South Africa's Foreign Policy Since 2009: A Case Study of the South African National Defence Force

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Abstract: This paper analyses the role of military as an instrument of foreign policy in SA since 2009. Thereafter examines how the military is utilised in different roles other than fighting battles with an aim to protect the national interests. The primary research question of the paper is: what is the role of the South African military as an instrument of foreign policy, and how does this role play out in the dichotomy between foreign policy formulation and foreign policy implementation? The theoretical framework applied to the study is idealism. Idealists believe it is possible for humans to live together in harmony of (interest) if proper measures are taken of which that is what inspires SA's foreign policy. The methodology utilised for this paper is the qualitative approach as it is fundamentally descriptive in nature and it assists in providing complex contextual description of the formulation and implementation of both the military and the foreign policy. We argue that the military has become one of the state instruments whose utility has gained momentum since 2009; especially in Africa. This is directly in support of the foreign policy of South Africa. Last and most importantly, this paper contributes to the on-going debate on how SA's military of late has become an image of foreign policy in Africa.

Keywords: Foreign policy, Idealism, International Relations, Military

1. Introduction

South Africa's position of the country is strategic in such a way that it straddles the major economic sea trade routes of the world. South Africa (SA) also enjoys the privileges of direct access to both the Indian and Atlantic oceans which gives her the advantage of connecting the African continent with the rest of the world. Therefore SA must have national power to influence and protect her interests in the world arena. The domains of national power include political, diplomatic, information, economic, social and military. For the country to exert its position or influence in the anarchic state of the world it must have power. These domains are of such a nature that they are intertwined and they affect one another, they are based on an interdisciplinary perspective. If the economy of the country is in decline, it will affect its industry, including the military industry as, the state will not have money to procure military equipment and armaments. The possibility is that it will directly affect the political power, its influence in the international arena (Defence Review, 2015:3-5). According to the White Paper on Foreign Policy (2011:4) South Africa's action in the international sphere must be guided by its foreign policy. South Africa's foreign policy has

the underpinning elements of which all her actions must be based on and amongst others include the centrality of human security as a universal goal, based on the principle of Batho Pele (putting people first), support for democratisation and conflict management and peace. Thus it is important that foreign policy is discussed in perspective. Foreign policy is the state's plan of action in relations with other states.

International Relations (IR) as an academic discipline can be viewed simultaneously as constructivist and empiricist by nature. It is constructivist in the sense that it is reflexive and it deconstructs essential claims to knowledge. Constructivists put the emphasis on the assigned material aspects of power (Guzzini, 2013:5). They create the necessary room for the identities and interests of international actors to take a certain position in theorising international relations. In the nature of the international system, constructivism notes such identities and interests as the result of ideas and social construction of ideas. It gives objects meaning and can attach different meanings to different things. It is empiricist in as much as it is sensitive to the practices of human beings and their relationships to objects. These characteristics provide a perspective on how to analyse security

by focusing on specific practices and be reflexive towards those practices (Williams, 2013:21). The purpose of the paper is to analyse the role of the military as an instrument of foreign policy in South Africa since 2009. Thereafter, to examine how the military can be utilised in different roles other than fighting battles of with the aim of protecting the national interests. This provides an understanding of the roles that the military can perform in the international sphere. The military is an instrument of the state and thereby an extension of politics. It is used in different roles both internally and externally. The focus of this study is on the external use of the military instrument when the state is pursuing its foreign policy. The military instrument is not only used as hard power in cases of war but it can have effect in influencing international actors to act in a manner that is in the interest of South Africa. The central research question to be answered in this paper is: What is the role of the South African military as an instrument of foreign policy, and how does this role play out in the dichotomy between foreign policy formulation and foreign policy implementation?

