

SECURITY FORCES

The future of security and defence in South Africa

Papers by

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IDASA OCCASIONAL PAPERS

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THE FUTURE OF SECURITY AND DEFENCE IN SOUTH AFRICA

Security Forces in Transition
by Gavin Cawthra

The Military in a Future South Africa
by Jakkie Cilliers and Paul-Bolko Mertz

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THE SECURITY FORCES IN TRANSITION

Gavin Cawtrha

(The papers in this publication were commissioned by Idasa from participants in the conference on "The Future of Security and Defence in South Africa" held in Lusaka, May 1990)

The creation of a climate of peace is vital to the negotiated transition to a democratic South Africa and has been prioritised by the government and the ANC in different ways. The present and future role of the security forces is high on the political agenda.

The government insisted that the question of violence, including the ANC's armed struggle, be discussed at its first formal meeting with the ANC in May 1990. In the Groote Schuur Minute issued after this meeting both parties agreed "on a common commitment towards the resolution of the existing climate of violence and intimidation from whatever quarter". (1)

The ANC suspended its armed struggle at the second meeting in Pretoria in August where "both delegations expressed serious concern about the general level of violence, intimidation and unrest in the country". (2)

Violence "from whatever quarter" was thus identified early in the negotiations process as a major impediment to the transition to democracy. Since the suspension of the ANC's armed struggle, the spotlight has been focussed on the violence of the state's security forces. For the ANC, state violence has been one of the biggest threats to the peace process, while the government has argued that the ANC's commitment to suspend its armed struggle should include an end to mass protests, as these can lead to violence. The ANC has strongly rejected this and made it clear at the time that the suspension of armed struggle did not in any way affect its right to peaceful protest.

The first indication of the extent of ANC concern at state violence came in September 1990 after the movement's national executive had considered extensive evidence of involvement by the security forces in the spread of violence in the Transvaal. The ANC said that "unless the government is seen to be taking appropriate measures to apprehend and prosecute the perpetrators of this violence, it will have to assume full responsibility for derailing the peace process". (3)

Similar statements have been made repeatedly since then, and continuing state violence was one of the main issues behind the decision of the ANC's national consultative conference in December 1990 to review its commitment to peaceful change and negotiations if the situation had not improved by April 1991.

The steps taken by the government during 1990 to create a climate conducive to negotiations, including the unbanning of organisations and the release of some political prisoners, took place during some of the worst political violence ever seen in South Africa. Between the unbanning of the ANC on 2 February 1990 and the end of September 1990 at least 265 people were killed and 2 988 injured by the police, according to monitoring by the Human Rights Commission. These figures exclude casualties in Natal and those from the conflict in the Transvaal in August and September which left up to 1 000 dead. (4)

There is little evidence that violence by the security forces has been effectively checked since then, and they have been accused by the ANC, Cosatu, the churches and other organisations of fanning the flames of conflict.

Monitoring groups reported violent police actions throughout 1990 – actions which often provoked counter-violence and led to

local cycles of unrest and repression. For example, unrest in the northern suburbs of Port Elizabeth in August in which nearly 50 people were killed was apparently sparked when police forcibly broke up a peaceful demonstration by residents protesting over rent. (5)

Elsewhere, the dispersal of gatherings declared illegal under the Internal Security Act – although often peaceful – also led to clashes.

Police have shown little willingness to apply "minimum force" tactics, often using teargas, rubber bullets, shotguns, pistols and rifles against unarmed civilians. The inevitable result is the same process that has scarred South Africa since the mid-1970s: deaths and injuries, subsequent protests and political funerals, further clashes and further deaths. The army, although less involved in day-to-day actions, has been drawn in as a result of the government's continuing policy of deploying troops to support police in urban areas, albeit on a smaller scale than in previous years. In September 1990, for example, 11 people were killed by soldiers who fired into a crowd in Sebokeng. (6)

The actions of the security forces underline the need for urgent changes in day-to-day deployments, operational instructions and tactics, training and use of equipment if the pattern of violent conflict is to be broken.

Such operational changes will not in themselves be sufficient to create the climate of peaceful and open political activity so necessary to the transition to democracy. The security forces do not enjoy the confidence of the majority of South Africans as they have been closely associated with the enforcement and maintenance of apartheid. The so-called securocrats engineered the massive repression of the State of Emergency and sidelined civilian authorities during the 1980s. The SADF carried out an aggressive regional policy, maintaining the South African occupation of Namibia, invading and occupying parts of Angola and destabilising the entire Southern African region. When the famines resulting from the wars are taken into account, this destabilisation left one and a half million people dead. (7)

Framework for transformation

A framework for the transformation of the security forces was drawn up at the Idasa conference on "The Future of Security and Defence in South Africa" held in Lusaka in May. This conference was attended by senior ANC and Umkhonto we Sizwe officials, as well as by SADF Citizen Force officers, retired senior SADF commanders, bantustan military officers, researchers and others concerned about military questions, including representatives of the End Conscription Campaign. A high level of agreement was reached on most of the issues relating to the future of the security forces and their role in the period of transition to non-racial society.

The conference agreed that a future South African defence force should be non-racial, should uphold democratic values and be accountable to parliament, should be about half the size of the present force and should be a professional rather than conscripted force. It would adhere to the Geneva Conventions and be committed to developing a nuclear free zone in Africa.

Immediate steps were identified. They included a reduction in defence expenditure, a reduction in Citizen Force and commando commitments, the declaration of a ceasefire between MK and the SADF, the reintegration into the SADF of bantustan armies, the establishment of a joint commission to examine the integration of MK, and the introduction of affirmative-action programmes and political information and education programmes.

