

South African Subimperialism

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Introduction

Imperialism, subimperialism and anti-imperialism are all settling into durable patterns and alignments in Africa – especially South Africa – even if the continent’s notoriously confusing political discourses sometimes conceal the collisions and collusions. ‘All Bush wants is Iraqi oil,’ the highest-profile African, Nelson Mandela, charged in January 2003. ‘Their friend Israel has weapons of mass destruction but because it’s [the US] ally, they won’t ask the UN to get rid of it... Bush, who cannot think properly, is now wanting to plunge the world into a holocaust. If there is a country which has committed unspeakable atrocities, it is the United States of America.’² Mandela’s remarks were soon echoed at a demonstration of 4,000 people outside the US embassy in Pretoria, by African National Congress (ANC) secretary-general Kgalema Motlanthe: ‘Because we are endowed with several rich minerals, if we don’t stop this unilateral action against Iraq today, tomorrow they will come for us.’³

This was not merely conjunctural anti-war rhetoric. Mandela’s successor Thabo Mbeki was just as vitriolic when addressing the broader context of imperial power, for example when welcoming dignitaries to the August 2002 Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development: ‘We have all converged at the Cradle of Humanity to confront the social behaviour that has pity neither for beautiful nature nor for living human beings. This social behaviour has produced and entrenches a global system of apartheid.’⁴ Mbeki’s efforts to insert the phrase ‘global apartheid’ in the summit’s final document failed, due to opposition by then US secretary of state Colin Powell, who in turn was heckled by both civil society activists and Third World leaders in the final plenary session.

A year later, in the immediate run-up to the Cancun World Trade Organization ministerial in Cancun, Malaysia’s *Straights Times* reported Mbeki’s comment on the global justice movements at a Kuala Lumpur seminar: ‘They may act in ways you and I may not like and break windows in the street but the message they communicate relates.’⁵ Moreover, in light of Pretoria’s centrality to the India-Brazil-South Africa bloc and the G20 group often credited (incorrectly) with causing the Cancun WTO summit’s collapse and threatening the Hong

1. This paper was originally published in Bond, P. (2006), *Looting Africa*, London, Zed Books..

2. South African Press Association, 29 January 2003.

3. Business Day, 20 February 2003.

4. Mbeki, T. (2002), ‘Address by President Mbeki at the Welcome Ceremony of the WSSD,’ Johannesburg, 25 August.

5. The Straights Times, 3 September 2003.

Kong WTO summit, the logical impression is that the anti-imperialist cause has an important state ally in Africa.

But these outbursts can best be understood as 'talking left, walking right', insofar as they veil the underlying dynamics of accumulation, class struggle and geopolitics.⁶ Alongside parallel economic, ideological and military functions played by the governments of Nigeria, Ghana, Senegal, Algeria, Uganda and Kenya (amongst others), Pretoria's crucial role as Washington's main subimperial African partner requires unpacking.

For example, in early 2003, at the same time as Mandela's outburst, the ANC government permitted three Iraq-bound warships to dock and refuel in Durban, and the state-owned weapons manufacturer Denel sold \$160 million worth of artillery propellants and 326 hand-held laser range finders to the British army, and 125 laser-guidance sights to the US Marines.⁷ South Africa's independent left immediately formed a 300-organization Anti-War Coalition which periodically led demonstrations of 5,000-20,000 protesters in Johannesburg, Pretoria and Cape Town. Despite the embarrassment, Pretoria refused the Coalition's demands to halt the sales. George W. Bush rewarded Mbeki with an official visit just as the dust from the Baghdad invasion had settled, in July 2003. As *Business Day* editorialized, the 'abiding impression' left from Bush's Pretoria stopover was 'of a growing, if not intimate trust'.⁸

In the course of organizing large demonstrations against Bush in Pretoria and Cape Town, the Anti-War Coalition complained, 'The ANC's public relations strategy around the war directly contradicts their actions, which are pro-war and which have contributed to the deaths of thousands of Iraqi civilians.'⁹ But public relations finally caught up to reality, as Mandela, too, recanted his criticism of Bush in May 2004.¹⁰

How much of this political inconsistency linking Pretoria and the Washington-London imperialist axis was merely contingent? In contrast, how badly does the world capitalist empire need Africa for surplus and resource extraction and the deepening of global neoliberalism, and South Africa for legitimacy and deputy-sheriff support? After all, it should be clear that the imposition of neoliberal logic, in the form of concrete policies, has amplified Africa's uneven and combined development.

As Stephen Gill has shown, continual enforcement of imperialism is crucial, both through a 'disciplinary neoliberalism' entailing surveillance and a 'new constitutionalism' that locks these policies in over time.¹¹ Leo Panitch and Sam Gindin have conducted emphatic studies of empire's management capacities via

6. Bond, P. (2004), *Talk Left, Walk Right: South Africa's Frustrated Global Reforms*, Pietermaritzburg, University of KwaZulu-Natal Press.

7. Clarno, A. (2003), 'Denel and the South African Government: Profiting from the War on Iraq', *Khanya Journal*, 3, March.

8. *Business Day*, 11 July 2003.

9. Anti-War Coalition Press Statement, 1 July 2003.

10. *Mail and Guardian*, 24 May 2004.

11. Gill, S. (2003), *Power and Resistance in the New World Order*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan.

the power and centrality of Washington, linking the neoconservative military-industrial complex in the Bush White House and Pentagon to the Washington Consensus nexus of the US Treasury, Bretton Woods Institutions and Wall Street.¹² Sub-Saharan Africa may be a site to demonstrate *both* the structurally-rooted need to extract surpluses (based on crisis tendencies discussed in Chapter 2) and agency: the importance of Washington's combined political and economic power. In his recent survey, Robert Biel identified two central contradictions in US imperialism vis-à-vis Africa:

First, central accumulation always tends to siphon away the value which could form the basis of state-building, bringing with it the risk of 'state failure', leading to direct intervention. Second, the international system becomes increasingly complex, characterized by a range of new actors and processes and direct penetration of local societies in a way which bypasses the state-centric dimension.¹³

Because of the complexity associated with 'indirect rule', and especially the difficulty of coopting all relevant actors, Biel continues, 'A reversion to the deployment of pure power is always latent, and the post-September 11th climate has brought it directly to the fore. This is a significant weakness of international capitalism.'

If modern imperialism necessarily combines neoliberalism and 'accumulation by dispossession' in peripheral sites like Africa along with increasing subservience to the USA's indirect, neocolonial rule, the next logical step is to locate South Africa's own position as regional subimperial hegemon within the same matrices. That requires identifying areas where imperialism is facilitated in Africa by the Pretoria-Johannesburg state-capitalist nexus, in part through Mbeki's New Partnership for Africa's Development and in part through the independent (though related) logic of private capital. Finally, in response to this subjugation, we can consider what kinds of analyses, strategies, tactics and alliances are being posed by serious African anti-imperialists. First, however, we must clarify imperialism's militarist and geopolitical inclinations.

