

Chapter 3

Peacekeeping in Southern Africa: A Regional Model

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Founding Statement of the Southern African Development Community

Introduction

In the past fifty years, the Southern African region has had its fair share of conflict and strife. The main causes of conflict revolved around issues of ethnic and religious identity, nationalism, scarcity of resources and internal wars. As each of these issues took a toll in the region at socio-economic and human levels, it also left a legacy of despair: an increased availability of light weapons throughout the region.

Since the early 1990's, with the resolution of some of its most pressing problems, Southern Africa has had the opportunity to take charge of its own future. Thus, when the conflict in Angola finally ends during 1996, for example, the region will be free from the inter-state and intra-state conflicts that prevented development and economic growth for so long. Now there is a chance to establish a secure enough environment for development to take root, and this, in turn, will benefit all the countries in the region. Nevertheless, the negative legacy of the conflicts will persist for many years to come. It will be up to the governments of the region to act and commit themselves to the speedy removal of this legacy.

One of the most preoccupying legacies is that of small arms proliferation. The region is awash with small arms and munitions, flowing freely across the borders of the countries to where and when they are in demand for political and criminal motives. Moreover, the long years of violent conflicts have developed

a culture of violence among recent generations, cultivating the *culture of the gun* as the only means for solving political disputes and gaining economic benefits. Thus, the temporary improvement of the general situation in Southern Africa, as seen in a number of resolved political conflicts and in the existence of United Nations missions for monitoring peaceful transitions to full democracy, is marred by a rise in crime and in weapons flows.

Each and every state in the region is now faced with a myriad of problems, including the increased availability of weapons in the region; the present fragility of states emerging from years of internal strife; the central governments' inability to increase security internally and internationally; the increase in international criminal organizations trading drugs, weapons and counterfeit currencies in the region; and the spread of a culture of violence among the young and the economically challenged. No one state is strong enough to cope with these problems alone and thus a call for collaborative approaches for solving common problems has emerged. Southern Africa has understood that the only way to achieve lasting peace, stability and prosperity is through cooperation.

Cooperation mechanisms, therefore, are underway in every aspect of national life. Collaborative efforts have been established in the economic, development and cultural dimensions, and also at the security and military levels. The focus of this paper concerns this last aspect of regional cooperation possibilities. In it I will explore the prospects of regional peacekeeping efforts, undertaken by the militaries of the Southern African nations, to assist in the larger regional security objectives. The creation of such peacekeeping efforts will be fundamental for gaining confidence in regional interactions between neighboring states, which in turn can facilitate the national and regional objective of controlling weapons flows across borders, thus helping to reverse the culture of violence that has begun to permeate the region.

I. Regional Peace and Security: SADC and ASAS

The concept of the peaceful settlement of disputes, as set out in Chapter VI, Article 33 of the UN Charter, indicates that parties to any dispute, the continuance of which is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security, should first of all seek solution by negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, or judicial settlement, and "should" resort to regional agencies, arrangements, or other peaceful means of their choice. Only after

possible ways and means of resolving conflict or imminent conflict have been exhausted will the UN resort to chapter VII of the charter, where more forceful measures may be implemented by the UN to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security.¹

Against this background, on 30 June 1993, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) established a *Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution*, which committed the OAU to cooperate closely with the United Nations with respect to peacemaking and peacekeeping². The mechanism was created as a response to international preoccupations concerning the ability of Southern African nations to: a) comply with economic and political principles acceptable to the international community; b) ensure their preparedness to implement political and economic reconstruction; and c) promote co-operation. This OAU effort eventually led to the creation of the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

The declaration by the Heads of States, on 1 April 1980, gave rise to the establishment of a regional organization concerned with development and security. The Declaration and the Treaty were signed in Windhoek (Namibia) during 1992, finally creating the SADC. Commitment to the establishment of SADC was aimed at achieving specific ideals, serving as a vehicle for regional development and integration.

The adoption of the SADC Declaration and Treaty marked a major step forward for Southern Africa. Its birth represented the culmination of processes that had been under way in the region for some time. In its founding statement the SADC States indicated that:

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Acting under these principles, the SADC adopted a framework of co-operation, trust and harmony that would provide for the following:

¹ Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *An Agenda for Peace*, New York: United Nations, 1992.

