

# South Africa's Foreign Policy Since 1994



# South Africa's Foreign Policy Since 1994:

*New Insights and Perspectives*

By

Rejoyce Hlengiwe Phetha

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I would like to dedicate this book to my son,  
Siyathokoza Ntobeko Phetha  
and to my loving family.



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## FOREWORD

South Africa through its foreign policy agenda has rejected the international system of structured power that reinforces the dominance of hegemonic states. Since 1994, South Africa has demonstrated a strong commitment to promote its interests and being the “voice” of the continent. South Africa has endeavored to cut the powers of colonizers in Africa, particularly the new powers who fail to promote the African agenda. Since ceasing to be a pariah state in 1994, the country has tried to promote a strategy of Africans speaking with one voice while still building coalitions amongst themselves. The South African government has focused its African Agenda strategies on a review and understanding of the African geopolitics in the 21st Century. South Africa’s foreign policy has been influenced by several developments which have taken place within the developing countries. This book presents South Africa’s foreign policy in relations to the continent. The book begins with the historical outlook of South Africa’s foreign policy orientation before and during the democratic era, focusing particularly on the role of South Africa in the global political arena, diplomatic foreign engagements, African continent integration and its approaches to foreign diplomacy. The significance of this book lies in the influence of South Africa from perspective of its integration efforts in Africa. Confronted by the inevitability and the need to promote collaborative mechanisms among member states, South Africa has been characterised by her unwavering commitment to African development as well as continental and global collaboration. The country’s desire for unity among African states and interrogating possibilities for growth and development on the African continent positioned it to occupy its rightful place in the world economy. This book shall contribute fresh perspectives in the area of robust leadership initiatives by South Africa to assist in efforts to galvanise and mobilising support in the vision of African integration. It is envisaged that this book will provide a fresh look to South Africa’s foreign policy agenda, especially in the aftermath of the outbreak of the Russia/Ukraine war as well as that of the Israel/Palestine conflict, in both of which South Africa took a neutral stance at the UNGA.

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## ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS

AA	Africa Agenda
ACCORD	African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes
ACHPR	African Court of Human and People's Rights
ANC	African National Congress
APRM	African Peer Review Mechanism
AR	African Renaissance
ARICF	African Renaissance and International Co-operation Fund
ASF	African Standby Force
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
BLNS	Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, and Swaziland
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, and South Africa
CAR	Central African Republic
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
CW	Cold War
CWP	Community Work Programme
DFA	Department of Foreign Affairs
DIRCO	Department of International Relations
DoD	Department of Defense
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
EAC	Executive Associate Commissioner
ECOSOC	Economic, Social and Cultural Council
ECOWAS	Economic Community of Western African States
EU	European Union
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FTA	Free trade Area
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GEAR	Growth, Employment and Redistribution
GNU	Government of National Unity

IADB	Inter-American Development Bank
ICC	International Criminal Court
IBSA	India, Brazil, South Africa
IGOS	International Government Organizations
IMF	International Money Fund
IR	International Relations
IRPS	Cluster International Relations, Peace and Security Cluster
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
NCAA	National Committee Against Apartheid
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NNCAA	Nigeria's National Committee Against Apartheid
OAU	Organization for African Unity
PAP	Pan African Parliament
PSC	Peace and Security Council
SA	South Africa
SACU	Southern Africa Customs Union
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAIIA	South African Institute for International Affairs
SANDF	South African National Defense Force
SARF	South Africa's Relief
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UJ	University of Johannesburg
UKZN	University of KwaZulu-Natal
UN	United Nations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
US	Unites States



# INTRODUCTION

The late 1980 and early 1990s marked the end of the West's dominance in Africa, particularly in the economic sphere. Zimbabwe had obtained political independence from Britain in 1980 and Namibia (formerly known as Southwest Africa) cut ties with South Africa in 1990. Consequently, South Africa got rid of apartheid in 1994, emerging as an important regional power in Africa. Despite South Africa's image as a pariah state in 1994, the country changed its political orientation. Since then, increasingly, South Africa has been portrayed as an important global player on global governance architecture and reforming the international order. The country's experiment with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) became a reference point to other African countries.

