



## CHAPTER 2

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## CHAPTER 2

### THE SOUTH AFRICAN MARITIME ENVIRONMENT

#### INTRODUCTION

After developing an extensive definition of the term 'maritime environment', this Chapter will briefly develop three broad themes: The area and nature of South Africa's seas, the importance of the sea to South Africa (especially the contribution of maritime trade and the increasing value of what mariners call South Africa's 'tenth province') and highlighting the issue of a national maritime policy; and thirdly identify and scan the role of partners in the maritime sphere. Therefore, this Chapter aims to focus on the role that the SA Navy plays in the management and control of maritime security of South Africa, and its positive stabilising effect on the region.

In order to give effect to this Chapter, an encompassing definition of 'maritime' is required. This will enable an understanding of its attributes and the interaction of entities which deal with the maritime environment. It is important to ensure that the criteria for a definition includes the physicality of the seas, the benefits (actual and potential) which may accrue from its productive and pro-active utilisation; as well as those who traverse South Africa's seas.

#### DEFINING THE SCOPE OF MARITIME

Depending on the context, 'maritime' is described as relating to or involving ships or shipping or navigation or seamen – in a nautical or marine sense – or, bordering on or living or characteristic of those near the sea; located on or near or bordering on a coast, in the coastal sense. By inference then, those who utilise the sea off the coasts are included in this definition. Further, the 'maritime environment' may be defined as 'the oceans, seas, bays, estuaries, islands, coastal areas, and the airspace above these, including the littorals. Although there is no clear or universally accepted definition of littoral, it remains widely agreed that it is 'the region of the shore of a lake or sea or ocean'. It is widely accepted as a region from 200 miles inland to 200 miles out to sea.

In effect, described in the confluence of the above concepts is the essence of the maritime military environment, the three dimensions of the maritime battlespace within which naval forces must be capable and effective. The three dimensions of this battlespace are not discrete and also provide connections to other land masses. It comprises a fluid medium

where maritime platforms, weapons and sensors permeate and interconnect above, below and upon the surface. This fact makes the maritime battlespace uniquely different from both the land and the air battlespaces, and its nature affects all aspects of maritime warfare – surveillance, classification, localisation, targeting and weapon delivery.

Oceanographically and physically, there are no border lines or natural boundaries at sea. “(C)oordination, co-operation, and consultation are fundamental to oceans governance and the management of regional seas and coastal zones”. In addition, so as to be fully and continuously informed of South Africa’s oceans, it will ensure that “... resource development, navigational safety, and marine environmental management” occurs. It follows therefore, that management of oceans necessitates a co-operative approach; hence this Chapter will ensure that reference is made to those who occupy our seas, whether on lawful maritime business or otherwise.

## **THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SEA**

### **SOUTH AFRICA – A MARITIME NATION**

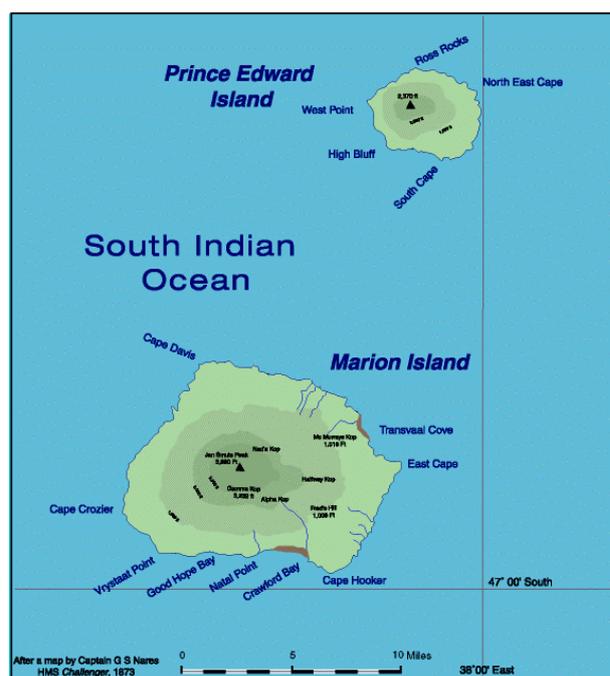
The concept of sea power was fully developed by distinguished naval historian and strategic thinker, Alfred Thayer Mahan in “The Influence of Sea Power upon History 1660-1783.” Mahan described the sea as a magnificent highway, with trade routes linking nations; through sea lines of communication. Trade and transportation by water has always been easier and less expensive, with the ability to carry bulk (if somewhat slower) than land or possibly even air transportation. Successful shipping requires two factors - protection, hence the need to protect the sea lines of communication by navies; and secure seaports. This concept is further elucidated in Chapter 3.