² Organization of African Unity, *Resolving Conflict in Africa*, Addis-Abeba: OAU Information Services Publication Series (II), 1993.

³ J.K. Cilliers and Mark Shaw, *South Africa and Peacekeeping in Africa*, Volume 1, Pretoria: Institute for Defence Policy, 1995.

- greater economic co-operation on the basis of balance, equity and mutual benefit, providing for cross-border investment and trade, and the freer movement of goods and services across national borders;
- common economic, political and social values and systems enhancing enterprise and competitiveness; democracy and good governance; respect for the rule of law; and the guarantee of human rights, popular participation and the alleviation of poverty; and
- strengthened regional solidarity, peace and security that will enable people in the region to live and work together in peace and harmony.

In pursuit of these objectives, member states of the SADC recommended the establishment of the Association of Southern Africa States (ASAS) -- as the political arm of the SADC -- to replace the now defunct Front-Line States' co-operative framework, becoming the primary mechanism for dealing with the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict in Southern Africa.

It must be noted that the Front-Line States (FLS) grouping had been born out of the need for common defense against activities aimed at destabilising the region. Since its inception in 1978, it co-ordinated strategies with and between the various national liberation movements. The FLS spearheaded international diplomacy and mobilised resources in support of these movements. The Inter-State Defence and Security Committee (ISDSC), which was formed under the FLS, had an important role to play in this regard.

In the past, the views and efforts of the FLS found common ground in the task of liberation. However, with the end of regional conflict and the end of Apartheid in South Africa, the countries in the region have recognized the need for change. With the decision taken to replace the FLS with the ASAS grouping, the Southern African states have indicated that a new basis for common security must be found. This new base must necessarily reflect the shift from a strategy of confrontation to one of cooperation.

This cooperative strategy is clearly indicated in the new organization's proposed terms of reference. The proposed objectives of ASAS are:

- to protect the people of the region against instability arising from internal breakdown of law and order, interstate conflict, and conflict from external aggression;
- to co-operate fully in regional security and defense, through conflict prevention, management and resolution;
- to mediate intra-state and inter-state conflicts;

- to promote and enhance the development of democratic institutions and practices within each member state, and to encourage them to observe universal human rights;
- to promote peace and stability; and
- to promote peacemaking and peacekeeping in order to achieve sustainable peace and security.

Although the promotion of peacemaking and peacekeeping is placed at the bottom of the tier in this short enumeration, its importance should not be underestimated.

In the Southern African context, the future development and prosperity of the entire region will depend on the rapid decrease of rising crime rates, the turning around of the culture of violence, and the stabilisation of inter-state conflicts. Assistance to other countries in the region in the maintenance of law and order is critical. If every member state concentrates on dealing with problems on its own soil, collaborating with its neighbours to address the problems on mutual borders, many of the negative legacies of the past can be overcome. One organized and controlled way of achieving this is to improve the regional capabilities for joint security and relief action through the creation of efficient peacekeeping forces.

For these reasons, peacekeeping and relief operations are one of the major issues at stake in Southern Africa. In recognition of this fact, and to manage military matters, the Inter-State Defence and Security Committee (ISDSC) of the FLS was expanded to form the Military Sub-Committee of ASAS. Its mandate is to focus on training and military co-operation rather than on building a regional military command and control system. Secondary objectives of the ISDSC are: to promote multilateral co-operation; to provide the intelligence support for preventative diplomacy initiatives in the case of pending or actual hostilities; and to plan combined operations, agreeing on standard staff procedures, drills, tactics and telecommunications.

In taking these steps, the ASAS is recognizing that regional co-operation is essential to ensure a favorable security environment. It also serves to diminish regional reliance on extra-regional assistance programs and facilitates the retention of regional finances.⁴ Above all, it generates the seeds of confidence and efficiency which are needed if the problem of light weapons

⁴ J. K. Cilliers and Greg Mills, *Peacekeeping in Africa*, Volume 2, Pretoria: Institute for Defence Policy, 1995.

proliferation in the region is to be controlled, and if the culture of violence is to be reversed.