The changes in global power balance have created new and deeper relationships, allowing new and old powers to invest in strengthening old relationships while forging new ones to respond to the current political contexts. In the first two decades after becoming a democracy, South Africa sought to reposition itself on the international scene through bilateral and multilateral engagements. Noticeably, since 1994, the country's politics changed tremendously by refocusing South Africa's foreign policy imperatives. Being the second leading economy in Africa after Nigeria in 2014 (a situation which changed in August 2016 when South Africa reclaimed the number one spot), political stability and military strength, African countries have placed hope in South Africa's role in contributing towards the upliftment of the African continent, socially, economically, and politically. Given the state of peace and tranquillity existing in South Africa, the country has become an attractive partner to many African states than ever before. Hence, through its foreign policy, South Africa has played a significant role in resolving conflicts in the DRC, Congo, the Central African Republic (CAR), Nigeria, Rwanda, Zimbabwe, and many other countries. However, South Africa and Nigeria have proved to be Africa's hegemonic leaders based on their Afrocentric foreign policy aspirations, capabilities, and material wealth.

The new dispensation that was led by Nelson Mandela as the first democratically elected Black president in 1994 was directly in contrast with the previous apartheid regime. The new president was driven by the desire to move South Africa on an engagement path with a principled and highly moral foreign policy. The aim was to push towards stronger commitment in promoting Africa's interests and being its voice continentally and internationally. While South Africa and Nigeria can help each other in addressing their domestic challenges, arguably South Africa has had a strong state military cluster on the continent. South Africa has demonstrated its capability in training CAR soldiers to resist and manage insurgency within its borders. The collaborative efforts between South Africa and Nigeria reached new heights when Nigeria and South Africa became joint partners in strengthening the continent's policies and politics. Even though there has been continuity in the implementation of South Africa's foreign policy from Presidents Mandela, Mbeki, interim president Montlante and President Zuma, there have been some changes, depending on the prevailing circumstances. There have been some arguments concerning the fast-depreciating capital, urgency, and stature because of recent missteps and strategic blunders under the leadership of President Zuma, carried over to President Ramaphosa who has made many empty promises – including “The New Dawn”.

Obviously, this is subject to debate and contestation. For instance, South Africa's controversial turner at the United Nation Security Council, the visa debacle of the Dalai Lama and the divisive, disputable, and misguided campaign for South Africa to win the chair of the AU's commission, resulted in the CAR tragedy and military misadventure. Although South Africa and Nigeria can be perceived as collaborators, their approach is from different fronts; for instance, South Africa has been dominant in maintaining political stability in the CAR. There are however differences and similarities on how South Africa and Nigeria deal with African issues in strengthening Africa's integration. Therefore, it is safe to say that South Africa and Nigeria have ambiguous relations of collaboration and competition.



## **South Africa's foreign policy in context**

Generally, the end of Cold War resulted in new miscellany of political systems in Africa. When the Nationalist Party (NP) handed power to the democratically elected government of South Africa in April 1994, it gave rise to global democracy triumph which came after decades of struggle which was characterised by bloodbath. The elimination of the notorious inhuman apartheid system was a great achievement, and it paved the way for non-racial democracy. The dismantling of apartheid resulted in the formalization of relations by South Africa with different states across Africa and beyond. The declaration by Mandela in 1993 that human rights would be the light that would guide the country's foreign policy set the tone for South Africa's foreign policy orientation under the new political dispensation. Countries that were previously neglected due to their support to the liberation struggle became part of South Africa's foreign policy. These relations took different forms, from bilateral relations, regional relations to international relations.

The starting point for South Africa was to discuss broader issues that did not affect its national security in any way. Hence, commentators began to argue that South Africa's relations should focus more on the international context, peace, and cooperation, rather than geopolitics of conflict and war. So, South Africa's international relations thinking changed after the 1994 elections. The ANC leadership envisioned the country as a catalyst for rapid development for Southern Africa and the rest of the continent. Liberal voices started campaigning for a domestic value-driven agenda. However, critics claim that South Africa's foreign policy is at odds with the foreign policy tenets.

Based on its foreign policy principles, South Africa has assumed a place in the international system based on its policy choices that emphasize human rights and development. Its preference for the pursuit of its foreign policy through multilateral channels has made South Africa one of the *de facto* leaders on the African continent. As can be seen, South Africa's approach is guided by the desire to be a part of the global order both in the African and global communities rather than the state-centric conceptualisation which existed during apartheid. The approach to its foreign policy is defined

by the philosophy of *Ubuntu*, which recognises the interconnectedness and interdependence of humanity. So, the relevance of *Ubuntu* in its foreign policy is based on the Afrocentrism view, the people's philosophy which seeks to achieve its global agenda and other agendas in multilateral forums. South Africa's dramatic shift from being a pariah state during apartheid to becoming a bastion of African democracy has been a carefully crafted transition.

