INTRODUCTION

Since the time of decolonisation in the 1960s, conflict in Africa has been located within three pillars:

- The end of colonialism and its transformation (neocolonialism), which in some cases was replaced by Cold War spheres of influence
- The early dominance of the one-party state and military coups
- Regional tenets under the auspices of the OAU, established in 1963

Two of the pillars of this triangular framework were removed in the 1990s following the end of the superpower rivalry, with the fundamental restructuring of the African state replacing the one-party state system and the formal withdrawal of the neocolonialists/superpowers. According to Marshall (2005), sub-Saharan Africa was caught up in a regional sub-system of violence in the 1980s. The trend rose sharply and reached a peak in 1994-97, when the genocide in Rwanda and the outbreak of fighting in the DRC occurred against the backdrop of continuing violence in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan and Northern Uganda.

Conflicts in Africa in the post-Cold War era have therefore been characterised by:

- Reformed state structures amidst internally insecure political processes as substitutes for the one-party state system
The transformation of the OAU into the AU through the Constitutive Act and, in relation to security, formulation of the African Union Non-Aggression and Common Defence Pact under the Peace and Security Council (PSC)\(^1\) (although in some cases the concepts have been developed but not necessarily the institutions),

- A variety of external initiatives and players on the continent in the security arena

The above three areas represent the strategic effect and impact of the end of the Cold War on the global and regional security linkages on the African continent. More specifically, the impact has been manifested in the following ways:

- The undermining of the emergence of the African state as an international interlocutor in the security system
- The emergence of collapsed and weak states controlled by faction-based security and defence institutions
- The weakening of the widely debated African Regional Economic and Security Communities (RECs)
- The diversion of attention from addressing fundamental geographic and environmental challenges such as increasing desertification, famine, droughts and flash floods and from providing basic water and sanitation services
- The creation of an inordinately high number of refugees and internally-displaced persons
- The exposure of the maritime security of the continent as well as the sanction of brigandage and plunder, as meticulously documented by the United Nations
- The exposure of the continent’s skies to unregulated and illegal elements

It against this background that this Seminar 21 of Vision 2020 is taking place, suggesting that the army seeks to understand what the warfare/conflict terrain is going to look like and what role(s) it is likely to play over the next 15 short years.

This presentation looks at the global context and framework that informed conflicts in Africa and the impact of these conflicts. A case study of one of the RECs, the Horn of Africa, designed to drive home the message about the intertwined and complex conflict triggers that
have and continue to fuel differences, is discussed next. Using the conflict template developed for the purposes of this discussion, the regional conflict assessment then briefly examines situations in the seven countries of the Horn: Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Uganda, Kenya, Somalia and Djibouti. The situation in the Horn, it is argued, depicts the broader African conflict scenario. After summing up the challenges faced in the region, the paper then moves to answer the substantive question: what are the most likely conflict situations between now and 2020? Is the South African National Defence Force, particularly the army, is likely to play a role in these conflict situations?

THE AFRICAN PEACE AND SECURITY CHALLENGE

Security co-operation on the continent is predicated on the abandonment of the military instrument as the first option in responding to political differences. More specifically, the AU Non-Aggression and Common Defence Pact asserts in Article 15 that:

State Parties involved in any dispute shall first seek a solution by negotiation, inquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, or resort to regional and continental mechanisms or arrangements, or other peaceful means.

To this end, the AU came up with a Common African Defence and Security Policy and suggested the establishment of the African Standby Force (ASF), consisting of 15 000 to 20 000 troops organised as regional brigades, each with between 3 500 and 5 000 troops supported by a civilian police component. This force would be in operation by 2010 for basic peacekeeping and would have the capacity to handle complex emergencies by 2015 (Kent & Malan 2003). The following RECS would be involved in establishing this force:

- UMA – Arab Maghreb Union
- ECOWAS – Economic Community of West African States
- SADC – Southern African Development Community
- ECCAS – Economic Community of Central African States
- IGAD – Intergovernmental Authority on Development
- EAC – East African Community
- CEN-SAD – Economic Community of Sahelo-Saharan States
The challenge for the RECs will be how to motivate the harmonisation of policies and ethos towards abandoning inter-state war antics and how to accelerate the integration process to enhance the continent’s peace and stability. One of the most intractable challenges has been the funding of the ASF. Based on calculations made when the PSC was established, only six per cent of the AU budget (some US$3 million) can be expected as ASF direct financial commitments from contributions by AU member states. The rest is subject to fund-raising (Kent & Malan 2003:74). Recently, during a visit to Southern Africa, the deputy commander of the US European Command, General ‘Kip’ Ward, pointed out that the cost implications of the ASF appeared overly ambitious and needed to be realistically pruned to garner support from outsiders. It is important to put into perspective the cost implications of peacekeeping forces. For instance, the 17 000-plus forces in the UN Mission in the DRC (MONUC) cost an average of nearly US$750 million per year to maintain. When components of police and civilian advisers are added, that mission requires a little over a billion US dollars a year. In comparison, the AU budget is raised from subscriptions paid by member states, the total being just over US$50 million per year. Not all members are able to pay their commitments every year and lose their voting rights in the structures, among other things. This has resulted in major portions of the AU peacekeeping resources being raised under the auspices of the Peace Fund, generated from donations by well-disposed countries.

