EXPECTATIONS that a democratic South Africa would intervene in Africa to promote democracy and stability were articulated within minutes of democracy’s achievement on May 10, 1994.

The inauguration of Nelson Mandela as first President was attended by then United States vice-president Al Gore who is said to have taken him aside and requested his government – then only minutes old – to send peace-keepers to Rwanda.¹ The United States was to make further appeals to the new government to play a leading role in stabilising Africa – raising inevitable objections that it saw South Africa as a useful means of deflecting pressures for engagement in messy conflicts: ‘To more cynical observers, it was a way of letting the international community, and particularly the West, off the African hook’.² While the goal was ostensibly to end conflicts, democratisation was an implied concern – then US secretary of state Warren Christopher raised the Nigerian junta and a coup in Burundi as potential areas for intervention in 1996.³ And expectations – within the country and among international
actors - that South Africa would become a force for democratisation in Africa were certainly strong. A new democracy which was seen by many as a miraculous expression of the universal democratic ethos was expected to seek to export that ethos to the rest of the African continent, and perhaps even to more remote parts.

While interpretations of subsequent developments vary, South African democratising efforts have fallen significantly short of expectations – even discounting for the inevitable reality that what is expected from an iconic new government will far exceed the possible. While it may claim some successes, gains have been far less visible than we might expect from a country whose economy dwarfs that of all others on the continent and whose political capital as the product of Africa’s successful fight against apartheid should give it moral as well as material weight. And perhaps the most important challenge to its democratising intent and capacity, its response to its highly visible neighbour, Zimbabwe, has been a conspicuous failure which has also tarnished its moral lustre and reduced its credibility. While it is unfair to say that South Africa has done nothing to meet the expectations, it is hard to argue that it has exerted the influence which its assets seemed to give it.

This paper seeks to explain this. In particular, it takes issue with explanations which see the limitations of South African democratisation efforts as a case in which an ‘idealist’ foreign policy ran aground on the rocks of external realities and was amended in the light of them. While it acknowledges that attempts to promote democracy across international borders is a difficult undertaking and that attempts by South Africa to do this in Africa are particularly perilous, it challenges the assumption that the fundamental dynamic was that between a South Africa eager to spread
freedom and an African reality determines to resist them. It argues, rather, that South African policy has been ambiguous since 1994 and remains so. And it seeks to show that these ambiguities are significantly rooted in a domestic reality in which conflicting and competing visions of democracy and its promotion exist not only between sections of the elite but within particular sections and individuals – in which the complexities and tensions of South Africa’s own efforts to democartise play a crucial role in shaping its responses to African democratisation. This argues for analyses of international democracy promotion to examine how tensions, conflicts and complexities in democracy promoting states affect their capacity to spread democracy.

Post-Apartheid South Africa and Democracy Promotion

South Africa’s democracy promotion experience can be divided into three phases. A neat chronological compartmentalisation would be misleading: while there is a rough chronology, one phase does not follow another in strict date order, a point of some importance to this analysis. Their usefulness lies in their capacity to characterise three types of interaction rather than in delineating distinct periods. This seeming progression in policy and action is, however, thrown into disarray by an apparent anomaly – policy towards Zimbabwe.

Dashed Expectations

The newly elected African National Congress government was partly responsible for encouraging the expectation that it would energetically promote democracy.
A 1993 article by Nelson Mandela in *Foreign Affairs* which declared that ‘human rights should be the core concern of foreign policy’ after apartheid was often cited immediately after the ANC took office as evidence of a commitment to encouraging democracy abroad. Far more pointedly, a statement of foreign policy intentions at the end of the year in which the ANC became the government declared that ‘South Africa will devote its energies to the accomplishment of democratic ideals throughout the world’. Although this was qualified by a passage noting the tension between democracy promotion and sovereignty, it promised: ‘Grateful for the international solidarity which supported the anti-apartheid cause, a democratic South Africa will be in solidarity with all those whose struggle continues’.

This expression of foreign policy ‘idealis[m]’ was often contrasted with the ‘realism’ of the apartheid-era foreign policy establishment and its intellectual camp-followers, who tended to see foreign policy as a means of maximising economic advantage. Concern for democracy and human rights was thus associated with the new order’s foreign policy orientation, doubts that it was practicable or wise with that of the old. This explains why, in the first years of democracy, expectations that the government would take an unequivocal stand for democracy in Africa and the world were highest among scholars and activists within the ANC’s constituency and why the complaint that policy fell far short of the policy documents’ goals was heard repeatedly from foreign affairs specialists in the ANC camp. The most vigorous post-apartheid foreign policy debate was not the interchange between government and opposition but that between the Department of Foreign Affairs, the parliamentary foreign affairs committee dominated by the now governing ANC, and scholars and activists who had worked closely with the new establishment and hoped to shape its policy. And a
key issue in this exchange was the new government’s perceived failure to support the fight for democracy in Africa and the world.9

The post-apartheid government was charged with sins of omission and commission. On the first score, with failing to take the democratic lead which its provenance demanded: ‘t]he world expects more from a democratic South Africa ... After a long struggle for human rights in this country, our new democracy is viewed as a natural leader…’.10 On the second, it was accused of feting dictators who were economically useful - Indonesia’s Suharto was welcomed on a state visit11 which was still being cited as a reproach to Mandela three years later12 - or of co-operating with African autocrats because of a misplaced sense of solidarity: dealings with the Nigerian Abacha junta were cited, until events forced South Africa to take an assertive stance.

The government insisted that a key aspect of its foreign policy was ‘universalism’ – the principle that it would deal with all countries whatever it thought of their ‘internal or external policies’.13 But critics noted that the claim that contact with an undemocratic government did not mean endorsement were repeatedly made by those who retained links with the apartheid government.

In this phase, the government’s commitment to promoting democracy elsewhere seems matched neither by vigorous action nor by credibility among advocates of an active role. Assertions of intent outweigh concrete action and policy lacks credibility.

_Derring-Do In Nigeria and Lesotho, Speaking Loudly in SADC_

The initial expectation that the ANC in government would carry the democratic torch through Africa and the world were inevitably exaggerated. But so too was the claim
that it had turned its back on promoting democracy: As early as 1994, it intervened in Mozambique to support an electoral process in difficulty. Some eighteen months after democracy was achieved, Mandela, on behalf of the government, took an unprecedented stand on a human rights issue with implications for democracy— the execution, in late 1995, of the Nigerian activist and author Ken Saro-Wiwa. He reacted angrily, calling for sanctions against the Nigerian junta and its expulsion from the Commonwealth – a response which was said to have ‘pitched South Africa way ahead of the position of any other African government’ on Nigeria.