II. Implementation of Cooperative Security Arrangements

Notwithstanding the fact that there is light at the end of the tunnel concerning Southern Africa's role in peacekeeping, it is important to be aware of the problems posed by peacekeeping in the region and to explore ways of overcoming these obstacles. For this reason, I propose now to examine specific measures which might be explored by Southern African States to enhance their preparedness to keep the peace.

Southern Africa is not only a contributor to peacekeeping; it is also a region that is much in need of peacekeepers. In Southern Africa, as elsewhere on the continent, a number of practical difficulties, including insufficient material resources and slow deployment of troops and equipment, have impinged upon the implementation of peacekeeping missions as mandated in the past.

Independent of the institutional arrangements made between Southern African States, on this issue, the crux of the effectiveness of peacekeeping operations will, in each case, lie with the level of preparedness of troops. Therefore there is a pressing need to improve the readiness of countries to deploy appropriately-equipped forces rapidly and effectively. Improving preparedness for peacekeeping in the region should be viewed as a co-operative endeavour between the SADC, ASAS and the interested states. To ensure these, the cooperative mechanisms which are in place should pay particular attention to stand-by arrangements, equipment, confidence-building and training, and finance.

Stand-by Arrangements

One way to improve preparedness is to develop and encourage participation in regional stand-by arrangements. In these arrangements, governments indicate in advance to the regional body the types of personnel and equipment that they are willing, in principle, to make available for peacekeeping or assistance operations in the region. Such systems can be of great help when a crisis occurs or an operation is planned; they also enable participating governments to prepare and train their troops for specific task. As part of the stand-by arrangements, special attention could be given in the future

to the establishment of a capacity to respond rapidly to crises in the region. Such arrangements can significantly enhance the preparedness of member states for crisis management and peacekeeping in the region.

There are a number of advantages to a regional Stand-by Peacekeeping/Relief Aid Force. The most important of these is the ability to react swiftly. Troops remained stationed in their home countries, maintaining a high level of preparedness. Once the preventative diplomacy actions are under way, the peacekeeping force could be put on alert and deployed at very short notice. In the case of natural disasters, swift reaction is crucial in the fight to save and protect the lives of affected populations. In addition to rapid deployment, a second advantage of such a force is that it could help achieve a higher degree of commonality and standardisation regarding equipment, communications and training standards within the region.

The following weaknesses of international peacekeeping and relief aid structures would probably be accentuated on a regional level, and should be addressed from the outset of negotiations regarding standby arrangements:

- the limited capabilities available to international and regional organisations which result from the lack of a planning cell to identify, co-ordinate and direct the logistics flow in the early stages of an operation;
- the lack of tactical mobility for supporting operations within a given deployment area;
- an overall lack of air capabilities for intra-theatre logistics, airlifts, surveillance, reconnaissance, communications and search and rescue tasks; and
- the lack of financial support and budgetary allocation procedures for peacekeeping forces and relief aid activities.

These weaknesses of international peacekeeping and relief aid structures can be ameliorated with attention to the following elements, which should be pursued during the planning of such arrangements:

- the establishment of secure communications and the clarification of channels of command and reporting between Higher Headquarters and missions in the field;
- the establishment of an effective command and control system in the field, possessing the necessary arrangements of personnel, equipment and procedures to enable the force commander to plan, direct and control forces in support of the mission;

- adequate training of units from countries which have no tradition of contributing troops and which lack specialised units and personnel in the areas of logistics, communication and engineering; and
- the provision to the Force Commanders of political and military intelligence which might have a bearing on their operations.

Intelligence is a sensitive issue in the UN context, but one which must be addressed on a regional level from the very start of co-operative peacekeeping. In the first place, a tactical intelligence capability is needed in order to avoid the kind of intelligence failures experienced in Somalia. Secondly, combined intelligence is a must if the OAU and the SADC are serious about developing a preventative and early warning capacity. Thirdly, such a capacity is needed simply as an independent source of information, especially in politically and ethnically complex areas of deployment.