THE INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION

Since the well-known events in Somalia in 1993, leaders from the First World have decided not to deploy boots on the ground on the African continent. In their place, various initiatives have been witnessed, from the US African Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI) in 1996 to the UK’s wider peacekeeping support and the French Reinforcement of African Peacekeeping Capacities (RECAMP).6 More recently, Portugal and the Scandinavian countries, as well as the EU, have also marshalled forces and equipment in various models to support African troops in undertaking more effective peacekeeping tasks. A more graphic event was the support of the African Mission in Darfur (AMIS), when the US and UK provided for food, fuel and salary costs while Canada provided vehicular equipment and other war material.
Direct support to UN peacekeeping missions, such as in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Côte d’Ivoire and Sierra Leone, again structured around troops drawn largely from the developing countries, has continued in parallel with the bilateral initiatives. The option of UN peacekeeping deployment on the continent, where there is a lead time of at least three months before forces arrive on the scene and when international attention is seriously diverted, currently focused on events in Afghanistan, Iraq and even Iran, means that there is no priority to have a new mission dispatched to the continent’s conflict zones. As a result, when it comes to early, rapid and effective response to African conflicts, those of us on the continent have to accept the chalice that has been extended by the international community.

Given the plethora of desperate initiatives from Washington, London, Paris, Lisbon and even Brussels, this paper argues that this type of ad hoc and non-structured support is likely to continue for the next decade and a half, although it does not directly enhance nor is it synchronised with the African security architecture and its evolving institutions under the PSC.

**CASE STUDY – AFRICAN CONFLICTS, SECURITY AND THE HORN**

The experience of the Horn reflects the fact that this is currently one of the most challenged RECs among the AU peace and security structures. There are also signs that the conflict system in that part of Africa may still be present beyond 2020. The Horn entered the post-Cold War period saddled with a 10-year crippling drought that had begun in 1974. Millions died from famine, while evidence of increased desertification was marked. This environmental blight has continued to underlie the structural foundations of the region. In 1986, motivated by external players, the region established the Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Desertification (IGADD) for the purpose of addressing the ecological and economic issues as well as food security. The lack of food security has continued to grip countries to this day, with Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia all on the Food Aid list. However, even before the initial objectives had been achieved, IGADD acquired a new responsibility – regional security. In 1996, IGADD was transformed to include a security dimension, adopting the current IGAD. Two years later, in 1998, this new role was articulated in a five-point plan centred on conflict prevention, resolution and management. However, since
1991 the regime of General Siad Barre in Somali had been disintegrating, following continuing conflicts in Sudan and later the Eritrean-Ethiopian war that began in 1998 and only ended with a ceasefire in 2000. These local and external/regional sources of conflict included competition for power and wealth-sharing, proxy wars in which neighbours interfered with each other’s internal affairs and ethnic, religious and racial differences and soon overwhelmed the precarious Somali political situation, effectively reducing the country to the collapsed state we now know, with serious regional security implications.

Based on the template of investigation developed for this discussion, using an arbitrary scale of the perceived severity of the crisis, the following is prevalent:

- **Collapsed state** – Control of Somalia now lies between the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and the Islamic courts, which are engaged in serious in-fighting. This is not to mention the issue of precariously peaceful Somaliland, currently a functioning enclave whose security is dependent on the stability of its neighbouring communities within greater Somali. More recently, the conflict has drawn in military deployments from Ethiopia in support of the TFG, clearly motivated by its own interests. Significantly, the local players have threatened to attack any peacekeeping forces deployed by the REC or IGAD
- **Inter-state conflict** – Ethiopia and Eritrea; the skirmishes between the Sudanese and Ugandan governments, exiles and rebels; food insecurity, border-territory disputes and the Oromos ethnic conflict, among others
- **Civil war** – Sudan (North-South and Darfur) and a potential third incited by elements in the east on the Egyptian border; ethnic, racial and religious conflicts and a weak central government, food insecurity, increased desertification, territorial disputes, external interests, including Uganda’s Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA), Chad’s ethnic Furs and oil; the struggle to insert a UN peacekeeping force instead of the weak and ill-funded AMIS
- **The marginalisation of the intervention of the regional body, IGAD**
- **The exposure of the continent to maritime piracy and brigandage**
- **The loss of control of the skies over the Horn**