### **THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT**

#### **South Africa’s, Geo-strategic Position**

South Africa is surrounded by the ocean on three sides – to the west, south and east – and has a coastline of 3924 km. The coastline includes South Africa’s sovereign possessions of Prince Edward and Marion Islands (collectively called the Prince Edward Island Group). Prince Edward Island has a coastline of 32 km, while Marion Island’s is 134 km. The size of South Africa’s Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) is 1, 553,000 square kilometers. Initial indications are that a successful Continental Shelf claim may add an additional 880 000 square kilometers to South Africa’s EEZ.

South Africa occupies an important geo-strategic position, a maritime choke point, in the Southern Hemisphere, being surrounded by three great oceans – the Indian, South

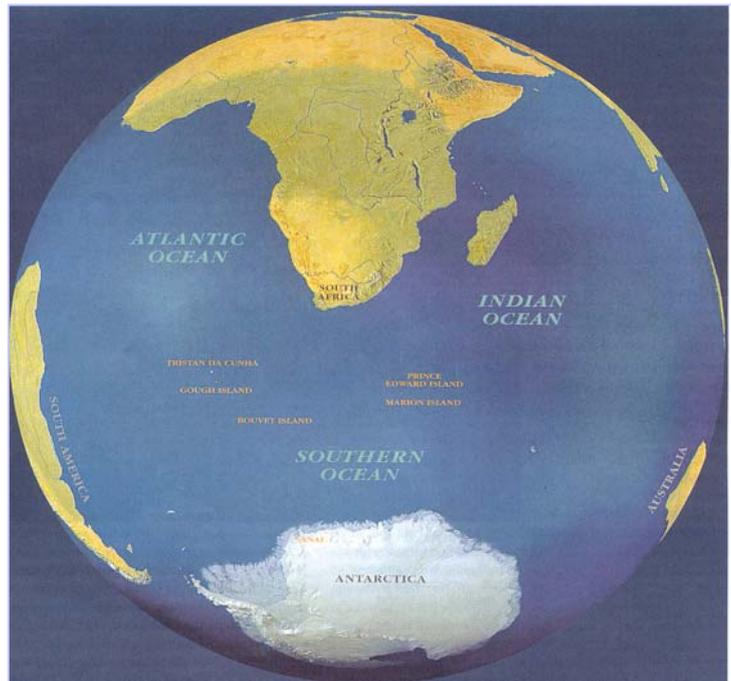


Atlantic and Southern Oceans. The closest continents are South America (about 7 000 kilometres to the west), Australia (nearly 8 000 kilometres to south-east) and the frozen continent of Antarctica, 4 200 kilometres to the south.

The geo-strategic position the RSA occupies as a country is an important factor that guides the country's use and security of the seas. The importance of its geo-strategic position is followed by its maritime zones, marine resources, marine ecology and conservation - as well as its maritime trade. All of these factors carry with them immediate national, regional and international obligations.

## The Oceans

The seas that wash the coasts of South Africa are governed by a combination of strong ocean currents and prevailing winds which, particularly at certain times of the year, meet each other from opposite directions, creating adverse sea conditions that demand vigilance from navigators. Off the West Coast the Benguela Current drives northward with cold water from the Antarctic. The warm north-south Agulhas Current washes the East Coast in the southern hemisphere. The mixing of these warm and cold currents off the Cape Coast creates a confusion of sea temperatures forming thermal layers, which are favourable for the deployment of submarines. In addition, the cold waters of the west coast are much richer in oxygen, nitrates, phosphates and plankton than those of the east coast. Consequently, the South African fishing industry is centred on the west coast.