Equipment

Established peacekeeping procedures require countries participating in operations to provide fully-equipped units. These units are expected to be self-sufficient for the first sixty days in a mission area. Although this expectation is a UN norm, it should also be applied within the SADC. This will not only ensure that SADC member states are ready to participate in UN operations in the region, but will also greatly enhance the speed and efficiency with which they can react within the region. Delays in deployment undermine the operational capability of peacekeeping and assistance operations. In crisis situations, like the one in Rwanda, such delays can have tragic consequences.

An effort should therefore be made by member states to provide their troops with the basic equipment needed, especially with regard to specialised and heavy equipment. One such effort could involve the forming of partnerships between member states, wherein one country would make troops available and the other would provide vehicles and heavy equipment. These partnerships, formed within the framework of SADC standby arrangements, could also provide for training in maintenance of equipment, air transport to the mission area, etc. To help overcome the delays encountered in the procurement and transport of equipment to mission areas, as well as to sustain troops once they are deployed, basic, non-lethal equipment such as tents and camping equipment, communication equipment, etc., could be pre-positioned at logistical centers in countries that are easily accessible. These arrangements

could be considered for peacekeeping and relief operations in the region either by the UN, the OAU or the SADC.

Confidence-Building Measures and Training

Some training activities can be pursued to assist member states in preparing troops, military- and civil police units, and civilians to participate in peacekeeping or relief operations. Furthermore, the same activities can be utilised to build confidence between the different armed forces of the region, and to foster understanding and trust between old enemies and new friends. These activities could include, for instance, exchanges of students to attend all military courses throughout the region, joint planning and training exercises, development of a joint doctrine on peacekeeping for the region, and guidelines, handbooks and videos covering the general aspects of peacekeeping and relief operations in the region. In addition, to increase the general knowledge of peacekeeping and relief operations, established training teams from the UN, or even from the region, could assist in the training of national troops, at the request of governments. Countries from the region, such as South Africa and Zimbabwe, can assist other countries in the region to overcome training difficulties in a number of ways. Institutional collaboration between training centers can greatly enhance the ability to train all forces in joint and combined operations. A small staff exchange program can reinforce collaboration between States both at Headquarters and at the field level. Bilateral arrangements for the provision of equipment for training will also enhance the standard of training and ensure inter-operability in regional peacekeeping and relief operations.

Finance

Whether the efforts to improve peacekeeping or relief operations in the region are centered in the UN, the OAU or the SADC, or a combination of these bodies, a reliable financial basis is essential. The fact that the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has had to rely on voluntary contributions to meet the costs of its expanded activities in Liberia has undoubtedly been a major obstacle in the discharge of its duties and responsibilities. Obstacles such as this should be taken into account when considering the financial aspects of peacekeeping and relief activities in the region. Accordingly, member states must also consider their financial requirements. One method of providing the necessary resources, for example, could be the establishment of a voluntary fund dedicated to enhancing

preparedness for peacekeeping and relief operations in the region. Such a fund could be opened to contributions from regional and other governments and interested business organizations. It could be used for the objectives described above, as well as to support the immediate deployment of missions when needed. Member states must be cognizant of the fact that this method of financing is dependent on the fund being replenished in a systematic and timely manner.

III. Factors to be Considered in Policy Formulation for Peacekeeping and Relief Operations in the Region

Steps such as standby arrangements, equipment, confidence building and training, and finance are important considerations if the regional organizations are to take up combined peacekeeping operations in all seriousness. Nevertheless, there are a number of factors over and above these four which need to be taken into account when deciding on procedures and policy formulations.

As explained above, the region already contains arrangements and plans which point in the direction of building peacekeeping forces to serve security and peace in Southern Africa. These arrangements must be considered with a critical eye to ensure that they are used to the best advantage and to suggest improvements conducive to effective deployment capabilities. For this reason, I will now concentrate on some of the most vital requirements for effective implementation of these plans.

Policy

Currently there is no regional policy on peacekeeping in Southern Africa. It is therefore imperative that the SADC, in conjunction with ASAS and ISDSC, develop a regional policy on peacekeeping and on the provision of aid in the region and in Africa at large.

Finance

A very clear policy regarding the funding of peacekeeping operations in the region has to be formulated. In addition, before operations are carried out, UN/OAU funding must be finalized.