Washington's reach

What are US planners up to in Africa? The period during the 1990s after the failed Somali intervention, when Washington's armchair warriors let Africa slide out of view, may have come to an end with September 11. One of the most acute critics of US Africa policy, Bill Martin, argues that

12. Panitch, L. and S.Gindin (2003), 'Global Capitalism and American Empire,' in L.Panitch and C.Leys, Socialist Register 2004, London, Merlin Press and New York, Monthly Review Press.

13. Biel, R. (2003), 'Imperialism and International Governance: The Case of US Policy towards Africa', Review of African Political Economy, 95, p.87.

Bill Clinton broke new ground by forcefully applying free market policies to Africa and, often unnoticed, by placing Africa on the US foreign policy map by casting it as a transnational security threat... Secretary of State Madeleine Albright was blunt in 1999: 'Africa is a major battleground in the global fight against terror, crime, drugs, illicit arms-trafficking, and disease.' Bush's discourse and web of military engagements after 9/11 have turned these Democratic policy statements into concrete actions, sustaining compliant allies in the hope they can contain local unrest and resistance to corrupt local states, international capital, and imperial interventions. The discourse of internal and international terrorism is thus not simply substituting for the ideology of the Cold War, but is forging new military and ideological networks as capable of repressing internal dissent as pursuing 'foreign' terrorists.¹⁴

The US has developed an Africa Contingency Operations and Assistance Programme to strengthen favoured militaries, but to do so under civilian control to prevent rogue forces from emerging (such as the Venezuelan precedent), according to David Wiley. The Pentagon's goal appears to be the deployment of 200 US troops at a half-dozen light bases which maintain stores of petrol, runways and 24-hour operations.¹⁵

Army General Charles Wald, who controls the Africa Programme of the European Command, told the BBC in early 2004 that he aims to have five brigades with 15,000 men working in cooperation with regional partners including South Africa, Kenya, Nigeria and two others still to be chosen.¹⁶ NATO's Supreme Allied Commander for Europe, General James Jones, confirmed the US geographical strategy in May 2003: 'The carrier battle groups of the future and the expeditionary strike groups of the future may not spend six months in the Mediterranean Sea but I'll bet they'll spend half the time down the West Coast of Africa.'¹⁷ Within weeks, that coast was graced by 3000 US troops deployed offshore from Liberia (and briefly onshore to stabilize the country after Charles Taylor departed). Potential US bases were suggested for Ghana, Senegal and Mali, as well as the North African countries of Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia.¹⁸ Another base was occupied by 1500 US troops in the small Horn country of Djibouti. Botswana and Mozambique were also part of the Pentagon's strategy, and South Africa would remain a crucial partner.

Central and eastern Africa remains a problem area, and not merely because of traditional French and Belgian neocolonial competition with British and US

14. Martin, B. (2004), 'Beyond Bush: The Future of Popular Movements and US Africa Policy', *Review of African Political Economy*, 102, pp.585-587.

15. Notes from David Wiley's presentation to the Association of Concerned African Scholars, African Studies Association, Washington, 19 November 2005.

16. Plaut, M. (2004), 'US to Increase African Military Presence,' <http://www.bbc.co.uk>, 23 March.

17. <http://www.allAfrica.com>, 2 May 2003.

18. Ghana News, 11 June 2003.

interests. President Clinton's refusal to cite Rwanda's situation as formal genocide in 1994 was an infamous failure of nerve in terms of the emerging doctrine of 'humanitarian' imperialism – in comparison to intervention in the white-populated Balkans. The lesson Wald drew was the need to engage more carefully, using proxy forces, rather than disengage. Hence in northern Uganda, the US has cooperated in state counter-insurgency efforts against the persistent guerrillas of the Lord's Resistance Army. Ian Taylor summarized the subregion's geopolitical alignment in the late 1990s: 'Pro-American leaders in Asmara, Addis Ababa, Kampala and Kigali seemed to be constructing a new bloc of regimes friendly to Washington's interests, linking up with South Africa as a group of states that America could do business with.'¹⁹

With an estimated three million dead in Central African wars, partly because of their proximity over access to coltan and other mineral riches, conflicts worsened between and within the Uganda/Rwanda bloc, vis-à-vis the revised alliance of Kabila's DRC, Zimbabwe, Angola and Namibia. Only with Kabila's 2001 assassination and Pretoria's management of elite peace deals in the DRC and Burundi are matters settling, however briefly, into a fragile peace combining neoliberalism and opportunities for minerals extraction. Another particularly difficult site is Sudan, where US Delta Force troops have been sighted in informal operations, perhaps because although China broached oil exploration during the country's civil war chaos, US firms have subsequently arrived.

Bridging Sub-Saharan Africa and North Africa is another subregion of crucial importance to US imperialism. Not only is Libya being brought into the fold of weapons certification and control. Already, US troops have been deployed for small-scale interventions in Mali, Chad and Mauritania. A site of future extraction lies between northern Nigeria and southern Algeria, where gas pipeline options have been contracted by the US multinationals Halliburton and Bechtel. The major petro prize remains the Gulf of Guinea. With African routes to Louisiana oil processing plants many weeks less time-consuming for tanker transport than the Persian Gulf, the world's shortage of supertankers is eased by direct sourcing from West Africa's offshore oil fields.

In continent-wide settings, the US military is also ambitious. For example, of \$700 million destined to develop a 75,000-strong UN peace-keeping force in coming years, \$480 million is dedicated to African soldiers.²⁰ But Africa is also a

19. Taylor, I. (2003), 'Conflict in Central Africa: Clandestine Networks and Regional/Global Configurations,' *Review of African Political Economy*, 95, p.49.

20. Training for African soldiers will be undertaken at the Kofi Annan Centre in Ghana, along with one in Kenya and three others still to be chosen. Other training candidate countries include Mali, Mauritania, Chad and Niger. The African Contingency Operations Training Assistance Programme aims to place soldiers into many conflict-ridden settings, under the rubric of the UN, but with direct Pentagon control. The major dilemma, here, appears to be the very high level of HIV-positive members of the armed forces in key countries. Hence both Namibian and South African defense ministers recently banned HIV+ soldiers from active duty, to the great consternation of human rights advocates (the decision was reversed in Namibia). See Elbe, S. (2003), *Strategic Implications of HIV/AIDS*, Adelphi Paper 357, International Institute for Strategic Studies, Oxford, Oxford University Press, pp.23-44.

site to recruit private mercenaries, as an estimated 1500 South Africans – reportedly including many of Mbeki’s own personal security forces – joined firms such as Executive Outcomes in Johannesburg and British-based Erinys to provide more than 10% of occupied Iraq’s bodyguard services.²¹ Some African countries joined the Coalition of the Willing against Iraq in 2003, including Angola, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Rwanda, although temporary UN Security Council members Cameroon, Guinea and the Republic of the Congo were opponents, notwithstanding Washington’s bullying. In addition, Martin warns of the

\$100 million Eastern Africa Counter-Terrorism initiative involving Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda, Tanzania and Eritrea as well as Djibouti. Another new State Department program, the Pan-Sahel Initiative, is being implemented by Pentagon and civilian contractors in Mali, Mauritania, Chad, and Niger. These actions suggest the obvious targeting and encirclement of Islamic Africa. Yet the number of African armies involved extends well beyond Islamic or oil-rich areas... More than 120 senior African military officers and defense officials from 44 states participated, for example, in seminars this past February [2004] at the Pentagon’s Africa Center for Strategic Studies.

