

# **Evolutions & Revolutions**

## **A Contemporary History of Militaries in Southern Africa**

EDITED BY  
MARTIN RUPIYA

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# Contents

List of abbreviations	xiii
<b>Introduction</b> <i>Martin Rupiya</i>	1
CHAPTER ONE <b>A military history of the Angolan Armed Forces from the 1960s onwards—as told by former combatants</b> <i>Ana Leão and Martin Rupiya</i>	7
CHAPTER TWO <b>Inside the ‘crystal ball’: Understanding the evolution of the military in Botswana and the challenges ahead</b> <i>Paul Sharp &amp; Louis Fisher</i>	43
CHAPTER THREE <b>The Congolese National Army: In search of an identity</b> <i>Jacques Ebenga &amp; Thierry N’Landu</i>	63
CHAPTER FOUR <b>From a destabilising factor to a de-politicised and professional force: The military in Lesotho</b> <i>Khabele Matlosa</i>	85
CHAPTER FIVE <b>The odd man out: A history of the Malawi army since July 1964</b> <i>Martin Rupiya</i>	111
CHAPTER SIX <b>In defence of the ‘star and key of the Indian Ocean’: A contemporary history of the Mauritian Police Force</b> <i>Martin Rupiya</i>	135

CHAPTER SEVEN	
<b>Profound transformations and regional conflagrations:</b>	<b>155</b>
<b>The history of Mozambique's armed forces from 1975–2005</b>	
<i>Adriano Malache, Paulino Macaringue &amp; Joao-Paulo Borges Coelho</i>	
CHAPTER EIGHT	
<b>Promoting national reconciliation and regional integration:</b>	<b>199</b>
<b>The Namibian Defence Force from 1990–2005</b>	
<i>Gwinyayi Dzinesa &amp; Martin Rupiya</i>	
CHAPTER NINE	
<b>The post-apartheid South African military:</b>	<b>235</b>
<b>Transforming with the nation</b>	
<i>Len le Roux</i>	
CHAPTER TEN	
<b>Caught between tradition and regional warfare:</b>	<b>269</b>
<b>The <i>Umbutfo</i> Swaziland Defence Force since 1968</b>	
<i>Jeffrey Tshalalala, Cyprian Nhlengethwa &amp; Martin Rupiya</i>	
CHAPTER ELEVEN	
<b>A changing conception of defence: A historical perspective</b>	<b>295</b>
<b>of the military in Tanzania</b>	
<i>Nestor Luanda</i>	
CHAPTER TWELVE	
<b>The Zambian military—trials, tribulations and hope</b>	<b>313</b>
<i>Hanania Lungu &amp; Naison Ngoma</i>	
CHAPTER THIRTEEN	
<b>Tracking Zimbabwe's political history:</b>	<b>331</b>
<b>The Zimbabwe Defence Force from 1980–2005</b>	
<i>Knox Chitiyo &amp; Martin Rupiya</i>	
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>365</b>
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>375</b>
<b>Index</b>	<b>387</b>

# List of abbreviations

AFDL	<i>Alliance des forces démocratiques pour la libération du Congo</i> —Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo
ANC	African National Congress
ANC	Armée Nationale Congolaise—Congolese National Army
AP	Assembly point
APLA	Azanian People's Liberation Army
ASF	African Standby Force
AU	African Union
BCP	Basutoland Congress Party
BDF	Bophuthatswana Defence Force
BJSTT	British Joint Services Training Team
BMATT	British Military Advisory and Training Team
BNP	Basotho National Party
CAC	Central African Command
CADSP	Common African Defence and Security Policy
CCFADM	Joint Commission for the Formation of the Mozambican Defence Forces
CDF	Ciskei Defence Force
CIO	Central Intelligence Organisation
CMF	Commonwealth Monitoring Force
CoD	Council on Defence
CODESA	Convention for a Democratic South Africa
COIN	Counter-insurgency
Comira	Military Committee for the Resistance in Angola
CSANDF	Chief of the South African National Defence Force
CSB	Civil Service Board
CSC	Supervisory and Monitoring Commission
DDR	Disarmament, demobilisation and rehabilitation
DoD	Department of Defence
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
DSP	<i>Division Spéciale Présidentielle</i> —Presidential Special Division or Praetorian Guard
DTA	Democratic Turnhalle Alliance
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
EEZ	Exclusive economic zone

ELNA	Army for the National Liberation of Angola
EPLA	People's Army for the Liberation of Angola
FAA	<i>Forces de Angola</i> —Angolan Armed Forces
FAC	<i>Forces Armées Congolaise</i> —Congolese Armed Forces
FADM	<i>Forças Armadas de Defesa de Moçambique</i> — Armed Forces for the Defence of Mozambique
FALA	Armed Forces for the Liberation of Angola (UNITA)
FAM	<i>Forças Armadas de Moçambique</i>
FAPLA	Popular Armed Forces for the Liberation of Angola
FAZ	<i>Forces Armées Zairoise</i> —Zairian Armed Forces
FLS	Front Line States
FNLA	National Front for the Liberation of Angola
FNLC	<i>Force Nationale pour la Liberation de Congo</i> — National Front for the Liberation of Congo
FPLM	<i>Forças Populares de Libertação de Moçambique</i>
Frelimo	<i>Frente de Libertação de Moçambique</i> — Mozambique Liberation Front
GC	<i>Garde Civile</i> —Civil Guard
GDP	Gross domestic product
GNP	Gross national product
GPA	General Peace Agreement
GRAE	Revolutionary Government of Angola in Exile
GURN	Government of Unity and National Reconciliation
HoD	Head of Department
IMET	International Military Education and Training
INM	Imbokdvo National Movement
ISDSC	Inter-State Defence and Security Committee
ISS	Institute for Security Studies
JHC	Joint High Command
JMCC	Joint Military Co-ordinating Committee
JOC	Joint Operations Command
JWTZ	Jeshi la Wananchi Tanzania
KAR	King's African Rifles
KZSPF	KwaZulu Self-Protection Forces
LDF	Lesotho Defence Force
MAS	Mauritian Air Service
MCP	Malawi Congress Party
MDC	Movement for Democratic Change
MDF	Malawi Defence Force
MK	Umkhonto we Sizwe

MLC	<i>Mouvement pour la Liberation de Congo—</i> Congo Liberation Movement
MMD	Movement for Multiparty Democracy
MoD	Ministry of Defence
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MPF	Mauritius Police Force
MPLA	<i>Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola</i>
MPR	<i>Mouvement Populaire de la Révolution—</i> Popular Revolution Movement
MSC	Military Steering Committee
MYP	Malawi Young Pioneers
NAC	Nyasaland African Congress
NCO	Non-commissioned officer
NDF	Namibian Defence Force
NDP	National Democratic Party
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NNLC	Ngwane National Liberatory Congress
NP	National Party
OUA	Organisation of African Unity
ONUMOZ	United Nations Operation in Mozambique
OPDS	Organ on Politics, Defence and Security
OPO	Ovambo People's Organisation
OPVDCA	Provincial Organisation of Volunteers for the Civil Defence of Angola
PAC	Pan Africanist Congress
PCPD	Portfolio Committee of Parliament on Defence
PIOC	Parliamentary Integration Oversight Committee
PLAN	People's Liberation Army of Namibia
PMG	Parliamentary Monitoring Group
PMU	Police Mobile Unit
PRU	Police Reserve Unit
RAF	Royal Air Force
RCD	<i>Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie—</i> Congolese Democratic Assembly
RECAMP	Reinforcement of African Peacekeeping Capabilities
Renamo	<i>Resistência Nacional Moçambicana</i>
RF	Rhodesian Front
RSF	Rhodesia Security Force
RSP	Royal Swaziland Police
SACU	South African Customs Union

SADC	Southern African Development Community
SADCC	Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference
SADF	South African Defence Force
SANDF	South African National Defence Force
SAP	South African Police
SAPS	South African Police Services
SARM	<i>Service d'Action et de Renseignement Militaire</i> — Military Operations and Intelligence Service
SDP	Swaziland Democratic Party
SIPO	Strategic Indicative Plan for the Organ
SIPRI	Swedish International Research Institute
SMC	Senior Management Committee
SMF	Special Mobile Force
SSU	Special Support Unit
SWA	South West Africa
SWANU	South West Africa National Union
SWAPO	South West Africa People's Organisation
SWATF	South West Africa Territorial Force
TANU	Tanganyika African Nationalist Union
TBVC	Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei
TDF	Transkei Defence Force
TEC	Transitional Executive Council
TPDF	Tanzania People's Defence Force
TR	Tanganyika Rifles
TUL	Tanu Youth League
UANC	United African National Council
UDF	United Democratic Front
UDI	Unilateral Declaration of Independence
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNAVEM	UN Angola Verification Mission
UNIP	United National Independence Party
UNITA	National Union for the Total Independence of Angola
UNITAF	United Task Force Somalia
UNOMUR	United Nations Observer Mission on the Rwanda Uganda Border
UNOSOM	United Nations Operation in Somalia
UNTAC	United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia
UNTAG	United Nations Transitional Assistance Group
UPA	Union of the Peoples of Angola



UPNA	Union of the Peoples of the North of Angola
US	United States (of America)
USDF	Umbutfo Swaziland Defence Force
VDF	Venda Defence Force
WOPC	Warrant officer platoon commander
ZANLA	Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army
ZANU	Zimbabwe African National Union
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union
ZDF	Zimbabwe Defence Force
ZIMCORD	Zimbabwe Reconstruction and Development Conference
ZIPA	Zimbabwe People's Army
ZIPRA	Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army
ZNA	Zimbabwe National Army
ZNDF	Zambia National Defence Force
ZNS	Zambia National Service
ZPM	Zimbabwe People's Militia



# Introduction

Martin Rupiya

In all the emerging states that were released from colonial bondage, the most important structure of the government bureaucracy to be created was the armed forces. This is because the armed forces are seen not only as an instrument to address security concerns, but also as a concrete national symbol that represents and participates in ceremonies which confirm the status of the new nation. And yet, not since Hubert Moyses-Bartlett's seminal *The Kings' African Rifles (KAR): A study in the military history of East and Central Africa, 1890–1945*, has there been an attempt to put together a military history that critically examines the context, role and function of militaries in a specific region of the African continent.<sup>1</sup>

*The Kings' African Rifles* treatise traced the history of British colonial army units deployed in East, Central and Southern Africa, stretching from the Sudan, Uganda and Kenya, to Tanganyika (now Tanzania), Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) and Nyasaland (now Malawi). This provided insight into the organisation, recruitment patterns and ethnic preferences, as well as the secondment of European and British officer corps to lead and exercise command-and-control at the exclusion of 'indigenous peoples'. It also provided insight into the articulate strategic purpose of this colonial instrument.

While the command element was based in Nairobi, units of the KAR were spread throughout the region in the following manner: 1 and 2 battalions based in Nyasaland; 3 and 5 based in Kenya; 4 Battalion was located in Uganda and the 6th Battalion in Tanganyika.<sup>2</sup>

The work also demonstrates the linkages of the KAR division in East Africa, made up of majority Askaris,<sup>3</sup> and its relationship with the British army, navy and air force in a context that included deployment out-of-area on colonial duty in such places as Malaya, Burma, the Middle East and Mauritius.

The primary objective of the KAR was to support the colonial political edifice in the colonies under British rule. In each of the colonies, a resident governor, directly answerable to the Foreign and Colonial Office in Whitehall, London was in charge and nominally commander-in-chief of the local KAR units. At the tactical level, the purpose of the KAR and its Askaris was to suppress resistance against the colonial project in East, Central, Southern Africa and elsewhere, as some chapters in this work demonstrate.

The challenge and gap that this volume attempts to fill is that of taking the contribution made by Moyse-Bartlett further into the post-colonial period.

The question of threats and insecurity permeates the three dimensions of geographic/territorial integrity of a state, the security of the state and its institutions, and finally that of the people within a defined state.<sup>4</sup>

In the new era after decolonisation, three related questions stand out in relation to the defence and security question of each new state. First, what threats faced the new state—were these internal or external? Second, what institutions were required to respond in order to satisfy both abstract and practical considerations? And third, how were these institutions organised/mobilised, financed, manned, equipped and trained, and how were the lines of command-and-control established?

In this assessment, it is also important to acknowledge that the ultimate goal(s) of providing defence and security structures shifted, in some cases, away from local considerations, focusing on and driven by external factors. In such instances, an assessment of how the process made an impact on either the regional or international system also partly explains the *raison d'être* and purpose of establishing armed forces in the post-colonial era.<sup>5</sup>

By providing case studies of the 13 countries that make up the Southern African Development Community (SADC)—Angola, Botswana, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Lesotho, Namibia, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe—this publication aims to deliver a template of how the new African states transformed in the area of their military institutions following independence.

Against the background of the above discussion, *Evolutions & Revolutions* has attempted to achieve three related objectives. The first is to provide a military history of the Southern African region since independence. This is important in a region where nationalists were forced to resort to armed struggle in order to secure independence, making the early politicians sensitive and acutely aware of the use of military means for political purposes. To this end, it is interesting to determine how the same political elite employed military power and influence once independence was achieved.

The second objective has been to overcome the traditional reluctance among African people, especially those engaged in sensitive military issues, to put pen to paper and record their experiences. This objective guided the selection of chapter writers, focusing on African military practitioners, either retired or still in service, and encouraging them to see the value of 'divulging' their experiences.

In putting together the research team, the net was cast far and wide, but also with the specific targeting of key characters who were likely to add value to the project. A call for papers was posted on the Institute for Security Studies' (ISS) website in November 2003, inviting applicants that fitted the bill to apply. Meanwhile, others who were known to possess intimate knowledge of the sensitive issues and who were willing to participate were approached. The result is that the final research team represents a rich mix of serving and retired military officers as well as respected academics.

Contributors to this volume include former Acting Minister of Defence Lt Gen (retired) Hanania Lungu, who at one time was in charge of both the Zambian Army and Air Force. Lungu worked closely with former Air Force colonel and now academic at the ISS, Dr Naison Ngoma. We were also able to have on board the serving commander of the Botswana Defence Force (BDF), Lt Gen Louis Fisher, who worked with one of his colonels, Paul Sharp, to produce the chapter on the BDF. We, of course, managed to secure a contribution from Maj Gen (retired) Len le Roux, who was intimately involved in drawing up the post-apartheid South African Defence Review, White Paper and transformation process, and who now heads the ISS Defence Sector Programme. The project also secured the support of serving deputy commander of the Umbutfo Swaziland Defence Force (USDF), Brig Gen Jeremy Tshabalala and his senior officer, Col Cyprian Nhlengethwa, who contributed the USDF chapter. Among the serving practitioners, the book also enjoyed the participation of Brig Gen Paulino Macaringue, a

former guerrilla/military commander with Frelimo and the FAM and later acting permanent secretary in the Mozambican Ministry of Defence. Macaringue worked on the Mozambique chapter together with Adriano Malache, a Ministry of Defence civilian official, and renowned academic Prof. Joao-Paulo Borges Coelho.

Some carefully chosen academics and researchers with a growing interest and distinguished publication record in the area of defence completed the special group. Among the latter were Prof. Nestor Luanda of the University of Dar es Salaam and Prof. Thierry N'Landu of the University of Kinshasa, DRC, as well as senior academics within academia and in the non-governmental organisation community, including those at the ISS. Wits University Military History PhD student Gwinyayi Dzinesa also became part of the specialised team. Knox Chitiyo, who has been lecturing for over a decade on the history of warfare and the rise of guerrilla movements in Southern Africa, also joined the initiative. Dr Khabele Matlosa's extensive research, teaching and publication on the Lesotho army goes back more than a decade. Similarly, ISS senior researcher Ana Leão is one of the finest field researchers and networked individuals on security and military issues in Angola, Mozambique and the DRC. Finally, the group benefited from the input of Jacques Ebenga—a medical doctor, retired colonel and current military advisor with the United Nations Development Programme—UN Peacekeeping Mission in the Congo (MONUC)—who contributed his wide and current military experience of the region.

The combination of contributions from past and present military officers, as well as the special category of academics, was a major success of our second objective. We hope these individuals will now prove us right in the third and final objective of developing a cadre of practitioners and policy makers who are able to engage in intellectual discourse on the way in which the military is evolving in the post-colonial era.

If part or all of our aims are achieved in the following chapters, then an important link would have been established with the challenges presented by *The Kings' African Rifles*. Importantly, we would have broken the traditional African tendency not to leave any recordings for posterity, as well as breaking the secrecy normally surrounding military issues in the region's history.

**NOTES**

- 1 H Moyse-Bartlett, *The King's African Rifles: A study in the military history of East and Central Africa, 1890–1945*, Gale & Polden, Aldershot, 1956.
- 2 M Mutonya & T H Parsons, KiKAR: A Swahili variety in Kenya's colonial army, *Journal of African and Afro-American Studies*, 25, Washington University, St Louis), 2004, p 113.
- 3 See also T Parsons, *The African rank-and-file: Social implications of colonial military service in the King's African Rifles, 1902–1964*, Heinemann, Nairobi, 1999.
- 4 See M Hall, *On the morphology of international systems: Political space as structure and process in early medieval Europe*, Working Paper Series, Centre for European Studies, Lund University, p 7 citing contributions by K Waltz, *Theory of international politics*, Addison-Wesley, Reading, 1979; B Buzan & R Little, *International systems in world history: Remaking the study of international relations*, Oxford Press, Oxford, 2000.
- 5 See the discussion in T Dunne, New thinking on international society, *The British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 3(2), 2001, pp 223-244.



Source: [www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/index.html](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/index.html)



# **A military history of the Angolan Armed Forces from the 1960s onwards—as told by former combatants**

Ana Leão and Martin Rupiya<sup>1</sup>

## **INTRODUCTION**

The history of the Angolan Armed Forces (FAA) remains largely unwritten—yet, understanding the FAA’s development is undoubtedly important both for future Angolan generations as well as for other sub-Saharan African countries. The FAA must first and foremost be understood as a result of several processes of integration—processes that began in the very early days of the struggle against Portuguese colonialism and ended with the April 2002 Memorandum of Understanding.

Today’s FAA is a result of the integration of the armed forces of the three liberation movements that fought against the Portuguese—the MPLA (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola), the FNLA (National Front for the Liberation of Angola) and UNITA (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola). This was a process that developed over more than 30 years.

The various phases that characterise the formation and development of the FAA are closely related to Angola’s recent political history, particularly the advent of independence in 1975 and the civil war that ensued.

This chapter introduces that history with a view to contributing to a clearer understanding of the development of the FAA and its current role in a peaceful Angola. As will be discussed, while the FAA was formerly established in 1992 following the provisions of the Bicesse Peace Accords, its origins go back to:

- the Popular Armed Forces for the Liberation of Angola (FAPLA) and the integration over more than three decades of elements of the Portuguese Colonial Army;
- the FNLA's Army for the National Liberation of Angola (ELNA); and
- UNITA's Armed Forces for the Liberation of Angola (FALA).

These give the FAA a history and development that are *sui generis* in the region, if not in the world. Today, the FAA can be considered a factor and a reflection of national unity comprising soldiers and officers from all ethno-linguistic groups, from all regions and parts of the country and from all political and social groups. For the vast majority of Angolans, the FAA represents the entire nation and is one of the few institutions in the country that truly embody a sense of nationhood. The FAA has now to continue its transformation into a peace-time armed force, changing the objective of its missions as well as the structure of its organisation, training, readiness, ways of thinking and acting. Beginning with a discussion of Angola's recent political and military history, this chapter aims to provide an initial reflection on these issues, highlighting Angola's National Defence Policy, the FAA's legal and institutional framework, the FAA's current structure and composition and, finally, the FAA's current strategic positioning.

## **BACKGROUND: HISTORICAL CONTEXT AS A DETERMINING FACTOR**

### STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE: THE LIBERATION MOVEMENTS AND THEIR MILITARY FORCES

Modern Angolan nationalism has its origins in the 1940s and 1950s with the birth and development of several organised liberation movements. The influence of pan-Africanism and the independence wave that swept across the African continent in the late 1950s and early 1960s, coupled with the excesses of the late colonial period, particularly in the form of forced labour, contributed to the emergence of a new political conscience in Angola.

The nationalist movement gained added momentum with the independence of the former Belgian Congo, which allowed nationalist Angolans to find refuge and operate from within the borders of that country. On 7 July 1954, the UPNA (Union of the Peoples of the North

of Angola) was born with the specific aim of fighting for the independence of the old kingdom of Congo. Following the integration in 1958 of Angolans with different political views and from different parts of the country, the UPNA changed its name to the UPA (Union of the Peoples of Angola).

During the 1960s, the UPA developed its political structure and created a military wing, launching the armed struggle against the colonisers. In 1962, the UPA unified with the PDA, another emerging political force, to form the FNLA. The FNLA's organisation capacity as well as the creation of its military wing, ELNA, gave it international and continental recognition, as well as increased external support. Moreover, the FNLA would soon be recognised by the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) as Angola's government in exile and the true representative of Angolan nationalism. In addition, international recognition of the Revolutionary Government of Angola in Exile (GRAE) enabled the FNLA to train officers at the Kinkuso base from liberation movements from neighbouring countries, such as Zimbabwe (ZANU), South Africa (ANC), Mozambique (Frelimo) and Namibia (SWAPO).

Also during the 1950s, more precisely in 1956, another liberation movement was formed, the MPLA; and also a result of the integration of groups representing varying strands of the Angolan political landscape. The MPLA would become consistently involved in the liberation struggle from 1961. In 1962, when Dr Agostinho Neto became its president, the MPLA created a military wing, EPLA (People's Army for the Liberation of Angola). It is important to note that although the FNLA and the MPLA initially operated from independent Congo-Leopoldville, disagreements and competition between them led the MPLA to move to Congo-Brazzaville.

How and why did UNITA emerge as Angola's third liberation movement? As a student, Jonas Savimbi (later to become UNITA's president) became an active member of the UPA. He participated in the formation of the FNLA, rising to the important position of minister of foreign affairs of the GRAE. In 1963, during a trip to China by some of the leading members of the FNLA, including Savimbi, President Mao suggested that the leadership of the liberation struggle should be established inside the country in order to supervise the combat. This principle was enthusiastically accepted by Jonas Savimbi but met with strong opposition by Holden Roberto. This disagreement between the two was made worse when Savimbi went to Cairo as the representative of Roberto at an OAU Heads of State and Government meeting, but

publicly denounced both the MPLA and the FNLA as not deserving credibility or recognition due to the fact that neither of them was conducting the struggle from inside Angola.

This accusation led to the expulsion of Savimbi from the FNLA. The MPLA, who for some time had tried to bring Savimbi into its ranks, now refused to accept him. In Kinshasa, Savimbi started mobilising some of the ELNA officers and other FNLA political cadres and moved with them to Lusaka in Zambia. There, they reorganised themselves and on 13 March 1966 established UNITA inside Angola. With a hard-core nucleus of 12 leaders who had received military training in China, UNITA created its armed wing, FALA.

In this regard, it is important to note that while both the MPLA and FNLA's political activity and organisation as liberation movements led to the development of their armed wings, it was the creation of FALA that gave substance to the UNITA movement and its all-party activities. As will be discussed below, this largely explains why, several decades later, UNITA became weakened once FALA was disbanded.

In the struggle for independence, the three movements faced a powerful and intransigent coloniser. The deployment of Portugal's armed forces to the colonies—according to some accounts a force of more than 300,000 Portuguese was in Angola at this time—coupled with the forced conscription of many thousands of Angolans into the colonial army, posed a considerable challenge to the liberation movements. There was little that Angolans could do to avoid being drafted, for, at the age of conscription, Angolans were considered as citizens with rights only if they had served in the Portuguese armed forces.

The colonial authorities also fostered organisations of civil defence, such as the Special Groups (GE) and the Provincial Organisation of Volunteers for the Civil Defence of Angola (OPVDCA), which consisted of armed civilians living among the population. OPVDCA is said to have had an arsenal of 40,000 small arms and light weapons, which was later plundered by the three liberation movements.<sup>2</sup>

In addition, the settlers organised themselves into vigilante groups and took justice into their own hands with little, if any, oversight by the colonial authorities. According to some estimates, these first uprisings in the 1960s led to the death of 40,000 Angolans due to disease and famine, 400 settlers and innumerable Angolans considered as *assimilados*<sup>3</sup> as well as anyone sympathetic to the colonial regime.<sup>4</sup>

From the mid-1960s onwards, Angola's three liberation movements fought separately (and at times antagonistically) for the common ideal of

national independence. Attempts to unify the FNLA and the MPLA (the two larger and better organised movements) into a united front against the colonial power were not successful. Political, ideological, regional and ethno-linguistic differences—to say nothing of each movement's different international support and alliance base—proved difficult to overcome. Indeed, there were several reports of fighting between ELNA and FAPLA forces during the anti-colonial war.

In order to understand the options of the three liberation movements and the way they evolved, it is important to consider both the timing and the nature of their formation. The suppression of all political activity before the April 1974 coup in Portugal meant that any opposition to the regime, either in Portugal or in the colonies, had to go underground. The clandestine nature of opposition made it easy for the communist party in Portugal to co-opt political dissent—the Soviet Union provided steady funding, international networks of support, and operational plans. Democratic European countries could not openly support the movements opposing Portuguese colonialism because of Portugal's membership to NATO and to other Western institutions. The geo-strategic importance during the Cold War of the Azores and Cape Verde was another reason why the Western allies could not openly support the opposition movements. It was for this reason that the political opposition in Portugal during the dictatorship came to be channelled through the communist party.

The FNLA, however, had the financial, logistical and military support of Mobutu's Zaire as well as the financial backing of the United States (US). By establishing itself in Leopoldville (Kinshasa) and opting for a centre-right ideology, the FNLA had opened the doors for the West to see it as a valuable tool in the fight against communist penetration of the African continent. Mobutu had close relations with the West and the US, which were used to channel mostly covert support to the FNLA, as open support was impossible because of the geo-strategic considerations previously referred to. The FNLA started as an ethnic movement seeking the restoration of the old kingdom of the Bazacongo.<sup>5</sup> The FNLA's leader, Holden Roberto, had family ties to President Mobutu in Zaire, who thus became a natural ally with sympathy from the West. Moreover, Mobutu never hid his interest in Angolan natural resources; they would later influence some of his decisions towards relations with the government of Angola.

The MPLA was formed by Angolans with connections to the Portuguese communist party. Students from the colonies were

accommodated in Portugal's 'Casa do Império' (House of the Empire). The communist party was quick to form relationships with these students, who included Amílcar Cabral, Mondlane, Agostinho Neto and Marcelino dos Santos, who also developed close ties with one another. They had not much choice for allies and these future leaders soon realised that support would only come from the Eastern bloc. The MPLA had the support of Congo-Brazzaville and other socialist countries. This movement's origins as an offshoot of Angola's Communist Party and its close relations with the Portuguese Communist Party—the most organised party in Portugal at the time of the revolution of 25 April 1974—provided it with the necessary networks and contacts in the former communist bloc.

UNITA opted for socialism, despite the fact that most of its cadres had come from the FNLA, but aligned itself ideologically with Maoist China. Closer to home, it benefited from the support of Zambia and a few other African countries. When Savimbi decided to found UNITA he accepted that China would probably be the party's only supporter. While the West via Zaire was supporting the FNLA<sup>6</sup> and the MPLA could count on the support of the former Soviet Union and Cuba, Savimbi had few allies to choose from, particularly at the time of UNITA's inception.

Although ideological differences should not be taken as paramount in the relations between the movements before independence, the connections and alliances each one maintained undoubtedly influenced their future development. This was also a reflection of the bipolar structure of the international system at the time. In fact, the cleavages between the movements were most evident in the disagreements of the mid-1960s on how to conduct the liberation struggle and the way support was obtained for carrying it out. In the 1974–75 period, the emergence of the civil war exacerbated these contradictions and exposed deep-seated ideological cleavages.

Of the three liberation movements active on the eve of Angola's independence, the FNLA was the strongest militarily, enjoyed diplomatic recognition and had a better organised and structured operation. The MPLA, although second in strength, was at this time paralysed by internal divisions caused by the activities of various factions: the 'Active Rebellion', consisting mostly of intellectuals; the 'Rebellion of the East', led by Daniel Chipenda and integrating the larger part of the EPLA guerrillas in the east of the country; and Neto's faction all competed for control of the leadership. In fact, these divisions would persist until the first negotiations on a cessation of hostilities were held with the

Portuguese. The attempts made in Lusaka during 1973 to attain unification of the three movements did not produce any results. Even though Agostinho Neto insisted on the need for reconciliation with the other movements, creating FAPLA as an attempt to unify the armed forces on 1 August 1974, when negotiations started with the Portuguese, there were de facto three distinct armies in the country: ELNA, FAPLA and FALA—the armed forces of the FNLA, the MPLA and UNITA respectively. And although the movements concluded an agreement with the colonial power in Alvor, Portugal, which *inter alia* provided for a transitional government comprising all three movements as well as the colonial power, this was not sufficient to overcome the cleavages which had resulted from the different objectives during the liberation struggle. The civil war could therefore not be avoided. However, when analysing international intervention and Cold War strategic interests one has to wonder whether the civil war would have taken place if the liberation movements had not been heavily armed in support of interests other than Angolan national ones.

The 1974 coup in Portugal followed an accumulation of pressures from colonial wars, international criticism and the Portuguese resistance. Being the most organised party, the communists attracted opponents to the regime regardless of their ideologies, sharing in the common goal of defeating fascism. The co-option of Portuguese dissent by the communist party and the lack of an explicit political agenda by the coup leaders led to a period of political turmoil in mainland Portugal, where emerging political parties were competing for space in domestic politics.

The influence of the communists in Portugal surfaced during the power struggle that started with the coup of 25 April 1974 and ended in November 1976 when the socialist party came to power. This period spanned the decolonisation process and had a serious impact on the way this was conducted.

#### INDEPENDENCE AND CIVIL WAR

Being essentially military in nature, the coup of 25 April had the objective of bringing the colonial war to an end. However, it failed to articulate specific policies or even a coherent political and military plan to end the colonial war.

The process of decolonisation coincided with a period of political turmoil in Portugal. Between April 1974 and December 1975 Portugal had six provisional governments and two presidents, and had elected

members of a constitutional assembly. This instability was the result of the power struggle between the Portuguese communist party and other democratic forces, which came to a head in November 1975 (a mere two weeks after Angola's independence) with a rejection of the communists. During this period, the Portuguese government implemented, among other things, a number of nationalisations, foreign exchange control and land reform based on property expropriation. For the whole period of decolonisation (1974–75) Portuguese leaders were, rightly or wrongly, considered leftist sympathisers.

The political instability in mainland Portugal and the breakdown of colonial authority had dire consequences for the decolonisation process of Angola.

A former Portuguese minister in the transitional government commented on the situation on the ground in Angola at that time:

... but we had a situation that virtually led to a general demobilisation of the Portuguese troops ... there was an unwavering principle and that was independence; without agreeing to this principle it was not possible to even start talking to any of the liberation movements ... the Portuguese troops were not willing to fight for a country soon to be independent ... And there was another obvious thing, the huge political unrest here in Portugal, which [made it impossible to form any coherent policy]... .<sup>7</sup>

During the colonial war, the three Angolan liberation movements failed to reach an agreement on what to do when the war came to an end. They failed also to discuss eventual power-sharing models should Angola become independent.<sup>8</sup> Of the three Angolan movements, only the MPLA had strong links to Portugal and to the Portuguese communist party. The perception that a left-wing military government in Portugal, with a strong communist composition, would favour the MPLA seems to have compounded distrust among the Angolan parties and it ultimately created space for foreign intervention in Angola. It certainly did not help to build confidence in the Alvor Accords in January 1975—a process in which Portugal acted as mediator.

The civil war was the consequence of the climate of mutual suspicion carried over from the liberation struggle. The inability of the movements to create a political platform for consensus, coupled with the ideological turmoil and intolerance that characterised the anti-colonial period, all contributed to this state of affairs.



According to the Alvor Accords, signed on 15 January 1975, Angola would become independent on 11 November 1975. Until then, there would be a transitional government of 12 ministers (three Portuguese and three from each Angolan movement) and a Portuguese high commissioner appointed by the Portuguese president. The transitional government would be under the command of a presidential council that included one representative from each movement. The transitional government was empowered to organise elections to take place within nine months and to set up common security forces consisting of 48,000 troops (24,000 Portuguese and 8,000 from each Angolan movement). By February 1976 all Portuguese troops were to leave Angola. The Alvor Accords also protected the interests of the Portuguese settlers in Angola and their rights to Angolan citizenship.<sup>9</sup>

The terms of the treaty seemed correct but the assumptions were perhaps misguided. There was no trust among the parties signing the Accords and the impartiality of Portugal as a mediator was questioned.<sup>10</sup> Members of the Angolan delegations would often tell the press that: "During Alvor we debated independence and nothing but independence."<sup>11</sup> And the MPLA delegation added: "... there is no unity among the movements. There is only a common programme."<sup>12</sup>

The ability of Portugal to implement a political solution was questionable, and the continuing deployment of Portuguese troops raised dissent in Portugal. A Portuguese soldier who arrived in Angola in December 1974 told a reporter about the demonstrations against the shipping of Portuguese troops to Angola: "There was a strong opposition to the shipping of troops ... when our battalion was ready to embark there were incidents with a demonstration."<sup>13</sup>

The immediate result of the coup on Angola was the exodus of Angolan nationalists from the Portuguese armed forces to the movement of their choice—MPLA, FNLA or UNITA, carrying with them as much weaponry as possible. While the Angolan nationalists were diverting weapons to the liberation movements, the Portuguese armed forces were engaged in similar activities, with a bias towards the MPLA, which only served to increase the perception of the questionable impartiality of Portugal as the mediator of the Alvor Accords and as a neutral implementer of the transition period leading to independence. According to a Portuguese soldier, who only left Angola on the eve of independence:

As you know, some people just wanted us [Portuguese soldiers] to do what many other [Portuguese soldiers] were doing and that was hand

over the weapons to the MPLA. In Quibaxe, many people did just that. In our battalion, practically everything [meaning weapons and stockpiles] was handed over to the MPLA.<sup>14</sup>

Between the signing of the Alvor Accords in January until independence in 11 November 1975, the three movements spent more effort in positioning their military wings to take over Luanda than in implementing any of the provisions of the Alvor Accords. The perception was that the party controlling Luanda on 11 November would control the rest of Angola.

The civil war started in Luanda between the two factions of the MPLA, which found itself divided between Agostinho Neto's faction and Daniel Chipenda's 'Active Revolt' faction. In order to contain Neto's faction, the Active Revolt asked for the support of the FNLA. The participation of ELNA on the side of Chipenda led to further animosity between the MPLA and FNLA, and fighting between both movements intensified. The fighting carried on and escalated with the participation of hundreds of civilians. The FNLA and UNITA were forced to leave Luanda and their leadership sought refuge in the north of the country (FNLA) and in the centre south of the country (UNITA).

Each movement took control of the area in which it found its natural or historic support base. In addition, and of critical importance for a comprehensive understanding of this period, the end of the anti-colonial war and the withdrawal of the Portuguese from Angola generated a movement of former soldiers of the colonial army into the armed forces of the different liberation movements. This was a spontaneous and voluntary process in that each person could freely decide which liberation movement or force to choose. As elsewhere, these choices were based on a variety of factors, such as the regional distribution of the forces, family or ethnic ties, personal knowledge and the existence of friends in the different movements. It should also be noted that this process also involved students and other young people.

Given the political instability in Portugal at the time of decolonisation, the climate of mistrust among the Angolan movements, the ideological differences, the perception of Portuguese bias towards one of the contenders and the enormous natural wealth of Angola, foreign interests were quick to form and consolidate alliances; their purpose to ensure a friendly regime in independent Angola rather than to support a liberation movement. This escalated the war and ensured that advanced weaponry would play a major part in its course.

As independence day approached, conflict among the liberation movements increased; and so did foreign support for each movement, which took the form of military assistance and the supply of weapons. The dawn of Angolan independence saw the MPLA (with massive support from Cuban troops) controlling Luanda in the face of severe attacks from the FNLA in the north (supported by Zairian forces) and from UNITA in the south (supported by South African troops). On the final day of the Portuguese administration, power was handed over to the Angolan peoples rather than to any specific movement or coalition. In practical terms, the MPLA, as the party controlling Luanda at the time, named a government and proclaimed the People's Republic of Angola, which was quickly acknowledged by several countries. For the MPLA, the conflict turned from a struggle for power into an invasion by foreign forces and into the requirement of a legitimate government to defend the country.

In late January [1975], a high-level United States government policy-making body authorised a grant of US\$300,000 to the pro-Western FNLA, which at the time seemed to be the strongest of the three movements. In March the Soviet Union countered by increasing arms deliveries to the MPLA, and by mid-July that group had become appreciably stronger militarily. Alarmed, the United States increased funding to the FNLA and, for the first time, funded UNITA. Cuba, which had been aiding the MPLA since the mid-1960s, sent military instructors in the late spring of 1975. By early October, more Cuban military personnel had arrived, this time primarily combat troops; their total then probably reached between 1,100 and 1,500.

In April the presidents of Zambia, Tanzania, and Botswana decided to support Savimbi as leader of an Angolan government of national unity, believing that UNITA attracted the widest popular support in Angola. Savimbi also had the support of some francophone states and of Nigeria and Ghana.<sup>15</sup>

General civil war was now irreversible and conditions were ripe for foreign intervention in support of the belligerents. In an attempt to consolidate their tenuous but established lines of control, the two main movements (MPLA and FNLA) actively sought increased support from their backers. The FNLA obtained increased support from Mobutu when he gave his tacit approval to the use of Zaire as the rear-guard base

of ELNA—also important because it permitted the transit of mercenaries from this country in support of ELNA (with the support of several European countries and with the US at the fore). The MPLA also sought increased support from its allies, including the Soviet Union, Cuban internationalist forces, Marian Nguabi's Congo Brazzaville and the Portuguese Communist Party operating via the Movement of the Armed Forces, which was at this time in control of the post-revolution government in Lisbon.

UNITA, however, as the smallest and least powerful of the three liberation movements, did not at this stage benefit from the direct support of third parties. Nevertheless, it established a number of agreements with the FNLA for the creation of common fronts in the country. Although UNITA had the manpower, it did not have the equipment for war, except for a limited arsenal recovered when the Portuguese abandoned some of the areas now controlled by UNITA.

Shortly before independence both the FNLA and the MPLA were experiencing leadership problems and were militarily weakened. Militarily, the war had reached a stalemate. UNITA was still in the initial stages of its struggle and did not yet have a steady supporter as the other movements had. UNITA's lack of military leverage turned it into a particularly interested stakeholder to the Alvor Accords—UNITA had everything to gain from a political solution but had no leverage to back it. The foreign support provided to the other two players, the FNLA and the MPLA, attracted them to a military solution of the conflict rather than a political one.

The supply of large numbers of weapons from the Soviet Union combined with technical assistance from Cuba to the MPLA after the April 1974 coup must have made a political compromise less and less attractive for the movement. While negotiating the Alvor Accords, the MPLA received large amounts of weapons from the Soviet Union and had their troops trained by Cuban officers. Reports estimate that between April and October 1975 Angola was supplied with 27 shiploads of weapons—enough, it was claimed, to arm 20,000 troops. Armed with Soviet weapons, the MPLA set out to secure Cabinda and the major urban centres. Violence escalated with increasing confrontation between MPLA and FNLA militants. By June there were already 5,000 dead.<sup>16</sup> The total amount of Soviet military support has been valued at US\$400 million, so that the US support of around US\$60 million paled by comparison.<sup>17</sup>

Foreign intervention dramatically altered the theatre of operations—the war was no longer scattered guerrilla warfare but instead became a

conventional war, with front lines and a rearguard. In addition, the levels of training and the types of equipment were fundamentally different from what the movements had been accustomed to. The chaotic decolonisation had opened doors for open military intervention in Angola. And it was this intervention that turned war into an option, by arming and training parties reluctant to pursue a political solution.

#### FAPLA AND CUBAN TROOPS

In 1975 the MPLA integrated between 3,500 and 7,000 anti-Mobutu Katangese in exile in Angola into the FAPLA force. These Katangese troops joined the MPLA in opposition to the FNLA, which was supported by Mobutu.<sup>18</sup> The arrival date of Cuban troops in Angola has been subject to much debate but accounts of the presence of Cuban troops already in mid-1975 are too many from varied sources to be dismissed as propaganda. In mid to late 1975 some 230 Cuban military advisers arrived in Luanda to train FAPLA in the use of the Soviet equipment.<sup>19</sup> After declaring independence, the MPLA decided to strike against what was considered a foreign invasion and soon the Cuban troops reached 10,000 with long-range guns and armoured personnel carriers.<sup>20</sup>

#### THE FNLA AND UNITA

The FNLA had been the movement considered the strongest in military terms. However, at the time of independence several internal disputes had considerably weakened its capability. Right after the coup in Portugal, the FNLA had received support from China in the form of military assistance and 450 tons of weapons. In January 1975, the month the Alvor Accords were signed, the US had increased its covert support to the FNLA with an award of US\$300,000 “for organisational purposes”. The support may have been covert and cautious but it was also quick and generous; it is equally possible that it may have diminished the attraction of a peaceful solution through a power-sharing model. Later in July 1975 the US would increase its support with a grant of US\$60 million.<sup>21</sup>

The supply of weapons from the US to the FNLA was done via Zaire, where they would replace weapons already delivered by Mobutu or smuggled them into Angola to give the FNLA military leverage vis-à-vis the Russian-backed MPLA.<sup>22</sup>

But Zaire also contributed with troops, and some sources mention that by mid-May 1975 there were 1,200 Zairian soldiers operating in Angola.<sup>23</sup> Mobutu had many reasons for intervening in the conflict in Angola. He wished to secure access to the Cabinda oil, thus favouring a friendly regime in independent Angola. Relations with the MPLA were not an option because of the alliances with opposing blocs and there were family ties between Mobutu and Holden Roberto, leader of the FNLA. In addition, the MPLA was supporting the Katangese opposition.

In January 1975 the FNLA claimed a force of 21,000 troops: 9,000 in Angola and 12,000 on stand-by in Zaire.

UNITA had been said to have a force not stronger than a thousand troops but in April reports were claiming a force of 40,000.<sup>24</sup> Estimates at the numbers of troops in FNLA and UNITA are as disparate as those ascribed to the MPLA; movements seemed to boost or understate their force according to the political considerations of the moment.

Initially, the US envisaged support for UNITA with much caution. Roberto and the FNLA had a long history of alliance and connection with Mobutu; while UNITA was a relatively new player with weak military capacity.<sup>25</sup> Of all the parties to the Alvor Accords, UNITA was the only one likely to benefit from a political solution, but as violence escalated between the other two parties UNITA was sucked into the turmoil and in August 1975 declared war on the MPLA.<sup>26</sup> It is interesting to note that by August UNITA had already approached South Africa; the party that until shortly before had a vested interest in a political solution was now able to compete militarily on a par with the other two contenders.

Covert military support from the US to UNITA started in September 1975 via Zambia; it is estimated that US support to the FNLA and UNITA amounted to US\$64 million and not US\$32 million as stated officially. Around September 1975 UNITA secured the support of South Africa in an attempt to reach and control Luanda before the date set for independence. UNITA's approach to South Africa had started in mid-1975 in the search for a substantial foreign supplier of military equipment.<sup>27</sup> In political terms, such an alliance was to prove a disaster but in military and immediate terms South African support tipped the balance of power towards UNITA, even if only temporarily.

The first big operations took place when the South Africans entered the country with 6,000 troops in support of the FNLA, coming from Namibia and advancing towards the centre of Angola in the direction of Luanda. From the northern borders with Zaire simultaneously came the

FNLA forces, stopping at only 12 km of the capital. It was in this environment that the independence of Angola was proclaimed on 11 November 1975. Neto proclaimed independence in Luanda, creating the People's Republic of Angola and, in Huambo, the FNLA and UNITA proclaimed the Democratic Republic of Angola.

In April 1976 news of US covert support to UNITA leaked to the American press and South African troops were made to retreat to northern Namibia, from where they provided discreet but steady support to UNITA. The South African intervention rallied political support by African countries in favour of the MPLA, and on 10 February 1976 the OAU recognised the People's Republic of Angola. The alliance between FNLA and UNITA was finished and their proclamation of independence failed.<sup>28</sup> The South African invasion had consumed US\$130 million<sup>29</sup> and South Africa was not prepared to back up UNITA on its own. Nevertheless, the South African Defence Force (SADF) undertook occasional small incursions into southern Angola under the pretext of pursuing SWAPO guerrillas.

With the arrival of the Cubans, the support of the Katangese for the MPLA against the FNLA rear bases in Zaire, the restructuring of FAPLA in 1976 and, finally, the departure of the South Africans, UNITA and the FNLA were forced to abandon the towns they controlled and opted for guerrilla activity. It should be noted that the exit of the South Africans was largely a result of the inconsistency of US policy towards Angola: 1975 was an election year in the US in the context of widespread opposition to the war in Vietnam. The Democrats, who won the election, reversed previous Republican encouragement of South African intervention in Angola. Without the diplomatic support from the US, the South Africans could not continue their direct military intervention in support of the FNLA. The South Africans ended this intervention leaving some of the ELNA/FNLA forces along the border with Namibia without protection. The rapid southern advance of FAPLA and the Cubans prompted the FNLA to sign an agreement with South Africa for the integration of its forces in the now famous 32 Battalion (Buffalo Battalion), as a means of allowing them to pass, together with their families, to the South African side.

#### THE BIPOLARISATION OF THE CONFLICT AND THE GROWTH OF UNITA

South African support for UNITA had the immediate result of consolidating the MPLA government as the legitimate government of independent Angola. However, in spite of the defeat inflicted on its two

opponents, peace was not forthcoming. Furthermore, the MPLA was experiencing internal challenges to its leadership, which was consolidated by violence in 1977. Regime reprisals against those perceived as having been involved in the unrest of 1977 were ruthlessly prosecuted and the MPLA government set up security institutions similar to those of the colonial regime.

UNITA was still reluctantly being supported by South Africa, with training and air cover,<sup>30</sup> and kept its ties to Mobutu's Zaire. The MPLA, however, had welcomed and supported the Katangese opponents to Mobutu. After two aborted invasions of Zaire by the Katangese opposition and several border skirmishes, the MPLA and Mobutu signed a peace agreement in 1978, which excluded Zairian support to the Angolan movements in the opposition. This would be the *coup de grace* for the FNLA and would keep UNITA with a lowered profile for some time. Through the 1980s until 1991 with the Bicesse accord, the Angolan conflict continued in the cyclic pattern it had taken early on.

The survival of UNITA from 1979 until the Bicesse accord was based on its alliance with the US. The Clark Amendment of 1976 precluded open American support to UNITA but the Carter administration could allow Angola to become the easy victim of Soviet influence. Besides, American business was thriving and even though Reagan was unable to lift the Clark Amendment until his second term, the US supported UNITA politically and diplomatically. Furthermore, the US illegally supplied UNITA with weapons via a third party; weapons were coming not from the US but rather from client states such as Belgium, Switzerland and Israel, with funding issuing from Saudi Arabia and other Western partners:

To facilitate delivery of UNITA weapons, a covertly managed Central Intelligence Agency charter firm won the air supply contract for Angola's government diamond mines. Legitimate supplies of mining equipment were thus carried in conjunction with illegitimate supplies of weapons delivered to opposition units camped out beyond the diamond mines.<sup>31</sup>

But in August 1981 South Africa was no longer hiding behind the SWAPO pretext:

... South Africa no longer pretended to restrict its incursions to the pursuit of Swapo units but openly intensified its assaults on Angolan



economic targets and began to occupy Angolan territory ... furthermore, SADF support for UNITA in 1982 and 1983 increased to the extent that the South African Air Force (SAAF) participated in UNITA operations against Fapla.<sup>32</sup>

In 1984 Reagan won his second mandate, lifted the Clark Amendment and increased support to UNITA, and the conflict escalated once more as war spread again to the highlands.

During this cycle both parties targeted populations for supplies and manpower but the contenders also engaged in conventional war battles, such as the battle for Cuito Canavale in 1987. By now the Cuban troops amounted to 50,000 and the debt to Moscow a billion dollars.<sup>33</sup> The South Africans realised that they did not have the capacity to invade Angola successfully.

The testimonies collected for this chapter provide an interesting insight into this period. According to them, in the immediate post-independence context it is important to consider the truce between the MPLA and the FNLA in 1978, which gave the civil war in Angola the bipolar structure (MPLA versus UNITA) that would characterise it for decades to come. During the anti-colonial war, several hundred Katangese had found refuge in Angola, where the Portuguese settlers made use of them in the fight against the liberation movements. While the Katangese aimed for Katanga's secession from Mobutu's Zaire and for that could use the support of the MPLA, the MPLA needed them to fight the FNLA and in particular to destroy its bases in Zaire. As it was in the interests of Angola (MPLA) to end the FNLA's operations from Zaire, President Neto took very clear political decisions, believing that in order to defeat the FNLA, a pact should first be sought with Mobutu. Only subsequently could the FNLA be purged.

In 1978, the MPLA and Mobutu agreed on such a pact. In return for the end of Mobutu's support for the FNLA, the MPLA would guarantee the control of the Katangese within its territory, in particular to stop the infiltration of Katanga and lower Zaire. This agreement led to the expulsion of the FNLA from Zaire. Deprived of its rear bases, the FNLA started to disintegrate. Of importance to the topic of this chapter is the fact that some of the FNLA's cadres were integrated into the MPLA and ELNA forces and became part of FAPLA. Other cadres and leaders looked for exile in Europe and the US. Those who tried to resist formed Comira (Military Committee for the Resistance in Angola), which did not last, although the support of South Africa might have been possible at this time.

The demise of the FNLA and its armed wing had an immediate effect in the military correlation of forces—from this moment onwards, FAPLA and its allies directed their efforts towards fighting a single enemy, UNITA.

Unable to fight the MPLA/Cuban forces in the cities due to the imbalance in troop numbers, equipment and technical capacity, UNITA opted for guerrilla warfare, spreading its forces in small units throughout the centre-south provinces.

UNITA's leadership found refuge in the 'chanas' of the east, from where it co-ordinated the movement of small guerrilla units towards the interior of the country. FAPLA's military operations in the area during 1977, which for the first time included air support, forced UNITA's leadership to move from the east towards the south-east of the country, installing itself in the uninhabited region of Kuando Kubango. Although at this time UNITA had no significant international support, it had strengthened its arsenal of light and support weapons during the South African intervention.

In the course of this intervention, all arms captured by the South Africans had been given to the FNLA or UNITA. As was previously mentioned, UNITA fought on the side of ELNA and the South Africans during their simultaneous advance to Luanda before 11 November 1975.

In Kuando Kubango, UNITA found suitable conditions for the installation of a support base—UNITA needed a vast area inside Angola, difficult to reach and capable of lodging the party leadership structures and the headquarters of its armed forces. Once this support base and the links with its guerrilla units scattered around the centre and south of the country had been firmly established, UNITA's leadership initiated the approach to the South Africans. Begun in September 1978, UNITA's overtures to the South Africans had been given the blessing of two critical Western powers, France and the US. A number of factors explain the unlikely alliance between apartheid South Africa and UNITA, namely:

- The encouragement and support of the West, which continued to regard Angola as strategically important in the fight against communist expansion.
- UNITA's need of a strong international backer in order to sustain its war effort.

- The realisation by the South Africans that the fight against SWAPO and the ANC (both supported by the MPLA) could not be done inside their lines of defence.
- The disintegration of ELNA, which South Africa regarded as its ally.

In 1978 UNITA received the first tranches of logistical support from South Africa and in 1979 various training centres were installed, some within Namibian territory and others along the borders with Namibia, within Angola. These developments enabled UNITA to restructure its forces and equip them with new weaponry. In restructuring its forces, UNITA divided these into scattered guerrillas (small groups carrying out sabotage operations), compact guerrillas with stronger offensive capability (in groups estimated at up to 150 men), semi-regular units and, finally, special forces units.

From 1985, after the establishment of the so-called free territory of Angola (*Terras Livres de Angola*), which comprised the whole of Kuando Kubango province, the bigger part of Cunene province as well as part of Moxico province, UNITA's first regular units were launched, with a new organisational system, heavy armament, motorised artillery and logistical support. At this time, UNITA's semi-regular units were transferred further into the interior of the country in order to defend the free territory from the enemy inner defence lines. While, during the struggle against colonialism, UNITA's support bases were in the east of the country, the south-east of the country became the main bastion during the civil war.

#### INTERNATIONALISED CIVIL WAR

From 1977 to 1989 the civil war in Angola was truly internationalised, with foreign forces fighting alongside Angolans—on one side FAPLA and Cuban troops and on the other side FALA and South African troops. Tactically, this period is characterised by a gradual movement towards a more conventional type of war, with infantry and mechanised artillery gaining importance for UNITA, and the MPLA seeking to acquire an air combat capability.

The launch of UNITA's semi-regular units and special forces allowed the movement to widen its territorial gains by dislodging various FAPLA units from a number of positions. This largely explains UNITA's control of a vast territory without significant opposition. In this way, it was able

to develop political, cultural and diplomatic activities almost unhindered. These included negotiations for additional support. In fact, in order to reach UNITA's headquarters in Jamba (and therefore its leadership), FAPLA and the Cubans had to cover such a long distance that they were rendered vulnerable.

The alliance between the South Africans and UNITA was a determining factor that changed the course of events. The first two years of co-operation proved to the South Africans that UNITA was a secure ally to which all available support could be channelled. On a political level, this was confirmed by the several visits that Savimbi made to Pretoria and that Pik Botha made to Jamba. Although in the beginning the South Africans intended to provide no more than logistical support and training to FALA for the defence of the Cunene line, the MPLA's increased support for SWAPO and the ANC (which now fought from inside Angola) prompted the South Africans to redeploy in the field of operations.

FAPLA's repeated attempts to break the FALA lines in order to destroy UNITA's headquarters and reach the border gave the war a more conventional nature. UNITA proceeded to study the best way to defend its bastion. It chose to take the offensive and procure additional means. At the same time, the government was waiting for the necessary conditions to enable it effectively and simultaneously to hit FALA's defence lines and its rearguard. Thus, FAPLA acquired fighter and transport planes in order to support its infantry in the destruction of FALA's rearguard. FALA replied by using field-guns and anti-aircraft artillery as well as land mines and explosives.

From 1985, FAPLA started using large numbers of armoured units and launching periodic offensives, which UNITA found increasingly difficult to stop. The South Africans stepped up their support with heavy long-range artillery and the introduction of light vehicles armed with anti-tank weapons.

It was during these years that the US resumed its support to UNITA. Following Ronald Reagan's election, UNITA could now count on two sources of support. The resumption of American support with the lifting of the existing embargo against UNITA further entrenched the internationalisation of the conflict. Angola's civil war was increasingly regarded by the US and the Soviet Union as strategically critical. The two superpowers had deployed their own military and diplomatic advisers to both sides, and increasingly the war was managed from the Pentagon and the Kremlin.

## EARLY DÉTENTE AND THE BEGINNINGS OF A NEGOTIATED SOLUTION

The result of the escalation of the conflict during the 1980s led once more to an impasse. In the 1980s, international support enabled UNITA to sustain the MPLA counter-attacks, to set up a form of public administration to manage the territory under its influence, and to establish headquarters in Jamba, considered as the capital of UNITA's territory. The presence of foreign troops fighting on Angolan soil, coupled with the risk of indefinitely prolonging the conflict led the parties to consider (hesitantly at first, and without UNITA) a negotiated solution that would deal with the international aspects of the conflict.

After 1985, UNITA was (with US support) able to extend its operations to the whole country. With little expectation of a military victory, UNITA was trying to increase its leverage in case negotiations should start.

UNITA's armed forces were now a conventional military organisation with command and specialised staff organs, a formal hierarchy of ranks, an impressive array of weapons and equipment, and considerable international support.<sup>34</sup>

Western economic interest in Namibia started to decline in the mid-1980s, as the oil crisis of the 1970s was resolved and public opinion against nuclear energy increased. Namibian uranium lost some of its appeal, Angolan oil gained in importance, support to Angola was a burden on the Soviet economy, and social unrest in South Africa was stretching the capacity of the apartheid regime. In this context, and with the added imminence of independence for Namibia, Angola, Cuba and South Africa signed the Tripartite Agreement in New York in December 1988. The implementation of this agreement was to be overseen by the United Nations (UN), through its UN Angola Verification Mission 1 (UNAVEM 1). This mission was to stay until May 1991, when all foreign troops had left Angola.

The New York Accords regulated Cuban withdrawal from Angola and the simultaneous withdrawal of South Africans from Angola and Namibia, which would become independent. The agreement also foresaw the formation of a demilitarised zone along the Angola–Namibia border—and, although UNITA had been ignored in these negotiations, it had forces deployed along the border.

Although the New York Accords (signed in 1988 and mediated by US Assistant Secretary of State Chester Crocker) took close to a decade to

be achieved, they provided the framework for the disengagement of foreign troops (Cubans and South Africans) from Angola and the independence of Namibia. Many observers felt that once the international aspects of the conflict were dealt with, internal negotiations with UNITA could begin.

The relatively swift implementation of the New York Accords and the independence of Namibia, in a context of international détente and the end of the Cold War, created ripe conditions for initial contact between UNITA and the Angolan government.