A commission on internal security set out parallel steps to be taken with regard to the police, although its conclusions were not endorsed with the same degree of consensus as the recommendations on the military. The commission called for community monitoring of police actions, improved crowd control and minimum-force training for the police, the restriction of personal weapons and a move towards community-based policing. (8)

The SADF delegates at the conference attended in their private capacities, and Minister of Defence Magnus Malan opposed their presence. He publicly rejected the recommendations of the conference, especially its call for the integration of MK.

Top SADF generals have echoed Malan's dismissive views on the Lusaka recommendations. In an interview in July last year, General Meiring, head of the army, ruled out any need for restructuring the SADF, claiming that it was "a completely balanced force". He did, however, concede the need for "a more cost-effective force". (9)

Similar views were expressed by the incoming head of the SADF, General "Kat" Liebenberg, in August. (10)

Despite these statements, there have been reports that the government has accepted that at some level, and at some stage, there has to be integration of the various military forces in South Africa, including MK. The Lusaka conference set out a detailed programme of action to prepare for integration, including the declaration of a ceasefire, a process of political sensitising in both armies, the reintegration of bantustan armies, the commencement of affirmative action and improvements in the training of black soldiers, the appointment of MK commanders into SADF command posts, the return of MK forces in an organised way and the provision of facilities for them, and integration of demobilisation of other armed forces, leading to a new defence force with a new name, symbols and uniforms.

If the principle of integration has been accepted, there is no evidence of practical steps being taken by the SADF towards this objective. The only noticeable change has been the abolition of the "Know your enemy" courses in the SADF, which could be regarded as a first step towards "political sensitising". General Malan has repeatedly referred disparagingly to MK, inferring that its training is inferior and that its troops would be incapable of operating SADF weaponry. While it is true that there are major differences between the two forces on all levels, MK has made it known that selected officers have been receiving training appropriate for the conventional armies, and it is evident from previous MK operations that in many cases a high degree of military proficiency has been attained by some cadres. A more fundamental problem is that of the role of politics in the two armies – MK has always regarded itself as a political force in which political commissars play an important role, while the SADF has adhered, at least in theory, to the British model of a division between political authority and the institutions of the state including the armed forces.

There is also the question of numbers. Where integration has taken place in other similar circumstances, such as in Namibia and Zimbabwe, the liberation movements' armed forces have roughly equalled or even exceeded the numerical strength of the old armed forces. The strength of MK has not been disclosed, but most analysts estimate it at perhaps 10 000, and not more than 20 000, compared to the hundreds of thousands of troops available to the SADF. However, the Permanent Force, which would form the core of any new army, is much smaller – around 60 000.

Integration is above all a political matter – and is clearly essential to a democratic transformation. General Malan, who declared in October last year that there could be "no question" of integration, did however show some sign of movement on the issue soon afterwards when he extended an invitation to MK commander Joe Modise for a mutual inspection of the two armies' respective military facilities.

Civilian accountability: cleaning up the security forces

The Lusaka conference emphasised the need for the security forces to be brought under civilian control and to be democratically accountable. This is vital not only for the future stability of South Africa but to ensure that the "securocrats" are on board as the ship of state makes its way through the uncharted of negotiation.

During the 1980s the SADF and police virtually became a law unto themselves as they implemented their militaristic, all-embracing "total strategy". Parliament was not consulted – and probably not the cabinet either – about major strategic and military initiatives, such as the decision to impose States of Emergencies, or to sabotage the Eminent Persons Group negotiations initiative in 1986 by attacking neighbouring states. Nor did parliament authorise the wars against Angola, Mozambique and our other neighbours which immersed the entire region in bloodshed.

The results of more than a decade of rule by the securocrats should dismiss any arguments in favour of military authority. By the end of the 1980s, South Africa was riven by seemingly unresolvable strife escalating into civil war, its economy was sinking, it was internationally isolated, its overextended security forces were fighting in wars they could not possibly win hundreds of miles away, and civil society in the entire region was disintegrating. This was the legacy of the total strategy visited upon us by the securocrats, not, as Lt-General Holtzhausen has argued, that the SADF's "Counter Revolutionary Warfare doctrine (was) able to introduce government officials and politicians to the necessity that in South Africa the political system had to change". (11)

The presidency of De Klerk has been taken as an indication that civilian authority has been restored, but the signs are mixed. Early announcements of the death of the National Management System, the instrument of military influence over the state, turned out to be exaggerated. Major parts of the system are still in place, although it has been sanitised by renaming it the National Co-ordinating Mechanism and increasing the extent of civilian participation. The system still functions in secrecy and without any apparent accountability, and its work centres on police-dominated security committees. (12)

A further indication of the continuing influence of the securocrats is De Klerk's failure to clean out personnel associated with illegal and clandestine political activities, and his tardy and unenthusiastic attempts to deal with the Civil Co-operation Bureau and other hit squads. The Harms Commission, which was set up after a public outcry to investigate the involvement of the Security Police and the SADF in an assassination, was restricted in its brief to events inside South Africa – while most of the CCB's 200 or more "projects" were external. Harms only scratched the surface, dealing with half a dozen or so cases. He himself concluded that: "The commission has been unable to achieve one of its main purposes, namely to restore public confidence in a part of the state administration". (13) That the Harms Commission was a whitewash was confirmed in January 1991 when Justice Krieger found that General Neethling had no basis on which to bring defamation charges against *Vrye Weekblad* for alleging that he had provided poison for one of the police death squad operations. This judgement clearly contradicted the finding of the commission that the police were not involved in such activities.