Compliant African states and militaries offer Washington far more than checks to radical Islam; they are increasingly seen as a counter-weight to rival core powers in the North and unruly states and leaders in the South. African peacekeeping forces, the thinking goes, may be especially valuable in replacing, as the occupation of Iraq has so starkly indicated, European and other allies now unwilling to occupy areas conquered by direct US military action or deploy to areas the U.S. is unwilling or unable to (due to overextension in Iraq and Afghanistan).

And even if South African troops are not sent to Iraq, the South African government seems more than willing to allow their mercenaries, now converted into ‘private military contractors’, to play major roles in the U.S. occupation. African states are clearly judged by some US policymakers to be more politically compliant as well as more militarily dependent-and have a proven track record. This may prove especially valuable as the ‘war on terrorism’ transmutes into a broader discourse that supports a global, post-liberal order including repressive regimes in the South. The current top ten contributors to UN operations are Third World states, with Africa providing four of the ten (Nigeria, 2,930 troops; Ghana, 2,790 troops; Kenya, 1,826 troops; Ethiopia, 1,822 troops).²²

Africa remains an important site in Washington’s campaigns against militant Islamic networks, especially in Algeria and Nigeria in the northwest, Tanzania and

21. Vancouver Sun, 11 May 2004.

22. Martin, ‘Beyond Bush’, pp.590-591.

Kenya in the east, and South Africa. Control of African immigration to the US and Europe is crucial, in part through the expansion of US-style incarceration via private sector firms like Wackenhut, which has invested in South African privatized prison management, along with the notorious Lindela extradition camp for 'illegal immigrants'. The development of a highly racialized global detention and identification system is proceeding apace.

Of course, the US military machine does not roll over Africa entirely unimpeded. Minor potholes have included Pretoria's rhetorical opposition to the belligerent parties in the Iraq war, conflicts within the UN Human Rights Commission (especially over Zimbabwe), and the controversy over US citizens' extradition to the International Criminal Court. Regarding the latter, on the eve of Bush's first-ever Africa trip in July 2003, the Pentagon announced it would withdraw \$7.6 million worth of military support to Pretoria, because the South African government - along with 34 military allies of Washington (and 90 countries in total) - had not agreed to give US citizens immunity from prosecution at The Hague. Relations with Pretoria became somewhat more complicated, as noted below, but several other countries, including four on Bush's itinerary (Botswana, Uganda, Senegal and Nigeria) signed these blackmail-based immunity deals and retained US military spending.²³

It is in these functions that we can observe the ongoing relevance of the national state, not only to accumulation via traditional facilitative functions (securing property rights, the integrity of money, and the monopoly on violence), but also to the 'coauthorship' of the neoliberal project, in turn reflecting a shift in the balance of forces within societies and state bureaucracies. Thanks largely to capitalist crisis tendencies and the current orientation to accumulation by dispossession, imperialism can neither deliver the goods nor successfully repress sustained dissent in Africa.

It is here, hence, where the ideological legitimation of 'free markets and free politics' requires renewal. Sub-Saharan Africa is so rife with state failure and 'undisciplined neoliberalism' (witnessed in repeated IMF Riots) that Washington needs a subimperial partner, even (maybe especially) one whose politicians are as cheeky as those in Pretoria - and who have become, hence, just as vital for broader systemic legitimation as other talk-left, walk-right allies in Delhi and Brasilia.²⁴ After all, anti-imperial critique continues to emerge across Africa, not just rhetorically (as cited at the outset) but even in practical form when African ministers withdrew consensus from the WTO's Seattle and Cancun summits. Thus Nepad becomes especially important as surrogate for imperialism, as argued below.

23. Sapa, 2 July 2003. Other African countries where US war criminals are safe from ICC prosecutions thanks to military-aid blackmail are the DRC, Gabon, The Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, Sierra Leone and Zambia.

24. For India, see Chibber, V. (2004), 'Reviving the Developmental State?', in L.Panitch and C.Leys (Eds), *The Empire Reloaded: Socialist Register 2005*, London, Merlin Press and New York, Monthly Review. For a critique of Brazilian neoliberalism, see Morais, L. and A.Saad-Filho (2004), 'Lula and the Continuity of Neoliberalism in Brazil: Strategic Choice, Economic Imperative or Political Schizophrenia?', Unpublished manuscript, available from as59@soas.ac.uk.

In July 2004, the Center for Strategic and International Studies publicly launched a bipartisan US-Africa policy blueprint, requested by Colin Powell and the Congress. That document, 'Rising US Stakes in Africa', recommends seven interventions: political stabilization of Sudan, whose oil is craved by Washington; support for Africa's decrepit capital markets, which could allegedly 'jump start' the Millennium Challenge Accounts; more attention to energy, especially the 'massive future earnings by Nigeria and Angola, among other key West African oil producers'; promotion of wildlife conservation; increased 'counter-terrorism' efforts, which include 'a Muslim outreach initiative'; expanded peace operations, which can be transferred to tens of thousands of African troops thanks to new G8 funding; and more attention to AIDS, whose treatment is feared by pharmaceutical corporations because it will require generic drugs. In all but Sudan, South African cooperation will be crucial for the new US imperial agenda.²⁵

Does Pretoria qualify as subimperialist? Aside from Mandela's vacillation, there is much to consider in the hectic activities of Mbeki and his two main internationally-oriented colleagues: finance minister Trevor Manuel (chair of the IMF/World Bank Development Committee from 2001-05) and trade/privatization minister Alec Erwin. The question will be put: are these gentlemen breaking or shining the chains of global apartheid?

South Africa's subimperial functions

During an August 2003 talk to business and social elites at Rhodes House in Cape Town, Mandela offered the single most chilling historical reference possible: 'I am sure that Cecil John Rhodes would have given his approval to this effort to make the South African economy of the early 21st century appropriate and fit for its time.'²⁶ (In the same spirit, Mandela took that opportunity to publicly criticise, for the first time and at a crucial moment, activists from the Jubilee South Africa anti-debt movement and apartheid-victims support groups. Their sin was filing lawsuits in New York demanding reparations from corporations for their pre-1994 South African profits, along the lines of the Nazi-victims ancestors' banking and slave labour cases. Mandela backed Mbeki, who formally opposed the suits on grounds that Pretoria had its own reconciliation strategy, and that such litigation would, if successful, deter future foreign investors.)

Is the Rhodes comparison apt? We do have much to learn from revisiting late 19th-century imperial rule in Africa, in part because no other buccaneer did as much damage to the possibilities for peace and equitable development in Africa as Cecil Rhodes. As diamond merchant, financier and politician (governor of the Cape Colony during the 1880s-90s), Rhodes received permission from Queen Victoria to plunder what are now called Gauteng Province (greater

25. Africa Policy Advisory Panel (2004), 'Rising US Stakes in Africa', Washington, Centre for Strategic and International Studies, May, Executive Summary.