The 1980s were the decade of Reagan in the US and Gorbachev in the Soviet Union; of the fall of the Berlin Wall; and of the Namibian peace process. Foreign support—or the lack of such support—to Angola would determine the cycles of the conflict and at the end of the decade foreign troops were made to withdraw from Angola. It was thought now that the lack of international intervention would make possible a political decision to the conflict, but this was not to be. Diplomatic pressure was able to bring the warring parties together to negotiate and sign the Bicesse Agreement in May 1991, but the process was almost as flawed as the Alvor Accords and had a similar outcome, even though its implementation was to be undertaken by the UN Angola Verification Mission 2 (UNAVEM 2).

#### 1991 BICESSE ACCORDS, FORMATION OF FAA AND RESUMPTION OF WAR

The Bicesse Accords represented the culmination of a series of contacts, at first informal and then official, between the MPLA government and UNITA to reach a negotiated settlement to the civil war. For the purposes of this chapter, and beyond the political framework defined by the agreements (based on the holding of Angola's first democratic elections), Bicesse defined the general basis for the formation of a single unified Angolan Armed Force (FAA). For this purpose, the agreements foresaw the creation of the CCFA (joint committee for the forming of the FAA), operating under nine main directives defining the legal framework and the steps needed for the formation of the FAA.

The Bicesse peace agreement was supposed to rule the transition from conflict to political co-existence. Bicesse was also mediated by Portugal—this time through the foreign affairs minister, whose political path ranged from left radical Maoist in the 1970s to right-wing minister in the 1990s. Russia and the US were observers to the process and the three countries constituted what became known as the troika.

The peace agreement established a cease-fire for both warring parties and UNITA forces were to be integrated into a single national army—the FAA. The national army should have 50,000 troops. It also included a clause that prevented either party from procuring new weapons and re-arming; this clause is known as the triple zero clause. UNITA acknowledged the authority of the government of Angola that was to stay in place and set the date for the first general elections in Angola, while UNAVEM 2 would co-ordinate and oversee the transition. The troika had an observer and diplomatic role to ensure that the parties complied with the agreed clauses.

The political climate in Portugal had changed since 1975. After the turmoil of the 1970s and the economic crisis of the 1980s, Portugal had been a full member of the European Union since 1986. Links with Europe took precedence to links to the former colonies. The elected president, Mário Soares, was the former leader of the Socialist Party, one of the negotiators in the Alvor Accords. Soares was also in a political coalition with a centre-right government. In terms of Angolan politics, the situation was almost the reverse of 1975. The Portuguese leaders seemed now to favour UNITA: the Portuguese government because of political and ideological affinities, and the Soares family because of the close ties they had at the time with Savimbi. If in 1974 Portugal could have been blamed for partiality towards the MPLA, less than 20 years later the wheel had turned and UNITA seemed to be now the preferred choice. One way or the other it seems Portugal insisted on the pattern of questionable neutrality. Most analysts, stressing the historical ties with Angola, will argue that the reverse was true: that Portugal's position was favourable to the government. However, Portugal was now more concerned with its role in Europe than in Africa. Also, in spite of the socialist ideology there were apparently business ties between the Soares family and Jonas Savimbi. The then Portuguese centre-right prime minister provided only half-hearted support for the MPLA.<sup>35</sup>

For the warring parties the situation was different too: in military terms and just as in 1975, the conflict had reached an impasse but, different from 1975, the two armies were now two efficient war machines. Politically, however, the world was now different. In 1975 UNITA had had everything to gain from a political solution, which would have given legitimacy to a relatively young movement still struggling for international support. Now, in 1991, after years of support by powerful international allies, UNITA had enough political clout to stall and to adhere, or not, to the agreement. Although UNITA

now could not count on US military support (due to the triple zero clause), the US started diplomatic relations with the government of Angola only in 1993, after the war had resumed.

Furthermore, the Bicesse peace agreement seems to have underestimated the difficulties the transition entailed. There was great mistrust between the contenders; some joint commissions that should have been led by the UN were entrusted alternatively to the MPLA and UNITA; UNAVEM 2 was understaffed and underfunded. And, while the international community turned a blind eye, one of the parties was obviously neither demobilising nor disarming. The new Angolan army—the FAA—was empowered two days before election day.

According to one testimony, the formation of the FAA began following the implementation of the cease-fire negotiated in Bicesse. Once implemented, the accords foresaw that the UNITA forces would take up their quarters in their previously established areas while FAPLA would remain in its own barracks after withdrawing from the line of battle. The basic formation of the FAA would be completed before the elections, and recruitment, on a voluntary basis, would be done from both FAPLA and FALA units. The surpluses from FAPLA and FALA would remain in their barracks under the control of UNAVEM 2, awaiting demobilisation and reintegration into society at a later stage. The FAA would have no political affiliation, its neutrality being secured by the parties acting in the political and military joint commission (CCPM) and the committee for the formation of the FAA.

Following the sequence of the wars in Angola, one may conclude that, although Bicesse created a platform for an initial understanding between UNITA and the MPLA, the causes of the war had not been taken into consideration sufficiently to achieve a final peace. The Bicesse process required the full commitment and trust of both parties, especially since the responsibility for its implementation was largely given to them (even though the UN and the Troika of Portugal, the US and Russia had been given a monitoring function). Mistrust, however, continued to characterise the relations between the belligerents. Suspicious of a surprise government attack, UNITA kept its reserve forces instead of transferring them to barracks and demobilising. For its part, the MPLA government did not want to demobilise FAPLA—in fact, expecting the end of the war, many FAPLA soldiers had deserted and reportedly committed acts of vandalism.

The elections should have been the crucial element for the consolidation of peace. Instead, they exacerbated the climate of tension



as the instruments foreseen in the Bicesse accords as fundamental elements of stability had not been implemented. These instruments, particularly the formation of unified armed forces and an integrated police, were only in their embryonic stages. Moreover, when the elections took place and the results were published, the two armies that had fought for so many years were still almost intact.

Both parties were convinced that they would win the election. When published, the results were a total disillusionment for UNITA, which rejected them, placed its units in a state of readiness and transferred part of its leadership to Huambo. The conflict re-started during attempts at finding a framework to prevent the collapse of the process. In a very short time, war had spread to the provinces, and because UNITA was in a better position at the start of the conflict, it managed to take control of two-thirds of the country, with only a few provincial capitals remaining outside of its control.

Because at the time of demobilisation the government could not hide troops, many were transferred to the police in order to give the government a reserve force. It was then that the ninjas<sup>36</sup> were formed and they were practically partisan troops. Some demobilised soldiers from FAPLA had accepted to join the police under the promise they would undergo special training, but the war resumed and there was massive desertion from the police. There were others, however, who asked to be reintegrated into the new FAA. When the war started, many of the demobilised UNITA soldiers rejoined UNITA. At the time, the FAA had only integrated 4,000 UNITA men—mainly at the administrative level. There were hardly any men from the operative level of UNITA; the operatives never joined the FAA and they went back to war.<sup>37</sup>

The inability of the recently formed FAA to oppose UNITA's advance and the intensity of the war during this period led the government to abandon the triple zero clause of the Bicesse accords, which prevented the parties as well as the Troika of mediators from procuring or supplying weapons for either side. The government resorted to article 50, which required it to defend the territorial integrity of the country. UNITA, for its part, had already abandoned the clause and had found sources of logistical support.

It is interesting to note that the mediators to the Bicesse accord waived the triple zero clause almost at the time the UN issued its first sanctions against UNITA.

## THE 1994 LUSAKA PROTOCOL

In an attempt to put the derailed process back on track, various meetings took place initially with the support of the Troika and then with the mediation of the UN. These contacts resulted in what is known as the Lusaka Protocol, signed in the Zambian capital in 1994. However, the parties kept tight control of their respective areas.

The period between the signing and implementation of the protocol could be characterised as one of 'no peace, no war'. The UN had authorised the deployment of UNAVEM 3, now a more robust peacekeeping, monitoring and verification mission. Yet, Savimbi's strong suspicions that the elections had been rigged by the government and the fact (later confirmed) that he did not entirely agree with the final terms of the protocol, led UNITA to reorganise and rearm its reserve forces (outside the control of UNAVEM 3), while at the same time implementing some of the provisions of the protocol. For example, some of Savimbi's actions towards the implementation of the protocol included ordering UNITA soldiers to their quarters, sending generals to Luanda to take positions in the FAA, and appointing both ministers to serve in the Government of Unity and National Reconciliation (GURN) and deputies to serve in the National Assembly.

The government realised that in order to defend itself adequately it would have to reorganise the FAA. As previously noted, however, the FAA already included UNITA cadres in its ranks. These remained loyal to the FAA in spite of the renewed hostilities, and played a fundamental role during the post-Lusaka period and in particular during the last phase of the war, from 1998 to 2002. In the immediate post-election period, the FAA remained largely an embryonic structure. The restart of the war in 1992 forced the government to transfer the remaining FAPLA soldiers and officers to the FAA and to form FAA operational units. In fact, it was the rearming and reorganisation of the FAA during the Lusaka period that helped to explain the total defeat of UNITA after the war had resumed across the entire country in 1998 and 1999.

During the post-Lusaka period, UNITA gradually strengthened its conventional capability, largely without support from third parties. The movement found itself without allies and lived under the pressure of UN sanctions. Angola's natural resources now became critical for the sustainability of the movement. UNITA's control of vast areas of the country, rich in mineral resources and especially diamonds, allowed it to finance the war effort. In addition, by controlling territory, it controlled local populations, airports and other infrastructure that helped it

maintain the effort for several years. The embargo notwithstanding, its ability to procure weapons and ammunition in the international arms market, and particularly from former Eastern bloc countries, was also an important factor at this time.

#### THE LAST PHASE OF THE WAR, 1998–2002

When the war resumed in 1998, a strengthened and reorganised FAA gradually and systematically took control of the centre of the country, capturing or destroying UNITA's conventional arms and reoccupying areas under UNITA control. Within the context of the international sanctions regime, it became more and more difficult for UNITA to replace lost weaponry. In addition, as the FAA advanced throughout the country, many UNITA troops were brought into the FAA fold.

This last phase of the war was a logical consequence of the events following the 1991 elections and the culmination of several years of non-compliance with the Lusaka Protocol. The government had lost its patience. Although various contingents of troops had been confined to their barracks, the protocol was not implemented in its entirety, and the demobilisation, disarmament and re-integration requirements had largely failed.

When Savimbi died in February 2002 UNITA's capacity to resist was already doubtful. UNITA had already lost much of its material and human resources. Moreover, the strategic elements that had given the advantage to UNITA had been lost to the FAA, including territory, material resources, troops and officers who had surrendered and who were now serving in the FAA, a scattered leadership and, finally, faulty communications. Savimbi was by then faced with three options: to accept the unconditional implementation of the remainder of the Lusaka Protocol; to go into exile; or to face death on the battle field.

With the death of Savimbi and facing total collapse, UNITA had no choice but to negotiate. The Luena Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), negotiated by the military leaderships of both sides, was signed shortly after Savimbi's death. In this MoU, UNITA was presented with an olive branch: although it was finished militarily, the party still existed and it should assume the responsibilities entrusted to it in terms of the unfinished implementation of the Lusaka Protocol.

Angola is now facing the problem of reintegrating both the ex-combatants and the demobilised forces (FAPLA and FALA) in accordance with the Alvor, Bicesse and Lusaka processes. While

demobilisation has been completed, even if imperfectly, reintegration will remain an on-going process for some time, and will depend on the political will of the Angolan authorities and, partly, on the support of the international community.

### **THE ANGOLAN ARMED FORCES TODAY**

Two-and-a-half years of peace are not sufficient for a clear appreciation of the FAA's peacetime organisation, doctrine and size. Although subject to some minor alterations, the FAA largely retains the structure it had during the conflict, although a more defensive approach is being advocated and practised. Moreover, following a directive from the commander-in-chief, a profound restructuring of the FAA is now being studied and planned. The present institutional and legal framework is therefore based in the Bicesse and Lusaka accords, which contain the general principles for its formation. The Constitutional Law and the Law of National Defence are additional legal documents in this regard.

Today, the FAA can be considered a factor of national unity. This is because it includes soldiers of different political and social origins and from all Angola's ethno-linguistic groups and all parts of the country. As will be discussed below, the FAA's strategic positioning will depend on the country's positioning within sub-regional, African and international organisations.

### CONSTITUTIONAL, LEGAL AND POLITICAL FRAMEWORK

At present and within the legal framework of the country, the FAA is entrenched in the constitution as a permanent, regular and non-partisan state institution, under the authority of the political power and obeying the organs of sovereignty. It is required to:

- defend Angola militarily in terms of national defence policy; and
- guarantee the independence of Angola's people against any aggression or external threat in terms of the constitution and international law.

Compulsory conscription is required by the constitution. Consequently, and from a legal point of view, the FAA is regarded by the constitution as an institution of the state. It is a permanent and regular force subject to political control and obeying the organs of sovereignty.

The political subordination of the FAA is naturally one of the more important principles of the constitution and the Law of National Defence. Although the FAA is subject to political control, there are essential elements that independently characterise it. These include its functioning, cohesion, discipline and mission. A wide internal autonomy is accorded to the FAA, including the management of its leadership. The head of state, the National Assembly, the government, the prime minister and the minister of defence share political responsibility for the FAA, while the commander-in-chief and the chiefs of staff hold the technical and military responsibility.

#### NATIONAL DEFENCE POLICY AND COMPOSITION

The army, navy and air force are the main branches of the FAA. The numerical composition of the FAA is difficult to assess. This is largely a consequence of the turbulent way it developed. While the size and composition of the FAA are still being quantified, it is estimated that its final total establishment will be a maximum of 140,000 men, including active and reserve forces. The size of the FAA is at present inflated, with the result that it constitutes a considerable burden on the state budget, with many arguing that other sectors are underfunded as a result. One argument runs that “if there are no guarantees that a reduced defence budget will automatically result in an increase of welfare expenses for the people, an excessive military capacity may create instability and promote uncertainty and fear and even military conflict”.

When contrasted with the requirement that Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries should allocate some 1.5% of gross domestic product (GDP) for defence and should consider programmes for freezing military expenses for several years, the cost of the FAA to the Angolan state is well out of line. According to SADC data, Angola spent between 19% and 23% of its GDP on defence between 1994 and 1999, except in 1998, when the figure was 11.4%. While it is undeniable that armed forces should be given enough means to guarantee their sustainability and organisation and the fulfilment of their mission, this should not in peacetime come at the expense of other critical sectors of the economy and society.

In terms of national defence policy, the priorities defined by the various legal instruments are to:

- maintain the FAA as the country’s only defence force;

- maintain and retain a conventional capacity to face external attacks;
- maintain the capacity for non-conventional or anti-subversive war;
- face internal threats and others that may arise;
- maintain the capacity to safeguard the inviolability and the security of Angola's borders;
- maintain an intelligence capability in order to uncover latent threats and, if possible, to neutralise them;
- to acquire the capacity to safeguard the country's territorial waters and exclusive economic zone (EEZ); and
- have the capacity to intervene in peace missions at the request of international organisations such as the UN, the African Union (AU), SADC and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS).

The above forms the strategic vision of the FAA. In today's troubled world, a country without armed forces is not respected. In addition, a country with substantial natural resources is envied and may become a looting ground if it does not have armed forces capable of protecting it.

#### STRATEGIC POSITIONING

The strategic importance and positioning of the FAA should be seen from a variety of perspectives, and an in-depth evaluation of its capacity for its roles, in different theatres of operations and with different partners, needs to be undertaken. Such an evaluation should be guided by the following questions.

- What is the FAA's capacity as a conventional force? Should it adopt a defensive or offensive role in the defence and protection of the national territory including the EEZ?
- What is the FAA's capacity as a non-conventional force in counter-subversion activities? What is its capacity in special operations either outside or inside the country?

- What is the FAA's capacity to act in combined operations of the three branches—the army, the air force and the navy?
- What is the FAA's capacity to operate in a theatre of operations close to its borders? Or in a battlefield situated far away?
- What is the FAA's capacity and means to transport personnel and equipment for near and distant theatres of operations?
- What is the FAA's capacity to be involved in missions or conflicts over short-, medium- and long-term periods?
- What is the FAA's capacity to act in combined operations with foreign forces?
- What is the FAA's capacity as a peacekeeping or peace-enforcement force?

The answers to these questions will serve to determine the real strategic importance of the FAA in the Southern and Central African sub-regions. A brief discussion of each of the topics follows.

From a military point of view, no country in the SADC and ECCAS sub-regions, with the exception of South Africa, has, or in the short- and medium-term will have, the capacity to match the FAA. It should be noted that apart from its size, aspects such as the FAA's organisation, discipline and combat experience make the Angolan force far superior to most other armed forces in the region. Although having a certain financial and military capacity and the support of one or more powers (namely the US, France and possibly South Africa), countries such as Uganda and Rwanda do not represent a real threat—both because of their distance from Angola's borders and because of their experience of FAA capabilities, making it unlikely that they would want to experience a new military confrontation or a repeat of the Kitona and Inga episodes.

The FAA's capacity as a conventional offensive force was largely demonstrated in Angola throughout the civil war as well as abroad with interventions in Congo-Brazzaville and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The FAA's defensive capacity was well demonstrated during the years of war against apartheid South Africa in the south of the country, and more specifically in the Cunene, as well as in the defence

of cities and positions subject to the attacks of UNITA forces, as was the defence of Huambo city and Kuito city. The assumption must therefore be that the FAA is capable of defending Angola's territorial integrity.

Unfortunately, the same cannot be said regarding the protection of the EEZ, as the Angolan navy lacks sufficient resources. Without adequate vessels—ocean patrol boats, corvettes or frigates—and maritime reconnaissance and patrol planes, it is impossible to fulfil this essential task. An important part of the country's wealth lies in the maritime zone—fisheries, oil and other minerals, substantial portions of which have not yet been surveyed. The spreading of patrolling responsibilities by different entities—oil companies, the Ministry of Fisheries, the maritime police, the navy and possibly others—lacks consistency and efficiency, makes a rapid and adequate response to threats more difficult, and represents costly duplication and overlap.

Combatting subversion is undoubtedly the FAA's strong point, and where it has the most experience and feels most at ease, especially after the integration of thousands of UNITA elements in the final years of the civil war. The hard apprenticeship of more than 20 years of war against a courageous and disciplined enemy, well equipped, with important international support, knowledge of the terrain and with a strong leadership, an efficient chain of command and served by an efficient communications network, gave FAPLA and later on the FAA the endurance and experience that allowed the Angolan government to successfully prevent Savimbi's quest for power through undemocratic means. This apprenticeship was enriched with the experience gathered from the Portuguese—the cross-line concept and the training and utilisation of commandos—which was very useful although not entirely applied.

We should emphasise that although there are no written guidelines for the FAA, its practical experience is a guarantee of its effectiveness. The experience of special operations, although important, was never taken very seriously despite the enormous experience of the UNITA soldiers. Why not retrain them for possible use in this type of operation?

Combined operations involving the army and the air force have for some time been undertaken by the FAA. However, the same cannot be said regarding combined operations involving the navy and either the army or the air force. During the civil war, due to the strength of the land component, the navy was neglected to the point where it was never equipped with appropriate ships and landing craft. Besides sporadic transport and logistical support for the forces, either by sea or river, the



few experiences in the field of naval operations combined with land forces involved the marines. In addition, there was the experience of 1978 and 1979 with small landing barges in the Kuando Kubango—for the crossing of the Kuito and Kubango rivers.

Angola has a 1600 km coastline, not taking into account the navigable part of the Zaire river for large ships and the other rivers in the interior for small vessels. Besides this, the EEZ is vast, comprising approximately 320,000 km<sup>2</sup>, hence the need for the navy to be equipped with sufficient naval means capable of combined naval, air force and army operations.

The capacity to participate in joint operations with foreign armed forces requires wide co-operation in the fields of information sharing, military equipment standardisation (especially ammunition and communications equipment) and procedures. In addition, a great effort must be devoted for the training of the command structure, including the chiefs of staff. Angola's experience of multinational exercises with forces from the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP), namely the Felino exercises, has been a good start, but it is important not to forget that these exercises involved a language common to all the participants.

Regarding co-operation with other armed forces in the two sub-regions, efforts will have to be strengthened and training made more intense. This applies to all missions in which Angolan units participate as part of multinational forces or simply co-operate in the same theatre of operations.

We cannot at present conceive of situations where the FAA will have to act outside Angola without the request or direct or indirect approval of organisations of which Angola is a member—the UN, the AU, SADC or ECCAS. Nevertheless, it is obvious that the experience of the FAA as regards peacekeeping and peace-support operations is very limited since it has never really been engaged in such missions—the São Tomé e Príncipe episode and the second intervention in the DRC should not really be considered as peacekeeping missions.

## CONCLUSION

Although the history of the FAA remains largely unexamined, many of the protagonists of that history are still either on active duty or have recently retired from the military. It is critical therefore that an exhaustive research programme be developed so that a comprehensive understanding of that history can be set down. It is not only that several

generations of Angolans admire the FAA's strength, determination and deeds. Understanding the recent past is fundamental for a rational, adequate and sustainable transformation of the army, air force and navy branches of the FAA.

As we wrote at the beginning of this chapter, the FAA has now to transform itself into a peacetime structure, changing the character of its mission, organisation, training, preparation and ways of thinking and operating. This is currently the biggest challenge facing the FAA. The success of this transformation will undoubtedly be of critical importance for the country as well as for its troubled neighbourhood.

## NOTES

- 1 This chapter is based on personal experiences and perspectives of former Angolan soldiers and officers during the different phases of the Angolan war, as told personally to the authors. It reflects testimonies rather than scholarly research; it focuses on events as experienced and interpreted by those living them on the ground and as described by them, even if at times they may seem to eschew accepted orthodoxy. The verbal and written descriptions of events represent a unique contribution to the history of the Angolan Armed Forces, an issue worthy of further research. The text voices the perceptions of former combatants, complemented with desktop research by the authors.
- 2 FA Guimarães, *The origins of the Angolan civil war—foreign intervention and domestic political conflict*, Macmillan, London, 1998.
- 3 *Assimilados* were mixed race Angolans and the local elite.
- 4 <[http://workmall.com/wfb2001/angola/angola\\_history\\_index.html](http://workmall.com/wfb2001/angola/angola_history_index.html)>
- 5 Guimarães (op cit) mentions in his book that it was an American senator who explained to Holden Roberto the advantages of turning an ethnic movement into one with national dimensions.
- 6 Guimarães (op cit) states that the FNLA's links to China were no more than a move by Mobutu to put pressure on the West.
- 7 JN Editorial, Angola 20 anos depois, <<http://jn2.sapo.pt/secdiv/especial/angola4.htm>>.
- 8 In 1972 the FNLA and MPLA signed an agreement to establish the Supreme Council for the Liberation of Angola aimed at the unifying the struggle of both movements. This agreement, however, never came to anything.
- 9 JN Editorial, op cit.
- 10 The FNLA and UNITA also had Portuguese supporters: the FNLA was supported by the Spínola faction in Portugal and UNITA was able to harness support from Europeans in colonial society. But none of the movements was strong enough to exclude the other two, and the Portuguese faction supporting the MPLA was in power at the time.
- 11 JN Editorial, op cit.
- 12 Ibid.

- 13 Ibid.
- 14 Ibid.
- 15 <[http://workmall.com/wfb2001/angola/angola\\_history\\_index.html](http://workmall.com/wfb2001/angola/angola_history_index.html)>
- 16 Guimarães, op cit.
- 17 D Birmingham, Angola, in *A history of postcolonial Lusophone Africa*, C Hurst & Co Ltd, United Kingdom, 2002. The total amount provided by Birmingham is US\$30 million; however, other sources place this total at around US\$60 million. See Guimarães, op cit.
- 18 Guimarães, op cit.
- 19 See works from Guimarães, Newitt, Chabal, Birmingham, Kapuscinski among others.
- 20 Birmingham, op cit.
- 21 Guimarães, op cit
- 22 Ibid.
- 23 Ibid.
- 24 Ibid.
- 25 Ibid.
- 26 Ibid.
- 27 Ibid.
- 28 Ibid.
- 29 Birmingham, op cit.
- 30 <[http://workmall.com/wfb2001/angola/angola\\_history\\_index.html](http://workmall.com/wfb2001/angola/angola_history_index.html)>. South Africa also supplied arms, fuel and food to UNITA.
- 31 Birmingham, op cit.
- 32 <[http://www.photius.com/wfb2001/angola/angola\\_military.html](http://www.photius.com/wfb2001/angola/angola_military.html)>
- 33 Birmingham, op cit.
- 34 <[www.photius.com/countries/angola/national\\_security/angola\\_national\\_security\\_military\\_organizatio~13\\_9.html](http://www.photius.com/countries/angola/national_security/angola_national_security_military_organizatio~13_9.html)>
- 35 In 1989 the son of the Portuguese president was on board of a plane that crashed when taking off from Jamba, UNITA's headquarters. Recently, Angolan authorities have accused the Soares family of "being the main beneficiaries of the traffic in diamonds and ivory carried out by Angolan rebel leader Jonas Savimbi" <[www.africaintelligence.fr/AMF/archives/default\\_archives.asp?num=20&yea](http://www.africaintelligence.fr/AMF/archives/default_archives.asp?num=20&yea)>.
- 36 Paramilitary police force, today rapid intervention police.
- 37 Series of interviews from 20 April to 4 May 2004.



Source: [www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/index.html](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/index.html)

# **Inside the ‘crystal ball’: Understanding the evolution of the military in Botswana and the challenges ahead**

Paul Sharp & Louis Fisher

I must study politics and war, so that my sons may have liberty to study mathematics and philosophy, in order to give their children a right to study painting, poetry and music.<sup>1</sup>

## **INTRODUCTION**

The history of mankind is partly a history of the military in state development, since the military is an important instrument of statecraft and an element of national power. While European military scholars have articulated well the role of the military in state formation as well as in Western civilisation, increasing attention has been paid of late to an analysis of this role in relation to state formation in Africa. To date, such developments continue to influence academic and policy studies as well as general interest in the study of politics, war and peace.

In some instances the military, or parts of it, has been a major element in the struggle to emancipate colonised territories from the yoke of colonial rule. In others, the military has been at the centre of state evolution and development.

Given its role in the development of the post-colonial state, the military has posited itself in debates concerning the state and its contribution to development. Interest in the utility of the military in development has come under close scrutiny in the post-Cold War era. A

corollary of this scrutiny has been renewed interest in civil–military relations.

This chapter examines the evolution and development of the military in Botswana within the regional and national security context. It also provides an overview of the civilian oversight mechanisms meant to ensure accountability of the Botswana Defence Force (BDF) and reviews the experiences in building a truly professional force. Furthermore, it examines the role of the BDF within the region, and in continental affairs.

The chapter argues that post-colonial Botswana was conceived without war-making capacity in that the state was born without a military. Such a position was informed by many factors, including resource constraints, fear of coups, and a preference for peaceful co-existence with neighbours. Eventually, a consideration of national and regional factors combined gave impetus to the formation, recruitment, weapon procurement, defence budget, training, civil–military relations and other future developments of the BDF. The authors of this paper assert that an understanding of the evolution of the BDF can only make sense if it is coupled with an understanding of the regional and national circumstances that gave rise to its creation.

## **BOTSWANA'S POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY**

In order to appreciate the evolution of the state and the military in Botswana, it is important to understand the country's political geography and how this has affected or influenced the evolution of the military.

The country that has come to be known as Botswana covers an area of approximately 582,000 km<sup>2</sup>.<sup>2</sup> Botswana is landlocked and is bordered to the north by Zambia, to the north-west by Namibia, to the north-east by Zimbabwe and to the south-east by South Africa. Prior to attaining independence, all Botswana's neighbours were ruled by white minority settler regimes—a variable that has been a major factor in the region's political and socio-economic developments. The wars for independence in Angola, Zimbabwe and Namibia, and the struggle for freedom in South Africa have kept open warfare near Botswana's borders for virtually the entire period since its independence, and have brought repeated armed incursions into Botswana's territory.<sup>3</sup> As a result, Botswana became a haven for political refugees from these and other neighbouring countries. This geopolitical juxtaposition has influenced

the country's economic and political development, and therefore its national and regional security posture.

### **EVOLUTION OF BOTSWANA'S DEFENCE FORCE: HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

State formation may be defined as a set of complementary and competing processes that deals with the creation and consolidation of an organisation of domination over a population in a given territory, using an administrative apparatus backed by coercive capability and various claims of legitimacy.<sup>4</sup> The process involves extraction of resources from the relevant population (and territory) so as to maintain the administrative machinery of the state, as well as internal and external security capabilities. It also involves deepening the state's penetration capacity and symbolic presence in society. In sum, state formation is the struggle for internal control, extraction of resources, political unification and external security.<sup>5</sup>

In attempting to appreciate state formation in Botswana, it is critical to understand that war in the region—and the lack thereof in Botswana—played a vital role in the formation of the post-independence state and the posture of the military.

Botswana attained independence from Britain on 30 September 1966, after 81 years of protectorate rule. The country was one of the poorest and most underdeveloped in the world at independence. The indicators of this underdevelopment included, for example, the fact that the country's per capita income was US\$60 in 1966, and also that over half the government budget was financed by grants from Great Britain.<sup>6</sup> There was only 8 km of tarred road, and 22 university graduates. The new government relied almost exclusively on Britain to finance both the recurrent and development budget.

The colonial neglect was partly out of the expectation that Botswana would eventually become part of South Africa (there were plans to have Botswana annexed by South Africa). It is no surprise, therefore, that the capital town of the then Bechuanaland was Mafikeng in South Africa. Given this colonial history it is no wonder that the following features are true of Botswana but not necessarily true of most African countries: first, Botswana did not experience settler colonialism. As a result, the independent state was born without war. Botswana did not have to fight for their freedom, thanks to the fact that at that time diamonds were not yet discovered. It is common knowledge that if the opposite had been true, the history of Botswana would today be different.

Second, unlike other countries in the rest of Africa, Botswana did not inherit any military establishment at independence. The leadership at the time did not see any value in creating an army. While there were debates over the creation of a military establishment at independence, the country's elites vehemently resisted the move to create a Botswana defence force.

Concerned with the phenomenon of military intervention in politics, Botswana deliberately deferred the creation of the military despite the fact that at independence the constitution provided for its existence.<sup>7</sup> During the transition to independence, Prime Minister Seretse Khama rejected as "ridiculous" the opposition's calls for the creation of an army. Other authors during this period, such as Welch, expressed the same sentiments that creating an army at independence brought with it the intractable budgetary, political, ethnic and other problems associated with colonial armies.<sup>8</sup>

It was regional events that would eventually play a decisive role in later years, necessitating the creation of the military in Botswana. With the liberation struggle intensifying, especially in the mid to late 1970s, Botswana was increasingly bearing the heat of the conflict. This was primarily due to incursions into Botswana territory by both freedom fighters and those bent on their annihilation. In particular, the Smith government from Southern Rhodesia inflicted damage upon Botswana when its security forces violated Botswana's territorial integrity on several occasions.<sup>9</sup> These violations and the unfolding situation prompted condemnation from the United Nations (UN) Security Council and forced the debate on the creation of the military back to the legislature for the second time. The second parliamentary debate reflects how ill prepared the state was for creating the BDF at that time.

The BDF was thus conceived as a response to the then prevailing political and military situation in the region. In a nutshell, the BDF is a product of a reluctant but inevitable response. The unintended consequence of this is that the BDF's development pattern has missed the systematic and strategic steps of conventional military development. Efforts to develop the BDF have been, if anything, reactive.

This historical fact is important in understanding the development of the military and the defence sector in Botswana in later years. It has also been a key factor informing the strategic development of the army, its command structure, deployment practices, doctrine, procurement and acquisition, recruitment, promotion and retirement policy, as well as its general posture.



## FROM POLICE MOBILE UNIT TO THE BOTSWANA DEFENCE FORCE

It is to be noted that where there were colonial armies, African troops were recruited and trained to serve European objectives, and as a result were often deployed against indigenous resistance. In Botswana, the absence of war-making capacity at the formative stages of the state meant that this variable has been absent in the military–society cultural development.

Instead of a military establishment, Botswana trained and equipped a small constabulary force, the Police Mobile Unit (PMU), inherited from the colonial administration.<sup>10</sup> The PMU, with an estimated strength of 1,000 men, also served the border patrol function that was traditionally associated with the military. The PMU also undertook the internal policing function. However, it soon became clear that the PMU was inadequate in the face of the stormy security situation taking shape both internally and in the region.

The security situation in the region was changing drastically. The liberation war in Southern Rhodesia escalated in the mid-1970s: Rhodesian government forces were increasingly crossing into Botswana raiding villages, kidnapping people and even killing some. The PMU was evidently ill equipped to cope with this security situation. Owing to this major shift in the regional and national security dynamics of the country, the creation of a military force was inevitable.

The debates preceding the creation of the BDF make for interesting reading, and reveal the strategic shift in thinking among the political elites compared to the 1966 debates and national security mood at that time.

The Botswana government bowed to this increasing pressure and made the creation of the military a priority; thus the BDF Bill was tabled before parliament in April 1977.

It must be noted here that the creation of the BDF could not have come about without the agitation of political and civil society. In the 1977 debate, leader of the opposition Botswana People's Party, Phillip Matante, welcomed the government's decision to create an army noting: "I give the Bill my fullest support."<sup>11</sup>

Other legislators, especially from the north, were equally adamant about this strategic decision. By virtue of its geography and proximity to the conflict area, the northern region of the country was heavily affected by this phenomenon, hence the lead role of the northern legislators in agitating for the establishment of the military. But the BDF would only come into being 11 years after Parliament adopted Matante's motion.

## **DEFENCE POLICY IN THE EARLY YEARS**

Even though Botswana does not yet have a written policy instrument on defence, BDF operations have always been guided by some fundamental values and principles on which it has anchored its operations. These principles include:

- peaceful co-existence and good neighbourliness;
- non-interference in the affairs of other nations; and
- not using Botswana as a springboard for attacks on any of its neighbours.

The first president, Sir Seretse Khama, noted repeatedly in various forums that although Botswana abhorred apartheid and racial discrimination, the country did not have the means or muscle to exert any physical pressure on its powerful neighbours. Khama was often quick to state that even to attempt such moves would be suicidal. His vision was to create a multiparty democratic state in Botswana that would serve as a model of interracial harmony, thus proving to the racists that blacks and whites could indeed co-exist in a peaceful environment.

Among the concerns of the political leadership of the time was the phenomenon of military intervention in politics. Legislators such as Englishman Kgabo cautioned government to guard against “greedy, self-seeking leaders of the military who might undermine Botswana’s democracy with a coup”.<sup>12</sup>

Thus when the BDF was created, government took a deliberate policy move to create a professional and well-disciplined defence force that would stay outside of politics. This was viewed as a sure way of reducing the possibilities of a coup. Inevitably such a policy position would go a long way in influencing training and development of the officer corps, as well as force structure in later years.

Richard Dale, for example, argues that one of government’s commitments to professionalism was “the meticulous details in the 1977 Botswana Defence Force Act regarding military jurisprudence”.<sup>13</sup> He further contends that the Act was an unequivocal signal to the officer corps and ordinary soldiers alike that the most professional conduct was expected from them.

While the absence of a formal written policy position was adequate at the formative stage of the BDF, it has become increasingly necessary to move towards a formal policy. Proponents of this view contend that such a policy would provide a strategic framework on defence and military

management as well as political direction on the development of the military.

It can be argued that while the BDF is still to develop a statutory defence policy, certain conventions from the conduct of its officers and troops point to a well-disciplined force that displays the highest code of military conduct. Further, the BDF's record on civil-military relations is very good. The army has maintained a practice of supporting civilian activities when called upon to do so.

### **TOWARDS CREATING A PROFESSIONAL DEFENCE FORCE: HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND TRAINING IN THE BDF**

Upon its creation, the BDF inherited officers and troops from the PMU. Their training was mainly paramilitary in character and most held only a modest primary school educational certificate. Some 16 officers were, however, sent to Sandhurst Military Academy to join Ian Khama.<sup>14</sup> It should be noted that Khama had been sent to the Academy five years prior to the formation of the BDF in what some observers have dubbed "a deliberate move by his father to ensure added military loyalty to the state".<sup>15</sup>

In March 1980, Botswana entered into a training agreement which provided American training for the BDF and as well as a tour of United States (US) army bases in order for the then Commander of the BDF, Gen Merafhe, to assess the "various types of training available".<sup>16</sup> This commitment has been sustained over the years. In fact the US has been the largest single contributor to the sustained development of the BDF to date. For example, both the past and current generals have at one time or another benefited from International Military Education and Training (IMET) programmes. Government has also ensured that this commitment is sustained.

From 1977 the BDF used mostly junior certificate as the entry requirement for privates or non-commissioned officers (NCOs), and the Cambridge Overseas school certificate for officer cadets. Today, the BDF recruits Cambridge school leavers as privates and degree holders as officers.

The changes in military recruitment can be considered a reaction to market forces that have shaped the Botswana job market from independence onwards. With more and more Cambridge and university degree graduates unable to find work, the BDF now has a pool of educated young people from which to recruit.

Importantly, the BDF has always been a voluntary army and has consequently never suffered from problems experienced by countries that enforce conscription. Members of the BDF have demonstrated a willingness to work under the most trying conditions—nationally and regionally—in their peacekeeping assignments.

Another issue that remains a challenge to the military has been the recruitment of women soldiers. Due to pressure from women's organisations, the BDF has been at pains to explain why it cannot employ women in the defence force, as is convention the world over. The official explanation for this omission is that the BDF's infrastructure is inadequately tailored to accommodate women, and that separate and appropriate facilities would need to be built. This explanation has, however, not quelled the mounting political pressure on the issue and politicians have been known to lure female voters to their side with the promise of such recruitment.

Botswana is a member of the UN and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and is party to and has ratified regional and international conventions. The country has recently adopted its National Vision 2016, incorporating the UN's Millennium Development Goals in its development framework. These instruments and the National Vision emphasise the importance of equal opportunities between men and women, as well as the notion of women's rights as human rights. The National Vision is explicit on this matter and calls on the BDF to allow women into the army. In this context, and considering the landmark *Dow Case*,<sup>17</sup> it is clear that the issue of women's recruitment will resurface until the BDF concedes.

To that end, the BDF has commissioned a team to carry out an in-depth feasibility study on the employment of women in the military. The team has so far carried out extensive studies from available sources and has visited the Malawi and Zimbabwe defence forces. Zimbabwe employed women soldiers as part of the government forces during the colonial era; consequently, at independence the government inherited a well-established colonial military infrastructure that catered for both male and female soldiers. This made it easier to integrate even women soldiers who fought during the liberation struggle. Malawi, however, only began recruiting women in its defence force as late as 1999/2000. The delay, like Botswana, was apparently lack of financial resources, which was resolved only through foreign donor funding.

In principle, the BDF is ready to induct women into the officer corps only and not across the board into the NCO ranks, provided that

fundamental infrastructural requirements for their recruitment are in place. Under present conditions, employing women in other ranks would only worsen the current accommodation crisis. The recruitment of women in the BDF would, however, address the issue of gender equity and place the force on par with other regional militaries.

As is the case in most organisations, personnel development and training in the BDF is an on-going undertaking. Members of the BDF are frequently trained both inside and outside the country. The BDF is involved in collaborative training with all SADC countries, including those as far afield as Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria and Tanzania. Beyond Africa, BDF personnel are trained mostly in Australia, Canada, India, the US and Europe.

The structure of the BDF has advanced considerably over its 27-year history, as has the acquisition of its operational equipment. Indeed, if called to defend the nation the BDF, within the limits of its capabilities, can now assume both a defensive and offensive posture depending on the enemy and the assessment of threat.

#### **HIV/AIDS CHALLENGES IN THE BDF**

The government of Botswana has responded to the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the country by declaring a national, multi-sectoral war on the disease, and has produced a National HIV/AIDS Policy that provides strategies on fighting HIV/AIDS.

The BDF is representative of the national make-up of Botswana and its members have also been infected with or affected by HIV/AIDS. This is a threat to national security since, undoubtedly, a weak military does not offer deterrence to its adversaries. In an effort to position itself against this national scourge, the BDF has published guiding policies and literature on HIV/AIDS to enlighten military personnel on the dangers of the disease. Structures and programmes are in place to address the epidemic, and partnerships have been established with other stakeholders.

The BDF HIV/AIDS programmes include: health education; counselling services; prevention of mother-to-child transmission for the infected spouses of soldiers; Isoniazid preventive therapy; peer education; pre- and post-deployment HIV/AIDS counselling; procurement and distribution of condoms; house-to-house campaigning; design and distribution of information, education and communication material; prevention, treatment and management of sexually transmitted

diseases; and train-the-trainer workshops. The BDF is also involved in the provision of free anti-retroviral therapy to those infected with HIV. The above-mentioned strategies are a mitigating factor and have made a modest difference in the prevalence rate.

### **CIVIL CONTROL OF THE BDF: EXPERIENCES AND CHALLENGES**

Huntington defines civilian control as the distribution of political power between the military and civilian groups that is most conducive to the emergence of professional attitudes and behaviour among members of the officer corps.<sup>18</sup> In recent political theory this area of study has been termed, ‘democratic control of the armed forces’, and is thus generally understood to mean subordination of the armed forces to democratically elected civilians who oversee a given country’s affairs.

In its fullest sense, democratic control of the armed forces means that all decisions regarding the defence of a country—the organisation, deployment, and use of the armed forces; the setting of military priorities and requirements; and the allocation of necessary resources—are made by democratically elected leaders and scrutinised by the legislative body. This is done to ensure support and legitimacy—the ultimate aim being to guarantee that the armed forces serve the societies they protect, and that military policies and capabilities are consistent with political objectives and economic resources.<sup>19</sup>

Democratic civilian control is therefore done through a well-articulated hierarchy that exists between civil authority and the military. This hierarchy emphasises a form of consolidated bureaucratic organisation. Normatively, democratic control provides transparency and spells out responsibilities between the military and civilian authority over issues of defence policy, budgets, programmes and the professional execution of policy. Civilian control of the military is thus considered a prerequisite for democratic governance.

This section looks at the various forms of civilian control used to ensure accountability of the BDF. We also review their effectiveness.

#### **EXECUTIVE CONTROL**

Botswana’s generic law provides for a strong presidency with wide-ranging executive powers. The president of the majority party in Parliament becomes the head of state and government. Section 48 of the Constitution provides that the president is the commander-in-chief of the

armed forces.<sup>20</sup> The president is further empowered by the Botswana Defence Force Act to appoint the commander of the BDF and other senior officers of lieutenant colonel rank and above. Subsection 8(2) restricts the operational use of the BDF to the president. The Act further provides that the president may delegate such responsibility as he may deem fit to the commander. The Minister of State in the President's Office is theoretically responsible for the day-to-day running of the BDF. The reality, however, is that the hierarchy of civilian control is ambiguous. The relationship between the President and the Minister of State in the President's Office responsible for defence is not clear. The military and police are currently administered from the Office of the Presidency. In addition the same minister is responsible for the civil service.

As part of the state bureaucracy the military alone constitutes the second-largest formal sector employer after the civil service.<sup>21</sup> Within the current structure at the Office of the President, there are no permanent staff dedicated solely to managing or attending to defence issues on a daily basis.

This arrangement carries a number of challenges. First, it undermines administrative efficiency and effectiveness on national defence matters. Defence and policing are two distinct and sensitive roles, and having them jointly administered under one roof might blur their distinguishing characteristics and compromise the development of both of these units of national security.

Second, the implication of the current arrangement is that issues of defence and security may be crowded out by other demands. The peculiarity of national defence means that it needs a political bureaucracy and officials who are dedicated to and responsible for handling such matters. This is because defence is not just another spending department;<sup>22</sup> its uniqueness comes with its structure, organisation, use of resources, and cultural values and norms. The 'management of violence' is a vocation in its own right and carries with it characteristics and qualities that are complex and intricate. Such peculiarities must be acknowledged even at the political superstructure.

Third, the absence of a defence bureaucracy means that there is no unit to promote research in academic and policy discourses on the military and defence in Botswana.

#### PARLIAMENTARY OVERSIGHT

Legislatures play an important role in the formulation of defence and

military policy, as well as in monitoring implementation. Input into the policy process from broad-based sectors of society legitimises policy and helps develop consensus. The needs of society and the military are more likely to be balanced when representatives from all segments of society are consulted in the policy process.<sup>23</sup>

In Botswana, two key committees constitute the core mechanism of parliamentary oversight over defence. These are the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) and the Parliamentary Committee on Trade, Foreign Affairs and Security.

The PAC relies on periodic reports from the auditor general on the state of BDF accounts and financial procedures; and, as a way of ensuring checks and balances, the Committee comprises members of the ruling and opposition parties. However, given the low level of expertise on military issues among members of Parliament, commentators have observed that there must surely be minimal scrutiny of defence issues.<sup>24</sup> Sandy Grant and Brian Egner also allude to the fact that details of the BDF's budgetary requirements are not publicly available and are only sketchily considered in the National Assembly.<sup>25</sup>

Inevitably, this poses a problem for parliamentary oversight and casts serious doubt on the legislature's ability to act as a 'watchdog'. But as Giraldo rightly points out: "The need for the legislature to approve and review expenditures is a permanent source of influence."<sup>26</sup>

The BDF has enjoyed the largest budget allocation of the Ministry of Presidential Affairs and Public Administration. For the period 1988 to 1996, military expenditure as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP) averaged 4.1%.<sup>27</sup> This figure has increased considerably over the years. While critics have questioned this expenditure, those supporting the establishment of a strong and professional defence force have argued that since the BDF did not inherit any infrastructure, it needed these seemingly high budgets in order to establish itself. Some have claimed that rising BDF budget figures are indicative of failure on the part of the executive to provide oversight and to keep the BDF accountable. The executive has in turn rightly refuted such allegations.

An issue that has continued to receive much attention is what some have referred to as the "over-bearing power of the presidency, particularly given the fact that the president is not directly elected".<sup>28</sup> Critics have argued that it is unhealthy for democracy to entrust the national security and defence of the country in one Office that holds so much power. However, in the absence of evidence to corroborate this view, we take it as mere speculation. Critics contend further that this set-



up undermines democratic accountability in the process; but the matter of how much power the president should or should not have is a broader constitutional issue that is outside the jurisdiction of the BDF.

#### THE DEFENCE COUNCIL

The Defence Council was established as per section 8(1) of the BDF Act and is charged with the control, direction and superintendency of the force.<sup>29</sup> Its members are appointed by the president to assist him in his capacity as commander-in-chief of the defence force. The Defence Council is thus viewed as an extension of the executive control role.

The BDF Act is ambiguous when it comes to the Council's size and composition. The commander of the BDF is an ex-officio member, while the permanent secretary (Political Affairs) in the Office of the President is secretary to the Council. Besides the permanent secretary, no other staff are assigned to the Council, and thus the ability of the Council to provide oversight has often been questioned.

In the recent past there have been improvements in the structure and composition of the Council. Lt Gen Mompoti Merafhe joined the Council after retiring from the BDF in 1989 and subsequently becoming a Cabinet minister, bringing to the Council his military experience and expertise. In fact it can be argued that Merafhe, in his political capacity, has contributed considerably to improvements in the Defence Council's deliberations and focus. Other developments regarding the Council are equally important. In 2003, the composition of the Council was increased to 12, to include the deputy commander and the two deputy chiefs of staff. The additions bring a long-desired improvement vis-à-vis the representation of the BDF and its key structures in the Council. Furthermore, the appointments go a long way in improving accountability, particularly in terms of operational, procurement and personnel matters—at least insofar as representation in the Council is concerned. Normatively, this new development is an attempt to add value to the quality of the Council's deliberations, as well as to broaden the voice of the military and its continuous presence therein.

#### **THE DEFENCE BUDGET AND DEMOCRATIC ACCOUNTABILITY: THE CONTINUING CHALLENGE**

Another source of executive oversight and control over the BDF is through the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning. Like other

departmental or ministerial budget submissions, the BDF's budget is presented to the budget committee in this Ministry. As such, despite its peculiarities, the BDF is subjected to the same rigours that ordinarily apply to other departments.

Furthermore, a uniform budgetary approach that does not recognise institutional peculiarities is applied to all government ministries and departments. This uniform approach to expenditure control and management has a major weakness: it generalises all departments based on administrative controls and procedures, and in the process neglects the underlying factors peculiar to each department, more so to defence. As Simon Lunn has argued: "Defence is not just another spending department."<sup>30</sup> This underscores the importance of continuing engagement on the issue.

Due to the fact that military expenditure has been increasing over the years, there have been calls for a review and reversal of this trend. However, it is difficult to make an objective determination of the true cost and efficiency of military financing in the absence of a tangible military doctrine, defence policy or national security strategy.

#### **THE BDF WITHIN SADC AND THE REST OF AFRICA: CHALLENGES AHEAD**

The formation of the BDF took place within the context of a turbulent and racially divided Southern Africa. At a continental level, one-party states and military governments were the norm. The Cold War was also an important factor at the time, determining relations between nations. These considerations were to influence quite significantly the political thinking on the creation of the BDF, as well as its posture and role.

The 1990s ushered in a new era of democratisation throughout Southern Africa and the rest of Africa; however, pockets of conflict remain in some parts of the continent. The region has seized this opportunity of relative peace and calm to redefine priorities and focus energies. To this end, SADC member states have declared their commitment to addressing issues of peace and security, conflict management, post-conflict reconciliation, rehabilitation and reconstruction, democracy and poverty alleviation, and other challenges. It is now commonly acknowledged in Southern Africa that without peace and security, there will be no sustainable development. These same issues are central to the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) initiative, of which Botswana is part.

While Botswana is one of the most highly developed constitutional democracies, its foreign policy centres on the pragmatic objectives of security and economic development through regional integration and diversification of trade and technology sources. As such, it has sought to enhance the effectiveness of SADC as a working vehicle for economic development, preventive diplomacy and conflict resolution, based on the principles of collective action and responsibility. Given the turbulent history of Southern Africa, regional stability and participation in peacekeeping and even military intervention have featured in Botswana's foreign policy and they often have been the primary motives for its opposition to violations and reversals of democracy.

In this context, for example, the BDF and the South African National Defence Force were sent to Lesotho as a joint military force to restore order in 1998, working under the auspices of SADC as a legitimising structure. Apart from military intervention and in pursuit of democratic governance, the BDF has participated in the following peace operations:

- Somalia (UNITAF) 1992–1993, company operations;
- Somalia (UNOSOM II) 1993–1994, battalion operations;
- Mozambique (ONUMOZ) 1993–1995, battalion operations and staff officers, four rotations were done; and
- Rwanda (UNOMUR) June–October 1993, military observers.

Within this unfolding regional context, four issues are critical in the discussion of the role and development of the BDF in general. These are as follows:

- The challenge of continuing to build a professional, efficient and effective army within a context of shrinking national resources.
- Striking a good balance between regional and continental obligations and responsibilities in a manner that does not overstretch the BDF's human and financial resources.
- The new development of a looming budget deficit in the country, and the necessary actions of streamlining expenditure in all sections of the public service, including the defence force.
- The HIV/AIDS scourge and its possible implications for reversing the human resource development gains made by the BDF to date.

None of these issues has simple answers or remedies. What is certain, however, is the need to remain constantly engaged, to keep assessing the whole environment, and to formulate timely and appropriate strategies at any given time.

## **CONCLUSION**

This chapter has outlined the factors that necessitated the formation of the BDF, which, we observed, took place in the context of a turbulent and racially divided Southern Africa. Botswana did not inherit an army at independence, but had to quickly respond after initial resistance to create such a force. The country has, however, done well in terms of creating a professional defence force with an impressive record in regional and continental missions. Similarly the BDF's civil–military relations have been commendable.

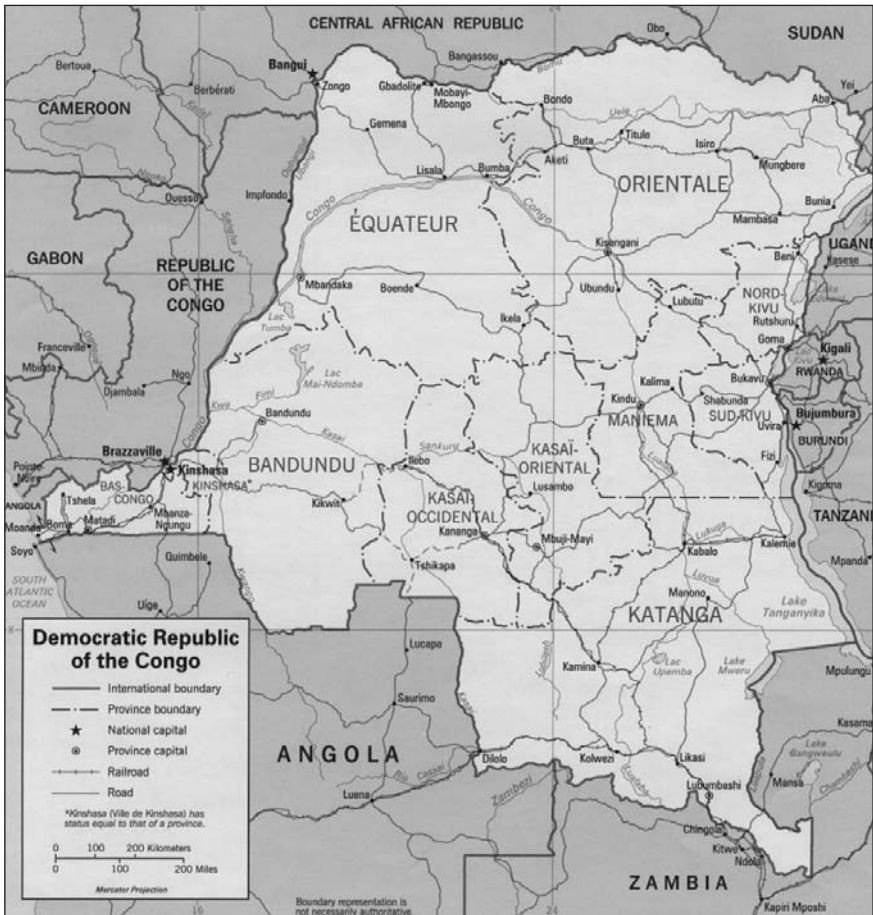
Notwithstanding these achievements, the BDF, like other armies on the continent, will continue to face challenges. These include getting more done with fewer resources, ensuring that the HIV/AIDS scourge does not reverse the human resource gains made so far, and executing regional and continental obligations without overstressing the already shrinking resource base. Other issues dealing with, for example, executive oversight, fall outside the jurisdiction of the BDF.

## NOTES

- 1 See John Adams (1735–1826) American statesman (second US president: 1797–1801) by L H Butterfield (ed), *Letter to Abigail Adams, after May 12, 1780, Adams Family Correspondence*, Vol. 3, 1973, p 342.
- 2 Aspects of Botswana's physical and human geography, in F Sefe et al (eds), *Botswana National Atlas*, Department of Surveys and Mapping, Botswana, Gaborone, 2001, p 2.
- 3 S R Lewis, Jr, Policymaking and economic performance: Botswana in comparative perspective, in S J Stedman (ed), *Botswana: The political economy of democratic development*, Lynne Rienner, Boulder, 1993, p 13.
- 4 P Batchelor, K Kingma & G Lamb, The role of the military in state formation and nation building: An overview of historical and conceptual issues, in *Demilitarization and peace building in Southern Africa*, Ashgate Publishers, 2004, p 1.
- 5 T H Callaghy, *The state-society struggle: Zaire in comparative perspective*, Colombia University Press, New York, 1984, p 8; and M Ayoob, *The developing world security predicament: State making, regional conflict, and the international system*, Lynne Rienner, Boulder, 1995, pp 22-23.
- 6 Stedman, op cit.
- 7 For more insights on this position refer to, No army wanted, *The Star*, 24 August 1966, p 14; Bechuanaland Legislative Assembly Official Report, *Hansard* No. 15, pp 19-25; and B N'Diaye, *The challenge of institutionalizing civilian control: Botswana, Ivory Coast and Kenya in comparative perspective*, Lexington Books, Lanham, 2001, pp 69-75.
- 8 C E Welch, Jr & A K Smith, *Military role and rule*, Duxbury Press, North Scituate, 1974, pp 308-309.
- 9 See R Dale, Botswana as a hostage to high politics? Twentieth century conflict with South Africa and Zimbabwe, in Stedman, op cit, p 172.
- 10 R Dale, The creation and use of the Botswana Defence Force, *The Round Table* 290, 1984, pp 218-220.
- 11 Honourable Phillip Matante, quoted in E Chilisa, MPs give blessing to Army Bill, *Daily News*, 31 March 1977, p 2.
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 Dale, The creation and use of the Botswana Defence Force, op cit, p 222.
- 14 Ibid, p 224.
- 15 See S Decalo, Towards understanding the sources of stable civilian rule in Africa: 1960-1990, *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 10(1), 1991, p 80.
- 16 For details on International Military Education and Training, see <www.satfa.monroe.army.mil>. In 1949, the US Congress authorised the grant Military Assistance Programme and the cash Foreign Military Sales programme, and the US began training military personnel from several foreign countries, most of them in Europe. The emphasis of those early programmes was on containing the influence of the Soviet Union, while training concentrated on skills needed to operate effectively and maintain equipment provided by the US. As Europe recovered from the Second World War, US security assistance efforts shifted towards developing countries in the Pacific, Africa, the Middle East and

- Latin America. The International Military Education and Training (IMET) grant programme was established in 1976 to provide professional, leadership and management training for senior military leaders and selected junior and mid-grade officers with leadership potential.
- 17 U Dow (ed), *The Citizenship Case – The Attorney General of the Republic of Botswana v Unity Dow, Court Documents, Judgements, Cases and Materials*, 1995. This is a decision of the Court of Appeal of Botswana in which the court used international human rights law and decisions of many other countries to interpret the country's national constitution. By virtue of section 4 of the Citizenship Act, a child who is born to a citizen mother, who is married to a non-citizen father, could not be a citizen of Botswana. On 11 June 1991, Ms Dow made an application to the High Court contending that section 4 of the Citizenship Act violated her constitutional rights and freedoms, including the right to equal protection from the law irrespective of sex, personal liberty, protection from being subjected to degrading treatment, freedom of movement and protection from discrimination on the basis of sex. The High Court found for Dow, holding that the provision of the Citizenship Act complained of was *ultra vires* the constitution on the grounds that it was discriminatory against women.
  - 18 S Huntington, *The soldier and the state: The theory and politics of civil-military relations*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1957, p 83.
  - 19 S Lunn, The democratic control of the armed forces in principle and practice, *Connections: The Quarterly Journal* 1(4), Partnership for Peace Consortium of Defense Academies and Security Studies Institutes, December 2002, p 83.
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  - 21 M G Molomo, Civil-military relations in Botswana's developmental state, *African Studies Quarterly*, The Online Journal for African Studies, p 4, <<http://web.africa.ufl.edu/asq/v5/v5i2a3.htm>> (8 March 2003).
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  - 23 J K Giraldo, *Legislatures and defense: The comparative experience*, Occasional Paper 8, The Center for Civil Military Relations, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California, June 2001, p 5.
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  - 26 J K Giraldo, *Defense budgets and civilian oversight*, Occasional Paper 9, The Centre for Civil-Military Relations, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California, June 2001, p 6.
  - 27 See *SIPRI Yearbook 2001: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security*, Oxford University Press, 2001.
  - 28 Molomo, op cit.
  - 29 Botswana Defense Force Act, Chapter 21:05, Government Printer, Gaborone, p 21:177.
  - 30 S Lunn, op cit, p 86.





