times, they may be explained - or at least influenced - by geography, levels of technology, economic development, history, size etc. For example, geographical factors such as the nature and security of natural borders may affect strategic culture in terms of historic patterns of enmity and amity. In other cases, the relative importance of the different armed forces and their particular strategic doctrines will also have implications for the strategic culture of a nation. Economic factors may be critical. In this regard, questions such as 'Is the economy essentially self sufficient?' or 'What is its economic potential?' can have a bearing on how effectively a nation responds to military threats and force as well as its attraction as a target for aggression.

The concept of strategic culture appears to be significant for several reasons. According to Booth (1994a:8), the concept

> . . . erodes the impact of ethnocentricism in strategic analysis; it serves the need to 'know thine enemy'; it sensitises the analysts to the importance of history in the development of a nation's military posture; it helps to breakdown the artificial barrier between the internal and external environments of policy-making; it helps to explain apparently 'irrational' thoughts and actions by states in their threat and use of force; and it is an essential element of accurate threat assessment offering nuance and insight into the way adversaries and friends think and act over issues.

The potential of strategic culture as an analytical tool to discover whether common norms and expectations exist among

states in the region is enormous since it permits the analysts to look behind the content of security policy to the influences that have shaped it (Booth, 1994a: 9). Shared norms and expectations of behaviour reflect a shared strategic culture and indicate the prospects for the development of security regimes, security complexes and security communities. In short, strategic culture has real implications for the future of regional security - and, hence, peace-relations.

The nature of a state's strategic culture influences its attitudes to the use of military force and the inclination to pursue national security objectives violently or through peaceful, cooperative mechanisms. As a result, prospects for regional peace-making and conflict resolution may only be anticipated via a thorough understanding of the strategic cultures of the relevant countries. Booth's question is pertinent in this regard: 'How can we know about a nation's potentiality to develop a 'peace culture' without knowing its strategic culture?' It is critical to understand prevailing strategic perceptions and the factors shaping them. These will include historical and contemporary attitudinal and behavioral factors which affect national security postures and policies of the states in the region.

The concept of strategic culture does serve as an all-purpose explanatory factor on issues of strategy and peace, but it does shed light on what kinds of (new) questions are relevant for such an understanding. Nevertheless, inherent shortcomings and problems in the concept persist. The term 'culture' is notoriously vague and it is difficult to determine any causal link between strategic and political culture. What does create strategic culture? How does one establish the connection between culture and policy? What is the primary referent group - elites, society, the military establishment, government or regime? These questions

must be addressed before the potential of the concept will be realised.

Perhaps the best way to begin to think about the value of strategic culture as a concept is to see it as a sensitising, heuristic device. In this light, it may be perceived as a 'transmission belt' for ideas rather than a neat, all-encompassing concept or theory. As such, it establishes a framework for analysts to work with, but in a flexible, non-prescriptive manner. This is borne out by Booth who lays out the framework as a set of questions under a wide ranging list of headings. The following paragraphs follow suit, but limit the questions in a way which appears relevant to Southern African security concerns.

Political structure and strategic culture : What are the main features of political culture? What are the factors shaping political culture? How does ideology affect patterns of allies and enemies? Is there a militarist tradition in the society? What are the sources of militarism? What impact do ethical, religious factors have on strategic culture? How do people see martyrdom, for example?

Traditional strategic culture : In considering both attitudes and behaviour, what are the wellsprings of strategic thought? Are there distinctive strategic subcultures (ethnic or military)? What has been the nature of the state's strategic doctrine? Is it possible to speak of a distinctive national style? Is there a tendency to act unilaterally or are leaders 'alliance prone'? What is distinctive in the country's decision-making process, attitudes and behaviour with respect to the threat and use of force? What generalisations can be made?

Contemporary issues : What are the main attitudes and policies towards nuclear strategy, conventional strategy, disarmament and control, unconventional strategy (revolutionary or guerilla warfare,

terrorism, for example)? What are the origins of these attitudes and policies? What are the attitudes towards independence/ interdependence, broadened definitions of security, decision-making procedures, the post-Cold War strategic environment, questions of identity and migration? Are there subnational groups which have competing security outlooks which are at odds with the state or dominant group?

The nature of change : If it is possible to speak of strategic culture in a particular country, is it also possible to identify change over time? If there has been change, why? To what extent has strategic culture been affected because of the advent of democracy? Is there an attempt to rethink in the same way? Is the process of transition smooth or a source of conflict?