The Horn represents one of Africa’s weakest RECs and places added responsibilities on the more stable entities such as ECOWAS and SADC.
To this end, the security situation in the Horn requires continentally-sanctioned intervention in the following three areas:

- Monitoring ceasefires and peace agreements
- Supporting established and elected central governments
- Post-conflict institutional support in disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) and security sector reform (SSR), leading to the strengthening of regional structures under IGAD

CONTINENTAL SECURITY CHALLENGES UP TO AND BEYOND 2020

The AU has sought to strengthen further the economic and security pillars suggested by the OAU by providing political leadership and a structured approach to regional security. To this end, moves are being made to begin creating capacity between now and 2015 so that each region will be able to react and deploy forces in order to address complex peacekeeping emergencies. After extensive discussion, we summarise below some of the more important security challenges that could inform and influence the structure and operational preparedness of the SANDF:

- Major gaps in maritime security
- Uncoordinated air space over the continent
- Environmental challenges
- Collapsed or weak states located within protracted conflicts
- Fatigued external players
- Weak RECs and limited capacity to address land-based conflicts
- The monitoring of ceasefire treaties and agreements
- The support of nation-building in establishing truly national institutions

RECOMMENDATIONS

Within the next 15 years, the SANDF and particularly the army has to prepare to engage in early warning mechanisms on the African continent. The reasons are obvious, not least to be adequately prepared to respond. Secondly, we anticipate a continued need to have a deployable capacity for supporting or monitoring humanitarian relief, ceasefire and peace agreements and other treaties. For example, the peace treaty in
Darfur, eastern Sudan and northern Uganda has still not been secured, while that between Ethiopia and Eritrea is threatening to disintegrate. Furthermore, in terms of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between the Sudan People’s Liberation Army/Movement (SPLA/M) and the government in Khartoum, a referendum will be held in 2011 to determine whether the country should continue as one or be Balkanised. Currently, the agreement provides for a separate flag, armies, currency and share of revenues from oil exports and it is hoped that the leaders on both sides will not have been tempted enough to wish for separate development. It is only after that year that we can expect a new government or governments to come into power and find their place at the AU table. Thirdly, the SANDF must prepare itself to support nation-building with peacekeeping missions and, later, the consolidation of democracy through DDR, SSR and other bilateral initiatives.

CONCLUSION

The post-Cold War era witnessed a sharp rise in African conflicts during the 1980s before this slowed and stagnated by the mid-1990s. However, the stalemate has not disappeared, leaving countries collapsed and fighting against each other and large communities straddling the borders of neighbouring countries exposed to ethnicity, racial and religious persecution. This development has continued amidst the suggestion of a common African defence and security policy which has unfortunately been coupled with weak or ineffective regional security structures. Much more significantly, countries that signed up to the AU Non-Aggression and Common Defence Pact have clearly not abandoned the military option as a policy instrument in settling disputes. This development almost suspends this AU document, as its spirit and ethos is being violated in all regions, especially the Horn.

While post-1993 Somalia witnessed the exit of First World interest in deploying peacekeepers on the continent, the alternative has been confusing, with piecemeal initiatives from the United States and former imperial and colonial powers on the continent such as the UK, France, Portugal and even the European Union. Significantly, the external intervention by these countries has been neither co-ordinated among themselves nor directed at strengthening the AU PSC security notions. Consequently, there is a place for armed forces and other institutions on the African continent that have a capacity to influence and stem the
deterioration of security in the trouble spots identified in the Horn, Central Africa and parts of West Africa.

NOTES

1. Adopted at the Second Extraordinary Session of the Assembly held in Sirte, Libya, in February 2004 and later also adopted at the Fourth Ordinary Session of the AU Assembly held in Abuja, Nigeria, on 31 January 2005
2. Founded in 1989 and comprising Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Libya and Mauritania but not Egypt
4. Established in 1983 and comprising Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, the Central African Republic, the Republic of Congo, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Rwanda and São Tomé and Príncipe
5. Seven member states: Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Somalia, Sudan and Eritrea
6. See also Eric Berman (2003).

LIST OF REFERENCES