Under the leadership of President Nelson Mandela, the rainbow nation emerged. Whilst South Africa's foreign policy objectives sought to support active democratic progress in the continent, its foreign policy direction was not acceptable to all the other African countries. When Nigeria was under the dictatorship led by Sani Abacha, President Nelson Mandela spoke against dictatorship, but he was quickly pulled back by his vice president Thabo Mbeki. South Africa's lowest point was when it failed to isolate Nigeria for hanging Ken Saro-Wiwa and his compatriots, the Ogoni Nine. Instead, President Mandela was blamed by other African leaders for his failure to understand that Africans cannot turn against each other. Thereafter, Thabo Mbeki slowly recrafted South Africa's foreign policy credentials and its strategic thrust to assume a more nationalist than pro-democratic posture *vis-à-vis* several African conflict situations. South Africa has steadily pursued a foreign policy agenda that is fuelled by the notion of putting at its centre a specific focus on Africa. Hence, its emphasis on solidarity, peace, stability and security as the pillars of its foreign policy.

Cognisant of decades under White minority rule, South Africa was aware that domestic as well as foreign policy could not change overnight. So, So, the new government avoided trying to affect change in one arena to the detriment of the other. Hence, South Africa was seen as a middle power with limited capacities. From 1994 to 1999, there was direct criticism of its foreign policy due to lack of a clear structure. Based on its domestic experience under the apartheid regime, human rights became central to South Africa's foreign policy. Hence, the country has pursued greater African integration to give Africa a voice in world affairs. Through its nationalistic foreign policy approach, South Africa believes that the African Renaissance idea will amount to nothing if Africans are not involved in addressing sister countries' situations and other challenges.

South Africa's approach in prioritising Africa can be divided into distinct elements such as diplomatic and military energy, and deployment in stabilising the continent. This involves peacebuilding initiatives directed at facilitating negotiations between political and military adversaries. Such initiatives have been achieved in countries such as Angola, Burundi, Lesotho, Mozambique, Sudan, Sierra Leon and Zimbabwe, among others. Within the context of South Africa's regional engagements, the emphasis on the use of economic resources as 'rewards' or 'sanctions' in the pursuit of foreign policy objectives provides an inlet through which the country's regional policy can be understood.

After becoming a democratic state, South Africa was shown great resentment, which forced the country to do self-introspection in attempt to find its identity. As a result, the country's foreign policy was constantly reviewed using *Ubuntu* as the premise of diplomacy. The idea was to direct its foreign policy with respect for humanity and national sovereignty. Since 1994, South Africa has been trying hard to reposition itself on the African continent and beyond. For this reason, there are different perspectives that shape South Africa's foreign policy. Generally, South Africa's role in a rapidly changing world provokes more heated reactions than the question of its legitimacy in Africa. Hence, South Africa's foreign policy is portrayed by the political leadership as being informed by international conventions which promote democracy. Despite the discrepancies and controversies in the application of South Africa's foreign policy, the question of safeguarding commercial and national interest remains.

Foreign policies are not just based on generalization but affect practical perceptions of national interests that arise from abrupt demand and are influenced by historical perspectives (Shembilku, 2009). Furthermore, South Africa's foreign policy before and after apartheid has been the quest for peace and security in Africa, especially in the Southern African region, where they intervene in terms of security. Moreover, a wide range of actors, both internal and external, are typically involved in peace and development efforts in post-conflict contexts. Most of these actors have different, sometimes conflicting objectives. According to Williams (2013:5), "disagreements about the short-term and long-term goals of post-conflict efforts frequently exist even among major external actors." In some cases,

official objectives tend to remain vague, reflecting the incongruity of positions within the group of external actors or the fact that some actors pursue hidden agendas (Williams, 2013).