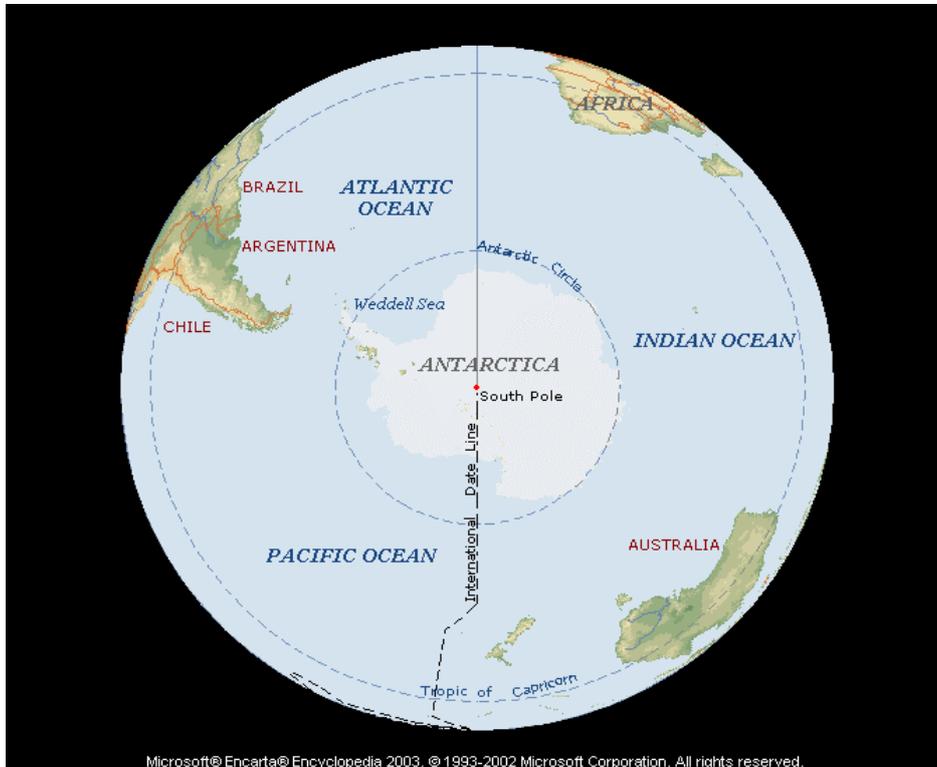
At certain times of the year, when specific conditions prevail, freak waves occur which can result in damage to, and even the sinking, of ships.

To the south of the country lie the notorious "Roaring Forties". These are the areas of the Southern Ocean that fall between latitudes 40 degrees and 50 degrees south. They are exposed to thousands of miles of uninterrupted weather fronts which sweep in ferociously from west to east and are respected and avoided by all responsible navigators, particularly during winter. The Prince Edward Islands, possessions of South Africa since having being annexed in 1947, lie in this weather belt.

The vast area of the oceans patrolled by the SA Navy includes, within its parameters, numerous contrasts that range from tropical splendour to icy wastes. The sea conditions in the operating areas are generally notoriously rough. This is the environment of the SA Navy. In these regions lie her tasks in some of the most unfavourable conditions in the world. It requires highly professional and motivated seamen to carry out their tasks efficiently in these

conditions off a hostile coastline.

The weather and sea conditions have a strong influence on the design and minimum size of naval warships needed to patrol in these areas for weeks at a time.



## The Coasts

The coastline itself is an even, closed one with few bays or indentations naturally suitable for harbours. The only ideal natural harbour along the coastline is Saldanha Bay on the west coast. Most river-mouths are unsuitable as harbours because large sandbars block entry for most of the year. Only the largest rivers, such as the Orange and Limpopo, maintain narrow permanent channels through the bars. For these reasons, the country has no navigable rivers.

