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# Introduction: Africa - Rethinking Security

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## Abstract

*Following independence a number of African states were content to seek protection under the security umbrella of an external power. The end of the cold war has called this clientelism sharply into question, facilitating a variety of challenges to the political hegemony of the state and the emergence at the same time of new and diffuse forms of force, wielded by private as well as official entrepreneurs of violence. Liberalisation and state weakness have encouraged a growing private market in security, making possible novel ways of articulating political, commercial, and military agendas. The resulting "crisis of security" is forcing both state and non-state, domestic and external actors to rethink security concepts and architectures, in cooperation as well as competition with each other.*

## Introduction

"Security" has become the big issue in Africa in the 1990s; because during the last decade, Africans have been subjected to an extraordinary variety of sources and forms of violence: civil wars, ethnic pogroms, religious conflict, political repression, forced migrations, and the upheaval associated with structural adjustment. As well, the end of the Cold War has brought a remarkable "wave of peace" to some of the continent's most durable armed conflicts, but at the same time has sharply undermined existing security paradigms and practices, intensifying the "security predicament" (Ayoob 1995) of some African states, and giving rise in the process to complex new forms and permutations of force, within and beyond the state. In response to these developments, African states and civil society, as well as foreign donors and powers, are seeking to reconfigure (in collaboration as well as competition) security concepts and architectures. One may also note some paradox in the way that debates on security in Africa have developed in the process. By the

end of the 1980s, critics were arguing that "security" needed to extend beyond its political and military meaning to encompass other forms of security, such as the satisfaction of basic needs, the right to a sustainable environment, and protection of cultural and religious identity, and so on. These critics have also sought to understand not only the systemic sources of violence embedded in the domestic and global orders including those associated with capitalist economic restructuring but also how the practices of the state itself have constituted a fundamental source of insecurity, not only in the political but also in the social and ideological realms. However, the genocidal conflicts in Somalia, Rwanda, Algeria, Liberia and Sierra Leone have led to the discussion being refocused once again on the most primordial meaning of security, as the right to protection from physical abuse and attack. Physical safety became the preeminent concern for many Africans as states collapsed and were unable to generate fundamental conditions for protection of life. Thus both the "primordial" and 'extended' notions of security are being problematised in tandem.

The erosion or collapse of security infrastructures in Africa is linked in turn to broader and longer-run problems of governance and development, as well as developments at the core of the international system of power and its arms economy. However, while "governance and 'development' received considerable emphasis from donors in the 1980s, issues of "security"" (like those of the arms economy) received very little attention although by the mid-1990s this would change as concerns about the stability of African states grew. Depending on how it is viewed, "security" is both a dependent and independent variable, a cause as well as effect of both governance and development outcomes. The relationship between governance and security is both intimate and obvious. First, governance is about both creating and assuring conditions of security, and is at the same time necessarily underpinned by the management of the instruments of violence. The capacity for legitimate use of coercion is a cornerstone of governance. Secondly, governance involves the effective administration, regulation and control of the instruments of violence. However, we need to speak not only of governance and security but also of governance *of* or *over* security: of governance not only as the projection of security but also as the effective management of the institutions of violence, i.e. the security apparatuses. This is due in part to a paradox of security. Rulers may discover that the attempt to strengthen internal security also increases the power of "strongmen" within their security apparatus, and hence the threat to the ruler himself. Extending the monopoly of the state over security is thus liable to increase the insecurity of the ruler, as "strongmen" arise within the very organs of security. This is the source of what may be termed the "ruler's security dilemma". Deliberately weakening the power of the direct controllers of violence is an option, attractive in the short-term but potentially fatal in the long-term. However, this "security dilemma" is not confined to the ruler. Managers of the

security apparatus, as repositories of power, also face their own governance challenges: first, in terms of the technical efficiency of the production of force, and second, in terms of similar threats of "strongmen" from within the ranks of the institution. In many African armies and security forces informal links and structures of power, based on such factors as ethnic, family and political connections, count much more than formal hierarchy and lines of command. Hence, a key issue in the outcome of governance is how holders of political power and managers of coercion relate to each other, as well as respond to institutional and political challenges from "strongmen" within constituencies under their formal control.

The relationship between the three variables of governance, security and development may be seen in the triple basis of the modern state, namely: (a) social and territorial control; (b) monopoly over the legitimate use of force; and (c) accumulation of and the drive for revenue. These facets of the foundation of the state are driven by different forces and entail dealing with different constituencies, and are brought together by the political entrepreneur, ideally in a formula that enhances political accountability and responsiveness, security, economic growth and state revenues. Such an outcome is not assured, given the fundamental conflict between popular sovereignty (political legitimacy), market sovereignty (accumulation), and the bureaucratically organised interests of the state itself (power, in other words).

