

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Canadian policy has set out to assist democratic transformation and development in South Africa. At times imaginative, though not always consistent, it went beyond punitive measures and boycotts in the battle against Apartheid. In reality though, Canada's intervention has made little difference to South African developments. However it has contributed to Canadian self-definition and international credibility.

In three main parts, this analysis (1) sketches the historical record of Canadian policy toward South Africa. It outlines some of the controversies and speculates about the functions and background of a surprisingly activist policy by a conservative government. (2) It probes the competing political forces in the ongoing South African transition, assesses the prospect of democratic success or failure and describes the ambiguous impact of Canadian efforts on the recipients in the white and black communities. (3) In the light of this critical evaluation, the study reflects on possible changes, new foci, or even withdrawal of Canadian involvement from the Southern Africa region of the post-apartheid era.

The study represents a critical think-piece rather than advocacy of a particular policy. It argues that developments in South Africa are widely misunderstood, even by informed policy makers. Public opinion abroad applies popular stereotypes of violent tribalism or false colonial analogies. The personality cult surrounding Mandela and the accolades accorded de Klerk have romanticized a conflictual relationship and personalized it into a literal black-versus-white conflict. Yet Mandela and de Klerk need to be demystified in order to achieve a sober assessment of the