This response was unprecedented in post-independence Africa where heads of government tended to rally together. Precisely for that reason, Mandela’s intervention prompted anger from other governments on the continent. The Organisation of African Unity described the call for sanctions as ‘not an African way’ of dealing with a problem while Liberia probably captured prevailing sentiment: ‘…[Liberia] is calling on other African countries to prevail on President Mandela not to allow South Africa to be used in the division and undermining of African solidarity’. Mandela was seen, it was claimed, to be acting in the ‘white man’s way’, following a ‘Western’ approach. Vigorous action against Nigeria by African states did not ensue and South Africa seems to have decided that discretion was the better part of valour: in an address to parliament in May 1996, then deputy president Thabo Mbeki argued that South Africa did not have the leverage to dictate to Nigeria. He suggested that Mandela had been set up for failure by western leaders, some of whom were protecting oil profits and Nigerian assets in their countries.
If this experience discouraged calls for action against authoritarian African governments, it did not deter South Africa from an aggressive and very risky intervention to protect an elected neighbouring government which seemed under threat from a military coup. In September, 1998, South Africa and Botswana, acting formally on behalf of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), despatched troops to the neighbouring kingdom of Lesotho after its elected prime minister, Pakalitha Mosilisi, requested help because he feared a coup. The incursion initially appeared disastrous. The troops faced resistance from the Lesotho army and intervention prompted widespread looting. The action encountered widespread criticism: it seemed a heavy-handed attempt to impose South Africa’s will on a neighbour which severely underestimated local ability to resist. In the fullness of time, however, the incursion could be said to have been justified by democracy’s restoration in Lesotho: academic critics of the action labelled the intervention an ‘unlikely success’ after successful elections in 2002.21

Nor were Mandela and Mbeki discouraged from taking stands in favour of democracy in the SADC region and further afield. In late 1997, after events in Southern Africa had created fears of a retreat from democracy, Mandela used his office as chair of SADC to raise concerns. He added: ‘At some point therefore, we, as a regional organisation, must reflect on how far we support the democratic process and respect for human rights. Can we continue to give comfort to member states whose actions go so diametrically against the values and principles we hold so dear and for which we struggled so long and so hard? Where we have, as we sadly do, instances of member states denying their citizens … basic rights, what should we as an organisation do or say?’22 Months later, Mbeki was as blunt, subjecting governance ills on the continent, including ballot-box stuffing, to a satirical barrage.23
Neither seemed to have been cowed by the disapproval of their peers (which was said to have greeted these interventions too) or to have been seduced into silence by expediency.

While this phase is usually associated primarily with the Mandela administration, and in particular its later period, one aspect endured into the Mbeki presidency: twice, in Zambia and Malawi, he intervened to dissuade presidents from seeking a third term in office which would have entailed a constitutional amendment in both case and would have meant ignoring mobilised public opinion. While this influence did not prevent former Namibian president Sam Nujoma from serving a third term, the Mbeki administration may well have influenced his decision to step down after that term.

In this phase, South Africa is, to a significant degree, doing what the first phase critics want it to do – energetically pursuing democracy, even if this means clashing with autocrats. Among advocates of democracy promotion, the question has shifted from whether it is interested in democracy promotion, to whether it is doing it well. But assertive and public democracy promotion was giving way to a more modest approach.

*Speaking (Largely) in Code*

In the third phase, which continues into the present, South Africa continues to play a role in democracy promotion but influence and intervention is tailored not to confront African leaders and is justified on grounds other than democracy’s merits. There are three aspects to this.
First, interventions which are presented not as democracy promotion but as contributions to conflict resolution. They are pursued within a context in which South Africa seeks to assist other societies in applying the inclusive negotiated settlement model which ended apartheid: ‘The most consistent thread in South Africa’s post-1994 foreign policy forays lay in its efforts to "export" its model of conflict resolution to other situations: this consisted of painstaking compromise and consensus-building and the assimilation of rivals into new, democratic systems. Whether through quiet diplomacy or outright arm-twisting, Pretoria tried this in Mozambique, the former Zaire, Nigeria, Angola and Lesotho’.  

This approach has also been applied to two major international conflicts, Northern Ireland and Palestine/Israel (the former with much greater credibility than the latter). While the most impact may have been achieved not in Africa but in Northern Ireland, where Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams insists that engagement with the ANC helped persuade his movement to abandon violence and pursue a political settlement, continuing attempts to broker peace agreements in Democratic Republic of Congo and Burundi have produced processes which could yield inclusive elections. A key element of this approach is participation in peace-keeping:- ‘overall South African peacekeeping deployments in African countries total 2,800 personnel’.

These interventions are not presented as democracy promotion exercises, but as attempts to settle debilitating conflicts. But, since they entail an attempt to include all political actors in the process and are meant to produce a free and fair election, they are attempts to democratise as well as to prevent violence.
Second, an attempt to channel democratising influences through multi-lateral, continental, institutions. Thus South Africa has played a key role in establishing the African Union (AU) and developing its New Partnership for African Development (Nepad). The AU’s Constitutive Act, adopted in mid-2000, empowered it to ‘intervene in a Member State pursuant to a decision of the Assembly in respect of... war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity.’

Nepad, adopted in 2002, includes a Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic and Corporate Governance which commits African governments to: ‘The rule of law, the equality of all citizens before the law and the liberty of the individual, individual and collective freedoms, including the right to form political parties and trade unions...’ It also introduces an African Peer Review Mechanism which allows states to submit to a peer review, in which civil society is to participate, of their compliance with these norms.

South Africa has sought to act as an exemplar by submitting itself to peer review. This approach obviously seeks to share responsibility and is consistent with an oft-stated South African concern for multi-lateralism as a means of settling disputes which, in the view of some scholars, is evidence of the country’s status as an actual or aspiring ‘middle power’.

Third, democratising influence is exerted through instruments which purport to have another purpose. Thus Nepad is concerned to promote development and ‘good governance’, but proposes, by implication, democratic commitments. Its democracy promoting elements are phrased almost as technical aspects of ‘good governance’ which are required if the continent is to achieve growth, modernity - and foreign aid. The Peer Review Mechanism, while it has been used by some South African civil society organisations as a means of holding government to account for the state of
democracy, is not presented as a measure of democratic achievement, but of a more
general commitment to the growth-oriented and developmental goals of Nepad. This
is, in a sense, a formalisation and elaboration of an earlier Mbeki approach in which
the promise of an African Renaissance with its attendant notions of development and
enhanced international status are proposed as beneficial outcomes of adjustments
which include democratisation.\textsuperscript{36}

In this phase, South Africa has continued to play a role in supporting democracy
promotion, but one performed almost by stealth. Its role is less open to challenge, and
less threatening to power holders. But its impact is greatly reduced by the need to
move at the pace of actors who may be resistant to democracy, or at least to a
substantive version.