## Harbours and Ports

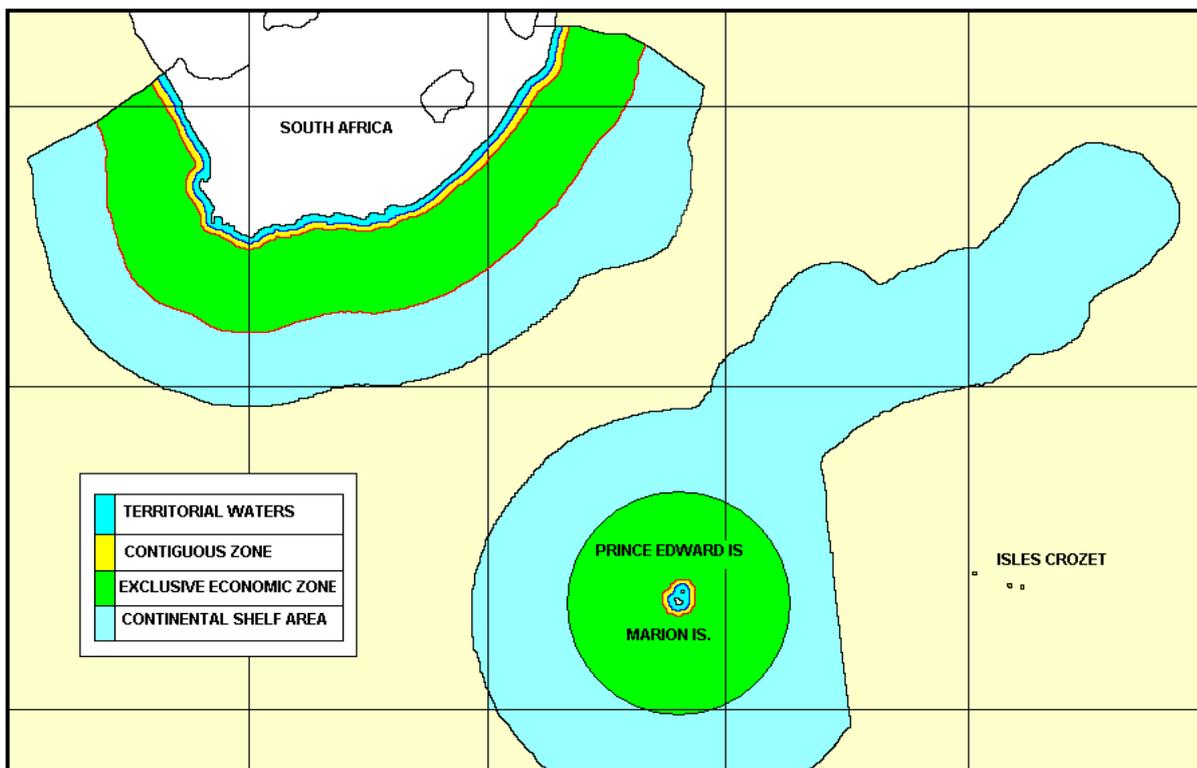
South Africa operates six major ports (from the east coast to west – Richard's Bay, Durban, East London, Port Elizabeth, Cape Town and Saldanha Bay), a further one under construction (the port of Coega) on the Eastern Cape coast, and a naval harbour (Simon's Town). There are also other minor harbours and ports with extensive harbour infrastructure which provide important containerisation processing, ship repair, limited ship construction and maintenance facilities. In addition, there are five drydocks with a sixth under construction in Richards Bay. The two Kwa-Zulu Natal ports, Richards Bay and Durban, provide the largest concentration of modern port facilities on the Southern African coast. Critical to an understanding of the concept of South Africa being a maritime nation, is that these harbours and ports are at the seaward end of a network of roads and railways that

penetrate deep into Southern Africa. This makes South Africa an important trading country. In excess of 90 percent of its imports and exports in terms of value are carried by sea.

## MARITIME TRADE

### Maritime Zones

In the Maritime Zones Act of 1994, South Africa declared an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) out to 200 nautical miles to seaward from the coastal baselines of both South Africa and its possessions in the Southern Ocean, the Marion and Prince Edward Islands — situated some 2 000 kilometres to the south-east. This Act also covers the internal waters (waters to landward of the baselines), territorial waters (12 nautical miles), the contiguous and maritime zones (24 nautical miles), the EEZ and the continental shelf. All these zones fall within South Africa's jurisdiction for monitoring, control and enforcement of state authority. This comprises a total of some 2,4 million square kilometres) of assets.



**The maritime zones of South Africa**

Within these areas are rich fishing grounds which support an industry that contributes significantly to the economy and provides in excess of 25 000 jobs.

The area is also rich in minerals and gemstones. Diamond mining from the seabed is on the increase as, not only are some of the finest gem quality stones mined at sea, diamond companies are turning more and more to the sea as land diamonds become increasingly rare.

South Africa can, therefore, justifiably claim to be a major maritime nation, dependent on the sea for its trade and economic well-being.

It is in this environment where a favourable geographical position with access to three great oceans and a growing agricultural and industrial base are in juxtaposition that the SA Navy operates.

### **Increasing Importance of Maritime Trade**

A large exporter of mineral and agricultural products, South Africa is developing a growing trade in manufactured goods. The economy is almost totally dependent on this maritime infrastructure. Its trade is essential to the growth and development of not only the country, but also the southern African region. With its central global position, South Africa benefits being astride major trade routes to the East and to the West. The Cape of Good Hope is the easiest cape in the south to round - attracting many ships that travel these routes, often seeking supplies, repairs or cargoes. One of the busiest shipping lanes in the world - especially when conflict in the Middle East results in the closure of the Suez Canal — the Cape Sea Route is one of the main jugulars between East and West; it is via this route that some 30 percent of Middle East oil bound for Europe and the Americas is conveyed annually. Furthermore, trade with the Republic of South Africa is on the increase.

