

Forging Foreign Policy during South Africa's Transition: The Transitional Executive Council (TEC) and South African Reintegration into the International community, 1993-1994

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South Africa's 'miraculous' transition from apartheid to democracy, 1990-1994, has been widely investigated in the academic literature, with a number of studies examining various aspects of the nation's dramatic political change. However, enacted in October 1993, the activities of the cross-party body, the Transitional Executive Council (TEC), and more importantly those of its composite sub councils have so far been widely neglected. Investigating the role of the Sub Council on Foreign Affairs (SCFA) through previously unutilised official documents, this paper will provide a background to and a description of the SCFA; an overview of some of its work; and analyse the significant influence it had on the shape of South Africa's post-apartheid foreign policy. The paper also explores the influence the apartheid era, Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) had over the organisation and activities of the SCFA. I will demonstrate how their considerable input into the process, as well as the role of western governments, helped shape the final recommendations of the sub-council, so that they closely represented those of the DFA, and the wider international community. Despite formulating its own foreign policy vision during the transition, the new ANC-led government were compelled to accept the recommendations of the SCFA for fear of losing western support for its ambitious domestic reconstruction plans. This paper argues that entrenched domestic and international elite interests, which were contrary to those of the vast majority of ANC supporters, 'captured' the 'new' South Africa's foreign policy. This capturing of foreign policy seriously impinged upon the ANC-led government's room for manoeuvre internationally, and ultimately was a factor that led to the country's perceived inconsistent foreign policy after 1994.