## SETTING THE SCENE

Since the advent of democracy in 1994, South Africa has committed itself to promoting its interests, being also a voice of the African continent. This has been demonstrated in its foreign policy posture, where it has played a significant role in cutting the colonizers' powers and motives to promote an African agenda. The strategy that was pursued by South Africa from 1994, was to ensure that Africans speak with one voice. Through building coalitions amongst themselves, South Africa hopes to strengthen African continental integration. By focusing on African geopolitics in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, South Africa has reviewed and expanded its own strategies to reduce external dominance. Hence, some civil society organizations have been questioned on their dominance on the African continent through the media and other forums. The approach that has been adopted by South Africa is to address underdevelopment strategies, restructure global division of labour, address inequality in the distribution of global world, address poverty and understand the implications of the growing power of transnationals, governance, and administration. Although South Africa has been critical about Western influence in Africa, its approach has been infiltrated by Western ideas – both overtly and covertly.

Thus, South Africa's position has been clear on globalization and how it incorporates its stance on anti-globalization, democratic governance, accountability, and responsibility. This has been demonstrated by the way it handles regional issues. The destructive way it used to deal with the region during apartheid has been changed by focusing on the principles of equity and mutual benefit. South Africa has constructed its policy in a way that denounces domineering and bossy postures towards the region. In so doing, the country has sought to develop partnerships and fairness to realize its foreign policy goals. South Africa's position has been influenced by several factors emerging in developing countries.

## **Transitioning into independence and beyond**

South Africa's transition from being an international pariah state during apartheid has changed the country's policy considerably. During apartheid, the Pretoria regime pursued an aggressive foreign policy that was hostile to the region and international players. The aggressive foreign policy was meant to protect the White minority rule and prolong their interest. It was seen as a defense mechanism by the apartheid architects. After becoming a democracy, South Africa learnt many lessons from the African continent, considering its human right abuses under the apartheid regime. Challenges such as hunger, poverty and war were prevalent. Based on these negative experiences, the country sought to address both domestic and continental issues by constructing an integrative foreign policy that would avoid the repeat of these African experiences. Mainly, the policy sought to address critical issues such as human rights, peace and security as envisioned by Nelson Mandela in establishing a free South Africa. The policy was modelled around transforming and developing South Africa from a racist, unjust, and authoritarian regime into a democratic, non-racial, and prosperous nation.

Unlike the situation the world over that favours the domination of the powerless by the most powerful, South Africa sought to change the status quo by rejecting an international system of structured power that reinforces the dominance of a hegemonic state. Generally, internationalism seeks to create conditions of collective security and shared values among the global community members. From its inception, international relations sought to deal with causes of war and peace circumstances systematically. Historically, the Catholic church under the Roman empire was the imperial center of power known as the Christendom. Based on this thinking, it is important to look at the historical context of South Africa's relations with the continental (African) and global community before and after 1994.

The British empire and its involvement in the affairs of South Africa marked the historical context of South Africa in 1910. The country found itself in a peculiar situation under the white minority population. In 1948, South Africa introduced apartheid as a government policy. The policy sought to extend pre-existing racial discrimination in the country. Consequently,

through international pressure, the country was isolated until 1993 when apartheid was ended; this led to political discussions between 1990 and 1992. When the new government was elected in April 1994, a transition from white minority rule under apartheid which enforced racial segregation and socio-economic segregation came to an end. Therefore, the ushering of the new political dispensation meant the review of South Africa's foreign policy to ensure that the country could be integrated into the international community. As a result, the introduction of the new changes positioned South Africa as a beacon of hope in Africa with Nelson Mandela as its first Black President. President Mandela's foreign policy was consecrated on the principles of human rights and democracy which were rooted in an idealist paradigm. He derived inspiration from The Freedom Charter, a document which was adopted in 1955 in Kliptown, Soweto in Johannesburg. Its purpose was to envision what a free and democratic South Africa would look like. In other words, it envisaged the characteristic features of a democratic South Africa.

However, during the first few years of democracy, Mandela's foreign policy was confronted by controversies and inconsistencies in its implementation. When Thabo Mbeki succeeded Mandela in 1999, the challenge was aligning the foreign policy formulation with its implementation. The aim was to reconfigure the foreign policy and prioritize domestic preferences. During Mbeki's tenure, South Africa's foreign policy was given direction and purpose by bringing in an ideological framework. At this stage, the policy was directed through the concept of *Ubuntu* and the general structure of diplomacy.