Prospects for regional peace : What is the attitude towards non-military means of promoting peace and security (economic integration, multilateral diplomacy etc.)? Is anyone thinking about conflict resolution as an approach to security as opposed to military defence? Is there any discussion around the advantages of non-offensive defence? Who does support such thinking? What are the prospects of key groups in society reconceptualising security away from traditional assumptions which emphasise state security, military strength and preservation of the *status quo*? Is there evidence of 'new security thinking' emphasising common security, a comprehensive approach and change including interdependence, transparency, integration and multilateralism? In short, is there any prospect of the country's strategic culture being changed, adapted or used to polite the delegitimisation of force in international politics? Are traditional cultures compatible with peace? What are the prospects for transforming national strategic cultures into an international or regional culture or peaceful conflict resolution?

STRATEGIC CULTURE AND SOUTH AFRICAN SECURITY

Strategic cultures in Southern Africa have been shaped by the legacies of apartheid and South Africa's regional policy during the 1980s. Regionally, destabilisation was calculated to sabotage the region's frail economies, ferment conflict and dissent, and incapacitate the region's governments. Although destabilisation has ended, its effects weigh heavily on the future of security in the region. Despite some progress towards a lasting peace in Angola, for example, the legacy of that brutal civil war will pose a serious obstacle to economic development and an ongoing test of the success of peace-making and peace-keeping at the regional level.

A fallout from years of destabilisation and conflict is the surfeit of weaponry traversing the region in almost total disregard to formal border controls. This fuels the various civil, ethnic, political (and criminal) conflicts plaguing southern Africa. At the same time, South Africa, Botswana, Angola, and Mozambique have all devoted large and growing portions of their public expenditure to military and defence requirements. Southern Africa, to put it graphically, is armed to the teeth. An ongoing threat to stability will involve demobilising the numerous armies and militias dispersed across the region. Successful demobilisation demands that ex-soldiers are re-integrated into civilian life and provided with productive employment. In the context of declining socio-economic infrastructure, this enormous problem is exacerbated and the danger of demobilised soldiers resorting to crime or banditry, ever-present.

This volatile mixture of military-related issues is alarming, especially as the region lacks formal mechanisms of conflict management, conflict-resolution or confidence-building. Moreover, there are few concrete signs of effort to reduce force levels, military arsenals and expenditure (Ohlson, 1993:39). The

situation is compounded by South Africa's armament industry which appears eager to supply weapon systems to the region. With its web of instability and inequality, southern Africa offers a ready-made and lucrative arms market. The proponents for arms exports in South Africa have argued that arms production create jobs and exports secure much-needed foreign currency. It appears that an essential lesson has not been learnt: exporting arms to the region will not foster a more secure regional environment but, on the contrary, it will deepen instability. Moreover, pursuing this policy will tend to strengthen the South African economy at the expense of its neighbours as, presumably, regional governments will be expected to pay for weapons in hard currency. In South Africa, this debate draws battle lines between a traditional (realist/ apartheid) strategic culture and those advocating a new security discourse. Peter Vale (1994:6) has observed that "the strategic culture of the apartheid state has endured beyond the formal transfer of power". Indeed, South Africa's military establishment has largely withstood the political transformations in the country and, in these circles, (neo-)realist perspectives remain firmly embedded. Despite the post-apartheid context, defence, it appears, must remain integral to the life of the nation in order to protect sovereignty from any possible predatory ambitions of neighbours. While old foes may have disappeared, significant sectors of the South African state seem set to address the new threats of illegal migrants, arms smuggling and drug trafficking within the confines of shortsighted statist and militarist perspectives.

Parts of the state and the economic interests they represent offer the region a series of outcomes which do not reflect any clear break with past practice. Two trends are evident. First, the view that the region is crisis-prone leads some to advocate that South Africa keeps the region at arms length: the phrase 'good fences make good neighbours' comes to mind. Alternatively,

South Africa will engage the region but only in so far as it serves as a market for exports and a source of raw materials to be exploited. This would be in keeping with South Africa's big brother profile and hegemonic ambitions in its 'backyard'. The effect of this approach will be to entrench regional imbalances by encouraging a quantitative extension of existing patterns. In this scenario, South Africa will benefit disproportionately from closer economic relations and will dominate the pace, terms and circumstances of the entire process (Davies, 1992). It is difficult to overestimate the likelihood of such scenarios. The strength and attraction of realist discourse is its capacity to generate seemingly simple answers to a range of complex problems. Also, they represent the interests of powerful political and economic actors seeking to entrench the *status quo* both in South Africa and in the region. These powerful vested interests cannot be dismissed lightly.