### **Maritime Trade**

Seventy percent of the world's surface is covered by seas and oceans, and this proportion reflects the significance of the oceans in world affairs, in that at least 80% of world trade is carried by sea.

Shipping accounts for 99,5% of global trans-oceanic trade, the volume of which increased by a factor of eight since WWII. Maritime trade will remain the principal means by which raw materials and manufactured goods are transported between customer and supplier nations and reflects increasing inter-dependency of the modern world. The people of South and Southern Africa are economically dependent on world commerce and also on the necessity to have free access to the gateway between the South Atlantic and South Indian oceans.

According to the White Paper on Coastal Management, launched in June 2000, products that could be linked to the coast account for at least 35% of South Africa's Gross Domestic Product and have enormous potential for further development. This highlights the coast as a driving force in the national economy.

**Trade.** South African ports and the maritime infrastructure are well developed. Between 90% and 95% of the country's import and export trade in terms of volume (159 million tons in 2000), or in excess of 75% in terms of value (Rbn 369 in 2000), is transported by sea. A total of 14 098 merchant vessels called into South African ports during 2000 and 75% of South Africa's energy requirements in terms of fuel comes by sea from the Middle East.

Approximately 65% of South Africa's GDP was generated by foreign trade in 1998 and it is estimated that 60 cents of every rand earned in South Africa is directly dependent on the sea. Only about 13% (2000) of South Africa's exports are destined for Africa while imports from Africa is relatively small at 3% of its total imports. The economies of South Africa's

landlocked neighbours are also completely dependent on the six ports that serve South Africa.

**Challenge.** Should a hostile blockade of ports be conducted, it would severely affect the economy of South Africa. The region, dependent on South Africa's ports and infrastructure, will feel the economic impact. This very real threat highlights the need to protect and to ensure safe sea approaches and ports.

**Marine Resources.** The oceans seem to be an inexhaustible, virtually untapped marine storehouse, containing a wealth of food and mineral resources. However, maritime industries supported by the latest technology in commercial equipment, continually harvest marine resources. This bounty has since proven to be finite and is fast becoming a storehouse that nations are prepared to fight for.

**Commercial Fishing.** South Africa's commercial fishing industry is valued at more than R4,8 billion annually and employs in excess of 25 000 people directly. The commercial fishing fleet consisted of 4 477 vessels in 2000 and the total catch increased from 443 300 metric tons in 1996, to 563 900 in 1998. Recreational fishing attracts some 750 000 anglers, employs around 130 000 people and generates approximately R1,7 billion in revenue. The fishing industry is an important component of the maritime economy, contributing over 2% of the GDP.

**Marine Mining.** This industry consists mainly of petroleum gas mining off the South coast and diamond mining off the West Coast of South Africa. Diamonds mined from the sea in 1997 earned R625 million. The discovery and recovery of gas is expanding with a new gas strike on the west coast and increase of estimated gas and oil reserves in the Agulhas region, and expansion of offshore mining operations seems likely.

**Food.** Fish provides about 25% of the world supply of animal protein and the bulk of world catch is taken in the relatively shallow waters of the continental shelf. The control of fishing and the management of fish stocks is problematic, with many fishing nations deploying their fishing fleets to waters within other states' *EEZs*. Over-fishing, resulting in depleted marine food resources, is a major problem and could increasingly become a source of conflict. To prevent this, policing of waters will have to be taken far more seriously.

**Marine Tourism.** Marine Tourism adds substantially to the tourism sector and provides a significant contribution to economies of coastal towns. Cruise liner tourism is a fast growing sector with large, five star vessels commissioned regularly. New destinations are constantly explored and South Africa has proven to be very popular. The contribution of cruise liner visits to South African ports has a knock-on effect for inland tour operators, currently estimated at R28 million per year. It is estimated that a tourist arriving on a cruise ship in a South African port will spend R30 000 on average during such a visit.

### **South Africa's 'Tenth' Province**

South Africa's maritime zones represent a vast, virtually untapped marine storehouse, containing a wealth of mineral and food resources. The total area of our maritime waters, which include the region around the Prince Edward and Marion Islands, far exceeds the total area of South Africa's land territories. Under the auspices of the United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) greatly increased rights, but also corresponding obligations,

have been granted. In terms of additional rights, territorial waters, for example have been increased (from 3 to 12 nautical miles), and it is generally accepted that a country should have the rights to explore and exploit resources in an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) up to 200 nautical miles from their coastlines. EEZs now enclose approximately 36% of the total sea area. It is thus apt to adopt South Africa's seas as its 'Tenth Province'.

