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Jan - Sorry about the spelling mistakes  
- Roddy

## THOUGHTS ON THE NUSAS JULY FESTIVAL PAPER

BRIEF: BUILDING PEOPLE'S POWER: MILITARISATION

Paper should investigate the following areas:

- The role of the military in a future South Africa,
- The needs and functions of a future defence force,
- Future manpower procurement policy for the defence force,

TIME: 1 1/2 hours.

PROPOSED STRUCTURE

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### INTRODUCTION

Since the February 2nd opening of parliament speech by State President De Klerk, the key catch phrase in South African politics from the far left to the far right has been "negotiations". While some groups have argued that negotiations are the greatest compromise that can occur in South Africa today → in terms of the needs of their constituency, the vast majority of political organisations and parties recognise that in some form or another negotiating and dialogue are the key elements to a peaceful, prosperous and secure future for South Africa. In the new political climate many people are now debating and discussing the restructuring of institutions of the state that have up until now, and possibly for some time hence, carried out the policies of white minority rule and partition. Perhaps the greatest and most pronounced indication of the real possibility of change has been the extraordinary debate around what a future defence force would look like both in terms of policy and practicalities. I say extraordinary because for the past 10 years it has been the SADF who has developed and spearheaded the state's programme that

has <sup>with</sup> ~~had~~ aimed to erase the support, legitimacy and very existence of extra parliamentary and liberation organisations.

The purpose of this paper is to tentatively bring together the various strands of debate and sources of information on the possibility of transforming the security forces from an institution that has consistently defended white rule and <sup>the</sup> interests to an institution that represents and defends the needs of South Africa as a whole.

In pursuing this aim the paper will examine what changes have occurred already within the security establishment, and in particular the SADF, tempered with an examination of what has not changed. The paper then turns to an examination of the more specific task of restructuring the SADF to reflect the needs, policies and ideals of a new South Africa. In particular the paper will draw on some of the conclusions and points of debate that emerged at a recent IDASA hosted conference in Lusaka between an SADF linked delegation and MK. Finally the paper presents a series of tentative suggestions and ideas on the question of the future role of a defence force in relation to firstly security needs and secondly staffing and recruitment and the possibility or not of a future system of conscription.

#### CHANGES WITHIN THE SECURITY FORCES

Mark Philips in a recent article in the Daily Mail makes an observation on how the political climate has almost swapped the sides of the fence of what is politically acceptable and unacceptable in South African politics today. He refers to the return of Chris Hanj, number 2 in MK and his picture in the newspapers and he openly walks the streets of Johannesburg,

juxtaposed with the release of Peit Rudolf's bizarre video and R50 000 being placed on his head. Clearly the "nice and nasty" face of resistance to the South African state has changed dramatically.

The most fundamental change has been the disbanding of the National Security Management System and the downgraded role of the State Security Council. This change has marked the overt end of counter revolutionary warfare and the reimposition of civilian rule within the state apparatus.

Within the SADF the "know your enemy" courses have been removed from the basic training programme and the evidence lead at the Harms Commission of Enquiry has lead to internal tensions between the more "professional" militarists such as General Geldenhuys and the "hawkish" Magnus Malan.

The defence budget has been cut by an effective 16% with more reductions in the pipeline as well as a reduction in the development and production of military goods by Armscor.

National service has been reduced by a year and several commando units in the Free State, Transvaal and Northern Natal are being disarmed, in that commando members will no longer be able to keep their rifle at home. → Political settlement in Namibia.

#### WHAT STILL NEEDS TO CHANGE?

While much has been made of De Klerk's reform moves, both at home and overseas, it is clear than the real process of disbanding apartheid has only just begun.

The SADF still remains one of the most segregated institutions in the country. there is still an all white call up, and all white commando and citizen force membership. This is the most

important sense in which the SADF remains a political institution in that its officer corps from Colonels upwards are all white and that nearly all white South African males have some experience of the military and war training.

While the SADF has been a far less visible force in the townships, the operation of troops in Natal is seen in some areas to be problematic, particularly in the deployment of 32 battalion. There is strong evidence that the CCB is not simply being maintained in an administrative capacity, but has been involved in active operations, such as the murder of the Chand family in Botswana and the attack on Farther Lapsey in Harare.

While the National Security Management System has been disbanded, new structure of military control over civilian affairs appear to have developed such as the emergence of the Alexandra Advisory Committee which consists of the same people who were members of the Alex JMC.

Finally in following the statements of Magnus Malan, while he is no longer talking the words of war that characterised his outbursts in the past, Malan is clearly out of step with the state's reform moves.

While the effect of De Klerk's new approach to politics has been felt within the SADF, much still exists of the old order. In particular the leadership of the SADF and the ideology of the institution has been so enmeshed within policies that have attempted to maintain apartheid in all its forms, that for the SADF to turn the full circle that is required of it may be a drawn out and painful process.