Mbeki sought to re-invigorate the policy and restructure SADC by emphasizing cooperation as opposed to competition. His focus was on multilateral institutions and how South Africa could continue to play an important role in terms of peacekeeping, conflict resolution and conflict prevention. Mbeki showed his willingness to engage constructively on several multilateral issues with the rest of Africa. Over the years, South Africa has advanced its commitment to democratic governance and peaceful political change on the African continent. Through its developed, industrial, and economic base and its military capabilities, it has managed to overcome the economic and political barriers that bedeviled the country during

apartheid. Unlike other African states that gained independence much earlier, the new South African government aspired to occupy a position of regional political leadership, and one of influence in international organizations. With the advent of a change in the global system, the shift of power in South Africa required a new foreign policy agenda that would engage all actors concerned to create and adapt to new signs of a globalized world.

For the ANC strategy on development and social progress to be successful, the country needed not only to reconstruct its foreign policy, but to establish itself internationally. Thus, when South Africa was accepted back into the global community of state regionalization in world politics, there was increasing importance of multilateralism in world affairs. Kgalema Montlante took over as a caretaker president after Thabo Mbeki was forced to resign by the ANC in September 2008. As expected, the foreign policy focus did not change. Motlanthe was only a caretaker who was going to hand over power in the next election.

In 2009, President Zuma assumed office and continued to implement the ANC's foreign policy objectives and decisions. On 5 December 2013, Nelson Mandela passed on, which set the country in mourning since he was viewed as the Founding Father of today's non-racial democratic system. Even though his death did not change the country's foreign policy direction, it consolidated South Africa's relations with other countries across Africa and the globe. South Africa has continued to play a significant role regionally due to its political, trade and investment ties across Africa. Historically, it is one of the founding members of both the League of Nations which was formed after World War 1 and the United Nations, which came into existence in 1945 when World War 2 ended. Due to its commitment to African integration, South Africa has promoted peace and stability in conflict-ridden countries such as the Comoros, DRC, Ivory Coast, Zimbabwe, Sudan, and Ethiopia.

### **South Africa's foreign policy since 1994**

Over the years, there have been a few changes in South Africa's foreign policy. The militaristic and aggressive policy that was used by the apartheid



regime against its African neighbours was dumped. The new South African foreign policy revealed a paradigm shift with more focus on peacekeeping and peace-making anchored on the 'soft power' approach as opposed to the 'hard power' that was used by the apartheid government. South Africa has been playing a significant role as an African mediator. The country's multilateral credentials were certainly enhanced by a demonstration of its principled commitment and activism as a "norm entrepreneur" (Geldenhuys, 2006). Based on the global and regional conference circuit, South Africa was ranked twenty-second in popularity, building its soft power which proved to be more beneficial than the hard power which was pursued by the previous regime. Currently, South Africa can be categorised as a middle power based on its hierarchy of power and influence in world affairs and its nature of diplomacy. From Mandela to Zuma, the country has accomplished a milestone in its reputation as a mediator in negotiating political settlements in Africa and elsewhere. The motivation driving South Africa to engage in these engagements is to address the question of the spill-over effect of unchecked political and economic instability.

As can be seen from the discussion above, the design of the South African policy posture has undertones of Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki, who talked about contributing to a stronger African Union (AU), supporting efforts to build a more stable and peaceful continent, building the pillars of South-South cooperation through BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa), and strengthening North-South relations, particularly with the United States (US), Europe, and Japan (Zuma, 2013). South Africa has built strong economic ties with other developing countries and has been visible internationally. For instance, it became a member of BRICS even though BRICS member states have their own geopolitical interests and regional agenda. There have been some arguments, right or wrong, on the establishment of BRICS, which some scholars have perceived as a new scramble for Africa. Hence, the formation of BRICS has resulted in natural resources competition among its members. As a result of the competition, the impact has been negated on African economies.