The SADF chief directly responsible for the CCB have not been called to account. The CCB fell under the control of the

Special Forces directorate, an SADF structure controlling the reconnaissance commandos and closely linked to Unita and Renamo. Although Harms found the CCB to have been involved in illegal activities, apparently sanctioned by the SADF, no heads have rolled. Lt-General Liebenberg, who commanded Special Forces during some of the most active years of the CCB, has been promoted to chief of the SADF. General Malan has not merely survived as defence minister, he has been allowed to make bellicose and outspoken attacks on the ANC. (14)

The government has apparently not taken any steps to de-activate the Special Forces directorate, which, in conjunction with Military Intelligence, should bear full responsibility for the CCB. Special Forces has also been deeply compromised by its association with the terrorist actions of Renamo and its sabotage of the Nkomati Accord signed with Mozambique in 1984. There is now extensive evidence of its involvement in training vigilante forces, including Inkatha, and the fingers pointing to a "third force" behind the spread of Inkatha violence in the Transvaal are aimed at Special Forces and Military Intelligence. Again, the government has failed to act on these accusations, and has refused an ANC proposal to set up a judicial commission of inquiry into the violence. (15)

The Harms Commission exonerated the SAP's Security Branch from involvement in illegal activities and assassinations. But the shortcomings of the commission left far too many questions unanswered. The security police have a reputation for brutality and violence: in virtually every case where detainees have been tortured or killed, the evidence has pointed to them. The branch has historically been oriented specifically towards the infiltration, disorganisation and destruction of the ANC and its allies. This was made explicit in the 1988 government White Paper on the police, although the 1990 version refers less specifically to "terrorist onslaughts" and "attempts by radicals to undermine law and order". (16)

There appear to have been no moves to reduce the size of the Security Branch after the legalisation of the ANC – indeed Brigadier Stadler declared in June last year that no cuts would be made. Whether the force has been retrained and reoriented to deal with recent political changes is unclear. (17)

The relationship between the ultra-right and elements of the CCB, the Security Branch and structures of the National Management System is additional cause for concern. Para-military right-wing groups have been associated with assassinations and extra-legal activities, and many of these groups make no secret of their preparations for a war in defence of white minority rule. Their links with the police are extensive – it is reliably believed that in the Transvaal 75 per cent of police are Conservative Party or AWB supporters. (18) The tolerance the government and its security forces have shown to the para-military activities of the right contrasts with its harsh treatment of ANC and Communist Party members engaged in military activities.

The record of clandestine, specialised units and the structures of the National Management System in carrying out disruptive if not illegal actions in the name of "counter-revolutionary warfare" must raise suspicions about continuing activities. Until the secret structures are abolished – or at least opened to scrutiny and made accountable – civilian control over the security forces will not be established.

Other steps also have to be taken – for example the establishment of a proper multi-party parliamentary committee on security and defence. Due to the highly restricted representation in parliament, the establishment of adequate extra-parliamentary watchdog structures is also essential. The ANC has called for an independent review body to investigate complaints against the security forces and recommend action. (19)

Defence expenditure

The 1990 defence budget, introduced in March, showed a slight increase of 1,3 per cent over the previous year, but given inflation, represented a cut of over 10 per cent. (20) Some units had been disbanded and armaments projects scrapped earlier in the year. (21) And in September a further 16 army and air force units were disbanded. (22) A five per cent cut is expected in the 1991 budget.

Given the end of the war in Angola and Namibia, and the overall squeeze on government spending, these reductions cannot be taken as a decisive act of demilitarisation. SADF chiefs have themselves stated that they merely form part of a government rationalisation drive.

At least half the defence budget for 1990 was earmarked for the Special Defence Account, which is not subject to public audit and is used to acquire armaments and to fund covert projects like the Civil Co-operation Bureau. The cuts have resulted in the arms production company Armscor cancelling 11 weapon and equipment projects. (23) Armscor's problems have been compounded by the local economic slump and the global decline of the arms market. (24) Nearly a third of Armscor employees were laid off during 1989 and 1990. (25)

However, the company has continued to launch new products, and there have been no indications that the most expensive of these, the fighter aircraft code-named Cava, has been cancelled. Armscor is almost certainly committed to contracts with Israel and possibly with Chile to develop the Cava, described as a multi-role twin-engined jet fighter to replace the Mirages and their upgrades, the Cheetahs. (26) If the experiences of other countries are anything to go by, this project will entail the commitment of a significant proportion of the defence budget and its final cost will probably run into billions of rands.

There is also nothing to suggest that Armscor has abandoned its efforts to develop, again almost certainly with Israel, a medium-range ballistic missile capable of taking nuclear or chemical warheads, which was reported by the CIA to have been tested in the middle of 1989 and again in November 1990. (27) Pretoria has still not signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. But, threatened with suspension from the International Atomic Energy Agency, Foreign Minister Pik Botha has said that South Africa will sign if all other states of the region do so first. As these countries have no prospect whatsoever of developing nuclear weapons, and South Africa's capabilities are now beyond doubt, this can only be seen as a manoeuvre to prevent suspension from the IAEA. (28)

The Cava project is aimed at restoring South Africa's regional air superiority, lost during the Angola campaigns of 1987-88. The ballistic missile project is clearly also aimed at altering the regional balance of power. Both projects will have little application in a future South Africa which hopes to live in peace with its neighbours. Weapons will in any case be able to be obtained far more cheaply on the open market once the arms embargo is lifted when a representative and non-racial government is installed.