### **Implications of the Above**

From the above facts, it is clear that South Africa has an "island economy". This virtually complete reliance on the ocean for trade renders South Africa very vulnerable and emphasises the strategic importance of commercial ports and the oceans bordering the country. The same are vital to the economies of the rest of Southern Africa and the interdependence of these economies and the South African maritime community cannot be over-emphasised. This implies that ports, as vulnerable economic choke points, must be protected at all cost.

Oceans may seem inexhaustible, but unless coastal states start taking responsibility for their conservation, once over-exploited, they may never recover. The economic impact could cause the collapse of coastal states. The fishing industry is well worth protecting, not only for the number of jobs it provides, but also for its current and potential contribution to the GDP. Management of this resource becomes increasingly important, as South Africa will look more to the sea to provide for sustainment of its growing population.

Although non-living marine resources are an increasing factor, continued exploration might reveal far richer resources of deposits of gas or even oil. Such discoveries will contribute to the economic power base and possibly even ensure some measure of independence from foreign imports of oil.

Oceans can contribute significantly to the economic power base of the coastal states, thus enhancing the associated economic stability and development of our nation.

### **MARITIME PARTNERS**

It is helpful to analyse South Africa's maritime partners from both an internal and international viewpoints, where the latter is taken to include regional and continental partnerships.

More than ten years ago, the South African leadership chose inclusive democracy and led the country to exemplify successful conflict prevention. The new South Africa symbolises a hope that Africa can get it right. Politically, it offers both a model for development, co-operation and growth; and economically South Africa represents an engine for growth through investment and trade. This is particularly true of trade in the maritime economic sphere, where South Africa has considerable economic interests in the sea. Recent events (piracy incidents along the African coast, fishing violations and increasing attention to and focus on maritime security) re-emphasize the need to have appropriate means to manage and control the maritime zones of South Africa, so as to secure these areas for both marine and hinterland development and growth.

## **SOUTH AFRICA'S INTERNAL PARTNERS: AGENCIES IN THE MARITIME SPHERE**

In South Africa, all commercial, scientific and recreational activities may be pursued, secure in the knowledge that professional agencies constantly monitor and maintain the integrity of South Africa's seas. The SA Navy collaborates with the agencies mentioned below in protecting the marine resources mentioned above and also in providing the necessary security for the protection of the territorial waters.

**The Department of Transport (DoT).** The DoT is responsible for accession to at least twelve international maritime conventions, all pertaining to safety standards and combating of pollution. It is also responsible for establishment of, and aids to, navigation at sea, as prescribed by the SOLAS Convention, and for provision and maintenance of 45 lighthouses along the South African coastline. Maritime communications, in terms of the International Communication Convention of 1982 and the Automatic Identification and Data Management System also fall within the sphere of responsibility of this department.

**The South African Maritime Safety Authority (SAMSA).** SAMSA was constituted by Act 5 of 1998 and is responsible for the administering of these conventions and ensures the introduction and maintenance of international standards set by the International Maritime Organisation in London. It is steadily improving its capacity to monitor safety standards at sea through inspection of foreign vessels calling at South African ports.

**Department of Environmental Affairs & Tourism (DEAT).** This department is responsible, in terms of the Living Marine Resources Act (Act 12 of 1988) and the Environmental Conservation Act (Act 73 of 1989), for the conservation and protection of the marine environment. DEAT responsibilities include that of Marine and Coastal Management and control of conservation in the EEZ. In Act 6 of 1981 (the Prevention and Combating of Oil Pollution at Sea Act), DEAT is made responsible for combating pollution once it has occurred (whereas the role of the Department of Transport is to prevent it from happening). The South African Weather Bureau renders weather services to 10% of the globe, in accordance with the SOLAS Convention. Telkom and the SA Navy transmit radio maritime safety information to mariners in the South African area of interest.

**The South African Police Service (SAPS).** The SA Police Service is responsible for the securing of international borders of the sea to prevent and investigate all illegal or clandestine cross-border movement of persons and goods. The Sea Border Unit is responsible for marine policing, with the primary function of border control along the coastline up to 12 nautical miles from the coast. This responsibility is effected in collaboration with the Department of Home Affairs and the South African Revenue Service.