2. Theoretical Perspective

The theoretical framework that applied in this paper is idealism. Simply because SA's foreign policy is influenced by the theoretical underpins of idealism. Lacewing finds it appropriate to clarify the nature of idealism and that the doctrine of apperception enters in only indirectly. The main claim goes back to the basic definition of idealism *"It is only as it is in thought that the object is truly in and for itself; in intuition or ordinary conception it is only an appearance"* (Lacewing, 2015:3)*.* This claim is thoroughly acceptable to a modern realist, especially a scientific realist, and it is serve as another way of saying again that idealism consists in taking "finite existence", i.e. given sensible particulars merely as given, to be not absolute, will require something else to explain them. It is simply non-philosophical, even if common, it is remarkable that here the claim is that it is like "ordinary psychology," specifically in its doctrine of apperception (Barkenhead, 1923:3). Robert continues to argue that idealism is not meant to follow directly from the idea of concepts is not to deny that a more radical and appealing "Copernican" theory of concepts might be developed. The idea that items cannot be understood apart from thought makes sense (Robert, 2000:14). Idealism is very counter-intuitive in the sense that if realism does not work, idealism is the answer.

The claim that there is nothing to physical objects apart from ideas is certainly odd, but, it should be welcomed upon reflection. There are two reasons for thinking that idealism solves the problems that realism throws up. Certain questions are posed in this regard on how it is that experiences can be connected to something 'beyond', which cannot even be described or understood? How can it be confirmed that ideas really do represent (and represent accurately) something that exists? Idealism solves the problem of scepticism, because there is no need to 'link' the ideas perceived to something else (physical objects). Ideas don't represent physical objects, they are physical objects. The possibility of a world quite different from what is experienced does not suffice. In experiencing ideas, the world is also experienced (Anon, 2015:11). Idealism is distinguished by having the following main Tenets. These tenets are explained in the following manner:

- Universal ethics indicates that all humans should abide by common standards such as natural laws. Furthermore there is a universal ethic common to all people and there is no special aspect of culture that makes morality different from country to country. This notion of idealists claims cultural relativists are hypocrites.

- Another tenet is that peace is better than war and that war is seen as immoral by idealists, by others, it is only as a last resort and for a just cause.

- According to idealists war is irrational. Idealists argue that real conflicts arise over real disagreements and they tend to believe that such conflicts could be avoided if states sought to better understand each other. Thus, there is much misperception and manipulation of people in international relations that needs to be rectified.

- Idealists believe it is possible for humans to live together in harmony of (interest) if proper measures are taken. The human race could live together in peace if only it would come to believe that war and violence are not the answer. Conflict is not intrinsic of human existence as realists claim; war and violence are learned behaviours, not intrinsic and this is constructed.

- Idealists are more optimistic about human nature. In the proper setting, people would enjoy peace and be free from conflict and thus are good.

- Another tenet idealist mentioned is that people that are active can take charge of politics. Political leaders can manipulate common people to fight in war, but an active, democrat movement of common people can reverse this manipulation and this indicates the power of public opinion.

Again, war is irrational and avoidable, and most individuals would not participate in war if they were fully informed and had a free choice. Furthermore, a lot of faith is put in international law and intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) such as the United Nations and International Court of Justice to solve problems on the international level (Anon, 2015:11-14; Lacewing, 2015:5). Karl also argues that idealism is more consistent than realism with a commitment to empiricism. The hypothesis that there is a physical world, quite independent of experience, is not something that can be verified through experience. The experience is only of primary and secondary qualities. Furthermore the argument is that primary and secondary properties belonged to the physical object; the properties are held together by its substance. A substance is, by definition, something that does not depend on something else to exist (Karl, 1991:9). Booth concurs that physical objects have substance that they can exist unperceived. Idealists connotes that the substance of physical objects are nothing more than the ideas perceive. In addition the ideas only exist in the mind. It doesn't make sense to say a pain exists unless someone feels, or that a colour exists unless someone sees it. Nor does it make sense to say a shape exists unless someone sees or feels it. What is the shape 'square' except what we see or feel? The realists stipulates that primary qualities are not dependent upon being perceived, and in this way, there is sense of physical objects existing unperceived (Booth, 2011:37; Nkosi, 2017:8). It worth noting that idealism is the same as liberalism in the sense that it embraces the notion of human rights, multi-lateralism, peace and different role players in the world order.