Armscor has made some attempt to move over to civilian production, but the one example which has been cited – making cricket bats – can hardly be taken seriously given Armscor's high-tech orientation. With South Africa's urgent development needs, it is vital that the money frozen up in the arms industry is freed for housing, education and other social projects.

Reduction of Citizen Force and commando commitments

With the end of the war in Angola and Namibia, the period of conscription was halved, for both national servicemen and Citizen Force members faced with further "camps". There have

been no public indications that the government intends phasing out these structures – the new head of the SADF, General “Kat” Liebenberg, is reported to be in favour of upgrading and improving the Citizen Force. (29) In some areas, however, stricter control over the issuing of weapons to commandos has been implemented. (30)

The future of both the Citizen Force and the commandos hinges on conscription. The present system of conscription, which involves only white males, is inappropriate for a situation in which there is a move towards a non-racial government.

Furthermore, conscription depends for its effectiveness on the threat of punishment – and many of those refusing conscription do so on political grounds and should thus qualify for amnesty. It is difficult to see how the government can be expected to indemnify conscripts for previous acts of refusal and then imprison them when it calls them up again, and the problem will grow as exiled conscientious objectors return.

There are also compelling economic arguments against conscription, which has been largely responsible for the brain drain and exacts a heavy toll on the most skilled strata of the workforce.

The government’s Van Loggerenberg Commission, which has been considering the future of the SADF’s manpower policy for some time, is expected to make recommendations on conscription. Early indications suggested that it would recommend the phasing out of conscription. (31) However, public statements by SADF generals show no indication of preparations for such a move. The SADF Chief of Staff, Lt-General Meyer even declared in an interview that conscription might be necessary until the year 2020, and that it should be extended to blacks. (32)

Internal security

Both De Klerk and Minister of Law and Order Adriaan Vlok have publicly pronounced a changing role from the police. The police, they have said, should be less involved in political repression and should be redirected to combatting crime. In an interview published in May, Vlok noted that “when people gathered in the past for a meeting or a protest march, it was illegal. It was easy for the police to stamp it out as quickly as possible...Now we still have to be present, to keep a low profile and watch things develop. It is very difficult to draw the line – to know when to interfere with the proceedings”. (33)

Unfortunately, many meetings are still illegal. In terms of the Internal Security Act, outdoor meetings are still banned and permission has to be obtained. Often a meeting is of a spontaneous nature, or the organisers do not apply for permission, or the magistrate refuses to authorise it. The police are then empowered to “stamp it out as quickly as possible”, as Vlok puts it.

As if this were not bad enough, the government has lifted the State of Emergency only to use the “unrest areas” provisions of the Public Safety Act to impose local emergencies provisions on a roving basis around the country. These provisions give virtually unchecked powers to the police to detain people, impose curfews and other restrictions, break up meetings and use force. (34) As long as the enabling legislation exists, police are effectively given the green light to use violence against political demonstrations.

The picture Vlok paints of police keeping a low profile and merely monitoring developments may be true of showpiece, authorised rallies, but in countless incidents throughout the country a different pattern has emerged. The Goldstone Commission which investigated the killings at Sebokeng in March 1990 found, for example, that police had opened fire without warning, using a variety of inappropriate weapons which inevitably resulted in deaths and injuries. (35) Similar incidents happened at Rammulotsi in April (36), at Thabong in May (37), at Mamelodi in July (38), in Khayelitsha in October (39) and so on.

Vlok has said that it is vital that there is more contact between the black community and the police. The Lusaka conference also addressed the urgent need for police-community liaison, noting that the Groote Schuur agreement between the government and the ANC earlier in the year had accepted the principle of “public intervention in policing”. The conference proposed measures including joint monitoring of police actions, the devolution of police powers to a local level, and the use of marshalls trained by the Mass Democratic Movement.

While there has been some contact between police and communities or representative organisations including the ANC, progress in establishing channels of communication and liaison has been slow. Often this happens only when people have been killed or injured. For example, it was only after two people had been killed when police attacked a demonstration in central Johannesburg on 17 November that the police and organisers of the meeting, the Civic Associations of Southern Transvaal, agreed to establish channels of communication. The whole incident could probably have been avoided through proper communication: the magistrate refused permission for the march, but this was communicated to the organisers only on the evening before the event, too late for them to call it off. (40)

Some local channels of communication have been set up, such as those in Durban, Cape Town and Northern Natal. The Durban committee, which began work in August, draws together two SAP colonels and two ANC officials. The police raise incidents where they feel the ANC and its allied organisations have broken the spirit of the Groote Schuur and Pretoria Minutes by allegedly violent or intimidatory behaviour, and the ANC can do likewise. (41)

These limited channels have clearly not been adequate to bridge the gap between the police and the community, or to effectively reorient the police, as is reflected by the ongoing conflicts and the number of violent deaths at the hands of the police using lethal or potentially lethal weapons.

The ANC repeatedly accused sections of the police of deliberately stirring up violence, failing to act against vigilantes and using unnecessary force against its supporters. In September last year the National Executive Committee of the movement, acting on recommendations from the joint ANC-Cosatu working committee on violence, resolved to conduct a national campaign to achieve greater public accountability by the police and other security forces. This centred on demands for:

- The establishment of an independent review body, equipped with powers to recommend action, to investigate complaints against the police
- The establishment of a publicly devised code of conduct for all police personnel
- The demilitarisation of the police
- The limitation of police arms and weaponry to those adequate for normal law enforcement and the detection of crime. (42)

Such measures would go a long way towards breaking the cycle of violence. However, the SAP has shown little receptivity to the proposals.