— once De Klerk has achieved hegemony in the nats + greater support among <sup>4</sup> ~~constituency~~ — may then try to take the security forces. — start — increases in pay

## THE IDASA CONFERENCE

I now want briefly turn to some of the debates and discussions of the IDASA conference. In discussing the conference it is important that the momentous significance of the conference is not lost. While the SADF did not allow any of its permanent force members to attend, several of the South african delegates had and continue to have strong links with the SADF and security establishment more generally, such as Jakkie Cilliers previously a member of the secretariat of the State security Council and now a private consultant, Major General Wally Black former Director General: Operations of the SADF, Prof. Mike Hough of the Institute of strategic Studies in Pretoria, as well as senior officers in the Venda, Transkie and Ciskei defence forces.

The conference was the first time that previous enemies were able to discuss areas of common concern as well as place the issue of the integration of the SADF and MK on the national political agenda, an idea which four months ago would have been unheard of. Most importantly the conference was effectively able to demystify MK and debunk the idea of a split between the hawks and doves in the ANC as well as to state clearly that moves towards a post apartheid South Africa require the restructuring of every institution of the state even the security establishment.

In follow up meetings senior SADF members appear to be in agreement that the integration of armies is an inevitability. What is stressed however is that the time framework of this process must be set by the political structures and not the military.

Briefly, the conference came up with seven principles for a new defence force,

- \* It would be non racial
- \* Its primary role would be the protection of South Africa's territorial integrity.
- \* It would uphold democratic values and be accountable to parliament.
- \* Its appointment and recruitment would ultimately be based on merit alone.
- \* It would adhere to the Geneva Convention and all other applicable international treaties and agreements governing the conduct of war.
- \* South Africa would be committed to the development of a nuclear free zone in Africa and surrounding oceans.
- \* The new defence force would be a professional organisation with high standards of efficiency.

The nuts and bolts of a proposed new defence force would be that it would contain air force, navy, medical, army (both counter insurgency and conventional) and special forces. The size of the SADF would be dramatically reduced to around 50 000 with the bantustan armies, MK and other liberation armies (if they chose to) and the SADF providing the main source of membership. The army would be a professional one with a volunteer reserve and conscription and the commando system would be scrapped or phased out. In the post negotiations phase the new army may well develop new symbols and new uniforms as well as embark on an intensive training programme to ensure that the army at all levels reflects the nature of South Africa's population. This process could well

be a drawn out one as for example it take approximately eight years to train a jet pilot and as long to train a submarine officer.

The conference had no decision making powers or mandate but the conclusions and conseus reached was beyond expectations. I think the above information gives us some idea of what a new army could look like even if we can not give a time frame and define in too much detail how we get to such a situation.

What is clear is that for some time in a port apartheid South Africa, MK troops and even bantustan soldiers will be in a subordinate position to other members of the new defence force because of their training which by necessity has been mainly restricted to insurgency tactics. Because of this, it becomes essential that the new army is governed effectively and tightly by parliament.

Also both the SADF and MK will have to embark on a concerted programme of reconciliation and tolerance aimed at reducing the antagonism between soldiers to ensure an effective internal working relationship.

#### THE FUTURE SECURITY NEEDS OF A POST APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA.

After discussing, some may argue on an abstract level, the possible structure of a post apartheid army the paper turns to possible roles and functions of such an army in the protection and defence of the new state.

In this section i want to approach this question under <sup>+</sup>three sub themes:

- a. The SADF's view of future security needs.
- b. The possibility of internal armed decent.

c. The possibility of inheriting conflict <sup>from</sup> the sub continent.

d. The possibility of threats from other neighbouring states.

a. Several papers recently presented by SADF ideologues indicate that sections of the total onslaught view of South Africa's position within the sub-continent still prevails within SADF thinking. What the SADF appears to have done is to keep part of the equation but change the variables. Now instead of SWAPO, the Soviet Union and the ANC/SACP threat one has the threat of India and AIDS.

India is regarded as a possible threat to the republic because of its territorial and neo-colonial interests in the India Ocean → area as well as the upgrading in its armed forces both in terms → of person power and weapons development. The SADF regard India's military expansions as an indication of its desire to be a regional power and with the restriction of China to the North, Burma and Vietnma to the east, and Pakistan to the west, the SADF regard India's expansion into the Indian Ocean and east coast of Africa a distinct possibility.

Aids and a more general decline in social and political structures in nations north of south Africa's boarders present the SADF with the second and possibly more realistic threat to the state which could continue for many years to come. As Jakkie Cilliers state, "In a sub-content facing rampant population growth and disease, the South African economy will not be able to provide in the minimum needs of its own people as well as in those of the hundreds of thousands of refugees already fleeing from the effects of their own problems".

b. South africa is already witnessing the rise of right wing



militarist militants in the form of organisations such as the AWB, the BV in Welkom, the HNP and others as well as actions by individuals such as Piet "skeit" Rudolf. While these actions have been small in comparison to right wing groupings in other countries such as El Salvador and the Philippines, South Africa's right wing displays an enormous potential for growth. 1 million South Africans (most of them white) own approximately 3 million guns. Nearly every white South African male has experienced of at least two years of military training, particularly in COIN operations. The statements of the far right indicate a total terror of the ANC in particular and black South Africans in general as well as a complete commitment to maintaining white property, privilege and power.