26. South African Press Association (2003), 'Mandela Criticises Apartheid Lawsuits,' 25 August.

Johannesburg) once gold was discovered in 1886, and then Zimbabwe, Zambia and Malawi; his ambition was to paint the map British imperial red, stretching along the route from the Cape to Cairo. Rhodes' two main vehicles were the British army, which invented the concentration camp and in the process killed 14,000 blacks and 25,000 Afrikaner women and children during the 1899-1902 Anglo Boer South African War, and the British South Africa Company (BSAC), a for-profit firm which in 1890 began systematically imposing settler colonialism across the region. The BSAC's charter, following the notorious Rudd Concession which Rhodes obtained deceitfully from the Ndebele king Lobengula, represented a structural switch from informal control of trade, to trade with rule. British imperialists assumed that competition for control of Africa would continue beyond the 1885 Berlin conference which partitioned Africa, and that only BSAC-style 'imperialism on the cheap', as it was termed, would ensure geographical dominance over the interior of the continent in the face of hostile German, Portuguese, and Boer forces. Such a strategy was critical, they posited, to the protection of even the Nile Valley, which in turn represented the life-line to the prize of India.²⁷

But as today, there was also a crucial economic dynamic underway in Britain (and much of Europe) – beyond the never-ending search for gold – which undergirded Rhodes' conquests: chronic overaccumulation of capital, especially in the London financial markets, combined with social unrest. The easy availability of foreign portfolio funding for nascent Southern African stock markets stemmed from a lengthy international economic depression, chronic excess financial liquidity (a symptom of general overaccumulation), and the global hegemony enjoyed by City of London financiers.²⁸ From the standpoint of British imperialism, the main benefit of Rhodes' role in the region was to ameliorate the contradictions of global capitalism by channelling financial surpluses into new investments (such as the telegraph, railroad and surveying that tamed and commodified the land known as Rhodesia), extracting resources (especially gold, even if in tiny amounts compared to the Rand), and assuring political allegiance to South African corporate power, which was in harmonious unity with the evolving British-run states of the region.

Can Mandela claim he is faithfully following in these footsteps? Today, for Victoria, substitute the White House. Instead of the old-fashioned power plays of the Rudd Concession and similar BSAC tricks of dispossession, read Nepad and its many corporate backers. Likewise, the SA National Defense Force stands ready to follow British army conquests, what with its invasion of Lesotho in September 1998, justified by Pretoria's desire to protect a controversial, corrupt mega-dam from alleged sabotage threat. As Rhodes had his media cheerleaders from Cape Town to London, so too do many Western publications regularly

27. Loney, M. (1975), *Rhodesia: White Racism and Imperial Response*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, pp.31-32.

28. Phimister, I. (1992), 'Unscrambling the Scramble: Africa's Partition Reconsidered,' Paper presented to the African Studies Institute, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 17 August.

promote Mandela and Mbeki as Africa's saviours, and so too does SA Broadcasting Corporation screen pro-Pretoria propaganda to the continent's luxury hotels and other satellite broadcast receivers.

Mandela's less honourable foreign policy intentions were also difficult to disguise. Although South Africa can claim one intervention worthy of its human rights rhetoric – leadership of the 1997 movement to ban landmines (and hence a major mine-clearing role for South African businesses which helped lay the mines in the first place) – the first-ever democratic regime in Pretoria recognized the Myanmar military junta as a legitimate government in 1994; gave the country's highest official award to Indonesian dictator Suharto three months before his 1998 demise (in the process extracting \$25 million in donations for the ANC); and sold arms to countries which practiced mass violence, such as Algeria, Colombia, Peru and Turkey.

Another moment of ideological confusion was cleared up in 2004. As noted above, in mid-2003 the US House of Representatives extended a ban on military assistance to 32 countries - including South Africa - which agreed to cooperate in future with the International Criminal Court against alleged US war criminals. Nevertheless, Washington's ambassador to Pretoria, Cameron Hume, quickly announced that several bilateral military deals would go ahead in any case. According to Peter McIntosh of *African Armed Forces* journal, the US 'had simply re-routed military funding for South Africa through its European Command in Stuttgart.' Hume reported the Pentagon's desire 'to train and equip two additional battalions to expand the number of forces the [SA National Defense Force] have available for peacekeeping in Africa.' South African newspaper *ThisDay* commented, in the wake of two successful joint US/SA military manoeuvres in 2003-04: 'Operations such as Medflag and Flintlock clearly have applications other than humanitarian aid, and as the US interventions in Somalia and Liberia have shown, humanitarian aid often requires forceful protection.'²⁹

The two countries' military relations were fully 'normalized' by July 2004, in the words of SA deputy minister Aziz Pahad. In partnership with General Dynamics Land Systems, State-owned Denel immediately began marketing 105 mm artillery alongside a turret and light armoured vehicle hull, in support of innovative Stryker Brigade Combat Teams ('a 3500-personnel formation that puts infantry, armour and artillery in different versions of the same 8x8 light armoured vehicle'). According to one report, 'The turret and gun is entirely proprietary to Denel, using only South African technology. At sea level, it can fire projectiles as far as 36 km.'³⁰ This followed a period of serious problems for the SA arms firm and others like it (Arm Scor and Fuchs), which were also allowed full access to the US market in July 2004 after paying fines for apartheid-era sanctions-busting.³¹

29. Schmidt, M. (2004), 'US offers to Train and Equip Battalions,' *ThisDay*, 19 July.

30. South African Press Association (2004), 'Denel to Benefit from US Defence Trade', 21 July.

31. Batchelor, P. and S. Willett (1998), *Disarmament and Defence Industrial Adjustment in South Africa*, Oxford, Oxford University Press; Crawford-Browne, T. (2004), 'The Arms Deal Scandal,' *Review of African Political Economy*, 31.

Given Pretoria's 1998 decision to invest \$6 billion in mainly offensive weaponry such as fighter jets and submarines, there are growing fears that peacekeeping is a cover for a more expansive geopolitical agenda, and that Mbeki is tacitly permitting a far stronger US role in Africa - from the oil rich Gulf of Guinea and Horn of Africa, to training bases in the South and North - than is necessary.³² On the surface, Pretoria's senior roles in the mediation of conflicts in Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) during 2003 appeared positive. However, closer to the ground, the agreements more closely resemble the style of elite deals which lock in place 'low-intensity democracy' and neoliberal economic regimes. Moreover, because some of the belligerent forces were explicitly left out, the subsequent weeks and months after declarations of peace witnessed periodic massacres of civilians in both countries and a near-coup in the DRC. By mid-2004, the highly-regarded intellectual and leader of the Rassemblement Congolais la Democratique, Ernest Wamba dia Wamba, was publicly critical of Pretoria's interference:

When a [transition process] takes off on a wrong footing, unless a real readjustment takes place on the way, the end cannot be good... Some feel like South Africa has actively put us in the situation we are in. They had a lot of leverage to make sure that certain structural problems were anticipated and solutions proposed. They seem to have fallen in the Western logic of thinking that mediocrity is a less evil for Congolese, if it stops the war. They also have a lot of leverage to get a clear on-going commitment to resolve the contradictory fears of both the DRC and Rwanda; they do not seem to use it. This is why some feel that South Africa is too close to Rwanda.³³

Pretoria was not alone, playing the role of proxy for the great powers in its own extended periphery. Simultaneously, similar concerns were raised about another new democracy with a centre-left regime, Brazil, which took leadership of the armed occupation of Haiti, just four months after the US-supported overthrow of the previous government.³⁴ The Congress-led government in New Delhi, likewise, has come under criticism for its close military ties to Washington. From Brazil to South Africa to India, the dangers of growing regional political hegemony, in the context of military alliance with the US, are amplified when we consider some of Pretoria's *global* opportunities.