Source: [www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/index.html](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/index.html)



# The Congolese National Army: In search of an identity

Jacques Ebenga & Thierry N'Landu

## INTRODUCTION

The Congolese National Army has had one of the most complex, albeit short, histories of any of the world's armed forces. The army was shaped by the Congo's own changing status and often without a sufficiently broad or long-term view of its role. This is why—from the pre-colonial days of Belgian King Léopold II's governorship until today—it has been difficult to establish what the army's role actually was, and is.

This chapter attempts to trace the long and winding history of the Congolese National Army and its search for an identity. This is because an understanding of its history may help the army to formulate a new role for itself that accords with the Democratic Republic of the Congo's (DRC's) intrinsic importance in the Central and Southern African regions and, indeed, in the world. While it is not difficult to trace the pre-independence period (that is, until 1960), the subsequent history has been ever-changing and often obscure, allowing little reliable insight. An additional difficulty has been provided by the secrecy applied to matters relating to the army by the different post-independence regimes. We shall nevertheless attempt to sketch the history of the several armies and militias that were the forebears to today's evolving Congolese National Army.

## THE FORCE PUBLIQUE: HISTORY OF A PRIVATE MILITIA

Created on 4 August 1888 by Belgium's King Léopold II, Governor of the Independent State of the Congo, the *Force Publique* was first and

foremost a political and economic instrument of suppression against the Congolese people.

As the Congolese people needed to be coerced to work for the directors and governor (the Belgian King)—the effective owners of the Congo of the time—it was necessary to create a militia for the purpose. This private militia was composed of foreign mercenaries and Congolese, and was trained by Belgian officers. It therefore bore a similarity to a modern example, the South African company Executive Outcomes, which hired itself out for peacekeeping and other quasi-military involvements in various, mainly African, countries.<sup>1</sup>

When, in 1908, the Belgian government transformed the Independent State into the colony of the Belgian Congo, the *Force Publique* continued to suppress the native Congolese, whom members of the force called, with contempt, *Basenzi*, which could be translated as ‘wild monkeys’.

In the name of Western capitalist civilisation and philanthropy, the *Force’s* role was to break all resistance to the economic exploitation of the Belgian state. As an instrument for sustaining the Belgian economy during this period, the *Force* spread terror by amputating hands and lashing corpses.<sup>2</sup>

On the other hand, the *Force* notched up some achievements in the campaign against slavery. And it also had reason to be proud of its contributions to the Allied victories in the two world wars.

During the First World War, the Congo armies of 1916 did a great deal to put an end to German power in East Africa when they drove the enemy from the provinces of Ruanda and Urundi, which were subsequently awarded to Belgium under a League of Nations mandate. In naval operations on Lake Tanganyika, and in a brilliant campaign culminating in the capture of Tabora, the Congo armies materially helped Great Britain to wrest from Germany what became the Tanganyika Territory.

During the Second World War, these armies played their part in liberating the then Abyssinia from Italian rule. Units of the *Force Publique* were transported in barges some 1,600 km up the Congo River to Aketi. From there, the barges were carried by train and truck another 1,300 km to Juba, where they were launched on the waters of the White Nile. The Italian forces were given the impression of facing a much larger force. The mountain fortress of Saïo was cut off from supplies and the Italian commander surrendered with eight other generals and more than 6,000 officers and men to Gen Gilliaert and the combined Belgian and Congo forces. For this and subsequent campaigns, the *Force*

*Publique* was equipped with American jeeps, tommy-guns and mortars.<sup>3</sup> It has to be said, however, that these exploits were undertaken as part of the Allied armies with which Belgium and the *Force Publique* were associated.

### THE POST-INDEPENDENCE CONGOLESE ARMY

At independence in 1960, the Belgian commander of the *Force Publique*, Gen Émile Janssens, declared: “After independence equals before independence.” This statement caused a mutiny and a rapid Africanisation of the *Force’s* officer corps.

The ‘Congolisation of the Army’ faced a lack of skills at officer and command levels. Officer ranks were distributed to all non-commissioned officers (NCOs) above the rank of sergeant. These men were instructed to “take their units in hand”. An officer training school was subsequently established at Luluabourg (now Kananga) early in 1961.

A dispute for the top command of the army now arose between the regional and political army supporters of President Kasavubu and Prime Minister Lumumba. The contestants were colonels Lundula and Mobutu, both of whom had been NCOs in the previous *Force Publique*. Col Mobutu emerged as the winner.

On 14 September 1960, under Mobutu’s command, the Congolese National Army—*Armée Nationale Congolaise*—(ANC) suspended the 1959 Brussels round-table constitution.

It was this first coup that gave President Kasavubu encouragement to oppose the legitimate Prime Minister, Patrice Lumumba. The constitutional crisis that followed led to Lumumba’s assassination on 17 January 1961.

Before this, the country had already fallen into civil war when, only ten days after independence, the Katanga copper province leader, Moïse Tshombe, backed by his *Gendarmerie Katangaise*, declared Katanga’s secession.

This secession was overcome after the intervention of United Nations (UN) troops. At the same time, the ANC had had to crush another attempt at independence, this time by His Imperial Majesty Kalonji in the Kasai diamond province.

After these secession attempts and after the removal of Lumumba from government and his assassination in Katanga, where he had been taken to his enemy, Moïse Tshombe, a rebellion broke out involving almost half of the country.

As this rebellion was seen as pro-Communist, it was heavily supported by communist countries, with the 'free world' ranged on the government side. Training programmes, armaments supplies and technical advisers from the Soviet Union, China, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Cuba, Mali and Tanzania backed the rebels, while similar support from the United States, Belgium, anti-Castro Cubans and European and South African mercenaries came in on the side of the government.

This civil war lasted from 1963 to 1967. Meanwhile Moïse Tshombé had succeeded to the prime ministership after he had won the legislative elections in the capital, Kinshasa. The conflict between the President and the Prime Minister continued, providing the now Lt Gen Mobutu with the opportunity to overthrow President Kasavubu and to take power on 24 November 1965 "for five years", which, in fact, became 32 years.

#### **PRESIDENT MOBUTU'S DESIGN FOR THE ARMY**

Encouraged by the strong support he enjoyed from Western countries in the context of the Cold War, President Mobutu was able to place the ANC, which in October 1971 became the Zairian Armed Forces—*Forces Armées Zairoises* (FAZ), under his sole authority. He personally promoted and dismissed officers, ordered equipment and directed military operations. His posts included Supreme Commander, Commander-in-Chief, President of the Superior Council of Defence and Minister of Defence.<sup>4</sup> This 'personalisation' of the army led to a façade of legal decisions that regularly attempted to remodel the face of the army at any sign of an internal, political or external crisis that threatened the President's regime. Unfortunately, and in contrast to the objectives he sought to bring about by these numerous perilous legal exercises, President Mobutu was progressively destroying the army that he had so strenuously built up.<sup>5</sup>

The following headings deal with such objectionable practices as the politicisation and tribalisation of the army, the creation of privileged units within the army and the de-professionalisation of the biggest part of the army. This last was in order to benefit some units of the army such as the elite Presidential Special Division (DSP) or Praetorian Guard, the Reinforced Division and the 31st Paratroop Brigade.<sup>6</sup>

#### **POLITICISATION**

President Mobutu politicised the army formally through the Defence and Zairian Armed Forces Act of 1977, which placed the army under the

command of “the President of the Popular Revolution Movement [MPR, the country’s political party] and the President of the Republic”.<sup>7</sup>

The party soon transformed the army into a ‘specialised organ’ of the MPR, and the members of the army had to pay homage to the Founding President of the MPR. They were also psychologically conditioned to pledge their allegiance at all times and in all places to their ‘Guide’, the Founding President of the MPR. This period witnessed numerous decrees and other written or oral decisions concerning the army that would end by harming its organisation and professionalism.

Some of the decrees relating to the structure of the army under Colonel, later General and then President, Mobutu were:

- The creation of the ANC on 8 July 1960 with the requirement that Congolese be promoted from the ranks to assume the direction of the army even though they lacked the required skills and experience.
- The incorporation of the National Gendarmerie into the ANC and the subsequent integration on 1 July 1963 of the forces of the former secessionist armies of Katanga and Kasai into the ANC.
- The re-establishment of the National Gendarmerie as a separate body on 31 July 1972 to replace the dissolved National Police, and the subsequent reintegration of the National Gendarmerie into the FAZ. These manoeuvres included the re-appointment of only some members of the National Police, a sweeping adjustment of ranks and the demobilisation of unwanted policemen.
- President Mobutu’s vision for a trusted and nationally and regionally efficient FAZ included the creation, with the assistance of foreign partners, of several high-level training centres in the country. In the 1970s these centres were so successful that recruits came from other African countries, such as Togo, Chad, Burundi, Rwanda, Niger and the Central African Republic. Women also joined the army and performed well even in such special corps as the Paratroops. At this time, the FAZ numbered some 70,000 officers and other ranks. In 1974 the government allocated 5.7% of the country’s gross national product to defence development.
- In 1975 President Mobutu began reorienting the FAZ from an external defence role to domestic law enforcement. The gradual

transformation of the FAZ from objective control to subjective control weakened the armed forces both operationally and organisationally.<sup>8</sup>

- The National Defence and Armed Forces were again reorganised on 1 July 1977. This move was triggered by the ‘moral defeat’ of the forces in the face of aggression by South Shaba (Katanga). But it also signalled the centralisation of all civil and military defence powers into the hands of President Mobutu and the legal integration of the army into the structures of the MPR.
- The Civil Guard was created on 28 August 1984. Its initial mission was to protect borders and national parks, as well as to protect civilians. Some years later and without any legal basis, the Civil Guard—then commanded by Gen Philémon Baramoto, a close tribal member of President Mobutu’s family—was surreptitiously incorporated into the army.

There followed a period during which all branches of the defence organisation were expanded, leading analysts to conclude that the Zairian army had become the second most powerful in sub-Saharan Africa—after the former South Africa Defence Force. This said, however, the strength of the FAZ relied heavily on foreign aid and on foreign training programmes.

#### TRIBALISATION

To guarantee the loyalty of the army, President Mobutu began progressively appointing members of his own tribal group—and, rarely, some loyal officers from other ethnic groups—to key army posts. His DSP was led and manned by his ethnic Ngwandi brothers and other tribes from the northern area of Equateur province. At the same time, the entire army was subjected to a series of ethnic or tribal purifications on grounds such as fictitious coups. These ‘purifications’ were followed by the summary execution of suspected officers from other ethnic groups. In her book *The Dinosaur*, Colette Braeckman recalls numerous schemes that were part of President Mobutu’s strategy to prevent the regular army from destabilising his regime.

Within this climate of permanent suspicion, Maj Mpika and his fellow officers, just graduated from their American military academies, were in

1977 accused of having fomented a coup with the complicity of the United States (US) Embassy in Congo. And the next year it was the turn of Maj Kalume and his fellow officers, graduating this time from the Royal Military School in Brussels. All were executed in spite of protests from Belgian officers. Later still, the efficient Gen Mukobo, a victim of the jealousy of his colleagues, was relegated for some years to a Kisangani outpost. Then again, Col Mbo—a brilliant Mirage pilot trained in France and now flying transport aircraft—was killed when his Hercules C130 exploded in mid-air not far from Kinshasa under suspicious circumstances.<sup>9</sup>

#### PRIVILEGED UNITS

As is often the case in an army in the service of a dictator, President Mobutu's army included at least three distinct armies. His Praetorian Guard, the DSP, was under his direct command and benefited from modern equipment and privileged funding and conditions of service. Officially, this division numbered close to 15,000 men, organised into two commando brigades loyal to the president. These men, in excellent physical condition, were trained by senior Israeli officers in Egypt and North Korea. From the DSP, the best candidates were appointed to the famous Dragon Battalion, which was suspected of clandestine operations against students in Kinshasa and Lubumbashi.

The second and third armies-within-an-army were the Paratroop Corps, based in Kinshasa and Kamina, and the Military Operations and Intelligence Service (SARM), to both of which President Mobutu gave particular attention. The Paratroop Corps benefited from special logistical and command support provided through French and Israeli military co-operation. The rest of the 50,000 men of the FAZ were more of a phantom army, with their officers and generals making their living from corruption and illegal practices. These 'soldiers in corners' were mainly left to their own devices. To survive, these vagrant soldiers behaved so extortionately towards the civilians around them that they irreversibly destroyed the healthy relations that should have existed between the military and civil society. Indeed, they created the general discontent that led to the fall of the entire regime, as well as the army.

#### DE-PROFESSIONALISATION

De-professionalisation manifested itself through a lack of communication between the various structures and branches of the military organisation

and through the overlapping of commands, military forces and specialised services. These manifestations often led to conflicts of influence and power between generals, between military authorities and between members of the MPR.

In this climate of permanent suspicion and conflict, a pattern of patrons and clients soon revealed itself in the army. According to this pattern, each promoted general had an entourage of members of his own ethnic group or tribe, to whom he assigned ranks and other privileges without regard to their qualifications in relation to the other members of the division, battalion or other unit.

### **ARMED FORCES DEFENCE POLICY, MISSION AND ORGANISATION**

The role of the Congolese defence forces is to defend a huge country of some 2,340,000 km<sup>2</sup>; nearly eighty times the area of Belgium or nearly twice the area of South Africa. The DRC is bordered by nine countries—clockwise from the north-west: Republic of Congo, Central African Republic, Sudan, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Zambia, Tanzania and Angola—seven of which are from time to time racked by their own internal crises.

Various constitutions—changing with the successive regimes—have been in force since independence. Of these, the most recent, dating from the year 2003, has given the greatest clarity to the status of the country's army, including the roles of the supreme commander and the Defence High Council. The 2003 constitution requires the FAZ to have a fair balance of ethnic groups, good skills, morality, exclusive Congolese citizenship and a minimum age of 18—which definitely excludes the former *Kadogo* (child soldiers) from these forces. The armed forces are constitutionally under civilian control, which means that the military are legally accountable to the nation through these civilian representatives. The roles of the army and of the police are clearly separated in this new transitional constitution.

For the first time in the history of Congo, Parliament democratically debated and, in October 2004, passed the Defence and Armed Forces Organisation Act. By contrast, all previous laws relating to the army were enacted through the will of successive heads of state, who kept full control over the military in their own hands.

Unfortunately, even this new law transformed the Republican Guard into a special Army Corps under the direct order of the President of the Republic.



## **DEFENCE EXPENDITURE: A TABOO**

In the interests of ‘defence secrecy’, the Congolese defence budget was previously not made public. Defence expenditures were also funded from different sources, including the President’s secret allocations and funds provided by public companies. (In addition, some non-defence private and state expenditures were charged to the defence transport, health facilities and housing budget.) Contributions by foreign countries in supplies and training for the Zairian—and later the Congolese—armies were also significant, with the result that the 1.1 % to 5.7 % of Congolese gross national product (GNP) allocated annually for the country’s defence was by no means a reliable figure for the resources actually earmarked for defence.

During the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo (AFDL) invasion in January 1997, President Mobutu allocated US\$150 million “for the Army’s requirements and its modernisation”. Much of this money was used to pay Serbian, French, Italian and Chilean mercenaries.<sup>10</sup>

Later, during the 1998–2000 war, the governor of the National Bank complained publicly that expenditure on defence had reached 80% of all state expenditure.

The defence budget for 2005 is now under preparation. It should include the high cost of integrating and creating a new Defence Force, and of parts of the disarmament, demobilisation and rehabilitation (DDR) process, which an international consortium of donors (led by the World Bank) is willing to fund to the tune of US\$150 million.

## **ZAIRIAN FOREIGN MILITARY INTERVENTIONS**

### **ANGOLA**

As the protector of “Western ideological interests in central Africa”, President Mobutu committed two FAZ brigades to the 1970s’ war in Angola on the side of the National Front for the Liberation of Angola’s (FNLA’s) Holden Roberto, against the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola’s (MPLA’s) Augustino Neto. This intervention ended in disaster for the former and a victory for the Soviet- and Cuban-backed MPLA. In the opinion of the Zairian officers:

the failure of the operation was due to FNLA leader Holden Roberto’s refusal to order the final offensive on Luanda, while the Soviets and the Cubans had organised one of the largest airlifts of arms in history.<sup>11</sup>

A decade later, and again with respect to Angola, the government of Zaire was engaged in long-term military support for the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola's (UNITA) Jonas Savimbi. This support took mainly the form of providing an arms transit link with the Kamina airbase, which was a secret US Central Intelligence Agency operation exposed by the *New York Times* in 1987.<sup>12</sup>

#### OTHER OPERATIONS

Congolese troops offered efficient military assistance to many African countries or regimes in their times of crisis. Examples of these countries were Nigeria and Burundi in 1971, Chad in 1982–83, Togo in 1986 and Rwanda in 1990.

In 1971 Congolese troops helped the Nigerian army to end the Biafran secession. In the same year President Michombero from Burundi benefited from the assistance of Congolese troops to restore his government.

In 1982 the government of President Gukuni Weddei of Chad was threatened by the invasion of his country by Libyan forces backing powerfully armed northern rebels. When the French tactical air operations could not stop the rush of the invaders to the capital town of N'djamena, Zaire offered its army to counter the invasion, with the logistical support of Washington and Paris.

Three Zairian battalions were deployed—one in N'djamena in the centre of the country, one in Musuro in the west, and the third in Abeche in the east. They were provided with their own air cover by Zairian Airforce Mirage-Vs.

The Chad mission marked a success for the Congolese forces. Even though they were not trained for desert operations, these forces pushed the enemy back to the Libyan border.<sup>13</sup> In 1986 Congolese forces were sent in support of Togolese President Eyadema after an attempted coup. In 1990 Congolese paratroopers helped Rwandan President Habyarimana to counter an insurgency and to stop a Rwandan Patriotic Front (APR) invasion of Rwanda from Uganda.

#### **CIVIL–MILITARY RELATIONS: FROM 'FORCES OF ORDER' TO 'FORCES OF DISORDER'**

From colonial times, the Congolese defence forces have always been involved in domestic policing activities, even when they had no training

for this type of work. The country's separate police force was abolished in 1972 and replaced by a gendarmerie and, in 1982, by a civil guard, both of which were integrated into the defence forces.

Although the police force was re-established in 1997, it was still regarded, even for its domestic role, as inferior to the defence forces, whose officers and men near retirement age often end their careers in the police force.

The belief that the army was empowered to use force against any civilian was born during the colonial period and stayed with the Congolese people long after independence. Even today, the military forces are viewed with suspicion because they continue to be used to enforce politically motivated policies that are generally unpopular. Many people denigrate some soldiers as 'owls'; a cultural reference associated with witchcraft.

In the days of the *Force Publique*, military personnel lived in barracks and operational areas that were generally out of bounds to civilians. As descendants of the *Force Publique*, the *Forces Armées Congolaise* (FAC), later the FAZ, as well as today's armed forces of the DRC have retained this aura of not being part of the rest of the population.

In the same way as the colonial forces, the FAC was regarded as a self-centred and heartless body of men trained to fight and kill. It was an instrument of repression and, because of this, most Congolese were convinced that there was nothing to be gained from associating with its members. If anything, the army forces were to be avoided at all costs. The military was seen as the enemy of the ordinary people; and this hostility was worsened by the actions of the national intelligence network, which stamped out any dissent.

#### THE IMPACT OF CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

As in many other African countries, several coup attempts in Congo were engineered by an alliance of civilians and military personnel. Indeed, on several occasions civilians and disgruntled military officers teamed up to remove regime leaders from office.

There was also discontent within the military. Low and irregular pay was the primary cause for the army's criminal behaviour. Only the highest-ranking officers and the presidential units received sufficient pay to allow them to maintain a basic level of subsistence. Most officers and other ranks received wages that were insufficient to feed and clothe their families, and they often went for months without being paid.

As a result, members of the defence forces often exploited or even stole from the local community in order first of all to make ends meet, and then to enrich themselves—which was a sure formula for the breakdown of trust between the military and the civilian population. As one example, paratroopers who had not been paid went on the rampage in Kinshasa in September 1991, and their action was followed by widespread looting throughout the country.

With some units led by Congolese Army Gen Mahele, France and Belgium sent in troops to restore order and to protect foreign citizens. Another wave of military-led pillaging and looting occurred in early 1993 following the introduction of a new Z5 million banknote that many merchants had refused to accept from the military personnel who had been paid with it. Less serious, but nonetheless routine, looting has continued, to the extent that many citizens have been prepared to pay the ‘contributions’ demanded by soldiers as the price for being left alone.

#### THE ARMY’S CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE

It should not be forgotten that the FAZ has from time to time also played a constructive role in its own country, through, for example, its participation in various civic action programmes. There was the occasion during a joint Zairian–US military exercise when Zairian engineer units built a number of bridges in the Shaba region that restored vehicular travel between some towns for the first time in ten years.

At the request of the government, army engineers also quickly and cost effectively repaired damaged university buildings. In 1976, also, the military health service rescued people in the area of Yambuku near Bumba who had been affected by the lethal Ebola virus, while the same service subsequently participated in several anti-epidemic missions throughout the country.

Later, in 1997, President Laurent Kabila created the National Service, which was a paramilitary corps tasked with providing the army with food and with training the youth in a range of reconstruction and developmental activities.

#### **ARMED CONFLICTS DURING PRESIDENT MOBUTU’S REGIME, AND ANGOLA’S REVENGE**

The rundown and disorganised state of the army gave the Congolese no confidence in either of its twin roles, which were to defend the

Congolese territory and to secure a military victory over a potential enemy.

The army's structural and operational insufficiencies became apparent on 8 March 1977, when armed elements of the National Front for the Liberation of Congo (FNLC) launched an attack from Angola on the mineral-rich Zairian province of Shaba (Katanga). It was only through the intervention of the Western community that the army and the regime it was supposed to protect were saved. In this case, the rationale for the Western mobilisation was the Cold War that had divided the world into two opposing blocs.

A year later, in 1978, there was a similar scenario when the 'Second Shaba War' was fought successfully, only because of military assistance provided by the West, Morocco and Israel.<sup>14</sup>

Similarly, again, Zaire was able to obtain co-operation in times of crisis from Taiwan and South Korea—something which more than anything else illustrated the masterly way in which the Mobutu regime was able to play the big powers off against one another in the context of the Cold War, and the strategic position and minerals and other riches of Zaire.

### **KABILA'S AFDL FORCES**

At the end of 1996, Laurent Kabila launched a flash liberation war from the Kivu region that ended with the capture of Kinshasa on 17 May 1997. The attacking force totalled some 40,000 AFDL troops including contingents of Congolese, Rwandans, Erytreans, Somalis, Ugandans, Tanzanians, Kenyans and Ethiopians. The aim of this force was to liberate both the Congo and all African countries under dictatorships. In the south, the AFDL received strong military support from Angola.

No holds were barred to serve Kabila's objective of overturning the Mobutu regime, and child soldiers were not only recruited into the AFDL forces but also led many of their most dangerous operations. Gen James Kabarehe—a Rwandan officer, now his country's chief of staff—was appointed the first commander of the FAC. His special mission was to track down the Rwandan Hutu refugees who were assumed to have been responsible for the genocide of the Tutsis in Rwanda in 1994. Although the FAC then continued to hold power in Congo, it had no legal framework between 1997 and 2002.

Kabila's AFDL forces rounded up some 40,000 members of the previous regime's FAZ force and confined them to a concentration camp

at the Kitona training base 500 km south-west of Kinshasa. No fewer than one in ten of these FAZ members died of starvation and lack of medical care. In their frustration, generals of the former FAZ said of the AFDL army:

Today, even more than yesterday, our country looks like a giant castle located in a forest. In the castle enormous wealth is stored, but the castle has no security system, no fence, no rampart and no guards, and the naive owner relies on the goodwill of thieves.<sup>15</sup>

### THE FIRST AFRICAN WORLD WAR

After the Congolese alliances with foreign troops ended in 1988 due to a disagreement on the apportionment of political leadership positions, the Banyamulenge group created the *Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie* (RCD), or the Congolese Democratic Assembly, allied to Rwanda. The RCD launched its revolt from Goma in August 1998. Some months later, another rebel force, the *Mouvement pour la Libération du Congo* (MLC), or the Congo Liberation Movement, emerged in the north-west of the country. Later on, too, a smaller rebel group, the Mai-Mai Resistance Movement, was formed in the east of the country to support the government forces against the RCD (Goma) troops in Kivu.

In this new war, the government forces suffered from a shortage of skilled officers, while the RCD and MLC forces were trained and supported by Rwandan and Ugandan officers. The two rebel forces invaded half of the country, and my mid-August 1998 the RCD Goma troops were threatening the country's capital town, Kinshasa, after launching an epic 2,500 km air attack on the Kitona training base.

Three Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries then came to the assistance of the government forces—Zimbabwe with 11,000 troops, Angola with perhaps 10,000, and Namibia with perhaps 2,500—and in a quick counter-attack were able to repulse rebel troops that had already entered the capital from the east.

The Zimbabwean Air Force played a decisive role in the war. Zimbabwean Air Group Captain Chingono said:

In many cases we were left with no choice but to strike at rebels hiding out in churches, and these attacks caused substantial structural damage to the buildings. During the battle to defend Kinshasa, the rebels failed to appreciate the effectiveness of air power in any conflict.<sup>16</sup>

According to Kumar Rupesinge, the military intervention in the DRC by these three SADC countries was not cleared by the membership of SADC as a whole, and this caused a crisis in the political relations between President Mugabe of Zimbabwe and President Mandela of South Africa.<sup>17</sup> When Burundi troops backed the rebels along Lake Tanganyika, three countries—the Central Africa Republic, Chad and Sudan—gave strong support to the government forces. Some analysts then dubbed this Congolese crisis as the first ‘African world war.’<sup>18</sup>

### **INTER-CONGOLESE DIALOGUE: THE HARDEST MILITARY NEGOTIATION**

Failing to conquer more territory and under pressure from the international community, the various armed factions in Congo negotiated the Lusaka Accord in July 1999. This Accord ended the war and mapped out a new institutional framework for the country and for new DRC defence forces.

From then until 2002, Congolese leaders met on several occasions in different cities in Africa to debate the implementation of the Lusaka Accord. While political issues were ultimately agreed at Sun City in South Africa, culminating in the Pretoria Inter-Congolese Dialogue, military issues required longer negotiation.

The main military obstacles were the different viewpoints put forward by government and rebel representatives relating to the formation of a single defence force. The conflicting concepts presented were whether there should be ‘integration’ or ‘restructuring’. The first would entail the ‘fusion’ or ‘absorption’ of rebel forces into the government army, while the second would require the government army and other forces to negotiate the shape of a single force made up of all their various components.

Congolese civil society participated in these negotiations and played a key role both in drafting the basis of a common understanding for the shape of an entirely new defence force, and in backing the combined South African–African Union–UN mediation team.<sup>19</sup>

The Inter-Congolese Dialogue led to the creation of a new command structure of the army. According to Lt Gen Motau, the South African defence mediator at the dialogue: “All the armed factions are represented in such a way that no single faction can control a part of the command chain and so use its position to harm other factions.”<sup>20</sup>

The sharing of positions in this command structure was another tough issue, with the government wanting to retain the key posts of chief of

staff and chief of the ground forces, as well as the command of the crucial military regions of North Kivu and South Kivu. The rebels objected, reminding the government representatives that: “No party won the war.”

Ultimately, the posts of chief of staff and chief of the air force were allocated to the government, while RCD (Goma) was allocated chief of the ground forces, and the MLC chief of the navy. The regional military commands were shared fairly between all the forces (government, the three RCD factions, the MLC and Maï-Maï).<sup>21</sup>

The current membership of all the armed forces to be integrated into the defence force totals some 345,000. The DDR national plan aims to demobilise almost half this number, but the integration process—which will shape the individual and the army profiles—is still in the conception stage.

#### **INTEGRATING THE CONGOLESE ARMED FORCES**

As well as the above-mentioned forces involved in the defence force integration process there are five Ituri militias—the UPC, FAPC, FNI/FRPI, Pusic and the FPDC. Other combatants who went into exile will also benefit from the integration. They are mostly in the Republic of Congo (Brazzaville), Angola, Benin, Chad and several European countries. Their number is estimated at 20,000. No quotas have, however, yet been agreed for their integration into the new defence force. The integration plan requires a gradual establishment of the defence system at four levels.<sup>22</sup>

- The territorial defence forces will be called the Coverage Force and will be made up of light infantry brigades under regional commands throughout the country.
- A quick response force will also be made up of brigades. It will be characterised by mobility, firepower and flexibility, and it will be able to be deployed in any part of the country within 72 hours.
- The main defence force will be organised and equipped as the main arm of the country’s defence strategy. It will comprise some heavy armoured divisions.
- The air force and navy will be developed and equipped to allow them to carry out their respective duties.



The new Defence Force Headquarters' schedule provides for:

- The immediate setting-up of the Coverage Force and its integration and training by June 2005.
- The creation of the Quick Response Force in the short-term (2005–2007).
- The creation of the Main Defence Force in the medium- to long-term (from 2007). The UN Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) and an international UN committee will establish guidelines for the integration of this force.<sup>23</sup>

#### **CHALLENGES FOR THE NEW CONGOLESE DEFENCE FORCE**

The challenges facing the new Congolese Defence Force include:<sup>24</sup>

- erasing all links with former force leaders;
- providing a training programme for the under-disciplined Mai-Mai;
- disarming armed Hutu refugees and Ituri militia;
- preventing hostilities at the Kivu borders;
- combating the proliferation of illegal arms; and
- building a republican army capable of defending the huge country.

In order to speed up the formation of the new army, the following co-operation accords have been concluded:

- with Belgium, which has already trained and equipped a combat brigade for Ituri;
- with South Africa, which is advising on the process;
- with Angola, for training new integrated brigades; and
- with the US and the Netherlands, which have additional and different inputs.

In May 2004 senior members of the military from SADC countries, led by Botswana Chief of Staff Lt Gen Fisher, met their Congolese colleagues in Kinshasa for discussions on the creation of a basis for the constructive exchange of experiences.<sup>25</sup> In addition to this programme and with the support of several donors, the DRC government is developing a DDR plan for about 200,000 combatants and 25,000 child soldiers.

## CONCLUSION

Until now, the Congolese people have been excluded from policy and other decision-making affecting the country's military institutions. No one outside the High Command has known anything about the composition or organisation of the army, or its command structure, or its budget. Owing to this, the army did not have a healthy relationship with the civilian government or the population as a whole. The actual relationship, indeed, was constantly contradictory and was marked by the army's repression of the population.

Emerging from this state, today's politicians—as well as the Congolese people as a whole—are anxious for change. They want to see the creation of a republican army that both respects and earns the respect of the civil authorities. The population has had a serious interest in the debates on army issues that started with the 1991–92 Sovereign National Conference, and which continued with the Inter-Congolese Dialogue and the present debates in the Senate and in Parliament.

Both the Congolese people and the army professionals are seeking to establish the army as an institution that:

- stabilises the state;
- ensures people's security;
- protects the country's institutions and its sovereignty;
- secures the integrity of the country's borders; and
- contributes to the stability of neighbouring countries.

All dream of an army whose principles support the ideal of security for the population. This explains the relentless way the Congolese people are debating the questions relating to the new army and its restructuring. There is an almost universal desire for an army that will bear no resemblance to the armies of the Belgian king, the Belgian colonial government, President Mobutu and presidents Kabila, father and son.

The first step in the development of the country's defence and national security system is the formation of what is called the 'New Congolese Restructured and Integrated Army'. The process should then continue until this body develops into a national institution that is both republican and apolitical. Wrong directions would include:

- papering over the present cracks, either by a simple unification of the military commands, or by the redeployment of present units so that they are blended in ways that would represent only adjustments; and

- fusing the various armies and militias. This would merely disguise the certainty of an eruption sooner or later that would bring about a new and possibly even more disastrous war, and whose outcome would be a victory for one faction or another that would probably lead to a new military dictatorship.

Instead, what we have to achieve is the creation of an entirely new army with an ideology, structure and organisation unlike anything that has previously existed in the DRC.

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Source: [www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/index.html](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/index.html)

# **From a destabilising factor to a de-politicised and professional force: The military in Lesotho**

Khabele Matlosa

## **INTRODUCTION**

Some three decades ago, the military in Lesotho was considered one of the major internal factors for political instability, which was the hallmark of the authoritarianism of yesteryear. Today, however, the military has been greatly reformed and restructured. The current restructuring and security sector reforms have gone a long way in inculcating a new culture of professionalism and de-politicisation of the forces—much to the benefit of the country’s democratisation process and internal discipline within the Lesotho Defence Force (LDF).

This chapter interrogates the historical evolution of the LDF since independence in 1966 and highlights contemporary trends in terms of civil–military relations. The discussion throughout the chapter is anchored upon the following assumptions:

- The historical and contemporary state of the military in Lesotho has been influenced by various external factors at the global and regional levels.
- Political developments in Lesotho itself have also shaped the nature and role of the military from 1966 to date.
- Governance of the military is crucial for an understanding of both the professionalism (or lack thereof) and de-politicisation (or lack thereof) of the LDF.

- Policy development and visioning have become critical elements in restructuring and security sector reforms since the late 1990s.
- Although enormous progress has been registered in the improvement of civil–military relations in Lesotho since the onset of democratisation in 1993, various challenges still remain if the success record is to be sustained.

Following these prefatory remarks, we discuss the contextual backdrop to the historical development of the military in Lesotho and briefly introduce the key concepts that recur throughout the chapter. Thereafter the debate and analysis focuses on the development of a modern army in Lesotho; the military governance regime; the constitutional and legal framework governing the military; the institutional arrangement for the LDF; policy development and visioning within the military since the mid-1990s; the human and financial capacity of the LDF; and regional security issues and the challenges these pose for the LDF. The concluding section wraps up the debate and recaps the key observations and research findings.

## **CONTEXTUAL FRAMEWORK**

Lesotho gained political independence from British colonial rule in 1966. As was the case in various other transitions from colonial rule to self-rule in Africa, the newly independent Lesotho state inherited the Westminster constitutional and institutional arrangements. Hence the modern army in Lesotho was bequeathed by the British colonial power and was indeed built by the British personnel with considerable succour from neighbouring South Africa.

Initially, the army evolved as a paramilitary police—the Police Mobile Unit—in the 1960s, transforming into a modern army—the Lesotho Paramilitary Force—in 1980 and subsequently elevated to a defence force proper in the 1980s when it assumed the status of the Lesotho Defence Force. However, following the military coup of 1986 which witnessed the demise of Basotho National Party (BNP) rule and its replacement by a military junta initially led by Maj Gen Justin Metsing Lekhanya, the name of the army was changed to the Royal Lesotho Defence Force.

This was meant to underpin and cement the symbiotic relations that existed between the military and the monarchy (read: military–monarch alliance) during that period. This relationship, however, was short-lived



and witnessed political tension and conflict of various kinds between the King (the late Moshoeshe II) and former head of the military junta, Maj Gen Lekhanya.

Since the political transition of the early 1990s—whose apogee was marked by the holding of a democratic election in 1993—the military force comprises about 2,100 people (including the army and air wing) and is now known as the Lesotho Defence Force (LDF).

It is worth noting that the above changes or transformations of the military in Lesotho were not just changes in name, but rather a profound metamorphosis of the military from its infancy in the 1960s up to its present status. These transformations were also informed by interesting changes, too, in terms of the governance arrangements of the military in Lesotho.

Whereas there have been shifts and twists regarding institutional arrangements for the governance of the military over time since the 1960s, one common denominator throughout all the phases of military evolution in Lesotho is that the prime minister has remained commander-in-chief of the forces. However, it is worth noting that in the earlier periods, tensions have simmered between the prime minister as head of government and the king as head of state regarding the governance of the military.<sup>1</sup>

Fortunately, these tensions were resolved following the democratic transition in the country in the early 1990s. Thus, quite obviously, following this transition and judging by the encouraging progress registered thus far through the on-going security sector reforms, the governance of the LDF has improved considerably; although, of course, much still remains to be done to consolidate the achievements and avoid reversals. But one thing which is abundantly clear is that never again can the military assume state power in its own right as it did in 1986—a professional culture within and civil control over the forces has been firmly institutionalised thanks to the 1993 democratic transition, the amendment to the constitution in the same year and technical assistance from South Africa, Botswana and India around security sector reform aimed in the main at entrenching a culture of professionalism and civil control.

## **THE CONCEPTUAL FRAME OF ANALYSIS**

It is important from the onset that we clarify some key concepts in this discussion. These include ‘security sector’ and ‘governance’, and then

‘security sector governance’. The notion of security sector denotes both formal and informal security formations in a given country, including those civil institutions that play an oversight role over the operations of these security institutions. In this paper we confine our discussion to the army and as such do not extend our coverage to other security organs in Lesotho.

The concept of governance simply refers to various ways, systems, procedures, rules, regulations and institutional arrangements for running the affairs of either an organisation or a nation at large; hence, governance is clearly distinct and distinguishable from government, for the latter refers to officers who man state institutions for the purposes of making governance possible. Here again our discussion is limited to the governance of the army in Lesotho.

From the above definitions of the concepts ‘security sector’ and ‘governance’, it is thus easier to define ‘security sector governance’, which in this context implies the way in which various organs of the security establishment (both formal and informal) are managed and administered. Much of the debate on security sector governance poses the critical question around civil control over the security establishment for the purposes of accountability and bringing the security sector aboard the current democratic transformation occurring in the African continent in general, and in Lesotho in particular.

Whereas there is general consensus in the governance literature on the commendable progress that Africa, and Lesotho, have made in terms of democratic transition since the early 1990s, serious questioning is going on within both policy and academic discourses around problems and prospects for democratic consolidation. Various scholars have raised issues around perceived democracy deficits that could threaten the progress already made and reverse the gains achieved to date.<sup>2</sup>

It is no exaggeration to posit that one of the key challenges for democratic consolidation following a successful transition clearly revolves around security sector governance in Africa; and it is within this context that we unravel governance challenges facing the military in Lesotho.

It is worth emphasising that security and the role of the military in Lesotho—as elsewhere in Southern Africa—have been drastically recast by various important recent developments.

First, the end of the Cold War has changed global threats to the national security of our countries due to the removal of the ideological rivalry between the then Soviet Union and the United States (US)—

which had in turn divided the world's countries into these two camps, making it easy to define external or potential threats.

Second, the demise of apartheid also reshaped regional security in a fundamental way in that states are no longer able to use South Africa's regional destabilisation of yesteryear as a reference point in defining external threats.

Third, the end of the Cold War and the demise of apartheid also changed the conflict patterns away from those of an inter-state form to the currently all-pervasive intra-state conflicts principally propelled by struggles over scarce resources.

Fourth, security itself is becoming increasingly contested and is not as straightforward as it was thought to be in the past: Whose security? What type of security? And, therefore, what should the role of the army be?

Today, states of the world, Lesotho included, face the dilemma of whether or not they perceive security in a state-centric fashion as national security, or in much more socio-economic terms as human security; but then still caught in the horns of dilemma as to how to advance national interest.<sup>3</sup>

Fifth and finally, accelerated globalisation has also affected the security landscape globally and poses new challenges for states, including the problem of global terrorism—even as this has tended to be politicised by the Bush administration in the US for its own national security and strategic interests on a global scale.

## **THE DEVELOPMENT OF A MODERN ARMY**

Various accounts abound regarding the historical evolution of the military in Lesotho and the political significance thereof, including the manner in which the military has made its own distinctive imprint on Lesotho's contemporary governance trajectory.<sup>4</sup> Most of these accounts have elaborated the factors that led to the establishment of the army in Lesotho in the early 1980s. There were both internal and external factors that accounted for the establishment of a modern defence force in Lesotho.

Internal factors had a lot to do with power struggles between the then ruling BNP and opposition parties. The former reckoned that it had to beef up the security machinery in order to enhance its political edge over the opposition. External factors had to do with the deteriorating relations between the BNP government and the then apartheid regime,

which presented a serious external security threat; more so given that the latter had assisted the opposition Basutoland Congress Party (BCP) in establishing the Lesotho Liberation Army to mount a proxy war against the former, which was seen as being too sympathetic to the African National Congress—hence the military incursion into Lesotho by the South African Defence Force in 1982 that killed 42 people.

It was also rather ironic that the BNP regime, which had been firmly anchored upon the military, would be dislodged by the military itself through a coup in 1986.

Thus between 1986 and 1992 the military ruled Lesotho on their own account during an era that marked the worst form of authoritarianism in the small and impoverished country.

However, the transition from military to civilian rule in 1993 did not lead to a quick and assured resolution of the military's involvement in politics. Thus, this chapter focuses mainly on contemporary developments around Lesotho's military in the new democratic dispensation following the 1993 democratic transition.

Lesotho's transition from military dictatorship to multiparty democracy has not been a straightforward and smooth process. As in most other African countries, the military-to-civilian rule transition trajectory in Lesotho was fraught with political intrigue, and mutual mistrust and tension among the contending actors and stakeholders.

Given the historical partisan politicisation of the security establishment, it is an exaggeration to posit that the armed forces posed the major threat to Lesotho's democracy following the transition. Not only had the forces been imbued with partisan politics over the two decades of uninterrupted praetorian rule of the BNP, they had themselves presided over a military dictatorship from 1986 to 1992, as indicated above. But it needs to be pointed out again that the then ruling BCP pursued rather confrontational policies which hardened, rather than softened, the negative perceptions of the military towards the new democratic project.

Combined with the confrontational attitude of the new regime towards the army was another failure on the part of the government: reintegration of the armed forces.

The faction-fighting within the army, the confrontation between one faction of the army with central government, and the police strike that took place in 1994, thus underlined Lesotho's historical political crisis which has always undermined legitimacy of the rulers. The turbulence, therefore, had less to do with salary demands by the security

establishment; it was a veiled political challenge to the new BCP government to safeguard interests and security of forces, which are historically aligned to the BNP.

It goes without saying that a new government inherited the security establishment which had been moulded after the image of another political party that ruled the country for a long time, and clearly such forces would not easily co-operate. Ironically, however, the BCP assumed power without a clear vision and programme of containing political discomfort of these forces, hence its hasty recourse to invitations of external forces in its attempts to quell the turbulence caused by the army in early 1994.<sup>5</sup>

When King Letsie III unconstitutionally ousted the BCP government on 17 August 1994, it was quite clear that Lesotho's democracy experiment had reached a cul-de-sac. The King's move was complex because it was informed by a constellation of political interests of the monarchy (and its supporters), the armed forces and the opposition BNP.

This travesty of Lesotho's fledgling democracy was reversed through the intervention of President Nelson Mandela of South Africa and President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, and ultimately a memorandum of understanding was signed in September of the same year in which Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe became guarantors of Lesotho's democracy on behalf of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). This regional governance arrangement remains today, and since 1998 Mozambique has been added to the list of guarantors of Lesotho's democracy. Although this regional arrangement has helped considerably to restrain the military's involvement in politics as well as to stabilise Lesotho's political system, it has brought into sharp relief the dilemma of national sovereignty to the small, impoverished and landlocked country. It has further reinforced Lesotho's hyperdependency on South Africa both economically and politically, and this has now been extended to the SADC region through the 1994 memorandum of understanding.

We wind up this section with a brief note regarding continuities and discontinuities on the nature of military doctrine since independence. The military doctrine in Lesotho since 1966 has favoured the Commonwealth military tradition, and this is no surprise given that Lesotho was a British protectorate. But again, given Lesotho's dependence on South Africa, the Commonwealth military tradition has tended to be somewhat diluted by the South African doctrinal principles, and this even more so since the 1986 military coup. Today, LDF officers undertake much of their training in South Africa. Be that as it may,

an Indian Military Team of 22 persons has been deployed within Lesotho since 2000 ... and will be assisting them with the retraining and redesign of all aspects of their Defence Force. It is likely that doctrinal principles of the Indian Army will feature more prominently in both the doctrine and training culture of the LDF in future.<sup>6</sup>

The next section turns the spotlight on another complex aspect of the contemporary history of the military, namely civil–military relations.

### **CIVIL–MILITARY RELATIONS**

There has been a robust debate around civil–military relations in Lesotho, especially since the 1980s when the country experienced military rule. We have argued elsewhere<sup>7</sup> that a useful approach to understanding the historical context of the current pattern of civil–military relations is to classify Lesotho’s political development into four broad phases and to assess the type of civil–military relations under each phase.

We proposed that the first phase could be classified as the era of embryonic or infant democracy during the period 1965–70 in which civil–military relations were generally stable, given the stability of the immediate post-independence political system.

It is worth noting though that prior to the 1965 elections, a heated controversy surrounded the nature of civil supremacy over the armed forces in independent Lesotho. Some political forces advocated the view that the armed forces be headed by the king (as head of state), while others argued that the prime minister (as head of government) be vested with powers to head the armed forces. With independence, the prime minister was given powers to head the armed forces.

We identified the second phase as the era of *de facto* one-party authoritarianism spanning the period 1970–86, which was marked by unstable civil–military relations predicated upon patronage and politicisation of the armed forces, both of which compromised the professionalism and ethical integrity of the defence force. During this period, the BNP government exercised stringent control over the armed forces and constructed the forces after its own political image in order not only to ward off external threat, but also to emasculate internal opposition.

The intense disagreements, faction-fighting and leadership squabbles within the BNP during the mid-1980s not only threw the ruling party

into disarray, but also pitted it against the armed forces primarily over issues of internal law and order, and sour relations with apartheid South Africa following the latter's military raids in Lesotho in 1982 and 1985.

The relations between the ruling party and the armed forces deteriorated so drastically that in 1986 the army undertook a military coup thereby dislodging the BNP government with tacit support from apartheid South Africa.<sup>8</sup>

We proposed that the 1986 military coup ushered in the third phase in Lesotho's political development, namely the era of military authoritarianism between 1986 and 1993, which was a continuation of deteriorating civil-military relations as the military had turned itself into an executive; once again professionalism was sacrificed on the basis of political expediency, and internal paralysis within the LDF was noticeable. Party political activities were banned by a decree notoriously known as Order No. 4. Not only was democratic governance suffocated, but the socio-economic conditions of ordinary Basotho worsened as the military junta adopted, and in 1987 began implementing, the International Monetary Fund and World Bank structural adjustment programme.

The fourth phase that we identified was the era of fragile democracy from 1993 to 2000, which followed the withdrawal of the military from direct control over the state, largely due to both internal and external pressure for democratisation and demilitarisation. This fourth phase has witnessed the withdrawal of the military from state power and the ascendance of civilian authority after the 1993 election.

Initially, problems of adjustment to the new political reality saw protracted conflicts between the executive authority and the LDF, leading to faction-fighting within the forces over the army's relationship with the BCP government,<sup>9</sup> and the temporary displacement by King Letsie III by a democratically elected government in 1994.<sup>10</sup> Tension re-surfaced after the 1998 election with conflict between the opposition parties and the ruling party. But despite the conflicts of 1994 and 1998, this current phase has marked major shifts in civil-military relations, especially regarding the momentum of legal, institutional and policy reforms that have thus far been put in place.

The current and fifth phase spanning the period 2001 to date has been marked by various kinds of institutional engineering aimed at redressing identified democracy deficits of the earlier phases.

On the electoral front this process witnessed the replacement of the first-past-the-post system by the new mixed-member proportional

representation system. This was first put to the test in the 2002 general elections and has in part contributed immensely to the country's current political stability.

On the military front, this current phase has been characterised by considerable improvement in civil–military relations and concerted effort towards security sector reform, with external assistance from Botswana, South Africa and India.

The most important lesson that the above historical context poses for security sector reform is that under conditions of authoritarian rule, civil–military relations are bound to be weak and unstable, whereas under democratic rule they tend to be relatively stable.

Another lesson worth noting from this historical context is that once the military takes over state power and rule on their own, internal discipline within the forces deteriorates; consequently, the military as an institution gets overwhelmingly destabilised by its own rule. This explains in part why the military administration was marked by internal disorder and revolt of the officer corps against the military top brass, resulting in the dissipation of the force's internal cohesion.<sup>11</sup>

## **CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK**

The LDF is established by article 146 of the 1993 Constitution as amended, which states that “there shall be a Defence Force for the maintenance of internal security and the defence of Lesotho”. Although the head of government still remains the commander-in-chief of the forces, actual command is vested in the commander who is appointed by the king on the advice of the prime minister.

On 29 March 1996, the Prime Minister as the Minister of Defence and Internal Security introduced a bill in Parliament which amended the 1993 Lesotho Constitution with the sole purpose of providing a more effective and efficient governance machinery for the LDF.

The amendments to section 146 of the Constitution basically included that:

- the prime minister as the elected head of government has powers to determine the operational use of the LDF;
- powers of command of the LDF are vested in the commander; and
- the appointment and removal of the commander of the LDF rests



with the king as head of state and the constitutional monarch, acting on the advice of the prime minister, the head of government.

There are therefore three main stakeholders or actors in the governance of the military in Lesotho, namely:

- the king, as head of state and constitutional monarch;
- the prime minister, as head of government and minister of defence; and
- the commander, as head of the defence force.

The above constitutional arrangements are buttressed by enabling legislation that further streamlines the governance of the military in line with the evolving democratic dispensation in the country. A Defence Force Act was enacted by Parliament in 1996 and aimed at providing the structure, organisation and administration, as well as discipline for the forces and matters incident thereto. The Act is consistent with the overall constitutional provisions as outlined above; however, it clarifies further command, control and administration of the LDF and defines the role of the commander much more clearly.

The commander determines and implements such measures that he considers necessary for:

- command-and-control;
- maintenance of proper discipline;
- improvement or simplification of organisation, methods and procedures; and
- securing the most economic and efficient utilisation of the resources provided for the maintenance of the LDF.

The commander is therefore accountable to and reports regularly to the prime minister and minister of defence on matters under his jurisdiction, both on operational and policy issues relating to the LDF.

## **THE INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK**

The main institution that has been established recently for the purposes of efficient and effective governance of the LDF is the Ministry of Defence, with the prime minister as the minister of defence, and the day-to-day administration of the ministry vested in the principal secretary

and his/her deputy. The main functions of the Ministry of Defence are to:

- formulate and execute defence policy;
- provide the central operational and administrative headquarters for the LDF; and
- act as the organisation which procures equipment for the LDF.<sup>12</sup>

The establishment of the Ministry of Defence in 1995 represents an important move towards institutionalisation of civil control of the forces by elected civil authority, and the enhancement of accountability of the forces to the executive organ of the state as well as the legislature through the minister in charge. Thus, administrative accountability of the LDF filters through the Office of the Principal Secretary in the Ministry of Defence through the minister, the executive (Cabinet), the legislature (Parliament) all the way to the king as the pinnacle of the legislature and head of state.

In a nutshell, the LDF, through the Ministry of Defence, is accountable to Parliament. The Ministry of Defence provides for the efficient management of activities and the effective utilisation of resources and assets of the LDF in a more economic manner. It provides for civil control and co-ordination of the various activities of the forces, and development of appropriate defence policy for the LDF.

Part of the institutional framework aimed at enhancing civil control over the LDF is the Defence Council, which is established in terms of the Lesotho Defence Force Act, 1996. The Defence Council comprises:

- the minister of defence, who is the chairperson of the Council;
- the principal secretary of the Ministry of Defence;
- the commander of the LDF;
- the secretary to be appointed by the minister; and
- two other members appointed by the minister for a period of three years (renewable).

The primary functions of the Defence Council are to:

- make recommendations to Cabinet on the formulation and implementation of defence policy;
- make recommendations to Cabinet on the terms and conditions of service of members of the LDF; and

- inquire into and deal with complaints and grievances by any member of the LDF.<sup>13</sup>

To all intents and purposes, the establishment of the Ministry of Defence and the Defence Council is clear testimony to the enormous strides made by Lesotho to professionalise the military and try to cut its umbilical cord with partisan political activities in which the LDF has been so embroiled in the past, much to the detriment of democratic governance and internal discipline within the LDF.

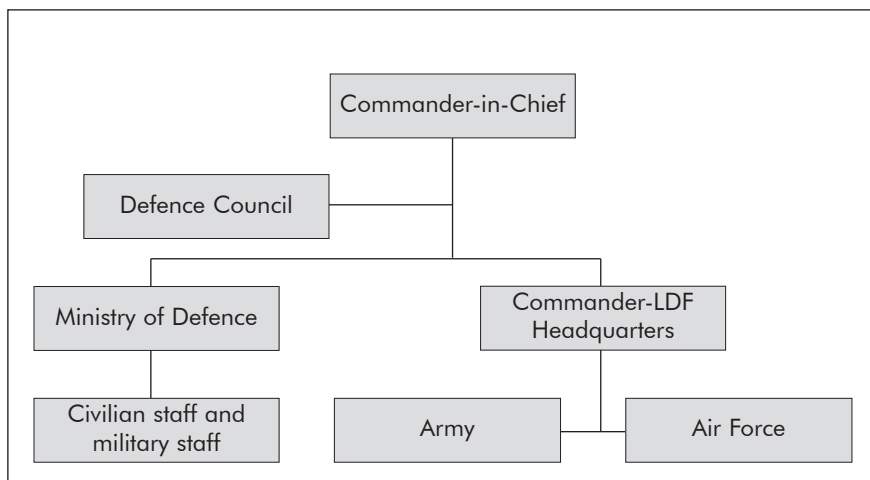
With all fairness, although the democratic transition of the early 1990s was bedevilled with serious hiccups—including violent conflicts between the military and the government—this has changed dramatically since the late 1990s when these institutional arrangements were set in motion. The LDF as we know it today is much more professional and less political in both its worldview and in the execution of its national duties. This is a positive development for Lesotho's fledgling democratic governance. The professionalism that is evolving within the LDF is also a positive development for the cohesion of the force, which has been rocked by internal faction-fighting over the past decade.

However, the link between the minister of defence and the head of government must be severed in order to further institutionalise de-linkage between the military and politics. Presently, the prime minister is the minister of defence and the head of government at the same time, and this arrangement translates into an overwhelmingly centralised institutional framework. Lesotho needs to consider an arrangement whereby the Ministry of Defence is detached from the Prime Minister's Office, with its own distinctive minister responsible for defence matters.

Incidentally, wide-ranging recommendations regarding decentralisation of the governance regime for the LDF were made during a three-day dialogue workshop on civil–military relations in Lesotho organised in 2000 by the Institute for Security Studies (ISS). These recommendations included, among others:

- the need to build public trust in the military;
- the need for a broadly inclusive process informing the restructuring and security sector reform measures;
- concerted efforts towards de-politicisation of the military;
- strengthening the civilian oversight over the military; and
- the need for the establishment of a defence and security portfolio committee of Parliament.<sup>14</sup>

**Figure 1: Current governance structure of the Lesotho Defence Force**



The current governance structure of the LDF is summarised in Figure 1. At the top of the LDF is the commander-in-chief, currently Phakalitha Mosisili, who is also simultaneously the head of government and the minister of defence. Mosisili also chairs the Defence Council, which in turn advises Cabinet on defence policy. Defence policy is developed by the Ministry of Defence in close co-operation with the LDF headquarters under the leadership of the commander, Lt Gen Makhula Mosakeng, who is in charge of the management and all operational functions of both the army and air wing. Civilian staff of the Ministry of Defence are answerable to the principal secretary of the Ministry, while military staff are answerable to the LDF commander through the LDF headquarters.