**The National Sea Rescue Institute (NSRI).** The NSRI dedicates itself to assisting people in distress both at sea and on inland waters. Among the oldest world safety organisations, the Institute relies solely upon fully trained volunteers to save lives on South African waters, which includes select inland water bodies. It works closely with other, similar groups around the world, and is recognised as an authoritative and credible safety and rescue organisation. As at March 2004, it had carried out 11 677 operations and had saved 1 927 lives.

**Department of Defence (DOD): Maritime Defence and the Role of the SA Navy.** The SA Navy derives its mandate from the Constitution. The White Paper "Defence in a Democracy"

of 1996 (as updated in 2006), gives broad policy direction, elaborated upon in the updated Defence Review. These documents also comment on South Africa's strategic environment, provide guidelines for developing our military strategy, and discuss the roles and functions which the people of South Africa expect the Department of Defence, and hence the SA Navy, to fulfil. The ability to perform these roles and functions are inherent in the force design of the SANDF, as approved by Parliament. Chapter 4 of the Doctrine explains how the SA Navy carries out its responsibilities.

The SA Navy is tasked with the responsibility of ensuring that our sea lines of communication remain open at all times. It is to prepare for and, when so ordered, conduct appropriate naval operations in defence of the RSA, its citizens and interests and operations other than war in support of other relevant and approved national goals. The SA Navy's reach, area and efficiency are much increased should it operate jointly with other maritime assets such as a maritime air and surveillance capability, which can be provided by the South African Air Force (SAAF). This includes protection of shipping and sea-borne trade in times of conflict and ensuring the uninterrupted flow of shipping. Another responsibility to its membership of International Hydrographic Organisation and the International Maritime Organisation, is the provisioning of a hydrographic service. In addition, the SAN supports all the above organisations in the execution of their responsibilities.

## **SOUTH AFRICA'S INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS**

The South African government is committed to ensuring a secure and prosperous South Africa for its people. To ensure a stable country, the neighbours and regional countries also have to be stable and need to co-exist peacefully with each other. It is for that reason that South Africa is committed to providing support to African countries in need. In order to be effective in its endeavours, an understanding of the conditions in African countries that give rise to the support required is therefore necessary.

Instability in the countries is caused by competition for land and resources, ethnicity, religious intolerance and the fact that the violence in countries also causes large numbers of displaced populations.

Natural disasters also tend to overstretch the disaster management capacity of most African states quickly, leaving them to rely on international assistance. Mainly floods, droughts, food insecurity, earthquakes and infectious diseases cause the disasters.

As Africa is central to South African foreign policy, South Africa has committed itself to supporting Africa in its quest for peaceful co-existence and alleviating suffering, resulting from both natural and other disasters mentioned above. This commitment is visible in South Africa's active participation in the African Union (AU) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in



promoting the development programmes of NEPAD. The DOD, and by implication the SA Navy must, therefore, find innovative means to ensure the establishment of peace and security as part of the Government's initiatives. This approach can ensure the availability and serviceability of both equipment and personnel to meet the requirement for defence against new threat patterns that may develop.

The SA Navy is actively involved in the SADC through its participation in the Standing Maritime Committee which comprises all the SADC countries and where military maritime matters are discussed.

The SA Navy will participate in missions in Africa to support the Government's African initiatives and will contribute forces to the Africa Standby Force. It will provide the necessary support during natural disasters and also support littoral countries in securing their sea borders and resources. The support will be in the form of physical support and the provision of training.

Like most nations, South Africa, strives to maintain good relations with states who have like-minded goals of pursuing peaceful prosperity and development. The precedence of diplomatic and security relations spreads out in a natural manner, in expanding concentric areas – and, viewed from a maritime perspective, it starts with the regional diplomatic, economic and security organisation, the SADC's littoral and island states, followed by member states having large water bodies, and then landlocked states. It then moves further afield to continental African Union littoral and island states, followed by the African Union's large water bodies states, and then landlocked states. Finally it circles out to international partners at both bilateral, trilateral (as is the case with India-Brazil-South Africa partnership) and multilateral fora, such as the United Nations. International partners include non-governmental organisations, humanitarian and religious organisations, and the like.