\textit{The Fatal Flaw? Zimbabwe}

If South Africa’s response to the challenge of democracy promotion had stopped at
the examples cited thus far, its role could be judged to be benign if sometimes
ineffectual. Lodge points out that it has assisted electoral processes, supported
‘politically negotiated conflict resolution’ in which civil society participation has been
encouraged and persuaded reluctant presidents to observe term limits.\textsuperscript{37} But this
relatively positive evaluation must be greatly modified by post-apartheid South
Africa’s failure to meet the moral and strategic challenge of its most conspicuous
foreign policy test: Zimbabwe.
The events which began when President Robert Mugabe’s government lost a 2000 constitutional referendum, in which attempts to defeat him at the polls have been beaten back by a sustained and often violent authoritarian onslaught, have been exhaustively analysed. Suffice it to say here that South Africa has offered substantial aid and comfort to the Zimbabwean regime by sending official delegations which endorsed elections regarded by independent sources as fraudulent, often ignoring the opposition, seeking to temper international action against Mugabe and remaining silent on human rights abuses.

South Africa has insisted through much of the conflict that it is adopting an even-handed approach which relies on ‘quiet diplomacy’ and is seeking an inclusive negotiated settlement. Accounts sympathetic to its position tell of Mbeki’s frustration with Mugabe and portray a South African administration whose search for a solution within the limits of the possible have run aground on the shoals of intractable reality. But, since Zimbabwean democracy has continued to decline throughout this period and South Africa has appeared to condone this, claims of neutrality have lacked credibility. As a Zimbabwean civil society activist said of repeated official claims that South Africa was avoiding unproductive ‘megaphone diplomacy’ – ‘You are engaged in megaphone diplomacy. But you are pointing the megaphone in the wrong direction.’

Critics who insist that South Africa has not exerted the pressure it could on Zimbabwe include not only the Zimbabwean opposition but President Mbeki’s brother Moeletsi, deputy chair of the SA International Affairs, who has consistently urged a more assertive stance, as well as civil society organisations in Zimbabwe and South
Africa. Even if the complaint that South Africa has supported a sustained attempt by an illegitimate government to crush opposition under a democratic fig leaf is rejected in favour of the government view that it has been trying to resolve a difficult problem in the only possible way, Zimbabwe remains a notable failure because Mbeki and his government have insisted that they are trying to reach a settlement and none is in sight.

More importantly, the South African response to Zimbabwe has severely tarnished the effectiveness of its democracy promotion. It has created an impression of inconsistency and thus expediency – South Africa may well not be able, after Zimbabwe, to return to more vigorous democracy promotion of the sort it attempted in the second phase, even if circumstances seemed to warrant it, because this would raise obvious questions about why abuses were permitted in Zimbabwe but not elsewhere. In effect, the Zimbabwean response may have ensured that South African democratisation efforts will remain limited and conducted by stealth.

It is also possible that, because the response has been justified as a strategy to achieve an inclusive settlement, it may have damaged the credibility of this strategy too. If inclusive negotiation means condoning anything power holders do to the powerless, it is unclear what constraints it places on the former and what hope it offers the latter. While the inclusive style may still enjoy credibility in cases such as Burundi and DRC, where both power holders and challengers have access to arms and the one cannot be considered to be at the mercy of the other, they may now be discredited in cases in which citizens require protection from power holders who hold a monopoly on coercion. Third and finally, it may weaken South Africa’s already limited
influence within the AU and SADC. A key weakness of the multi-lateral instruments South Africa has helped to shape is that they have never been used against Zimbabwe – they have, in reality, never been used against an incumbent government but the failure to act against Zimbabwe is particularly significant given the high profile of its domestic conflict. This creates the impression that they are cosmetic– or, since they have been used against those who challenge African incumbents rather than the incumbents themselves,\textsuperscript{41} that they are a means of shoring up existing power relations. This not only reduces their credibility among actors working for democracy – but also among power holders who do not expect to be held to account by them.

Zimbabwe is, therefore, not simply a limited stain on South Africa’s democratisation record. It is serious enough a blow to the credibility and strategic viability of its role as a democratiser to compromise the entire programme. In essence, it appears to confirm that South Africa’s role as a democracy promoter is now largely limited to doing what power-holders will allow it to do: while it may still assist democracy by helping those countries who are far enough down that road to need the aid of a friendly neighbour, it is now no longer in a position to lead and set direction. Zimbabwe both illustrates and helps to explain the severe limits on South Africa’s role as a promoter of African democracy.

\textbf{The Manacled Giant? Explaining the Limits}

What are we to make of this experience?
One influential strain of analysis sees it as a reminder of the limits which face democracy promotion ambitions. In this view, the new South African made an energetic attempt to spread democracy but was then forced by reality to retreat into a more nuanced stance which acknowledged the limits of foreign policy ‘idealism’, making significant concessions to a more sober ‘realism’.

The evidence for this shift is said to be contained in a 1997 ANC discussion document tabled at its conference that year. While it repeated ‘idealist’ intentions, it placed ‘at the top of the international agenda’ developing a just and equitable world order and also added opposition to colonialism and neo-colonialism as a goal. This was seen as a dilution of the human rights commitment. The document also, it is argued, scaled down the ANC’s human rights ambitions, arguing that South Africa should not ‘overestimate ourselves as a middle income country’. It cited the Nigerian case as an example of the dangers of acting alone and argued for action through multi-lateral bodies. This change, with an agreement on foreign arms purchases ‘(which) signalled new recognition … of the importance of military capability if South Africa was to exercise pan-African influence’ signalled, it is argued, the emergence of a foreign policy which began to acquire consistent characteristics that were to endure into Mbeki’s administration. Key features are a stress on multi-lateralism consistent with an embrace of a role as a ‘middle power’ and a ‘self effacing posture on the continent’.

Two aspects are crucial to this view. First, an assumed unity of purpose within the ANC. While divisions are at times mentioned in passing - consensus on the need for the promotion of democracy and human rights is assumed and debate is implied to
centre on how best to achieve this. Second, policy is seen to evolve in response to external constraints. The chief obstacle to a more assertive and effective policy is external reality which moderates an ‘idealist’ consensus as an eager but inexperienced new government comes to learn that the world is not necessarily hospitable to energetic intervention in support of democracy.