It is evident from Figure 1 that the prime minister wields enormous power vis-à-vis the governance of the military in Lesotho. This is explained by reference to the historical evolution of the defence force, which has been structurally linked to the political party in power as well as to the historical power struggle between politicians and the palace over control of the LDF.<sup>15</sup>

This centralisation of power within the Prime Minister's Office needs to be reviewed in the light of progress in Lesotho's democratisation project, as well as the advances that have been made in security sector reform, with a view to emphasising an increasing role for civil society

and Parliament in defence matters. It is surely against this backdrop that participants to the earlier mentioned ISS workshop made a specific recommendation that “the Prime Minister should oversee all ministries and *not hold portfolios such as that of defence*”.<sup>16</sup>

The operational structure of the Lesotho army is as follows:

- defence headquarters;
- 7 x infantry companies dispersed throughout the country;
- 1 x support company with 81 mm mortars;
- 1 x armoured reconnaissance company;
- 1 x artillery battery; and
- 1 x logistics support group.<sup>17</sup>

## **DEFENCE POLICY**

Policy development that provides a well-defined vision for the defence force has historically been lacking in the LDF. Only since the recent past has the LDF started developing its long-term policy framework. Policy development is an important hallmark of best practice in the governance of countries and organisations/institutions.

The Ministry of Defence in May 1995 developed a defence policy. A brief background to this policy is needed, if only to suggest that there were both external and internal factors for its development. On a global scale, the end of the Cold War and the onset of accelerated globalisation recast regional and national security imperatives, and even small countries such as Lesotho have not been left untouched by these global developments.

At a regional level, the demise of apartheid and concerted efforts towards regional integration and security co-operation have drastically reshaped the regional security architecture to the extent that all regional states have had to rethink and re-order their security and defence mechanisms. Regional security imperatives through the SADC region are inextricably linked to continental security imperatives within the framework of the African Union (AU), and Lesotho is a state party to both supranational institutions. Finally, a major domestic factor was the democratic transition of 1993, which was followed immediately by tense and conflict-ridden relations between the military and the government, as well as violent faction-fighting within the military. All these factors had direct and indirect influence on the development of the defence policy.

The policy aims to reposition Lesotho’s military in the context of the

kaleidoscopic changes at global and regional levels, and with a view to addressing civil–military relations at home. The policy states that:

the day to day guarantee of security lies in the maintenance of national and international order, and in particular, in regional stability. To achieve this, Lesotho must maintain a minimal, unified national defence system, which should be professional, well-trained, highly motivated and well equipped.<sup>18</sup>

More specifically, the policy has a clear objective to restructure the LDF in fundamental ways. In line with the policy, the LDF should be:

- *Apolitical*: Organised, trained and managed to serve the government of the day and the entire people; importantly it should uphold and respect the Constitution of the Kingdom of Lesotho.
- *Accountable*: Well-disciplined and accountable to government and the people through clearly defined political mechanisms of control. There is need for the people to have confidence in their defence force—in its discipline, integrity and professional ability.
- *Capable*: A military capable of undertaking its primary task—that is, defence of the territorial integrity of the country—while playing a constructive peacetime role.
- *Affordable*: Defence should not represent an unaffordable burden on the economy.<sup>19</sup>

It is within the context of this policy that we are able to understand the security sector reform measures that have been put in place since 1999, with technical support from Botswana, South Africa and India.

#### **HUMAN RESOURCES AND FINANCIAL CAPACITY OF THE MILITARY**

The LDF has a personnel strength of about 2,100 and comprises two military branches, namely the army and the air wing. According to the Ministry of Defence’s defence policy:

the LDF is at present organised into 11 companies each comprising approximately 120 personnel. This includes a Headquarters company,

Air Squadron and Band and Engineering. The majority of personnel are based at Headquarters or Makoanyane Barracks, which is in the suburbs of Maseru. At all times there are two companies on operational duties outside Maseru: invariably one in the north and one in the south of the country. Two platoons at Headquarters and two at Makoanyane are on operational standby. The remaining companies will be on stand-down. Companies rotate weekly through these tasks.<sup>20</sup>

In terms of the size and geo-political location of the country, the size of the force is not a contested issue. What is hotly contested, though, is the amount of public resources made available to the LDF. This relates to the overall resource endowment of the country and how scarce resources are allocated between and among various government departments.

The state of economic growth and development plays an important role in influencing civil–military relations. This is because the economy determines the amount of resources that the executive authority is able to avail to the security forces. This is crucial for the defence budget, which often competes with other demands on the country's scarce resources. Thus far the defence budget has always ranked among the traditional top three—namely, education, health and defence. For the first time, the 2002/03 national budget relegated defence spending to fifth position in terms of resource allocation prioritisation.

The five top ministries allocated a larger chunk of the budget were: Education with M777.2 million (22% of the total budget); Public Works with M324.9 million (9.2%); Health with M289.7 million (8.2%); Finance with M275.1 million (7.8%); and Defence with M178 million (5.0%). Interestingly, the then Minister of Finance and Development Planning, Mohlabi Tsekoa, justified increased defence spending to Parliament as follows:

Defence costs are largely inflated by aircraft insurance and purchase of spare parts. Insurance and spare parts costs rose sharply following the events of September 11, 2001 in the United States. It is Government policy to restructure defence in accordance with realities in the Lesotho context.<sup>21</sup>

Again, defence ranks fifth in the current national budget for the fiscal year 2004/05, as follows: Education and Training with M953 million

(22.0% of the total budget); Finance and Development Planning with M554 million (12.8% of the total budget); Health and Social Welfare with M322 million (7.4% of the total budget); Public Works and Transport with M289 million (6.7% of the total budget); and Defence and National Security with M216 million (5.0% of the total budget).<sup>22</sup> Defence expenditure should not amount to a diversion of scarce resources away from socio-economic goals to militaristic ventures, especially under conditions where no serious military threat exists.

### **THE REGIONAL SECURITY CHALLENGE FOR THE MILITARY**

It is appropriate and apposite to premise our discussion in this section on the assumption that the size and geo-political location of Lesotho considerably shape and influence the country's role and position in regional common security efforts.

Put more explicitly, and rather provocatively, Lesotho's small size, impoverishment and landlocked status have inhibited the country's assertive and influential role in SADC's current efforts towards common regional security. Lesotho's external security horizon is overwhelmingly dependent on South Africa. Joint patrols involving the LDF and the South African National Defence Force are a regular feature along the Lesotho–South Africa border.

It is worth noting though that Lesotho is an active member of the region's supranational entity—SADC—and participates meaningfully in all SADC activities. Lesotho has contributed its military personnel during regional peacekeeping exercises such as Blue Hungwe (1998) and Blue Crane (1999). Lesotho was in fact chair of the Inter-State Defence and Security Committee in 2001 and also chair of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security (OPDS) in 2003. It is the co-chair of the OPDS in a troika including South Africa (current chair) and Namibia (incoming chair).

In a sense, therefore, Lesotho's foreign policy in the region, though somewhat weak and reactive, does embrace the conviction of the political elite that national security today under conditions of globalism and regionalism is inextricably intertwined and interwoven into regional security measures and mechanisms. In this regard, Lesotho embraces the significance of a regional security institution such as the SADC OPDS.

In a recent review of SADC aimed at major restructuring and the development of a five-year Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan, the key strategic priorities included consolidation of democratic



governance as well as the establishment of a sustainable and effective mechanism for conflict prevention, management and resolution.<sup>23</sup>

On the basis of the review process, the new structure of the OPDS as agreed upon by member states is as follows:

- The Organ shall be co-ordinated at the level of Summit on a Troika basis and reporting to the Chairperson of SADC;
- The Chairperson of the Organ shall be on a rotational basis for a period of one year;
- The Member State holding the chairperson of the Organ shall provide the Secretariat services;
- The Chairperson of the Organ shall not simultaneously hold the Chair of the Summit; and
- The structure, operations and functions of the Organ shall be regulated by the protocol on Politics, Defence and Security Co-operation.<sup>24</sup>

Currently, the OPDS is fully operational under the leadership of South African President Thabo Mbeki. Lesotho's Prime Minister, Phakalitha Mosisili, was, as mentioned, chairperson of the OPDS in 2003. Despite the initial paralysis of the OPDS and lack of a clear role for SADC on the security front, as mentioned, South Africa, Botswana and Zimbabwe have been heavily and directly involved in containing Lesotho's protracted and often violent conflicts, and the three countries, together with Mozambique, are the guarantors of Lesotho's democratic governance.

A key challenge facing Lesotho today in relation to regional security imperatives is precisely how best the leadership of the country can reposition this small and landlocked nation in the context of post-apartheid South and Southern Africa. Lesotho needs much stronger bilateral co-operation arrangements with South Africa, without necessarily sacrificing its commitment to multilateral regional efforts towards common security.

Although it has taken a painstakingly long time for the leadership of both countries to appreciate this stark reality, it is encouraging, and indeed commendable, that they have finally established the Joint Bilateral Commission of Co-operation. Established and signed on 19 April 2001, the key objectives of the Bilateral Commission are to:

- guide the strategic partnership between the parties;

- promote mutually beneficial economic integration between the two countries with the aim of closing the existing economic disparities;
- promote co-operation in the field of science and technology with the aim of bridging the technological divide which exists between the two countries;
- cultivate and promote good governance, beneficial social, cultural, humanitarian and political co-operation and facilitate contact between the public and private sectors of the parties;
- maintain peace and security between the two countries and general stability in the Southern African region through collective action based on respect for democratic institutions, human rights and the rule of law;
- co-operate and harmonise the position of the parties in addressing multilateral issues of common interest; and
- facilitate movement of people, goods and services between their two countries taking into consideration the unique geographic position of Lesotho.

In order to operationalise the Commission and facilitate the realisation of the above objectives, four working groups or clusters have been established, namely the:

- Economic Cluster;
- Good Governance Cluster;
- Security and Stability Cluster; and
- Social Cluster.

It is still too early to make an informed judgment and assessment of progress thus far in this direction. It is, however, fair to observe that slowly but surely positive steps are under way in the redefinition of Lesotho–South Africa relations, and only time will tell whether or not the two countries will reap mutually beneficial developments arising

from the Bilateral Commission, especially in respect of democratic governance and security.

Be that as it may, Lesotho has played an important role in shaping the current regional security architecture in SADC, for it was during its tenure as OPDS chair that the SADC Strategic Indicative Plan for the Organ (SIPO) was developed and subsequently adopted at the SADC Summit held in Mauritius in August 2004.

SIPO commits SADC member states to:

- promote and safeguard the development of the region against instability arising from the breakdown of law and order, intra-state and inter-state conflicts and aggression;
- promote political co-operation among member states and the evolution of common values and institutions;
- prevent, contain and resolve inter- and intra-state conflicts by peaceful means;
- promote the development of democratic institutions and practices by state parties and encourage the observance of universal human rights;
- observe and encourage state parties to implement the UN Charter, AU Constitutive Act and other international conventions and treaties on peaceful relations between states;
- develop the peacekeeping capacity of national defence forces and coordinate the participation of state parties in international peacekeeping operations;
- enhance regional capacity in respect of disaster management and coordination of international humanitarian assistance; and
- develop common foreign policy approaches on issues of mutual concern, and advance such policy collectively in international fora.<sup>25</sup>

It is within the context of this new thinking around regional security that the LDF has been involved in various regional peacekeeping training initiatives organised mainly through the Harare-based Regional Peacekeeping Centre since the late 1990s.

## **CONCLUSION**

Lesotho's democratic transition has resulted in considerable progress being made in terms of improving the LDF's governance machinery. This has included improved professionalism of the force, the extrication of the LDF from partisan party politics, enhanced civil control over the force, accountability of the LDF to Parliament, and advances in the on-going process of security sector reform.

All these are indeed commendable strides forward in terms of institutionalisation of democratic governance of the military sub-sector in the country. However, much more still remains to be done in order to ensure that the gains made thus far do not lead to complacency and/or possible reversals.<sup>26</sup>

Challenges for the consolidation of democratic governance in the military include the following:

- Parliamentary oversight needs to be strengthened through relevant standing and portfolio committees.
- There should be effective implementation of the defence policy and finalisation of the draft Strategic Plan for the LDF in order to add more value to the improved civil–military relations and security reforms.
- There is need to further decentralise governance of the LDF and avoid centralisation within the Prime Minister's Office.
- Democratic governance of the LDF is also dependent upon the successful democratisation of Lesotho generally.
- The democratic culture and practice that is emerging in Lesotho ought to change in a positive manner the attitude of both the political elite and society at large towards the military.
- There should be recognition that the LDF ought to play an increasingly developmental role, over and above its traditional security roles.
- An emerging culture of public trust and confidence around the role of the military since the mid-1990s needs to be solidified and consolidated through, among others, greater access to information on security sector reform to broader stakeholders, including civil society organisations.

- The LDF has begun to play a greater regional role in Southern Africa through SADC, and in the African continent through the AU. This is bound to continue as the region and the continent strive for deeper integration; and this implies further and possibly more complex responsibilities.

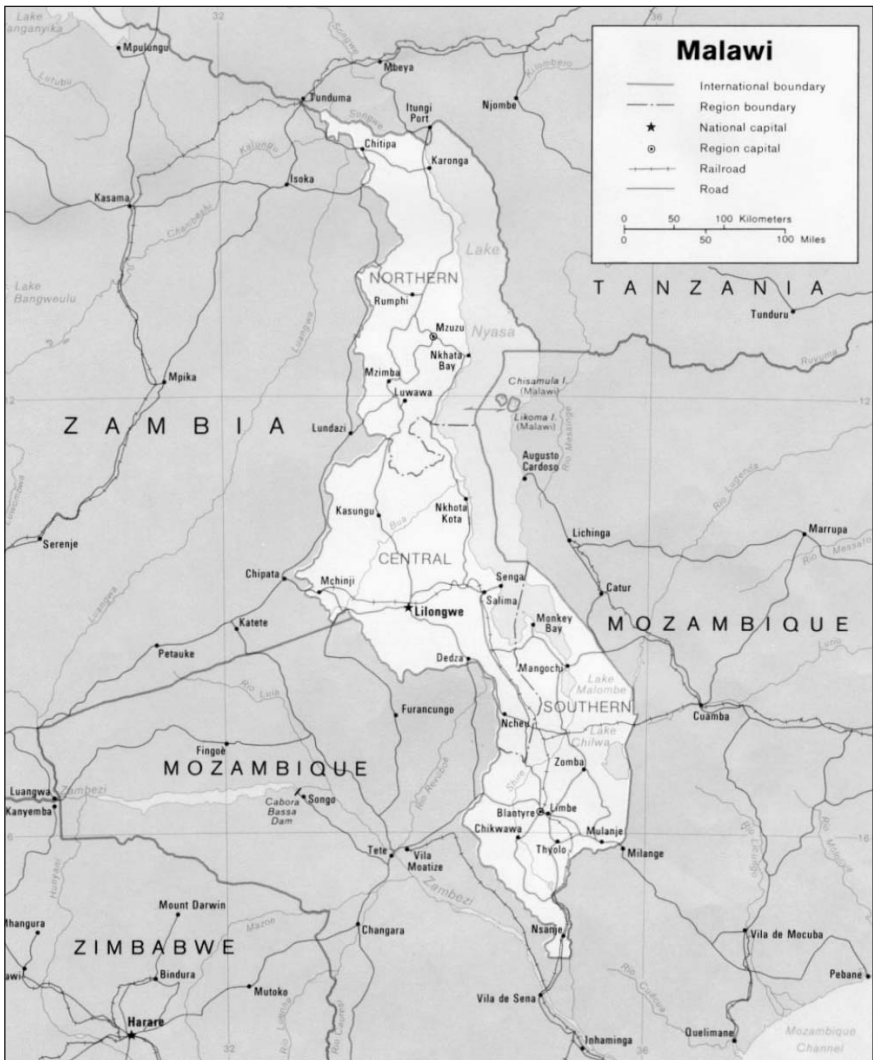
This chapter has sketched the mode of governance for the military in Lesotho. It is abundantly evident from the above that since its early days, the military in Lesotho has evolved from an embryonic force to a professional defence force that has fairly sound and robust institutional mechanisms for ensuring civil or democratic control.

The constitutional and legal framework for the governance of the military is clear in terms of defining the parameters for control of the defence force by an elected civil authority. Yet again, the institutional framework is clearly defined in terms of which public institutions are responsible for ensuring civil oversight and accountability of the LDF to the executive branch of government and less so to the legislative branch.

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# The odd man out: A history of the Malawi army since July 1964

Martin Rupiya\*

## INTRODUCTION

Malawi is one of Southern Africa's land locked countries, sandwiched between and sharing border areas with Tanzania, Zambia and Mozambique. Malawi gained independence at the peak of the decolonisation process, on 6 July 1964.<sup>1</sup> The current population of the country stands at 12,158,924 people. Geographically, the country has 20% of its landmass (or 24,400 km<sup>2</sup>) covered by water, constituting Africa's third largest water mass, Lake Malawi. The remaining 80% (or 94,080 km<sup>2</sup>) is land, running like a thin wedge, west and along the lake and a little beyond to the Mozambique border in the south. Administratively, the territory has been divided into 24 districts, a process that has security implications for policing and the location of units. While settlement in the country is largely rural, there are some major urban areas, among which the towns of Blantyre, Zomba and Lilongwe are the most prominent.

The military history of Malawi—a subject that has so far escaped serious academic inquiry—is much more complex and unique compared to other post-colonial Southern African countries. For a start, Malawi's foreign policy from 1964 went counter to that of her newly independent neighbouring states of Tanganyika (now Tanzania) and Zambia, both of which offered their countries as the Front Line States, in line with the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) Liberation Committee's call for the total political emancipation of the continent. In contrast, the new prime minister, Hastings Banda, formed a curious alliance with the remaining

settler, colonial and apartheid regimes in the then Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), Portuguese East Africa (now Mozambique) and South Africa. This decision placed Malawi and its security and defence forces in an invidious position. Furthermore, Banda took a second decision that had far-reaching internal implications for the Malawi Defence Force (MDF). Following the cabinet crisis barely six weeks after independence on 6 July 1964, four cabinet ministers were expelled from cabinet while two others resigned in disgust, claiming that Banda exhibited extreme dictatorial and intolerant tendencies. As shall be discussed fully later, over the next three to four years until 1967 some of the ministers launched internal armed insurrections or invasions from neighbouring states.

In response to this security challenge, Banda took the decision to strengthen the Malawi Young Pioneers (MYP), an organisation with links to the ruling political party, the Malawi Congress Party (MCP). This decision removed the MDF's central role and function, leading to its stagnation and neglect until December 1993 when—motivated by a growing national opposition to the receding influence of the by now very old Banda—the MDF launched Operation Bwezani against the MYP, during which the latter was successfully disarmed and disbanded.

In the interim, while attention, resources and effort from 1964 turned towards favouring the MYP, there was stagnation within the MDF, with the inherited white officers Askari arrangement remaining in place eight years into independence until 1972. The significance of this lack of reform and maintenance of the status quo was in line with the country's foreign policy. This required the MDF to continue collaborating and working with colonial forces in Rhodesia, Portuguese East Africa and apartheid South Africa. In the complex military history of Malawi, this continued even after Mozambique gained independence in 1975 and Zimbabwe in 1980.

In the following two decades until 1992, Malawi had still unexplained troops assisting both sides of the conflict in Mozambique: the MYP associated with the Mozambique National Resistance (Renamo); and the MDF now establishing a working relationship along the Beira–Nacala route with the ruling Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (Frelimo).

A clearer picture of the national role and function of the MDF appears after the May 1994 elections when the country's foreign policy underwent a fundamental shift, in line with the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

After spending more than 30 years in the international wilderness, associated with colonial and pariah states, Malawi began its full

rehabilitation by participating in international peacekeeping and membership of regional security arrangements.

This chapter therefore seeks to trace the complex events that made an impact and influenced the evolution of the MDF from independence in 1964 to the present.

### **BACKGROUND: PRE-COLONIAL NYASALAND ASKARIS**

The foundation of the Malawi military structure was laid during two epochs, spanning the colonial period from June 1890 until the dissolution of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland in December 1963. The first period emerged during the 1920s, after the First World War, when the existing Police Mobile Unit was charged with the responsibility to train a territorial force. These elements were soon incorporated into the British East African Command security policy as one of the units of the King's African Rifles (KAR).

According to Mungai Mutonya and Timothy Parsons, KiKAR, a Swahili variety in Kenya's colonial army, Nyasaland populated 1 and 2 Battalions of the British East African Brigade, in which a battalion consisted of about 200 soldiers led by "entirely European officers seconded from the British army who served one or two four-year terms in East Africa".<sup>2</sup>

The role of the KAR was to "protect European life and property, the abolition of the slave trade and elimination of threats from other colonial powers while supporting the expansion of the British empire".<sup>3</sup> The role of the Nyasaland unit, however, was to 'occupy' Tanganyika as part of the League of Nations trusteeship arrangements that Britain put in place when it dispossessed Germany of its former colony.

The Police Mobile Unit trained the first military unit soon after the First World War in 1922. In that year, the governor of Nyasaland—with the support of the white-dominated legislative council made up of white merchants, traders and business people—enacted the Defence Force Ordinance that gave rise to the establishment of a defence and territorial force which included 'natives' under white officers.<sup>4</sup>

Small cadre sub-units of the territorial force were also established in each of the 24 administrative districts in which the district commandant headed the local defence committee. While the governor represented the local commander-in-chief, the ultimate defence responsibility rested with Britain. This structure survived, with only small adaptations in 1939 and 1944.

The second structural and role change for the military in colonial Nyasaland occurred during the early 1950s. This was as a consequence of intervention by settlers from Southern Rhodesia who motivated for the establishment of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. Federation had security and defence implications, and we briefly trace its impact on the Nyasaland military units that were located in Tanganyika.

### **FEDERATION AND NYASALAND'S MILITARY EXPERIENCE**

While Southern Rhodesia viewed itself as proxy to the British Empire, its motivations in carrying out this role in Southern Africa was based on self-interest, aimed at consolidating its influence not only in the region—against perceived machinations from the Union of South Africa—but also within the Commonwealth. Consequently, based on the economic argument of amalgamation, the mooted federal concept had a strong security dimension in which the East African Brigade was expected to hand over control of several units in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland to Salisbury (now Harare). After securing the agreement of the Nyasaland governor to the idea of amalgamation and military integration in 1952, the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, influenced the role(s) and structure of the military in Nyasaland.<sup>5</sup>

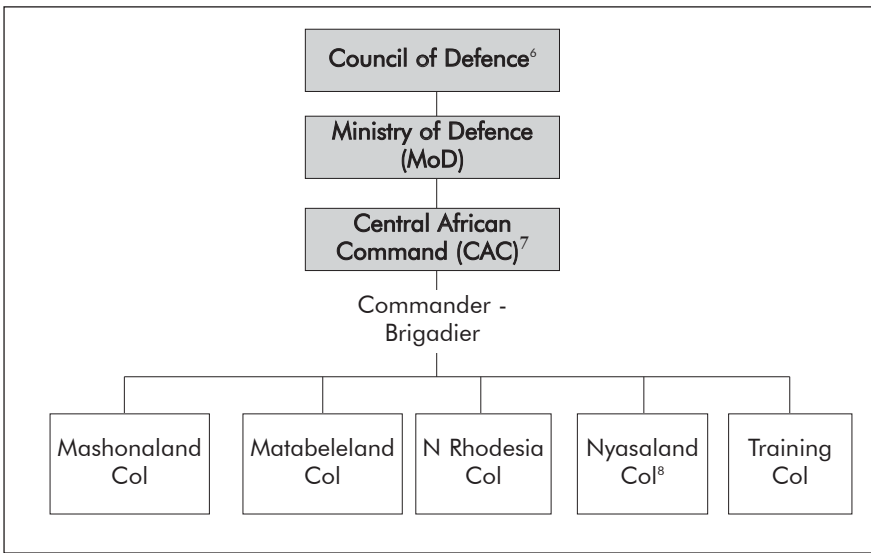
A conference to work out the security modalities was held at King George VI Barracks in Salisbury in August 1953. This followed acceptance a year earlier by the governors of Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland of the decision to welcome the creation of the Central African Command (CAC) as the successor to Nairobi.

At this time, Nyasaland had been required to deploy a battalion in Tanganyika since 1918, following the forced departure of the German occupiers in the trusteeship arrangement that followed the war.

After the meeting, Nyasaland was now brought under the control of the CAC, with its security policy established by the Council of Defence in Salisbury. A colonel was in charge of each of the commands, answerable to a brigadier who was overall commander of the CAC based in Salisbury. A new Federal Defence Act was passed in October 1954 and only became operational in 1955. The new structure, now known as the CAC, fell under Southern Rhodesia (see Figure 1 for full organisational structure).

At the end of the two epochs covering the colonial period, Malawi was at independence bequeathed with two experienced battalions of Askaris, commanded by white officers, for the purposes of external operations and limited internal use. One of the federal army's 'successes'

Figure 1: Full organisational structure



was to mount Operation Sunrise in which “over a hundred important and influential members of the NAC [Nyasaland African Congress] ... were taken to airfields and there handed over to Federal custody for transportation to prisons outside the Protectorate.”<sup>9</sup>

African political activists rounded up in Nyasaland included Kamuzu Banda and his top lieutenant, Chipembere. The incarceration of the leaders was in the midlands town of Gwelo (now Gweru) in Southern Rhodesia. However, this action by the federal government was at variance with the British position: the Commonwealth and Colonial Office had already begun serious constitutional talks with the African nationalists, leading to power transfers from 1961.

Following agreement reached in April 1961 the MCP won the constitutional talks—mandated legislative council elections and had its members form the dominant faction in the new executive council that prepared the country for independence. The following year in 1962, the constitutional talks provided for independence in 1964, with Dr Banda appointed premier from February 1963. This process revealed an inexorable move towards decolonisation on the part of Britain—a development that was being resisted by the Salisbury-dominated Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland.

## **INDEPENDENCE FREEZE 1964–1972**

Malawi's independence followed the usual pattern of post-Second World War political agitation, civil disobedience and calls for decolonisation that characterised colonial rule on the African continent. In the 1950s, several welfare and trade union-based organisations amalgamated to establish the first political parties and to champion for political independence.

In the then Nyasaland, the NAC (established in 1944) was at the forefront. Dr Hastings Banda returned to the country in July 1958 and joined the ongoing efforts of the NAC. Banda had been in self-imposed exile in the United States where he gained a medical degree, later in the United Kingdom where he operated a private practice, and finally in newly independent Ghana.<sup>10</sup> Banda was therefore a latecomer in the process, joining a band of young and militant nationalists who were already challenging what was clearly receding British colonial control.

A gradual process of decolonisation was then unwinding during the critical period of 1959–63, during which Banda assumed the premiership in preparation for full independence in 1964. However, as Mandiza asserts, the young militants were convinced that they would be at the helm of the new nation, with the invited Banda occupying a ceremonial presidential post.<sup>11</sup>

The young militants also appeared to be inclined to follow the then popular 'socialism' with links to the People's Republic of China in the foreign policy of the new nation.<sup>12</sup>

This perception and internal NAC–MCP political party power struggle was to erupt into a political crisis soon after independence, and impacted on the way in which the military was restructured thereafter (as discussed below).

Malawi became an independent state on 6 July 1964, ahead of all its earlier counterparts in the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. The units inherited from the colonial and federal experience became the Malawi army.

In order to maintain brevity, it also clear that the political crisis that gripped Malawi's cabinet on 26 August when there was open confrontation with Banda resulted in far reaching implications for the Malawi army. A summary of the events showed that Banda initially quarrelled with his lieutenants in July 1964 on the 'two China' foreign policy issue. While the latter had invited Mao's China, Banda responded by extending an invitation to Taiwan. As was customary, the People's Republic of China demanded that Taiwan be excluded. Banda refused to

compromise, setting the scene for a future internal turbulent relationship.

The foreign policy difference was soon followed by what was perceived as the new government's insensitivity, after the introduction of hospital fees, the slow rate of Africanisation, and attendant low salaries for civil servants compared to the remuneration offered to white officers. Against this background, the agitation by cabinet colleagues for improvements in the welfare and pay of African civil servants soon received the support of the civil service against Banda. On 8 September, four cabinet ministers were dismissed over the differences while two others resigned in disgust. Meanwhile, the Malawi army, still under white officers, observed the British tradition of aloofness and did not involve itself in the unfolding drama.

However, elements of the MYP sided with the prime minister, and this early support was decisive in the outcome of the internal political struggle. The MYP was an organisation that had been established in 1963 as an appendage to the League of Malawi Youth of the ruling MCP. The first trained contingent of the MYP had become available in May 1964, several months before independence. The concept guiding the formation of the MYP was modelled along Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah's Young Pioneers. (Banda had spent some time living in Ghana during his exile before returning to Nyasaland in 1958 and becoming politically active within the NAC, later to become the MCP.)

The scheme was also fashioned along Israel's National Service Brigade. Israel later provided the Malawi government with critical support towards training military instructors for the MYP, as well as making available opportunities to train selected MYP leaders in Tel Aviv.<sup>13</sup> Relations with Israel—a noted pariah state at the time with extensive links with settler, colonial and apartheid regimes in the then Southern Rhodesia, Portuguese East Africa and South Africa—later expanded to influence Malawi's foreign policy, recognising the settler, colonial and apartheid regimes in Southern Africa and establishing a diplomatic office in Pretoria.<sup>14</sup>

It is therefore correct to argue that from this period on, Banda chose to pursue and implement his security policy through the party-affiliated MYP rather than the Malawi army. Subsequent events with security implications at this time served to expand and consolidate the role and function of the MYP. Some movement towards laying the foundations of the Malawi army took place in early 1965, before the rupture referred to above took effect.

A Defence Act was passed in February 1965 providing for the establishment, administration, recruitment and general conditions of service of the Malawi army. The same act also provided for a reserve component and for the command-and-control structures, which gave the prime minister and commander-in-chief (C-I-C) powers to appoint the army commander in a process that was regulated by parliament. Below the prime minister was the Army Council, made up of the:

- minister of defence (chairman);<sup>15</sup>
- secretary to the president and cabinet;
- army commander; and
- deputy army commander.

Even as the normalisation and formalisation of the establishment of the Malawi army was being completed in 1965, the first military challenge to Banda's rule occurred in circumstances now popularly known as the Chipembere uprising in the districts of Mangochi and Machinga. The Malawi army and the MYP were deployed to the provinces to restore order and managed to put down the insurrection.

For the MYP, an organisation espousing undying loyalty to Dr Banda, many perceived opponents were detained, tortured, maimed or killed, forcing many others to flee into exile. Villages seen as anti-Banda "such as Mangochi and Rumphi had entire families uprooted, whole villages disbanded, schools closed indefinitely amidst hundreds of political activists and intellectuals forced to seek refuge outside the country".<sup>16</sup>

A second military challenge occurred two years later, in 1967. This was the 'Group of 21,' *Ufulu-Umodzi-M'Malawi* or also known as the Yatuta Chisiza invasion. This came from the northern border district of Mwanza with Tanzania. On 29 September, a joint police and army operation responded, killing three and capturing nine, while five others escaped.<sup>17</sup> After this deployment, researchers agree that the MYP had become stronger with a capacity to replace the Malawi army that was then relegated to carrying out ceremonial duties, leaving the security role to the former.

Against the background of the attacks, Dr Banda instituted a number of political decisions that had implications for the security and position of the military. The first important decision was the adoption of a one-party state system in 1966, making criminal any political activities outside the MCP. Four years later, Dr Banda declared himself president for life or the *Myaya*, among other similar accolades, closing any



possibilities of supplanting him from office until his death. For any security establishment to support this political edifice as constructed by Dr Banda, it needed to be closely identified with the ruling MCP, and the Malawi army appeared too remote, apolitical and beyond the ready manipulation and influence of the one-party state system. The alternative was therefore the MYP.

### **THE MALAWI YOUNG PIONEERS ERA**

As we have seen, the concept of the Pioneers appeared to have attracted Dr Banda's attention when he was in Ghana during the heady Kwame Nkrumah era, and was later given impetus by Malawi's close relations with Israel, where similar ideas abounded. On its formation shortly before independence, Banda provided the rationale for establishing the MYP. On completion of the first leadership course in May 1964, the premier announced that his intention was to develop an institution where youths would be taught respect and discipline, agricultural production, mechanics, aviation and other useful functions, including assisting the ruling party in its leadership role in the nation.

However, after the August cabinet crisis, as Phiri asserts, the MYP "served as a private army in the operationalisation of the one-party state dictatorship."<sup>18</sup> In order to fulfil its tasks, Dr Banda announced in October 1964 that the MYP would receive "tractors and over 1,000 rifles". This referred to the MYP's new role of promoting food production as well as acting as the vanguard for the defence of the nation. An annual Youth Week Programme, every April, coinciding with Dr Banda's birthday, was observed first in 1968 and every year thereafter. During this period, the youths would parade not only with agricultural produce but with the latest military equipment. From then on, the MYP not only served as a superior organisation to the Malawi army, but by 1985 had a lieutenant general as commander, senior in rank to the military major general at the time. Training of the MYP leaders continued to be provided overseas, especially in the pariah states of Israel, Taiwan and South Africa.

Dedicated resources and political attention provided the MYP with capacity far beyond that of the army. While the army continued to be confined to single inherited barracks outside Zomba, the MYP established training camps in 21 of the 24 districts and recruited from all these areas. Those completing training, especially those demonstrating leadership qualities, would be sent to a central location for an advanced

one-month leadership training course before being offered opportunities for further training overseas, or admitted at the only University of Malawi or other tertiary training colleges, hospitals, agricultural institutions and automotive trade schools. On gaining a qualification, many Pioneers would then be offered employment in public or private institutions controlled and financed by the ruling party, to constitute an intelligence network nationally throughout the country. Pioneers were deployed to guard government buildings as well as to undertake policing functions with authority that was greater than the regular police or army.

The level of deployment and that of gathering, collating and providing intelligence, to which the Malawi army and even the police were partially excluded, provided a major advantage to the MYP in the execution of its dominant security role. However, it also created angst between the two organisations, as in some cases the MYP was in fact spying on the two senior institutions.

In 1968, for instance, the MYP acquired a patrol boat, launched on Lake Malawi at a time when the army had no naval units. Two years later in 1970, the MYP received its first aircraft, with three of its cadres receiving qualifying wings during an elaborate ceremony conducted in the commercial city of Blantyre. Again this was significant as the Malawi army continued to be commanded by its white colonial officers and lacked the new integral units that were mushrooming around the MYP. Owing to its impressive equipment, training, salaries and discipline, the MYP began to attract a better type of recruit, drawn from the schoolteachers and better-educated classes.

The development of the MYP previously under the auspices of an army reserve had been phenomenal, outstripping the strength and capacity of the standing army. At its height, given its widespread representation in the majority of the districts and almost unlimited but unaccountable budgeting, the militia rose to over 6,000 strong, or the equivalent of two brigades, appropriately organised around a navy and an equally correctly equipped air wing. This was a level that had never been achieved by the Malawi army at any time since its inception.

#### **LIMITED REVERSAL OF MYP AND BENEFITS TO THE MALAWI ARMY, 1972–EARLY 1980s**

For reasons that are not yet clear, the early 1970s witnessed a decline of the MYP against the strengthening of the MCP in a development that, almost by default, allowed the partial rehabilitation and growth of the

Malawi army. This short-lived period began in 1972, when on 14 May, during a ceremonial parade in recognition of the president's birthday, Dr Banda announced the promotion to brigadier and appointment of Lt Col Matewera as the new army commander of the Malawi army. This announcement marked the first change in the command of the army since independence.

Matewera's tenure was to last for eight years, until he was retired on 9 April 1980. However, any notions of accelerated Africanisation were tempered with the appointment of the outgoing commander, Brig Clements, as advisor to the president. The events in the army were also related to what was taking place in the civil service in which, during the same year, the first African secretary to the president and cabinet had been appointed in January, soon followed by the first African attorney general.

The secondment of the African commander soon benefited from events related to international and regional security developments, when on 24 May a South African Airways plane from Salisbury (Harare) was hijacked and flown to the Malawi city of Blantyre. On the 26th, a contingent from the army around the plane fired on the hijackers who immediately surrendered, allowing the evacuation and entry of the South African Defence Force to take over the process. At the end of the same day, life President Dr Banda, while speaking on public radio in glowing terms on the role of the military, announced the further promotion of Matewera to major general. This development heralded the accelerated rehabilitation of the army.

The results were not slow in coming. In 1973 there was a discernable but limited disarmament of the MYP. During the next five years until 1978, the MYP lost its marine unit to the army as well as the helicopter aviation section that was transferred to the army, while the small aircraft wing was handed to the police.

This period was also characterised by important geo-political changes in Southern Africa with Mozambique's independence in 1975 and that of Zimbabwe's five years later. This left Malawi's foreign policy with the colonial and pariah states in difficulties. However, Dr Banda did not abandon his stance and continued to interact with the proxy forces of Renamo that were now based in South Africa from their former bases in Rhodesia and Portuguese East Africa.<sup>19</sup>

Despite this policy obstinacy, Malawi found itself forced to consider the demands made by her now independent neighbours, given her landlocked geographic position.

### THE MOZAMBIQUE CHALLENGE 1987–1992

The events surrounding the civil war in Mozambique soon drew all the neighbouring states into that conflict. While apartheid South Africa was aiding and abetting Renamo, Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Zambia and Botswana provided military support in different forms to the government of Frelimo. Malawi appeared again to be the odd man out, providing covert support to Renamo.

The objective of offering support to Renamo by the Malawi president was not altruistic: Banda had visions of a Greater Maravi, with claims in both the north from Tanzania and southern part with Mozambique. While President Julius Nyerere had refused to entertain Banda's territorial claims outright, Banda had still hoped this could be achieved in the south. Consequently, from 1966, at the height of the internal squabbles, Banda had deployed the MYP to patrol the border with Mozambique, collaborating with the colonial power in Portugal and the governor in Lorenzo Marques (now Maputo,) as well as with a proxy rival nationalist movement, the National Union of Rombezia led by Amos Sumane, with the aim of creating a pro-Malawi, black-controlled state in northern Mozambique. The secret operation was code-named 'Malawi II'.

During the post 1980s, Malawi's hitherto covert operation was forced to more overt levels, especially during the period 1982–86 by South Africa's increased support for Renamo, most of it now channelled through Malawi in order to avoid Russian military support and the violation of Mozambican territorial integrity that drew condemnation from the international community.

South African military support for Renamo now took the form of supplying weapons and equipment to the MYP, air-freighted to Lilongwe, further reviving the fortunes of the militia force that was on the wane during the end of the 1970s. (Lilongwe had been Dr Banda's choice of capital. Soon after independence he announced the move from Blantyre to the new centrally located capital that was then built from scratch by funds received mostly from South Africa.)

The MYP received a new lifeline, thanks to apartheid South Africa's offensive military strategy. Once the equipment landed at Lilongwe, trusted cadres from the "MYP delivered the equipment and weaponry to Renamo agents for transmission and distribution in the districts of Angonia and Tete in the west, Mulanje and Nyasha in the east."<sup>20</sup>

It is conceivable that although this was a conduit, some of the equipment did remain in the hands of the MYP in order to maintain the

charade, as well as its capacity against other security institutions in Malawi. If this is taken into account, then Dr Banda's actual military expenditure becomes almost impossible to measure and ascertain as a consequence of his links with former colonial powers.

Since the northern territory of Mozambique adjacent to Malawi was also part of the Renamo stronghold, refugees from the area crossed into Malawi, many of them encouraged by the rebel movement. Renamo continued to be active among the refugee community in Malawi, "with the assistance and blessings of the MYP top leadership and Dr Banda's Privy Council".<sup>21</sup>

The impact of the destabilisation of Renamo and South Africa's 'Total Strategy', which sought to destroy infrastructure in the neighbouring states perceived to be assisting its own adversaries in the African National Congress (ANC), was devastating throughout Southern Africa. Millions of Mozambicans were internally displaced or became refugees in neighbouring states. All surrounding states with Mozambique, including Swaziland, South Africa, Zimbabwe and Malawi, were each holding thousands or millions of Mozambicans.<sup>22</sup> In 1986, following the death of Mozambican President Samora Machel, Malawi was forced to sign an agreement with Mozambique to jointly safeguard its import and export route through the port city of Nacala to Nayuchi. While Dr Banda continued his relations with Renamo, also now supported by Kenya, he instructed the regular army to deploy with Frelimo.

The first external deployment of the Malawi army into Mozambique became an eye opener. Sharing experiences, information and intelligence with the *Forces Armadas de Mozambique* (FAM), officers and men from Malawi discovered the covert participation of the MYP in the Mozambican conflict. Malawian Army Commander and Commanding Officer, Gen Melvin Khanga, at the helm from 1982–92, was under pressure from his juniors to confront the president and his right hand man, John Tembo, on what they had discovered, including suffering losses at the hands of MYP collaborators with Renamo in the Mozambican theatre.

Quite correctly, Phiri asserts that the seeds to dismantle the MYP by the Malawi army received further impetus as a result of its experience in the Mozambique civil war.<sup>23</sup>

Owing to the complexity of the inheritance of the MYP by external interests, Dr Banda had lost complete control over the agenda 'his security' apparatus was now following in an expanded Southern Africa after the 1980s.

It was during this period of the late 1980s that international opinion also changed, putting pressure on Pretoria to abandon apartheid and the support of its proxies. From 1989, when President De Klerk took office, the regional security situation started to change, and with it the loss of external supporters for Renamo, the MYP and the Malawi government. By 1990, following the release of Nelson Mandela in February of that year, even the peace process in Mozambique had begun to take a turn for the better with the first protocols leading to the Rome Treaty of 1992 signed in 1991.

However, in a development that reflected the close relationship that had existed between the MYP/MCP and Renamo, Banda's right hand man John Tembo was in attendance besides Renamo during the talks in Rome. In Malawi itself, political de-regulation was on the cards after the international community, donors, civil society and churches began to agitate for the removal of the one-party state system and Banda's life presidency. A referendum was soon held in 1993, and the electorate overwhelmingly voted for multiparty politics and the setting up of a national consultative council to begin the process of drafting a new constitution and organising elections. This development drastically changed the political terrain, cutting the ground from Banda's previous political dominance supported by the MYP.

### **THE END OF THE MYP**

Operation Bwezani (literally, 'give back' in Nyanja) was about the violent hunting down, disarming and summary disbandment of the MYP by the Malawi army from 3–21 December 1993. The attacks followed the 1 December 1993 deliberate attack by Pioneers who shot and killed two soldiers in Mzuzu following a bar brawl. Given the general loss of prestige and standing, as well as diminishing political authority in line with Banda's curbed powers since 1991, the pent-up frustration that the army held against the MYP burst into the open. Early in the morning of 3 December, the army launched an attack on the MYP headquarters, located near the ruling MCP headquarters. Dr Banda also made an announcement on state radio, calling on the MYP not to resist and confirming that the disbandment of the MYP called for by the National Consultative Council had begun.

Once the army junior officers and enlisted men started moving against the MYP cadres, they were surprised by the associated public approval that soon fed the army action into a frenzy. The widespread MYP

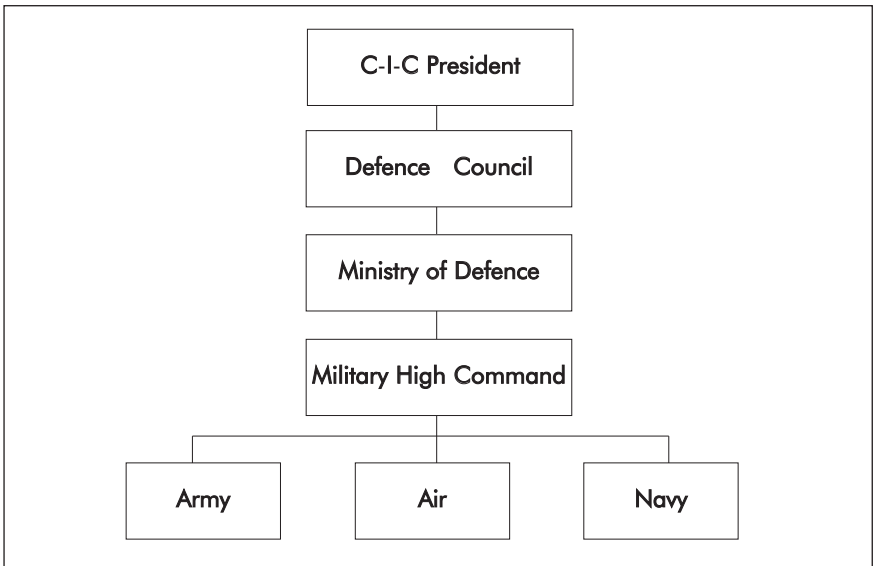
training camps and barracks were literally razed to the ground, bombarded, vandalised and looted, while cadres were chased, disarmed and summarily disbanded. Shocked and frightened MYP cadres surrendered, abandoned posts and uniforms and went into hiding either at home or fled the country into neighbouring Renamo-controlled areas in Mozambique.

Operation Bwezani was complete by the end of the month, although pockets of perceived insecurity and unaccounted for arms remained. Its conclusion marked the end of a generation of military stagnation and mismanagement that had stymied any efforts to develop the standing army.

**POST-1994 MULTIPARTY POLITICS AND THE ARMED FORCES**

Malawi’s first post-Banda elections were held in May 1994 and brought into power the United Democratic Front (UDF), a month after a similar exercise in South Africa had brought in the ANC as a dominant partner in the new coalition government. This provided a fresh and new era for the Malawian armed forces. The passing of a new constitution,

**Figure 2: New structure of the armed forces**



completed on 18 May 1995, soon followed the elections. The new constitution now provides for the new defence and police acts that have since guided security and defence policy in the country.

A year after coming to power, the government of President Bakili Muluzi, through his minister of defence, proposed the formulation of a new defence policy that would provide the architecture around which the military would operate. Other challenges during the second coming of Malawian independence included financing the military while paying attention to a balanced budget, growth and development. A new structure was put into place, as reflected in Figure 2.

Political power and security policy was also distributed in various institutions, such as the National Security Council, chaired by the president with a membership comprising the ministers of foreign, defence, home affairs, finance and the chief of the defence forces. The council is responsible for all security matters feeding directly into cabinet. Implementation was made the preserve of the National Command Authority (NCA) all supported by the National Intelligence Organisation, composed of heads of intelligence, the police, army and any other duly appointed civilian(s).

Table 1 partly reflects the manpower levels of the army under the new Defence Policy of the 1990s once its previous rival, the MYP, had been disposed of.

A steady and increasing troop level, associated with the country's involvement in Mozambique and the decline of the MYP, was registered between 1990 and 1993. Following the destruction of the MYP at the end of 1993, the Malawi army reached its highest level of manpower

**Table 1: Force levels, 1990–99**

Year	Force level
1990	7 000
1991	8 000
1992	10 000
1993	10 000
1994	10 000
1995	8 000
1996	10 000
1997	5 000
1998	5 000
1999	5 000



since inception. However, the realities of a stagnating economy and conclusions drawn from the 1995 defence review process witnessed a sharp decline in the enlisted numbers. The decision to cut back on the number of forces when the defence review was implemented in late 1996–97 resulted in as many as half of the force being rapidly demobilised. In the end, the strength of the army settled at just below two conventional brigades, organised around the concept of a combat team that enjoys integral support arms, including air and limited naval assets.

The overt security sector reform following free and fair elections finally won the country international recognition and removed the same from the pariah pedestal that Dr Banda had placed the nation. In 1994 a series of invitations were extended to Malawi to participate in United Nations–sanctioned peacekeeping missions on the continent and beyond. Following this development, the country’s soldiers have seen service in Rwanda, Angola, Kosovo, Malagasy and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Given its new foreign policy that is in line with the aspirations of SADC, the country’s units participated in regional security exercises, including ‘Blue Hungwe’ in Zimbabwe in April 1997 and the subsequent ‘Blue Crane’ in South Africa in 1999, as well as the recent similarly French-supported military exercise in Tanzania, ‘Blue Tanzanite’. The engagement in the military exercises was a signal that the process of rehabilitation of Malawi’s military was now a reality, both from an internal policy perspective as well as reciprocity by its neighbours. It was in this spirit that Malawi was allowed into the structures of SADC, as part of the Inter-State Defence and Security Committee (ISDSC) and its sub-committees. In September 1996, Malawi hosted its first ISDSC meeting, demonstrating complete regional rehabilitation.

The country has also been able to engage on the international level in military matters without upsetting local or regional sensibilities, as was the case during the 30-year rule of Dr Banda. To this end, Malawi has engaged in mature and fruitful military relations with the US initiative called the African Crisis Response Initiative, as well as participating in the French version of Reinforcement of African Military Capacities (RECAMP).

#### **CURSORY ASSESSMENT OF MILITARY EXPENDITURE**

As has been made clear during the Banda era of 1964 until 1993, military expenditure was resourced from a variety of sources largely as

a result of the country's policies that identified with international pariah states. In-kind and direct cash injections to the then preferred security structure, the MYP, by such countries as Taiwan, Israel, South Africa and Portugal, amounted to millions. This included helicopters and naval boats, most of which remains undeclared and is almost impossible to cost at this stage. Meanwhile, military expenditure after 1994 has been readily available.

On analysing these figures, several points need to be raised regarding military expenditure in Malawi over the past 40 years. The first is to understand that Malawi has traditionally been a poor country, made to export its labour during the colonial era to its more prosperous neighbours, with extensive mines such as the Copperbelt in the then Northern Rhodesia; gold, coal and other commodities in Southern Rhodesia; and labour was even recruited on the Transvaal gold mines in South Africa. This trend continued in the post-colonial era, with Malawi included in Africa's 38 highly-indebted poor countries under the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank programme—86% of wage earners in Malawi are employed by the volatile agricultural sector dominated by tobacco and tea exports, both of which have now been in decline.

In this context there was therefore little surplus available for military expenditure, and what was available was not necessarily significant. Taking an average of the 17 years depicted in Table 2, and what is known by outside organisations, Malawi is thought to have spent no more than US\$205.3 million—an average of US\$14.66 million a year—working out at 0.625% of gross domestic product (GDP). Taking the arguments for states to keep to the 1.5% of GDP military expenditure put forward by the UN, IMF, World Bank and others, Malawi's military expenditure has been consistently less than half the recommended figure.

More interesting is how and on whom this money has been spent. In the first phase after independence (1964–1980)—now referred to as the Banda era—military expenditure was allocated exclusively to the MYP at the expense of the stagnant Malawi army. This reserve had ostensibly become the standing army, and was over 6,000-strong at its height. The MYP had dominant security policy, was close to the life president and was the exclusive recipient of equipment, cash and training by the cited pariah nations. The generous funding resulted in the establishment of barracks for the MYP in the 24 districts and increased cadres drawn from the most educated elite of society. Before long, the MYP was equipped with helicopters, aircraft and patrol boats launched on Lake

Table 2: Malawi's military budget and expenditure, 1988–2004

Year	US\$ (million)	Kwacha (million)	% of GDP
1988	15.9	51.7	1.5
1989	17.2	62.9	1.5
1990	16.2	66.4	1.3
1991	14.4	66.5	1.1
1992	16.0	90.9	1.4
1993	16.2	113	1.3
1994	15.8	149	1.5
1995	9.8	169	0.8
1996	13.0	309	0.8
1997	16.7	434	1.0
1998	13.4	450	0.8
1999	13.0	635	0.8
2000	14.5	916	0.9
2001	13.2	1 021	0.8
2002	9.5	–	0.76 <sup>24</sup>
2003	No figs avail	–	
2004 <sup>25</sup>	11.1	–	0.7%

Source: Swedish International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI),  
[http://www.first.sipri.or/non\\_first/result\\_milex.php?send](http://www.first.sipri.or/non_first/result_milex.php?send) (30 July 2005).

Malawi—assets that were beyond both the standing army and the police. It is virtually impossible to quantify Malawi's actual military expenditure during this early phase of the country's military history.

The expenditure trend, however, changed towards the late 1980s when the assets referred to above were handed over to the army and police. This represented the second phase. This period was marked by Mozambique's independence in 1975, soon followed by that of Zimbabwe in 1980. After this, there was an obvious ratcheting up of military support to Renamo and other proxy forces in support of apartheid South Africa's military Total Strategy, which also included the destabilisation of the Southern African region.

At the time, although Malawi's forces were split between those formally working with Mozambique's FAM, and the MYP continuing its shadowy relationship with Renamo and South Africa, actual policy directing MYP activities appeared to have been taken out of the hands of President Banda. What was happening was that a convenient structure existed in Malawi, previously linked to the presidency. It could not be

denounced and now served external interests. Evidence of this assertion appears in the decline in influence of the MYP noted during 1978–80, later to be repeated in 1987 before the final confirmation in December 1993. In December 1993, at the height of Operation Bwezani, President Banda appeared on national radio and appealed to the MYP cadres not to fight back and to give themselves up to the army. This was unprecedented, although it followed Banda's agreement to opposition demands to disband the MYP, expressed during the negotiations in 1991 before the referendum of early 1993. When Banda made the public call for the MYP to disarm and conform to police orders, this was significant as it took away the basis of the MYP's existence—namely, carrying out instructions as issued by the *Ngwazi*.

Again, the financial support provided during this period is an area that cannot be quantified and may call for separate research. Suffice to say that one of the authors of a key source document used in this discussion, Kings Phiri, testifies to personally seeing weapons and equipment being received surreptitiously at Lilongwe Airport and transported to the districts in MYP hands before part of it was handed over to Renamo.

The final period is after 1994, when the Bretton Woods institutions moved to become part of the regime controlling the Central Bank in managing the budget and military expenditure. While the period coincided with the swift and permanent disarmament and disbandment of the MYP, this did not result in a rapid rise of the Malawi Army. In fact, barely three years after the new multiparty government was established, the military force level was slashed by 50% to 5,000 troops, representing a single brigade with key units of the navy, an integral air wing, training and logistics. Expenditure during the new era has since dropped to just below US\$12 million. Meanwhile, the internal role of the army has receded, except for emergency and disaster relief, leaving the army fully integrated overseas in peacekeeping missions as well as regionally within SADC.

## **CONCLUSION**

Although Malawi now boasts three branches of the military within the army, composed of an under-strength infantry brigade size, integral air and naval wings, supported by a police force and a paramilitary mobile force unit, this development belies the difficulties faced by this institution during President Banda's 30-year rule. Banda's legacy left an

imprint on the way the evolution of the Malawian defence force developed, making the force unique in the region.

We can isolate at least three distinct reasons for the unique development of the Malawi army soon after decolonisation in 1964. The first was the internal political rupture following the cabinet crisis in August 1964, which culminated in a number of the former cabinet members taking up arms to try and topple Dr Banda. Banda responded by side-stepping the existing and inherited colonial army and substituting this with the party-controlled MYP. In effect, from 1967, the army was relegated to a reserve while the MYP assumed a more dominant security role.

Second, was Banda's unique foreign policy in independent Southern Africa—it was the only country to actively pursue relations with former colonialists, much to the chagrin of the OAU and liberation movements in the region. This posture was to continue until 1994 when Banda was voted from office.

Finally, the Malawi army's unique development has been influenced by the political situation in the post-Banda era in which it has forged new relations in SADC, within the UN peacekeeping missions, and has played an expanded internal role, providing disaster relief and management in the absence of a competing security structure.