Nevertheless, there are significant political and social impulses within South Africa and southern Africa that may yet transform the region's dominant strategic culture and challenge the dire implications of neo-realist policy perspectives. In southern Africa, multiple identities in the region ensure that security means different things to different people. Thus, when addressing the issue of strategic culture, it is important to recognise ambiguities, and the 'spaces', for they open up for alternative visions of regional security.

For example, the future of South Africa's arms industry is, as yet, uncertain. There is a welcome and growing public discussion on the merits of continued high defence spending and procurement in light of other pressing socio-economic needs in South Africa. More generally, ethnical questions around the need for an arms industry and the desirability of arms exports are increasingly being raised. This is the subtext of a deeper set of

questions relating to what is security and who defines South Africa's national interest. Potentially, answers to these questions could constitute challenges to neo-realist conceptions and the traditional strategic culture in South Africa.

At another level, beyond government to government diplomatic relations in the region, southern Africa exhibits deep historical, social, cultural and economic links between its various components. Overlapping cultures and languages, the range of economic links forged during colonialism (the migrant labour system), and the history of struggle against apartheid have formed the elements of a common regional experience and identity. While the South African government was formally isolated from the international and regional communities during the apartheid years, South Africa's national liberation movements established, in a myriad of ways, close ties with its regional neighbours (Vale, 1995).

Regional networks of trade, population movements and regional links between non-governmental organisations have also laid the basis for the emergence of a regional civil society. Social movements (the best example are the trade unions) within each country have begun to establish region-wide networks and thereby engage in a kind of detente from below'. Such multiple linkages bid the region's people, encourage the emergence of a regional consciousness and suggest a series of reciprocal dependencies. Creating real security in the region, therefore, will rely less on the traditional apparatus of the state and more on the many faces of exchange and inter-change (Vale, 1994:33).

There are other impulses within southern Africa which point to more collaborative and cooperative forms of regional interaction. Some of these feed into the discussions of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), established

in August 1992, as part of an ongoing process of deepening regional cooperation and integration. In a different context, these again underscore an embryonic collective regional consciousness and the emergence of a marked paradigmatic alternative in the region's strategic thinking. Several considerations have propelled this vision.

Accepting that security is more than the military capacity to resist foreign threat implies a broader vision in which underdevelopment, inefficient use of resources, inequalities, violations of human rights, illiteracy, malnutrition, disease and other forms of non-military security concerns, are perpetual sources of tension that can lead to conflict (Vieira and Ohlson, 1992: 203). While national policies should be more attuned to meeting the basic needs of people, issues such as migration, refugees, pandemic diseases, and natural calamities may be more effectively addressed through region-wide strategies. In this light, SADC committed itself to expanding areas of cooperation and integration beyond economics to encompass politics, diplomacy, international relations, peace and security.

> A framework must be found for enhancing political solidarity and harmony among member States to minimise conditions which can lead to national and regional instability and insecurity. Regional cooperation and understanding in this area, in particular, has to be underpinned by the establishment of common political, social and other values... A new peace and security order is needed in Southern Africa, recognising that defence and security have economic, environmental, political and social dimensions, which often pose non-military threats, but could threaten security and cause conflict.
>
> (SADC, 1993:24)

Several suggestions to improve regional security are under consideration. As noted above, southern Africa is over-armed. Since there is little likelihood of interstate wars in the region and since no nation in southern Africa faces external aggression, there

is considerable scope for reducing the region's force levels and its defence spending. Given its overwhelming military preponderance, South Africa could take the lead. This would reduce suspicions about its intentions and possibly lay the basis for wider regional disarmament.

Re-orientating the posture of the armed forces is another way to reduce regional insecurity and foster confidence in the region. It could involve adopting the doctrine of 'non-offensive defence' to eliminate retaliation and escalation strategies, the capacity for large-scale offensive action and surprise attack. The doctrine aims to ensure stability and confidence by ensuring adequate defence against attack while minimising offensive capabilities. By restructuring the posture, deployment, weaponry, training, equipment, and manpower procurement of the armed forces, the doctrine aims to bring the overall character and strategy of the military into line with declared defensive intentions (Nathan, 1993:11).

Other confidence building measures, loosely modelled on the European experience, have been advocated (UN Final Report, 1993). Such measures envision establishing joint training exercises, operations and, eventually, joint forces for peacekeeping. In addition, military exchange programmes, information exchanges (on defense budget, troop deployment, weapon systems), notification and observation of military activities, verification procedures, communication networks, and mechanisms to deal with unscheduled military activities can all be designed to enhance transparency, alleviate mistrust and avoid misunderstandings developing into crises. While this will necessarily require greater cooperation between governments, it will simultaneously reinforce the sense of regional solidarity. The success of these measures depends on governments changing the way they think about security and defence. But unless and until they do so, there is little

prospect of changing defence postures or reducing military spending levels (Vale, 1994:1).