Nelson Mandela and other ANC leaders have correctly stated that it is the responsibility of the police to stop violence, and that the spread of vigilante attacks into the Transvaal and other areas shows the police either to be inadequate to the task or points to a deliberate policy of allowing violence to spread. Using this as a pretext, the government authorised even heavier-handed police action during the second half of 1990, starting with “Operation Iron Fist” on the Witwatersrand in September. The police were further militarised and given permission to mount machine guns on their armoured vehicles – this was done later in Natal as well.

More resources have been allocated to the police – for example R814 million was drawn from emergency funds for the police in June last year and salaries increased by up to 80 per-

cent. (43)

But there have been no public indications that these resources have been used to restructure, retrain and reorient the police.

There have also been disclosures that the SAP is considering setting up a new specially-equipped riot or reaction unit. Given the compromised and unprofessional nature of the existing reaction units, and the need to broaden the base of police recruitment, this may seem a viable option. However, the idea was firmly rejected at the Lusaka conference, not least because experience in other countries has shown that such elite units quickly become militarised and tend to be used as political instruments.

Threat perception

As South Africa moves into a new era, it is vital that the old thinking changes. Both internal and external security have to be radically rethought as the rather paranoid fixations of "total strategy" are discarded.

It is, of course, in the nature of security establishments to protect their patch. If there is no shooting war, they will argue, on the basis of a "threat analysis", that war could break out at any time. If there is no discernible threat – as is increasingly the case in South Africa – they will argue that the world is unpredictable, that a threat could emerge and the country would be unable to rearm itself quickly enough. Such logic has permeated recent statements by SADF generals and strategic analysts. For example, Helmoed-Romer Heitman argues in *The Star* of 26 September 1990: "Where is the threat? There does not seem to be any immediate threat. But that is not the point..." (44)

No government, be it the ANC or anyone else, would want to leave South Africa defenceless. But the fact is that the SADF is by far the most powerful military machine in sub-Saharan Africa. The tilt in the balance in air superiority is not so much the result of an imbalance in aircraft as the increasing sophistication of ground-to-air defences, in Angola in particular. There is, as Heitman says, no threat of invasion against South Africa at present. Furthermore, a democratic government will not be subject to the restrictions of the arms embargo.

South Africa under a non-racial and representative government will almost certainly join the OAU and SADCC – or a similar reconstituted regional bloc – and this should provide the basis for regional security, if not progressive mutual demilitarisation. The conflict in Southern Africa has resulted mainly from the attempt to maintain white minority rule, and the antipathy between South Africa and its neighbours will largely disappear when the old order is swept away. South Africa should prepare now for a future of security through peace and development.

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THE MILITARY IN A FUTURE SOUTH AFRICA

Civil-military relations in a democracy

Jakkie Cilliers & Paul-Bolko Mertz

It is indeed, as Gavin Cawthra states in his paper, "vital that the old thinking changes". "Both internal and external security", writes Cawthra, "have to be radically rethought." Unfortunately his paper presents no indication of any progress in this regard. It really is time that the ideological blinkers and apartheid stereotypes that have been built up on both sides of the fence are examined with more rigour than simply trotting out worn-out stereotypes and clichés.

Instead of laboriously dissecting Cawthra's article and engaging in what will, no doubt, be a fruitless exchange of perceptions, we propose rather to examine various structural questions relating to only one of the institutions which Cawthra discusses, namely the military.

As point of departure we postulate the following:

- because of its size, expertise and sophistication the basis of any future armed force in a post-settlement South Africa is going to be that of the South African Defence Force.

- the nature of the transformation process in our society requires that the issue of preparing the SADF for service in a future democratic South Africa should occur parallel to that of changes in other areas of our society, and not follow thereon.

In pursuance of this approach, the first section of this article will comment on the requirement for military forces in a general manner before moving on to discuss various aspects of civil-military relations in a democracy.

The requirements and role of armed forces

The requirements for armed military forces often appear contradictory with the values and practice of multi-party democracy. In the liberal Western tradition, democracy is increasingly built upon a respect for human and individual rights and the basic premise that the state serves the individual and not the other way round. Military forces are often viewed as the antithesis of these values. Unfortunately history provides ample proof that the existence of armed forces is exactly necessary to enable a democracy or a number of democracies in alliance to exist in security and freedom for its citizens.

The purpose of armed forces in a democracy is deterrence against external aggression. When deterrence fails, the armed forces are there to defend the country. For that purpose adequate and sufficient armed forces are required, without which deterrence will in any case fail.

Armed forces should, therefore, be professionally equipped and trained, and be able to accomplish their mission credibly. Should sufficient effort not be directed towards this purpose the military cannot succeed in its primary task, deterrence. Once deterrence has failed the entire state, and therefore individual peace and freedom, is at risk. In a polarised society such as South Africa, virtual statehood may even be at risk. The fact that no imminent "threat" is readily available against which to mobilise or organise in case of attack is little reason to neglect the armed forces. In a democracy armed forces stand for the defence of certain values, institutions and practices. As such they should not present a threat to anyone except those external forces with hostile intent against the state. They exist not to be used.

The definition of the primary role of the military in society as

set out above is generally not controversial. However, armed forces traditionally also have a number of secondary tasks. The most prominent of these for a regional power such as South Africa in the post-bipolar international structure will hopefully be that of participation in regional and multi-national peace-keeping and disarmament actions, thereby enhancing both national and regional security. Other roles include support to civilian authority during national disasters and emergencies, and actions in support of the police in controlling internal unrest. It is this latter task which has created a virtual host of problems both in South Africa and elsewhere.

