

DIE
SUID-
AFRIKAANSE
INSTITUUT
VAN
INTERNASIONALE
AANGELEENTHEDE

geleentheidspublikasie



occasional paper

THE
SOUTH
AFRICAN
INSTITUTE
OF
INTERNATIONAL
AFFAIRS

S.A. INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
3 - Struys House Library

ON THE WAY
TO A NEW
SOUTH AFRICA

HELMUT SCHAEFER

ON THE WAY TO A NEW SOUTH AFRICA

by

Helmut Schaefer

ISBN: 1-874890-02-1

December 1991

**The South African Institute
of International Affairs
Jan Smuts House
P.O. Box 31596, Braamfontein 2017,
Johannesburg, South Africa**

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am delighted and honoured to be at Witwatersrand University, a University with a great tradition in liberal thinking, at a time in which both my country and South Africa pass through a process of historical dimension.

Let me briefly outline some major aspects of German foreign policy in post-cold war Europe and then talk about the way we see our relations to post-Apartheid South Africa.

For many years the first priority of our foreign policy had been to work for a state of peace in Europe in which the German people would recover its unity through an act of self-determination. This goal was achieved on 3rd October 1990.

Now we face the formidable task to integrate the two parts of Germany after 45 years of division.

Our job is both a material and an immaterial one. It turns out to be more difficult – and more costly – to cope with the heritage of 40 years of socialism than anyone had envisaged. Productivity in the former GDR has gone down, unemployment up and without billions being poured into their industrial infrastructure and the social system the new "Länder" of Germany would face a very bad winter.

More difficult still is the task of breaking down the psychological barrier between the successful, materialistic West Germany and their brothers who find it difficult catching up with the standards of a complicated, performance-oriented society and who have to do away with the dark shadows of totalitarian rule and an omnipresent, criminal security system.

At the same time we want to push forward the economic and political integration of Europe. The unification of Germany has not changed our commitment. On the contrary, only now, after the end of an artificial dividing line separating Germany and Europe can the old continent grow together, and there are prospects for peace, stability and prosperity for the whole of Europe.

The aims of our European policy are threefold:

1. We want the European Community – the Europe of the Twelve – to develop into a political, economic and monetary union and ultimately into the United States of Europe.

2. We want all democracies in Europe sooner or later to accede to this community. As long as the economy of those outside is not wholly converted to a social market system and thus unable to face the competition with the West, association with the EEC will pave the way.
3. We want to bring the whole of Europe even closer together in the framework of the Conference of Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), whose Paris Charter of December 1990 provides for structures of security, economic and cultural cooperation in which 38 countries, including the Baltic States, participate. This cooperation also includes our Atlantic partners, the USA and Canada. In this way an area of peace could be created stretching from Vancouver to Vladivostok.

Two dangers however are looming on the horizon:

- Ethnical conflicts had for the last decades been frozen by the harsh grip of communist dictatorships. Now many ethnic groups look for their identity through self-determination. To control those processes, new structures have to be found. Neither the nationalism of the 19th century nor multi-national empires can be an answer. We hope that the provisions created for the Council of Europe and the CSCE-process will offer a haven for ethnic and national aspirations without making borders a cause for armed struggle.
- At the same time there is a risk that countries of Eastern Europe will not be able to develop their economies successfully. Thus, there could be a new division of Europe: into haves and have-nots. The European Community has, with the active participation of my country, initiated a vast programme of economic, technical and infrastructural aid in order to cope with this problem.

Of course, Germany's increased economic and political potential demands that we shoulder greater global responsibilities. We are prepared to play a bigger role in United Nation's peace keeping operations and will provide the necessary legislation. Already our contribution to the UN's mission during the transition of Namibia to nationhood was considerable, both politically and in the security field. In future, German soldiers should be able to participate in such operations.

Our aid programme is one of the largest in the world. We have raised our taxes in order to meet the requirements of our countrymen in the former GDR. But we have not cut down our economic assistance to the Third World. In 1991 the growth of the aid budget exceeded the growth of the national budget.

A great deal of the attention and energy of my Government is focused on these problems. Should we fail, there is the prospect of hundreds of thousands of refugees flooding Central Europe. Not only our economic stability is at stake, internal fighting could spill over international borders and threaten political and military stability. The control over the Soviet Union's huge nuclear arsenal still remains undecided.

Ladies and gentlemen, Germany has always attached particular importance to its relations with the African continent. As a part of Europe we participate in the special relationship geography and history have developed between our country and Africa. A unified Germany will remain deeply engaged.

To give you some examples: In recent months we had the visits of the Heads of States of Uganda, Mozambique and Zimbabwe as well as a greater number of Ministers. I myself met with South African leaders like Deputy Foreign Minister Wessels and ANC spokesman Mbeki. In 1991 alone I have visited a dozen African countries.

Germany has written off debts of African countries to the amount of 10.4 billion Rand and 40% of our official development assistance is going to Africa.

For a long time the African region had few opportunities to produce positive headlines. Civil wars, regional strife, human rights violations, underdevelopment and social injustice were a constant source of instability and concern.