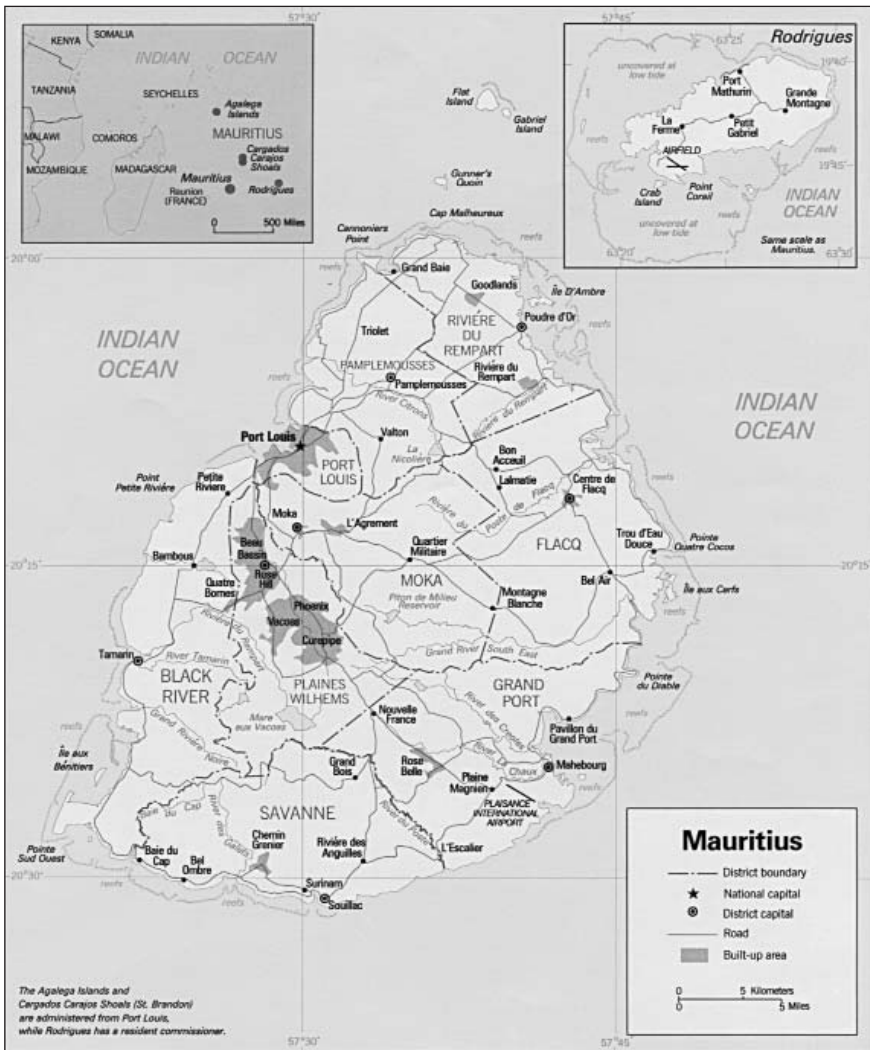
## NOTES

- \* I wish to acknowledge and thank the assistance provided by Odilile Lindiwe Onu and her internet search skills on this chapter.
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  - 6 Federal Defence Act 1955 and repealed in December 1961 when the cessation of the federation was announced, leading to constitutional talks with Britain. See Rupiya, op cit, p 163. The Federal Defence Council and the related structures were answerable to the local colonial governments and ultimately to the Colonial and Foreign Office in London.
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Source: [www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/index.html](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/index.html)



# In defence of the 'star and key of the Indian Ocean': A contemporary history of the Mauritian Police Force

Martin Rupiya<sup>1</sup>

## INTRODUCTION

The island of Mauritius—lying as it does in the middle of the Indian Ocean—has unique defence and security characteristics. Its geographical location made it attractive to major seafaring nations as a refuelling and staging post. The island is a volcanic promontory, measuring 1,870 km<sup>2</sup>, and situated 800 km east of Madagascar. Mauritius includes the dependencies of Rodriguez Island, the Agalega Islands, the Caigados Carajos Shoals and the Chagos Archipelago.<sup>2</sup> The most recent example of superpower interest was the use of the island of Diego Garcia in 1991 as a staging post for attacking the Iraqi military in Kuwait. (Diego Garcia was part of Mauritius until 1965, when it was sold to the United States [US] by the colonial authority, Britain, just before handing over control of the island to the local people in 1968.)

A second permanent feature of the islands with security implications is the weather. Associated with its geographic location, the islands experience cyclones every year. These are capable of wreaking havoc on infrastructure, creating a permanent need to put in place disaster relief structures that border on quasi-military organisations, instead of the normal fire brigade or civil defence structures that are common elsewhere.

Throughout the years, Arab and European imperial powers, later joined by the US, have competed for control of the islands. Since the early 16th century, an immigrant population of adventurers, imperialists and monopoly capitalists—who then brought in military units, slaves

and indentured labour to participate in the different functions of a monopoly economy—populated the islands.

The majority of the people brought in had ethnic ties with Europe, Africa, Asia or the Indian sub-continent. These ethnic factors subsequently ‘compelled’ Indian–British colonial administrators to take an active interest in the affairs of Mauritius. This interest was to continue after India’s independence in 1947, and today India is still one of the group of countries with an interest in the islands. India, as an emerging middle power in the international arena, has also provided security-related assistance to Mauritius—a recent celebrated case being the failed attempt to repair a badly constructed Coast Guard frigate, acquired from Brazil.

This chapter traces the evolution of Mauritian security policy and practice from independence in March 1968 to the present. The chapter seeks to provide an understanding of the context of the security and defence challenges that faced Mauritius on the eve of independence, and how the state responded then and afterwards.

#### **GENERIC ELEMENTS OF THE CONCEPT OF SECURITY AND THE STATE**

Since the rise of the nation state system in the late 15th century, states have a dual security challenge: defence from external attack; and the maintenance of internal security. This duality, however, has today merged into a seamless web in which it is difficult to distinguish between the two elements. Consequently, notions of defence and security represent two sides of the same coin, as states are required to pay equal attention to each in order to be effective. To understand the background to this state responsibility that has developed over the past 500 years and become a core function, we have to turn to the experiences of more established states, such as the US and those in Europe. Europe provided us with the model of the nation state as we know it today, while in the case of the US, the struggle to create a nation state began with attempts to wrest political control from the imperial powers in 1776. This struggle lasted until 1865, after the Civil War that had begun in 1861. In the case of both Europe and the US, the result was an increased awareness of the vulnerabilities that were likely to befall a weak state, and consequently the need to establish strong security structures that addressed both external and internal threats. This realisation informed a common set of related principles that have now become standard for the new and emerging states.

In Africa’s case, the phenomenon of independent states only arrived with the ‘winds of change’ in the form of decolonisation in the 1960s.

This development also incorporated the security concept that informs this paper. States have had to address the following key challenges:

- External threats to territorial integrity.
- Creating an ability to pacify internal proxies that are willing to work with external partners in undermining national security.
- Ensuring the security of the state and its institutions.
- Setting up internal security structures concerned with the maintenance of law and order.

Based on a careful mix of the above, a state can then embark upon the next step—engaging with other states in the international relations arena.

#### **BACKGROUND TO MAURITIAN DEFENCE AND SECURITY CONCERNS**

In the context of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the island of Mauritius provides us with an example of a state whose foundations were laid at the height of the era of mercantilism, imperialism and colonialism practised by competing European powers. The presence and interests of outside powers flow from the location of the island in the middle of the Indian Ocean in an area that dominates lines of communication between continents, representing ‘the key to the Indian Ocean’. Mauritius also forms an important rest-and-refit platform for crews on extended trips. These considerations make the islands critical for seafaring powers as a geo-strategic facility for operations in Africa, the Middle East, the Indian sub-continent, and even Australia.

From the late 12th century, control of the destiny of Mauritius has been characterised by competition among different seafaring and maritime powers for physical control of the islands and their environs. Prominent among the early settlers were the Arabs, operating from the east coast of Africa. Their seafaring interests were motivated by the influence of the Sultan of Zanzibar, whose empire included Persia and parts of the Middle East. The Arab presence was prominent from 1502 but went into natural decline through the century. Next were Portuguese merchants and explorers travelling the East India trade route, who discovered the usefulness of Mauritius nearly a hundred years later. The Portuguese remained in control until the 1590s, but they too went into the self-exhaustion trade mode, as had happened to the Arabs before them.

It was during this period that some Dutch merchants travelling the Spice Route were blown off course and ‘discovered’ Mauritius, resulting

in an official occupation by the Dutch merchants from September 1598. In 1633, the Dutch merchants renamed the island, Mauritius, after their own imperial Prince Maurice of Nassau. In keeping with the mercantilist period characterised by a close relationship between the state and traders, the Dutch state in 1638 formally recognised the occupation of the islands. The Dutch held on to the islands for the next 50 years, until the commercial reasons for doing so began to recede.

For the next two generations, the island did not have a dominant occupying power. This situation later changed when the French—who already controlled the nearby island of Reunion—were looking for a good harbour and deeper ports. In 1721, the French occupied Mauritius, renaming it Isle de France. Later, in a process that received a further fillip in 1767, French kings actively encouraged the acquisition of colonial possessions. As a result, investment and trade with the islands blossomed. This gave rise to a French ‘Plantocracy’, which manifested with the arrival of Europeans drawn from French prisons, along with more African slaves, entrepreneurs and prostitutes.

The French only moved to occupy Mauritius after the Dutch had long departed and following a period of neglect. Long before this event, in 1658, the Dutch had decided to cut their losses and relocate to the Cape of Good Hope. The texts reflect that in that year “all except a sailor and two female slaves who had taken refuge in the woods, were evacuated to the Cape”.<sup>3</sup> The French presence was to continue until war broke out between France and England during the rule of Napoleon Bonaparte. This European War led to a change in the control of the island following France’s defeat. Before this event, however, the French introduced features of government and security, the influence of which has survived to this day—for example, the French legal and judicial systems, language, trade and investment, as well as the model for the organisation of security.

Another characteristic feature of this group of islands is its people. The islands were populated during the different historical periods, with groups arriving in waves comprising Arabs, European adventurers, conquerors, agents of imperialism and traders. Based on their commercial and security interests, the dominant elite, supported by their governments, brought in thousands of African slaves and, after the abolition of slavery in February 1835, indentured labour mainly from India.

The abolition of slavery had a particularly salutary effect on the islands’ population when over 60,000 former slaves were released and had nowhere to go; almost all ended up living on the island and provided a readily available source of labour. The effect of this was, of

course, to drive down wages. Given these conditions, the later arrival of indentured labour from India further entrenched the low levels of remuneration available to workers on the vast plantations. These joined the former slaves who were now marooned on the small island and who were forced to return to their earlier work as nominally “paid labour”.<sup>4</sup>

These developments led to an economy featuring extreme levels of wealth and poverty. At the top of the socio-economic and political heap was the merchant capitalist elite, drawing its members from the ‘maritime classes’ that were deeply committed to the social legacy of slavery—values that dominated during the Ancien regime.<sup>5</sup>

Meanwhile, the Abolition Act and the subsequent ‘release’ of the slaves turned out to be a financial boon to slave owners on the island who received compensation totalling £2.1 million over six years. This was an era of accelerated primitive accumulation, never to be repeated.

Owing to the proximity of Mauritius to China, a small Chinese free immigrant class of merchants and traders also arrived on the islands and have a presence there even today.

As we write, the ethnic composition of Mauritius still resembles these early foundations with Indians comprising 68% of the population, Creoles 27%, Chinese 3% and French 2%. Languages spoken include Creole, French, English, Hindi and Urdu.

Each newly arrived ethnic group had a distinct language, religion and cultural influence that has been more or less retained. For example, the merchant and capital classes have continued to occupy these positions in present-day Mauritius, while the former slaves and indentured labourers are still firmly located at the bottom of the social and economic ladders.

Throughout the period, Mauritian society reflected three classes which shaped security policy, identified alliances, influenced command-and-control and comprised the local labour force. These were:

- representatives of controlling imperial powers;
- monopoly capitalists; and
- labourers who began as slaves and, after 1865 when slavery was abolished, indentured labourers.

The foundations of the common political, socio-economic pattern that characterises Mauritian security emerged at this time. Its first main feature was the arrival of a particular power interested in occupying the island. This represented the front end of imperialism and defined the strategic imperatives in the critical areas of trade, investment, security

and internal social construction. Second, agents would proceed to develop a local economy and populate the country with classes able to sustain the community. Convergence of the two features was critical to the type of economy that developed, which was largely based on producing for export at hugely subsidised rates and feeding into almost guaranteed markets.

Throughout its history, Mauritius has produced goods and services aimed at foreign markets, including sugar and tourism for Europe. The disruption to international trade and the search for new raw materials following the American Civil War of 1861–65 benefited the rise and consolidation of the sugar industry on the island when Europe was looking elsewhere for alternative supplies from America.

Yet another common principle established during the period was in the area of security. In each period, the controlling imperial power provided its own forces to act as the first security structure, linked to armed forces that could be called upon as reinforcements. For instance, the East India companies established by the Portuguese, Dutch, British and French agents all operated under their national flags, with a mandate provided for under the charter accorded by the monarchy, and they could expect military support from government forces when it was required. Consequently, although only lightly armed forces were physically located on the island, these represented the vanguard of larger metropolitan forces.

## **MAURITIAN POLITICAL AND SOCIAL HISTORY**

The core of Mauritius's security challenges therefore lies in the nexus of maintaining a balance between competing external and local or national interests. In practice, this involves attempts to understand and locate Mauritian strategic interests at a point at which the two interests diverge.

In order to provide clarity to present-day security challenges facing Mauritius, we need to briefly revisit the island's social and economic history from about the late 17th century to February 1968, or just before independence. It is hoped that this will provide a better understanding of past developments in this area.

### **COLONIAL SECURITY POLICY**

During the periods of colonial rule by the Arabs, Portuguese, Dutch, French and British, security for the colonial possessions rested on two considerations. The first was external attack by a covetous imperial

power. However, until the formal agreement of 1884 that recognised facets of the charter which granted European monarchies the right to demarcate the world into spheres of influence, no power in control of Mauritius was ever threatened. Stated differently, the Malays, Arabs, Portuguese, French and Dutch all lost interest in occupying the island before the next power became interested. The external threat for colonial administrations was therefore addressed through diplomatic channels in the European capitals.

More threatening, however, was the need to control the slave community, associated with marooning<sup>6</sup> and rebellion. As a result, each controlling power deployed military contingents in support of the commercial classes and their enterprises. In terms of localising and expanding this capacity, it was only during the French period that the foundations for an internal security policy and structure were established. In 1762, the French organised a new force, tasked with the responsibility of suppressing disorder and rebellion.

This arrangement was further consolidated in 1790 when the internal security police were transferred to the National Gendarmerie. Three years later, the force had an expanded role: general policing; national militia (as part of the French army); and National Gendarmerie.

By 1803, the force was reorganised, following the declaration of war with Britain under Order No 32. This restructured the National Gendarmerie into a cadre force that was capable of expansion as the need arose, to a force as large as four brigades or just under 5,000 troops. When war broke out, however, the French force on the Isle de France was no match for the British. On 29 November 1810 a British expeditionary brigade from India comprising the Madras Volunteers Battalion, the Madras Native Infantry Regiment and the Bengal Volunteers, commanded by Lt Gen Sir John Abercomby, landed on the north of the island. After a brief skirmish they soon overwhelmed the French force and laid siege to the capital, Port Louis.<sup>7</sup> The sparse French military presence capitulated.

Four years later, the surrender was celebrated in far-off Europe through the 1814 Paris Treaty of Capitulation. Britain, the new colonial power, then renamed the island after its former Dutch name, Mauritius. A British governor was put into place, reporting to the Colonial Office. In 1815, Britain deployed contingents from the King's African Rifles (KAR) drawn from the East African command in Kenya, Nyasaland (now Malawi), Uganda and Tanganyika (now Tanzania). This force was augmented by Indian 'volunteer' troops when *HMS Madias* landed in the north of the

island carrying the Madras Native Infantry and Bengal Volunteers. By 1931 the size of the island's forces had risen to 2,694, now comprising the Mauritius Regiment, two naval squadrons and an air force. Each of these forces was commanded by British officers and they soon identified themselves with the social and ethnic cleavages that already existed in the Mauritian society.

## **MAURITIAN DEFENCE POLICY—EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL DIMENSIONS**

THE ERA OF THE 'FATHER OF THE NATION' (SIR RAMGOOLAN): 1968–82

There are at least four distinct dimensions that, combined, provide an overarching understanding of the challenges and status of Mauritian security policy in the post-colonial era. These affect the perception of the internal and external threats and the country's response to the creation of its own defence and security structures.

The first factor is a keen appreciation of the continued need to align the country's interests with those of the superpowers. This phenomenon was made abundantly clear during the delicate negotiations for independence in the 1960s. At the time, Britain, as the withdrawing colonial power, disposed of the island of Diego Garcia that lies 1,900 km south-west of Mauritius to the US for £3 million, with the knowledge of the incoming government of Seewoosagur Ramgoolan in 1965.

The US needed a secure location in the Indian Ocean on which to base troops and equipment for its strategic interests. The US had always maintained a presence in the area. In 1794, an embassy had been established under the French rule. This survived the imperial power transfer to the British, but was closed in 1911. It reopened in 1967 and three years later, a resident ambassador was appointed.

Diego Garcia can accommodate 15–20 fully laden vessels and its runways are long enough for B52 bombers. There are also facilities for thousands of troops away from prying eyes. The US Central Command took over the island and has been there ever since.

The then premier, Seewoosagur Ramgoolan, who had been appointed chief minister in 1961 and premier in 1963, was party to the secret negotiations.

The agreement to allow the US to take over the island also meant the relocation of the entire indigenous population of Diego Garcia. Some 1,800 members of the Ilois community, which had been on the island for five generations, were ordered to leave. In an evacuation operation that



started in 1971, the entire population had been removed to, or rather dumped on, nearby Mauritius.<sup>8</sup> As a result, an international outcry was raised on behalf of the Ilois. The take-over of Diego Garcia and the plight of the Ilois became an issue for the United Nations (UN) General Assembly,<sup>9</sup> which on 16 December 1971, through Resolution 1514, expressed its “deep concern” at the “fraud and illegal act” between the two imperial powers. While the issue of Diego Garcia later became muted, the plight of the Ilois continued to draw international attention, creating an imported security problem for Mauritius.

In 1972, the British government paid £650,000 to the Mauritian government on condition that the Mauritian government would provide land for the Ilois and that no further funds would be asked for. By 1978 these funds had still not been disbursed, and it was only when the rule of Ramgoolan ended and before the 1982 elections that the money was distributed—at the rate of £650 per individual. At this time, the British government provided a further £4 million as well as land worth £1 million in a final settlement. However, the mainstream political parties in Mauritius have accepted the realism associated with their own country’s stability and have steered clear of championing the Ilois issue despite obvious international support. This development shows a major constraint and the nature of *realpolitik* in the Indian Ocean.

The second dimension is the foreign policy and defence agreements signed by the incoming government at the time of independence with Britain, France and, by association, the US. The Anglo-Mauritian Defence Agreement of 1968, reaffirmed in 1975, gave France and Britain responsibility for external affairs and defence of the islands.<sup>10</sup> This agreement also provided Mauritius with “guaranteed British assistance both for external and internal security” in return for Britain establishing and maintaining a radar station on the island.<sup>11</sup> Section 5 provided for “assistance, advice, administrative support and training in matters of defence as well as combating foreign aggression.”<sup>12</sup> This agreement was later lodged with the UN. The arrangement survived until 1975 when Britain, responding to its own internal cost-cutting measures, announced that it would withdraw its military contingent—“much to the regret” of Prime Minister Ramgoolan.<sup>13</sup>

Meanwhile, an equal Treaty of Co-operation was signed in the same year, 1968, with the French, not only as a balance to relations with Britain but also recognising French regional security interests in the area.<sup>14</sup> Mauritius also established close relations with India as a foreign power that formed part of the colonial and ethnic make-up of the country.

The third factor lies in the lucrative and preferential trade relations established between Mauritius and the European Union (EU)—with Mauritius represented in discussions with France and Britain and the West in general. The Accord de Port Louis conferred associate status as a member of the EU, with Mauritius recognised as an exclusive economic zone for processing sugar and eligible for EU developmental fund grants.<sup>15</sup> This has since been codified under the African, Caribbean and Pacific protocol.

The fourth factor is the incidence of riots; a factor that is particularly acute on an island with little or no bordering areas that can act as a safety valve and reduce any built-up tension. Rioting that has engulfed the whole island appears to be easily precipitated by football hooliganism or student protests, while other causes have been work- or strike-related, or those associated with serious car accidents, especially accidents involving the running-over of pedestrians. Up until 2004, there were eight major riots on the islands (see Table 1).

During the constitutional talks preceding independence, three serious riots occurred. The first was on 1 May 1964 when ‘an explosion of communal violence’ occurred which the regular police, the auxiliaries and other elements of the Special Mobile Force failed to quell. At this time, the total strength of the security forces tasked with internal security was five officers and 246 men. Four years earlier, in 1960, the British had in preparation for granting full independence withdrawn a contingent of the KAR that had been on the island for 150 years. Given the deteriorating security situation, a state of emergency was declared on 14 May 1964.<sup>16</sup>

In what came to be known as Operation Fishplate, Britain then ordered the deployment by air of a contingent of the Coldstream Guards based in the Gulf of Aden in the Middle East.<sup>17</sup> The Coldstream Guards were to remain on the island until 15 December 1964. In June 1965, the Police Reserve Unit (PRU), known in French as *Maintien de L’Ordre*, was transferred from the capital, Port Louis, to Vacoas—for easier deployment in emergencies—and renamed the No. 1 Riot Unit. A summary of the most serious riots is given in Table 1.

The message here was that the local security and police contingents needed to be strengthened or reinforced in order to manage the threats posed by the riots. A second riot occurred in 1966 and was barely contained. At the end, a second riot unit was mobilised at the Bean Bassin police training school and transferred to Line Barracks in Port Louis, a location that had recently been evacuated by the new No. 1 Riot Unit.

**Table 1: Serious riot incidents in Mauritius between 1968 and 2004<sup>18</sup>**

January 1968	Racial violence
November 1993	Football
18 December 1994	Vale—football
12 May 1995	Camp—Chapelon
March 1996	Football
6 September 1997	Abercombe
26 April 1997	Palma
21 February 1999	Kaya
5 April 1999	Rodriguez
23 May 1999	Aujalay Stadium
2004	Football <sup>19</sup>
<i>Other prior strikes and riots</i>	
1911 Strike/riots	
1937-38 Sugar strike <sup>20</sup>	
1971 Dock workers' strike <sup>21</sup>	

The overall strength of the Mauritian police force had been increased to 1,340 personnel, organised along British infantry regiment lines into A, B, C and G companies, with the last being a support company equipped with heavier weapons. The force also benefited from parallel French assistance<sup>22</sup> that provided training and equipment for a mobile wing, a self-sufficient engineering squadron, a maintenance/services unit, a transport unit, and a medical unit. The result was clearly a strengthened police force with paramilitary units.

A police contingent was also established on the 110 km<sup>2</sup> island of Rodriguez, 650 km east of Mauritius, with a population of some 35,000. Five police stations were established around the island, which has a maximum length of 18 km. This force comprised a chief of police, a superintendent, nine sergeants and some 60 constables.

The increased security requirement after 1966 was recognised by the 1967 Mauritian Public Order Act, promulgated in 1970.<sup>23</sup> State response to continuing internal unrest included mass arrests and deportations to less populated islands of the Mauritius group, with the intention of severing communications between emerging anti-establishment leaders.

Barely three months before independence in 1968, a third riot broke out in which 29 people were killed, 246 houses burnt and 597 houses ransacked.<sup>24</sup> The departing governor was forced to summon British

troops from Malaysia to help stabilise the situation. Consequently, independence on 12 March was declared amidst an increasingly precarious security situation for the new government. The failure of the local police to contain the series of riots from 1964 until 1968 made it difficult for the government to distance itself from the country's 'international partners'. The policy of the newly independent Mauritius was not to be self-sufficient for its own security but to operate within the existing and dominant Western sphere. In terms of this policy, there have been regular visits to the islands by foreign warships.

The three considerations on which the country's foreign and security policy are based can be summarised as:

- achieving a balance in its relations with France and Britain;
- exploiting the consequences of the 1965 transfer of sovereignty of Diego Garcia to the US; and
- gaining privileged access to Western markets and aid.

Some of these elements have borne practical fruit. For instance, the US began providing coastguard training and other assistance to the Mauritian security forces, thus giving them a semblance of control over the vast surrounding ocean. The Indian government has also contributed to the island's naval security with manpower training.

Owing to the unique nature of the Treaty of Capitulation, the French presence and influence have never disappeared. In the area of defence, French aid and assistance totalled 578.9 million francs between 1970 and 1986, since then it is estimated to amount to some 60 million francs a year. All these forms of assistance contribute to the stability of the Mauritian economy.

#### EVOLUTION OF THE MAURITIUS POLICE FORCE, 1968–2005

The security policy and structure of the Mauritius Police Force (MPF) in 1968 comprised the Regular Police (the first line), the Special Support Unit (called to support the above in emergencies) and the Special Mobile Force (SMF)—a para-military force with a capability to restore order.

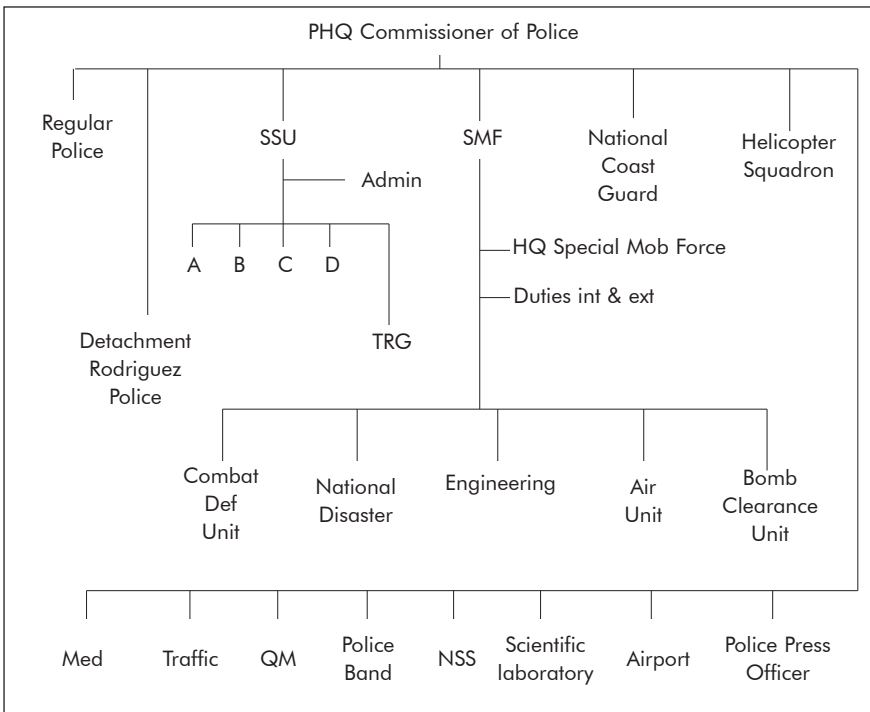
The country's elected prime minister is the commander-in-chief of the force, with control shared with the minister of home affairs. The permanent secretary in the prime minister's office has day-to-day responsibility for the police. The permanent secretary is also head of the civil service, underlining the 'civilian character' of the police and security forces. Under the

permanent secretary, the uniformed forces are commanded by the commissioner of police and his deputy. Assistant commissioners head the various branches of the force, with the officer and other ranks' structure comprising assistant superintendents and their deputies, chief inspectors, inspectors, sub-inspectors, sergeants, corporals and constables. Figure 1 summarises the organisation of the various branches.

In 1987, the Police Reserve Unit was renamed the Special Support Unit, and comprised five operational units or companies and a training wing. Its main tasks were: security of sensitive and vulnerable points; crowd control; search and rescue; criminal investigation; and escorting dangerous prisoners. This structure was inherited from the country's colonial and more recent past, especially the British empire and the subsequent Commonwealth grouping established as an alternative to the colonial relationship during the 1960s.

The 1,340-member MPF experienced minor changes over the next 36 years. These appeared to be linked to the cycle of strikes or riots and

**Figure 1: Mauritian Police Force**



inquiries. Each minor restructuring was intended to improve areas then found deficient. In this way, the MPF increased its firepower without necessarily changing its designation or its composition, which always comprised the minimum number of personnel. The next section discusses the major changes and some of the reasons for them.

#### MAJOR CHANGES

The first significant change occurred in 1974–6 when the MPF created an air wing equipped with helicopters. France donated the first helicopter in 1974 and India provided a second helicopter two years later. In 1990, a further air detachment equipped with Dornier aircraft was created, with two of the four aircraft with which it was equipped coming from Russia. As a result, the air wing and the air detachment were transformed into the Mauritian Air Service (MAS) on 17 July 1990. The role of MAS was to police the islands, and it was tasked with protecting life and property, deterrence and protection of ports, including ‘creeping line ahead search’, flag-showing and sector and radial search and rescue.<sup>25</sup>

The area of responsibility included the UN-recognised 200-nautical mile or 380 km exclusive economic zone. In undertaking these duties, the responsibilities included both security and economic protection activities, such as environmental protection, anti-smuggling and drug enforcement, protection of maritime assets, and minerals and precious metals, including oil and gas exploration.

The second qualitative expansion of the MPF occurred on 3 April 1974, when the Mauritian naval unit received its first ship, the *Amar*. This was followed in 1987 by major investment and legislation, after key recommendations had been made by the Coastal Security Committee in 1985. The committee had outlined the roles and duties of a national coastguard that required both ships and aircraft. Part of its task included protecting more than 24 recognised ports on all the islands.

The National Coast Guard was established on 22 January 1987, with equipment supply starting on 24 July of the same year.<sup>26</sup> The following five ships were acquired: CGS *Vigilant* (the only off-shore vessel), CGS *Observer*, CGS *Guardian*, CGS *Retriever* and CGS *Rescuer*. The CGS *Vigilant*, purchased from Canada in June 1996 for Rs322 million and built in Chile over a 23-month period, has since developed serious structural shafting and design defects and has had to be grounded in the harbour around Port Louis. In November 1999 the *Vigilant* was sent to Mumbai,

India, for repairs costing Rs10.2 million, and in December 2000 she was again returned to India for similar repairs at a cost of a further Rs16 million. Despite these repairs, the *Vigilant's* hull is still seeping water. The government has since been advised to sue the ship-building company to try to recover the losses that have been due to bad workmanship.

In 1992 the country also established a Motorised Patrol Force, organised as a commando unit and with a capacity to be transported by mobile infantry vehicles as well as the MAS. All these new units form part of the MPF.

#### THE RAPID EXPANSION OF THE MPF AFTER 1999

On 21 February 1999, a popular local singer, Joseph Reginald Toppize (aka Kaya) was arrested and died in police custody under suspicious circumstances. His death led to widespread riots and strikes throughout the island. After calm was restored, a commission of inquiry was appointed, led by Justice Keshoe Mataden. This commission produced some far-reaching recommendations. For the purposes of this chapter, we concentrate on the recommendations directed at the further strengthening of the security services and on how these were put into practice.

In material terms, allocations towards security increased by 29% at the end of that year.<sup>27</sup> Apart from the new equipment ordered, the police also received authority to increase the MPF establishment with 1,000 new recruits over a 24-month period, for which Rs2.2 billion was set aside.

What is evident from the pattern of military expenditure in Mauritius over the past 17 years, as reflected in Table 2 (*over page*), is that allocations for security purposes have been consistently well below the 1.5% of GDP, which the World Bank and UN see as being adequate without upsetting national development goals. For Mauritius, expenditure allocation is too small for a paramilitary force, the air and naval units as well as to the majority of policing structures that are responsible for the defence and security of the islands.

A second point to take away from this aspect of military expenditure is that the table reflects allocations from the country's budget and does not reflect sums donated by, among others, France, Britain, India and the US, which countries have provided materiel support in either cash or kind.

For instance, for nostalgic, cultural and language reasons, as well as for long-term strategic purposes and given the unique nature of the

**Table 2: Expenditure on the MPF, 1988–2005**

Year	Rupees (million)	US\$ equivalent (million)	% GDP
1988	63.0	6.5	0.2
1989	96.5	8.8	0.3
1990	137.0	10.9	0.3
1991	164.0	12.3	0.4
1992	178.0	12.7	0.4
1993	190.0	12.3	0.3
1994	213.0	12.9	0.3
1995	234.0	13.3	0.3
1996	233.0	12.4	0.3
1997	206.0	10.3	0.2
1998	203.0	9.5	0.2
1999	228.0	10	0.2
2000	246.0	10.3	0.2
2001	262.0	10.4	0.2
2002	285.0	10.6	0.2
2003	304.0	10.9	0.2
2004	328.0	11.3	0.2

Note: Current exchange rate: ~30 rupees to one US dollar; ~35 rupees to one Euro.

Source: The Swedish International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) military expenditure database, <[http://first.sipri.org/non\\_first/result\\_milex.php?send](http://first.sipri.org/non_first/result_milex.php?send)> (28 July 2005).

Treaty of Capitulation and the French presence in the nearby Island of Reunion, France has continued to provide significant military assistance to independent Mauritius. For the 16 years from 1970–1986, France disbursed to Mauritius over 578.9 million francs (US\$89 million). Since then, Paris has to-date offered 60 million francs (US\$9.2 million) a year, or a total of 1.2 billion francs (US\$184.6 million) to the government in Port Louis.<sup>28</sup>

Owing to the consistent military budgetary support from the former colonial powers of Britain and France, once suspects that political leaders in Mauritius now expect these contributions, keeping their own allocations constant or strictly below 0.5% of GDP.

The picture painted by the resource allocation and leverage in Mauritius's defence and security area is consistent with its security policy. The country has carved out a role for foreign support while limiting its own institutions to an internal security role with only a peripheral immediate maritime search and rescue function, which resonates with supporting the burgeoning but critical tourist sector.



## CIVIL—MILITARY RELATIONS

The political act of balancing the racial and ethnic quota system on the islands is also reflected in the way the police are perceived to relate to the different groups. A survey<sup>29</sup> undertaken by the University of Mauritius Centre for Applied Social Science Research, led by Professor M. Joynathsing, reveals interesting comments on the nature and perception of civilian—police relations. Overall, 68% of the people agreed with the view that the police were doing a good job in controlling crime and in their service to the public. Examined by ethnicity, 77% of Hindus fell into the above category, while 74% of Muslims also found the performance of the MPF favourable. A lower-than-average 66% of Creoles reported their satisfaction with the police.<sup>30</sup> Almost all those questioned called for more police on the streets, citing an increasing incidence of crime. It is also true that being a member of the police force is a sought-after job. Recruits are all volunteers who must meet stringent criteria in order to qualify.

Although still heavily dependent on sugar exports, the economy of Mauritius is thriving. Sources of revenue are manufacturing 31%, trade and tourism 29%, the public sector 18%, and agriculture and fisheries with some 11% each. Mauritius has continued to maintain a foreign policy that balances national interests with the interests of the West, India and Malaysia, the Indian Ocean Rim Association, Francophone countries and the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

Since the country's independence in March 1968, the MPF has grown to 10,000 active-duty members, supported by 8,000 national police for internal security, 1,400 members of the SMF and paramilitary units, 688 members of the National Coast Guard, 270 members of the special riot control support unit, and 100 members of the Air Helicopter Rescue (Tourism Early Warning) unit, making a total complement of 20,458 to protect a population of 1,210,447 (July 2003 census). These men and women are organised as:

- regular police (MPF), including the detachment on Rodriguez island;
- the Special Support Unit;
- the National Coast Guard;
- the SMF (paramilitary);
- the MAS Helicopter Squadron under the MPF; and
- the Women's Police Unit (although the members of this unit serve as integrated elements, they take account of ethnic and religious sensibilities).

## CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has tried to define the context of a frontier/island community and the linkages and proxy relationships that exist with external powers. A question posed concerned the roles that imperial powers have played and what functions they have allocated to Mauritius. The discussion has also tried to address some of the critical political dynamics that inform the relationships of the different ethnic and interest groups in the community.

In Mauritius, a force under the control of the police of just over 20,000 has been established since independence. The force has more power and punch than those of most armies in Southern Africa, especially when we consider the Intervention Mobile Regiment, the National Coast Guard and other elements. Its role is confined to internal stability and the immediate environs of the islands, as well as an increasing demonstration of search and rescue capacity.

The MPF has also been carefully integrated into the framework of Western powers working closely with the island—with France, Britain, India and the US completing the two-legged requirement and capability demanded of states that have accepted a responsibility to provide adequate security.

## NOTES

- 1 I wish to thank associate professor Dr Sheila Bunwaree of the University of Mauritius who agreed to co-author this chapter and provided invaluable assistance in terms of organising interviews and research materials, and who accompanied me during the research. Unfortunately, Dr Bunwaree fell ill soon after the research was completed and was unable to participate further. I shall forever remain grateful for her willingness to help and for her assistance given.
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- 4 *Ibid*, p 18.
- 5 *Ibid*, p 13.
- 6 Independent slave communities that had broken away from controlled group(s).
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- 19 Ramsawock, op cit, p 8.
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- 21 Ibid,
- 22 *Report Director of Audit*, p 31.
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- 24 One of the remarkable aspects of working in Mauritius is the availability of data and statistics, given the advantages of a closed and island community.
- 25 *MAS Annual magazine*, 1992, p 126.
- 26 *Report Director of Audit on the accounts of the Republic of Mauritius, 30 June 2003*, pp 55-56, 57; See also *Report Director of Audit on the Accounts of the Republic of Mauritius, 30 June 2002*, p 51.
- 27 *Budget Speech Mauritius Republic, Minister of Finance*, 2003, p 46.
- 28 French assistance is now in Euros. The exchange rate was 6.5 francs to the Euro when the transition was made.
- 29 Mauritius Social Attitudes Survey, 2002
- 30 CASR Report 2002 cited, pp viii, 81.



Source: [www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/index.html](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/index.html)

# **Profound transformations and regional conflagrations: The history of Mozambique's armed forces from 1975–2005**

Adriano Malache, Paulino Macaringue  
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## **INTRODUCTION**

The creation of the Mozambican armed forces was the leitmotif of post-colonial nation building; and the force that exists today—the Armed Forces for the Defence of Mozambique (FADM)—is a product of the 1992 political settlement and its provisions.

Mozambique's recent history has created formidable challenges when it comes to attempts to professionalise its armed forces. As a result, the FADM is torn between the 'push' of its socio-political guerrilla heritage (the party) and the 'pull' of the need for a new and preferred apolitical, professional ethos.

This study assesses the history and role of the armed forces in Mozambique from 1975 to the present, tracing its formation during the liberation struggle, the deep transformations brought about by independence, the civil war that followed, the 1992 General Peace Agreement and, finally, the current state of the FADM.

## **THE LIBERATION STRUGGLE AND CREATION OF MOZAMBIQUE'S ARMED FORCES**

The origin of the Mozambican armed forces can be found in the liberation struggle against Portuguese colonial occupation, which eventually led to the country's independence in 1975.

From the late 1950s, anti-colonial sentiment intensified in Portugal's overseas territories. In Mozambique this led to the merger of the country's main liberation movements—Mozambique African National Union (MANU), *União Democrática Nacional de Moçambique* (UDENAMO) and *União Nacional Africana de Moçambique Independente* (UNAMI)—on 25 June 1962. The result was the unified movement, *Frente de Libertação de Moçambique* (Frelimo), under the leadership of Eduardo Mondlane.

Frelimo made a crucial decision at its First Congress held in Dar es Salaam in September 1962. In view of the Portuguese authorities' refusal to discuss a negotiated settlement, Frelimo deemed that an armed struggle was the only way in which to overthrow the colonial regime and ensure independence—founding, as it were, the Mozambican armed forces.<sup>1</sup> Importantly, Frelimo drew lessons about guerrilla warfare from the aborted uprisings of earlier anti-colonial struggle movements in Angola and Guinea-Bissau, as well as from the successful revolutions in China and Vietnam.

#### ASSESSING MILITARY TRAINING, EQUIPMENT AND COMMAND-AND-CONTROL

In order to safeguard Frelimo's existence as an organisation, its First Congress decided, among other resolutions, to create:

- a Department of Organisation of the Interior which would mobilise the people politically and create logistical conditions within the country to support an armed struggle; and
- a Department of Defence and Intelligence to co-ordinate military action.

This was soon followed by concrete steps to set up a military force. Nationalist recruits were sent to 'friendly' countries for military training, and such countries as Algeria, Ghana, Egypt, Tanzania, Israel, China and the Soviet Union provided military and training assistance.

The Frelimo guerrillas initially used light and second-hand weapons, such as the MAT 49, MAS 36 and Thompson 0.50, which were 'inherited' from the French army through Algeria. They were, however, later equipped with weapons from Eastern European countries (the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, the German Democratic Republic and Yugoslavia), as well as from North Korea,

Cuba and China which provided, among others, Simonovs, AKs, RPKs, RPGs, 60 mm and 82 mm mortars, B10s, and at the end of the 1970s Grad Ps and Strella 2As.<sup>2</sup> As a result, Frelimo was in a position to launch its liberation struggle in 1964.

However, military events in 1966 and 1967 dulled Frelimo's initial optimism: logistical support lines were stretched to the limit and the southward advance revealed the guerrillas' first military weaknesses, particularly in the southern Niassa and Zambezia provinces. This period also saw the first effective Portuguese counter-insurgency moves.

By April 1967, and following a Central Committee decision, a central command-and-control was established to co-ordinate military action on the ground and to ensure a smooth flow of logistics to the various units. The Central Command comprised Samora Machel, Raul Casal Ribeiro and a dozen specialised sections, and became known as the National Council Command.<sup>3</sup>

Organisationally, the guerrilla force was under the direct control of the political Frelimo leadership. The guerrillas were conceived as a military wing of the people—Frelimo had a strong relationship with the local people who constituted the liberation movement's recruitment base.

Frelimo's initial military strategy for winning the colonial war was to target Portuguese military and police forces, as well as the administrative and economic infrastructure.

The Portuguese, for their part, used a two-pronged strategy: they constructed resettlement villages or *aldeamentos*; and used a 'fire-force' concept, which at the height of the war essentially combined the army and air force units in rapid deployment—rapid exit operations against the guerrillas inside the country.

#### THE RESETTLEMENT VILLAGES

From a strategic and tactical perspective, one of the most far-reaching and damaging features of the Portuguese counter-insurgency operation was the resettlement programme which began in 1967. The Portuguese grouped dispersed indigenous peoples into large villages organised by the military in western and north-eastern Mozambique. Their aim was to build up organised local defence against guerrilla attacks and to prevent insurgent infiltration and mobilisation among the peasants.

Outside the fighting zones, the Portuguese used the *aldeamentos* to promote economic and social development as "a method of undermining

the appeal of a guerrilla movement to the indigenous population by ameliorating the negative social conditions that create support for the guerrilla cause in the first place”, and winning African support. In addition, the Portuguese controlled the peasants by establishing a network of spies and informers in each resettlement village. The strategy of denying guerrillas access to the local populace had been witnessed in British Malaya and became popularised in the Portuguese colonies of Cape Verde, Angola and the then Portuguese East Africa, now Mozambique.

#### ASSESSING HUMAN RESOURCES

As a guerrilla movement Frelimo relied on a large social base, that is, the Mozambican peasantry. Their support was crucial not only for the guerrillas’ sustenance in logistical terms, but also as a recruitment base for the organisation’s ranks and, more fundamentally, for ideological reasons.

Frelimo was able to maintain the military offensive throughout most of the war because of the authority and appeal of the revolutionary line, its intimate relationship with the peasant population, and the efficiency of its guerrillas.

In terms of the colonialists, it is believed that there were as many as 70,000 Portuguese soldiers in Mozambique. But between 1972 and 1974 the Portuguese—following classical counter-insurgency principles—increased the ‘Africanisation’ of their army. This move was also motivated by the growing difficulty in providing soldiers for their deteriorating war fronts in Guinea-Bissau, Angola and Mozambique.

The Africanisation process meant that many Mozambicans were integrated into the existing military units, such as commando troops and new recruits. These units were often based on ethnicity, and in the last phase of the war operated mostly in the central zones of the country. Together with the rural guards and village militia, they numbered more than 30,000 men<sup>4</sup> and represented a profound ‘internalisation’ of the colonial conflict, the consequences of which are discussed later.

#### THE WIDER PICTURE

Mozambique’s liberation war from 1968 can be characterised as a paradigmatic conflict between a popular, revolutionary guerrilla front and a colonial counter-insurgency campaign, in a scenario that included outside influences.



Globally, Mozambique was caught up in the Cold War battle, and regionally the war witnessed the growing participation of the 'white states'—namely, South Africa and Southern Rhodesia. While Portugal had the latter on its side (as well as Western powers in general), the nationalists fell into the Sino-Soviet orbit, which was their major source of support.

These relations were maintained for some years, but began to change in the early 1970s when Frelimo's guerrillas made strategic advances in Tete; and following the failure of Portugal's ill-fated Operation Gordian Knot, which was a huge military effort aimed at destroying guerrilla bases in Cabo Delgado province through heavy bombardments and assaults by Special Forces.

#### REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL CONCERNS

Mozambique's liberation war increased military and political security concerns not only for the Portuguese administration, but for Rhodesia and South Africa as well. But three major developments led to a further deterioration of security in the region.

First, the guerrilla forces crossed the Zambezi River in the early 1970s. From Rhodesia and South Africa's point of view, this shifted the conceived strategic border down to the Limpopo River, as the two rivers represented natural barriers against the spread of Frelimo's liberation war.<sup>5</sup> The move also impacted negatively on the Rhodesian economy since the Beira Corridor was severely damaged by guerrilla activities. Furthermore, Zimbabwean nationalists were now able to re-initiate and carry out guerrilla warfare in Rhodesian territory, threatening the survival of the white minority regime and the physical security of white farmers in those areas bordering Mozambique.<sup>6</sup> The Cabora Bassa Dam deserves special attention since its economic viability depended on South African purchasing power.

Second, the coup d'état in Portugal in April 1974 unsettled Rhodesia and South Africa and worsened the prevailing security situation. The countries' uncertain ties with the new Portuguese political milieu and the Mozambican liberation movement's insistent stance on independence made future prospects for their own regime survival more unpredictable.

Third, the Lusaka Agreement of 7 September 1974, effectively paving the way for Angola and Mozambique's independence, confirmed Portugal's inability to sustain the colonial war and eliminated the previous strategic borders, bringing the distant external threat closer to

Rhodesia and South Africa's national borders. This worsened military security in Rhodesia and posed new and serious dangers to South Africa at a time when the South African domestic political environment was deteriorating as internal resistance to the apartheid regime grew.

### **INDEPENDENCE AND THE CREATION OF REGULAR FORCES**

Portugal was at that time waging war on three fronts—Angola, Guinea and Mozambique. The economic burden and psychological effects augmented the dissatisfaction in certain political circles, especially within the army, and led to the 1974 coup d'état in Portugal and the subsequent changes in Portuguese policy towards the colonies, which were granted almost immediate independence.

Independence in June 1975 was preceded by a nine-month transition period in which Frelimo took control of a transitional cabinet where, besides appointing a prime minister, it held six of the nine ministries. Security concerns, however, did not cease with the end of colonialism: both external and internal threats were still present.

While the Portuguese war machinery ceased to be a direct and immediate external 'colonial' threat, a perceived potential external threat to Mozambican sovereignty and territorial integrity came from Rhodesia and South Africa, both former allies of Portugal and committed to preventing 'black rule' in Southern Africa.

These external military threats to national security were to a certain extent neglected, remaining more at the level of discourse. Although Mozambique did give sanctuary to the Zimbabwean and South African liberation movements, it believed that active military confrontation would be confined mostly to Rhodesian and South African territories.

Security concerns were patently obvious in the Lusaka Agreement, which provided for a Joint Military Commission to ensure 'Mozambique's territorial integrity'. The fact that the armed forces were under the direct control of Frelimo's representative, although their employment was subject to co-ordination by Frelimo and Portuguese representatives, was clearly a preventive measure against unpredictable developments apposite to the decolonisation process and the security of people. The joint monitoring of the cease-fire and the establishment of joint patrolling groups, in what Paulino Macaringue calls their "peacekeeping role",<sup>7</sup> reflected the concerns of the security environment.

In practical terms, however, security was perceived mainly in terms of internal threats. Frelimo's socialist concept of state building emphasised:

- increasing national production;
- the political and ideological mobilisation of the entire society to meet the challenge;
- the dismantling of the colonial apparatus; and
- the eradication of any form of colonial or neo-colonial thinking and behaviour.

Internal security therefore became paramount for Frelimo, implying the suppression of any attempt, in any form, to reverse the take over of power by Frelimo.

It must be remembered, however, that Frelimo inherited a country that had been involved in protracted civil war and was therefore in economic ruin. As a result, austerity measures were announced, which included the national defence force whose members were expected to “work without pay until a sound economy had been created”.<sup>8</sup>

#### THE FAM/FPLM

The new state had to create a new national army drawn from the guerrilla forces, and this had to be accomplished quickly. As a result the new *Forças Armadas de Moçambique/ Forças Populares de Libertação de Moçambique* (FAM/FPLM)<sup>9</sup> had to resolve a number of fundamental issues: first, whether the transition would entail an incorporation of the thousands of Mozambicans who had served in the colonial forces; and second, whether the new army would follow either an essentially Western (Portuguese) institutional arrangement with ‘traditional’ rank structure and administration, or the guerrilla administrative structures and command-and-control typologies. Following on this issue of operational doctrine—and as sub-themes—were issues regarding the new army’s size and capabilities.

When the nationalists advanced to the south to fill the space vacated by the withdrawing Portuguese authorities, they regarded the cities and the ‘south’ in general with deep mistrust since the south was seen to have been submissive to colonialism to the last and had not been involved in Frelimo’s ‘purification process’ that went hand-in-hand with participation in the liberation struggle.

But the Frelimo nationalists were finding it difficult to control a state in deep crisis, and responded by setting up *grupos dinamizadores*. These grassroots committees operating at the local level popularised the Frelimo position and created Frelimo supporters in residential areas and

work places as a first step towards integrating the new adherents. This was in the hope to widen Frelimo's support base as well as to establish structures through which local level administrative tasks could be performed. However, despite Frelimo's overwhelming support by the majority of the population, its structures—particularly the military—remained relatively closed.

#### FAM/FPLM: ASSESSING MILITARY COMMAND-AND-CONTROL

The Ministry of National Defence was established by Presidential Decree No. 01/75 of 27 July 1975. This stated the role and functions of the Ministry and emphasised the military component of the National Defence Policy. The decree also underlined the fundamental responsibility of consolidating independence and national unity, and drew up the parameters for the restructuring of the armed forces.

From independence to the 1992 peace agreement, former liberation war general Alberto Joaquim Chipande was Minister of Defence and he was assisted by two deputy ministers.

In order to ensure political control and indoctrination of the armed forces, a new structure was established in the Ministry of Defence, namely the National Political Commissar of the FPLM. This structure was in place for over a decade and was represented in all branches of the armed forces. Armando Emílio Guebuza, the current Mozambican President, headed the structure from independence in 1975 until the beginning of the mid-1980s, while the FPLM General Headquarters was headed by Sebastião Marcos Mabote, who at the time was essentially the Deputy Minister of Defence.

#### ESTABLISHING A REGULAR ARMY: ASSESSING HUMAN RESOURCES

The Fourth Conference of the Department of Defence, as part of the Frelimo National Congress structure, was held from 25 July–4 August 1975—a month after independence—at which a first attempt was made to establish the philosophy of the new national defence force. It was decided at the conference that in order to ensure political loyalty, the new army would be formed based on the 10,000-strong guerrilla force that had fought the liberation war. However, the quality of guerrillas available, as well as their poor educational background, soon showed up the limits of the Department of Defence's strategy of building a regular army on the basis of the existing group of freedom fighters.

Attempts were therefore made to involve friendly countries such as Tanzania, Zambia, Nigeria, the Congo and China in the development, training and equipping of the new force.

But Mozambique's defence needs became more pressing from March 1976 when the country started to implement the United Nations (UN) mandatory sanctions against Rhodesia. This raised the level of conflict between Rhodesia and Mozambique to open confrontation and created military demands that were far in excess of what the 'friendly' countries were prepared to provide.

Meanwhile, the task of transforming the guerrilla force into a regular army capable of playing a rapid and efficient role soon proved to be too difficult for two reasons. First, the force was overwhelmed by heavy regional pressure from an aggressive South Africa and due to direct military incursions by Rhodesia. Second, the new regime had 'misread' a number of situations, in particular the hostile attitude of the thousands of Mozambicans who had served in the colonial forces. Additionally, it had overestimated anticipated support from socialist countries for liberation forces in the region. In fact, the will and capacity of Eastern countries to support the Southern African front were probably not that strong and their commitments to other regions such as Cuba, Vietnam and Afghanistan seemed to be strategically more important to them at the time.

Some 30,000 Mozambicans (or three times Frelimo's guerrilla force) who had served in the colonial army were purposely marginalised. According to Paulino Macaringue:

the records show that during the negotiations, the Portuguese delegation proposed that all Mozambicans within the colonial army should be integrated into the new post-independence army. Frelimo rejected the proposal on grounds that they were part of the colonial machinery which had to be dismantled.<sup>10</sup>

This marginalisation, however, had serious implications. On the one hand, it meant that under the new order there were a large number of trained military personnel who could not resume a normal civilian life. Not long before, many of these Mozambicans had participated in joint Portuguese-Rhodesian operations and—fearing being caught, or motivated by revenge—many therefore crossed the border and offered their services to Rhodesia for acts against the new Mozambique.<sup>11</sup> On the other hand, such marginalisation deprived the country of skilled

nationals who could have played an important role in the development of a new regular army.

Meanwhile, Mozambique had only two battalions (that were trained in Tanzania) and some regular platoons of the new Nova Vida battalion (that was hastily formed in Zambia) with which to oppose the Rhodesian attacks. In addition, Chinese military instructors from Nachingwea arrived in Boane on the Maputo outskirts to run a course aimed at transforming guerrilla commanders into the first officers of the new regular force.

Faced with a crisis in military manpower and organisation, the Mozambican authorities turned to the Soviet Union for help (China apparently lacked availability for such involvement). A Mozambican high delegation headed by Alberto Chipande, Minister of Defence at the time, was in May 1976 sent to the Soviet Union to negotiate for major support vis-à-vis the formation of the new Mozambican army. This was the start of delicate negotiations, with the Soviets requiring Mozambique to adopt a clear socialist orientation as a precondition for aid.

According to Chipande, the Soviet Minister of Defence, Marshal Grechko, openly questioned the Frelimo delegation about its members' communist inclinations, and the delegation had to offer guarantees regarding a commitment towards the development of a socialist project for Mozambique.

By twist of fate Grechko, who seemed disinclined to provide support to Mozambique, died that same day. Much to their surprise, the Mozambican delegation was informed at his funeral that the Soviet Union would back Mozambique, considering the "need for immediate support in order to build a regular army capable of facing external aggression."<sup>12</sup>

As a result, and in order to be consistent with the socialist oriented political discourse advocated during the anti-colonial armed struggle, Frelimo at its Third Congress in February 1977 officially became a Marxist-Leninist party and socialism was adopted. Given the limited options available, this choice seems to have been, among others, a strategic move.

According to Law No. 4/78 of 23 May 1978, compulsory conscription for all citizens, male and female aged 18 to 35, was adopted. This began a new phase: the old revolutionary scheme of mobilising to fight for freedom was replaced by the obligation to defend the nation.

Conscription in post-independent Mozambique was intended also to be a nation-building exercise whereby people from different regions, with different languages, faiths and outlooks could begin to share experiences. Consequently, by 1980 the former 10,000-strong guerrilla force was not only transformed but had increased in size to some 70,000.<sup>13</sup>

#### FAM/FPLM EQUIPMENT AND TRAINING

In March 1977 (and following Frelimo's commitment to Marxism-Leninism), a 20-year Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation was signed between Mozambique and the Soviet Union.

This was immediately followed by the transfer of significant amounts of Soviet military equipment, including artillery systems, radar devices, armoured vehicles and tanks.<sup>14</sup> Between 1977 and 1980 officers from the new army were sent for training to the Soviet Union, Cuba, Bulgaria, Hungary and the German Democratic Republic, and courses were also held in Mozambique at Boane and Nampula.

The new army comprised five infantry brigades and one brigade equipped with tanks and some heavy artillery units.<sup>15</sup> However, more people with better education and the ability to specialise were needed. Education, which had been the first priority, therefore gave way to the appeal to defend the 'motherland'. In March 1977, for example, 600 high school students had their education interrupted and were sent to the Soviet Union for special military training.

At the end of 1978 the cadres began returning to the country and by 1980 the Soviet-trained air force was already flying AN-26 cargo planes and MI-8 helicopters. By 1982 two wings of Mig-17s and Mig-21s were operational, and a small naval force had been established. The new FAM/FPLM was therefore considered by the authorities to be formed and established.

#### THE ROLES AND FUNCTIONS OF THE NEW ARMY

The role of the post-independence army depended largely on the conflict situation that existed at the time. In short, the FAM/FPLM was expected to be an instrument of war, a political instrument, as well as to contribute to the development of the country.

As mentioned, shortly after independence the newly renamed FAM/FPLM faced external military threats. Rhodesian aggression in

Mozambique and later on the South African destabilisation war fought through the *Resistência Nacional Moçambicana* (Renamo)—also known as MNR<sup>16</sup>—was the immediate determining factor for stepping up the establishment of conventional armed forces and the country's involvement in new warfare.

In the immediate post-independence period, the FAM/FPLM was strategically strengthened and morally motivated by the then still recent defeat of Portugal in the colonial war. However, the force was tactically weakened by the large geographical arena (which implied a dispersion of forces), its lack of experience and its lack of suitable military equipment for operations of a regular conventional army. Thus the armed forces could hardly cope with the task in the initial phase of Rhodesian military raids.

Once the guerrilla army had transformed into a regular army and had become more effective, the Rhodesian forces began a relative retreat, but Renamo guerrilla activities were stepped up.

The dynamics of the liberation wars and Frelimo's political solidarity with other nationalist movements led to Mozambique's direct involvement in the Rhodesian/Zimbabwean guerrilla war, where Frelimo's experience in guerrilla warfare was well utilised. These 'internationalists', as they came to be known, remained in Rhodesia until the collapse of the Smith regime.

In fact, at a popular meeting organised in Maputo on 23 December 1979 to celebrate the 1979 Lancaster Agreement, Mozambican President Samora Machel said: "We are proud to tell you that more than 350 Mozambican combatants are already in Zimbabwe as internationalist combatants. More than 500 participated in the Zimbabwe war."<sup>17</sup>

For the first time, Mozambican armed forces were used as an instrument of war not only inside the country, but also in other people's struggles. Presumably this was intended to serve Mozambican military developments, as decay of the minority regime and the take-over of power by the Zimbabwean nationalists would contribute to the end of hostilities in Mozambique, which had been conducted directly by Rhodesia as well as by Renamo.