Within this context it would be fair to assume that the far right wing will pose a threat to the process of negotiations that South African political groupings are entering. More particularly to the topic of this paper, the far right could well pose an severe challenge to the security of a post apartheid state. An example of the possibility of right wing destabilisation was seen in Zimbabwe during 1980/81. In this situation, right wing elements, mainly those connected with the security forces, planned a coup which was to take place just after the results of the elections which saw Mugabie and Zanu PF being swept to power. It was only through last minute sensitive discussions that the coup attempt was called of. Right wingers bombed various government buildings and symbols of the new Zimbabwe such as the Arch of Freedom outside Harare as well as destroying a third of Zimbabwe's air force at Thornhill Air Base. If South Africa had not been

prepared to welcome so many disillusioned and reactionary white Zimbabweans, the spectre of right wing attacks could have developed into a serious threat to the security of the state.

I believe that it is the right wing that will offer the greatest security threat to a new South Africa and one may well find the SADF and SAP involved in a counter insurgency programme both in the rural and urban areas to deal with right wing terror.

Another possible area of conflict could well be the far left and africanist groupings who, having lost out in, or ignored, the process of creating a new non racial state could turn to some form of military resistance to destabilise what they regard as a unjust and illegitimate settlement. While the PAC and BCMA have had little effect up to now in their campaigns of armed struggle, they may well find an increased support base as the a new government struggles to provide for the expectations of the majority.

Finally, the ongoing conflict in Natal may well be inherited by a new South African state and troops and the SAP could find themselves playing a peacekeeping role as a lasting political settlement to the conflict in that area is developed.

c. The situation in Namibia and Zimbabwe show how differing approaches have been made to the problem of civil war conflicts occurring in bordering countries. In Zimbabwe, the army was sent to Mozambique on the request of FRELIMO to protect the Bira pipeline and railway link from RENAMO sabotage. This has now resulted in over 10 000 troops being tied down in an essentially guard duty situation with RENAMO now mounting raids against settlements in the eastern Highlands of Zimbabwe.

Namibia has recently turned down a request from the MPLA government in Angola for MPLA troops to be based in northern Namibia and therefor attack the unita stronghold of the south eastern section of Angola. The Namibian decision was not particularly well received by the Angolans who now feel somewhat betrayed by the SWAPO government. While one may claim that the Namibian government is forgetting its history and the support that the Angolan government gave SWAPO in the 23 years of its bush war against the SADF, the fact is that the fledgling Namibia government cannot afford to import the conflict of Angola into its territory.

In a post apartheid South Africa, if political solutions have not been found for the civil war situations in Angola and Mozambique, there may well be a request for South African troops to participate alongside the local armies in the battle against Unita and Renamo. Consideration of these requests may well be based on more than simply solidarity factors and the historical support of the ANC by front line states.

d. In considering the final scenario of possible future threats to the security of a new South Africa by neighbouring states i think the greatest amount of crystal ball gazing is required. I think it is sufficient to state that a future South Africa may enjoy a cordial and close relationship with all its neighbours or that this situation may change to one of antagonism with certain countries on our boarders. In either scenario or any other the need of a well trained and well motivated defence force with COIN training and special forces capabilities will most probable be a feature of South Africa's defence needs for

some time to come.

### FUTURE CONSCRIPTION SCENARIOS.

Statements against military conscription. - Hani - Mbeki - IDASA conference.

Informed from a recognition that conscription

- a. would be difficult to implement.
- b. Costly
- c. military conscription produces un motivated troops.
- d. Contry to the defence needs of a new south Africa.

Other scenarios would be -

Conscription for community service of all youth of section of youth. - Issues to consider would be the need to provide stable long term employment - effective use of acquired skills - size and cost of management -

Prid Pro quo relationship between university and tech students with specific skills who would work for one or two years after their studies as state employees - law students as public defenders - medial students as rural doctors - engineers and architects in upgrading and development projects - teachers in schools.

Peace Corps idea of volunteer programme for longer duration working on specific projects inside the country.

### CONCLUSION

The paper has attempted to examine some of the debates and issues that should be considered when examining the SADF and the effect that the process towards democracy and non racialism will have on it as well as the possible future nature, structure, function

and manpower procurement policy of a new defence force.

I think one of the few concluding remarks that can be made is that the SADF and other security structures must be examined in as much rigour when considering a process of democratisation as say the education and health and social welfare systems. At the same time we have to examine the SADF with a realisation of the role it has played in the past and the raw fact that the SADF is militarily vastly different in size, strength and weaponry to MK. In this situation it will be the political strength of the ANC rather than the military strength of MK that will determine the nature and function of a post apartheid army and the question of integration of armies.

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