However, *security* is the crucial historical variable in the rise of the state. According to Tilly, states arose as a "security racket", trading protection to merchants and others in return for revenues and other services, and in the process providing a framework for the organisation of production, exchange and accumulation (Tilly 1985). A similar thesis has been advanced by Hymer and others to explain the rise of African empires, which were able to extract monopoly rent in return for extending military protection to long-distance traders (Hymer 1970, Terray 1974). War (as well as other forms of external competition) did for the state what competition in the marketplace did for the entrepreneur: it disciplined the state, forcing it to hone its capacities and extend its control over internal populations and resources, the price of failure being collapse or takeover by a rival state.

In administering this "racket", the ruler has to respond to several challenges. One is what we have already termed the "ruler's security dilemma", namely, those who *organise* the racket are liable to be displaced by those who actually *execute* the racket. Thus the reliability and efficiency of the ruler's security implements are in potential conflict with each other. A second problem is: how to fund the racket? The avenues have included predation, trading monopolies, taxing and borrowing from merchants, seeking protection under the wings of a foreign patron, and growing taxation of citizens (getting citizens to pay for their own protection or, as is at least as likely to be the case, repression). Tilly refers to taxation to suggest a counter-intuitive link between military and coercive power and the development

of political accountability: warfare creates expanding demand for taxes and revenue, which in turn allows the lower strata to demand a voice in decision-making. Whatever the merits of this argument, we do know that historically, the consolidation of the state's coercive power and territorial and social control has proceeded in tandem with the activation of civil society and its ability to press demands on the state and defend its rights against arbitrary power, together forming the contradictory basis to modern statehood and citizenship.

"Security rackets" also benefited from economies of scale. Herein lay the superiority of the modern territorial state as opposed to, say, princely municipalities and tribal kingdoms; particularly as the growing sophistication and cost of armaments dictated increasing centralisation of the instruments of violence. After the Second World War, we see an unprecedented growth in the scale of the security racket, both in territorial terms (*supra*-nationality), and in the technical sophistication of production. In other words, the security racket went global, with its own hierarchies, centres and peripheries, and patrons and clients. It no longer encompassed merely states and their national populations, but also the community of states as such, formalised in global alliances. Pushing wares designed to enhance the security of states became one of the most lucrative political, diplomatic and commercial rackets available. "Security" was articulated to hegemonic objectives that made it possible for patrons to subsidise at least part of the cost of reproducing the security of the client state. Hence, at the global level, "security" was placed beyond the logic of the marketplace, in the specific sense that states did not always have to pay the "going price" for their security. "National security" became a pre-eminent component of the ideological repertoire of states; at the same time the concern for security was no longer seen as coterminous with the boundaries of the nation-state, as before, but rather with the existence of a particular global order.

### **"Security" as Ideology and Power**

"Security" is a racket in another, much more sophisticated sense. Like "order", "security" is a highly ideological construct, a normative term which suggests that something good, something beneficial, results from the exercise of coercion. The ideological force of the discourse is broadened when "security" is linked to other normative states, such as 'democracy', or posed as a state of common property (such as in the notion of 'national security'), embodied in a supposedly neutral professional force. This illusion, of course, quickly falls apart as soon as we deconstruct the concept. Who are the protected? What is being protected? Against whom? Who defines when a state of security has been achieved, or when a state of insecurity is in force? The attempt to respond to these questions has generated discourses – gender, classist, ethnicised, radicalised, ideological – fundamental to the management of power and order in society. Discourses of security have in turn

furnished the basis for altruistic domination, the power exercised by protectors over the protected. In fact, as we well know, "security" has always been dispensed very selectively within both the national and international community, reflecting socio-economic status, residency, and state of citizenship (who does not remember French and Belgian paratroopers airlifting white European nationals from Stanleyville in 1964 in the face of the rebel advance, while leaving the natives to stew?); in other words, differential perceptions of human worth. The ability to project "security", then, as a common good ("equal protection under the law"), is one of the crucial achievements of the modern state, requiring in turn the ability to engineer perceptions and (to some degree) illusions, of which, surely, the notion of "security forces" has to be one of the best contemporary examples. For most Africans, however, the reality has been that of force (or worse, violence); Africans have too often seen the "force", and hardly ever the "security", in "security forces". Popular security has been sought through ethnicity, vigilantism and other primordial and non-formal institutions, away from (and often against) the state.

A subtle form of organised demonology, the ability to create national and global "others" who are then held as 'threats to security' is another component of the discursive construction of security and of the power to project "security" on a mass basis. Such demonisation of particular races, nationalities, ethnic groups, political and religious beliefs and movements, even genders has occurred at the level of both popular discourse as well as in the technical language of securocrats. Even as the Cold War has receded, new forms of demonisation have been invented, with scholars and the Pentagon speaking of "civilisational (*sic*) wars" (Huntington), the "Coming Anarchy", and "rogue states". Such demonisation persists not simply because of the need for the management of mass psychology, but also because it constitutes the ideological carapace for what has undoubtedly emerged, since the end of the Second World War, as the most powerful and successful extractive machinery in history, the military-intelligence-industrial complex.