3. Setting the Scene on SA's Military and Foreign Policy

The world is anarchic, that is the sense that sovereign states recognise no higher authority, thus realists portrays the fact that the world is dominated by states that act only in pursuit of their national interest. Therefore, interaction is regulated through the exercise of power. Ultimately it is through the utilisation of military power supported by a strong economy (Bylis

et al., 2007:97). Hurd indicates that in consideration of self-interest and legitimacy states avoid the stigma of being branded as law breakers. Instead they consider having a trustworthy reputation to be advantageous. This is also applicable to even the most powerful states. They seek to solicit support from other states that have common interests before they take action (Hurd, 1999:397). South Africa as a state also portrays its power in Africa through its foreign policy by using the military while pursuing its national interests, and contributing to peace and stability in the continent. Thus the paper will focus on the link between the military and the foreign policy. It is important to understand military security so that it can be linked to foreign policy (Williams, 1999:162; Nkosi, 2017:59). The next section will discuss military security.

4. Military Security

Buzan approaches security from all angles; from micro to macro, and also addressing the social aspects of security and how people or societies construct or "securitize" threats. This is also applicable to current issues, for example, the war on terrorism. This constructivist approach allows not only discovering security, but also the breakdown of every aspect that contributes to or affects security, from the individual and society to the main referent, which is the state. This epistemological methodology can be considered to be one of Buzan's greatest contributions to the theory of IR, as it allows for a broader understanding of conflicts and issues in the field of International Relations (Buzan, 2009:2). White argues that security at its broadest can cover threats to anything valued by individuals, starting from physical survival and wellbeing to economic welfare, personal relationships and sense of self-worth, and then extended to anything valued collectively as part of a society or group. Wolfers (1952:485) indicates that security can legitimately encompass someone's individual emotional wellbeing, 'national security' naturally limits the field to those aspects of security for which the state might take responsibility. When something is a security issue, it is expected of the state to become more involved: the state is allowed greater powers and resources to deal with that issue (White, 2012:4-5).

Baldwin (1997:12) contends that security is an important concept, which has been used to justify suspending civil liberties, making war, and massively reallocating resources during the last fifty years. Wolfers states that security covers a range of goals so wide that highly divergent policies can be interpreted

as policies of security. Security points to some degree of protection of values previously acquired, a nation is secure to a extend to which it is not in danger of having to sacrifice core values if it wishes to avoid war and is able if challenged to maintain them by victory in such a war (Wolfers, 1952:484).

Security is about the pursuit of freedom from threat and the ability of states and societies to maintain their independent identity and their functional integrity against forces of change, which they see as antagonistic. Security is about survival, but it also includes a substantial range of concerns about the conditions of existence (Buzan, 1991:435). The National Security Strategy guides national decision-making and determines courses of action to be taken in order to attain the state or condition wherein the national interests, the well-being of our people and institutions, and our sovereignty and territorial integrity are protected and enhanced. Military strategy is in support of the national strategy that is also congruent with the policy. There are common features of the military strategies in terms of actions. All strategies are concerned with ways to employ means to achieve ends. This is also applicable at operational and tactical levels. In essence all efforts are directed towards attaining the objective that is defeating the enemy. They are all employed to achieve military objectives in support of national strategy end and policy (Lykke Jr, 2017:180). Clausewitz (1942:20) contends that there are five basic military strategies namely;

- **Strategy of Extermination**: With this strategy the action is to exterminate and is directed at the physical embodiment of the enemy.

- **Strategy of Exhaustion**: The action is to either exhaust the enemy's war making means, the enemy's will to continue fighting over the political object, or both.

- **Strategy of Annihilation**: The strategy seeks to strip an enemy of his war making means in decisive battle through either physical attrition or the breaking of his psychological cohesion through dislocation.

- **Strategy of Intimidation**: The main focus is to threaten an opponent through the threat of violence, either psychologically compelling him to do something or, alternately, deterring him from doing something.

- **Strategy of Subversion**: Aim of this strategy is to subvert the attitude or beliefs of an adversary in order to break the enemy's resolve and observance to the political objective.

There are also commonalities between these basic military strategies and that they all exist between two poles, one physical and the other psychological. These two poles, as the objects of military strategy, provide an integrating framework for military strategy (Buzan, 1991:91). The next section will focus on the elements of the military.