However much one would wish to exclude the military from actions in support of the police, such a role will always remain a secondary task of any military force. Once the police are unable to contain a crowd and mass violence, for whatever reason, they and the government have little option but to call upon the armed forces to assist in restoring some resemblance of order and stability.

The most severe potential problem with the use of the military in this role is an insidious one. It develops over time when the military role in support of the police becomes of a semi-permanent or even permanent nature, often compounded in the absence of comprehensive legislative control of the armed forces. While we may, for example, decide to create a third, para-military, force in South Africa to further remove the military from involvement in internal affairs, even such forces cannot guarantee that the military will never be called on to assist the police in control of crowd and mass violence. Consequently the manner in which such support occurs needs to be scrutinised carefully and vigorously. The military should ideally only be called in as last resort at a stage when the police and civil authority deem it necessary. Such options require, however, sufficient and adequate police forces. If the police are undermanned, underpaid and ill-equipped and trained, the propensity for military involvement obviously increases.

Having defined the primary purpose of armed forces, it follows that the only military strategic policy in accordance with the dictates of a liberal democracy is one of military defence. The general interpretation of such a defensive policy does not, however, necessarily preclude pre-emptive operations or hot pursuit-type actions. While the former actions have a dubious international legal foundation, most governments (and one would expect citizens) favour fighting on someone else's territory if fighting is going to occur. In some cases this policy is enshrined in legislation, and even in the constitution. The Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany, for example, states in Article 87a:

"The Federation shall build up Armed Forces for defensive purposes."

The strategic military posture of a country may of course vary, although almost all modern conventional forces have adopted what is termed mobile defence by balanced, all-arms mechanised forces as opposed to positional defence along predetermined positions. Most modern military analysts would appear to concur that a balance has to be struck between the almost aggressive policies of defence of a country such as Israel (largely necessitated by its geography), and the inhibiting totally defensive policy of a country such as Germany.

Military culture and society

There are two broad strategic options through which politicians and society at large can ensure the correct and proper role for its armed forces in an unpredictable future. The first is that of insisting on the professional and apolitical nature of the armed forces. This is, for example, the case with regard to the British system, that of France and even that of the United States. It is also the tradition of the SADF, although South Africa still is no democracy and the armed forces have served the sectional interests of white society as opposed to those of the wider community. In accordance with this approach the emphasis is upon the military man as a professional who tends to stand somewhat apart from society.

Such an approach would appear to work best in the case of societies with an established democratic tradition within which there is a wide-ranging consensus on the proper role and place of the military in that society. Most of these societies also exhibit developed and sophisticated political systems and have little modern tradition of military intervention in politics. However, there may also be other reasons for such an approach as is the case in Portugal where the present role of the military is perhaps more the result of events since 1974. As a result Portugal still suffers from a military with an elitist self image and public image. This is, of course, also changing as Portugal is integrated into the European Community.

The alternative approach is that of integrating the military into society. This, for example, is the case with the Bundeswehr (defence force) in Germany. According to this school of thought every attempt is made to marry the often conflicting requirements of military service with those of a democratic society and a respect for individual and human rights. The basis of this system is a constitutional one. Article 1, paragraph 1 of the Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany reads as follows:

The dignity of man shall be inviolable. To respect and protect it shall be the duty of all state authority.

The requirement is, therefore, to integrate the armed forces into the democratic state in such a way that it would comply with the principles laid down in the constitution, both in letter and spirit.

In the choice of the way forward in South Africa, we would like to argue that South Africa should attempt rather to integrate our military into a democratic society following the broad example of the Bundeswehr. The military should not become isolated from the rest of society with the danger that it eventually functions as a "state within a state" thus ultimately being an alien element in the newly established democracy. In modern European history, for example, this occurred in France during the 1950s and earlier still with the Weimar Republic in the 1920s. In the past the SADF has performed exceptionally well from a professional military point of view. It was and remains an effective armed force, yet it is arguable to what extent this has contributed to the situation South Africa finds itself in today. What is certainly a much more severe problem is the extent to which the SADF has come to be seen as being politicised through its role in Namibia, Angola and deployment in the townships throughout South Africa.

There is of course a third tradition of military culture in modern history, namely that of the communist, highly politicised and ideologically motivated one. This is, to an extent, the tradition of Umkhonto we Sizwe. As indicated elsewhere, some analysts would argue that many of the characteristics of this approach are also evident within the SADF. Whatever the case, generally there would appear to be problems in marrying this approach to the requirements of a respect for individual rights and multi-party democracy.

The prerequisite for such a military culture is a single dominant political ideology. It requires constant mobilisation of the members of the armed forces in accordance with an overarching ideology that leaves little room for a respect and tolerance of

alternative points of view. Both the armed forces and individuals are too vulnerable to political abuse and misuse to the detriment of society as a whole. Most recently the Namibian Minister of Defence had, for example, to visit former Swapo members who have been absorbed into the Namibian Defence Force to personally brief them that they could, in future, perhaps be expected to serve a government other than one dominated by Swapo. They had previously refused to believe this subversive statement when so informed by their British training team.

There is, of course, a natural tension between the requirements of effective armed forces and those of a democratic state. These requirements most commonly refer to the need for military discipline and hierarchical organisation. Armed forces require strict discipline and an authoritarian culture if they are to serve effectively during times of war. As a result a balance has to be struck between the constitutional rights of servicemen and the necessary requirements for effective armed forces. The question is where to strike this balance. In tenuous and emergent democracies, the answer would appear to flow from the requirement to integrate the military into civilian life as far as practically possible. Ultimately the serviceman cannot be a citizen set apart from those of the rest of society with different rights and standards applying to him, but is simply a citizen in uniform. Military culture and leadership in this context must connect the system of values and standards as laid down in the constitution with military requirements. The result is an armed force within and for a democracy and not distinct from it.