### **"Back to the Future": The OAU and African State-Making**

If the state is indeed a security racket, then the African state is manifestly a failed racket. To some extent this is a global phenomenon: all over the world even within the most "secure states" populations are today facing social and criminal violence unprecedented in modern times. But the African state is qualitatively different in its security predicament. The reasons for this are complex in nature involving historical, structural, as well as political and policy factors<sup>1</sup> – but undoubtedly one reason can be located in the moment of creation of the continental system of states in the 1960s. At the time of the formation of the OAU in 1963 three fundamental issues of statehood confronted Pan-Africanism; the decisions of the nascent organisation in responding to these issues would have far-reaching effects on the ability of its member-states to develop the attributes of statehood. The first was

with regard to the issue of governance. One of the least known (but most disgraceful) episodes in the founding of the OAU was the rejection by the African Heads of State of a clause the *only* one rejected – in the preamble of the draft Charter that would have bound them to ensure “good government” in their respective countries, requiring them to affirm that “the aim of government is the well-being of the governed” (Mate 1986: 60).

The second issue was that of (regional) security. At the first OAU summit conference in Cairo, President Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana reportedly

spoke forcefully of the need for [an] African High Command. He referred to the breakdown of law and order in Zaire, which led the Zaire government to ask for a UN peacekeeping force, and to the mutiny in the Tanzanian army, which led the Tanzanian government to call in British troops, and said if there had been an African High Command there would have been no need to go outside Africa to seek help. He referred to the armed conflict between Ethiopia and Somalia and added that if there had been an African High Command, it would have gone in to separate the warring parties or at least supervise the cease-fire between them (*Ibid.*: 172).

These were prescient words, but they would be rejected repeatedly by the OAU, even though the casualties would mount inexorably from the 1960s, in terms of both collapsing states and African lives lost. Many African governments preferred to seek protection under the military umbrella of a foreign power, or to ally themselves with such powers rather than undertake the interventions that Nkrumah had considered the legitimate province of Pax Africana. As the 34<sup>th</sup> OAU Summit opened in Ouagadougou in June 1998 against the background of the recent conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone, the resumption of war between Ethiopia and Eritrea, a military revolt to unseat the government of Guinea-Bissau, and so on and so forth, African leaders would undoubtedly have reason to revisit Nkrumah's prophetic words.

Thirdly, this rejection of the ideas of Nkrumah was connected with a broader, and barely concealed, normative dispute about the nature of ‘development’. Should development take the form of a socialistic society, as favoured by Nkrumah and a minority of African leaders, or capitalism? Since in the African context the policy instrumentalities of “socialist” and “capitalist” development were frequently indistinguishable, it can be assumed that the real issue behind the rejection of Nkrumah's ideas of continental economics – which would have greatly expanded the possibilities of African development – was the extent to which ‘development’ should be sensitive to issues of distribution and basic needs.

Through the decisions wilfully taken at the dawn of African statehood, the OAU frustrated any possibility of a clear choice between two competing options: of

genuine regional collaboration (including more localised and self-sufficient forms of collective security) on the one hand, and competitive state-building on the other, in the first case by sanctioning an organisation so weak as to be unable to coordinate or defend the collective interests of member-states, in the second by freezing non-viable colonial state boundaries, outlawing intervention by African states in the internal affairs of other states, and releasing rulers from the obligation to be accountable to their citizens, thus pre-empting the very tensional forces that could be expected (at least in the realist paradigm) to shape institutional capacities and bonds of legitimacy in African states.<sup>2</sup> In reality, of course, underneath the pretentious carapace of a new "normative" politics, the realist logic of conflict and force operated. New African states interfered extensively, but covertly, in the affairs of neighbouring states (providing arms, rear bases and refuge for dissidents, funneling third party weapons to insurgents, etc.), and participated in regional interventions orchestrated by foreign principals.