In fairness, the pursuit of democracy in other countries is not purely an act of the will: intervention faces daunting obstacles, generally and in Africa in particular. Where local circumstances in the ‘target’ country are not propitious, little can be done. Even where they are favourable, there are severe constraints. This paper discusses them in an attempt to offer a balanced account of the limits which South Africa’s attempts faced and to contribute to understanding the limits of international democracy promotion. But, in South Africa’s case, the domestic dimension was arguably more important in shaping not only willingness to promote democracy in some places in particular ways, but also in limiting the inclination to do so more generally and vigorously. The ANC’s commitment to democracy promotion was not unambiguous and nor was there necessarily consensus on its desirability. Because it locates the limits on democracy promotion purely in the external environment, the view discussed here misreads the dynamics which shaped South Africa’s policy and action.

This analysis cannot explain why responses which were widely seen as ‘expedient’ contradictions of the ANC’s democracy and human rights commitment were evident before the Nigerian crisis indicated the limits of ‘idealist intervention’ – or why these approaches were also pursued in Asia where South Africa had never tried to promote democracy and can therefore not have abandoned idealism in the face of reality.
Within Africa, the clearest example of ‘realism’ before ‘disillusion’ is Nigeria itself. The period before Saro-Wiwa’s execution was marked by a sympathetic South African attitude to the military government – its foreign minister, Chief Tom Ikimi, was invited to visit Pretoria and used his time to lobby for his government. Delegations of ‘academics’ linked to the junta were hosted by the foreign affairs department. This enthusiasm for ‘constructive engagement’ or tacit support for the junta did not emanate from Mandela – he was said to have been embarrassed by it. The architect, circumstantial evidence suggested, was Mbeki. He had been the ANC representative in Nigeria where he is said to have had contact with Abacha and other military figures (it is impossible to serve as a diplomat in Nigeria without encountering military figures, given that institution’s dominant role). He took a lively interest in foreign affairs as deputy president and was often seen by insiders as the ‘real’ foreign minister. And it was he who delivered the 1996 speech suggesting that Mandela had been ‘set up’ by the West. This adds substance to the theory, proposed at the time, that the depth of Mandela’s anger at the execution was prompted not so much by the Nigerians’ deception but by the assurances of his foreign ministry – and, perhaps, deputy president - that ‘quiet diplomacy’ would save Saro-Wiwa.

In Asia, the ‘universality’ which prompted Mandela to fete Suharto could hardly have been prompted by a chastening encounter with reality. Nor, although it followed the Nigerian events, could the decision in 1996 to recognise the People’s Republic of China, which was not a democracy, rather than Taiwan, which had just become one. The ANC hoped to deal with both countries, but neither’s democratic credentials were at issue: since Taiwan had contributed generously to the ANC’s election expenses and
the post-apartheid government’s reconstruction programme, debate centred around the economic merits of the two relationships – where principle was raised in Taiwan’s support, the rationale was again ‘universalism’, not democracy.\textsuperscript{51}

The account is further undermined by the fact that ‘idealistic’ interventions such as Mandela’s 1997 speech to SADC, Mbeki’s 1998 speech satirising African autocrats and interventions to dissuade neighbouring presidents from seeking third terms followed the Nigerian events and that two of these interventions were attempted after the 1997 discussion document.

Nor, finally, do these analyses allow for diversity within the ANC on the merits of democracy promotion itself. Thus the 1997 document is presented as a unified ANC response to external complexity. A closer look invites a different view. Unlike other ANC and government documents on this question it offers a left-wing analysis of international realities, albeit a pragmatic one. While welcoming some consequences of the end of the Cold War, it adds: ‘the collapse of the Soviet Union had the effect of reducing international support for national liberation struggles, as well as the absence of space and support for developing countries to develop alternative economic and political policies relatively independently from the ideas set out by the Western capitalist countries’. It sees a ‘need to break neo-colonial relations between Africa and the world's economic powers’ and discusses options for seeking a more egalitarian agenda in a unipolar world. And, while endorsing multi-party democracy, it observes that ‘multi-party systems have been introduced in Africa in circumstances where other conditions have had the effect of weakening the capacity of governments to stop the explosion of ethnic war’.\textsuperscript{52} It is of some importance that, when the document was
drafted, the chair of the ANC National Executive’s International Affairs committee was SA Communist Party general secretary Blade Nzimande.\textsuperscript{53}

This does not mean that the document was the ANC left’s attempt to take over foreign policy and lead it in a direction in which socialist concerns about inequality would trump liberal preoccupation with democracy. The document, and ANC alignments, are more complicated than that. It could not have been published if the ANC leadership did not want it circulated and Nzimande was not the only person responsible for international policy. There are many continuities between it and other government and ANC policy pronouncements. And it does foreshadow some later foreign policy directions – a more active role in championing Southern concerns in world trade negotiations and a part in designing the AU.

But parts take a stance unusual for ANC foreign policy documents before or after it, it is the one document at the time to warn of limits to multi-party democracy, and some of the approaches it advocates, such as ‘the strengthening of party-to-party relations with progressive parties in the region and the continent’ or ‘cementing solidarity amongst the progressive forces in the world based on the principles of anti-colonialism, anti-imperialism and a democratic world order’ have not been adopted. This suggests that it was not an announcement of a new direction but a proposal, strongly influenced by the ANC’s left, some of which was ignored. This makes it the product of wrestling within the ANC, not only between sections of the movement but within them, not over how to promote democracy but over whether this should be a priority at all. And the fact that parts of it have proved influential and parts have not
may be a product of the extent to which ANC thinking on these issue is fraught with ambiguities on whether to promote democracy as well as on how to do it.

But these domestic dynamics do not occur in a vacuum: external constraints do influence them.

A Fragile Undertaking in a Hostile Neighbourhood: External Constraints

Democracy promotion is an uncertain and complex undertaking in Africa, particularly so.

Firstly, it can invite resistance from threatened power holders. Even where those in power do not overtly oppose attempts to democratise their societies, they may be able to employ effective stratagems to ensure that ‘democratisation’ does not threaten them. Since democracy promotion inevitably entails incursions into Westphalian understandings of sovereignty, governing elites can insist that they are being subjected to the imperial attentions of meddling foreigners. The issue is complicated by the reality that the line between democracy promotion and imperial imposition can be exceeding thin – witness current events in the Middle East and the continuing controversy surrounding democracy promotion in Venezuela.

Secondly, even where democracy promotion has the consent of the governing elite, crafting appropriate interventions may often require an intricate understanding of local complexities well beyond those undertaking the intervention. Since democracy promotion is hardly an exact science, effective strategies may be the
subject of heated debate even among those with sufficient local knowledge – to expect those who lack it to be well placed to intervene effectively is to ignore the reality that assisting democracy is a fragile process in which defeats are often glaringly visible, successes rare and difficult to explain.