Pretoria's world leadership?

Once the South African government showed its willingness to put self-interest above principles, the international political power centres invested increasing trust in Mandela, Mbeki, Manuel and Erwin, giving them insider access to many

32 Black, D. (2004), 'Democracy, Development, Security and South Africa's "Arms Deal"', in P.Nel and J. van der Westhuizen (Eds), *Democratizing Foreign Policy? Lessons from South Africa*, Lanham, MD, Lexington Books.

33. Majavu, M. (2004), 'Interview with Ernest Wamba dia Wamba,' <http://www.zmag.org>, 22 June.

34. Emir Sader (2004), 'What is Brazil Doing in Haiti?', Interhemispheric Resource Center, <http://www.americaspolicy.org/commentary/2004/0406brazil.html>, June 29.

international elite fora. As global-establishment institutions came under attack, they sometimes attempted to reinvent themselves with a dose of New South African legitimacy; witness Mandela's 1998 caressing of the IMF during the East Asian crisis, and of Clinton during the Lewinsky sex scandal. Indeed, Pretoria's lead politicians were allowed, during the late 1990s, to preside over the UN Security Council, the board of governors of the IMF and Bank, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the Commonwealth, the World Commission on Dams and many other important global and continental bodies. Simultaneously taking Third World leadership, Pretoria also headed the Non-Aligned Movement, the Organization of African Unity and the Southern African Development Community.

But this was just the warm up period. During a frenetic four years beginning in September 2001, Mbeki and his colleagues hosted, led, or played instrumental roles at the following major international events: the World Conference Against Racism in Durban (September 2001); the launch of Nepad in Abuja, Nigeria (October 2001); the Doha, Qatar ministerial summit of the World Trade Organization (November 2001); the UN's Financing for Development conference in Monterrey, Mexico (March 2002); G8 summits in Kananaskis, Canada (June 2002), Evian, France (June 2003), Sea Island, Georgia (June 2004) and Gleneagles, Scotland (July 2005); the African Union launch in Durban (July 2002); the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg (August-September 2002); the Davos World Economic Forum (January 2003 and occasionally thereafter); George W. Bush's first trip to Africa (July 2003); the Cancun WTO ministerial (September 2003); World Bank/IMF annual meetings in Dubai (September 2003) and Washington (September 2004 and 2005); the UN Millennium Development Summit (September 2005); and the Hong Kong WTO ministerial (December 2005).

Virtually nothing was actually accomplished through the 2001-05 opportunities:

- at the UN racism conference, Mbeki colluded with the EU to reject the demand of NGOs and African leaders for slavery/colonialism/apartheid reparations;
- Nepad provided merely a homegrown version of the Washington Consensus;
- at Doha, trade minister Alec Erwin split the African delegation so as to prevent a repeat of the denial of consensus that had foiled the Seattle ministerial in December 1999;
- at Monterrey, Manuel was summit co-leader (with former IMF managing director Michel Camdessus and disgraced Mexican ex-president Ernesto Zedillo), and legitimized all ongoing IMF/Bank strategies;
- from Kananaskis, Mbeki departed with only an additional \$1 billion commitment for Africa (aside from funds already pledged at Monterrey), and

- none of the subsequent G8 Summits – Evian, Sea Island and Gleneagles – represented genuine progress;
- the African Union supported both Nepad and the Zimbabwean regime of president Robert Mugabe, hence further delegitimizing the self-defensive political project of Africa’s elite;
 - at the Johannesburg WSSD, Mbeki undermined UN democratic procedure, facilitated the privatization of nature, and did nothing to address the plight of the world’s poor majority;
 - in Davos, global elites ignored Africa, in 2003 and subsequently;
 - for hosting a leg of Bush’s Africa trip, Mbeki merely became the US ‘point man’ on Zimbabwe, and he avoided any conflict over Iraq’s recolonization;
 - in Cancun, the collapse of trade negotiations – again, catalysed by a walkout by Africans – left Erwin ‘disappointed’;
 - at World Bank and IMF annual meetings from 2001-05, with Manuel leading the Development Committee, there was no Bretton Woods democratization, new debt relief or Post-Washington policy reform; and
 - the UN Millennium Review Summit provided Mbeki grounds for heart-break, leaving him to bemoan, ‘We should not be surprised when these billions do not acclaim us as heroes and heroines.’³⁵

Elsewhere I have recounted these consistent defeats for African interests, with attention to South Africa’s own complicity.³⁶ Further failures can be reasonably anticipated in 2006 when Pretoria hosts the ‘Progressive Governance Summit’ (with very unprogressive leaders such as Tony Blair and Meles Zenawi) and the G77 group of Third World countries. Notwithstanding periodic ‘talk left’ gripes such as Mbeki’s in New York, Pretoria’s failures left it slotted into place as a subimperial partner of Washington and the European Union. Although such a relationship dates to the apartheid and colonial eras, the ongoing conquest of Africa – in political, military and ideological terms - and the reproduction of neoliberalism together require a coherent new strategy: Nepad.

Staking claims through Nepad

The origins of the Nepad plan are revealing. Mbeki had embarked upon a late 1990s’ ‘African Renaissance’ branding exercise, which he endowed with poignant poetics but not much else. The contentless form was somewhat remedied in a powerpoint skeleton unveiled during 2000 during Mbeki’s meetings with Clinton

35. Mbeki, T. (2005), ‘Address of the President of South Africa at the United Nations Millennium Review Summit Meeting’, New York, 15 September.