In pursuance of this approach, we would wish to argue that South Africans should not wash their hands of the military, but rather timeously ensure that our armed forces are part of our society as we move into the next decade. In broad concurrence with the programmes and military culture to be found in the Bundeswehr the following sections will briefly comment on legislative control of the armed forces, the integration of the armed forces into society, the choice of manpower options and leadership development and civic education.

Legislative control

The role and functions of the armed forces should be defined in legislation, perhaps including that of the constitution. Legislation must clearly subordinate the armed forces as part of the executive branch to the primacy of politics. A democracy presupposes a military which is always accountable to civilian authority. In times of emergency such authority may take the form of a war cabinet, but never implies the accession to political power by the military itself. In peacetime the military are, of course, accountable to the constitution and parliament as sovereign body - not to the state nor to the government of the day.

The problem in many developing countries is often that various other demands are placed on the military which tend to enhance and increase their role in society. This may be the result of a variety of factors, for example:

1 lack of border security as a result of poor infrastructure, underdevelopment, etc

- internal instability and the requirement for the deployment of forces in an internal role at irregular intervals

- the lack of a democratic tradition of tolerance and the resolution of social conflict through the formal institutions of civil society

- the specific historical context of the particular society.

Generally many of these problems can be ascribed to a lack of a clear definition between the role of police and military forces in the particular society - a blurring between the task of armed forces and law enforcement agencies. Too often it is the role and task of the military forces which are easily expanded to fill gaps left in the function of other government agencies. The military often appear to offer a ready pool of apparently idle manpower and equipment ready for instant employment at short notice. Its

members are perceived as trained and competent. The police, on the other hand, are often viewed as corrupt, overstretched and inadequate for any new task. (The differences are often more in perception than in reality for military hands may only appear to be unsullied due to their lack of contact with society's more intricate and often messy problems). The result is a creeping militarisation of tasks and functions which correctly fall within the domain of the police.

This has been most clearly illustrated in the recent histories of Transkei, Ciskei, Bophutatswana and Venda. In all of these countries South Africa helped to establish armed forces as part and parcel of the trappings of sovereignty. However, without political legitimacy of the government, a lack of democratic tradition and culture, and without any external military threat, the military forces in these countries had little real task. Trained soldiers without a clear grasp of their patient role soon became restless and, in the tradition of numerous African, Latin American and other countries, came to view civilian authority as corrupt and inefficient. Soon the requirements for internal security actions drew the military into domestic policies and expanded their role until the armed forces in all of these countries came to view themselves as the alternative to existing governments. The result has been successful coup d' états in three of the four states and numerous unsuccessful attempts. In the tradition of *Animal Farm*, it was only a matter of months before the new military regimes began to evidence the characteristics of those they replaced.

Effective parliamentary control is most visibly effected through a bipartisan defence committee whose dealings should, whenever possible, be open to public scrutiny. Since the military serve the constitution and parliament as sovereign institution, control of the armed forces should not be the exclusive domain of the governing party, but be based on consensus between all parties with significant representation in parliament. It is also most visibly effected by financial accountability through budgetary control. Since numerical strength and general organisational structures are included in the budget, these too are subject to parliamentary decision and scrutiny.

Parliamentary control implies that the mechanisms are created through which effective control can be executed. Therefore, for example, all senior military appointments should ultimately be politically sanctioned. The most common mechanism used in democracies is political sanction of military recommendations, which means that the military forward a single or short list of names for senior posts upon which selections are made. Such instruments and mechanisms of control prevent party political abuse and subject military forces to civilian control. A legitimate system of recourse whenever circumstances come to light which imply violation of the basic rights of the citizen in uniform is, of course, another vital component in establishing a balance of power between military authority and the rights of the individual.

Many of the mechanisms listed above exist in some form or another within the present South African constitutional and parliamentary practices. They have to be resurrected, strengthened, changed and invigorated, but they do not have to be invented from scratch. Many of the theories bandied about regarding the degree of executive space created by the securocrats and the SADF such as those contained in the accompanying paper by Cawthra are grossly exaggerated and tend to debate the involvement of the SADF in national affairs in the past in isolation instead of within the appropriate historical and ideological context within which those events occurred. These arguments also assume that the SADF and police have been unaffected by events in the wider South African arena. Nothing could be further from the truth!

Integration and manpower policies

The readiness to serve the community because of insight into and conviction of the cause of freedom and democracy is the

best motivation for meaningful service in the military. Armed forces should maintain extensive and close official and personal relations with all levels of public life such as clubs, sport organisations, etc. These relations tend to demonstrate the integration of the armed forces into society and bind military duties into civilian life.

Military requirements should only impinge upon normal civilian life when this is absolutely imperative in terms of the dictates of military discipline and effectiveness. Military training institutions and academies should not be established in isolation from other institutions of learning such as is the case with the South African Military Academy at Saldanha Bay, but be integrated into them. The military cadet should benefit from the divergent interpretations of social reality which is the study of social science, history, organisation and leadership theory, economics, etc.