5. Elements of the Military

The South African Defence Review, 2015 indicates that the military must have a defence posture but will maintain offensive capabilities. This will allow the military to execute its functions properly and effectively. For the military to be effective it must have the following elements;

- **Joint Command Control**: This is to ensure joint action with respect to land, sea and air and which must be capable of integrating with multi-national and departmental agencies.

- **Defence Diplomacy**: This is aimed at prevention and resolution of conflict that will be enhanced through integration of its diplomatic, military and other efforts in a complimentary manner. The main effort focuses on those national priorities where defence diplomacy engagements will add the most value (Neethling, 2012:481).

- **Special Forces**: Special Forces capabilities must be suited to strategic reconnaissance; ordered strategic special tasks; deep reconnaissance in support of the combat services and the execution of unique operations including hostage rescue, urban and anti-terror operations.

- **Medium Combat Forces**: This force must be have mobility, firepower and must be projected where required.

- **Heavy Combat Forces**: The force must be able to deter adversaries and be able to conduct operations in high threat situations.

- **Air Operations**: This capability must be responsive and agile to defend and protect the South African airspace.

- **Military Health Support**: The capability must be deployable and be able to sustain operations for longer periods.

- **Expeditionary Force**: This force must be projected and be able to support operations in distant areas.

- **Information Warfare**: This capability must be able to protect South Africa's cyber domain thorough comprehensive information warfare equipment (Defence Review, 2015:6; Du Plessis, 2003:117).

It is important that military is linked to foreign policy in order to understand the nexus between the two. The next section will thus discuss SA foreign policy.

6. South Africa's Foreign Policy

The Freedom Charter is the capstone document of the ANC, as it provides directions to the government policies and actions. Similarly it directs the foreign policy of the country. The Freedom Charter emphasizes the element of peace and friendship, furthermore it states that South Africa will strive to maintain world peace and be involved in settling international disputes by negotiations (The Freedom Charter, 1955:1). Therefore, the government of the ANC continues to pursue its international relations objectives as directed by the Freedom Charter which states that there shall be peace and friendship. Therefore the foreign policy is focused on forming friendship and to work towards peace in the continent and the world whilst pursuing South Africa's interests. (ANC 53 National Conference Resolution, 2016:38). Resolutions that were taken in the ANC Polokwane conference also addressed aspects on international relations. Decisions taken there include the following dominant features of foreign policy such as the struggle against poverty and underdevelopment especially in Africa guided by NEPAD programmes, peace and the peaceful resolution of conflicts, peacekeeping activities, partnerships, building and reforming institutions in the continent and ensuring influence on political global issues (Ibid. 2016:34-41). The international relations focus mostly on the engagement with the continent, whilst supporting the call for the establishment of the AU government. Furthermore the decisions emphasized that the immediate focus should be on the building of regional economic communities and regional integration. It was also

pointed out that the consolidation of SADC is the first step to attain AU government and recognised that the ANC has a prominent role in strengthening and consolidating regional political and encourages the establishment of the SADC parliament (Sidiropoulos, 2008:117-119).

Habib indicates that it is critical that in the discourse about South African foreign policy, the hegemonic status of the country in the continent is taken into consideration. In this regard hegemons do not only aspire to lead but are also endowed with military, economic and other resources. It is of utmost important that they have a political and socio-economic vision. Ultimately it takes responsibilities to ensure that the features of its vision are operationalized in the region it sees as its sphere of influence (Habib, 2003:3). In some instances SA has taken leadership in the Democratic Republic of Congo with the deployment of Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) and in others, it took a silent stance in its dealing with international relations. Besides the hegemon must have the leverage to enforce (Tull, 2016:2).

The SA foreign policy covers various issues that must be addressed by the government. Amongst others are issues such as human security, environmental sustainability, poverty alleviation, development, political and economic crises, human rights, disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. For SA to address these issues it needs the cooperation of other countries (Masters *et al.*, 2015:106; Landsberg, 2004:183).

Since the foreign policy and military had been discussed separately the next section will link the two indicating how the military is used as a foreign policy instrument.