Thirdly, democracy promoting governments, like governments which seek to promote other goals abroad – such as poverty reduction – may experience a tension between their relationship with the ‘partner’ country and the stated objective. Where the stated goal conflicts with cordial diplomatic relations, promoting particular outcomes is likely to take a back seat to imperatives such as trade promotion (and even if democracy promoting governments were to place principle ahead of the bilateral relationship, the costs of pursuing democracy in the face of opposition from the host government might ensure that the obstacles became insuperable).

In Africa, these complexities are enhanced. Despite seemingly dramatic progress towards democracy – 49 of its 52 countries held competitive elections between 1989 and 1997\textsuperscript{58} - substantive progress towards democratic regimes is uncertain. Electoral competition is often accompanied by authoritarian features: many of the continent’s elites are adept at offering a semblance of democratic appearance while abrogating its substance.\textsuperscript{59} In several important cases, states remain fractured by deep-rooted conflicts – in some cases after elections whose results are disputed. And, in many African countries, the state is weak and largely insulated from the social pressures which might keep elites accountable to citizens.\textsuperscript{60} In these cases, plausible domestic partners able to advance democratisation are difficult to imagine. South Africa’s
efforts have, therefore, been constrained to a degree by the complexities of the environment with which its democracy promotion efforts must be pursued.

The Burden of History

If the resistance of power-holders in countries seen to be need of democratisation is a general problem for democracy promotion, for post-apartheid South Africa, the history of apartheid and its fight against it make intervention in support of democracy far more complex.

The support of other African states was a key resource for the ANC during the ‘struggle’ period. While the intervention of major Northern powers may have turned the international tide against apartheid, the rest of the continent played a major role when the ANC was its lowest ebb, providing not only a voice in international forums but, more practically, a home for the exiled movement not too far from the country it was seeking to change. Diplomatic dealings with other African governments were a major focus of the anti-apartheid campaign. More tangibly, states such as Nigeria lavishly supported the ANC’s 1994 election campaign, prompting charges by the opposition that foreign policy was shaped by the ANC’s ‘electoral debts’.  

During this engagement, links were forged with African governing elites: key ANC figures in exile, and in particular Mbeki and deputy foreign minister Aziz Pahad (who worked together during the exile period) had come to know African heads of government well – they were, in a sense, part of the African governments’ ‘club’ well before they took office. It was therefore predictable that they would be reluctant to do
battle against leaders with whom they had worked for years. This barrier to opposing authoritarian regimes in Africa was unevenly distributed within the ANC. Leaders such as Mandela, who spent three decades of the fight against apartheid in prison, and those activists who had fought the system through domestic activism had not formed these relationships and were therefore not influenced by personal ties. This may partly explain the difference between Mandela’s and Mbeki’s reactions to the Nigerian crisis. But this history did influence responses to African autocracies.

The fact that democracy was achieved by a negotiated transition acted as a constraint in at least two, related, ways. Because apartheid-era personnel still served in the military, governments could reject direct South African intervention in peace and democratisation processes on the grounds that this would allow the same military which had destabilised its neighbours while apartheid reigned back into countries they had sought to undermine. The prime example was Angola, where apartheid-era South African troops had fought on the side of the UNITA movement – Angolan President Jose Eduardo dos Santos’s apparent desire to avoid a South African presence no doubt stemmed from the perception that this would bring back some of the troops who fought his MPLA movement.

The negotiated transition also offered autocrats a handy means of deflecting South African appeals to democratise by insisting that the post-apartheid government was a puppet of white interests – the tactic used by the Nigerian junta after Mandela urged its removal from the Commonwealth: ‘The bitter Nigerian response envisaged Mandela as the black leader of a white state – implying that his white officials … had led him by the nose…’62 Vulnerability to being portrayed as a servant of the white
establishment may also explain why, in the last year of the Mandela administration, Mugabe was able to isolate South Africa within the SADC when it challenged his monopoly on its Organ of Politics and Security.

Some scholars and diplomats suggest that post-apartheid South Africa found itself in much the same position as Germany and Japan after World War Two – its democratisation did not outweigh its neighbours’ memories of it as a domineering, expansionist, power. This limited influence since, while there were expectations that the newly democratic state would play a benign role in the lives of its neighbours, energetic intervention would be seen as an attempt to revive past hegemony- or would be portrayed in that light by authoritarians who did not want to be told how to govern.

**The Trojan Horse: Domestic Constraints**

But analyses which go only this far ignore the reality that democracy promotion, like other foreign policy goals, is pursued by governments whose societies are not necessarily united on ends or means. Attempts to promote democracy are inevitably filtered through a domestic political lens which constrains and shapes policy.

The ‘realist’ notion that states always seek to act in their own interests has, therefore, been criticised for viewing the state as a ‘unitary’ actor which harbours only one conception of its interests. By contrast, models such as Robert Putnam’s theory of the two-level game which analyses international bargaining as the outcome of an interplay between the domestic and the external stress the role of domestic interest group conflict on international behaviour. This is not the place to discuss models for
understanding the domestic dimension of foreign policy.\textsuperscript{65} Suffice it to say that there is a vital domestic dimension to democracy promotion which often makes it the subject of heated contest in democracy promoting countries. \textsuperscript{66} Nor are understandings of what is to be exported and why necessarily coherent.\textsuperscript{67} Accounts of democracy promotion which ignore the crucial role of ambiguity and contest in the democracy-promoting country – and therefore assume a coherence and consensus on what is to be done if not on how to do it - are likely to offer a misleading picture. The South African case illustrates this.

\textit{Promoting What?}

Contrary to conventional wisdom, ensuring that Africa becomes democratic is not a core concern of the post-apartheid government.

This does not mean that the ANC in government has turned its back on its ‘freedom struggle’. On the contrary, it has remained true to it, for the fight against \textit{apartheid} was not primarily a struggle for democracy but for majority rule: a seminal history is, appropriately, not called an account of the ‘Black Man's Struggle for Freedom’. \textsuperscript{68} The ANC and its allies were not unsympathetic to democracy. But the primary rationale of the ‘struggle’ was the liberation of black people from racial minority rule. Democracy and human rights were invaluable tools in that ‘struggle’ and this ensured a more enthusiastic commitment to democracy than might have been expected after a brutal conflict. But they were means, not ends. Similarly, South African democracy is not a product of a fight for democratic freedoms but of a balance of power which ensured that majority rule would be achieved by negotiating a liberal democratic constitution.\textsuperscript{69}
This concern with racial subjugation did not end when apartheid fell. Post-apartheid politics have been underpinned by a pervasive theme often not stated overtly: whites expect a black government to fail and the leaders of that government know they do. It is, therefore, a key preoccupation of much of the new governing elite to demolish these assumptions by demonstrating that black people can govern an industrialised society. This, more than concern for democratic depth, is considered likely to show whites that assumptions of black inferiority are myths.