A Peacekeeping Force

Because of financial and policy constraints, a standing peacekeeping force is not even an option for the Southern African region. The future role that the SADC will play in defense and security in the Southern African region requires a clear policy regarding force levels, equipment and logistical support within the region. For any of the region's military forces to operate successfully inside the region, a joint and combined training program must exist, and a peacekeeping doctrine and procedures for the region must be formulated in the short term. It is suggested that the task and mission of a future operation be the fundamental factors in determining the composition, equipment, training and preparation of the force. Current standing forces in the region should be earmarked for peacekeeping operations and the provision of assistance and humanitarian aid.

Operational Requirements

Before combined peacekeeping or humanitarian aid and assistance operations can be conducted in the Southern African region, the following operational aspects will require finalization:

Operations

If regional mechanisms for peacekeeping activities include the grouping of a peacekeeping force drawn from regional forces, the following aspects must be mutually agreed upon by the SADC and ASAS:

- standardization of equipment for combined operations;
- common doctrine, procedures, tactics and drills for peacekeeping operations;
- command and control structures for combined operations;
- combined training exercises - types, frequency and venue;
- contingency plans with provision for adequate reserves to meet all foreseen and major military activities;
- co-ordination of military and security policies and doctrines;
- agreements on assistance in national disasters (e.g., floods, earthquakes, etc.) and the distribution of relief aid during those crises;
- agreements on technical assistance and technology transfers regarding clearing of landmines, etc; and

- policy-development and negotiations designed to address serious regional security issues like drug trafficking and the illegal trade in arms.

Intelligence

Inter-governmental agreement should be reached regarding the development of the following intelligence systems:

- a system for the exchange of information and intelligence regarding military and criminal issues outside the region that are of importance to the security of the region;
- a system for the exchange of information and relevant intelligence on the security of member states; and
- a system for providing early warning of pending conflict situations.

Medical

Proper medical research and information-gathering within the region must:

- evaluate all epidemic and endemic diseases in the region and the appropriate prophylactic measures to be taken against them; and
- assess the amounts of medical personnel, equipment and supplies required to support peacekeeping and humanitarian aid operations in the region.

Confidence-Building Measures and Skills Development

In order to further sound relations between the forces earmarked for participation in peacekeeping and humanitarian relief operations in the region, as well as to develop the necessary skills to execute the operations, the following issues require agreement between the states of the region:

- the formulation of common doctrine and procedures covering the envisaged combined activities of the forces involved;
- co-ordinated combined training (i.e., field exercises and training institutions such as Peacekeeping Centers, Police Academies, etc.);
- joint training manoeuvres with friendly forces;

- the exchange of information and sharing of experiences on measures to re-integrate ex-combatants and war veterans into civilian life in post conflict situations;
- co-operation in other fields, for example, facilitating sports and visits among member states;
- the creation of a Military Academy for Southern Africa for the training of professional officers; and
- the clearing of landmines in countries emerging from recent violent conflict, and other technical and professional assistance.

Logistics

The following logistic aspects require co-ordination:

- standardization of the equipment of national forces for peacekeeping roles;
- establishment of a procurement and maintenance policies and procedures for common equipment; and
- identification of sites and the formulation of a policy for pre-positioning stores and equipment near possible areas of conflict in the region, to facilitate the rapid deployment of forces.

Finance

Timely consideration should be given to the means of financing regional co-operation projects. Should conflict within a SADC member state escalate to such a level that a peacekeeping force must be deployed, the costs will be enormous, and provision should be made for such an eventuality. A SADC budget will have to be drawn up for multilateral military co-operation and should include provision for:

- the cost of Combined HQ's (if applicable);
- travel and accommodation expenses for representatives to attend meetings in member countries;
- conference expenses;
- peace force operation costs; and
- regional disaster and crisis relief fund expenses.

Considerations Before Deployment

Before any regional force becomes involved in peacekeeping operations, or in providing military aid to other states in Southern Africa, the following factors should be considered:

UN Sanction. A UN resolution must have been passed in the Security Council.

The role of the OAU and SADC. The UNSC Resolution must have the support of the OAU and must be in the interest of the region.