### **New Post Cold War Configurations of Force**

This farcical (if not cynical) pretence of a moral "Pax Africana" has of course collapsed, and arguably a new and more 'realist' Pan-Africanism rooted in a better understanding of the historical role of force may be emerging. Ironically, the end of the Cold War in concert with other factors, has led in some respects to a renewed saliency of force driven however by domestic contradictions rather than great-power manipulation on the one hand and far-reaching reconfiguration of force structures and paradigms on the other. First, the winding-down of the Cold War, and folding of the imperial military umbrella of the French and the Soviets, have led to the collapse of patron-client security arrangements. Second, neo-liberal economic restructuring has undermined existing patronage networks generated and sustained on the basis of public resources. Third, extensive retrenchment of military resources has taken place worldwide, reflecting both the end of the Cold War and the global crisis of public finance. At the same time, much of the trade in new and surplus weapons (particularly small arms and light weapons) and retrenched personnel has been diverted from government to private arms dealers and security organisations. From sales of \$2-3 billion per annum during the Cold War, private arms sales are estimated to have exceeded \$25 billion in 1996 (Bonner 1998).<sup>3</sup>

Finally, the activation of civil society and pressures for greater accountability and inclusion has forced regimes to reconfigure their arrangements to make them more inclusive and accountable, or to even abandon power altogether. The resurgence of civil society has prompted (depending on the context) state retreat, backlash, and/or power re-composition, leading in some cases to drastic changes in the complexion of national political power. Both developments are connected to some degree with globalisation and the erosion of certain forms of social control,



over e.g. communications and the media, on which the state had relied to enforce its will against civil society. How the political transition has been managed has had decisive consequences for both national political order and regional security: the horrific consequences of the failure of democratisation in Burundi and power-sharing in Rwanda, of the attempt to repress political Islam in Algeria and civil society in countries like Togo and the former Zaire, may be contrasted to the salutary outcome on the other hand of the transition in South Africa.

As the hegemony of the state has crumbled, it has precipitated rivalry among warlords, visionaries, adventurers, ethno-nationalists, and big power interests in manipulating the vacuum, appropriating and shaping new force structures as well as the nature of the developing geopolitical space. Combined with weapons proliferation from winding-down wars, the decomposition of the state has prompted vicious new forms of conflict, depicted by the media and scholars, a descent into barbarism and anarchy, "orgies of primordial savagery",<sup>4</sup> and a "retreat from modernity" (Mazrui 1995). However, the resulting geopolitical conflicts and alignments are not necessarily 'new' but represent a sometimes intricate fusion of old and new cleavages, struggles and alliances, bringing together veterans from the Katangese and successive Zairian rebellions, and the protracted Angolan war, as well as victims and perpetrators of past and current Rwanda and Burundi "ethnic pogroms".

However, these same dynamics have encouraged several positive developments. One of these is the new geopolitical alliances, Africa-centred rather than shaped by foreign powers, with a corresponding potential for emergence of regional hegemonic powers (South Africa, Nigeria). The second is a new regionalism, demonstrated at several levels: a revived interest in regional approaches to issues of trade and economic cooperation (the emergence of more formal and elaborate SADC structures, the expansion of IGAD, and most remarkably the revival of a new version of the East African Community); and a much more serious interest in mechanisms of regional security. This regional approach to security is underpinned by a new interventionist ethos, best expressed by Mandela at the 34th OAU summit in Ouagadougou. According to Mandela, Africa has a right and a duty to intervene to root out tyranny, notwithstanding the OAU's founding principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of member states: "we [African leaders] must all accept that we cannot abuse the concept of national sovereignty to deny the rest of the continent the right and duty to intervene when, behind those sovereign boundaries, people are being slaughtered to protect tyranny".<sup>5</sup>

The "Mandela Doctrine" is already manifested in the new willingness with which African countries are prepared, contrary to the historical and ideological legacy of the OAU, to intervene across national borders to restore order, to resist insurrections, and even to overthrow tyrants, as in the case of the SADC in Lesotho (1994); ECOWAS/ECOMOG in Liberia and Sierra Leone, East Africa in Burundi;

Uganda, Rwanda and Angola in former Zaire; Angola in the Congo, and, most recently, the armies of Guinea and Senegal in Guinea-Bissau. As this record suggests, however, this security-oriented regionalism, is occurring within a variety of formats – collective, bilateral and unilateral, formal and informal, regional and sub-regional<sup>6</sup> – that suggest that it has yet to develop the requisite consensus as to framework.

However, one wants to note in particular the emergence of three types of entrepreneur of violence to whom this decomposition of the old state and regional order has given rise:

- (a) The “new breed” of statesman – the so-called “African Metternichs” (Museveni, Kagame, Zehawi, Afewerki, etc.), who are reshaping the regional geopolitical system while at the same time transforming national politics, economies, and security structures. These are men schooled in the diplomacy and *realpolitik* of violence, having fought in or come to power through protracted war (and in several cases facing internal insurgencies of their own).
- (b) The warlord, a new type of African political entrepreneur who links violence, territorial acquisition and business, opportunistically dismembering or re-constituting states. Unlike the citizen-soldier who took to the battlefield and harnessed violence in pursuit of political liberation and social transformation, the warlord is characterised by the almost complete absence of a political programme; the deliberate and systematic use of terror and “ethnic cleansing” (perpetrated mostly against the civilian population) as a weapon; the use of children and youth (often abducted and drugged) as shock-troops and cannon-fodder, and the utilisation of violence to colonise natural resources the exploitation of which in turn drives the war machine. However, in part because of the absence of an ideological bond, the warlord type faces the familiar problem of strongmen within the ranks, leading to the proliferation of warlord factions.
- (c) The privatisation and commercialisation of security and the emergence of the defence corporation and security entrepreneur. Unlike the warlord, the latter is an ex-military professional, often with links to Cold War or (in the case of Executive Outcomes) apartheid structures, no (admitted) territorial ambitions, loyalties or political interests, claiming to work exclusively in the employ of sovereign entities to fill the security vacuum emerging at the end of the Cold War. The defence corporations for which they work (such as Executive Outcomes, Sandline, Defence Systems Ltd, and MPRI) are diversified, international concerns combining war and business and offering a range of services and interlocking ownership and directorates. In these corporations, the New Realism about business meets the New Realism about force.

Important changes on both the supply and demand sides of the security market lie behind the emergence of the defence corporation. First, the increasing inability of the state to extend protection has rendered "security" a scarce resource, available no longer to everyone by right of belonging in a political community, but at a price to those who can purchase it. In other words, security has become a tradable commodity, and has shifted from being a political relation (an entitlement of citizenship) to a market relationship – usually tied directly to protection and exploitation of minerals and other productive assets.

This is not entirely fortuitous, but is tied in several ways to a second factor, the logic of liberalisation and "neo-liberal" efficiency. The present mode of production of security is one of the most inefficient sectors, characterised by the existence of a large "security" rent in the form of high (and unjustified) military expenditures and perquisites. Official forms of force have simply failed to compete with those being provided by the "private" sector (see Howe and Urell's analysis of the success of Executive Outcomes relative to the official armies in ECOMOG); African armies have proven to be fragile constructs, difficult to control politically, and unreliable on the field of battle. The state, in this area also, withdraws from functions that it cannot provide efficiently. The emergence of the "military or defence" corporation, converting Cold War assets to new uses in the market place, is the most extreme (if logical) expression of this privatisation of state and social functions.

Thirdly and more broadly, this process is the result of a conjunction of globalisation, liberalisation and weak states. The security corporation represents an essential (if perhaps temporary) component in the organisation of business in weakened states undergoing rapid liberalisation and globalisation (Reno 1997). Aggressively globalising businesses trying to exploit opportunities from liberalisation confront the dilemma of weak states with attractive resources and unviable security situations. This is a situation ready-made for the new kind of "security" specialist organised as a private business concern and ready to 'barter' security for "shares" in a natural resource enterprise. These firms combine war and business (in much the same way as "legitimate" states had combined politics and business). It is thus in the interstices between collapsing states and globalisation that the new forms of force are insinuating themselves, represented at its most sophisticated by the security corporation, but also encompassing Russian criminal gangs, Colombian, Nigerian and Mexican drug lords, arms trafficking by soldiers including generals, and so on. It is a reminder of the extent to which, in the emerging world order, control over violence is a key to controlling both legitimate trade (such as in mineral resources) and lucrative but illicit transactions.

For the foreign investor as much as for the African state, the for-hire security arrangement has distinct advantages in that it side-steps problems of control and effectiveness, in this sense helping to minimise the "ruler's security dilemma". It

broadens the range of options available to African rulers in difficulty, allowing them to subordinate local strongmen and to reconfigure political networks and relationships (Reno 1997). On the other hand, it is liable to create potential new problems (such as the danger of backlash from traditional institutional providers of such services, as we saw in the case of Sierra Leone), and to lead to further displacement of sovereign functions. The specialised provision of security services targeted at paying clients also accentuates the problem of accountability in relation to force, further marginalising the bulk of the population as respects their ability to control and benefit from the organisation of force.

The notion of “privatisation of force” or what Cock calls “private miniaturisation” (Cock 1996) actually covers a range of different phenomena generated by the breakdown of the states claim to the legitimate monopoly of violence. The new force structures have been bent to a variety of purposes and agendas, depending on the context: tapped into respectively by states to underpin a situation which they are no longer militarily capable of defending, by privileged social interests to substitute for the protection that the state is no longer capable of providing, by criminal gangs as well as popular forces seeking to protect themselves (via vigilantism) from them, and finally by a variety of warlords and adventurers to challenge the state. Hence, whether they enhance or detract from “security” depends on who is doing the reckoning. We have to stress therefore the complex manifestations and political colourations of private miniaturisation, as well the equally complex articulations between unofficial and official forms of force emerging in Africa. Examples of this abound: the relationship between the former Rwandan regime and the *interahamwe*, between the “third force” and the South African security forces, and between the Sierra Leone government and the *kamajors*; or, at a different level, the alliances between Taylor and certain West African states, between ECOMOG and certain Liberian and Sierra Leonean warlords, between UN forces and anti-Aideed warlords in Somalia. Political forces that have lost democratic contests in the public sphere, such as Nguesso in Congo-Brazzaville<sup>7</sup> and the pro-apartheid right wing, have resorted to private miniaturisation to offset their loss and even recapture power.