However, BRICS present a good opportunity for development if the African continent is governed well. Through its membership of BRICS, South Africa has positioned itself as a gateway to Africa, a leader and bridge

builder on the continent. Consequently, the country has responded to requests to intervene in conflict situations. Such responses can be seen when Mandela mediated in peace talks between the Suddenness government and its opposition in the middle of the 1990s (Alden and Le Pere, 2003). President Mbeki's role in Zimbabwe, Cote d'Ivoire, and Sudan, as well as President Zuma's involvement in Burundi, Zimbabwe, and the Central African Republic (CAR), buttress the view that South Africa has been deeply involved in peace initiatives across Africa. South Africa inherited several challenges after 1994, ranging from battered sanctions, poor economic growth rate, increased unemployment, and high public debt. Faced with these challenges, the government needed to develop and align its strategies to achieve the set goals. So, to meet its envisaged goals and economic interests, cooperation with its neighbours and other African countries was needed. From 1994, the ANC-led government promoted a people-centred foreign policy, linking it with international organizations to reform foreign affairs bureaucracy (Sooliman, 2014). The foreign policy was meant to respond to South Africa's international economic relations that were constrained by sanctions imposed by the United Nations (Le Pere, 2014). South Africa's entry was accompanied by meaningful contributions to world affairs by paying attention to various multinational platforms meant to improve governance and support for international relations structures. After 1994, South Africa attempted to influence other African states into following the AU Constitutive Act and its structures, as defined in the AU objectives.

For instance, with South Africa's influence, the AU has sought to strengthen its capabilities and apparatus in conflict prevention, management, and government resolution. That has seen an establishment of institutions such as the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC), the African Union Commission (AUC), and the African Court of Human and People's Rights (ACHPR). The South Africa's foreign policy has been caught between liberal internationalist and human rights values and the doctrine of national sovereignty. On one hand, the foreign policy seeks to address ethics and interest; on the other hand, it seeks to tolerate authoritarian regimes, which is problematic. Based on these contradictions, the expectations and outcomes enshrined in the South African policy are difficult to achieve. The

complexity of the policy is reflected in its quest for identity which mirrors a shift of alliances and power relations among diverse groups. As noted by Marthoz (2014), South Africa has evolved through decades of wrenching apartheid policies and centuries of Western colonisation and therefore expresses the evident tensions between major ingredients of the anti-apartheid struggle: democracy, human rights and anti-imperialism, and South-South solidarity. After the fall of apartheid, South Africa took a liberal tradition that primarily focused on anti-apartheid struggle and human rights-inspired diplomacy.

From a domestic perspective, the South African foreign policy sought to improve the lives of the poor black majorities who had been neglected by the apartheid government, and their social and economic situations that were eroded by decades of social injustice. This was given priority by adopting a foreign policy that would transform and prioritise development, poverty, and inequality in the country in order to enforce capacity and reach goals quickly. On the domestic front, the policy was mindful to redistribute both power and resources to the marginalised society. At the continental level, Africa has confronted its own economic challenges and political paralysis stemming from decades of misrule, resource wastage and corruption, civil wars, and environmental degradation (Le Pere and Ikome, 2012). Thus, full diplomatic relations have been established [by South Africa] abroad and across the continent in over 46 African countries and the world over since 1995.

By the end of 1994, 16 multilateral organizations were re-admitted, 31 multilateral treaties, and 99 bilateral agreements were concluded and acceded. All these initiatives that were undertaken by the South African government confirmed a paradigm shift in the political environment. Nonetheless, there are five basic pillars that the South African foreign policy is anchored on: human rights issues, justice and lasting solutions to problems facing humankind, justice in respect, peace, and continental integration. As can be seen from the synopsis above, South Africa has repositioned itself as a country with a shared interest in peace, stability, prosperity in the region, the continent and in the world. So, based on the new constitution, which sought to build a democratic and united continent, the country's foreign policy has gone further to claim South Africa's

position as sovereign independent state which respects other states' political sovereignty.

Historically, foreign policy in international relations was associated with the engagement of the nation-state as they are regarded as dominant role players. That is why foreign policy is understood to be about the resolutions of the state's internal and external interests. Globalization over the years challenged this ideology; that is why today, foreign policy includes relations with a wide scope of role players and comprises of external role players such as the European Union, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the African Union (AU), the United Nations (UN), and the G7 countries, to name a few. The role players extend to the Multinational Corporations (MNCs) which have become very influential in the last and current century, such as Microsoft, Huawei, Uber, Nestle, etc. These MNCs are significant in influencing domestic policies and subsequently shaping global foreign policies.