Ethnicity. The risks involved in participating in operations where conflicts are fueled by ethnic division must be carefully weighed. Far too often in the past, operations were jeopardized by claims of partiality, indirect involvement and even direct support for one of the belligerent parties because the ethnic composition of the force was not properly considered.

Administration and Infrastructure. Before a decision is made to provide military support for peace initiatives in the region, troop-contributing countries must consider the state of the infrastructure, local government, law and order agencies, and existing legal system of the area concerned, as well the accountability of the belligerent parties. Often in the past, peacekeeping missions altered the aims of parties to conflicts in ways which inflated the parties' ambitions and made their appetites more difficult to satisfy. Humanitarian aid landed on the black market to enrich the powerful, and people became dependent on the "false economy" created by the force deployed in the region.

Areas of Influence and Interest. The effect of the deployment of military forces and the operation on countries in the area of influence and in the area of interest must be considered and discussed with the countries involved. The legacy of the UN operations in Mozambique and Angola, in terms of disarmament and the proliferation of light weapons, will linger for a very long time in the region. If proper consulting and planning had been conducted with the countries in the region before the start of these operations, the proliferation problem could have been contained before it started.

Internal Factors. Before any regional military forces are committed to, or accepted for, participation in peace operations in the region, the following internal factors should be considered:

- Are the forces trained for the job at hand, and do they have the ability to meet the operational needs of the operation?
- Do liaison channels exist within the regional or international peacekeeping structure? Does the force have the ability to maintain them?
- Has a command and control system been established, and are the forces' systems compatible with it?
- Does the force have the ability to execute combined operations in terms of:
 - telecommunications;
 - languages; and
 - standardization of equipment, technical and logistical support?
- Is a disengagement plan in place?
- Can the force be logistically supported from own resources? If not, what alternative arrangements are possible?
- Are finance channels open so that contingencies within the force do not become the problem of the mission commander or the organization initiating the operation?

IV. Conclusion

Only in a cooperative spirit and in an organized manner will the present violence, political instability, and increased light weapons proliferation be controlled and eventually reduced. The region has clearly indicated that it is ready to take charge of its own future. Now, it is a question of adding a physical dimension to that political will. Part of the solution to these problems lies in the creation of an effective combined peacekeeping force within the region. It is therefore important that the following should be considered by the SADC in its pursuit of its founding statement:

- a) The concept of stand-by arrangements for peacekeeping and relief operations should be fully realized.

- b) Countries in the region which can afford to help their less-fortunate neighbours, like South Africa and Zimbabwe, should endeavour to train and help these countries to enable them to respond quickly and effectively to conflict, and should offer logistical support through bilateral means.
- c) All efforts should be made to direct programs and projects in the region towards collaborative peace. Socio-economic development will only take root when security and peace are established in the region.
- d) Those that have common borders with conflict areas should be motivated and actively helped in a collaborative regional manner to resist or prevent arms sales or shipments throughout their territories. The entire region will eventually pay for allowing this problem to get out of hand.
- e) Regional peace seminars and workshops should be held frequently to discuss ways and means for addressing the security and crime problems of the region which threaten the fragile co-existence of member states.
- f) Regional Armed Forces, Police Forces and Customs Officials should actively become involved in collaborative training and preparation programs, to ensure that they are ready to act cooperatively to address security crises as they arise.

Whatever the difficulties on the road ahead, the SADC remains the only mechanism of the region to finally create the secure environment needed in order for stability and development to take root. Peace and security are essential for regional economic and social development, and all possible steps must therefore be taken to support the SADC's efforts to ensure peace and security in the region. The individual levels of preparedness of regional governments to contribute troops and equipment to peacekeeping and relief operations are crucial milestones on the road towards collaborative peace and security. What is required is the maximum collaboration of all SADC member states in contributing their quota of human and material resources. In the final analysis, the success of peacekeeping and relief operations, irrespective of the level of preparedness, depends on the political will of all Southern African Governments to ensure that when a crisis erupts, time is not wasted in taking steps that could have been taken in advance. Time that is wasted translates, at best, into despair, and, at worst, into loss of human lives. Southern Africa cannot afford to pay the price of lost time.