In terms of contributing to development, the FAM/FPLM was involved in economic and humanitarian missions. An example is its rescue operations during the 1977 floods in the centre of Mozambique. This natural disaster luckily coincided with an armed forces modernisation period and the army, air force and navy therefore had the



technical means—such as mobile bridges, pneumatic and boat propulsion, amphibious vehicles, transportation and communication facilities—to launch successful rescue operations.<sup>18</sup>

#### MOZAMBICAN DEFENCE POLICY IN A CONTINUUM OF WAR: SETTING THE AGENDA

Mozambique's independence came in a complex international environment dictated by the broad Cold War cleavages that had created a tense regional climate, but blended with some optimism following Frelimo's victory after a decade of war. The collapse of Portugal's empire and the prospect of black rule in Mozambique (and Angola) caused enormous concern in Pretoria. In fact, after independence the Mozambican government aligned itself closely with other liberation movements in Southern Africa, just as Tanzania's Nyerere had done for Mondlane and others a decade earlier.

Mozambique's political commitment to the struggle against racism and its policy of peaceful co-existence proved to be mutually exclusive and therefore not viable in the case of Rhodesia and South Africa. The new regime therefore expected direct military aggression from these states, as well as the infiltration of proxy elements—the so-called 'internal enemy'. Bearing in mind the international strategic environment and the current developments in Southern Africa at the time (1975–77), Mozambique's defence policy was understandably defined in terms of military power, and stated that the armed forces should be strengthened for "legitimate defence".<sup>19</sup> As a result, in 1977 Frelimo's 'military wing' of guerrilla forces was transformed into regular armed forces.

Rhodesian military raids into Mozambique accelerated the need to prepare the armed forces to face a conventional (modern) war against Rhodesia and probably South Africa. Rhodesian air supremacy underlined the necessity of establishing a "modern and powerful force"<sup>20</sup> and the armed forces began to receive special attention vis-à-vis their preparedness to mount a full-scale war.

In fact, at this period Rhodesia began to launch military operations inside Mozambique, attacking Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) guerrilla bases (and the surrounding Mozambican population), as well as economic targets. Also, as mentioned, after Mozambique began implementing UN mandatory sanctions against Rhodesia, including the shutting of shared borders, Rhodesia in 1976 responded by creating Renamo.

The realisation of defence policy was assigned to the defence and security forces. They were expected to fulfil classical duties related to the safeguarding of national independence, national sovereignty and territorial integrity and, not least “the defence of revolutionary conquests”, meaning the positive achievements of the liberation struggle.

During this period the war was mainly fought by Mozambique and Rhodesia, with Renamo still playing a secondary role. The group began by broadcasting propaganda against the Mozambican government through radio *Voz da Africa Livre*, complemented with pro-Rhodesian rhetoric.<sup>21</sup>

However, using Rhodesian Intelligence Service funding and resources Renamo soon began to train recruits in Rhodesia. These recruits were mainly Mozambican exiles living in Salisbury (now Harare), Johannesburg and Lisbon. The core of Renamo therefore consisted of a mixture of disgruntled Portuguese and black Mozambicans, Frelimo dissidents and veterans of the colonial army (both black and white, many of whom had fled to Rhodesia upon Mozambican independence). The majority of these individuals included intellectuals, middle-class businessmen, traditional chiefs and the Askaris that had served in the colonial army.

For the time being, South Africa was in the background and collaborated to a small extent with the Rhodesian war effort. But its activities were mostly limited to hostile economic relations, such as cutting the number of Mozambican migrant labourers working on South African mines, suspending the arrangement for deferred payment of miners’ wages (which dated back to the colonial period), and reducing South African exports through the port and railways of Maputo.

#### EVALUATING CIVIL–MILITARY RELATIONS

In the post-independence war period the military played less of a role in terms of mobilising citizen support for Frelimo, which now as a party constituted the government of Mozambique.

Its role in terms of recruitment was also minimised following the introduction of compulsory military service in 1978. This meant that other specialised Mozambican institutions were now focusing on administrative procedures for joining the army. Purely military demands exerted more pressure on the military personnel to direct their action against Rhodesian troops, and later on against Renamo guerrillas.

But it was during this period, at the height of the war, that the armed forces were asked to play an important role as a political instrument.

Through the chain of political military commissars and assistant commanders for political affairs, the military carried out many responsibilities to ensure not only political control and indoctrination in the armed forces but in society at large.

Under the single-party system and because of the revolutionary model of civil–military relations prevailing at the time, the FAM/FPLM was considered a reservoir for cadres to the party; the army was meant to be under party control, especially since the line between party and government was so blurred.

In essence, the top military leaders were at the same time top party leaders and core issues of defence policy were decided at the upper echelons of the party. Under that system, the Minister of Defence and the Defence Chief (Chief of Armed Forces General Staff) were both under the direct control of the party hierarchy, where they themselves held high positions. Until at least 1990 this situation, by extension, was emulated in the provinces and districts where, for example, the military commanders were the second-in-command in the party as well as in local level governmental structures.

Thus, the military did not intervene in domestic politics in its own right but rather because it was one of the instruments of power controlled by the leadership: it was both penetrated by and subordinated to the party leadership. This has left an awkward legacy in terms of disentangling the armed forces from a system in which it played a significant, but not controlling, part.

#### BUDGETING FOR THE MILITARY

The Ministry of National Defence is in charge of implementing the national defence policy. Financial resources necessary for this purpose are put at its disposal through the state budget.

Until recently, the budgeting process in Mozambique took place in the context of armed conflict. Hence, the main portion of the state budget was channelled to the defence and security sector, rather than to social needs. In short, due to the war the budgeting process in the defence and security sector was not subject to criticism; indeed, there is no record of an open discussion about the budget to be allocated to this sector. However, according to the available data the annual defence budget was a portion of that allocated to the defence and security rubric in the general state budget. Therefore, until recently, there was no record of the exact amounts going to the defence area.

Nevertheless, some data indicates that the former Soviet Union and German Democratic Republic constituted the main financial support from independence until the end of the war, under the auspices of the Rome Treaty of 1992. This was largely through incentives and exhortations from outside to the major key actors in Mozambique. This included offers of approximately US\$150 million a year in the form of a variety of donations, grants and loans directed towards both the government and the opposition Renamo. Curiously, these later became a burden in terms of Mozambique's accumulated debt. Stated differently, the incentives were simply long-term loans that have since come up for repayment.

From 1976 to 1989 the defence sector also benefited from military expenditure on equipment and diverse logistical material, and by 1990 Mozambique's military expenditure was an enormous 6.4% of gross domestic product (GDP).<sup>22</sup> Meanwhile, from 1990 onwards, there has been a global trend to cut back on military expenditure. The country's military expenditure also received a further dent when its traditional source of procurement, the former Soviet Union, collapsed during this period. This left a number of major weapons systems such as aircraft, tanks and conventional artillery and special weapons inoperable, lacking spares and other much needed technical support.

## **FROM ANTI-COLONIAL WAR TO SURVIVAL OF THE MOZAMBICAN STATE**

### THE CIVIL WAR AND ITS IMPACT ON THE FAM/FPLM

The threat analysis undertaken by the new Mozambican regime in 1975, which entertained the strong possibility of a conventional attack by hostile neighbours, was proven accurate following conventional Rhodesian military incursions into Mozambique.

As already mentioned, the threat also played an important role in the kind of alliances that Frelimo established at the time. In particular, it meant a break in Frelimo's tradition of neutrality in the conflict between China and the Soviet Union. As mentioned, after 1977 Frelimo moved closer to the Soviet Union in the belief that it was the only major power capable of providing the general and special assistance required to build a new army in Mozambique, almost entirely from scratch.

By the turn of the decade things were looking up for Mozambique. Zimbabwe's independence in 1980 resulted from the improved diplomatic stature of Mozambique, whose role in the peace negotiations at the Lancaster House Conference was recognised by many, particularly

the United Kingdom's (UK) Margaret Thatcher. Furthermore, Renamo was on the run. It was now deprived of its old Rhodesian sanctuary and was mostly expelled from Mozambique.

However, following the advent of non-racial majority rule in Rhodesia, South Africa inherited the reactionary anti-Frelimo insurgents. Pretoria was averse to Frelimo's inclination to support black liberation groups in the region; for South Africa this meant that Mozambique would likely aid its main black insurgent political group, the banned African National Congress (ANC).

South Africa's compulsion to interfere with the sovereignty of its neighbours also came from the fear that the Soviets would aid black liberation groups within the country. This caused South Africa to adopt a policy of 'Total Onslaught' bent on curbing the 'Evil Empire's' influence in the region. This proactive anti-communist initiative—rendered official policy from the end of 1978 by Prime Minister PW Botha—became known as the 'Total Strategy'.

In addition, the neighbouring black-ruled states had set up the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC) aimed at reducing the region's economic dependence on South Africa. Mozambique was assigned a key role in SADCC, and served as the centre for transport and telecommunications. The destabilisation of Mozambique would therefore also constitute a serious setback for the emancipation of the Front Line States (FLS) from apartheid South Africa's economic dominance.

Motivated by the above mentioned factors, South Africa arranged for the remnants of Renamo—led by its leader Andreas Matsanga and his deputy, Alphonso Dhlakama—and approximately 250 troops to be transferred to the south, mainly around Phalaborwa, and revived as a South African proxy force.

Pretoria's goals in Mozambique were to eliminate ANC bases from Mozambican territory, weaken Frelimo's support for Pretoria's enemies through direct destabilisation, and to reinforce regional dependence on South Africa's extensive transportation system. South Africa's right-wing extremists relied on Marxist rhetoric from Mozambique and Angola to justify its battle against the communist onslaught.

#### FAM/FPLM: PROTECTING PEOPLE AND THE STATE

Around the time of Zimbabwe's independence in 1980, the Mozambican military was re-arranged and a regional command was set

up in the Central region. Its headquarters was in Beira, Sofala province, and its objective—in the wake of presumed victory by the nationalists—was to wipe out the remnants of the Renamo guerrillas.

By 1981 the Mozambican army had developed into a fully-fledged conventional armed force capable of sustained field operations. This was, of course, a result of its intimate collaboration with the Soviet Union; and the massive inflow of heavy weapons and accompanying technicians and advisers had quickened the pace of institutional change. During the same year, however, South Africa launched Renamo into Mozambique in what would be guerrilla warfare rather than conventional aggression.

The South African back-up was immensely superior to what the Rhodesians had provided. It included much more efficient training of the proxy forces and night airdrops of supplies, against which the FAM was unprepared. This is part of the reason why Renamo spread rapidly throughout Gaza and Inhambane provinces from early 1981.

During the following two years—and as a result of such massive support and inadequate government military reaction—Renamo expanded its guerrilla action to virtually the entire country, with the exception of the northern province of Cabo Delgado, where the war arrived somewhat later.

The government of Mozambique then found itself embroiled in a civil war fought against a rebel movement controlled and co-ordinated from outside.

While ostensibly espousing freedom and democracy as the processes necessary for the development of Mozambique, in reality, Renamo had no alternative governing manifesto and sought only to discredit the ruling party. This is evident in the way in which Renamo carried out its rebellion.

The group targeted economic installations such as roads, railways and power plants. It also sought to undermine and destroy the Frelimo government's main accomplishments such as state-run schools, health clinics and local administrations. Renamo left in its wake major infrastructural damage and destroyed the government's ability to carry out its social policies effectively.

In response to these new political and military realities, an operational doctrine modelled to counter conventional and counter-insurgency threats was adopted. The bulk of the FAM would be a professional institution with an Eastern style hierarchy, and it would essentially operate on the basis of flexible and variegated capability and response.

It would have to be able to operate simultaneously or sequentially as a garrison force, as a counter-insurgency army using the fire-force concept, and as a conventional force with the capability to deter or repel the South African Defence Force.

In 1982 the Frelimo government realised that the earlier military rearrangement was now inadequate and a new restructuring of the armed forces took place, leading to the creation of ten provincial semi-autonomous military commands.

The commanders also played a political role as they were appointed second-in-command of the political and government structure of the provinces. Moreover, it was believed that the introduction of provincial commands would free the regular troops from the task of protecting the population and infrastructure, reserving them to fight the insurgents. The provincial autonomous military commands could call on strategically located military brigades placed countrywide for reinforcement.

The brigade was conceived as an autonomous and flexible unit capable of performing powerful combat action wherever planned. It generally comprised one command company, transport company, communications company, engineering company, military police, reconnaissance squadron, three mechanised infantry battalions, one tank battalion, terrestrial artillery battalion, anti-aircraft artillery battalion and reactive artillery battalion (six cars). The 1st Brigade and the 6th Tank Brigade were located in Maputo; the 2nd Brigade was in Mapai and, together with 8th Brigade based in Chokwe, assured protection of the south; the 3rd Brigade was in Chimoio and the 5th in Beira; the 4th Brigade was placed in Tete, and the 7th in Cuamba, assuring a military presence in Niassa, Cabo Delgado, Zambezia and Nampula, and particularly in the Nacala corridor; finally, the 9th Brigade, whose officers were trained in North Korea and were particularly effective, was based in Gorongosa, to control Renamo headquarters' activities.

This decentralisation process was seen as a way for the conventional army to hold on to some of the basic principles underlying a 'struggle' army. In particular, universal conscription was replaced by a 'patriotic call', in a move aimed at improving the local military strength by increasing the numbers and rooting them to the provincial scenario.

Besides having to deal with the permanent threat of a conventional attack by South Africa, in order to fight the guerrillas successfully, the FAM had to attack them and interrupt their supply lines. More importantly, the army had to defend the local population and protect

key strategic targets. For this, troops had to be properly fed, armed, motivated, and supported by adequate command, control, communications and intelligence, as well as with good transport to assure rapid mobility—and all this had to be co-ordinated in proper counter-insurgency campaigns.

Notwithstanding the fact that Mozambique's basic independence, national sovereignty and territorial integrity were secured by its armed forces, it can be said that this task was carried out under significant social, political, economic and military difficulties.

From a military perspective vis-à-vis armed forces as instrument of war, an obstacle was the divergence between prevailing military strategy and the changing reality on the ground. A more technical approach would suggest that the type of army, and consequently their tactics, were at odds with the nature/type of war it faced.

In addition to the two-year conscription initiated in 1978, the Ministry of Defence issued periodic conscription orders for all men born during a given calendar year. Separate days were reserved for teachers and students to report, and officials in charge of workplaces and schools were instructed to deny admission to anyone not properly registered for military service.

Due to increased troop requirements in the late 1980s, the FAM/FPLM resorted to other means besides conscription to satisfy military requirements. The above mentioned 'patriotic call' as a recruiting method was often a euphemism for 'informal drafting raids' which, as the conflict worsened, saw more and more young people caught in local villages, markets and schools.

As the army experienced increasing difficulties in controlling the situation, harsher methods were employed to prevent contact between Renamo and the population. For obvious reasons, Renamo tried to keep the rural population dispersed in small clusters, while the army tried to increase its control through tighter methods of villagisation, following one of the classical procedures of counter-insurgency campaigns.

Such measures, affecting particularly the central areas of the country, contributed significantly to popular discontent. These counter-insurgency methods were similar to those used by the Portuguese a decade before, and were hated for their violence and disruption of socio-economic life. The memory of colonial villagisation was still fresh in the minds of the population that the Mozambique military was now trying to control—ironically, these were precisely the villages that Frelimo had promised to dismantle after liberation.



The socialist development discourse which had supported the communal villages established after independence—received with less than total enthusiasm by the rural populations—was put aside to make room for new security needs. These villages were increasingly created by force and had poor living conditions. In fact, forced villagisation, and communal villages in general, were one of the main pillars of Renamo's propaganda against the government.

By the end of the 1980s, fighting between Renamo and the FAM/FPLM had forced hundreds of thousands of peasants to flee from the fertile and productive highlands. The result was a precipitous drop in food production. Renamo guerrillas also frequently mined roads and railroads, blew up electric power transmission lines, and attacked dams, mining facilities, and plantations. Moreover, they began taking foreign technicians hostage in the hope of gaining publicity for the Renamo cause.

In the short period of a decade, the standard of living in Mozambique had sunk to its lowest ebb, and the euphoria of independence was completely eclipsed. The economy was in crisis as a result of highly centralised development plans—and a devastating war that prevented their full implementation. Harsh methods to reverse the situation had spread discontent particularly in the rural areas, creating an environment that helped Renamo to root its guerrilla activities.

By the end of the 1980s, the Mozambican state was essentially inoperative and incapable of supporting an army that had grown immensely and demanded resources that did not exist. The armed forces were being heavily criticised within state structures, and the intimacy between the party, the state and the armed forces was all but lost.

Additionally, the relationship between the army and the population had deteriorated due to several factors. These included harsher recruiting methods and the occasional but uncontrolled abuse by military units of people suspected of having contact with Renamo. In the wider context, hundreds of thousands of Mozambicans in the countryside as well as in the increasingly crowded cities were malnourished and there was stiff competition between the military and civilians for scarce resources, either local or those supplied by aid agencies.

#### ASSESSING TROOPS AND EQUIPMENT

Despite the 1982 decentralisation, the steep increase in the number of troops and other factors brought added logistical problems. These were

felt in every possible instance, from armament and ammunition to transportation, rations and uniforms, health and moral ideology, in an army that had only limited repair and maintenance facilities.

Aircraft had to be ferried to the Soviet Union for overhaul and major repairs. Spare parts for vehicles and armaments, as well as ammunition had to be imported.

Towards the end of the war the problem got so serious that almost all jet fighters, transport aircraft and helicopters were paralysed due to lack of spare parts and jet fuel, and less than 5% of defence vehicles were in running order.<sup>23</sup> The continued dependence on foreign technicians and advisers, many of whom were not deployed in combat zones, had adverse consequences for operations and morale. By 1991, Nacala—the strategic airbase for the Mig-21s with more than 40 units—was in a state of disrepair and had only two serviceable vehicles. The concrete runway was badly cracked and seeped with water, radios were unserviceable, security was lax and pilot training was not carried out for months on end.

Throughout the units, the dismal situation meant that military personnel had to adapt to the almost impossible conditions that existed in the barracks. For instance, in Zumbo, an isolated area in the western Tete province, one battalion had been reduced to 40 men who did not receive their pay for more than a year; they dressed as civilians, had almost all married locally and subsisted through occasional fishing, gardening or petty trade. According to local sources, a foreigner could hardly distinguish them from local militia. Deprived of uniforms, weapons and any other supplies, they fought with the few ammunition cartridges that occasionally arrived from Zimbabwe.<sup>24</sup>

#### STRENGTHENING COLLABORATION AT REGIONAL LEVEL

After independence, Mozambique maintained its cordial and historical linkages with neighbouring countries. For instance, Tanzania and Mozambique in 1976 signed an agreement which, among others, established the exchange of military training and experience. Between 1977 and 1978 Tanzania sent a military contingent of the Popular Defence Force of Tanzania to Mozambique with the aim of boosting FAM capabilities in defending the country against Rhodesian aggression in the Tete, Manica and Gaza provinces.

Owing to the high economic cost of the conflict, the Mozambican government in March 1984 negotiated the Nkomati Accord (see below).

However, by August 1984 Renamo forces had increased their actions throughout the country. A meeting was held in Harare in June 1985 to discuss the worsening security situation, and was attended by presidents Machel (Mozambique), Mugabe (Zimbabwe) and Nyerere (Tanzania), at which it was agreed that their support and military presence (in the case of Zimbabwe) in Mozambique would be stepped up. These arrangements allegedly resulted, among others, in the August 1985 capture of Casa Banana, one of the strongest Renamo military bases in the centre of Mozambique.

Malawians appeared on the scene as a result of intense pressure, including threats of military action if they did not cease accommodating Renamo. By December 1986 a joint security agreement was signed between both states, and by mid-1988 600 Malawian troops were in Mozambique guarding part of the railway line from the Malawi frontier to Nacala. Under the 1987 agreement between Tanzania and Mozambique, a new military contingent was to be established in the central province of Zambezia to help FAM/FPLM in its efforts to counter the destabilisation war and Renamo forces that were trying to divide the country from the Zambezi River to Manica province, taking in the Beira Corridor running from the coast to Chimoio near the Zimbabwe border. Other elements of militaries were also seconded from Zimbabwe, while Zambia and Botswana supplied logistical input in the regional military response. This intervention marked yet another phase of military co-operation between the FLS at the conventional level at a time when SADCC continued to reflect the economic co-operating arm of the Southern African independent states.

#### MOZAMBICAN DEFENCE POLICY IN A CONTINUUM OF WAR: REVIEWING THE AGENDA

As the war continued to escalate and expand countrywide, political and diplomatic moves towards a settlement with South Africa were attempted. This culminated in the Nkomati Accord signed on 16 March 1984, in which Mozambique tried to trade the withdrawal of its operational backing of the ANC in exchange for the end of South African support for Renamo. To the Mozambican authorities, the Accord meant an important step towards peace. Their understanding was that it could stop the war without involving the rebels in a sort of 'win-lose' solution.

However, the Accord proved to be of little value and resulted in an unprecedented escalation of the war. In the months immediately

preceding the Accord, South Africa kept up an appearance of having fulfilled its diplomatic obligations when in fact it had dropped massive amounts of equipment to Renamo inside Mozambique so that the movement could continue with operations inside the country.

This marked a third phase in the war—the ‘Renamo period’—during which the rebels managed to increase their autonomy and establish their presence countrywide, turning the conflict more and more into civil war.

An important benefit of the Nkomati Accord for the Mozambican armed forces, however, was that it removed most of the threat of a South African conventional attack: from then on the army could focus its efforts almost entirely on fighting Renamo.

By the late of 1980s, as a result of strong internal and external pressure, the total collapse of the economy and the untenable military situation, Italian-sponsored negotiations were finally successful. This opened the door for direct talks between the two contenders, and for the signing of a peace accord between the Frelimo government and Renamo.

#### **THE 1992 PEACE ACCORD AND THE CREATION OF THE FADM**

##### FROM PEACE SETTLEMENT TO MULTIPARTY ELECTIONS (1992–1994)

The General Peace Agreement (GPA) signed in Rome in October 1992 between the Mozambican government and Renamo brought about a cease-fire and eventually ended the civil war.

The GPA was implemented in a very particular political environment. The Mozambican state that had survived the war was now very weak and incapable of assuming a high profile, despite the fact that, as stated in the GPA, it should function until the first multiparty elections in 1994 that would mark the end of the transition period. As a result, the UN (peacekeeping) Mission in Mozambique (ONUMOZ) not only mediated the peace settlement but also acted as a *de facto* state during the transition.

According to the GPA, the end of the conflict had to follow four steps:

- cease-fire;
- separation of the forces;
- their concentration into the containment areas; and
- demobilisation.

The operation was supposed to finish six months after E-Day (15 October 1992), when the GPA would come into force.<sup>25</sup>

UN Security Council Resolution 797 stated that ONUMOZ had to fulfil a mandate with four main roles that had profound implications for the structuring of the new armed forces:

- At the political level, ONUMOZ had to establish conditions for the implementation of the agreement.
- At the military level, ONUMOZ had to monitor and verify the implementation of the cease-fire as well as the containment, selection and demobilisation of the combatants, assuring the gathering and destruction of weapons.
- ONUMOZ was also to control the withdrawal of Zimbabwean and Malawian contingents in the Beira, Limpopo and Nacala corridors, and to supervise the dissolution of non-official, private and irregular armed forces.
- ONUMOZ also had to fulfil electoral and humanitarian roles.

The GPA was structured in several protocols: Protocol VI set the procedures to be followed for the cease-fire, while Protocol IV regulated the military issues.

According to the initial plan, demobilisation was supposed to be finished in May 1993. However, it was only during that month that the ONUMOZ contingent was considered adequate for monitoring the peace process. According to the GPA, the gathering of weapons by ONUMOZ should have begun in November 1992, but this only happened a year later. These delays added to the environment of mistrust that existed between Frelimo and Renamo. The cantonment of the troops started in November 1993, and demobilisation in March 1994.<sup>26</sup> Once cantoned, volunteers from both sides would then be selected and recruited for the new joint national army, while the remaining combatants (in fact the majority) would be demobilised.

#### FADM: FOUNDATIONS FOR MILITARY COMMAND-AND-CONTROL

The building of the Mozambican Defence Force— the *Forças Armadas de Defesa de Moçambique* (FADM)—was a central tenet of the peace process implemented under the GPA. The implementation of the GPA was co-ordinated by a Supervisory and Monitoring Commission (CSC)

and several other commissions in which Frelimo, Renamo, the UN (as mediator) as well as other countries were represented.

These commissions were to regulate the transition period during which several processes would be developed, aiming at establishing an environment in Mozambique that was conducive to security and multiparty democracy.

Matters related to the creation of the new national force fell under the Joint Commission for the Formation of the Mozambican Defence Force (CCFADM), which included representatives of Portugal, France and the UK, under the co-ordination of the UN.

According to GPA, Protocol IV, I-iii, 1(d) the:

CCFADM should draw up directives on the phasing of the establishment of the FADM structures and shall propose to CSC: the rules governing the FADM; the budget to be provided for the FADM until the new government takes office; the criteria for selection and the selection of FAM personnel and Renamo forces for the formation of FADM; the names of the commanding officers of the main commands.

In line with the spirit of the GPA, the FADM was created by abolishing the government army (FAM/FPLM) and integrating selected elements with the non-statutory components of Renamo forces, in equal proportion. FADM soldiers were to be drawn from both the government army and Renamo guerrillas, and it was expected to number 30,000 troops. This complicated and difficult process of integrating former belligerent forces was held up as an example of consensus building and nation building and laid good foundations for the country's first ever multiparty elections in 1994.

The 'technical' basis for the FADM started with the so-called Lisbon Declaration, issued at a meeting held in February 1993 at which Portugal, France and the UK confirmed specific commitments for training the new force. Only a year after the Lisbon Declaration, in February 1994, were concrete steps taken by the Portuguese who focused on the Naval and Special Forces. The British followed and focused on the infantry, while the French focused on de-mining. The Portuguese ran leadership courses and trained Naval and Commando forces. The French provided military instructions to help form the first FADM company of 100 personnel specialised in landmine clearance. The British trained instructors who were placed at the three principal

infantry training centres at Dondo (Sofala province), Boane and Manhiça (Maputo).<sup>27</sup>

Despite these achievements, there were several problems in the creation of the first FADM units. Difficulties were experienced in transporting the new recruits from the areas where they had been assembled after the peace accord to the new training camps, as well as delays in the arrival of the military equipment. These and other problems, such as poor basic education of the recruits and lack of facilities to house the corps when they left the centres, also hindered the process.

By mid-September 1994, on the eve of the elections and at a time when the FADM should be formed and ready, at least half of the expected contingent was still to be integrated into the army.

Problems regarding the implementation of the Lisbon Declaration have been a matter of controversy. According to some external observers,<sup>28</sup> four key factors plagued the creation of the FADM, for reasons not always clear.

First, Mozambique never took advantage of the offers for military training by the British, Portuguese and French during the peace process. Second, the Defence Ministry and the military establishment were kept off-balance for nearly seven months after the October elections and key Ministry and military players were appointed only in early May 1995. Third, senior political officials appointed as armed forces commanders for political reasons, were roundly disliked among the international donors. And, finally, Mozambique did not have a clear policy or direction for its military. Some views claim that this was done intentionally as a way to overcome years of military 'domination'.

Regardless of whether the above arguments are true, the fact is that several interrelated factors rendered the formation of the FADM a very intricate and slow process, hampering its expected role as a stabilising actor in the peace process, particularly at the time of the first multiparty elections.

Politically, the FADM was dependent on the complex process of achieving progressive trust between Frelimo and Renamo. The situation of having the same military corps headed by two commanders, one from each, was a very odd compromise with potentially great risks. It was abandoned after the elections, with the appointment of only one chief-of-staff of the army.

Technically, the FADM's formation depended on the collaboration of several countries, each with a different system of military organisation.

It also depended on the availability of recruits, often hampered by delays in the submission of lists of volunteers to the UN by both parties. Transport problems, poor facilities to house the trainees or, simply, lack of volunteers compounded these difficulties.

The further the FADM could go in achieving a good standard of discipline and efficiency, the better it could contribute to the sense of a stable local environment. The FADM's stability and efficiency was all the more vital as all former military forces became 'extinct' in August 1994,<sup>29</sup> leaving the responsibility of assuring a smooth conclusion of the transition process to the new army and ONUMOZ.<sup>30</sup>

#### FADM: FRAMEWORK FOR SUSTAINABLE HUMAN RESOURCES

The issue of how many former soldiers should form the new army had been difficult to resolve before the signing of the GPA by the two parties. The government favoured a larger army while Renamo wanted a reduced one. The reasons for such positions have been the object of some speculation. For some, the government, facing severe socio-economic problems, anticipated the need for a large army capable of absorbing a significant number of the unemployed. But since it was agreed that each side would contribute half of the FADM's troops, a large army would mean extra difficulties for Renamo, not only in producing its quota but also in maintaining hidden troops not needed to fulfil its quota in the FADM. It has also been suggested that Renamo's reason for proposing a smaller army was the prospect that the government would have its military power greatly reduced.<sup>31</sup>

Agreement was eventually reached that each of the two parties were to provide 15,000 troops, forming a 30,000-strong independent force with 24,000 in the army, 4,000 in the air force and 2,000 in the navy.<sup>32</sup>

GPA Protocol IV provided further definition of the role and profile of the new force:

The Mozambican Defence Force (FADM) [should] be formed for service throughout the national territory [having] as its general purpose the defence and safeguarding of the country's sovereignty, independence and territory. [It would be] non-partisan, career-oriented, professionally trained, and competent, [and] made up exclusively of Mozambican citizens who [were] volunteers and drawn from forces of both Parties. [It should] serve the country with professionalism and respect the democratic order and the rule of law.



The composition of the FADM should preclude all forms of racial or ethnic discrimination or discrimination based on language or religious affiliation.

The need to attract volunteers to the new army was taken seriously by all parties concerned. The conditions offered to the troops were the subject of prolonged discussion from an early stage. In an attempt to fulfil promises made to its own combatants during the struggle, Renamo had inflated the level of salaries for the military during the negotiations; the government, however, over-burdened and depleted of its resources, tried to keep the salary offers at more modest levels.

As a result of the compromise achieved, salaries of rank-and-file FADM soldiers were almost three times more than those paid in the FAM. Better medical, clothing and transport allowances and improved food were also announced.<sup>33</sup> Nevertheless, the conditions promised in the new army proved to be insufficient to attract volunteers, either because their expectations were higher or because the extended periods spent in the assembly areas increased mistrust in the whole process. Indeed, in the assembly areas, hundreds of Renamo and FAM cantoned troops mutinied, demanding faster demobilisation. Very few were willing to join the FADM. Their experiences of long service periods under generally poor conditions were not something they wanted to repeat.<sup>34</sup>

The GPA's expectation of having a 30,000-strong joint army on the ground before the October elections (thus putting into practice one of the lessons allegedly drawn from the failure of the Angolan peace process) was impossible to meet. Even the more modest target that the army be formed by at least half that number before the elections was not accomplished (by September the strength of the six FADM battalions was only 8,281).<sup>35</sup>

By February 1995 the FADM had only 12,195 troops (8,533 from the FAM and 3,662 from Renamo). Logistical problems remained the greatest concern, with transport, communication and supplies throughout the country being slow and difficult.<sup>36</sup>

## **FOUNDATIONS FOR A SECURITY STRATEGY (1994–2004)**

### **MILITARY COMMAND-AND-CONTROL**

Following the elections and the installation of a new government, the Mozambican armed forces had to undergo deep transformation in the context of profound national and regional changes.

Within Mozambique's borders, the end of the war, the economic constraints, the new approach to national security and the new political environment, dictated a diminished role for the army as well as the involvement of more actors in the discussion of that role.

Under the umbrella of the peace process, a civilian Minister of Defence was appointed; Aguiar Mazula, who had previously been Minister of State Administration and Labour, was well acquainted with budgeting processes and his new appointment was therefore welcomed by the donor community who believed he could contribute to improved levels of management vis-à-vis the state budget allocation to the defence sector. The donor community was not willing to finance the 'boosting' of the defence establishment in Mozambique. (The current Minister of Defence is Tobias Dai, a well-known retired general who played a vital role during the creation of the FADM. Dai was previously Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of National Defence.)

The defence and security sector is made up of the police, the state security services, and the defence establishment. The FADM is the core component of the defence sector and comprises three services: the army, air force, and navy. Compulsory conscription still exists.

The Mozambican Constitution (1990) provides the framework for national security policies. According to CAP V, article 59 of the Constitution, the objective of the state's defence and security policy is to preserve the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity and to guarantee the normal functioning of democratic institutions and the security of citizens against any external armed aggression.

Article 60 states that the defence and security forces are subordinated to the defence and security policy and are to be loyal to the Constitution and the nation. The oath of the defence and security force members establishes the right to respect the Constitution.

It is important to note that the period from the 1992 GPA until the establishment of the government was characterised by the absence of any clear and unequivocal definition of defence policy objectives or guidelines. In fact, until the Defence Act (1997), the FADM took its mandate exclusively from Protocol IV of the GPA, which was very general. The recent Defence Act stipulates that the main purpose of Mozambique's defence policy is to maintain the independence and territorial integrity of the state, and to contribute to the promotion of peace and national unity.

Democratic civilian control is meant to be exercised by Parliament's Standing Committee for Defence and Security Matters. However, like

other state institutions, this committee is still finding its way. It is therefore important that a thorough educational process be undertaken within society at large, and in the defence establishment in particular, to clarify the role of both the military and state institutions in this regard. Areas to be covered should include historical legacies, the regional context, the Western democracy model versus the Eastern model, and prevailing external and internal security threats and conflicts.

The first attempt to design the post-war role of the FADM was made by the 1994–99 government programme which indicated that the FADM's primary role was to: defend Mozambique against external aggression; operate within the parameters of the Constitution, domestic legislation and the new democratic environment; have an affordable and sustainable force structure appropriate to its post-war role; have a primary defensive orientation and posture; promote regional military co-operation; pursue confidence- and security-building measures with Southern African Development Community (SADC) partners; and to be accountable to both parliament and the people.

The fulfilment of these requirements in the context of transition and multiparty democracy meant that reforms had to be made in the defence sector and armed forces. If there was a requirement to abandon the executive role played by the armed forces in the recent past, then the first step was to establish the appropriate legislation that could assure, support and guide the establishment's civil function. This could be followed (or done in tandem) with other steps, such as educating and professionalising its members. It was believed at the time that the more organised and stable the institution was, the less likely it would intervene in the eventuality of a political crisis between the main parties.

Given the new context of multiparty democracy, the reforms being implemented would require strong support from appropriate legislation, while the legislation itself would have to take into account new trends in the conceptualisation of national defence. The concept of national defence was approached as embodying, among other things, the goal to preserve independence and territorial integrity, because defence makes no sense unless there are threats and risks based on probable conflicts of interest.<sup>37</sup> Thus, from 1997 three legal devices confer juridical existence to the FADM, namely:

- The Constitution (specifically article 59 thereof);
- The Defence and Security Policy Act; and
- the National Defence and Armed Forces Act.

This legal package subscribes that the armed forces fall under the Ministry of National Defence, which is responsible for implementing National Defence Policy. According to article 23(1) of the National Defence and Armed Forces Act (No. 18/97 of 1 October 1997), the generic mission of the armed forces is to ensure military defence against any threat or external aggression, while article 10 of the Defence and Security Policy Act (No. 17/97 of 1 October 1997) states what the armed forces are expected to perform.

It is worth mentioning that during war time the armed forces fall under the direct command of the commander-in-chief of defence and security forces. During peace time, and in accordance with article 25 of the National Defence and Armed Forces Act, the commander-in-chief of defence and security forces, on the advice of the Defence Council made up of defence and security practitioners, can decide on the participation of the armed forces in UN missions, regional security organisations, peacekeeping operations, humanitarian missions and development assistance.

The new defence policy has tried to cover missions that go beyond Mozambique's internal functional role to include peacekeeping at international level and contributing to conflict prevention and resolution in both the region and the continent.<sup>38</sup>

Among its internal tasks the armed forces have responsibilities concerning internal security and stability; these responsibilities are, however, restricted to cases where all the other non-military security agencies of the state are for whatever reason overwhelmed by the challenge, or when it involves "the satisfaction of basic needs and improvement of the quality of people's life".<sup>39</sup>

However, major political and economic obstacles have made it difficult to transform such definitions into reality. The National Assembly has yet to achieve the level of stability that allows for democratic competition that is free of suspicion and mistrust. The climate that exists not only hampers the debate on defence but also spills over into the armed forces where despite the appeal for unity and non-partisanship in its ranks, it remains clear who belongs to Frelimo and who came from Renamo.

The economic constraints, for their part, hinder capacity building of the envisioned force. It is unlikely that the government can or will increase defence expenditure in real terms in the foreseeable future, and it is morally accepted that there is no strategic or military rationale for doing so.

Post-civil war Mozambique faces intense pressure to comply with creditor demands, such as a reduction in spending on state bureaucracy, and this includes defence expenditure cuts.

Deprived of an appropriately detailed policy, troops and equipment, FADM troops basically remain cantoned in their quarters, unnoticed in the public debates and incapable of performing expected tasks. In particular, the FADM is yet to achieve the capacity to perform its principal mission accordingly to the Constitution, namely, to preserve the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

#### DEFENCE REVIEW: THE FADM'S PEACE-TIME UTILITY

The current challenges facing the Mozambican defence and armed forces cannot be dissociated from the regional and international changes that have occurred over the past 15 years.

Any discussion concerning the evolution of defence and armed forces therefore has to take into account historical elements, such as the end of the Cold War and the demise of the apartheid regime in South Africa, and the effect all this had on Mozambique's civil war.

At the regional level, the disappearance of the two main sources of conflict in Southern Africa—the Cold War and apartheid—meant that the ideological, strategic and logistical imperatives that fuelled and sustained many of the region's intra- and inter-state conflicts had to follow the same trend. Additionally, this signalled a new era of majority rule governments in the region, which meant the need for political and institutional reforms as well as the need to adapt to the new security environment.<sup>40</sup>

The political changes in the region were particularly relevant and challenging since the Mozambican defence sector and armed forces had been established and structured to counteract and respond to a regional security and political environment that no longer existed. A major overhaul of the institution was therefore required in order that it adapt to the new political realities.

In line with this new reality, security perceptions by the elite in power have been developing an inward perspective with a focus on human security. This is in part because the widespread availability of weapons in the post-war environment has made crime a challenging security threat, and the level of individual insecurity reached such extreme proportions that the problem could no longer be ignored by the political elite.

On the other hand, given that internal transformations were not dissociated from regional efforts at demilitarisation and peace building, such an environment (associated with a low degree of organisation and cohesion in the new armed forces) might have reinforced the need to establish mechanisms that justified the adoption of external defence and security confidence measures so that a degree of military and political security could be achieved, and so that internal issues, such as individual security and poverty, could be addressed.

Academic considerations about defence and security issues had been premised on the belief that social issues could only receive attention once regional political and security stability had been achieved. There was also some pressure to conceptualise defence and security and to define strategies in such a way that they could satisfy internal security needs and reinforce the country's ability to participate in the regional initiatives and alliances from a well-defined stance.

#### **THE 2000 FLOODS: HIGHLIGHTING FADM INEFFICIENCY**

In order to fully appreciate the problems affecting the armed forces it is illustrative to analyse the situation created by the January–April 2000 floods in Mozambique, which killed more than 600 people and disrupted the country's economy.

The role of the FADM during this natural disaster received special, but not positive, attention from both the Mozambican people and the international community. It was argued at the time that if security was being conceived more in terms of human security, especially considering the peace dividend, then that would surely involve measures to reduce people's vulnerability to such disasters. The floods could also have been an opportunity to dispel the commonly held view that the FADM was useless. Instead, the country was unable to create sufficient internal capacity to deal with the emergencies and security issues, and the FADM was incapable of responding properly to the devastation.

People were caught unawares by the rising water and sought refuge wherever they could, often in trees or on rooftops, while the less fortunate were swept to their deaths. Rescue and relief missions were desperately needed. With many roads impassable, there were pockets of people scattered across southern and central Mozambique in need of food and who could only be reached by air. In the second week of March, flights across the Limpopo valley indicated that around 20,000 people were stranded near the town of Mabalane, in northern Gaza.

They had been isolated by the flood waters for over three weeks: the only way of getting food to them was by helicopter.<sup>41</sup>

Pressured for answers by the media, the politicians tried to justify why the defence and security sector could not respond to the crisis, blaming the situation of external factors. At a press conference held in Maputo on 8 March 2000, President Joaquim Chissano told journalists that:

the country had just one operational helicopter—the Air Force planes are in no condition to be used and that is because the partners the country used to work with [are] today different. The country used to get planes, fighter planes and helicopters bought or acquired through credit from the former Soviet Union, but due to economic, political and social changes that occurred in those countries [Mozambique] can no longer buy either spare parts to repair its own [planes] or credit to buy new ones. And this situation seems to have affected all other branches such as the navy: [which is] left with ‘no boats but only with sailors’ and an air-force with pilots but no aircraft.

President Chissano also made it clear that the armed forces did not have enough equipment since budget allocations to the defence and security sector were constrained due to economic restructuring.

He stressed that the poor state of the armed forces was not due to lack of political will, but because “certain members of the international community” refused to finance equipment for the military, just as they had been reluctant to finance the training and equipping of the police.

The President added that the international community was now agreeing that Mozambique’s army should have the basic means to act and respond in situations such as disaster relief, but he denied claims that the FADM was not involved in rescue operations, stating that the FADM’s small navy, in particular, had been present from the start of the disaster.<sup>42</sup>

Nevertheless, the international community raised concern about the role of the government in the operations,<sup>43</sup> while the media used the opportunity to question government and criticise the institution’s sluggishness in co-ordinating the rescue operations,<sup>44</sup> and specifically the apparent invisibility of FADM members in rescue missions.<sup>45</sup> (This latter point was explained by President Chissano who said at the above mentioned press conference that some organisations were averse to giving aid where there are people with uniforms, so “we had to order them to wear civilian clothes, and that’s what they’ve been doing”.)

Importantly, the floods served an interesting and unexpected role: they provided an opportunity for vociferous political debate in parliament about the state of the defence and security sector; and from a military perspective and for those interested in security issues this was an opportunity to disclose the weaknesses of the military institution.

In terms of the former, there were extensive debates in Parliament concerning flood relief. Parliamentarians expressed their grief at the human and material impact of the disaster, but also used the occasion to criticise each other. For example, Renamo-*União Eleitoral's* Luis Gouveia accused the Frelimo benches of “abandoning the Mozambican army, the air force and the navy”, to which Frelimo’s Sérgio Vieira replied, recalling that during the negotiations leading up to the 1992 GPA, Renamo had insisted on “parity” in the navy and air force, even though it had no sailors and no pilots; and as a result the air force came to include “people who don’t even know how to fly paper aeroplanes”. Vieira called for a strengthening of the capacity of the air force and the navy, but with people chosen on the basis of their competence, rather than on political party affiliation.<sup>46</sup>

In terms of the floods disclosing the military’s weaknesses, the Ministry of National Defence (MDN) report<sup>47</sup> identified that the composition of the army, the poor state of its technical and material equipment—lack of uniforms, tents, and basic means of transport and communication—were having a psychological effect and in practice reduced the armed forces’ ability to perform adequately in rescue and relief operations. In fact, during February 2000 *MediaFax* published a series of articles reporting the problems facing the FADM at the time in relation to uniforms, transportation, medicine, housing, food, etc.<sup>48</sup>

In terms of exposing the country’s vulnerabilities, an article in *Domingo* newspaper epitomised people’s apprehension in relation to the actual condition of the armed forces, stressing how the catastrophe clearly brought to light the country’s fragilities, the absence of defence means to counter natural disasters or, even worse, to repulse any aggression towards the country’s sovereignty.<sup>49</sup>

Similar sentiments were expressed in other local newspapers which called for, among others, Parliament to increase the defence budget. Other reports<sup>50</sup> strongly criticised the government, accusing it of having “mortgaged the future of the country to the international community”.

In essence then, the vulnerability as a consequence of the floods and the lack of national strategy highlighted to people what was already known: that there were no minimal means to guarantee the country



sovereignty. A strongly worded editorial in *Savana* on 10 March 2000 had this to say:

(...) since the death of Samora Machel, from the mind of the country rules disappeared the idea of formulating strategic reasoning about the future of Mozambique (...). Which donor could oppose an audacious programme on prevention and mitigation of natural disasters, which could include acquisition of helicopters, small airplanes, boats and other relevant equipment? No one! What happened is that there is no programme in the mind of our government. What is in place is the obsession of creation and multiplication of institutions without any content ... . In the same way there is no clear and feasible idea on what to do with national defence. We have the illusion that we can replace our military weakness by the famous *chassiniana* diplomacy of 'making more friends and fewer enemies'. But it should be clear that diplomacy is a good craft to avoid conflicts, but could not replace the need to build a strong army, equipped and with modern military outfits to the point of coping with any external and internal affronts. And the country had enough time to do so, and it did not.

A huge presence of foreign armies responded to the government's appeal for help, but only a few (the US, Portugal and Spain) shared information or co-ordinated with the FADM on the modalities of their participation. The defence establishment and armed forces therefore did not know the kind of technological equipment being used (except in the case of the US and Portugal) and, due to lack or degradation of its own material or technical resources, it could hardly exercise any credible authority to maintain certain levels of control (such as flights over restricted zones or landing in non-flood affected areas). Furthermore the complexity and uniqueness of the situation created some embarrassing and difficult situations. For example, high-ranking Mozambican officers had to take orders from foreigners with lower rank, while South Africa took on the role as 'big brother' and the Americans refused to work in the same zone as the Libyans.<sup>51</sup>

The military had not handled past flood situations well and their performance in the 2000 floods was no different. Interestingly, according to the MDN report, the armed forces were aware in October 1999 of the possibility of floods. In December 1999 aerial and naval units had been integrated into teams to monitor the rivers, so when the floods hit, the military was in a position to implement its rescue plan.

Although the FADM is divided into three regional commands (north, centre and south) with capacity to intervene and cope with local contingencies throughout the country, it was found that the available manpower, logistics and technical resources were insufficient to deal with an operation of this magnitude.

The military was, however, able to make serviceable some available equipment—one helicopter, two airplanes and eight pneumatic boats with their respective crews<sup>52</sup>—and participated in a number of rescue and relief operations in, for example, the town of Xinavane (10 February) where people were trapped on rooftops, as well as in the Incomati valley.

By 12 February the rest of the world had woken up to the unfolding drama, and neighbouring countries began to respond. Six South African National Defence Force helicopters were dispatched to Mozambique, while Malawi contributed two helicopters. By the end of February, with tens of thousands of people in dire straits, there were only 13 helicopters flying in response to Mozambique's request for aid: nine from South Africa; two from Malawi; one from France; and the FADM's only operational helicopter.

President Chissano castigated the international community saying: "He who asks for aid cannot be disappointed ... but we need more helicopters and boats."<sup>53</sup> And UNICEF Director Carol Bellamy added: "The people in Southern Africa are in a desperate situation and will not make it much longer."<sup>54</sup> In response, international aid began arriving from the beginning of March on a substantial scale from the US, Germany, Libya, Spain and Botswana.

However, the FADM did continue participating in the relief and cleaning operation in the provinces of Chilembene, Chokwe and Xai-Xai, rebuilding streets, bridges and houses. The relief work also included the traumatic task of removing corpses in an environment in which the traditional body bags were not readily available.

The MDN/FADM's evaluation of its rescue operation was not positive. The negative aspects related to:

- the level of institutional co-ordination under conditions of pressure;
- the absence of legislation on states of emergency and siege;
- the absence of legislation to establish hierarchical command and centralised decision making;

- the lack or degradation of the armed force's material or technical resources, which left it handicapped in fulfilling its responsibilities; and
- the fact that the FADM could not exercise credible authority to maintain control of the situation, particularly in the light of the huge foreign military presence.<sup>55</sup>

All this calls for a comprehensive reassessment of the real role of the armed forces, while at a practical level there is need to close the gap between what the existing legislation establishes as armed forces' responsibilities in the context of national disaster, and the human, financial and other resources required to fulfil these tasks. However, due to dramatic improvements in the overall security situation in Southern Africa, particularly with the end of the war in Mozambique and the end of apartheid in South Africa, there are arguments that there are no real, visible sources of conflict in the region that are likely to present a strategic threat to Mozambique's sovereignty. Potential or actual conflicts on the rest of the African continent are also judged to pose no strategic threat to Mozambique, nor is Mozambique likely to become the target of strategic military threats or subversion from outside Africa.

The absence of an immediate threat, and the need to plan for the long-term against remote or barely foreseeable contingencies, therefore dictates that the FADM should adopt a flexible concept of defence capacity building, which implies a minimal outlay of the scarce resources available. A small core of military capabilities should be maintained in key areas. This core could form the basis for expansion of the FADM in the distant future, should strategic circumstances change and the threat to Mozambique increase.

## CONCLUSION

In its short history, the Mozambican armed forces have gone through at least two profound transformations. Formed in 1964 with the mission of freeing the country from colonial rule, the FPLM grew as a popular army based on volunteer adhesion. It developed an intimate relationship with the liberation front (Frelimo) and performed a central role in the embryo of the revolutionary state established in liberated areas.

The independence of the country in 1975 marked what was perhaps the army's first serious test. In contrast to most African countries where

independence was negotiated with former colonial rulers and the new national armies were shaped very much in the image of the previous rulers' armies, Mozambique's independence was achieved through a military victory; therefore, besides the odd facilities and hardware, nothing was inherited from the colonial army.

The creation of the new national armed forces, the FAM/FPLM, from 1975 was based on two contradictory dynamics. On the one hand, it attempted to maintain its main popular characteristics—as shown in Samora Machel's directives to keep the army under the sphere of Frelimo and not of the new state, or in the Department of Defence's strategy to create the new army out of the guerrilla force which had liberated the country. On the other hand, however, the regime's fear that conventional attacks by hostile neighbours were likely to follow led its leaders to look for external support in order to establish a new kind of force—something they had not the experience or the means to undertake. The Soviet Union emerged as the only country willing and able to provide such a service. This connection, although far from being the only one, became an important factor behind the more rigid posture of the regime in the Cold War alignment of the time.

The armed forces that was born of this process (FAM)—with its main characteristics already patent in 1980—was fundamentally different from the army that had liberated the country. In particular, after a short moment of glory as a result of its victory over the Rhodesian forces, the FAM gradually lost its popular character: universal conscription was adopted and the army's mission lost the clarity it formerly had.

Built as a conventional army in the 1980s, the FAM battled to fight both external aggression and an internal guerrilla-type war. The FAM increased immensely in number, consumed a growing slice of the state's limited resources, and experienced great logistical and training difficulties. In the end, the price of fighting the war against Renamo was a clear degeneration in civil–military relations, in a situation that was rapidly becoming untenable.

The 1992 peace accord between Frelimo and Renamo introduced the second major break in the history of the armed forces. In contrast with the previous transition where the settlement of conflict had excluded those Mozambicans who had fought under colonial orders, this time settlement meant including the former contenders in the new military structure. Such integration was not done without difficulty, due to an understandable lack of trust between the two parties. Moreover, the creation and consolidation of the FADM did not receive priority either

by a Mozambican society tired of years of war, or by the external actors in the process of transition to peace. Whatever effort was made fell under a dynamic of negative peace; in other words, the necessary was done so that confrontation could not resume.

Such problems notwithstanding, the armed forces, in including contingents from the former opposition armies, became one of the privileged fields for national reconciliation, and the measure of their stability is undoubtedly a good indicator of what is being achieved and consolidated in terms of peacebuilding.

As rationale following the peace dividend, the FADM is not in the present day a priority sector in budgetary terms. However, it must use the limited resources at its disposal in a sustainable way to regain some of the traditions built in the liberation struggle and eroded in the huge effort to preserve independence. That can be achieved through building capacity to play its role in an integrated regional security set up and to provide support to fellow citizens under a new concept, which has been broadened to encompass individual security. Last but not least, the armed forces have to consolidate new democratic procedures of dialogue with society through the appropriate democratically elected organs; while for their part, these organs must reciprocate by accommodating the military and providing it with effective political guidance.

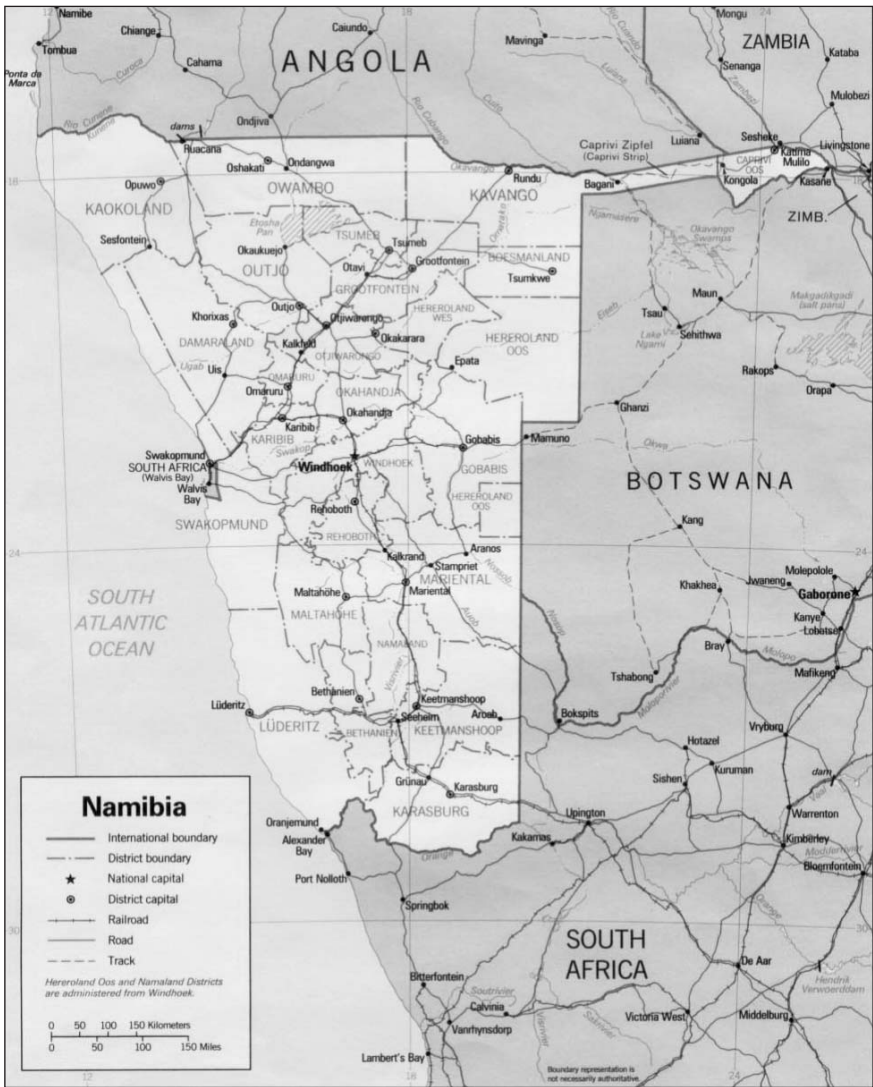
## NOTES

- 1 The Congress activities were summarised by the President of Frelimo, Eduardo Mondlane as a “consolidation [of unity] and mobilisation; preparation of war; education [of cadres] and diplomacy [in order to obtain international support].” Party document in the possession of the author, 1977, pp 133-137
- 2 P Macaringue, *Para Uma História do Surgimento dos Exércitos nos Actuais Estados Africanos: Estudo de Caso: A Edificação das FAM-FPLM (1962-1977)*, UEM, Maputo, 1997, pp 21-31.
- 3 *Ibid*, pp 33-34.
- 4 Confirmed by Joao-Paulo Borges Coelho, one of the authors, in 1993.
- 5 Over the years South Africa’s Vorster had consistently made the point to Rhodesia’s Smith “that the further north we could hold the line against communism the better”, and that the Zambezi River was a far stronger defence barrier than the Limpopo River. Public comments by former long serving Rhodesian Prime Minister, Ian Smith, who led the Rhodesian Front Party.
- 6 *Tempo*, No. 454, 24 June 1979, p 32.
- 7 See P Macaringue (Brig), *Mozambican defence in the post-war era*, MA dissertation in Defence and Security Analysis, 1998, p. 41
- 8 *Tempo*, No. 261, 1975, pp 42-43.