The chief concern of post-apartheid governance has not been to deepen democracy or pursue growth but to prove white prejudices wrong by showing the black people can govern.

This also clearly underpins understanding of engagement with the rest of Africa. Mbeki’s 1998 speech poking fun at Africa’s failure to get its house in order looks at this issue through the eyes of the citizens of Dead Man’s Creek, Mississippi, who are told that an African Renaissance has begun, removing them of the obligation to pay for intervention in Africa, but discover, through nightly news bulletins, that nothing on the continent had changed. The complaint is that African leaders are behaving in ways which ensure that white, Western, people have a low opinion of them. The desire to refute these opinions by building an Africa which is modern, sophisticated and in control of its destiny is the driving force behind Mbeki’s notion of an ‘African Renaissance’ and the Nepad document, which plays a key role in South Africa’s engagement with Africa (the Nepad secretariat is based in South Africa). The key objective of South African strategy in Africa is not a democratic continent, but one which can win respect by becoming the kind of place which bigots believe it can never be. Democracy is embraced as a means to this end.
This explains the patterns we have described here far more plausibly than the notion of an enthusiastic democratiser running up against unpleasant realities. If we situate South Africa’s democracy promotion within a concern to refute international prejudice, we understand some of the ambiguity and unevenness. Is the goal better served by ignoring or defending democratic deficits in Africa because highlighting them can only enhance white Western prejudice – or by highlighting them in the hope of changing them? The answer is both, depending on circumstances and context. In Zimbabwe, the former prevails, for the conflict is the only one discussed here in which criticisms of government behaviour are closely tied to race; Europe and America are often accused of highlighting violations in Zimbabwe because white farmers have been among the victims in that country. It is far easier to see criticism of Mugabe as a pandering to bigotry than a similar response to Nigeria or Lesotho.

Nor should the tendency to cloak democratisation in developmental and technical garb – or to present it as a by-product of conflict resolution - be seen purely as a manoeuvre designed to seduce authoritarians into democratisation. South Africa promotes inclusive settlements and urges the adoption of democracy as part of a wider attempt to enhance the effectiveness and international credibility of African states because it too sees democracy as a means to a wider end. The approach is less a response to intractable external realities as an expression of the South African governing elite’s understanding of Africa’s needs and challenges.

The attempt to ‘export’ the South African model of conflict resolution and democratisation is also consistent with this concern. One symptom of the desire to
refute prejudice is a preoccupation with South Africa as a source of ‘world class’ contributions which demonstrate Africans’ ability to enrich humanity – anything from the post-1994 constitution to financial services may be presented as ‘world class’ to show what the country has to offer.

Exporting a model of conflict resolution is one further way of demonstrating ‘world class’ status.

That South Africa’s desire to encourage democracy is part of a wider concern to restore black self-esteem does not necessarily devalue it. But it does introduce dilemmas, ambiguities and contradictions which explain policy and action– as well as the different trajectories it has taken and the varying perspectives towards it within the ruling elite. At times, differing strategies and views have existed side-by-side –in the same policy documents or in the approaches of the same politicians. This has less to do with confusion than with the reality that the pursuit of democracy has to be weighed against other goals to which it is subordinate. While it has never been ditched – either because it has become too deeply a part of ANC thinking or because strategic realities dictate this – it has always to compete with them.

To offer a full picture of South African democracy promotion, this factor must be combined with the paradoxical insularity of South Africa’s international interventions.

*Promoting or Projecting?*

Assumptions that South Africa is committed to a coherent project of promoting democracy elsewhere are also partly based on a misapprehension of its elite’s relation to the world.
For decades, the contending forces in South Africa were locked in a battle which was played out to a considerable degree in the world arena. Winning world support was a key component in the strategies of the apartheid government and the ANC. The negotiation process which ended apartheid began with substantial backroom diplomacy as representatives of the major powers sought to induce a settlement. And, during, much of the first two years of the 1990s, the process appeared to be playing as much to a foreign audience as a domestic one.\textsuperscript{75} Even during the negotiations of 1993, when the parties were seeking a compromise (rather than contesting to win the international ‘moral high ground’), international influence was significant in shaping positions.\textsuperscript{76} This forced the ANC into a diplomatic role which it performed with great effect, raising expectations that foreign policy would be the arena in which it would perform most proficiently in government.

But the concern for engagement with the world during the apartheid era was, in an important sense, illusory: relations with other states and actors was about apartheid and nothing else. A key preoccupation of the apartheid government was winning international legitimacy.\textsuperscript{77} The ANC’s international role was to deny it that and to win support for sanctions: so central was this focus that, for much of the exile period, guerrilla war, dubbed ‘armed propaganda’ by the ANC leadership, was designed more as a diplomatic weapon than an instrument to overthrow the white-ruled state.\textsuperscript{78} As its campaign to win support for the anti-apartheid ‘struggle’ gathered momentum in the West, this required that it remain fairly bland on international issues for fear of antagonising major powers.
While the international context was strongly embedded in the consciousness of whites and blacks, it was only in the context of apartheid. Within the resistance tradition of which the ANC was part, world opinion had always played a central role: it was seen, excessively at times, as a key to freedom. One of the earliest responses to segregation by the Western educated leaders who founded the ANC was to send a delegation to London to request the British king to intervene on behalf of his black subjects; petitioning the colonial authorities was a central theme in ANC strategy until the 1940s. Nor was reliance on external influence restricted to the elite: in 1921, Wellington Butelezi, a herbalist and preacher, rallied a mass movement by promising that black Americans would arrive in aeroplanes to free black South Africans. The reliance on intervention from abroad was an expression of real or perceived powerlessness which remained a crucial element of resistance strategy into the 1990s.

In exile, the ANC established diplomatic missions throughout the world and was afforded a presence in significantly more countries than the government. Its aim, however, was single-minded – to win support for the fight against apartheid.

There was, therefore, much interaction with the world – but the goal was not to establish what South Africa could do for the world but what the world could do for South Africa. ‘This forced the ANC … to develop a narrow and highly parochial view of the world’. The ANC in exile did not concern itself with international human rights issues: it was single-mindedly set on attracting support for its fight against apartheid. The oft-stated expectation that a movement which had made human rights virtually its raison d’etre during the apartheid period would champion this cause vigorously after defeating the system might have made good polemics, but was faulty
analysis. Seeking resources to sustain the post-apartheid order was a continuity, not an inexplicable departure from tradition.

Again, this explains key aspects of the democracy promotion agenda, in particular the complaints of expediency. ‘Universality’, which has sometimes prompted friendliness to authoritarians, can also be traced back to a desire to get on with anyone who has anything to offer South Africa, whatever their human rights record. Asked in 1990 for his response to human rights abuses in other countries, Mandela replied: ‘Our attitude to any country is determined by (its) attitude..towards our struggle.’ For the ANC apartheid was not simply a human rights issue – it was the human rights issue. The highest form of human rights commitment was, therefore, opposition to apartheid. Domestic human rights performance was, in comparison, unimportant.