Other notorious role players include terrorist groups such as the Taliban, Boko Haram, Al Qaeda, and ISIS, who are stateless actors in international relations. This is because by definition terrorist groups operate and exist independently, outside the borders of sovereign states. Although these terrorist groups have extreme influence in the foreign policy establishment of any country, sovereign states and leaders do not engage them directly and do not recognize their legitimacy. This renders them "unofficial" yet important policy influencers in foreign policy analysis. Other role players are Non-Profit Organizations (NGOs) such as the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Heifer International, and Amnesty International. These NGOs assist in advancing and making policy issues recognizable, ensuring they are discussed in international politics. In other words, NGOs set up the agendas for discussions and open the eyes of the world to issues other people would not consider important (Kaufman, 2017).

However, in practice, Kaufman (2017) states that these external non-traditional role players have convoluted the systematic way of establishing foreign policy. Thus, states no longer focus mainly on the national "interest", but on how well these players advance their interests, react, and respond, or how will they be perceived if they follow an unpopular stance

or clause on foreign policy. In custom, the ministers of international relations, ambassadors, heads of states etcetera, formulate and participate in the foreign policy decision-making process in an established, bureaucratic manner. Thus, the mentioned external role players, particularly the stateless and non-state actors, do not possess the red tape practice that sovereign states possess. Instead, sovereign heads of states such as the president, secretary of state, or an ambassador, shy away or refrain from having direct or indirect contact with these terrorist groups, for the simple reason of not wanting to validate their existence. If these leaders make any contact regardless of how small it is, this could result in these groups being legitimate and seeking sovereignty in occupied territories. However, in the same breath, leaders cannot formulate foreign policies without accounting for how they intend to deal with these influential groups.

Interestingly, the foreign policy doctrine is in contrast with the Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA). While foreign policy focus is on the interests of the state, FPA, through factual and practical observations, pursues how in reality state representatives interpret their state's interests (Breuning, 2007). Foreign policy is informed by the state's ideology, terrain, origins, economic and diplomatic ability. These factors are referred to as determinants of foreign policy and are principally examined before and during foreign policy formulation. For this study, one objective is to establish the evolution of foreign policy determinants and how states are adapting to the digitization of foreign policy. Political Science (2018) states that almost all factors contribute to any foreign policy formulation and thus, a single factor cannot dominate the policy. The quality of diplomacy has become the most dominant factor in determining and formulating foreign policy. This is because technology has revolutionized how businesses are conducted and how people interact with each other. Secondly, the performance and non-performance of any state in international politics rely on its diplomatic strategies and pre-eminence.

That is, the government's diplomatic creativity, originality, and resourcefulness are needed and used to accelerate and ensure the achievement of the state's foreign policy goals and objectives. Thirdly, the caliber of diplomats is also of importance since their leadership qualities inform the kind of relationship they may have with their foreign counterparts. Thus, it is through diplomatic

engagements that the connections and dissimilarities with other states are purposefully determined and settled (Political Science, 2018). The best formulated foreign policy in the world is rendered irrelevant without a clear sense of the tools available to politicians and their respective utility. Usually, states have had recourse to diplomacy, economics, subversion and military instruments to achieve their respective aims. Recently, these 'hard power' instruments have been supplemented by recognition of the importance of incorporating 'soft power' into a state's repertoire. The promotion of values through governmental and nongovernmental actors is one of the 'soft power' tools which can help states shape a target country's foreign policy aims. Each of these has strengths and weaknesses in relation to a given foreign policy problem and it is a state's ability to capitalize on these diverse sets of instruments that determines whether it has a successful foreign policy or not.

### **South Africa's role in the global political arena**

Since the late 1980s, South Africa has been affected by the global economic downturn. For instance, statistics show that the country is faced by high levels of poverty due to unemployment, particularly of the youth living in the rural areas. Cognizant of South Africa's challenges at home, possibilities of expanding its fortunes beyond its horizons to release the opportunities out there, and urgent strategies needed to be developed. Being part of the global economy, South Africa's role must be visible in the global political arena. South Africa as an emerging power makes itself the greatest international player and is contributing through its participation in the work of developing global governance through multilateral forums and organizations (Draper, 2006). Based on its experiences of marginalization at home, South Africa is committed to ending many conflict situations and resolving them amicably across the African continent. Due to its capacity, South Africa has participated in the global debate effectively. For instance, during President Mandela's government, a step-by-step regional integration was developed as part of the African agenda. Thus, President Mbeki's administration expanded and further strengthened regional integration, democratization, peace, security and accelerated economic growth. On re-integration, South Africa has expanded its diplomatic, political, and economic