It would appear as if the choice of a specific manpower option may have an effect upon the propensity for military forces to develop an own culture independent of civilian society, particularly in developing societies. Fully volunteer and professional armies would appear most amenable to this disease. Conscript forces, whatever the specific nature of conscription or short service type schemes, tend to tie the military closely to civil society. Although the choice of manpower option is admittedly often based on financial considerations, the long-term impact of such choices should be taken into account. In the present South African context changes to the existing system of white male conscription are imminent. Considerable care should, however, be exercised in the choice of an alternative system. Admittedly this choice also has much to do with white fears and feelings of insecurity. Yet, essentially white control of the armed forces is secure in the overwhelming balance of white leadership within the SADF which is bound to persist for many years to come.

Further to this argument, military service has a restricted ability to soak up unemployment and to assist in technical and even general literacy training. However, if a country desires a capable armed force which understands and is professionally able to execute its task, it must be prepared to allocate sufficient funds and skilled manpower to that task. It is patently dangerous to entrust the final guarantee of a country's sovereignty to poorly equipped and trained forces. Whilst changed international and regional situations have and will impinge upon security considerations in South Africa, this has not yet obviated the requirement for armed forces.

Civic education and leadership development

Peace can only be maintained in freedom. Individual freedom can only be provided if there is a balance of power between the individual and the state, and between the state and external threats to its sovereignty. It is therefore the duty of every able citizen in the democratic state to defend the state against an external attack. In the tradition of ancient Greece, the citizen accepts the responsibility to safeguard human rights in the knowledge that the dignity of man will be lost without freedom. He or she must, therefore, understand the political and legal framework, conditions and possible consequences of military actions.

Since individual rights are paramount even when discussing service in preparation of the defence of the state, individuals should, of course, have the right and option to accept alternative service options should he not wish to serve in the armed forces for political, religious or moral reasons. However, perhaps one should hasten to state that the acceptance of this responsibility by individuals does not necessarily imply conscription or even of a militia type system.

Yet there are limitations regarding individual rights in the armed forces in a democracy. The freedom of individual servicemen is necessarily restricted to the extent required by military service. Leadership development and civic education is intend-

ed to explain and bridge the tensions between the military duties of servicemen and the rights and privileges of the citizen.

It has become common wisdom that nation-building in South Africa can have little dependence upon ethnic or racial culture, but will have to revolve around a set of common values. These values which commonly revolve around the primary role of the individual as opposed to the state in society, will eventually be enshrined in the constitution and legislation. Instruction and experience of the spirit and content of these values through theoretical discussion and lectures as well as personal example, experience and meaning must bind the armed forces into society through a deliberate programme of leadership development and civic education. This connects the requirements of the principles of military discipline and functionality with the inviolable dignity of man and the fundamental conditions of a democratic, pluralistic society.

The concept of a soldier as a citizen in uniform allows and presupposes a serviceman who is politically informed and takes an interest in his social environment. Accepting the responsibility to defend your country is by its nature a political act, for it implies defence of a particular value system, norms and rules. Civic education explains to the soldier the necessity and meaning of his service in the armed forces. It motivates the serviceman in service and defence of the broad political system and values as enshrined in the constitution and applicable legislation.

Civic education also provides the framework within which military discipline operates, including the provisions of international humanitarian law. All actions by servicemen in peacetime and in war within a democracy as defined in these pages can only be taken within the framework of national and international law. It enshrines the doctrine of personal responsibility for all orders given and all actions taken. In this context servicemen cannot be absolved from responsibility on the premise that they were simply obeying orders. Illegal orders are criminally punishable also on those who obey them. Such principles and practices prevent servicemen from being defenceless against power and simultaneously restricts the abuse of power.

Finally, through leadership development and civic education, military discipline is continuously updated to remain compatible and in step with the wider society it serves.

Of necessity considerable emphasis is placed upon leadership development within armed forces. Armed forces rely on leadership at various levels in the chain of command and control for the execution of their task. Leadership is, in fact, often of a decisive nature in the accomplishment of military missions. Within the context of a democratic state, military leadership is a balance between the functional demands made by the military tasks at hand and the respect for the individual as a citizen in uniform

on the other hand. It presupposes a trustful relationship between superior and subordinate. This relationship provides the basis for military efficiency and the acceptance of appropriate mission-orientated command and control doctrines, as opposed to detailed orders, regulations and stipulations.

Conclusion

The system proposed here as a contribution to the debate on the future role of the armed forces in South African society constitutes a relationship of mutual loyalty and trust between the state and its servicemen and between all ranks within the armed forces. While the serviceman commits himself to loyally serve the state, the state is obliged to provide care and social assistance. The personal interests of servicemen have to be adequately considered whenever military command and control measures are being taken. The state cannot at will impinge upon the freedom and dignity of the individual, but has the duty to make its decisions in a way that will have the least adverse consequences for the serviceman concerned.

These actions require constant attention. The linkage between individual rights and the requirements of military service in a democracy can only succeed under constant vigilance and efforts. The armed forces must be able to tolerate differing opinions, for it services a plural society. It is subject to public discussion just like any other institution, must face criticism both in public and by the media and be mature enough not to view such criticism as unpatriotic or subversive.

Looking to the future we would like to argue that the debate about the future role of the armed forces in South African society should address the following questions:

- What should be the role of the military in a democratic South Africa?
- What constitutional and other constraints can be used to ensure that our armed forces do not overstep this role in society?
- What military culture, structure and organisation facilitate multi-party democracy and a respect for individual and human rights?
- What policies and choices enhance regional stability and thereby reduce the requirements for military forces?

In present times, it is these questions that need to be answered and debated. We need to change our stereotypes and strip our arguments of emotion and easy cliché.

Acknowledgement

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