## **Rethinking Security: Reforming Paradigms and Structures**

The decomposition of security arrangements of African states and the struggles to democratise the public space have intertwined to produce some sharp questioning of security concepts and architectures, as well as their underlying relations of power, on the part of both citizens, and (less radically) states. African leaders have failed not only to link the security of their regimes with the security of their citizens, but also to guarantee the security of even their regimes. The result is that both states and non-state actors are being forced to rethink the meaning and implements of security.

On their part, African states have sought to bolster their security arrangements in three principal ways. One, as we have seen, is by "contracting-out" security functions (e.g. to mercenaries), while continuing to rely on military aid and co-training networks. A second approach has been to revamp security architectures at several levels.

- (a) **Restructuring in the area of both governance and operational structures**  
The advent of democracy has necessitated some effort (with what success it is difficult to say at this stage) to redesign civil-military relations, both to facilitate political control, and to reconcile the armed forces and civil society (the most remarkable example of this rapprochement between the two sides is the one that has taken place in Mali since 1991).

- (b) **Downsizing of budgets and force numbers**  
Security forces and structures are being redesigned to more closely reflect fiscal imperatives and social utility, as well as to align them with (neo-liberal) market concepts. In economic terms, there have traditionally been two problems with the way security, as a commodity, has been organised: first, security was considered an intangible, "public good" not amenable to conventional cost-benefit analysis; and second, it was a (state) monopoly, hence attracted a monopoly rent, and with that considerable in-built waste. Armed forces are no longer considered immune to structural adjustment. Camdessus, the Managing Director of the IMF has decreed that military expenditure in excess of 4.5% percent of the national budget is economically unjustifiable, and at least one donor has funded a study to align defence spending in developing countries with security needs and reduce the element of rent in security outlays (see MacDonald 1997). However, while overall military expenditure in Africa has in any case gone down significantly since the mid-1980s, there are also notable variations in performance (Ejigu and Gedamu 1996). For instance, in the southern cone, South Africa<sup>8</sup> has reduced its military budget by at least 51 per cent since 1989, with force numbers expected to fall from 121,000 to 75,000. Zimbabwe is also reducing its forces from 51,000 to 40,000 troops, while Mozambique's present manpower of 12,000 is actually less than half of the 30,000 authorised by the 1992 peace agreement. Botswana, with huge foreign reserves, is the only exception to this trend, with significant new weapons acquisitions and corresponding increases in military spending (Honwana 1996: 38).

- (c) **Changing Mission and Role Definitions**  
Armed forces' roles are being redefined to give much greater emphasis to what used to be considered "collateral" functions, such as tasks of national

development and peacekeeping roles. At a recent conference in Ethiopia in May 1998, representatives of African militaries were anxious to stress their contributions to national development; the Ghana Armed Forces was into farming and domestic air services, the Senegalese army was delivering health and education services, and so on. This mission reorientation, as well as general review of force structures, has probably been taken furthest in the case of the South African National Defence Force (See the contribution by Williams to this volume, and also Williams 1996: 73). The idea of involvement of the armed forces in civic and development tasks is not new, of course; but it has re-emerged primarily due to fiscal and political exigencies, rather than, as in the 1960s, as a result of the misguided notion that armed forces are somehow uniquely equipped to execute development functions.<sup>9</sup>

A third approach is an increasing shift in the direction of regional security and "Pax Africana", an autonomous African capacity to deal with regional conflict issues, based on a clearer recognition of the link between domestic and regional stability, and possibly, the emergence of somewhat more flexible attitudes on the question of national sovereignty. However, the record of collaboration between African states on issues of regional security has been a sorry one, a remarkable record of myopia and missed opportunities replicating that of the OAU at the continental level. This is particularly clear in the case of ECOMOG. While ECOMOG has been hailed as the most advanced case of regional collaboration on issues of security (and indeed the settlements in Liberia and Sierra Leone are historic), in reality ECOMOG was a classic case of blundering into peacekeeping. A Mutual Defence treaty signed in 1981 and adopted in 1986 by eleven of the 16 member states, with provision for an intervention mechanism, should arguably<sup>10</sup> have prepared the ECOWAS states for the very challenges encountered in Liberia and Sierra Leone. However, for unexplained reasons, this treaty was never implemented. In many respects – the dominance of a single regional power, the often deep polarisation within ECOWAS itself regarding the operation,<sup>11</sup> the lack of inter-operability among the component national forces, and the minimum control exercised by the political directorate over the military body, among others – ECOMOG was a classic example of how *not* to conduct peacekeeping.