7. Nexus Between the Military and Foreign Policy

Foreign policy is implemented by the state. It must therefore be noted that the concept of the state has dominated western thinking since the seventeenth century and today power is dispersed through the nation state. The state has powers and resources to ensure that it pursues its own interests. This is more apparent in the blurring of three traditionally important distinctions such as between domestic and international spheres, between policy areas and between public, private and non-profit sectors. This is significant but rarely considered within

contemporary deliberations on domestic and foreign policy. The challenges faced by governments, such as terrorism and immigration, for example, cannot be solved by one government but this demands a collective action by a global community (Edwards, 2007:31). Policy approaches to deal with these challenges are derived from the older vision of international politics, one dominated by notions of border controls, citizenship and sovereignty (Buzan *et al.*, 1998:15). The United States global military posture serves as an example of how to make military support the foreign policy of the country. In 2009, the US launched a major review of its global military posture which resulted in the shift away from Cold War orientation and reinvigoration of US's' partnerships in Asia. This strategic deployment of military in Asia is political as it pursues her national interest and thus in line with its foreign policy (Flournoy *et al.*, 2012:55).

With regard to South Africa, her national security is centred on the advancement of her sovereignty, democracy, national values and freedoms, and its political and economic independence. There is both a domestic and a regional dimension to national security; however the focus here will be on regional security (Southall, 2006:220). Regionally, South African national security inextricably hinges on the stability, unity and prosperity of the Southern African region, and the African continent in general. Africa is at the centre of South African foreign policy, and the growth and success of the South African economy is basically dependant on enduring peace, stability, economic development and deepened democracy on the continent (Department of Military Veterans Strategic Plan, 2012:20). The DIRCO Strategic Plan also indicates that one of their objectives is to enhance international responsiveness to the needs of developing countries and Africa through negotiations and influencing processes in the global governance system. The objective is furthermore broken down to contribution to peace and security and socio-economic stability within the centrality of the UN Charter and international laws (DIRCO Strategic Plan, 2015:32).

Security and development go hand in hand; the two are inter-linked and intertwined; and both are the continent's biggest challenges. The human well-being and good health will take place in a secured environment. However in the case of insecurity there is health crisis, political violence, forced migration just to mention few and the achievement

of development is affected negatively (Stewart, 2017:3). SA, in partnership with likeminded African states, has a vested interest in contributing to the rooting of democracy, the promotion of economic advancement and the pursuit of peace, stability and development on the African continent. This manifests in contributions to UN, AU and SADC security, democracy and good governance initiatives. This is also inclusive of specific bilateral partnerships with other African states in the political, economic, social and security realms (Dudley, 2013:2). Nation states mitigate security risks through the coordinated application of a suite of 'soft' and 'hard' power interventions, including diplomatic initiatives, political interventions, economic measures and importantly, the deterrence value of the Defence Force, coupled to military interventions where appropriate. South Africa's international stature and balanced suite of defence capabilities contribute to overall deterrent capability and posture. This is characterised by credible combat forces, operational prowess, rapid force generation through trained Reserves, demonstrated ability in field training, technological and doctrinal competence, and the visible morale of personnel (Defence Review, 2015:vi).

The Military is a unique instrument and an important lever of power at the disposal of the state to pursue its national security and foreign policy priorities and is consequently at the core of South Africa's national security. The deployment of the Defence Force must thus be coordinated with the full range of instruments which government can bring to bear both domestically and regionally. However, the Defence Force provides the means of last resort when other instruments of state are unable to protect or defend South Africa.

South Africa has deployed its Defence Force widely in recent years ranging from counter-piracy in the SADC Maritime Area; to peace-missions across the African continent; to a return to border-safeguarding; to a range of other domestic security duties. Many of these operations have not required the Defence Force to engage in significant combat operations. But when the Defence Force has to engage, the military capability must thus be commensurate with South Africa's international status, strategic posture and its inescapable continental leadership role (South African Defence Review, 2015:vii). South Africa in the case of internal disputes in Lesotho has consistently expressed preference for a negotiated settlement of disputes. This has resulted

in her involvement in mediating the conflicts in Zimbabwe, the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Comoros in the Southern African region. Despite this preference for political solutions, SA has not avoided embarking on military interventions where it was deemed necessary (Grigsby, 2009:267). The country's defence forces also provide critical assistance to its neighbours in disaster relief such as in Mozambique. SA's peacekeeping presence on the continent is impressive especially with the deployment of the (FIB), drawing on its past successes, particularly in countries such as Burundi. South Africa is one of the largest contributors of troops to the UN (Lalbahdurl, 2015:12).