Similar difficulties are encountered in terms of restructuring economic relations in the region. There are numerous areas in which fruitful regional economic cooperation may be envisaged. These include: trade, infrastructure, transport, water, electricity, (migrant) labour, food security, agriculture, natural resources, mineral policy, tourism and environmental protection (Davies, 1990). The fundamental issue, however, concerns equity within the regional scheme itself because, as historical and comparative evidence show, regional projects flounder when the benefits of economic union are not shared equitably or when some members do not experience real gains.

Existing economic links in the region are not only inequitable but also increasingly unsustainable (Davies et al 1993). Severe economic imbalances within each country and between South Africa and its neighbours are a perennial source of instability in the region. An uncontrolled expansion of economic links will undoubtedly have the effect of entrenching and deepening these imbalances and this will have dire consequences for both South Africa and the region. Given the fact that South Africa dwarfs the region economically, its role in shaping the character of the economic union is critical.

South Africa's greatest contribution to resolving the crises that wrack the subcontinent is to pursue mutually beneficial economic relations within the SAD framework. This is not predicated on charitable or moral obligations. Although continued exploitation of the region may yield immediate profits, it would be decidedly contrary to South Africa's long-term interests. If the region continues its slide into poverty and instability, the effect will easily boomerang onto South Africa. The associated socio-economic

problems of growing illegal migration underlines the essential truth of this proposition. The point is that South Africa's destiny is linked to the region and that South Africa will ignore the plight of its neighbours at its peril.

The general consensus is that South Africa will lend its considerable weight to the regional economic and political project on the basis of mutual benefit, partnership and collaboration. This has been the view accepted by the African National Congress various policy documents which renounced all hegemonic ambitions in the region. It has also been expressed in the South African Government of National Unity's Reconstruction and Development Programme White Paper (1994).

The first meetings of the expanded SADC seemed to bear this out. South African representatives of the African National Congress-dominated Government of National Unity were at pains to provide leadership in a consultative, non-hegemonic way to meet the immediate challenges facing the SADC. The political crisis in Lesotho in mid-year was also highly significant. The sight of South Africa's National Defence Force (SANDF) engaged in a show of force on the Lesotho border was an ominous reminder of South Africa's military dominance in the region. However, the manner in which the crisis was eventually resolving many of its own problems in a sensitive and peaceful manner.

Might the prospects for regional peacemaking and conflict resolution be forged by a thorough understanding of the region's different strategic cultures? if it is accepted that cultures are not static nor defined entirely within statist parameters, then extending the idea of community beyond national frontiers is not un-founded. In this regard, the concept of strategic culture may help uncover common norms and expectation among the countries in the region. By securing common norms and expectations of

behaviour, the development of security regimes, security complexes and security communities seem possible.

CONCLUSION

Although many regional problems are familiar, the rapid changes and deep crises engulfing the entire world dictate that old, pat solutions will no longer suffice. New and imaginative approaches must be depended in a manner which fosters regional peace, security and development. The primary concern on the future of Southern Africa relates to the process whereby the region-characterised by inherent conflict and antagonistic contradictions - will find peace and security (Mandaza, 1993).

The value of the concept of strategic culture is, in this regard, manifold. The concept generates a set of questions which may be utilised as guiding posts through the maze of threats the region faces. It recognises that while threats may be far-ranging, addressing how nations and groups respond to the threat and use of force is of paramount significance. Similarly, it acknowledges that responses to the threat and use of force are rooted in factors as diverse as historical experience, economic structure, political development, geography etc. The crux of the matter is this : If the concept of strategic culture is employed as a sensitising device, it holds the promise of revealing the strategic predisposition of various countries in the region with regard to how they view peace, conflict, force and conflict resolution. In this way, it may assist analysts to discover whether or not the region shares any common foundation, norms, expectations or more broadly - *culture* which can be the basis of regional peace and cooperation.

Finally, any analysis of the nature and direction of change in Southern Africa will have to begin with an account of those historical, economic, cultural and political factors which together

have been the cause of conflict and insecurity in the region. An appropriate framework should expose the fallacy of single-factor explanations and identify ways and means to transform inherited economic and political structures which are inimical to peace, security and development. The concept of strategic culture recommends such an approach and, at the same time, suggests a novel way in which to begin reconsidering regional peace and security in Southern Africa.

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