- 9 FAM/FPLM were the initials of the newly created post-independence Mozambique Armed Forces. Maintaining 'FPLM' was for political marketing purposes and to acknowledge the role played by the former guerrilla forces in the national liberation struggle.
- 10 Macaringue, *Mozambican defence in the post-war era*, op cit, pp 40-41.
- 11 Flower, the head of Rhodesia's CIO, refers to the recruitment of operational units. See K Flower, *Serving secretly: An intelligence chief on record, Rhodesia into Zimbabwe 1964 to 1981*, John Murray, London, 1987, p 262.
- 12 See Macaringue, *Para Uma História do Surgimento dos Exércitos nos Actuais Estados Africanos*, op cit, pp 77-79.
- 13 This is according to Macaringue who was involved in the army at the time.
- 14 See Macaringue, *Para Uma História do Surgimento dos Exércitos nos Actuais Estados Africanos*, op cit, p 79. Undoubtedly, the Treaty was part of the argument used by South Africa to press for a higher US profile in the region, further entrenching the regional conflict into the wider Cold War scenario.
- 15 Macaringue, *Mozambican defence in the post-war era*, op cit, p 46.
- 16 It is difficult to date when MNR as the acronym for the anti-Frelimo guerrillas was replaced by the one of Renamo. This was gradual and probably indicated the need to avoid an English acronym in order to strengthen the identification with Mozambique.
- 17 *Voz da Revolução* 70, November 1979–January 1980, p 26.
- 18 The key officers in each of the services involved were Lt Col Efraime Macome (Army), and Maj Leonardo Dimas (Air Force), Ministério da Defesa Nacional (MDN): Cheias 2000, que lições para o MDN in charge of the FADM.
- 19 See The Third Congress of Frelimo, *AIM Information Bulletin*, 9/10 (Congress Special Issue), 25 March 1977, p 22.
- 20 *Ibid*, p 25.
- 21 See Porque nos ataca a Imprensa Quizumba, *Tempo*, No. 325, 26 December 1976, pp 61–64.
- 22 See Gen Teófilo João and Cor Gune, *Economia e gestão da defesa*, paper presented at the Executive Defence Management Course, UEM/CEA, February 2004.
- 23 Interview with Gen Teófilo João, Chief of Logistics, cited in Macaringue, *Mozambican defence in the post-war era*, op cit, pp 47-48, 53.
- 24 As confirmed by Joao-Paulo Borges Coelho.
- 25 GPA, Protocol VI, I.3.
- 26 Confirmed by Joao-Paulo Borges Coelho in 1996.
- 27 For the training activities see newspapers *Notícias* and *Domingo* between February and September 1994.
- 28 Debates held during a seminar in Maputo conducted by experts from the Centre for Civil-Military Relations/Post-Graduate Naval School, Monterey, California. Maputo, 15–19 March 1990.
- 29 *Notícias*, 16 July 1994.
- 30 At this time debate started on the sharing of roles between the army and the police since risks to the peace process appeared now to be coming from within the country and not from a regional context, which looked particularly favourable.

- 31 See this line of analysis in José Luis Cabaço, FADM- Aprender dos outros: e de nós, in *Domingo*, 22 May 1994. See also UN Report on the Mission in Mozambique, (ONUMOZ), 1994.
- 32 GPA, Protocol IV, I-ii
- 33 *Domingo*, 27 March 1994; *Notícias*, 24 March 1994.
- 34 On the mutinies in the assembly areas. Confirmed through research by co-author Joao-Paulo Borges Coelho in 1994.
- 35 *Notícias*, 17 September 1994.
- 36 For the problems and shortcomings in the building of FADM in these first days, see Macaringue, *Mozambican defence in the post-war era*, op cit, pp 60-62.
- 37 *Ibid*, pp 4-6.
- 38 Law No. 18/97, art. 10, pp 200-207.
- 39 *Ibid*, art. 23, pp 200-210.
- 40 The internal and external political and sociological factors that led to the changes in Mozambique are generally attributed to the progressive changes of the Frelimo party in power. Cf. Simpson, *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 31(2), 1993, pp 309-337. Plank, *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 31(3), 1993, pp 407-430.
- 41 Interviews: Amélia Cossa, Chokwe, 21 November 2000; Maria Emília, 28 November 2000; Sister Maria Lários, 22 November 2000; Father Sebastião, 23 November 2000; Victorino Alberto, 30 November 2000, among others. Cf. *Mozambiquefile*, AIM, No 285, April 2000, p 4.
- 42 Cf. *MediaFax*, No. 1975, 9 March 2000, p 3; *Savana*, 10 March 2000, p 9; *Mozambiquefile*, AIM, No. 285, April 2000, p 5.
- 43 *BBC News*, 20 February 2000.
- 44 *Savana*, 11 February 2000, p 9; *MediaFax*, No. 1974, 8 March 2000, p 1.
- 45 *MediaFax*, No. 1955, 10 February 2000, p 1.
- 46 Cf. *Mozambiquefile*, AIM, No. 285, April 2000, p 11; *Savana*, 3 March 2000, p 16.
- 47 Ministry of National Defence (*Ministerio da Defesa Nacional*) Report, 2000, p 5.
- 48 Cf. *MediaFax*, No. 1963, 22 February 2000; No. 1966, 25 February 2000; No. 1967, 28 February 2000. See also M da Graça, A Talha de Foice: Tropa, *Savana*, 3 March 2000, p 9.
- 49 F Matusse, Assim, até a Swazilandia pode invadir-no, *Domingo*, 19 March 2000, p 9.
- 50 *MediaFax*, No. 1976, 10 March 2000, p 5.
- 51 MDN report, op cit, pp 3-8; interview with Lt Col Efraime Macome (Army) and Maj Leonardo Dimas (Air Force), General Staff Headquarters, Maputo, 2 February 2001.
- 52 MDN Report, op cit, p 8.
- 53 *Mozambiquefile*, AIM, No. 284, March 2000, p 12.
- 54 *Arbetet* (Swedish newspaper), 3 March 2000, p 17.
- 55 As revealed in MDN Report, op cit, p 8.





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# Promoting national reconciliation and regional integration: The Namibian Defence Force from 1990–2005

Gwinyayi Dzinesa & Martin Rupiya

## INTRODUCTION

The colonial experience in Namibia was brutal and harsh. For the purposes of this chapter—which seeks to document the post-colonial military history of Namibia—a brief discussion of events spanning the period circa 1884 to independence in 1990 is essential.

## HISTORIC OVERVIEW

The geography of Namibia is unique in the Southern African region. With a total land mass of 825,418 km<sup>2</sup>, Namibia's climate is hot and dry, measuring the lowest rainfall in the region, with large parts of the country being desert. Only 1% of the land area is arable, confined to the north, with 46% pastures and 22% forests and wood. The rest is harsh, rocky and dry.<sup>1</sup> Namibia has a 1,572 km Atlantic Ocean coastline along its western edge on which a number of harbours and ports have been established; these include Oranjemund, Ludertiz, Walvis Bay and Swakopmund. While the country lacks vegetation and is hilly and sparse, it contains a generous range of minerals from diamonds, copper, uranium and gold, to lead, tin, lithium, zinc, salt, vanadium, natural gas, suspected oil deposits, coal and iron.

The area first witnessed European interest from Portuguese explorers in the late 15th century, followed by Afrikaner traders during the 17th century, and German missionaries and traders dealing in ivory and cattle at the turn of the 19th century. Their presence was later followed by a

growing trade in diamonds and copper. During the Berlin Conference of 1884/85, the region was annexed by Germany; a little earlier, in 1872, Britain had annexed Walvis Bay as part of the Cape Colony.

German rule was particularly harsh on the local inhabitants. In 1904, a resistance to German occupation was led by the Herero Chief, Samuel Mattearero, and supported by the Nama and Damara ethnic groups. The African resistance attacked towns and the colonial headquarters and threatened the emerging outlying farms.

Using the ploy of a negotiated settlement, the German administrators between 1904–08 embarked upon a policy of extermination and genocide. Employing superior military organisation and equipment, including repeating rifles and machine guns, the Herero were mowed down, hanged, starved and brutally crushed. By 1908, the Herero population had dwindled to less than 90%, the majority dead, and the remaining 5–10% were forced to go into exile in the hinterland. Two-thirds of the deaths registered occurred in the concentration camps.

A downside for the colonialists in putting down the resistance was the immediate shortage of labour, forcing them to recruit persons further north from Ovambo and Kavango. This episode is deeply etched in the memories of Namibians and formed an important part in providing the inspiration and resolve to engage in a 23-year protracted armed struggle that began in 1966.<sup>2</sup>

The European arrangement was upset during the First World War when, in July 1915, troops from South Africa defeated the German contingent and occupied the territory. In December 1920, the League of Nations gave South Africa a mandate to administer the territory; this was renewed following the creation of the United Nations (UN) in 1945. Three years later, when the Afrikaner National Party (NP) of South Africa triumphed at the polls in that country, this benign colonial arrangement was set to change radically.

After 1948, with the NP in power, South Africa annexed South West Africa (SWA) as its fifth province. Pretoria from then on stopped submitting annual reports to the UN, as required under the trusteeship arrangement. In the same year, South Africa also granted whites in the territory direct representation in the South African Parliament while embarking on the deliberate exclusion—socially and economically—of the African majority. In order to maintain brevity, the South African government in 1960 commissioned the Odendaal Report that divided SWA into 12 regions, relocating 93% of the population into ‘homelands’ that covered 40% of the land, while leaving the minority white

community holding on to 60% of the most productive land available. The same apartheid laws practised in South Africa became the norm in SWA, drawing howls of protests from the victims. Conduct in commerce and industry—comprising commercial farming, fisheries, mining and emerging service industries—central to the economy became integrated with that of South Africa's. Despite these moves, however, the country remained severely underdeveloped, creating a permanent source of conflict within society.

In October 1966 the UN General Assembly voted to remove South Africa from administering SWA and to transfer responsibility to the UN.<sup>3</sup> This did not materially affect the situation on the ground, forcing the African people to seek other avenues in order to effect the departure of South Africa.

In response to the various colonial impositions that continued ruthlessly to crush African voices of agitation, the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) was established on 19 April 1960, following increasing agitation and the rise of several African political parties in the late 1950s. Three anti-colonial movements are important here. The first was the Ovamboland People's Organisation (OPO) led by Andimba Toivo ja Toivo, which organised strikes at the Luderitz port. Next was the South West Africa National Union (SWANU), and finally the Herero leader's organisation: Sam Shafiishuna Nujoma, working with OPO and the youth organisation later created SWAPO.

Already in March 1960, Nujoma had fled into exile to then Tanganyika, following a demonstration in Katutura during 1959 in which 12 people were massacred and leaders threatened with arrest. In April 1960 SWAPO was established, and in June 1960 Nujoma stood before the 4th UN Decolonisation Committee making a presentation on behalf of his people.

Events were to move rapidly during the next five years with the SWAPO Congress of 1961 proposing the adoption of an armed struggle in order to secure independence. In July 1966 SWAPO established a military faction—the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN).

In October of the same year, the UN General Assembly voted to end South Africa's mandate. Implementation of this international resolution was ignored, and in 1971 the responsibility of negotiating with South Africa was moved to the UN Security Council. However, it was clear to SWAPO that in order to succeed, the intervention of the international community had to be supplemented with active military and political action by the Namibians themselves.<sup>4</sup> In this decision and action,

SWAPO received the backing of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), and through the OAU's Liberation Committee was accorded material assistance and training facilities for its cadres.

A brief description of SWAPO-PLAN's military capacity and civil-military relations is useful before discussing the ceasefire that was agreed to and effected in 1989.

PLAN guerrilla units established major bases in Angola after 1975, and by the end of the war had approximately 10,000 men and women under arms.<sup>5</sup> Two military command posts were established: the PLAN Headquarters in Luanda; and the Defence Headquarters based in Lubango and manned by SWAPO's Secretary for Defence and the Military Council.<sup>6</sup> The Military Council would meet every year to determine strategy and guide the war as part of the political process.

SWAPO's guerrilla military strategy was intertwined with its political strategy. The liberation movement's guiding principle was "it is politics which leads the gun" and that war was "an extension of politics by other means".<sup>7</sup> Former SWAPO Secretary Andreas Shipanga noted:

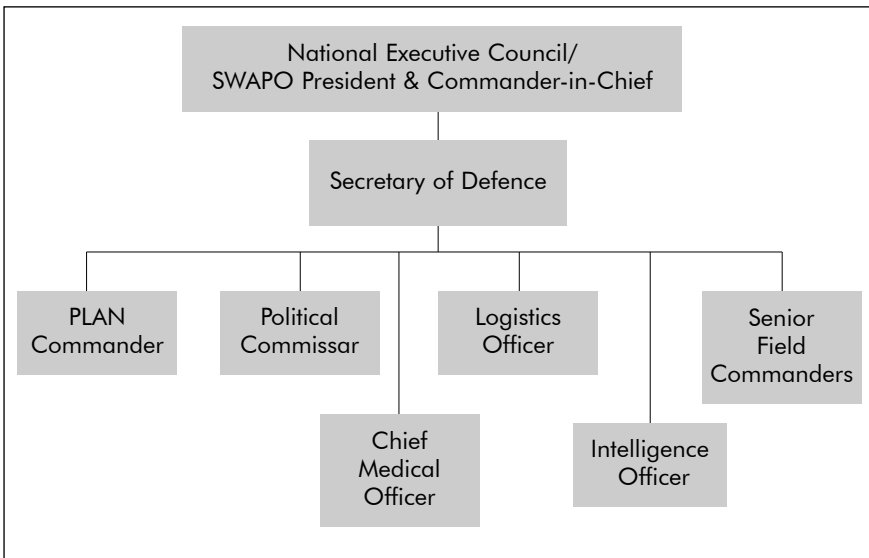
In SWAPO we don't divorce military from political matters—it is always politics which leads the gun. We have no purely military leaders; we are not militarists. Everybody in PLAN is politically motivated; our cadres are trained both politically and militarily, and the military is completely integrated into the overall structure of SWAPO.<sup>8</sup>

This was also reflected in the organisational structure of PLAN. The position of political commissar was included in PLAN's Military Council. The Council also included the commander of PLAN, chief medical, logistics and intelligence officers and senior field commanders. SWAPO's National Executive Committee, to which the Military Council reported via the secretary of defence and transport, controlled PLAN via the political commissar.

Levy Nganjone, then Political Commissar, explained that his position meant he was "responsible for communicating and clarifying party policy, party decisions and military strategy ... [as well as] for the overall political development and morale of all SWAPO militants".<sup>9</sup> These mechanisms enabled the political leadership to maintain political and administrative control over the military wing.

PLAN combatants received joint training and deployed together with the *Forces de Angola* (FAA), which was based on the Popular Movement

**Figure 1: SWAPO-PLAN military structure**



for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA)—the liberation faction of the People’s Liberation Forces of Angola. Military assistance had also been made available from countries including Russia, China, Tanzania, Algeria and Egypt. By 1988, PLAN could muster units averaging 500 to 800 battalions. Many of these saw service against the South African Defence Force (SADF), which during the mid-1980s supported the opposition Ovambo-based Jonas Savimbi and his Movement for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA).

Meanwhile, South Africa in its occupation of SWA was determined not to accord legitimacy to SWAPO and therefore strove throughout to marginalise the movement from direct or official engagement.

Only when the situation appeared untenable during the late 1980s, did the South African regime seek to influence the future political direction of Namibia. This was to be achieved through a dual political and military strategy. The first was to create an acquiescent political alternative within the country. This began soon after the seminal Armed Forces coup in Lisbon of April 1974 that changed the geo-strategic arrangement of Southern Africa. From 1975, through the Turnhalle Conference leading to elections in 1976, an internal political entity in SWA was given succour by South Africa.

The second string to this policy was the military option: from August 1980 South Africa created ethnic-based units within SWA. Within four years the South West African Territorial Force (SWATF) fielded a force just under 11,000 and was trained to undertake local defence tasks as well as counter-insurgency operations.

Starting from a few thousands, by the 1989 SWATF—supported by the South West Africa Police—had swelled to over 30,000 troops, or eight full-time battalions and specialised support units.<sup>10</sup> Many of the units, including the notorious *Koevoet*, numbering some 3,000 troops, were capable of undertaking cross-border operations deep inside Angola. The locally raised units also had the advantage of reducing the burden on the SADF commitment outside its borders.

By the end of the war, the military capacity in SWA contributed some two-thirds or over 60% of the SADF deployment, even on external operations. In total, South Africa had over 100,000 troops in the country and on the northern border.

Insofar as SWA itself was concerned, the comprehensive strategy was to create an alternative political and military capacity that would displace the dominance of SWAPO and PLAN after independence in Namibia.

The turning point and departure of South Africa from SWA was the near defeat that the SADF experienced at Cuito Canavale following the increased commitment of Cuban forces and airpower in the Angolan war in 1987. After seven months of negotiations, a Tripartite Agreement was signed in New York on 13 December 1988. On the same day, South Africa signed an agreement with the UN agreeing to leave SWA. The actual withdrawal from SWA was part of a 'linkage concept' in which the withdrawal of Cuban forces from Angola became a precondition for the implementation of UN Resolution 453 of 1978.

#### **CEASEFIRE AND FORMATION OF THE NDF**

South Africa appointed Advocate Louis Pienaar, while the UN dispatched Special Representative Martti Ahtisaari as the joint outgoing/incoming administrators. Implementation<sup>11</sup> of the agreement provided for the following:

- Date of implementation from 1 April 1989.
- Evacuation of Cuban forces by July 1991.
- SADF to leave SWA one week before the scheduled elections.

- PLAN fighters to report to designated Assembly Areas—generally 150 km north of the border with Angola in Ovambo.
- Refugees to be allowed to return.
- The UN Transitional Assistance Group (UNTAG) troop contingent of 7,500 was to be deployed with effect from February 1989 (later, only 4,650 troops were deployed).

UNTAG's role was to:

- monitor the ceasefire;
- ensure both SWAPO-PLAN and SADF/SWATF were confined to bases;
- supervise the rapid reduction and eventual departure of the SADF envisaged as:
  - six weeks after D-Day, to reduce to 12,000 and after 12 weeks to 1,500; and
  - confined to two bases in northern SWA;
- accept the need to embrace the SWA police for maintaining law and order; and
- facilitate the demobilisation of *Koevoet* and other undesirables under the 'ethnic and para-military' units umbrella.

As is evident, UNTAG was largely a political exercise designed to create conditions for holding elections, while cajoling the traditionally intransigent and obdurate South Africa to continue withdrawing without stalling the unfolding operation.

In practice, UNTAG was a UN mission that executed roles and functions well beyond any traditional peacekeeping operation before 1989. By the end of the mission, UNTAG had been involved in police action, monitoring, military activity, supervising elections, refugees, constitution drafting, demobilisation and disarmament, training the integrated force, arbitration and mediation between adversaries, and a host of other functions previously unforeseen when it was deployed.

Two events stand out in the run-up to the elections and independence that had a particular impact on the perceived nucleus of the future Namibian defence force, namely PLAN. The first, which has now come to be accepted as a fabrication, was the persistent claim that SWAPO-PLAN was violating the conditions of the ceasefire. The UN itself has now admitted to having been under constant pressure from South African Foreign Minister at the time, Pik Botha, resulting in the UN

agreeing that SADF units could be partly deployed to enforce the ceasefire after 1 April 1989. What followed was the deliberate massacre of assembled PLAN combatants, with over 375 killed before the urgent Joint Commission meeting at Mount Etjo, called under the auspices of the UN Security Council.

The second event was the insistence by South Africa not to disband SWATF units, including *Koevoet*, and integrating the latter into the local police structures. Before the elections of November 1989, *Koevoet's* task was to hunt down and eliminate PLAN combatants in the villages and to deny SWAPO the opportunity to establish liberated zones inside SWA that would result in instant popularity with the masses.<sup>12</sup>

Furthermore, after several months into the run-up to supervised elections (and even beyond) a few officers and resources were left behind to cater for and pay the *Koevoet* operatives, until the UN Special Representative raised serious concerns about the practice. Again—as we have pointed out, but it is worth repeating—this was part of a wider strategy designed on the one hand to benefit the internal settlement actors who were pliant and favoured South Africa, and on the other to obstruct the incoming Marxist guerrilla and nationalist movement. Both these developments severely damaged the capacity of SWAPO and PLAN to assert themselves during the run-up to the elections.

SWAPO leader Sam Nujoma returned to the country in September 1989 and, working together with UNTAG, proceeded to contest the November elections. Interest in the elections proved high with 98% of the electorate casting their votes—many for the first time.

SWAPO secured 57% of the vote, while the internal group, the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA), achieved a poll of 29%—enough to dilute the political dominance of the former. The remaining 14% of the vote was shared among the smaller parties. While this partly diluted SWAPO's political dominance, winning as it did less than a two-thirds majority, the liberation movement was given legitimate authority to form the government.

For our purposes, this led to the adoption of the Namibian Constitution, the appointment of President elect Sam Nujomo to office by the UN Secretary-General in March 1990 and the urgent establishment of the defence force.<sup>13</sup> However, given the above discussion, it is clear that PLAN embarked upon its new transformation as the national force, mortally wounded by the departing SADF and SWATF. It is against this background—charged with an atmosphere of suspicion and mistrust—that the local forces were now expected to integrate.



### FORMATION OF THE NAMIBIAN DEFENCE FORCE, MARCH 1990

The formation of the new 10,000-strong Namibian Defence Force (NDF) was envisaged to draw recruits on an equal 50-50 basis from both PLAN and SWATF. Its operational mandate was contained in Defence Act Chapter 20, articles 118–120 of the Namibian Constitution, providing for the establishment of the defence force, the police and the prison service.<sup>14</sup>

A state's published security and defence policies normally do not provide indications of a state's real threats, interests and even intentions. One has to look elsewhere for how these facets are addressed in order to influence policy and related structures practically.

Against this background it is safe to argue that the real security and defence threats facing the new SWAPO government included, among others, the fact that a severely weak state had come to power in a country where 'fifth column' activities of SWATF and SADF counter-revolutionary elements could easily derail the new independence national project.

In point of fact, this fear was to be confirmed during the first five years of independence following numerous explosions and sabotage acts in Windhoek and around the country generally by these fifth column elements.

The assassination of the country's visionary liberation leadership was a real possibility at this stage. Namibia's independence occurred at the height of South Africa's Conference on Democracy in South Africa; Nelson Mandela had just come out of prison in February 1990, and the difference in opinion between President De Klerk and other right-wing formations was still at a peak.

Part of the manifestation of this struggle was military units acting almost outside the ambit of Pretoria's political control, with devastating consequences for the liberation project—as noted by the massacre of PLAN combatants during April 1989.

A further motivation for counter-reaction to the new regime in Namibia by apartheid South Africa was the resolute actions of SWAPO, which continued to support moves for majority rule in South Africa. Soon after coming to power, the Namibian government gave a R1 million donation to the African National Congress (ANC) to assist the party with resources as it engaged in crucial independence talks.

Yet another factor posing a serious threat to the fledgling Namibian independence was the continuing military activities of South African elements—official and unofficial—against UNITA across the border in

the southern Angolan Ovambo province. This raised serious concern about the territorial integrity of Namibia. The new state did not have the capacity to monitor or stop flights from South Africa to and from UNITA-held territories. In reality, until late 1999 UNITA was better equipped, militarily, compared to Namibia. Furthermore, UNITA and PLAN combatants had traditionally been at each other's throats, even when the latter was based in Angola.

The nexus of supporting the ANC on the one hand and being prepared to fight UNITA on the other, reflected the unfinished business of the liberation of Southern Africa, creating yet a further dimension that had to be dealt with now that SWAPO was in power. Stated differently, now that the intentions of Resolution 435 had been secured, the struggle for full emancipation continued in a different form.

Among the host of undeclared defence and security challenges, the two final ones were also related to the internal situation. In this regard, on the one hand, there was urgent need to establish a credible conventional regular army that was loyal and steeped in the revolutionary ethos of SWAPO, while on the other hand the new government had to manage the level of expectations of the African majority in terms of delivery now that independence through armed struggle and the ballot had been achieved. To this end, the creation of a new army meant demobilising more than 50,000 combatants of its forces under PLAN.<sup>15</sup>

A policy to recruit Namibians aged between 18 and 25 years was adopted in order to bring new blood into the NDF. This allowed for natural attrition whereby the older former SWATF and PLAN members could be gracefully replaced.<sup>16</sup> The publicly stated roles and functions of the NDF were to:

- maintain the sovereignty of Namibia and the territorial integrity of the country;
- provide support to the civil authorities and the community;
- undertake ceremonial functions; and
- assist with the process of reconciliation.

The fifth role of the NDF—to serve as the vehicle and mechanism for national reconciliation—is unique in Southern African post-colonial and liberation history. Given the military strategy by South Africa that was designed to forcefully influence the political direction of independent Namibia, as well as the notorious activities of *Koevoet*, for SWAPO to

then turn around and reach out in this manner is unprecedented. This is an important lesson for other nations coming out of a protracted conflict to emulate.

With the success of the integration project assured, President Sam Nujoma revealed during the NDF's 12th anniversary celebrations why this factor had been provided for at the early stages of the new nation:

The NDF's primary task was to promote the implementation of the Policy of National Reconciliation. By integrating former warring foes, those from ex-SWATF, *Koevoet* and PLAN Combatants into one united national army, [the Policy] paid off well, leading to the [early] consolidation of a unified and strong nation.<sup>17</sup>

The actual formation of the new NDF started soon after March 1990 when part of UNTAG—comprising the Kenyan contingent led by UNTAG's Deputy, Lt Gen Daniel Opande—was requested to extend its stay for another three months (until May 1990) in order to assist with the military integration process.<sup>18</sup> Lt Gen Opande explained that the Kenyan battalion—which included former instructors from the Kenyan Training Institution for the Armed Forces—was chosen for the practical reason that its troops were based closest to the training grounds.<sup>19</sup> The battalion assisted the establishment of a military nucleus comprising members of the two formerly warring armies that provided a ceremonial guard of honour during the independence celebrations.

The Kenyan contingent was later assisted with a 57-strong British Military Advisory and Training Team (BMATT) led by Brig Tony Ling who, working with the government, formulated an integration plan that would bring together equal volunteers from SWATF and PLAN to constitute a 10,000-strong force.<sup>20</sup> This force would have a small headquarters and five infantry battalions with a number of supporting units. Command-and-control of the new armed force would, however, be shared due to the overwhelming win by SWAPO at the polls. Almost by default important posts, especially in the military, went to former PLAN cadres while SWATF dominated the police service. The President appointed guerrilla chief of PLAN, Jerobeam Dimo Hamaambo, to lieutenant general and made him the first chief of staff of the NDF.

The numbers coming forward also reflected the political impact of the new dispensation. Most senior officers from SWATF simply resigned, with many having been conscripted anyway, and eventually the ratio was 1:2 in favour of former PLAN members. Furthermore, most of the

former *Koevoet* members elected to relocate to South Africa, to where they were airlifted. They soon saw further service in southern Angola assisting UNITA, until 1994 when power in South Africa was handed over to the ANC in April of that year.

The integration process required military re-orientation and not necessarily basic military training as combatants from both sides had been prosecuting the war under different political leaderships. As a result, an eight-week leadership cadre course was developed to train officers on conventional army administration and weapons training/conversion (from the popular liberation AK47 to FNs or G3s), preparing graduates for command positions in the new army. The new army consists of:

- five motorised infantry battalions;
- a Presidential Guard battalion;
- a combat support battalion;
- a reconnaissance company;
- an engineering company;
- an artillery group; and
- a logistics support brigade.<sup>21</sup>

An air wing and a maritime element were established later. Part of the motivation for these components was the continued violation of Namibian air space and territorial waters by foreign craft, creating the need to build internal capacity to respond. The maritime wing, for example, had its first ship donated by the Ministry of Tourism and Fisheries, and this was converted to carry suitable armament.

#### **NDF DEFENCE POLICY AND COMMAND-AND-CONTROL FRAMEWORK**

Once thoughts on the integration of the military and security forces had been clarified into policy and practice, attention turned to creating oversight and command-and-control structures that have survived to this day. At the apex of the new government, in the area of defence, is the Defence Staff Council, chaired by the president and commander-in-chief. Members of the Defence Staff Council include the ministers of defence, foreign affairs, finance and home affairs. The chief of defence forces (CDF) and the permanent secretary of the Ministry of Defence (MoD) also sit in the same body, the Defence Staff Council. The MoD was established at independence in 1990 and is responsible for setting

up the organisational and administrative structures to manage the NDF. The MoD's main tasks are to:

- formulate and execute defence policies for the government; and
- provide central operational and administrative headquarters for the NDF and to procure its equipment.

A minister, who also sits in the presidential Defence Staff Council, chairs the second tier Senior Management Committee (SMC). As part of the SMC, the minister is supported by the CDF and MoD permanent secretary. The CDF is the NDF's professional head and is responsible for its military effectiveness. This includes supervising administration and operations of the NDF while advising the minister on all aspects of the NDF. Meanwhile, the permanent secretary is responsible for the financial, administrative and political aspects of the defence policy and its execution. The permanent secretary chairs the last rung in the hierarchy, the Military Steering Committee (MSC), which is directly managed by the chief of staff operations, and which falls directly under the permanent secretary.

The MoD combines the following functional components: policy and operations; personnel; logistics; medical services; military intelligence; and finance. These constitute six directorates:

- The Directorate Policy and Operations formulates operational concepts, organisation, deployment, planning of force structure, policy for support arms, management of day-to-day military co-operation, and combat support services of the NDF. The chief of staff: operations (who also sits in the MoD's SMC and MSC) is the head of this directorate.
- The management of human resources, including selection, recruitment and career development of all NDF personnel and MoD civilian staff is the function of the Directorate Personnel. This directorate co-ordinates training of officers, soldiers and civilians. It also presides over discipline and welfare, terms and conditions of service, pay policy, pensions and allowances, promotion and commissioning policy, leave and dress code. The chief of staff: personnel (who is also a member of the SMC and MSC) heads the directorate.

- The provision of combat supplies and materials that the ministry needs to discharge its functions effectively and efficiently is the responsibility of the Directorate Logistics. This directorate also prepares logistics policies, plans and their implementation, records acquisition of new materials and equipment in line with the defence procurement policy, and manages all vehicles and transport-related issues through an efficient, cost-effective management practice. The chief of staff: logistics (who is also a member of the SMC and MSC) heads the directorate.
- Health matters are catered for by the Directorate Medical Services. This directorate formulates health policy, oversees medical supply services and ensures the general well-being of NDF personnel. The chief of staff: medical services (who is also a member of the SMC and MSC) heads the directorate.
- The MoD also has the Directorate Military Intelligence, which deals with all issues regarding military and security. These include ensuring security of all military installations, personnel and equipment, the collection and dissemination of security information, production and management of the ministry's communication policy, and managing media relations. The minister and permanent secretary's directives bind the directorate. The chief of staff: military intelligence (who is also a member of the SMC and MSC) heads the directorate.
- The Directorate Finance manages financial matters of the MoD. It manages and prepares the defence budget, accounting of defence expenditure, internal financial administration, and management of the financial system of the ministry through efficient financial accounting practices. It is bound by directives issued by the Ministry of Finance and the Auditor-General's Office. The directorate is headed by the director of finance who is the financial advisor to the permanent secretary in his capacity as accounting officer of the ministry. The director of finance is also the chairperson of the Financial Advisory Group and is a member of the SMC.

In addition to the directorates there is provision for two divisions: central staff; and procurement, research and development:

- The Central Staff Division is an independent division established to

provide a mechanism for co-ordinating the work of the ministry on the instructions of the minister and the permanent secretary. It is the principal agency for processing submissions from the directorates to the permanent secretary and the minister. The division is responsible for the co-ordination of all policy matters and the preparation of all policy papers in conjunction with heads of directorates for endorsement by the Defence Staff Council and SMC. It is also responsible for the preparation of meetings and regional conferences regarding defence and security, the production of agendas for these meetings and preparing minutes thereof, as well as protocol and policy on VIP visits. The division ensures effective production and presentation of the MoD's development plans, creates a good public image of the ministry through the media, executes strategies and plans for the development of information systems, and oversees the ministry's internal auditing function. A deputy director (who is also the secretary to SMC) heads the division.

- The Procurement, Research and Development Division is also an independent division and is responsible for co-ordinating capital procurement for the NDF, which includes acquisition of all major military equipment, ammunitions and materials, contract negotiations with suppliers, inspections and reviewing conditions of sale as per purchase terms, attending military exhibitions to ensure effective sourcing, and liaising with military equipment manufacturers to establish contacts and supply channels. The division is also responsible for researching, designing and developing military materials to keep abreast of the fast-changing technology in the military industry.

In a bid to provide clarity and division of labour, the MoD has broken down the tasks and functions and has allocated these to a specific arm or service. The arrangement is as follows:

#### THE ARMY

The main roles of the army are to:

- ensure the maintenance of sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country;
- provide assistance to civil authorities and civil communities when required;

- undertake ceremonial functions; and
- assist the process of reconciliation.

#### THE AIR WING

Namibia developed an air wing which is responsible for air-based military operations in support of the army and maritime wing. The NDF air wing's peacetime and war roles are:

- surveillance;
- transportation of personnel; and
- transportation of supplies/equipment.

In addition, the air wing has two purely peacetime roles, namely:

- rendering support to civil authorities or communities; and
- training.

The small air wing consists of a fixed squadron and a helicopter squadron.

#### THE MARITIME WING

The maritime wing was introduced to defend Namibia's maritime domain and coastline against external attack. The maritime wing's headquarters was naturally earmarked for Walvis Bay. The wing was not a priority and was only established in 1998 following the graduation of naval personnel in Brazil.

Equipping the navy was an expensive and complex undertaking and the NDF adopted a policy of first developing the necessary human resources:

The navy has not been commissioned because we don't have a naval ship yet, but as soon as we get the proper facilities, the navy will start its operations ... At least our human resources will be well prepared by the time we purchase one [a naval ship] to be able to maintain and operate effectively and efficiently.<sup>22</sup>

In 1994, the Namibian government entered into a co-operation agreement with Brazil whereby the two ministries responsible for



defence agreed that Namibian naval cadets would be trained in Brazil. The agreement also included that Brazil would assist Namibia to construct and develop a naval base, that it would assist Namibia in acquiring naval facilities such as patrol boats and other facilities, and that it would provide general consultation services on naval matters to the young Namibian cadets.

Then MoD Permanent Secretary, Erastus Negonga, explained that Namibia chose Brazil because the two countries share the same waters, are geographically situated on the same latitude, and because “Brazil is also one of the traditional leaders in naval science throughout the world, and it has one of the oldest navies in the world with highly technological equipment and facilities”.<sup>23</sup> Brazil offered 80% of the required naval training, South Africa 10% and other countries—including India, the US and Germany—the remaining 10%.<sup>24</sup> By August 2004 (ten years later), 168 naval officers and cadets had graduated from Brazil, among them the command and staff units.

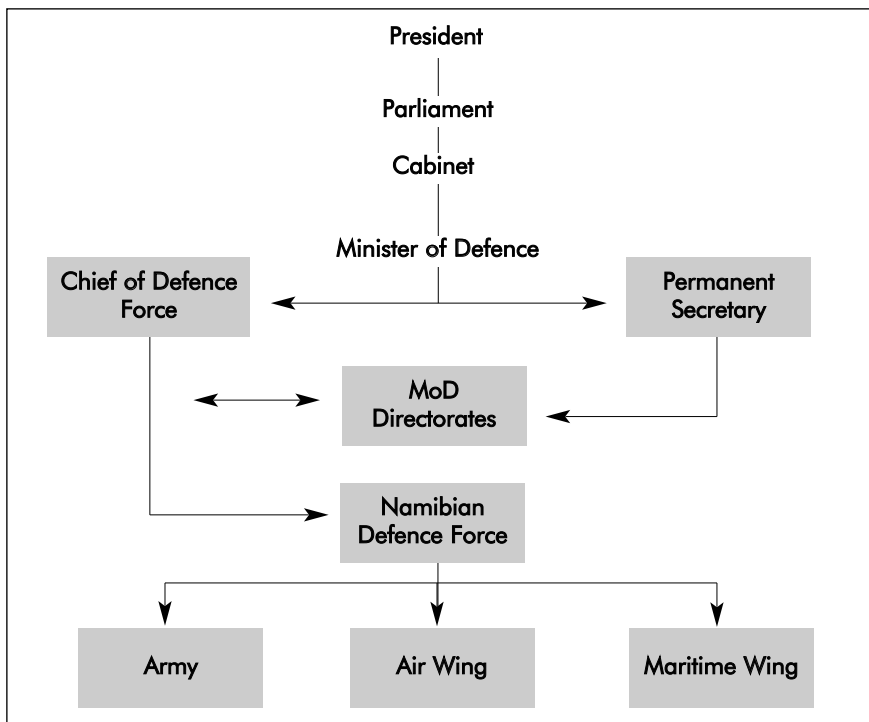
Negonga noted that since its inception in 1998 and due to lack of equipment, the NDF’s maritime wing could not properly perform its duties of safeguarding the country’s territorial waters and defending it from external attack.<sup>25</sup> To surmount these inadequacies the MoD and the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources established a strategic partnership. One outcome of this was the transfer of a patrol vessel from the Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources to the MoD. This galvanised the maritime wing’s implementation of its security roles, including training and conducting patrols along the country’s exclusive economic zone to combat illegal fishing, immigration, piracy and drug trafficking.

In 2004 the NDF maritime wing finally acquired its first warship—named after the late first Chief of the NDF, Lt Gen Jerobeam Dimo Hamaambo—which was donated by the Brazilian government. This, together with the existence of trained naval personnel, enabled the commissioning of the maritime wing in 2004.

## **CIVIL–MILITARY RELATIONS**

The Constitution of Namibia provides for a sovereign, secular, democratic and unitary state founded on the principles of democracy and rule of law. Furthermore, it lays down the principle of separation of powers and recognises the inherent dignity, equal and inalienable human rights of all members of Namibian society.

Figure 2: Structure: Political control of defence



Source: Political control of the Namibian Defence Force, <<http://www.mod.gov.na/>>

The Namibian Constitution that has been largely upheld since independence is regarded as one of the most liberal and progressive constitutions worldwide. Institutionalised checks and balances have enabled Namibia to preserve stable civil–military relations since independence. Democratic values and respect for civilian institutions by the NDF are evident.

The president is the commander-in-chief of the NDF. The Constitution entitles the president to single-handedly deploy the NDF to protect national security interests. The president appoints the chief of the defence force who is the professional head of the NDF. The chief of the defence force is authorised to:

- make provision for a balanced structuring of the defence force;
- make suitable appointments to the defence force;

- cause charges of indiscipline among members of the defence force to be investigated and prosecuted; and
- ensure the efficient administration of the defence force.

The chief of defence is answerable to the president. The president may remove the chief of the defence force from office for good cause and in the public interest, and in accordance with the provisions of any act of Parliament which may prescribe procedures considered to be expedient for this purpose. This is an important mechanism for ensuring civilian supremacy over the military.

The civilian-led and -dominated MoD supervises the NDF. The minister directs the chief of the defence force in executing his peace-time roles. The civilian authorities maintain effective control over the security forces. Parliamentary oversight is reflected in the National Assembly's scrutiny and approval of the military budget. These are important mechanisms for ensuring checks and balances. The NDF is supposed to embody political neutrality, and serving members are prohibited from holding political office. Its personnel are encouraged not to be influenced by political party affiliations in discharging their constitutional roles. This would be made possible by the creation of a professional, disciplined and highly trained NDF. Addressing new NDF recruits in 2001, Defence Deputy Minister Victor Simunja said:

For you to be able to effectively carry out these noble duties, you should be disciplined and well trained. Without discipline, you cannot be entrusted with the safety and security of the nation, as you would be seen like a band of armed criminals.<sup>26</sup>

The defence institutional framework and insistence on a professional and disciplined force has served Namibia well, as the military has yet to intervene in political matters. Remarkably, Namibia's stable civil-military relations are also a product of the nature of the preceding liberation struggle. SWAPO's political leadership had to implement control measures to manage an increasingly assertive PLAN section during the liberation war. Guy Lamb noted that:

The South West African People's Organisation's liberation experience, and in particular the mechanisms of civilian control that were instituted as a result of the tensions between the armed wing and the political leadership, strengthened this tradition of civil supremacy.<sup>27</sup>

### NAMIBIA'S DEFENCE POLICY (WHITE PAPER)

In March 1992 the National Assembly approved the defence policy that incorporated policy guidelines for the development of the MoD. In 1993 the MoD unveiled the Defence Policy White Paper. It was a comprehensive security policy framework that clarifies the envisaged and most effective posture of the NDF, the conditions under which it should operate and the roles it should discharge.

According to the defence policy the major aim was to maintain a “minimal, unified” and affordable defence force that would be highly mobile and mainly defensive.<sup>28</sup> In line with the defence policy the strength of the NDF has never scaled the 10,000 mark.<sup>29</sup> The size of the army in 2000 was 9,000.<sup>30</sup>

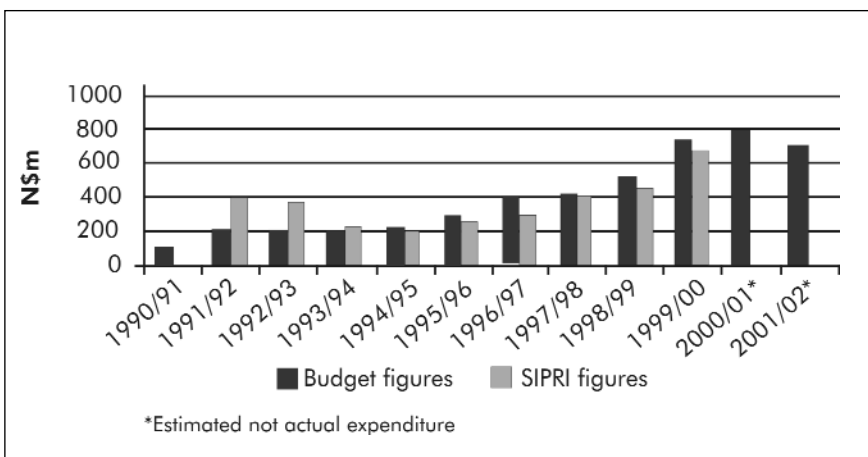
### DEFENCE BUDGET

Allocations to defence since independence have increased in terms of the size of the economy (*see Figure 3*).

Defence expenditure in terms of the percentage of gross domestic product (GDP) has also risen significantly since 1993/94 (*see Figure 4*).

Economist Robin Sherbourne attributed the rise in defence expenditure to:

**Figure 3: Expenditure of Ministry of Defence in current prices**



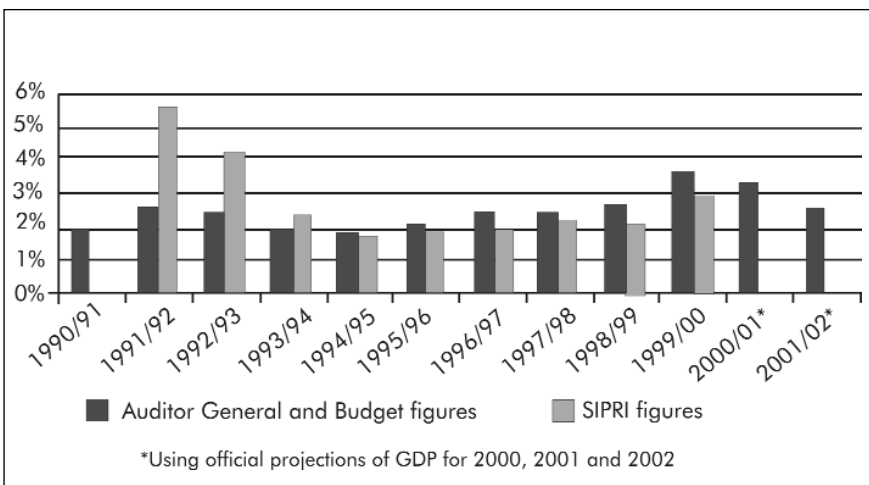
Source: R Sherbourne, *Defending the indefensible? Namibian defence expenditure since 1990*, IPPR Briefing Paper No. 1, April 2001

- the implementation of the 1993 Defence White Paper and its provision for the creation of the new air and maritime wings, in addition to upgrading existing military bases;
- the Cabinet directive of 1998 leading to the employment of 2,000 ex-PLAN fighters into the NDF; and
- the need to finance the deployment of NDF troops in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).<sup>31</sup>

Taking the average percentage of military expenditure over 12 years, Namibian investment in its security policy stands at about 2.358% of GDP a year. From all accounts, the country has been able to ‘afford’ its military expenditure, and if one takes the view that benefits from investment in security are located in other spheres that require predictable peace and stability, then the argument that this has been money well spent is persuasive.

It was argued in the section dealing with Namibia’s initial security and defence policy that one of the challenges facing the new government in 1990 was the UNITA threat in the northern Ovambo region. At the time, UNITA’s capacity far exceeded that of the Namibian government.

**Figure 4: Expenditure on Ministry of Defence as percentage of GDP**



Source: R Sherbourne, op cit

However, from 1999, through commitment to regional security considerations and assistance to the government of Angola, the actions of both the FAA and NDF soon triumphed, allowing greater peace and stability to return on Namibia's northern borders.

Also, the cited military expenditure includes responding to Southern African Development Community (SADC) military obligations. Namibia deployed forces in response to the DRC's formal request for military assistance from the SADC Organ, of which Namibia is a member. Membership of SADC places certain obligations on member states in the security area and this was one instance when Namibia was required to react through the provision of military assets.

Operating under the regional mandate, Namibia deployed forces in the DRC from August 1998 to September 2002 when the UN took over through its Peacekeeping Mission in the Congo (MONUC). Namibia's military participation has translated into increased stature, and it is well respected among SADC member states as a dependable nation.

Internally, defence expenditure has been targeted not only at establishing a credible conventional force but, as we have seen, demobilisation had to be revisited in late 1999 when the thousands of unemployed former combatants threatened to disrupt civil peace. To this end, the action taken was timely.

It has become an accepted phenomenon that most demobilisation exercises unravel within ten years for a number of reasons. Partly, this is due to the limited focus of initial strategies in terms of time and lack of civil re-employment of the thousands of ex-combatants who then become social and economic outcasts.

It is also true, however, that part of the current internal stability in Namibia is a result of the deliberate use of military integration as a tool to unite society and create stability. This facet of the policy has been successful.

Finally, military expenditure has been used to finance the four standing permanent commissions with neighbouring countries, which underpin the preventative diplomacy and security policy of Namibia. The country has established defence protocols with Angola, Zambia, Botswana and South Africa that are serviced through standing and permanent commissions which meet almost every quarter, if not every month, to address any security concerns along the common border areas. This has effectively translated into improved border security with minimal deployment of NDF forces along the international borders, drawing maximum benefits from the permanent defence commission's

strategy for the country. This is a feature that many SADC states and beyond may well find useful to emulate. In sum then, it can be concluded that Namibia's military expenditure in support of the NDF's foreign and domestic policy tools has been money well spent.

#### **NDF MILITARY DEPLOYMENTS: 1990–2004 PURPOSE AND IMPACT**

Namibia gained independence in the context of a UN peacekeeping operation—UNTAG. Its participation in UN peacekeeping operations, mainly the dispatch of NDF units, began relatively early in its independence. So far Namibia has dispatched NDF personnel to participate in four UN peacekeeping operations, thus contributing to international peace and security.

The multilateral security institutions to which Namibia belongs—such as the UN, African Union (AU) and SADC—have influenced Namibia's participation and contribution to international peace and stability. Its military contribution to international peace and security is thus premised upon its membership of the UN, other continental and regional institutions and coalitions, as well as the need to preserve secure and stable frameworks for national peace and development.

One of the principles guiding NDF participation in international peace and security operations, such as peacekeeping, is that intervention should comply with regional security resolutions and, more pertinently, with the UN Charter. Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tuliameni Kalomoh, said that Namibia supports humanitarian intervention to stop gross and systematic violations of human rights, but that this should be done through and under the authority of the UN, or through regional organisations acting in accordance with the provisions of the UN Charter.<sup>32</sup> Commenting on Namibia's participation in the DRC war, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hidipo Hamutenya, noted that “the SADC allies' checking of the aggressors' advance [on Kinshasa] is the triumph of justice and the upholding of the UN Charter”.<sup>33</sup>

National security considerations also influence Namibia's contribution to regional peace and security. As President Sam Nujoma said:

Our country continues to enjoy socio-political peace and stability. However, my Government is concerned about the civil war in Angola and its spill-over effects into the north-eastern parts of our country, especially in the Kavango Region.<sup>34</sup>

As shall be discussed later, the NDF launched incursions into Angola against UNITA in order to secure the country's northern border areas.

#### NAMIBIA'S CONTRIBUTION TO UN PEACEKEEPING

Namibia's first engagement in UN peacekeeping operations was the dispatch of a contingent of 43 soldiers and equipment to work as part of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC). UNTAC was established by UN Security Council Resolution 745 of 28 February 1992, to ensure the implementation of the Agreements on a Comprehensive Political Settlement of the Cambodia Conflict, signed in Paris on 23 October 1991. UNTAC's mandate included aspects relating to human rights, the organisation and conduct of free and fair general elections, military arrangements, civil administration, the maintenance of law and order, the repatriation and resettlement of Cambodian refugees and displaced persons, and the rehabilitation of essential Cambodian infrastructure during the transition period. Its mandate, and by extension NDF participation, ended in September 1993 with the promulgation of the Constitution for the Kingdom of Cambodia and the formation of the new government.

The NDF also contributed personnel to serve on the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM) III in 1996. UN Security Council Resolution 976 of 8 February 1995 established the multi-dimensional UNAVEM III to assist the government and UNITA in restoring peace and achieving national reconciliation against a fragile politico-military background. Initially assigned road verification and VIP escort duties, the UNAVEM Namibian contingent was later asked to act as a Rapid Reaction Force. The NDF contingent continued to serve with the smaller United Nations Observer Mission for Angola (MONUA), which replaced UNAVEM III on 30 June 1997.<sup>35</sup>

Namibia responded to a UN appeal and pledged forces for Liberia in 2003 whose "purpose [was] not to fight, but to keep the peace".<sup>36</sup> An NDF contingent of 855 personnel served with the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL). These included 844 troops, six civilian police, four staff officers and three military observers.<sup>37</sup> These were drawn from the 26th Brigade, 12th Brigade, 4th Artillery Brigade and Engineering Regiment. The battalion's responsibility was to secure and safeguard Liberia's western corridor (between Liberia and Sierra Leone), where it deployed on 22 February 2004. Two-thirds of the battalion had previously served in different foreign missions in Cambodia, Angola,



Ethiopia and Eritrea, including the regional peacekeeping missions in the DRC.

In January 2004 a shipload of 800 tonnes of military equipment, sourced from NDF stock, was dispatched to Liberia for use by the NDF contingent. The equipment included about 100 vehicles, mainly armoured trucks, as well as ambulances and sporting gear. The equipment took approximately three months to prepare and cost the NDF between N\$5–8 million.<sup>38</sup> Care was reportedly taken to ensure that this contribution to UN peacekeeping would not compromise local NDF activities. However, contributing to the debate on the Additional Appropriation Bill (Vote Eight of the Namibian Defence Force), Bartholomeus Shangheta, a SWAPO councillor for the Otavi Constituency, questioned the allocation of N\$36 million to deploy an NDF contingent to Liberia as part of the UN peacekeeping mission in that country.<sup>39</sup>

#### THE NDF AND THE DRC WAR

In 1998, under the auspices of the SADC alliance with Angola and Zimbabwe, Namibia committed troops and equipment to the DRC. Namibia's involvement in the DRC war aroused debate on the constitutional issues regarding deployment of the NDF, in particular the President and Commander of the NDF's prior consultation with Parliament.

President Nujoma argued that Namibia's involvement was in accordance with peacekeeping efforts enshrined in both the OAU and SADC charters. In 2002 Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hidipo Hamutenya, explained the basis of Namibia's intervention:

Proceeding from the standpoint of Pan-African solidarity and commitment to regional peace and stability, the three (Namibia, Angola and Zimbabwe) countries responded to the Congolese request in the affirmative and acted resolutely to blunt the advance of the aggressors' forces on Kinshasa and the other major Congolese economic and population centres, such as, Mbuji-Mayi, Lubumbashi, Matadi, etc.<sup>40</sup>

Namibia deployed nearly a third of its armed forces, comprising all services, and at any one time averaging 2,000 troops who were rotated.<sup>41</sup> The exact statistics of Namibia's total casualties are hard to come by. By

December 1999 at least 18 Namibian soldiers were reported to have died in the DRC while the International Committee of the Red Cross reported a further 11 soldiers held as prisoners-of-war in the Rwandan capital, Kigali.<sup>42</sup> These figures included five Namibians—two pilots and three technicians—deployed in the DRC who died instantly when two NDF helicopters collided in the war-torn central African country in mid-January 2003.

Also in January 2003, the High Court issued an order that seven Namibian soldiers who had been missing in the DRC for more than three years were legally presumed dead.<sup>43</sup> This was in response to an application by the NDF.

Namibia commemorated NDF personnel who lost their lives during the DRC war. For instance, in June 2001 President Sam Nujoma said:

We solemnly pay homage to our fallen heroes and heroines who sacrificed their precious lives and shed their blood to achieve and restore peace and stability in the DRC.<sup>44</sup>

Namibia incurred financial and material costs in addition to human casualties. Motivating the N\$172 million allocated to the MoD under the Additional Budget in 2000, Defence Minister, Erkki Nghimtina, explained that N\$74.5 million would cover “conditions of service” for soldiers deployed in the DRC, while more than N\$36.8 million would be spent on the acquisition of various types of ammunition and pyrotechnics.<sup>45</sup>

The international donor community—including Germany, Finland and Britain—opposed Namibia’s involvement in the DRC war and announced cutbacks in development aid to the country.<sup>46</sup> Finance Minister, Nangolo Mbumba, once claimed that Namibia’s military involvement in the DRC would not have any bearing on the country’s finances: “No expenditure item, programme or project of the Namibian Government will suffer as a result of our military involvement in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.”<sup>47</sup> However, the timing of the withdrawal of Namibian troops became a contentious issue.

The Summit of the Heads of State of Angola, Namibia and Zimbabwe held in Kinshasa on 24 October 2002 issued a communiqué that formally announced the definitive withdrawal of allied troops from the DRC in accordance with the Lusaka Agreement of 10 July 1999. Rwanda and Uganda were similarly completing their military pullouts from the DRC. The Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement had required that all

foreign countries involved in the DRC conflict withdraw their troops from that country by the end of August 2001, although in practice this deadline had been ignored by the belligerent parties.

The SADC allies' intervention had created an enabling framework for peace talks. According to Namibian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hidipo Hamutenya:

And with the Rwanda and Uganda aggression blunted and their hegemonic ambitions checked, it was now possible for other parties, such as the UN and South Africa, to step forth with proposals for peacekeeping and national reconciliation. The deployment of the UN Peacekeeping Forces is now being stepped up. Also, talks are going on between the government of the DRC and the various groups in that country in an effort to find a formula for the setting up of a transitional government of national reconciliation. These talks are taking place on the basis of the Pretoria Agreement, which is the latest attempt aimed at achieving national reconciliation in that country.<sup>48</sup>

The Namibian government categorised its DRC operation as a success. Welcoming the return of some 150 NDF troops in June 2001, President Sam Nujoma said:

The Namibian Defence Force soldiers have played a major role in preventing Kinshasa from being captured by Ugandan and Rwandese forces and their rebel elements. The landing of NDF soldiers in Kinshasa changed the balance of forces and ensured that the legitimate government of the DRC was not overthrown by force of arms.<sup>49</sup>

Defence Ministry Spokesman, Frans Nghitila, confirmed that all Namibian troops and equipment were withdrawn from the DRC under the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement,<sup>50</sup> following the deployment of UN peacekeeping troops in that country.

The UN Security Council Final Report of the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of the DRC established that some countries which had troops in the DRC benefited from the DRC's minerals and other resources. This report, which was released to the UN Security Council on 16 October 2002, concluded that Namibia was not involved in any form of illegal exploitation of the DRC's resources. Namibian Foreign Affairs Minister Hamutenya stated that this was:

... a clear testimony that our sole interest there was and still is the protection of the sovereignty of and territorial integrity of the DRC, including the protection of its natural resources. And, while we have achieved our military objectives in that country, it is in our interest to remain politically engaged in the Congo. A peaceful and stable Congo will further strengthen the process of economic development in the SADC region and Africa as a whole. Thus, we continue to closely monitor the peace process until peace and stability is fully established in that great country.<sup>51</sup>

Namibia, however, aimed to build on its military involvement to strengthen bilateral relations with the DRC for mutual economic and social benefit. Remarkably, the assassinated DRC President Laurent Kabila reportedly offered diamond concessions to Namibia as payment for military assistance.

A mine—consisting of two blocks of about 25 km<sup>2</sup> along the Kasai River, 40 km from Tshikapa—was granted as a five-year concession. Namibia's diamond mining interest was meant to offset the escalating military expenses of Namibia's participation in the DRC war, estimated by the UN Panel to have drained Namibia's coffers of more than N\$700 million.<sup>52</sup>

A feasibility study on the mine recommended negotiations with the DRC government, but the continued tenuous security situation and peace negotiations meant that by 2002 no prospecting had begun. The gift was then converted to a five-year business transaction, at no cost, and exploration activities were embarked upon by the Namibian company on 26 August. SWAPO has established a company with this name in recognition of the first attack mounted in the war in South West Africa during the 1970s.