The SANDF like all militaries is a foreign policy instrument. Military capabilities can be used in three modes; firstly, in a military mode, that is the coercive use of armed force, secondly in a political-diplomatic mode, for example the supportive use of military means in the form of peace support missions as an adjunct to diplomacy and lastly in a diplomatic mode, for example defence diplomacy (White Paper on SANDF, 1996:21-24). In past years, the re-emergence of the military instrument in South Africa's foreign policy has been realised. The international expectations regarding South Africa's role as a responsible and respected member of the international community have steadily grown. These expectations includes that SA will play a leading role in international peace missions. The White Paper on SANDF also states that South Africa is committed to responsibly fulfilling its obligations under the charters of the UN and the AU, as well as the SADC Treaty. Therefore, South Africa's decision-makers became fully aware of international expectations that the country needed to play an increasingly significant political-military role in African peacekeeping requirements and international peacekeeping endeavours (Du Plessis, 2009:11). Moreover, the prospect of the SANDF being drawn into further peacekeeping missions was reiterated by African National Congress (ANC) member of the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Defence, Dr Gerhard Koornhof, who stated in August 2004 at the University of Pretoria that the SANDF "will probably result in an increase in ordered deployments in the region as we are moving towards a more collaborative approach to defence and security in our region" (Neethling, 2006:68). This resulted in the country being more involved in DRC, Sudan and Central African Republic. The deployment of the UN Intervention Brigade that mostly consisted of

SANDF and its high tech equipment to neutralise and destroy the rebel group (M23) in DRC indicated the use of hard power in achieving foreign policy objectives (Cammaert, 2013:3).

South Africa has officially declared its commitment to playing a meaningful role in Africa and the rest of the international community, and has (at least by implication) stated its aspiration to become a permanent member of the Security Council of the UN. Against this background it is important to note that the White Paper on SANDF states that participation in peace missions is increasingly becoming a prerequisite for international respectability, and for a strong voice in supranational organisations and in debates on multinational conflict management. In this regard, the South African government is taking the view that participation in international peacekeeping is important for playing a significant role in the international community, in the region and Africa in general. In view of the above, SANDF members were deployed on African soil (O'Connor, 2005:7).

Schoeman states that the importance of the military in SA's foreign policy is stipulated in the strategic plans of both departments (Department of Defence [DOD] and DIRCO), that hard power will be used achieve or protect the interests of the country where deemed necessary. The commitment to international peace and security has become more prominent in the adoption of the White Paper on South African Participation in International Peace Missions 1999. The emphasis is on peacebuilding and post conflict reconstruction and development. Peacebuilding is not only limited to post conflict situations but also to attempt to address the root causes of conflict. Peace mission activities are the foremost part of a country's foreign policy. Conventionally there are four instruments of foreign policy that are available for policy implementation. They are diplomacy, economic technique, propaganda and military means, with diplomatic and economic instruments combined to a certain extent. The military means are the last in the hierarchy (Schoeman, 2013:209).

From a military perspective, humanitarian operations can be conducted as part of a broader peace support operation or in a non-peace support operations scenario, which has the alleviation of human suffering as its main objective. Both are conducted under circumstances in which the official authorities

are unable, and in some cases unwilling, to assist in providing adequate aid to the population (Homan, 2008:74). In a peace support operation, there are a series of distinct measures to provide protection for targeted populations. One set of protective measures relates to the protection of humanitarian action and includes the defence of aid convoys and the maintenance of humanitarian corridors. A second set of measures relates to the physical protection of populations in discrete locations. It may be when people remain in their homes and communities, and safe havens or when people from the surrounding area seeking protection congregate. Protection by a military is directed to prevent mass killing. Protection is providing area security for humanitarian action (Holt, 2006:2). The next section will deal with the foreign policy challenges.