The ECOMOG operation was replete with ironies (as may perhaps be expected when weak states attempt to restore order among still weaker neighbours); the ECOWAS members themselves were involved in difficult political transitions, the structural and political crises that sustained these rebellions – economic stress, state decay and delegitimation, dislocation of youth – were present among other states in the region; and, from the point of view of political legitimacy and behaviour on the battlefield there was little to choose between the warlords on the one hand, and the official heads of state and their armies on the other. ECOMOG

also teaches the important lesson that one should not conflate regional security and human security as suggested by the fact that the government of General Abacha, which took the lead in regional peace-enforcement, would at the same time be ostracised by the international community for its abuse of human rights at home. As a concept, regional security seeks to collectivise the costs of reproducing the security of each individual state; it remains in this sense state-centric, and thus hardly constitutes a complete paradigm shift. The settlements that brought "peace" to Liberia and Sierra Leone did not seek as forcefully to address the domestic issues at the root of regional conflagration, technically due to sensitivity on the issue of national sovereignty, but in reality due to the fact that hardly any West African leader was in a position to strike moralistic poses on issues of governance and human rights. States in the region have still to realise that the best guarantee of state security is the security of their citizens, and the willing acceptance by those citizens of the political rules of the game on which the state's own legitimacy rests.

At least in terms of political will, the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security seems to be ahead of ECOWAS in attempting to integrate issues of politics, security and development into a coherent framework, seeking among other objectives to promote "common political value systems and institutions". A closer look suggests, however, that the organ has "major deficiencies in the critical areas of doctrine, inter-operability, training, communications, and equipment" (Rupiya 1996: 45). In addition to the scarcity of human and financial resources, other reasons seem to be a reluctance to surrender national sovereignty and fear of South African hegemony, particularly given the perceived domination of South Africa National Defence Force (SANDF) by former apartheid elements, and attempts by certain Western powers to nudge South Africa into playing a sub-imperial role in the region (Honwana 1996: 35-6).

Further, as we have seen, there is also less than complete consensus on the framework for organising Regional Security. The OAU has established a central organ for conflict prevention, management and resolution that will facilitate the deployment of peacekeeping forces in collaboration with the UN. However at the Cairo summit in 1993, where this decision was taken the OAU decided against an African regional peacekeeping force. Foreign powers are moving to fill the resulting vacuum. There are several such initiatives in the works (including proposals from France and the UK), but the best-known example is the American African Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI). The OAU and many African countries complain about the lack of coordination between these initiatives, and (in relation to ACRI) the selective and potentially divisive approach taken by the US in selecting certain African states for participation in ACRI while excluding others, thus creating the appearance of a system of alliance with the US rather than a regional security system intended to benefit all African states. There are also concerns relating to the limited resources available under the initiative (which

focuses on training rather than the equipment and logistics requested by African armed forces), as well as philosophical differences over the approach to peace-keeping, in particular regarding the “robust” approach preferred by the Americans.<sup>12</sup>

This great power’s concern with issues of regional security in Africa is not altogether salutary, however, since it also mirrors a shift once again in the donor discourse from “governance” (emphasising democracy) back to political stability and “development”. This is particularly clear in the case of the US, where Clinton’s decision to meet African leaders in Uganda was designed to send a deliberate signal of support for a “new generation of leaders” in the region, epitomised by Museveni, “who care less about establishing full-fledged democracies than they do about developing their countries”.<sup>13</sup> And with this there has been more readiness to tolerate less conventional means of assuring security, the clearest demonstration of this being the willingness of international capital to deal with warlord regimes or to create security enclaves designed to facilitate exploitation of mineral resources.

States are not the only entities revamping their concepts and structures of security. A similar, but much more expansive, process of reconceptualisation is being carried on by activists in civil society as well as by certain international organisations. Since concepts and practices of “security” have historically been “partisan”, it is not surprising that political change (and democratic change in particular) should provoke some questioning of reigning security concepts. These alternative concepts have tried to deepen the meaning of security, from the militaristic and, state-centric concepts implied in “national” or “internal security” to emphasise in addition certain broad entitlements such as access to basic needs and services (education, health, shelter), the right to a clean and sustainable environment, and protection for cultural identity and autonomy. Security is seen as an outcome (as well as a cause) of both development and good governance and incorporates an element of distributive justice. These concepts – “Common Security”, “Human Security”, or “Extended Security” are rooted in the developmentalist discourse rather than the power or dominance discourse that characterises security in international relations theory, and are more inclined to see the human person, rather than the state, as the beneficiary of security. The state, too, is no longer seen as exercising exclusive responsibility for assuring security or managing conflict. NGOs, with their proximity to the people, are increasingly seen as essential aspect of an early warning system, particularly with regard to ethnic conflict, and useful as well for monitoring human rights abuses and the conduct of security forces.