36. Bond, P. (2006), *Talk Left, Walk Right: South Africa’s Frustrated Global Reforms*, Pietermaritzburg, University of KwaZulu-Natal Press; Bond, P. (2005), *Elite Transition: From Apartheid to Neoliberalism in South Africa*, Pietermaritzburg, University of KwaZulu-Natal Press; Bond, P. (Ed)(2005), *Fanon’s Warning: A Civil Society Reader on the New Partnership for Africa’s Development*, Trenton, Africa World Press and Durban University of KwaZulu-Natal Centre for Civil Society; Bond, P. (2003), *Against Global Apartheid: South Africa Meets the World Bank, IMF and International Finance*, London, Zed Books and Cape Town, University of Cape Town Press; and Bond, P. (2002), *Unsustainable South Africa: Environment, Development and Social Protest*, London, Merlin Press and Pietermaritzburg, University of KwaZulu-Natal Press.

in May, the Okinawa G-8 meeting in July, the UN Millennium Summit in September, and a subsequent European Union gathering in Portugal. The skeleton was fleshed out in November 2000 with the assistance of several economists and was immediately ratified during a special South African visit by World Bank president James Wolfensohn 'at an undisclosed location,' due to fears of the disruptive protests which had soured a Johannesburg trip by IMF managing director Horst Koehler a few months earlier. By this stage, Mbeki managed to sign on as partners two additional rulers from the crucial North and West of the continent: Algeria's Abdelaziz Bouteflika and Nigeria's Olusegun Obasanjo. Both suffered regular mass protests and various civil, military, religious and ethnic disturbances at home.

By early 2001, in Davos, Mbeki made clear whose interests Nepad would serve: 'It is significant that in a sense the first formal briefing on the progress in developing this programme is taking place at the World Economic Forum meeting. The success of its implementation would require the buy in from members of this exciting and vibrant forum!'³⁷ International capital would benefit from large infrastructure construction opportunities on the public-private partnership model, privatized state services, ongoing structural adjustment, intensified rule of international property law and various of Nepad's sectoral plans, all coordinated from a South African office staffed with neoliberals and open to economic and geopolitical gatekeeping.

Once Mbeki's plan was merged with an infrastructure-project initiative offered by the neoliberal Senegalese president, Abdoulaye Wade, it won endorsement at the last meeting of the Organization of African Unity, in June 2001. (In 2002, the OAU transformed into the African Union, and Nepad serves as official development plan.) Then, as 300,000 protesters gathered outside the July 2001 Genoa G-8 summit, Mbeki and other African leaders provided the G8 a modicum of cover.

In the wake of the World Conference Against Racism, the actual Nepad document was publicly launched in Abuja, Nigeria, by African heads of state on October 23, 2001. In February 2002, global elites celebrated Nepad in sites ranging from the World Economic Forum meeting in New York City to the summit of self-described 'progressive' national leaders (but including Blair) who gathered in

37. Business Day, 5 February 2001. Replied community activist Trevor Ngwane in the same Business Day: 'This sounds suspiciously like June 1996, when the Growth, Employment and Redistribution policy was launched prior to public debate, to parliamentary enquiry, to consultations with the people affected. And the exclusive club of Davos fatcats who use Third World leaders like Mbeki as figleaves will probably give the new programme exactly the same support they have given Gear: currency speculation, capital flight, refusal to invest, free-trade deals filled with last-minute Northern protectionism, and pressure on our government not to provide desperately-needed cheap drugs to ward off HIV/AIDS.' For other critiques, see Bond, Fanon's Warning; Adedeji, A. (2002), 'From the Lagos Plan of Action to the New Partnership for Africa's Development, and from the Final Act of Lagos to the Constitutive Act: Whither Africa?', Keynote Address prepared for the African Forum for Envisioning Africa, Nairobi, 26-29 April; Adesina, J. (2002), 'Development and the Challenge of Poverty: Nepad, Post-Washington Consensus and Beyond', Paper presented to the Codesria/TWN Conference on Africa and the Challenge of the 21st Century, Accra, 23-26 April; Nabudere, D. (2002), 'Nepad: Historical Background and its Prospects,' in P. Anyang'Nyong'o, et al (Eds), Nepad: A New Path? Nairobi, Heinrich Böll Foundation; and Olukoshi, A. (2002), 'Governing the African Political Space for Sustainable Development: A Reflection on Nepad,' Paper prepared for the African Forum for Envisioning Africa, Nairobi, 26-29 April.

Stockholm to forge a global Third Way. Elite eyes were turning to the world's 'scar' (Blair's description of Africa), hoping that Nepad would serve as a large enough bandaid, for as *Institutional Investor* magazine reported, the G8's 'misleadingly named' Africa Action Plan represented merely 'grudging' support from the main donors with 'only an additional \$1 billion for debt relief. (The G8) failed altogether to reduce their domestic agricultural subsidies (which hurt African farm exports) and - most disappointing of all to the Africans - neglected to provide any further aid to the continent.'³⁸ Mbeki had requested \$64 billion in new aid, loans and investments each year, but South Africa's *Sunday Times* remarked that 'the leaders of the world's richest nations refused to play ball.'³⁹ So on the one hand, within weeks, Nepad was endorsed by the inaugural African Union summit, by the WSSD as the chapter on Africa, and by the UN's head of state summit in New York. Yet on the other hand, pro-Nepad lip-service could not substitute for the 'new constitutionalism' (to borrow Gill's phrase) that would translate into long-term, non-retractable leverage over the continent.

The main reason for doubt about Mbeki's commitment to disciplinary neoliberalism and the rule of law was his repeated defence of the main violator of liberal norms, Robert Mugabe.⁴⁰ Both Mbeki and Obasanjo termed Zimbabwe's March 2002 presidential election 'legitimate,' and Mbeki repeatedly opposed punishment of the Mugabe regime by the Commonwealth and UN Human Rights Commission (although finally in 2003 then Commonwealth host Obasanjo agreed Zimbabwe should be suspended, at which point Mugabe simply quite the organization). The Nepad secretariat's Dave Malcomson, responsible for international liaison and co-ordination, once admitted to a reporter, 'Wherever we go, Zimbabwe is thrown at us as the reason why Nepad's a joke.'⁴¹

Just prior to the 2003 G8 meeting in Evian, France, *Institutional Investor* magazine captured the tone: 'Like other far-reaching African initiatives made over the years, this one promptly rolled off the track and into the ditch.'⁴² More than 100,000 activists protested the G8 in nearby Geneva and Lausanne. To Mbeki's consternation, African activists joined them, in part because Nepad had recently been described as 'philosophically spot-on' by the White House's main Africa official.⁴³ Moreover, just prior to the Evian summit, former International Monetary Fund managing director Michel Camdessus, subsequently France's personal G8 representative to Africa, explained Nepad's attraction in the following way: 'The African heads of state came to us with the conception that globalization was not

38. Gopinath, D. (2003), 'Doubt of Africa,' *Institutional Investor*, May.

39. *Sunday Times*, 30 June 2002; *Business Day*, 28 June 2002.

40. There exists enormous confusion over Mbeki's role in Zimbabwe, which is addressed in Bond, P. and M. Manyanya (2003), *Zimbabwe's Plunge: Exhausted Nationalism, Neoliberalism and the Search for Social Justice*, London, Merlin Press, Pietermaritzburg, University of KwaZulu-Natal Press and Harare, Weaver Press. For an extremely important critique of Mugabe from an Afro-feminist standpoint, see Campbell, H. (2003), *Reclaiming Zimbabwe: The Exhaustion of the Patriarchal Model of Liberation*, David Philip, Cape Town.

41. *Business Day*, 28 March 2003.