8. Foreign Policy Challenges

Political pledges on the deployment and utilisation of the military must be in line with the capability of the military. In most cases there is a gap between the pledge and the real capability on the ground; thus finding the military being overstretched. Therefore for a country to utilise its military as an instrument to achieve foreign policy goals and objectives, such an instrument must be credible. In the case of South Africa foreign policy demands on the military establishment are great, especially with its prioritisation of the African agenda. The issue to be on the table is whether the military is capable of providing the required support for the implementation of the African Agenda, given the heavy demand placed on it in terms of active involvement in peace keeping. The military has moved to transformation thus less emphasis on the maintaining military capabilities. The move was also to change the outlook of SA where the military was used to destabilise the neighbouring countries during the apartheid regime (Schoeman, 2013:217).

The challenge is a lack of political will, which is crucial to provide the required resources to develop and maintain the capabilities that would ensure the use of the military as a credible instrument of South African foreign policy. The biggest challenge was to convince the ordinary citizens that strengthening the military was not a matter of neglecting basic issues such as education and health. That it was also in the interest of the country that the level of its socio economic aspirations and also to have a strong military that would secure the environment

in which South Africa can pursue its national goals and objectives (Schoeman, 2013:218).

Peacekeeping missions are deliberately chosen by countries for different reasons. For example, Brazil's reason is to promote their international status and prestige while India's participation in peacekeeping missions is based on the notion of good international citizenship and idealism. Peacekeeping is viewed as the part of the price you have to pay to be among the nations that make rules. South African policy is directed strongly towards strengthening the capabilities of AU to promote peace and security on the continent (Anon, 2010:3).

Another point to be considered is that responding to violent conflict is not just a military issue. It also requires the full array of political and economic tools at member states' disposal. The ability to provide an integrated approach to preventing and managing violent conflict is perhaps the single greatest challenge. Nevertheless, military instruments are relevant and careful consideration of the role they should perform is important. For instance, in recent years the trends in armed humanitarian interventions have raised political and legal challenges to how such operations are carried out. When the military is called upon to perform such operations, ideally with a UN mandate, it will be expected to use weapons designed and developed according to international legal obligations (Mawsley *et al.*, 2003:41). In March 2014 the South African government completed its Defence Review, which not only reflects on its past engagements but also suggests a strategic focus for the future. A main pillar of the proposed strategy revolves around the role that South Africa should play in providing peace support to the continent via contributions to the UN, AU and SADC. The government needs to fund the operationalization of this policy document. The next paragraph will discuss the conclusion.

9. Conclusion and Recommendations

The South African military as an instrument of the country's foreign policy has improved significantly since 2009. South Africa has gained confidence on the international stage and especially with its aspirations on the continent. Diplomacy as an instrument of continental policy has proven not sufficient. The backing of the military is required, especially when the country has to pursue its national interests which include a peaceful and stable continent. Stability will

allow development opportunities for business to grow the South African economy and also address the demands of poverty alleviation and creation of employment. South Africa's aspirations for continental leadership and to strengthen its stance in a global arena such as in G20, BRICS and having a seat in UN Security Council must be backed by taking leadership in the region and Africa as a whole. South Africa could also strengthen its international position by engaging more actively in international debates on the future of peace missions. In any case a country considered a continental power cannot stand back from international responsibilities of good citizenship. The country's aspirations might fail if its capabilities do not match its responsibilities. A thorough understanding of complexities and demands of peace, construction and development as far as relevant resources and capabilities are concerned still seem to escape policy makers and politicians.

A political consensus needs to emerge where all the elements of power would be co-ordinated and harmonised in the fulfilment of the foreign policy of the country. The next section will provide recommendations for further research.

This paper recommends that a study be conducted on the application of realism and must be merged with regionalism in a bigger context of Africa since South Africa's foreign policy inextricably hinges on the stability, unity and prosperity of the Southern African region, and the African continent in general. This is so recommended since this paper focussed on the application of only idealism in line with the South African foreign policy. The researchers further recommends a quantitative study on the subject to be conducted that will include the participation of members from the relevant departments to treasure broader opinion on the matter since this study was based on qualitative approach obtaining information from the secondary sources.

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