Recently, developments have shown a positive trend in this part of the continent: Namibia has reached independence, the peace process in Angola is well on track and in Mozambique Frelimo and Renamo have started to talk to each other. Zambia surprised quite a few observers by the smooth transition of power to a democratically elected government.

But the most impressive changes are those this country has committed itself to go through. South Africa has embarked on a process difficult to be qualified in a single word. Let me call it a South African Perestroika which involves not only the political system but the society as a whole. The outcome will be a new country.

Combining courage and reason President de Klerk set this country on a radically new course. In Nelson Mandela he has a partner whose statesmanship, determination and wisdom makes this transformation possible. Let me add how much I personally admire the spirit of conciliation and moderation in which this man after 27 years in prison started to work for peace.

You know that my country was radically opposed to apartheid. Germans of all generations, particularly the young are still shocked by the system of apartheid Germans had, one generation ago, inflicted on people of German and neighbouring nationalities but of different race. This shock made us particularly sensitive to comparable prejudices all over the world, even if their roots and their meaning might be different.

This is why we fully participated in measures taken by the UN and the EEC. There was also an enormous emotional support for the victims of apartheid. During the last years official political communication went down to a minimum, cultural exchange stopped and development of economic relations were blocked.

With the same emotional participation Germany follows recent developments in this country. With relief and admiration we watch a historical process of a dimension nobody would have dreamed of 5 or 10 years ago.

It is true, that there are still doubts and reservations being hedged by a number of Germans asking whether the move to a system of equality and justice is serious and irreversible. They regret the spread of violence and the slow move towards a new constitution.

To my mind these people do not do justice to the determination of the main actors in this difficult and complicated game. My government is deeply convinced that South African Perestroika is irreversible. They are prepared to open a new, positive page in the relations between our two countries.

They fully trust President de Klerk's and Nelson Mandela's determination to create a constitution guaranteeing equal rights in the political, economic and social life to all citizens, to remove unjust privileges and to introduce equal civil rights for all South Africans.

This society, this country, this region will be an important friend and partner of united Germany.

The potential of our economic and cultural ties is considerable. There are about 90,000 people with German nationality living in this country and more of German origin, including those who had to leave Germany in our dark ages and were received here with traditional hospitality. We are your greatest official trading partner – although personally, I wonder whether this might not also be due to the fact that we handle exports and statistics less adroitly than other countries. There are a number of German schools and a vast field for cultural cooperation.

In recent years we used some of this potential to fight or alleviate apartheid. Germany introduced a code of conduct into the European Community that made *European labour standards* applicable to their companies in South Africa. Our companies paid particular attention to training and promoting non-white labour and management. German language schools subsidised by my Government were urged to abolish racial separation and to give particular attention to non-white children. Government and private funds went into projects devised to support and to promote the victims of apartheid.

Once a non-racial political system is established these energies can be streamlined, coordinated and increased. We will carry on as we have done before to channel assistance to the underprivileged black population: we also realize that the task of educating the underprivileged and of preparing them for full participation in the economic and social life of this country requires huge investments. I am sure that my country as well as the other Europeans will be prepared to participate in this gigantic task.

I do not need to stress the importance of foreign investment in restoring growth to the South African economy. Without support by a sound economic development the chances of success of the political process will be minimised. An economic boost could come from German private investment.

My government will do everything to encourage private enterprise.

Of course, attractive conditions and the long-term development perspectives in South Africa are equally important.

Germany strongly believes that a social market economy based on private enterprise, competition, with the state ensuring the social dimension of the economic life, is the best structure to achieve this goal.

Social justice was a central pillar in restructuring Germany after the Second World War; it is one of the main objectives in integrating the former GDR into Germany. Opinions will differ between countries over time how to achieve social justice, what the individual should do for himself and what the state should do for him. Better equal education and more training facilities, jobs and housing will certainly be a major objective. I mentioned our considerations to participate.

I think there are many ways in which Germany can share its experiences in nation-building with the new Republic of South Africa. We talked about our own experience with various economic structures. Furthermore, I think that the German

trade union system is one of our greatest post-war achievements. We can also offer our know-how in successfully structuring a viable system of federalism or the relationship between military and political power. I was happy to learn that an intensive exchange of views in these fields has started with various South African groups and organizations. The German political foundations are increasingly participating in this dialogue.

Ladies and gentlemen, I have outlined a few areas in which the cooperation between our two countries is restarting. I see a great future for the relationship for Germany and a non-racial fully democratic South Africa.

STATE MINISTER HELMUT SCHAEFER is a member of the Free Democratic Party (FDP), coalition partner of the Christian Democrats in the Federal German government. He has been a member of the Federal Parliament since 1977 and State Minister (equivalent to Deputy Minister) for Foreign Affairs since 1987. Since 1985 he has also been Chariman of the Federal Committee for Foreign, European and Development Policy in Bonn.

This is a transcription of an address given at the Witwatersrand Branch of the Institute on the 18 November 1991.

The views expressed in this paper are the responsibility of the author and not of the Institute.