While such a deepening of the concept of security is salutary, these concepts seem often to lack the necessary conception of agency and political strategy. To challenge ruling concepts of security is to potentially challenge, or undermine, the



self-justification of the state, as well as underlying relations of power and distribution. After all, "security" is the most ideologically charged and hegemonic concepts of the twentieth century. These alternative concepts of security need to be complemented by a strategy for engaging and displacing traditional, state-centred security concepts and their material apparatuses and transforming the power relations that underpin them. This element of a political strategy seems to be missing, in relation not only to restructuring security mechanisms, but also to the global economic order to produce the distributive justice advocated. In addition, as Campbell suggests in his contribution on Angola, it is necessary to question not only security paradigms, but the very vocabulary and narratives that inform and shape the paradigms, such as masculinist and ethnicist interpretations of African culture and history that underpin the approaches to "conflict management" in Africa, and the absurdity of the world's arms producers posturing as "peacekeepers" in Africa. Finally, NGOs should not necessarily be confused with the broad democratic forces of the people, whose intervention in the security debate (in so far as they have been allowed voice) has received little recognition. The role of the community in peace-making and reconciliation in Mali, in relation both to the Tuareg rebels and to the armed forces, has been dramatically highlighted in Mali (Poulton and Youssouf 1998); while Campbell points to the role of women in the peace movement in Angola and Lundin to the role of the community in the process of psychological healing and reintegration of demobilised soldiers that followed the war in Mozambique. It is such popular forces whose voices (as distinguished from those of professional peacemakers) remain to be heard in the debate on security in Africa.

## Notes

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1. See the excellent and comprehensive analysis by Ayoob (1995). Ayoob argues that unlike security threats to the older (European) states, the principal security threats to Third World states are internal (the result of poorly integrated multi-ethnic societies, irrational borders, weak and unarticulated economies, and external dependency), though shaped by broader historical and structural factors that are both internal and domestic in origin. Third World state formation occurs within a radically different historical and international context than had confronted earlier states: and an environment dominated by mature (and stronger) states, with the further challenge of developing the attributes of statehood in a much more compressed time frame than older states had been required to do.
2. The realist paradigm might conceivably argue that in defining their security in terms of relationships with external power centres, African states broke the

- organic link between war-making and state-making: between security, accountability to citizens and accumulation processes.
3. Bonner, Raymond 1998. "For U.S. Gun Sales are Good Business". *New York Times*, 6 June 1998.
  4. Barbara Crossette in the *New York Times*, 14 June 1998.
  5. *Cape Times*, 10 June 1998, p. 4.
  6. None of these classifications is watertight. In the case of ECOWAS intervention in theory took a collective form, but in fact there were strong elements of the unilateral (on the side of Nigeria). In the case of Central Africa the intervention into the former Zaire did not assume such a formal structure (and thus could technically be considered "unilateral"); nevertheless there was strong collaboration between the governments of Uganda, Rwanda and Angola in the exercise. The subsequent intervention into Congo-Brazzaville demonstrated further differences in modality.
  7. See the contribution by Bazenguissa-Ganga.
  8. The review of the South African defence forces appears unusually ambitious and wide-ranging, involving at the same time such issues as revisions in defence posture, force design, and mission doctrine, and the organisation of the Ministry and Department of Defence, and overhaul of the racial structure (representativeness) of SANDF. See the fascinating contribution by Rocky Williams in this issue. Also White Paper on Defence approved by the South African Parliament, 14 May 1996, and Defence Review Work Group, *Defence Review*, Department of Defence, Pretoria, April 1998. Another unusual feature of the review process is the strong and authoritative role being played by the new Parliament.
  9. This trend has also generated some debate as to whether involvement in internal, nonmilitary functions does not undermine the professionalism and political subordination of armed forces. See Desch 1996 and Goodman 1996.
  10. "Arguably" because the applicability of the provision of the treaty to the specific case of Liberia (and later Sierra Leone) was to become one of the key issues of contention within ECOWAS itself. See Vogt 1993; 1996, and Bundu Abass in "West Africa", 30 June-6 July p. 1040-1.
  11. Several members of ECOWAS questioned the legitimacy of ECOMOG's mandate; both ECOMOG itself and the factions it was battling enjoyed support among rival factions within ECOWAS. See the excellent accounts by Vogt, 1992; 1996.
  12. Another initiative being considered by the Americans is an African Centre for Security Studies to be run by the Pentagon and to replace similar centres located in Germany, Washington and Hawaii and covering the European, Latin American and Caribbean and Asia-Pacific regions.

13. James C McKinley Jr., "A New Model for Africa: Good Leaders Above All" *New York Times*, 25 March, 1998.

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