This raises the possibility that one spur for democracy promotion was not ‘idealist’ concern but a desire to impress trading partners and sources of investment. Certainly, an emphasis on 'selling' the new democracy to investors and trading partners - one foreign service cadet complained that he felt he was being trained to become a 'global hamburger salesman' - was a key feature of early post-apartheid foreign relations. The inward looking nature of outward relations made it possible to view a scramble to persuade anyone with money to direct it towards a new South Africa not as a compromise with democratic principle but a means of promoting it since the growth of post-apartheid South Africa was the ultimate contribution to democracy and human rights. Democracy promotion could be, partly, another means to that end.
As the end of apartheid has become distant, this influence may seem to have diminished – ‘self-effacing’ democracy promotion is unlikely to help investment. But key aspects of this experience persist, most notably in responses to Zimbabwe. The conflict is one between a ‘liberation’ party which is seen to have won independence for its country and a trade union-led civil society movement which, in 2000, successfully challenged its status as guardian of the nation. While the ANC leadership has achieved electoral dominance, a significant check on its power and challenge to its leadership is the Congress of SA Trade Unions (Cosatu), ironically an ANC ally, and a range of civil society organisations.\(^8^4\) While media speculation that Cosatu plans a worker’s party to challenge the ANC is unlikely to be vindicated, this possibility clearly weighs on the minds of ANC leaders. It is, therefore, perhaps significant that, when a senior official in the Presidency was asked at a confidential meeting why South Africa seemed cool towards the Zimbabwean opposition, he replied that it was led by trade unionists who were, everywhere, not equipped to run countries.\(^8^5\) The obvious implication is that the Mbeki administration saw the idea of a trade union-led civil society coalition unseating a ‘liberation’ party as a precedent unhelpful to South Africa’s development. What the Zimbabwean conflict may say about South Africa was far more important than what South Africa might say about the conflict.

This issue would not arise if the future of South African democracy seemed largely settled. Inevitably, it is not. Only twelve years after a severe conflict in which none of the parties saw democracy as an end in itself, democracy’s future and merits are still in doubt. This, taken with South Africa’s ‘inward outwardness’, means that promoting democracy elsewhere will inevitably be filtered through a response which keeps a
weather eye on the implications for South Africa’s own democratic prospects. And it may well be that a ‘self effacing’ approach, in which the democratisation burden can be shared and subsumed into other objectives, best fits the circumstances of a new elite uncertain of the democratic future of the society which it governs. If South Africa’s current power holders were more certain of its prospects, they may have clearer ideas of what they would like to promote elsewhere. It may be decades before they are surer and the low-key approach may reflect this.

**Conclusion: What Can We Learn?**

Does South Africa’s experience tell us about the circumstances of one country at one time or does it have a more general application?

Again, the answer is both. South Africa’s circumstances are unusual even if they are not perhaps unique: the role of self-image and identity in promoting human rights and democracy internationally may tell us much about post-independence India’s foreign policy, for example. 86

But the importance of the example may lie less in this key aspect than in what it tells us about our understanding of attempts by states to promote democracy abroad. It warns against expecting a coherent approach from states whose democracy is far from established and who will inevitably filter their role abroad through their own ambivalence and uncertainty about their democratic future. But, more generally, it warns against too sanguine a view of the capacity of states to promote democracy elsewhere – not only because the external constraints are very real but also because
the attempt will be filtered through domestic concerns which ensure that democracy promotion may tell us as much about the frailties, ambiguities and dilemmas of the promoting country as it does about those among whom it is to be promoted.

This does not mean that claims by states, including those which are newly democratic, to be promoting democracy in other states should be discounted— even South Africa’s modest, sometimes incoherent and often ineffective strategy has achieved democracy in Lesotho and the possibility of inclusive government in Burundi and Democratic Republic of Congo. And its influence on Nepad and the AU, while not apparent in concrete action yet, may still bear fruit, subtly constraining autocrats. But it does mean that the already sobering realisation that democracy promoting countries may be constrained from effectiveness by inadequate knowledge and a need to co-exist with ‘targeted’ governments must be complemented by a recognition of the key role of domestic preoccupations in further limiting the possible of democracy promotion.
NOTES

1 Adekeye Adebajo The Pied Piper of Pretoria Human Sciences Research Council, April 2006
www.hsrc.ac.za/research/programmes/DG/events/20060411_adekeye_adebajo.pdf -


3 US Department of State Secretary Christopher's visit to South Africa - Secretary of State Warren Christopher, South African
President Nelson Mandela – Transcript" US Department of State Dispatch October 14, 1996

4 Barber, ‘Mandela’s World’; Tom Lodge Quiet diplomacy in Zimbabwe: a case study of South Africa in Africa

5 Nelson Mandela ‘South Africa’s Future Foreign Policy' Foreign Affairs 72, 5, pp. 86-97

6 African National Congress' Foreign Policy Perspective in a Democratic South Africa, Johannesburg, ANC, December 1994,

7 Barber ‘Mandela’s World’, p.92

8 LH ‘Rusty’ Evans, the apartheid government’s last head of the foreign ministry and the new democracy's first, spelled out the
‘realist’ perspective in LH Evans South African Foreign Policy and the New World Order, Pretoria, Institute for Strategic
Studies, Pretoria University, Paper 4, 1993

9 “In his ...inaugural address, the new President made no reference to the troubles in Angola, Mozambique, Somalia or, more
See also John Daniel ‘The GNU’s Foreign Policy Initiatives and Responses’ in Chris Landsberg, Garth le Pere and Anthoni van
Nieuwkerk (eds.), Mission Imperfect: Redirecting South Africa’s Foreign Policy, Johannesburg, Foundation for Global

10 Vernon Seymour, Global Dialogue, Human Rights and Foreign Policy: Will South Africa Please Lead ?, Southern African
Perspectives, 55, Centre For Southern African Studies, University of the Western Cape, Cape Town, 1996, p. 1.