42. Gopinath, 'Doubt of Africa.'

43. Gopinath, 'Doubt of Africa.' A few months later, Walter Kansteiner resigned as assistant secretary of state for Africa, but the sentiment remained.

a curse for them, as some had said, but rather the opposite, from which something positive could be derived... You can't believe how much of a difference this [home-grown pro-globalization attitude] makes.⁴⁴

Given this background, the African left has expressed deep scepticism over Nepad's main strategies. A succinct critique emerged from a conference of the Council for Development and Social Science Research in Africa (Codesria) and Third World Network-Africa in April 2002. According to the meeting's resolution:

The most fundamental flaws of Nepad, which reproduce the central elements of the World Bank's *Can Africa Claim the Twenty-first Century?* and the UN Economic Commission on Africa's *Compact for African Recovery*, include:

(a) the neoliberal economic policy framework at the heart of the plan, and which repeats the structural adjustment policy packages of the preceding two decades and overlooks the disastrous effects of those policies;

(b) the fact that in spite of its proclaimed recognition of the central role of the African people to the plan, the African people have not played any part in the conception, design and formulation of the Nepad;

(c) notwithstanding its stated concerns for social and gender equity, it adopts the social and economic measures that have contributed to the marginalization of women;

(d) that in spite of claims of African origins, its main targets are foreign donors, particularly in the G8;

(e) its vision of democracy is defined by the needs of creating a functional market;

(f) it under-emphasizes the external conditions fundamental to Africa's developmental crisis, and thereby does not promote any meaningful measure to manage and restrict the effects of this environment on Africa development efforts. On the contrary, the engagement that it seeks with institutions and processes like the World Bank, the IMF, the WTO, the United States Africa Growth and Opportunity Act, the Cotonou Agreement, will further lock Africa's economies disadvantageously into this environment;

(g) the means for mobilization of resources will further the disintegration of African economies that we have witnessed at the hands of structural adjustment and WTO rules.⁴⁵

Given Nepad's purely destructive role in Zimbabwe, Mbeki and Obasanjo apparently did not even take good governance seriously beyond platitudes

44. http://www.g7.utoronto.ca/summit/2003evian/briefing_apr030601.html

45. Council for Development and Social Science Research in Africa, Dakar and Third World Network-Africa (2002), 'Declaration on Africa's Development Challenges,' Resolution adopted at the 'Joint Conference on Africa's Development Challenges in the Millennium,' Accra, 23-26 April, p.4.

designed for G8 governments. Those governments need Nepad, as Camdessus' comment indicates, partly because it reinforces their capacity to manipulate African countries through the aid mechanism; Nepad helps sell their own taxpayers on the myth that Africa is 'reforming'.

There was, nevertheless, hope that the good-governance rhetoric in the Nepad base document might do some good: 'With Nepad, Africa undertakes to respect the global standards of democracy, which core components include ... fair, open, free and democratic elections periodically organized to enable the populace choose their leaders freely.'⁴⁶ South Africa under Mbeki's rule permits free and fair elections (after all, the ANC wins easily, with 70% of the vote in the 2004 elections, due to the lack of a credible alternative), but Obasanjo does not, judging by an April 2003 'victory' which strained democratic credibility,⁴⁷ notwithstanding Mbeki's strong endorsement.⁴⁸

Johannesburg business interests

What of the subimperial part of the equation? To be sure, there were many naïve observers who expected, as Manuel Castells put it, that

the end of apartheid in South Africa, and the potential linkage between a democratic, black majority-ruled South Africa and African countries, at least those in eastern/southern Africa, allows us to examine the hypothesis of the incorporation of Africa into global capitalism under new, more favourable conditions via the South African connection.⁴⁹

In reality, the most important new factor in that incorporation is the exploitative role of Johannesburg business.⁵⁰ For example, in 2002, the UN Security Council accused a dozen South African companies of illegally 'looting' the DRC during late 1990s turmoil which left an estimated three million citizens dead, a problem that went unpunished by Pretoria.⁵¹ Other SA companies had collaborated with the corrupt dictator Mobutu Sese Seko in looting then-Zaire.

46. The New Partnership for Africa's Development, <http://www.nepad.org>, paragraph 79.

47. During the April 2003 presidential poll, in Obasanjo's home state of Ogun, the president won 1,360,170 votes against his main opponent's 680. The number of votes cast in a simultaneous race in the same geographical area was just 747,296. Obasanjo's explanation, by way of denigrating European Union electoral observers, was that 'certain communities in this country make up their minds to act as one in political matters... They probably don't have that kind of culture in most European countries.' International observers found 'serious irregularities throughout the country and fraud in at least 11 of 36 states.' (Mail & Guardian, 26 April 2003.)

48. Mbeki's weekly ANC internet ANC Today letter proclaimed, 'Nigeria has just completed a series of elections, culminating in the re-election of president Olusegun Obasanjo into his second and last term. Naturally, we have already sent our congratulations to him.' Mbeki registered, but then dismissed, the obvious: 'It is clear that there were instances of irregularities in some parts of the country. However, it also seems clear that by and large the elections were well conducted.' <http://www.anc.org.za>, 25 April 2003.

49. Castells, M. (1998), *The Information Age, Vol III: End of Millennium*, Oxford, Blackwell Publishers, p.88.

50. Daniel, J., V.Naidoo and S.Naidu (2003), 'The South Africans have Arrived: Post-Apartheid Corporate Expansion into Africa,' in J.Daniel, A.Habib and R.Southall (Eds), *State of the Nation: South Africa 2003-04*, Pretoria, Human Sciences Research Council.

51. United Nations Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (2002), 'Final Report', New York, October 8.

But such roles did not stop officials from Pretoria, Kinshasa and the IMF from arranging, in mid-2002, what the South African cabinet described as 'a bridge loan to the DRC of Special Drawing Rights (SDR) 75 million (about R760 million). This will help clear the DRC's overdue obligations with the IMF and allow that country to draw resources under the IMF Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility.' What this represented was a shocking display of financial power, with the earlier generation of IMF loans to Mobutu now codified by South Africa, which under apartheid maintained a strong alliance with the then Zaire. Moreover, IMF staff would be allowed back into Kinshasa with their own new loans, and with neoliberal conditionalities (disguised by 'poverty reduction' rhetoric) again applied to the old victims of Mobutu's fierce rule. In the same statement, the South African Cabinet recorded its payment to the World Bank of R83 million for replenishment of its African loan fund, to 'benefit our private sector, which would be eligible to bid for contracts financed from these resources.'⁵² Within eighteen months, Mbeki forged a \$10 billion deal with Kabila for trade and investment, and gained access to \$4 billion worth of World Bank tenders for South African companies.