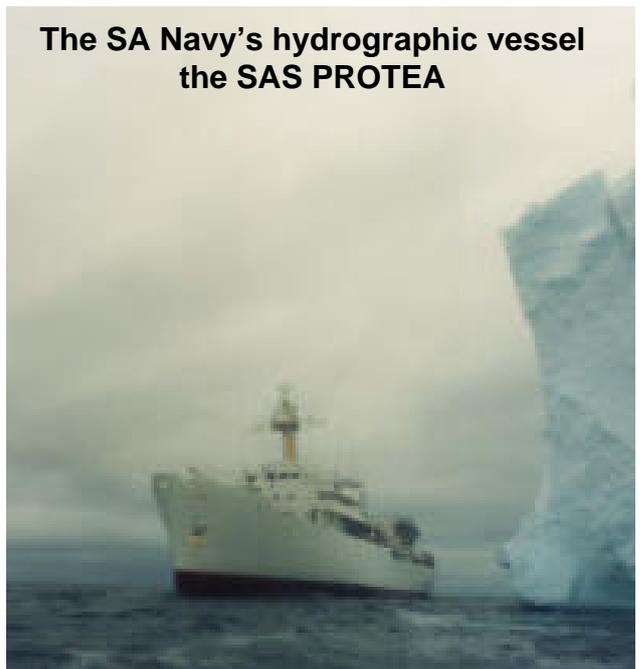
### **Presence of Neutrals**

An important feature of the military maritime environment is the fact that, in terms of international maritime law, the seas belong to everyone, and this may complicate issues, specifically relating to the maritime battlespace management, during periods of escalated tension or belligerence. It is therefore important to develop and implement internationally regulated rules of engagement to ensure the safety of neutrals.

### **International Maritime Obligations**

South Africa also has various obligations - such as to its neighbours in the Southern African Development Community who rely on the Republic of South Africa's ports as a gateway for their trade. South Africa is also a member of a number of maritime organisations which, in turn, result in various maritime obligations to be met.

**The SA Navy's hydrographic vessel  
the SAS PROTEA**



An example is the responsibility it has for navigation charts, coastal navigational and navigational area (NAVAREA) warnings in her assigned areas in terms of the membership of the International Maritime Organisation and the International Hydrographic Organisation. South Africa also has a massive search and rescue area of responsibility of some 5,57 million square nautical miles (17,2 million square kilometres) — vested in the country by the conventions of the International Civil Aviation Organisation. Furthermore, the Republic of South Africa is a subscriber to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and a signatory to both the Convention on Safety of Life at Sea and the Antarctic Treaty having maintained an active manned base on the Antarctic mainland for research purposes since 1960.

The SA Navy also has a number of Navy-to-Navy Memoranda of Understanding, forged with those maritime nations with which special partnerships have been developed and serviced.

### **International Requirements**

South Africa seeks to participate in UN and AU sanctioned peacekeeping and general disaster relief missions. To date the SA Navy has not had suitable ship platforms to provide maritime forces to participate and enhance the capability of the maritime component participating in the missions. The new Frigates, however, provide the means whereby the SA Navy could participate in the UN operations.



A combined force of German and South African warships exercising off the South African coast

### **CONCLUSION**

As a maritime nation, South Africa needs to be able to protect its maritime assets, in times of peace and war. Continuous access to the sea is essential for our nation's and that of our neighbours' survival, development and future prosperity. Significant contributions to the general economy are made from the various resources that are found in South Africa's EEZ.

The SA Navy, as the maritime service of the Department of Defence, is responsible for maritime defence and the associated security. The spectrum of tasks required of the SA Navy range from those involving conflict – fighting at sea in times of hostilities – to those of a more benign nature, such as fishery patrols, search and rescue, military diplomacy, et cetera. The foremost requirement is to ensure that South Africa remains a stable and secure country for its citizens to live in.

Further afield, South Africa, and therefore the SA Navy is committed to ensuring peace and stability within the region and the continent by being part of the solution to Africa's maritime security problems. This means that the SA Navy will provide assistance in various forms to ensure safety, security and stability in Africa. The above means that the range of tasks required to be performed demands that the Navy has the ability to effectively operate on, below and above the sea surface, using a variety of ships, submarines and joint air assets. This will mean that levels of interoperability with other regional, continental and international navies must be developed and exercised. The capabilities inherent in the equipment and systems, combined with the professionalism displayed by the men and women of the SA Navy, ensure that the SA Navy is able to meet its Constitutional mandate.

Internationally, the SA Navy is recognised as being one of the best 'medium Regional Force Projection navies in the world. This has advantages for the region and its continent and must be used to the continent's advantage, as maritime knowledge and expertise is exchanged among the regional, SADC and other continental navies, to the mutual benefit of all.