11 ‘SA rolls out red carpet for Suharto' Daily Dispatch 21/11/1997

12 Heather Robertson ‘17 People, 10 Years. Where are they now? Part Two' Sunday Times 30/1/2000 refers to Mandela’s
‘perceived support of human rights abusers like Indonesia’s General Suharto ’

13 Government submission to National Assembly Foreign Affairs portfolio committee cited in Barber “Mandela’s World”, p.92

14 Barber, ‘Mandela’s World’, p. 100


16Loud silence as leaders ponder Nigeria problem’ Mail and Guardian 24/11/1995


Diescho ‘Limits’, p.9

Adebajo, ‘Pied Piper’


24 Lodge ‘Quiet Diplomacy’


26 Hein Marais ‘South Africa carries a big stick’ *Le Monde Diplomatique* March 1999

27 Former chief ANC constitutional negotiator Cyril Ramaphosa was one of two people appointed to inspect IRA weapons dumps in an attempt to advance the Northern Irish ‘decommissioning’ process. ‘Full text of the statement on the Inspection of IRA weapons dumps by Martti Ahtisaari and Cyril Ramaphosa’ *The Irish Times* 26/6/ 2000

28 On a visit to South Africa in October 2005, Adams said that ‘speaking to “comrades in the ANC” was gratifying, as he realised that decisions made by both sides were similar, which emboldened Sinn Fein as they knew they were on the right path’. *SA Institute for International Affairs* *Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams at SAI* [http://www.saiia.org.za/modules.php?op=modload&name=News(file=article&aid=749&CAMSSID=ff662229c3137d3e37b3959bc8aebb](http://www.saiia.org.za/modules.php?op=modload&name=News(file=article&aid=749&CAMSSID=ff662229c3137d3e37b3959bc8aebb)


30 ‘President Thabo Mbeki is expected to attend the signing of an agreement on political and military principles between the Burundian government and the FNL in Tanzania today. But the peace talks …have reportedly hit a deadlock …’. ‘Mbeki to attend signing of Burundi agreement’ *SABC News*, 17 June, 2006 [http://www.sabcnews.com/africa/east_africa/0,2172,129502,00.html](http://www.sabcnews.com/africa/east_africa/0,2172,129502,00.html)
Lodge, ‘Quiet Diplomacy’

Constitutive Act of the African Union Article 4h

The New Partnership for Africa’s Development Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic and Corporate Governance Section 7

38th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the OAU: African Peer Review Mechanism 8 July, 2002 Durban, South Africa


These are, of course, the themes struck in Mbeki’s speech cited in note 23

Lodge, ‘Quiet Diplomacy’


Lodge ‘Quiet diplomacy’

In 2002, The AU initially refused to recognise Madagascar’s President, Marc Ravalomanana, who defeated incumbent Didier Ratsiraka after the Supreme Court declared him the lawful winner. His opponents insisted that this manner of winning was ‘unconstitutional’ and therefore violated the AU’s ban on recognising governments who attain power unconstitutionally. Even after his victory was recognised by all parties, the AU ban stood. While it was later lifted, it was seen as evidence that provisions which appeared to entrench democratic principle were being used to protect incumbents. Afrol News ‘Madagascar returns to normalcy without Africa’ 11/7/2002 http://www.afrol.com/News2002/mad042_au_reconciliation.htm

Barber, ‘Mandela’s ‘World’, Lodge ‘Quiet Diplomacy’.  


Barber ‘Mandela’s World’ p.119

Lodge ‘Quiet Diplomacy’

Barber sees the 1997 conference document as the expression of an ‘unresolved debate, and a contradiction within the party and the government’. ‘Mandela’s World’, p. 120

Barber ‘Mandela’s World’ p. 109
The author was director of a research institute at the time. It was contacted by the Department of Foreign Affairs and asked to meet a delegation from a Nigerian research institute. Most members of the delegation held military rank and we were informed by Nigerian exiles that they were closely linked to the Abacha government.

Mandela was reported to have been ‘embarrassed by the Foreign Affairs Ministry over Nigeria’. ‘How well did the Cabinet do this year?’ Mail and Guardian 22 December 1995

Barber ‘Mandela’s World’, p.16

Barber ‘Mandela’s World, pp. 106-108’

ANC ‘Developing a Strategic Perspective’

African National Congress ‘Section Four: Activities of the National Executive Committee’ 50th National Conference

Documents


Thomas Carothers ‘The Backlash Against Democracy Promotion’ Foreign Affairs, March/April 2006

For a critique arguing that US democracy promotion is imperial imposition see Joshua Kurlantzick ‘The Coup Connection’ Mother Jones November/December 2004

Maxine Reitzes and Steven Friedman Funding freedom?: synthesis report on the impact of foreign political aid to civil society organisations in South Africa Johannesburg, Centre for Policy Studies 2001


Barber ‘Mandela’s World’, p.115

Kenneth Waltz, Man, the State and War, New York, Columbia University Press, 1959

Robert Putnam ‘Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games’ International Organization, Number 42, Summer 1988, pp. 427-460

I make the attempt in Steven Friedman ‘The Forgotten Sovereign: citizens, states and foreign policy in the south’ in Justin Robertson and Maurice A East (eds) Diplomacy and Developing Nations: Post-Cold War foreign policy-making structures and processes Abingdon, Routledge, 2005

For current European debates see Richard Youngs (ed) Survey of European Democracy Promotion Policies 2000-2006, Fundación para las Relaciones Internacionales y el Diálogo Exterior (Fride), Madrid, 2006

‘South Africa: Divided In a Special Way’ in Diamond, Larry, Linz, Juan and Lipset, Seymour Martin (eds.), Politics in Developing Countries, Lynne Rienner, 1995.

The attitude is not restricted to South African whites. A (white) mining executive tells of visiting fund managers in North America and Western Europe in an attempt to raise investment capital. His and his colleagues’ pitch consisted largely of references to healthy economic fundamentals and progress in resolving conflicts. ‘But you have a black government' many of his audiences responded.

Discussion, senior mining executive, 1995.


Mbeki ‘Address to Dialogue on Smart Partnership’


Steven Friedman "Getting Better Than "World Class": The Challenge of Governing Postapartheid South Africa" Social Research Vol. 72, No. 3 (Fall 2005)


The term ‘armed propaganda’ was meant as a recruiting device within the country. But diplomatic activity was, through much of the period, as crucial an ANC strategy as insurrection. Until the early 1980s, the ANC eschewed attacks on civilians, partly in an attempt to emphasise the morality of its endeavour. See for example Tom Lodge, ‘The African National Congress, 1983’ in South African Review Two, Johannesburg, Ravan, 1984, pp.21-25.

Roux ‘Time Longer than Rope, p. 110

Roux, ibid., pp.140-141

Diescho ‘Limits’, p. 11/12
82 ABC Nightline, 21/6/1990 cited in Diescho ‘Limits’

83 Exchange with the author during lecture at Foreign Service Institute, 1995


85 Discussion, March 2004

86 Zondi Masiza and Chris Landsberg In Nehru’s footsteps? Two perspectives on India’s post-independence foreign policy and its relevance to South Africa Johannesburg, Centre for Policy Studies, 1996