The relationship between Pretoria, Johannesburg capital, Kinshasa and the IMF was merely an extreme case of a typical situation, in which state power is required to lubricate otherwise difficult markets. South African capital was already advancing rapidly into the region during the late 1990s, supported by special exchange control exemptions. By 2001, a researcher of the SA Institute of International Affairs warned that then trade minister Alec Erwin's self-serving trade strategy 'might signify to the Africa group of countries that South Africa, a prominent leader of the continent, does not have their best interests at heart.'⁵³ In 2003, a colleague issued a technical report on trade which conceded that African governments viewed Erwin 'with some degree of suspicion' because of his promotion of the WTO, which in Seattle and Cancun put Erwin in direct opposition to the bulk of the lowest-income countries, whose beleaguered trade ministers were responsible for derailing both summits.⁵⁴

On the one hand, officials in Pretoria regularly claimed to be advancing regional projects in part so as to steer the investment path of (and also regulate) Johannesburg capital, with Nepad the main example. Capital was not so malleable, however, and (pro-Nepad) *Business Day* newspaper admitted in mid-2004 that, 'The private sector's reluctance to get involved threatens to derail Nepad's ambitions.'⁵⁵ Hence the prospect that Johannesburg-based corporations will be 'new imperialists' was of 'great concern,' according to Pretoria's then public enterprises minister Jeff Radebe in early 2004: 'There are strong perceptions that many South African companies working elsewhere in Africa

52. South African Government Communications and Information Service (2002), 'Statement on Cabinet Meeting', Pretoria, 26 June.

53. Mail & Guardian, 16 November 2001.

54. Business Day, 2 June 2003.

55. Rose, R. (2004), 'Companies "Shirking" their Nepad Obligations', Business Day, 24 May.

come across as arrogant, disrespectful, aloof and careless in their attitude towards local business communities, work seekers and even governments.⁵⁶

But Radebe could also have been describing his Cabinet colleagues Erwin and Mbeki. In August 2003, the *Sunday Times* remarked on Southern African Development Community delegates' sentiments at a Dar es Salaam regional summit: 'Pretoria was "too defensive and protective" in trade negotiations [and] is being accused of offering too much support for domestic production "such as duty rebates on exports" which is killing off other economies in the region.'⁵⁷ More generally, the same paper reported from the AU meeting in Maputo the previous month, Mbeki is

viewed by other African leaders as too powerful, and they privately accuse him of wanting to impose his will on others. In the corridors they call him the George Bush of Africa, leading the most powerful nation in the neighbourhood and using his financial and military muscle to further his own agenda.⁵⁸

Indeed, the pumping up of Pretoria's post-apartheid military muscle has been rather revealing. Thanks especially to former international banker Terry Crawford-Brown of Economists Allied for Arms Reduction, much more is known about the invidious ways that French, German and British governments (as well as even Swedish trade unions) corrupted African National Congress leaders through a multibillion dollar arms deal.⁵⁹

Perhaps it is thus fitting that some of the most exciting anti-imperial initiatives being advanced in contemporary Africa are emanating from the most proletarianized and arguably organized country, South Africa. Critique and practical opposition to neoliberalism in South Africa are stronger than in any other African country, perhaps with the exception of Ghana.⁶⁰

In the aftermath of struggles against colonialism, Walter Rodney admired

the vital activity of the broad African masses, including the sacrifice of life and limb. In brief, it is enough to say that the African people as a collective

56. Sapa (2004), 'SA's "Imperialist" Image in Africa', 30 March.

57. *Sunday Times*, 24 August 2003.

58. *Sunday Times*, 13 July 2003.

59. Brown, T. (2005), 'The Arms Deal', Unpublished paper, Durban, Diakonia.

60. See, e.g., Saul, J. (2005), *The Next Liberation Struggle*, Toronto, Between the Lines Press, London, Merlin Press, New York, Monthly Review Press and Pietermaritzburg, University of KwaZulu-Natal Press; Gumede, W. (2005), *Thabo Mbeki and the Struggle for the Soul of the ANC*, Cape Town, Zebra Press; Barchiesi, F. and T. Bramble (Eds)(2003), *Rethinking the Labour Movement in the 'New South Africa'*, London, Macmillan; Kimani, S. (Ed)(2003), *The Right to Dissent: Freedom of Expression, Assembly and Demonstration in the New South Africa*, Johannesburg, Freedom of Expression Institute; Alexander, N. (2002), *An Ordinary Country*, Pietermaritzburg, University of Natal Press; Jacobs, S. and R. Calland (Eds)(2002), *Thabo Mbeki's World*, London, Zed Books and Pietermaritzburg, University of KwaZulu-Natal Press; Hart, G. (2002), *Disabling Globalization*, Pietermaritzburg, University of KwaZulu-Natal Press and Berkeley, University of California Press; Desai, A. (2002), *We are the Poors*, New York, Monthly Review Press; Bell, T. and D. Ntsebeza (2001), *Unfinished Business*, Cape Town, RedWorks; Adams, S. (2001), *Comrade Minister*, New York, Nova Science Publishers; and Marais, H. (2000), *South Africa Limits to Change*, London, Zed Books and Cape Town, University of Cape Town Press.

had upset the plans of the colonialists, and had surged forward to freedom. Such a position may seem to be a mere revival of a certain rosy and romantic view of African independence which was popular in the early 1960s, but, on the contrary, it is fully cognisant of the shabby reality of neocolonial Africa.⁶¹

To replace shabby neoliberal projects like the New Partnership for Africa's Development with a bottom-up programmatic strategy that can confront the looting of Africa requires not only the rapid development of mass democratic movements across the continent, suffused with values of liberty, equality (including between the sexes) and solidarity. In addition, the intellectual plays a crucial role. The possibility of a revived African left intent on halting and reversing the looting of the continent depends upon the nurture of Africa's independent-minded nationalists, feminists, critical political economists and anti-imperialists who are already helping to shape the progressive movements' strategies.⁶²

Perhaps Fanon put it best, in his discussion of intellectuals in liberated zones of Algeria, circa 1961:

One of the greatest services that the Algerian revolution will have rendered to the intellectuals of Algeria will be to have placed them in contact with the people, to have allowed them to see the extreme, ineffable poverty of the people, at the same time allowing them to watch the awakening of the people's intelligence and the onward progress of their consciousness... Today, the people's tribunals are functioning at every level, and local planning commissions are organizing the division of large-scale holdings, and working out the Algeria of tomorrow. An isolated individual may obstinately refuse to understand a problem, but the group or the village understands with disconcerting rapidity. It is true that if care is taken to use only a language that is understood by graduates in law and economics, you can easily prove that the masses have to be managed from above. But if you speak the language of everyday, if you are not obsessed by the perverse desire to spread confusion and to rid yourself of the people, then you will realise that the masses are quick to seize every shade of meaning and to learn all the tricks of the trade.⁶³

61. Rodney, W. (1972), *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania Publishing House and London, Bogle L'Ouverture Publications; <http://www.marxists.org/subject/africa/rodney-walter/how-europe/>.

62. Of course, conditions are not easy in most sites of African intellectual work, with many academics surviving on less than US\$100 a month pay. Even in once proud universities like Dar es Salaam and Makerere, former progressive intellectuals are prone to taking jobs or consultancies with multilateral agencies, donors, corporations and wealthy Northern NGOs, instead of devoting time and energies to unremunerated, risky work on behalf of civil societies.

63. Fanon, F. (1963), *The Wretched of the Earth*, New York, Grove Press, p.189.