Participation in peacekeeping operations and the DRC war was crucial for the combat experience and fighting capacity of the NDF. In 2000 Maj Gen Solomom Hwala, then Army Commander, could assert:

Today I am proud to announce that the army has grown into a disciplined, professional and battle-tested force, capable of fulfilling its national obligations of defending and safeguarding our sovereignty and territorial integrity.<sup>53</sup>

MoD Permanent Secretary, Peter Shivute, also stressed that the NDF now has the:

necessary experience and references to take from Cambodia, Angola, DRC and now from Liberia. I think those things make us stronger and more accepted by the international community; that if the Namibian contingent is there you should be comfortable. That international acceptance alone also puts [the] country at a good ranking.<sup>54</sup>

#### THE NDF AND INTERNAL ENGAGEMENTS

The NDF also has experience of operational deployment inside Namibia. In 1998/99 NDF troops and the police crushed a Caprivi Liberation Army secessionist attempt. There were, however, reports in 1998 that government forces—particularly the paramilitary police Special Field Force troops—had beaten civilians, looted property, and shot and wounded civilians fleeing arrest.<sup>55</sup> Over 2,000 Caprivians sought refuge in Botswana by the year's end. The government in 1999 confirmed revelations of human rights abuses against presumed secessionists by security forces.

From December 1999 the Namibian army launched pursuit operations against UNITA forces that threatened the security of the Kavango and Caprivi regions. President Nujoma elaborated:

The Army launched hot pursuit operations that minimised UNITA atrocities in Namibia. In the process, these hot pursuit operations into Angola destroyed UNITA bases and many tons of war materiel were captured. The Army contributed greatly to the reduction of UNITA terrorists' morale and subsequently their effectiveness, which resulted in their annihilation, and the elimination of Jonas Savimbi on 22 February 2002.

The NDF routinely provides support to the police to discharge its law enforcement functions. The army jointly mounts roadblocks and patrols with the Namibian police to minimise criminal activity during holiday seasons.

The NDF also conducted de-mining operations in the country's northern regions of Kunene, Omusati and Oshana, where hundreds of unexploded ordnances were destroyed. One of the army's main roles is to provide assistance to civil communities when required. The NDF has also carried out emergency relief operations and has provided assistance to civil communities affected by natural disasters, including floods and *veld* fires.

#### CO-OPERATION WITH REGIONAL DEFENCE FORCES

The Namibian government considers multilateral and bilateral contacts as a productive means to enhance stability and build confidence. President Nujoma summarised the point: “Participating in joint exercises and sports activities bilaterally, regionally and internationally remains one method of building confidence and trust.”<sup>56</sup>

In 2001 Namibia and South Africa agreed to establish a Joint Permanent Commission on Defence and Security and to access each other’s arsenals during wartime in order to strengthen their military allegiance.<sup>57</sup> The proposed Commission would empower the two countries to set up technical teams, which would study and agree on exchange of military equipment, as well as on joint training for the two defence forces’ personnel. Namibia, as mentioned, already has similar commissions with Botswana, Zambia and Angola.

As part of its co-operative approach to SADC security, Namibia has actively participated in regional military exercises aimed at enhancing the inter-operability of regional militaries. The NDF has participated in SADC initiatives to build sub-regional capacity for peacekeeping. These include: Exercise Morning Star, a map exercise hosted by South Africa in 1996; Exercise Blue Hungwe at battalion level, hosted by Zimbabwe in 1997; and a follow-up exercise, Blue Crane, at brigade level in South Africa in 1999. Participation in regional military exercises has presented an important arena to enhance the capabilities of the NDF.

The NDF was also part of the 16 African countries that participated in a French-led military exercise, Tanzanite Recamp 3, in Dar es Salaam and Tanga in Tanzania in February 2002. The 13 SADC countries were joined by Kenya and Madagascar in the Reinforcement of African Peacekeeping Capabilities (RECAMP) exercise. France’s RECAMP, conducted under the aegis of the UN and in agreement with the OAU, aimed to improve co-ordination between the continent’s armies in the fields of peacekeeping, and humanitarian or natural disasters. The exercise was thus part of an initiative to find a common approach among the armies of SADC countries in cases of natural or humanitarian disasters.

#### **NDF AND HIV/AIDS**

MoD officials acknowledged the prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the NDF. Noting how the nature of the military profession—in particular deployment away from the normal domicile—makes soldiers susceptible, Deputy Defence Minister, Victor Simunja, in July 2002 said:

The implications of HIV/AIDS are enormous. Not only is the readiness of soldiers for deployment and active duty likely to be severely impaired, but the cost of health and social care of the military personnel affected and infected with HIV/AIDS related diseases is likely to increase significantly in the coming years.<sup>58</sup>

A group of NDF personnel received training as part of the HIV/AIDS Third Cycle Counsellors Training Programme, and were encouraged

to promote an understanding among all military members of how sexually transmitted diseases are spread ... to advise fellow soldiers on a variety of symptoms of infectious diseases and sicknesses to enable them to look for proper medical attention ... .<sup>59</sup>

On 7 September 2002, President Nujoma also urged military health practitioners

to design intensive HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns and counselling programmes as ways of informing and educating the military community about the dangers and effects of this disease and to teach them how to deal with it once they become infected.<sup>60</sup>

Given the unconstitutionality of excluding people with HIV from joining the NDF, the MoD is struggling to design an appropriate HIV/AIDS strategy. MoD Permanent Secretary Peter Shivute explained that the current NDF

policy at recruitment is that somebody has to be medically fit and that includes voluntary testing for HIV/AIDS, we are not forcing anybody. We are saying we are going to recruit and we are inviting youngsters from this age up to this age, and these are the criteria—education, willingness to serve and voluntary HIV/AIDS testing. They will only apply if they are medically fit.<sup>61</sup>

## **CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE**

A number of challenges still face the NDF, including the following:

- A review of the Defence Policy White Paper of 1993 is needed in the context of the evolving and dynamic multilateral security environment.

Namibia will need to develop a vision and strategy for the NDF that can succeed in the light of new global, continental and regional defence and security developments, such as the African Heads of State and Government declaration to enable a Common African Defence and Security Policy, and the SADC Defence Pact.

- A comprehensive and progressive military HIV/AIDS prevention and care policy has been put in place, and recently received positive comments from the US military.
- An effective exit strategy for NDF personnel to facilitate productive and sustainable post-military livelihoods needs to be designed.

## **CONCLUSION**

The military history of Namibia and the NDF is a remarkable story. In just over a decade, SWAPO and the NDF have succeeded in overturning centuries of brutality and injustice, first perpetrated on the Herero, Nama and Damara by German traders from the 15th to the 19th centuries, and which continued throughout most of the 20th century even after South Africa had replaced Germany as 'rulers' of the territory in 1915.

Before South Africa's withdrawal from Namibia, beginning in April/May 1989, Pretoria had pursued options that would 'determine the political direction' of independent Namibia, including a last ditch attempt to destroy PLAN. Despite these machinations, Namibia's first free and democratic elections held in November 1989 provided the initial steps for restoring the African majority to political power.

When majority rule was confirmed at the March 1990 inauguration, the new government set about using the integrated military as a tool for national reconciliation, and also as a foreign policy tool for regional integration. Consistently living up to its liberation credentials, the Namibian government:

- collaborated with the ANC in South Africa during the crucial period of the 1990s;
- spurned the military option and agreed to the International Court of Justice arbitration in a potentially explosive incident with Botswana;
- continued to offer its political and military support to Angola;



- was capable of dealing with a potentially divisive internal security situation in the Caprivi Strip through military and active diplomatic engagement with its neighbours;
- discharged its regional security obligations under SADC by deploying forces in the DRC; and
- created a network of security and defence protocols with all its neighbours while continuing to train, equip and consolidate professionalism in the NDF.

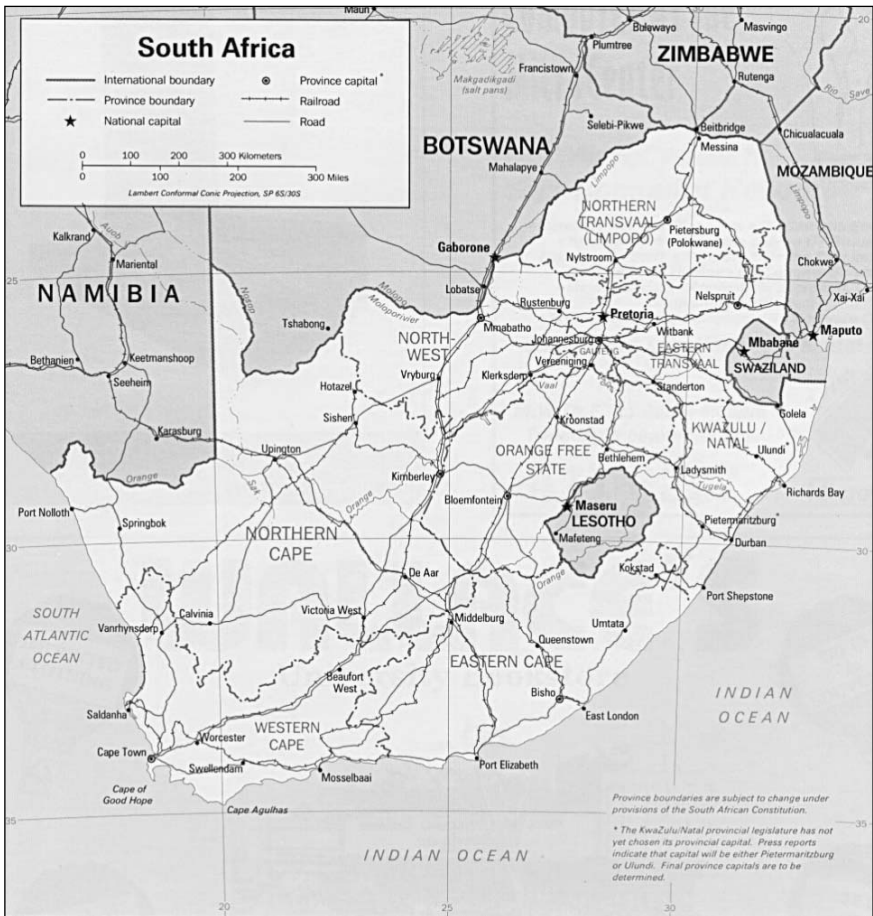
Through Namibia's judicious use of the military, Southern Africa is host to a unique experience, the relevance of which is worth sharing with other regions of the world that are struggling to emerge from protracted conflict.

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Source: [www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/index.html](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/index.html)

# **The post-apartheid South African military: Transforming with the nation**

Len le Roux

## **INTRODUCTION**

After a long struggle for freedom, South Africa in 1994 finally joined the community of nations as a democratic state. Since then the country has undergone fundamental transformation from the closed and isolated apartheid state to a state that is playing an increasingly important role in international, regional and sub-regional affairs. Internally, much has been done to advance reconciliation and nation building, and government has been transformed to ensure transparency and accountability in governance, as well as to focus all spheres of government on improved service delivery.

The South African Department of Defence (DoD) and the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) have also been substantially transformed from the defence organisation of the apartheid military era. This transformation focused on the integration of former combatant forces into one national force, making the DoD representative of the people of South Africa, ensuring transparency in defence management and accountability to civil authority, establishing greater efficiency and aligning defence policy with the Constitution, international law and national culture.

This chapter focuses on the creation and evolution of the South African DoD and SANDF in the period leading up to and after the first democratic elections in South Africa, and the birth of the 'new' South Africa in 1994. It presents insight into the challenges that faced the South African DoD post-apartheid, and the way in which these were met.

## **BACKGROUND**

### GEOGRAPHY<sup>1</sup>

South Africa is situated at the southernmost part of the African continent and has common boundaries with the republics of Botswana, Mozambique, Namibia, Zimbabwe, the kingdom of Swaziland and the mountain kingdom of Lesotho. The country covers an area of about 1,220,000 km<sup>2</sup> and is home to some 43 million people. Much of South Africa is situated on a high plateau (1,500 m above sea level), surrounded by a coastal mountain range and coastal plains. South Africa is generally dry, with 65% of the country having an annual rainfall of less than 500 mm. The climate, however, varies from arid in the west to Mediterranean in the south-western Cape, sub-tropical in the eastern coastal plains and continental on the plateau.

### POLITICAL EVOLUTION<sup>2</sup>

South Africa's modern political history is dominated by the period of European settlement, which started when the Dutch East India Company set up a station in Table Bay (Cape Town) in 1652, to provision passing ships. Later in 1795, the British occupied the Cape as a strategic base, controlling the sea route to the east. These occupations soon led to the expansion of European settlement into the interior and to conflict for land, natural resources, livestock and labour.

By 1854 South Africa was divided into the two Boer republics: the South African Republic (Transvaal) and the Orange Free State; and the two British colonies, Natal and the Cape. In the Boer republics the principles of racially exclusive citizenship were absolute, despite their reliance on black labour, while in the colonies more liberal policies prevailed.

The discovery of diamonds and gold coincided with a new era of imperialism, and the scramble for Africa brought imperial power and influence to bear in Southern Africa as never before. This led to the South African War, which lasted from October 1899 to May 1902. In the Treaty of Vereeniging that ended the war, the British agreed to leave the issue of rights for Africans to be decided by a future self-governing (white) authority.

This led to the creation of a white-ruled dominion by uniting the former Boer republics with Natal and the Cape into the Union of South Africa that came into being on 31 May 1910. The most important priority was to re-establish white control over the land and to force the

Africans into wage labour. These events, together with increasing segregationist policies, caused great dissatisfaction among black South Africans and led to the formation of the African National Congress (ANC) as early as 1912. The ANC became the most important organisation for black liberation and empowerment, drawing together traditional authorities and the educated elite in a common cause.

#### APARTHEID AND THE FREEDOM STRUGGLE

After the National Party (NP) came to power in South Africa (following the whites-only elections of 1948) it soon instituted the ideology of apartheid that brought an even more rigorous and authoritarian approach than the segregationist policies of previous governments. This policy led to increasing discrimination and disenfranchisement of people of colour.

Apartheid met with growing black resistance and hostility, and this in turn led to such events as the anti-pass law demonstration in Sharpeville in 1960, which was ruthlessly put down by apartheid security forces, leading to the deaths of 69 demonstrators.

Soon afterwards, the ANC formed its armed wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), and embarked on a campaign of limited sabotage that resulted in the arrest and imprisonment of Nelson Mandela and other leaders. According to Rocky Williams:

The final decision to embark on an armed struggle by the ANC was not a decision reached easily by the Congress Alliance nor was it a strategy that necessarily enjoyed the support of all sectors of the Alliance itself. It was both the perceived limitations of previous peaceful protest, the Sharpeville massacre of 1960, the intransigence displayed by the regime in declaring the White Republic in 1961 and the banning of the African National Congress and the Pan African Congress in the same year that led to the formation of MK.<sup>3</sup>

The imprisonment of these leaders and other repressive actions caused increasing unrest and eventually led to fully-fledged armed struggle during the 1970s and 1980s.

Externally, South Africa was also becoming increasingly isolated from the world community, and the corresponding political, social and economic pressures combined with internal mass action and the armed struggle, forced the apartheid regime to re-think its political policies.

## ADVENT OF INDEPENDENCE

The NP government embarked on a series of reforms, which culminated when President F W de Klerk un-banned the liberation movements and released political prisoners, notably Nelson Mandela, in February 1990. This led to a long, difficult negotiation process and in April 1994 South Africa held its first democratic election under an Interim Constitution (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1993, Act 200 of 1993).<sup>4</sup>

The ANC emerged with a 62% majority. Its main opposition came from the NP, which gained 20% of the vote nationally. The ANC-led government embarked on a programme to promote the reconstruction and development of the country and its institutions. This called for the simultaneous pursuit of democratisation and socio-economic change, as well as reconciliation and the building of a consensus founded on the commitment to improving the lives of all South Africans, in particular the poor.

Converting democratic ideals into practice required, among others, initiating a radical overhaul of the machinery of government at every level, towards service delivery, openness and a culture of human rights.

A significant milestone of democratisation during the five-year period of the Mandela presidency was the constitution-making process, which delivered a document that is highly regarded in the democratic world.<sup>5</sup>

The second democratic election, held on 2 June 1999, saw the ANC increase its majority to a point just short of two-thirds of the total vote. South Africa entered into the post-Mandela era under the presidency of Thabo Mbeki. President Mbeki promised a tough, hands-on managerial style, geared to efficiency and delivery. In particular, the Mbeki administration committed itself to the development of Africa based on democracy, good governance, and a co-operative approach to resolving the political and economic challenges across the continent.<sup>6</sup> This is clearly demonstrated in the leadership role that South Africa has taken in the establishment and functioning of the African Union (AU) and in the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). NEPAD forms the basis of South African foreign policy.

In 2004, South Africa celebrated its tenth year of democracy with, among others, its third democratic poll, from which the ANC emerged with a clear two-thirds majority.

Once again the ANC government has committed itself to improved service delivery by all spheres of government and to working towards the economic and social development of Africa, as well as to peace and stability on the continent.



FORM OF GOVERNMENT<sup>7</sup>

South Africa is a federal state, governed by a democratically elected government based on universal adult suffrage. The South African government is constituted as national, provincial and local spheres, which are distinctive, interdependent and interrelated. The powers of the legislative authorities, executive authorities and judicial authorities are separate from one another.

Parliament is the legislative authority of South Africa and has the power to make laws for the country in accordance with the Constitution. Parliament comprises the National Assembly and the National Council of Provinces. Parliamentary sittings are open to the public. Since the establishment of the new Parliament in 1994, a number of steps have been taken to make it more accessible. This has been done to make the institution more accountable, as well as to motivate and facilitate public participation in the legislative processes. Two of these steps are the parliamentary website (<http://www.parliament.gov.za/>), which encourages comments and feedback from the public, and the parliamentary channel on television that broadcasts live coverage of Parliament and parliamentary committee sittings. This is further enhanced by an active non-governmental organisation (NGO), the Parliamentary Monitoring Group (PMG), which regularly attends committee meetings and publishes the discussions on the group's website (<http://www.pmg.org.za>).

The National Assembly consists of members elected through a system of proportional representation for a term of five years, and is presided over by a speaker, assisted by a deputy speaker. The National Assembly is elected to represent the people and to ensure democratic governance as required by the Constitution. It does this by electing the president, by providing a national forum for public consideration of issues, by passing legislation, and by scrutinising and overseeing executive action.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996) entrenches the separation of powers, offers appropriate checks and balances and includes a far-reaching Bill of Rights. Socio-economic rights—such as housing, health care, access to food and water, social security and basic education—are recognised.

**THE FORMATION OF THE SANDF**

Chapter 11 of the Constitution provides for the defence force and determines that the “primary object of the defence force is to defend and

protect the republic, its territorial integrity and its people in accordance with the Constitution and the principles of international law regulating the use of force”.<sup>8</sup> It makes a member of Cabinet responsible for defence and determines the rules for the deployment of the SANDF. The Constitution also provides for the establishment of a civilian defence secretariat.

#### THE TRANSITION—CODESA AND THE JMCC

During the transition phase to prepare for the first democratic elections in South Africa, political events in South Africa were dominated by the negotiations at the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA). During this period the Sub-Council on Defence, a sub-structure of the Transitional Executive Council (TEC), constituted and mandated the Joint Military Co-ordinating Committee (JMCC) to draft provisional policies for the establishment of a new Ministry of Defence and to address the issues of integration and future defence policy.

This Ministry of Defence was to be governed by the principles of transparency, accountability, separation of powers and legality. Rocky Williams, a member of the JMCC wrote:

The planning and staff responsibility for the management of the pre-integration planning process was delegated to a body known as the Joint Military Co-ordinating Council [sic] which fell under the authority of the Sub-Council on Defence. Although the JMCC did not possess the attributes of a formal command structure, it was to become responsible for the management of a strategic planning process whereby detailed plans for the creation of the new defence force were laid [down].<sup>9</sup>

The JMCC provided the first forum for officers of the old South African Defence Force (SADF), MK, the Azanian People’s Liberation Army (APLA) and the TBVC (Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei) states’ defence forces to work together to create the post-election DoD and SANDF.

The proceedings were dominated by the officers of the SADF (due to their institutional capacity and experience in running complex planning processes) and MK (mostly due to the “political leverage possessed by the ANC”),<sup>10</sup> as well as by the preparatory work that had been done by the Military Research Group—an ANC think-tank on defence policy.

### According to Williams:

The TVBC armies had no significant impact on the integration process beyond the influence of a few individuals. It is not surprising, for the reasons outlined above, that the force design of the new SANDF was largely based on that of the former SADF and that the strategies, doctrines and procedures remained unaltered (prompting one senior SADF officer at the time to comment that “the SADF got more than 80% of what it wanted out of the JMCC process”). The imminent integration process was to be based, therefore, on SADF structures and SADF rules and regulations—a phenomenon that was to greatly undermine the capacity of non-SADF forces to influence the integration process in the initial integration period.<sup>11</sup>

Despite tension and difficulties, caused mostly by the very restricted and limited mandates from their political masters, the JMCC members managed to establish good working and social relations. This was mostly due to the strong leadership of such individuals as Rocky Williams<sup>12</sup> of MK and Roland de Vries of the SADF, among others, who were willing to seek and find commonality in interest, to think and act ‘outside the box’, and to challenge authority as and when appropriate.

#### THE NEW SANDF: MANDATE AND FUNCTIONS

Officially the new, post-apartheid South African DoD, comprising the Defence Secretariat and the SANDF, came into being on 27 April 1994 with the establishment of the new democratic South Africa. The Interim Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1993 (Act 200 of 1993) established the National Defence Force as the only defence force for the Republic and provided the fundamental policy framework on which further developments were to be based. The most important of these are:

- adherence to the principles of international law regulating the use of force;
- determination that the SANDF shall have a primarily defensive orientation and posture;
- determination of the functions for which the SANDF may be employed; and

- ensuring democratic (parliamentary) control over the military by the establishment of a Joint Standing Committee on Defence, and the provision that a minister, responsible for defence, shall be accountable to Parliament for the National Defence Force.<sup>13</sup>

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996) further determined that the “primary object of the defence force is to defend and protect the Republic, its territorial integrity and its people in accordance with the Constitution and the principles of international law regulating the use of force”.<sup>14</sup>

The Constitution provides that the SANDF may be employed for service:

- in the defence of the Republic, for the protection of its sovereignty and territorial integrity;
- in compliance with the international obligations of the Republic with regard to international bodies and other states;
- in the preservation of life, health or property;
- in the provision or maintenance of essential services;
- in the upholding of law and order in the Republic in co-operation with the South African Police Service under circumstances set out in law where the police service is unable to maintain law and order on its own: and
- in support of any department of state for the purpose of socio-economic upliftment.<sup>15</sup>

#### CONSTITUENT FORCES

The 1993 Constitution provided for the integration of forces into the new SANDF. This entailed integrating the former SADF, the defence forces of the former TBVC states, the guerrilla armies of the ANC (MK) and the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) (APLA) and the KwaZulu Self-Protection Forces (KZSPF) of the Inkatha Freedom Party into the SANDF. By 1998, the SANDF (military and civilian) totalled 93,324 members (see Table 1).

Table 1: SANDF constituent forces, 1998

Force	1998
SADF	57,053
MK	11,738
APLA	3,713
TBVC	7,243
KZSPF	1,788
SANDF (members who joined after 27 April 1994)	10,600
<b>Total</b>	<b>93,324</b>

Source: *South African Defence Review 1998, chapter 10, figure 10.1, p 70*

#### BRIEF BACKGROUND TO THE CONSTITUENT FORCES

##### The South African Defence Force before 1994

The SADF developed from the Union Defence Force, which was established in 1912. The SADF participated in both the First and Second world wars as well as in the Korean conflict. Through these engagements, the SADF developed into an effective and well-equipped conventional military force.

The SADF consisted of the army, the air force, the navy and the military health service. The SADF was organised along the lines of a conventional force and a territorial or counter-insurgency force. During the 1970s and 1980s the conventional force, both regular and part-time, was responsible for external operations and operated extensively in Namibia and Angola in operations against the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) and in support of the Movement for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) against the armed forces of Angola (FAPLA), which were supported by Cuba and the Soviet Union. The counter-insurgency forces operated in South Africa opposing the freedom struggle as led by the ANC and its armed wing, MK.

The SADF was a significant military power in Southern Africa and could field three army divisions supported by strong and sophisticated air and naval power. These forces relied heavily on part-time soldiers and conscripts (white male national service conscripts that served for an initial period of two years and then joined the part-time force for another ten years). The two-year obligation totalled, at its peak, 100,000 conscripts. This system allowed for the rapid expansion of the SADF if and when required.

The strategic posture of the SADF was based on a pre-emptive, operationally offensive approach, and the force was also designed around this approach. The fundamental principle was that all threats had to be met outside South African territory by highly mobile forces with high firepower and strategic reach.

The SADF budget reached a peak of around 4.4% of gross domestic product (GDP) by the early 1980s. This was obviously putting much strain on the embattled South African economy and contributed to the initiatives for reaching a negotiated settlement of the country's political problems and the ending of armed conflict.

In the latter part of the 1980s and early 1990s, as the peace process gained momentum and as the SADF started withdrawing from Angola and Namibia, the defence budget was progressively reduced to reach 2.2% of GDP by 1993.

The combination of the high cost of defence in the 1970s and early 1980s and the rapid reduction after 1986 meant that the SADF could not replace ageing equipment. This resulted in creeping obsolescence of critical equipment, especially in the South African navy and certain conventional army formations by 1994.

In the early years of the SADF, civil–military relations were modelled on the Westminster system. Legislative control over the armed forces was vested in Parliament, executive control resided in the prime minister and his Cabinet, and civil control was further enhanced by a civilian Ministry of Defence and a civilian secretary for defence.<sup>16</sup>

Post 1948, these formal structures remained essentially intact except for the disbandment of the Secretariat in 1966. But the armed forces were also 'purged' to ensure their loyalty to the new ruling party. According to Williams:

[I]t was both the values and common vision that it [SADF] shared with the political and civil elite, and the strong ascriptive ties that existed between its command cadre and the leadership of the then ruling National Party that prevented its intrusion on to the extra-parliamentary terrain.<sup>17</sup>

In later years (1980s and beyond) this resulted in civil–military relations that were characterised by a lack of transparency of the military to the public and a lack of parliamentary oversight and control of the armed forces, as opposed to significant influence of the military in political matters and a strong tie between the military and the executive.

### The TBVC defence forces

The apartheid regime developed the concept of the independent 'black homelands' of Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei. Each of these nominally independent states created, with the assistance of South Africa and the SADF, their own defence forces, essentially comprising infantry armies and air wings. These forces were modelled on the SADF and used mostly the same type of equipment and doctrine. According to Dr Jakkie Cilliers: "All four of the TBVC forces were established by the SADF and have, to varying degrees, adopted SADF training systems and standards."<sup>18</sup> They were little more than an extension of the SADF, responsible for regime security in their respective homelands.

The Transkei Defence Force (TDF) was established in 1975 and was involved in an unsuccessful raid on the home of Ciskei President, Chief Lennox Sebe, in February 1987. On 30 December 1987 the TDF took over the administration of the Transkei in a bloodless coup; Maj Gen Holomisa declared martial law and suspended the Transkei constitution. He ruled the Transkei until the advent of democracy in South Africa in 1994.

The Bophuthatswana Defence Force (BDF) was established on 30 November 1979 out of the original Bophuthatswana National Guard. The BDF was involved in an aborted coup attempt in February 1988. This coup attempt was thwarted through the intervention of the SADF.

The Ciskei Defence Force (CDF) was established on 4 December 1981 with the independence of the Ciskei. The CDF was involved in a successful coup in March 1990 and another unsuccessful coup in January 1991. The CDF is, however, best remembered for the Bisho incident—a confrontation between marchers and the CDF when a group of ANC demonstrators attempted to outflank the CDF forces deployed to counter a march on Bisho, where the CDF opened fire on the marchers, killing and injuring several.

The Venda Defence Force (VDF) was formally established on 27 September 1982. It was involved in a bloodless coup in April 1990.

All four defence forces were established to protect regime security rather than the security of the people, and were politicised and unprofessional. As can be seen, this led to their direct involvement in politics, and eventually military coups or coup attempts in all four homelands. They did, however, provide a significant repository for black officers and non-commissioned officers outside of the racially based SADF. Many of these officers played important roles in the later establishment of the SANDF.<sup>19</sup>

## **Umkhonto we Sizwe**

The formation of MK was announced on 16 December 1961. On that same evening a series of explosions rocked all major cities in South Africa and marked the beginning of a sabotage campaign against strategic installations throughout the country. In a leaflet issued on 16 December 1961, MK High Command made its political allegiance quite clear by stating:

Umkhonto we Sizwe will carry on the struggle for freedom and democracy by methods, which are necessary to complement the actions of the established national liberation organisations. Umkhonto we Sizwe fully supports the national liberation movement and calls on members, jointly and individually, to place themselves under the overall political guidance of the movement.<sup>20</sup>

In subsequent years, MK was at the forefront of the armed struggle against the apartheid regime and the South African security forces, both within and outside South Africa.

The history of MK is complex due to the many phases and nuances that it underwent, and is perhaps best described by Rocky Williams in an article entitled ‘The other armies: A brief historical overview of Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), 1961–1994’.<sup>21</sup> In summary, the armed struggle as conducted by MK had an initial emphasis on sabotage. These sabotage operations were principally aimed at, among others, pass offices, power pylons and police stations. The state’s reaction through legislation and security force operations compelled the ANC to establish a mission in exile, with the two-fold purpose of mobilising international support for the struggle and securing military training facilities for MK abroad.

MK also realised the necessity of moving to more sophisticated levels of guerrilla struggle, and the ANC instructed a number of its senior members to study revolutionary warfare and theories of guerrilla struggle in more detail.<sup>22</sup> This led to the development of Operation Mayibuye—a comprehensive plan designed to create and internalise the structures required for the successful execution of the armed struggle within South Africa.

Operation Mayibuye had three objectives: first was to prepare an underground structure capable of ensuring the revolutionary overthrow of the state; second was to provide for the military training of MK personnel whether at home or abroad so that MK would possess the capacity to confront the state militarily; and third was to ensure, via the



ANC's external structures, that the necessary levels of international support accrued to the liberation struggle. Operation Mayibuye was, however, disrupted by the arrest of members of MK's High Command in South Africa, and the subsequent Rivonia Trial where most of those arrested were sentenced to lengthy periods of imprisonment.

The post-Rivonia period saw the ANC concentrate on developing its external infrastructure and securing military facilities for the training of existing and prospective combatants. The late 1960s and early 1970s were dedicated to reconsolidating MK's underground structures and training, with few military operations undertaken. The late 1970s and 1980s saw a progressive increase in military operations inside South Africa evidenced by, for example: attacks on police stations (Booyens, Soweto and Soekmekaar); physical clashes with the police in the rural areas (Derdepoort and Rustenberg); an attack by the MK Special Operations Unit on the Sasol oil refinery complex in June 1980, causing damage estimated at R66 million; attacks on Eskom power plants (1981) and military bases in rural areas; a dramatic attack on the Voortekkerhoogte military complex outside Pretoria (1981) by MK Special Operations personnel; a Special Operations attack on the Koeberg nuclear power plant outside Cape Town (1982); and the car bomb explosion outside both the South African Air Force and Military Intelligence headquarters in Pretoria in 1983. MK managed to maintain a steady increase in both its rural and urban operations. In the late 1980s, Special Operations activities included the detonation of a car bomb outside the Johannesburg Magistrates' Court (1987) and a sustained mortar attack on the South African Air Force's 3 Satellite Radar Station at Klippan in the Western Transvaal.<sup>23</sup>

MK was also involved in external operations to assist its MPLA allies in Angola against UNITA and the SADF; in support of Frelimo forces in the liberation of Tete province; and in support of the Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) forces in Zimbabwe throughout the 1970s. These operations were of a more conventional nature and allowed MK to accumulate considerable combat experience in conventional and semi-conventional operations.

Regarding civil-military relations, the ANC leadership had control over the MK High Command, and volunteers for MK came from the ANC or its allies. James Nqculu writes that:

Operation Mayibuye (a strategy document of MK for the conduct of guerrilla warfare) stated that "before operations take place, political authority will have been set up in secrecy in a friendly territory with a

view to supervise the struggle both in its internal and external aspects.” So, from the very beginning, MK emphasised that armed actions took place within a broader political context.<sup>24</sup>

He further emphasises the importance placed by the ANC on political education and training, overseen by the political commissars who acted as deputies to military commanders.

### The Azanian People’s Liberation Army

APLA was the armed wing of the PAC and was formed in September 1961. The PAC was established in 1959 as an alternative liberation movement to the ANC, and contrary to the ANC, advocated “that ideological emphasis on racial identity was essential in the formation of a revolutionary popular consciousness”.<sup>25</sup> In its early years the PAC instigated a civil disobedience campaign against the apartheid pass laws, which led to the killing of 69 people at Sharpeville in 1960. The Sharpeville unrest led directly to the banning of both the ANC and PAC.

After the banning of the PAC, APLA members received training in Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of the Congo [DRC]), Ghana and Algeria. Later, in 1970, APLA was granted a base in Chunya, Tanzania, where its members received military instruction from Chinese military personnel. In 1968, APLA was involved in an attempted sabotage of the Beira oil pipeline (in co-operation with Corema—*Comite Revolucionario de Mocambique*). Other than this, it concentrated on establishing arms caches in South Africa and also on training members of the Mgoomezulu tribe, a community straddling the South African–Swaziland border, in military operations.

When PAC President Robert Sobukwe died in 1978, internal dissent and conflict in the PAC and APLA brought all military operations to a halt. The conflict had external ramifications, leading to the closing of the APLA base at Chunya, expulsion from Lesotho and APLA defections to the ANC and MK. However, by 1985 APLA operations had resumed in South Africa. These operations included:

- attacks on the South African Police (SAP) in Sharpeville in 1986;
- grenade attacks on the Soweto police training college in 1987;
- co-operation with Qibla, an Islamic fundamentalist grouping in the Cape; and
- operations in smaller towns in the Transvaal.

By the 1990s, with the un-banning of the ANC and PAC, APLA operations extended considerably. The PAC was in and out of the negotiation process for a new South African constitution while APLA continued its armed struggle. During this period APLA forces concentrated on attacks on 'whites' and, although not great in number, these attacks had a significant impact on South African society. In the period 1990 to 1992, these operations focused on widely dispersed attacks on policemen and police stations. By 1993 there was a shift to civilian targets, including farmers, restaurants and hotels. In 1993, APLA carried out about 142 attacks, the majority (128) of them directed at farms.<sup>26</sup> One of the most publicised APLA attacks during this period was the attack on St James Church in Cape Town on 25 July 1993, in which 12 worshippers were killed and 148 injured.

In general, APLA operations were sophisticated and methodical. APLA operatives used automatic weapons and grenades as their preferred method of engagement and could therefore be selective in their targeting. Tom Lodge writes:

For a very small operational force, APLA cadres were really rather effective, though their military impact continued to be constrained by the logistical difficulties confronting an externally located command remote from operations.<sup>27</sup>

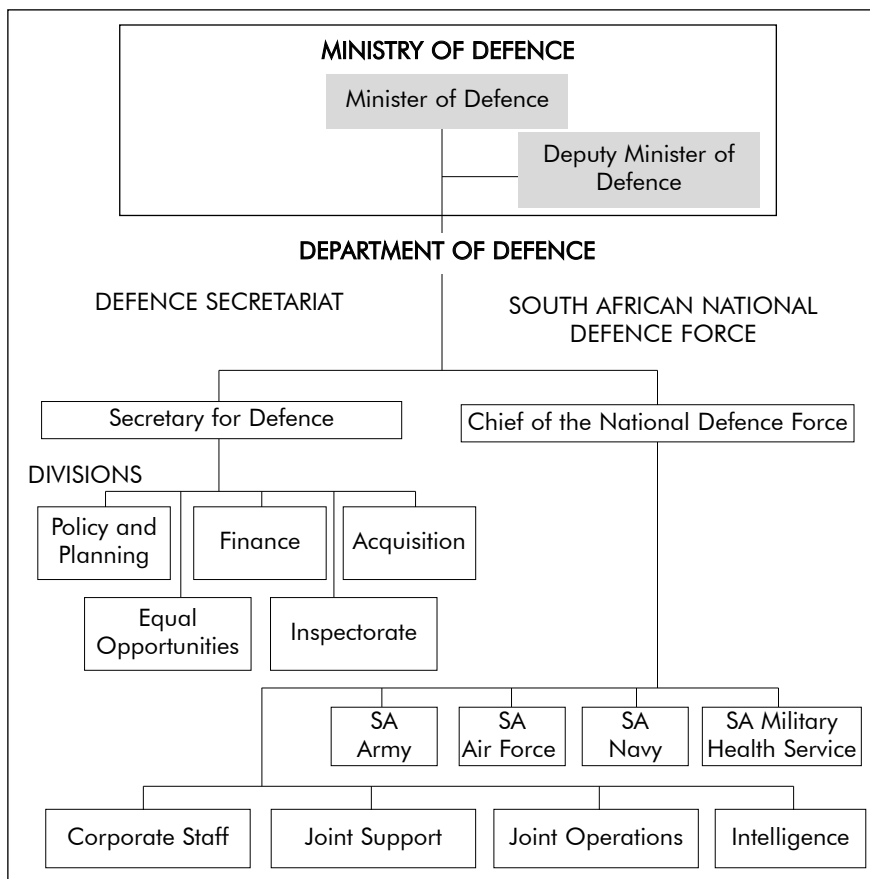
APLA's command-and-control arrangements depict adherence to the 'movement' concept of civil-military relations. According to Lodge:

APLA's command arrangements attempted to employ the guerrilla doctrine of a unified political and military leadership. Dual authority rested with field commanders and political commissars, the latter holding notional seniority. APLA's nine person military commission, a sub-committee of the PAC's, included several civilian leaders in its membership and up until 1992 APLA's commander in chief was PAC chairman Johnson Mlambo.<sup>28</sup>

#### THE STRUCTURE OF THE DoD AND SANDF

The post independent South African DoD today comprises the Defence Secretariat headed by the secretary for defence, and the SANDF headed by the chief of the National Defence Force (CSANDF). The secretary for defence is the head of department (HoD) and the accounting officer for

Figure 1: Structure of the Ministry of Defence and Department of Defence



the department and he/she is the principal advisor to the minister of defence regarding defence policy.

The CSANDF executes defence policy, directs the work of Defence Headquarters and manages the overall functioning and operations of the SANDF. He/she is also the principal advisor to the minister of defence on military, operational and administrative matters within his/her competence.

The SANDF consists of four services—the army, air force, navy and military health service—as well as the staff divisions that report primarily to the CSANDF. These divisions are: Corporate Staff, Joint

Operations, Joint Support and Defence Intelligence. Four divisions and one directorate report primarily to the secretary for defence, namely: Policy and Planning, Finance, Acquisition, and the Defence Inspectorate, and the Equal Opportunities Directorate. The structure of the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and DoD is shown in Figure 1.

The South African Army force design consists of armour and armoured reconnaissance, mechanised, parachute, motorised, light and special infantry, artillery and air defence artillery, intelligence, logistic and engineer support capabilities. The personnel strength of the army for 2001/02 was 38,646 members. The South African Air Force force design consists of air combat and reconnaissance squadrons, helicopters, transport and maritime air squadrons, command-and-control units, operational support and intelligence capabilities. The personnel strength of the air force for 2001/02 was 10,979 members. The South African Navy force design consists of surface warfare, submarine warfare, mine-countermeasures, and operational and tactical logistic support capabilities. The personnel strength of the navy for 2001/02 was 7,821 members. The South African Military Health Service force design consists of deployable medical units, military and specialist health services and facilities, logistic support, and operational and medical product support capabilities. The personnel strength of the military health service for 2001/02 was 7,739 members. The total personnel strength of the DoD (including all supporting services) for 2001/02 was 78,724 members.<sup>29</sup> There are no para-military forces in the South African DoD.

#### FUNCTIONS, POSTURE AND FORCE DESIGN

The approved force design of the SANDF in the Defence Review is reflected in Table 2.

**Table 2: SANDF approved force design**

Arm of service and element	Quantity
<b>SA Army</b>	
Mobile Division	1
Mechanised Brigade (Rapid Deployment Force)	1
Parachute Brigade (Rapid Deployment Force)	1
Special Forces Brigade	1
Territorial Forces:	

Table 2: SANDF approved force design (continued)

Arm of service and element	Quantity
<i>Group Headquarters</i>	27
<i>Light Infantry Battalions</i>	14
<i>Territorial/Motorised Infantry Battalions</i>	12
<i>Area Protection Units</i>	183
<b>SA Air Force</b>	
Fighters	
<i>Light Fighters</i>	16
<i>Medium Fighters</i>	32
Reconnaissance Aircraft	
<i>Light Reconnaissance Aircraft</i>	16
<i>Long Range Maritime Patrol Aircraft</i>	6
<i>Short Range Maritime Patrol Aircraft</i>	10
<i>Remotely Piloted Squadrons</i>	1
Helicopters	
<i>Combat Support Helicopters</i>	12
<i>Maritime Helicopters</i>	5
<i>Transport Helicopters</i>	96
Transport Aircraft	
<i>Transport Aircraft</i>	44
<i>VIP</i>	9
<i>Voluntary Squadrons</i>	9
In-Flight Refuelling/Electronic Warfare Aircraft	5
Airspace Control	
<i>Radar Squadrons</i>	3.5
<i>Mobile Ground Signals Intelligence Teams</i>	3
<b>SA Navy</b>	
Submarines	4
Corvettes	4
Strike Craft	6
Combat Support Ships	1
Minesweeper/Hunter	8
Inshore Patrol Vessels	2
Harbour Patrol Boats	39
<b>SA Military Health Services</b>	
CB Defensive Programmes	1
Medical Battalion Groups (Full Time Component)	1
Medical Battalion Groups (Part Time Component)	1.5

Source: *South African Defence Review*, 1998, ch.8, pp 47–8.

## **DEVELOPMENT OF THE SANDF POST-INDEPENDENCE**

### GENERAL

In the period leading up to the 1994 elections and the establishment of the SANDF on 27 April of that year, emphasis was on the establishment of the new MoD, a civilian Defence Secretariat and the SANDF based on clear constitutional provisions, and on the integration of the forces of all the previous combatant forces into the new SANDF. It was clear that the detailed development of new defence policy and strategy as well as the detailed elaboration of defence doctrine, a new force design and structure and defence management concepts, would have to be addressed after 27 April 1994.

Immediately after the celebrations of the 'new' South Africa—with the inauguration of President Mandela as the first president of a democratic South Africa (a celebration in which the SANDF played a significant part)—emphasis shifted to a project to establish the new MoD and the civilian Defence Secretariat, the development of detailed defence policy through the elaboration of a white paper on defence and a defence review, and a comprehensive defence transformation project aimed at optimising the structuring and management of the DoD. These activities and processes were concurrent and culminated in the publication of the 1998 Defence Review.

### INTEGRATION OF FORCES

The integration process mentioned above began almost immediately after the elections in 1994. It aimed at integrating into the SANDF all personnel whose names appeared on the certified personnel registers of the statutory and non-statutory forces identified in the Constitution (with the subsequent inclusion of APLA), as well as the education and training of all members of the SANDF to meet international standards of competence and professionalism. The process was neither easy nor trouble free. Numerous problems and grievances emerged and, at times, gave rise to serious tensions. Many of these difficulties were inevitable given the political and logistical complexities of merging forces. One of the complaints was that the integration process was simply a matter of absorption of the other forces by the SADF.

A Ministerial Integration Oversight Committee was established to manage these tensions and to monitor the process and, particularly, adherence to policy. The Committee included members of the SANDF,

**Table 3: Forces available for integration**

Force	Anticipated	1998
SADF	90,000	57,053
MK	22,000	11,738
APLA	6,000	3,713
TBVC	11,000	7,243
KZSPF		1,788
SANDF		10,600
<b>Total</b>	<b>129,000</b>	<b>93,324</b>

Source: *South African Defence Review, 1998, chapter 10, figure 10.1, p 70*

the Defence Secretariat and the Joint Standing Committee on Defence. A British Military Advisory and Training Team (BMATT) was incorporated into the process to ensure its fairness. A Parliamentary Integration Oversight Committee (PIOC) of the Joint Parliamentary Standing Committee for Defence was created and was regularly briefed by the DoD on the integration process. It also visited units of the SANDF to monitor progress.

In regard to whether this was a true integration process or simply a matter of absorption, it is clear that elements of both were present. On the one hand, the size of the SADF element (*see Table 3*) and its institutional capacity made it inevitable that it would dominate the process numerically and technically. On the other hand, the political leverage of MK and the control and oversight provided by the Defence Ministry and the parliamentary oversight committees ensured the political dominance of the decision-making process. BMATT also played an important role in ensuring fairness and objectivity, and its contribution was largely responsible for the ultimate credibility of the integration process.

It is the view of the author that despite the difficulties and setbacks experienced, the integration process was largely successful and has contributed significantly to the present stability and success of the SANDF in its internal and external operations.

The most critical area of transformation for the SANDF was that of ensuring equity in racial and gender representation. The predominantly white and male character of the apartheid defence force had to be eliminated rapidly or at least ameliorated. However, due to the imbalances in the sizes of the integrating forces, the initial composition



**Table 4: Racial reflection of the new SANDF (%)**

Race	1994	1998	2003
African	38	57	62
Asian	1	1	1
Coloured	16	12	12
White	45	30	25

Source: South African Defence Review, 1998, ch.10, Figure 10.2, p 71; and South African Department of Defence 2002/2003 Annual Report, ch.3, Table 3.14, p 23.

**Table 5: Breakdown of SANDF by gender (%)**

Gender	1994	1998	2003
Female	20	19	21
Male	80	81	79

Source: *Ibid.*

of the SANDF did not reflect positively on this imperative. This led to the need for concerted rationalisation strategies through affirmative action and fast tracking on the one hand, and the institution of voluntary severance packages on the other. Significant advances have been made in this regard, albeit far more in relation to race than gender (*see tables 4 and 5*).

While a degree of progress is clear, the major challenge currently lies in the fact that although top management is representative and aligned with national demographics, middle management is still biased towards white, ex-SADF members (around 65%). At the same time, the SANDF is not attracting whites at the lower levels, causing that level to be predominantly black. Asians are also still under-represented in the SANDF. In terms of gender representivity, the figure of 21% for females in the DoD is obviously low, yet good by international, and especially African, standards.

All in all, the present situation in the SANDF regarding both integration in general, and racial and gender representation in particular, is satisfactory and remaining problems are being addressed by the recently approved DoD Human Resources Strategy 2010.

## NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY

The White Paper on Defence was developed over the period 1994 to 1996 and had as its primary aim to align defence with the new South African democracy. It also describes the national strategy for the defence and protection of the state and its people through the hierarchy of:

- political, economic and military co-operation with other states;
- the prevention, management and resolution of conflict through non-violent means; and
- the use or threat of force as a measure of last resort.<sup>30</sup>

The White Paper argues that government's preferred and primary course of action is to prevent conflict and war:

South Africa will therefore only turn to military means when deterrence and non-violent strategies have failed. Deterrence requires defence capabilities that are sufficiently credible to inhibit potential aggressors.<sup>31</sup>

The hierarchy for the defence of South Africa, therefore, is clearly:

- prevention of conflict and war;
- containment of conflict and war; and
- employment of military force as the last option.

Despite the above, the White Paper goes on to define the primary function of the SANDF as "to defend South Africa against external military aggression"<sup>32</sup> and determines that the SANDF should be designed mainly around the demands of its primary function.

The overemphasis on the primary function of the SANDF as the defence of South Africa against external military aggression and the primacy of designing the SANDF for this function came about for two reasons. First, the new ruling party was painfully aware of the results of allowing the apartheid SADF to become involved in political and internal stability matters. The ANC accepted the need for a defence force but wanted one that would be truly apolitical (non-partisan) and professional; therefore, one that was restricted to purely conventional military tasks.

At the same time, the military command structure of the new SANDF (overwhelmingly officers from the old SADF) were concerned about the

aging of conventional military equipment and the loss of capabilities, and saw the strong focus on the primary function of conventional defence as an opportunity to motivate for re-equipping the SANDF. This was also supported by the captains of the defence industry and was in fact a marriage of convenience between unlikely parties.

Second, the euphoria experienced with the demise of apartheid rule brought an unrealistic vision of the end of conflict in Africa and a dream of continental peace, stability and development. Not much was therefore thought about the role that the SANDF might have to play in shaping the conditions of peace and stability on the continent for the realisation of the African Renaissance.

The current demand for the SANDF in African peace missions was simply not formally envisaged. This boiled down to the following: if South Africa accepted the need for a defence force due to the uncertainties of the future but wanted this defence force to remain disengaged from internal stability matters and did not foresee a significant role for it on the continent, a defence force could only be built based on the logic of 'defence against external aggression'. And, as this was a remote possibility, a defence force needed to build on the concept of 'a small conventional core force with the ability for rapid expansion based on a sufficiently large reserve component'. Such a force would be able to execute any secondary functions using the collateral utility available in its primary design. This policy framework fundamentally influenced the later development and acceptance of the Defence Review force design.

Based on the White Paper policy direction, the Defence Review (1998) developed the concepts of the primary function of the SANDF, its secondary tasks and the core force logic into more tangible defence doctrines and a force design for the future SANDF. The eventually approved force design as reflected in Chapter 8 of the Defence Review became the blueprint against which the subsequent development of the SANDF was undertaken, and against which the acquisition of the so-called 'strategic defence package' was conducted.

#### CIVIL—MILITARY RELATIONS

The legislative framework for the governance and management of the DoD and SANDF is contained in the Constitution, the Defence Act (Act No. 42 of 2002), the Public Service Act (Act No. 103 of 1994) and the Public Finance Management Act (Act No. 1 of 1999). The internal

management responsibilities and respective roles of the secretary for defence and the CSANDF were described earlier.

Substantial mechanisms, forums and procedures exist to ensure political oversight and executive control over defence. This is to make sure that the executive and national legislature both accept responsibility for defence policy, its plans and budget, as well as the execution of the defence plan. These bodies are to make certain that policy priorities are linked to departmental spending plans and service delivery. The key role-players in this process of political oversight and executive control over defence are discussed below.

The minister of defence is the political head of the DoD. He/she is designated as the 'executive authority' for defence by the Public Service and Public Finance Management Acts. As such, the minister has the primary responsibility for political oversight of defence, including the defence budget. He/she is responsible for ensuring that political priorities are linked to departmental spending plans, the delivery of service and to determine departmental priorities. The executive authority is responsible for ensuring that the department performs its statutory functions within the limits of the funds authorised for the relevant vote. The minister executes these functions primarily through the statutory Council of Defence, which comprises the minister, the deputy minister, the secretary for defence and the CSANDF.

The Portfolio Committee of Parliament on Defence (PCPD) is a committee of the National Assembly with membership open to all parties represented in the legislature. It ensures parliamentary oversight over defence. According to Rule 201 of the National Assembly, the PCPD is mandated, among others, to:

Deal with Bills and other matters falling within its portfolio as are referred to in terms of the Constitution, these Rules, the Joint Rules or by resolutions of the Assembly;

Monitor, investigate, enquire into and make recommendations concerning any such executive organ of state, constitutional institution or other body or institution, including the legislative programme, budget, rationalisation, restructuring, functioning, organisation, structure, staff and policies of such organ of state, institution or other body or institution.<sup>33</sup>

Parliament is the highest authority for the approval of defence policy,

legislation, the deployment of the SANDF, and the approval of the defence budget. The National Treasury plays a key technical role in the national budgetary process and guides the budgeting process of all departments. The National Treasury is responsible for:

- identifying the overall level of spending that can be afforded within government's macro-economic and fiscal framework;
- evaluating departmental policy options and budget planning submissions;
- presenting comments and views on proposed departmental options;
- developing a Medium Term Expenditure Framework;
- negotiating allocations, reprioritisation and funding levels of programmes/activities, including possible savings;
- making recommendations to the Medium Term Expenditure Committee; and
- presenting the National Medium Term Expenditure Framework to the Ministers' Committee on the Budget.

External auditing of the DoD is done by the auditor-general. He/she reports to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Accounts.

The principles of civil–military relations and parliamentary oversight of defence have special reference to Defence Intelligence. For that reason a National Intelligence Act (Act No. 39 of 1994) was enacted to provide for control in respect of all intelligence agencies. Defence Intelligence structures are furthermore subject to scrutiny by the inspector-general of the DoD, the National Intelligence Co-ordinating Committee, the inspector-general for intelligence and the Joint Standing Committee on Intelligence of Parliament.

With the SANDF becoming more involved in peace support operations in Africa, the Defence Intelligence division is accordingly co-operating more closely with the intelligence structures of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region. The main emphasis is on “producing intelligence in support of operations in the region [and] developing strategic partnerships with member countries of SADC”.<sup>34</sup>

This is a positive development as intelligence co-operation is an important confidence- and security-building measure among regional states.

In terms of accountability, the SANDF is under democratic civil control. Indicative of this is the fact that 13 meetings of the Joint Standing Committee on Defence and 18 of the Portfolio Committee were convened in 2003. These meetings covered a range of issues—from a human resource strategy to the defence budget, the defence strategic plan and the Armscor Bill. Much the same is true of the transparency issue. The defence strategic plan can be seen on the DoD website at <[www.mil.za](http://www.mil.za)>, the budget at <[www.treasury.gov.za](http://www.treasury.gov.za)> and the minutes of nearly all committee meetings are available on the PMG website mentioned above.

#### CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS

Since completion of the White Paper and the Defence Review, much has happened to put strain on implementing defence policy and to indicate the need for a re-evaluation of the policy. Major shifts in the strategic environment and the non-realised planning assumptions include the:

- conflict situation in Africa and the demand that this has placed on the SANDF to support foreign policy initiatives through peace support operations;
- developing African defence and security architecture and the move towards collective security processes and structures;
- internal crime situation in South Africa that continues to place demands on the SANDF for deployments in support of the South African Police Service (SAPS); and
- strategic defence acquisition packages.

These changes have caused a greater demand for SANDF services both externally and internally, while budget provisions have not kept pace to allow for the simultaneous development of the SANDF in line with policy.

#### **Conflict and security in Africa and SANDF peace missions**

Despite the post-Cold War and post-apartheid optimistic view of Africa, the continent is unfortunately still suffering from chronic

underdevelopment, poverty, lack of human security and other social ills. This, together with poor governance and competition for control and exploitation of resources, has led to the proliferation of intra-state conflicts on the continent. Currently there are 11 United Nations (UN) and African peace missions in 12 African countries. These are Burundi, the DRC, Central African Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan and Western Sahara.

Most of these peace operations are directed at solving internal disputes spurred on by poor governance, warlords and rebel groups motivated by ethnic or religious disputes, the control and exploitation of resources, and/or political adventurism.

These conflicts also overflow into neighbouring states, as is evidenced in West Africa, the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa. This high level of instability and conflict, coupled with the general state of underdevelopment on the continent, creates a vast potential breeding ground for polarisation, the rise of warlords, rogue regimes, terrorism and crime. It could also create conditions favourable for a base from which international terrorists could operate. If this is not contained, the potential for unilateral external interventions will become very real.

In support of South African, AU and international efforts at conflict prevention and management, the SANDF has become increasingly engaged in peace support operations on the continent. At present the SANDF has about 3,000 soldiers deployed in these conflict areas in Africa with a demand for more.

The major deployments are in Burundi and the DRC, with an increasing involvement in Sudan. The SANDF is, however, not well equipped for these types of operations as its force design is predicated on short logistic lines for highly mechanised mobile forces prepared to fight in defence of the territorial integrity of the country and not for out-of-area force projection and support in distant places.

### **Africa's developing collective security architecture**

Africa is rapidly moving towards becoming a collective security community. At a continental level, the AU has accepted the Common African Defence and Security Policy (CADSP), which acknowledges that

each African country's defence is inextricably linked to that of other African countries, as well as to that of other regions and, by the same token, that of the African continent as a whole.<sup>35</sup>

One of the building blocks of the CADSP is the African Standby Force (ASF), which is mandated by the Protocol of the Peace and Security Council of the AU. The concept of the African Standby Force is based on standby brigades to be provided by the five African sub-regions. These brigades will be established in two phases, to be completed by the year 2010, with the attendant strengthening of capabilities at both the AU and regional levels. The ASF will have military, police and civilian components and will operate on the basis of various scenarios under AU mandates, ranging from observer missions to peacekeeping operations and intervention in conformity with the Constitutive Act of the AU.

At a sub-regional level, SADC has made great progress on issues of collective defence and security. This is manifested through the Organ for Politics, Defence and Security (OPDS) and its sub-structure, the Inter-State Defence and Security Committee (ISDSC). Furthermore, through these structures all SADC countries have agreed to a Mutual Defence Pact and are working on the modalities of the SADC regional brigade as an element of the ASF. Operationalising and strengthening these regional and sub-regional mechanisms will undoubtedly contribute greatly towards providing the wherewithal to combat collectively the threats to African peace and security.

These developments are heavily premised on political integration and co-operation on the continent and in the sub-regions, as is evidenced in the AU and NEPAD. They also require, however, that African defence forces should be built around the concepts of 'confidence-building defence' (also known as non-offensive or non-provocative defence), as well as those of confidence- and security-building measures. Present South African defence policy stresses the need for confidence- and security-building measures, but the approved force design is not well aligned to these principles. The Defence Review did present one option based on the principles of non-offensive defence, but in the conclusion of Chapter 8 stated:

[This] option involves major deviations from present capabilities and doctrine, and will require more study before it can be recommended. If future tendencies are in this direction [the selected] option 1 will be an acceptable base for such development.<sup>36</sup>

The developments in Africa are clearly leading in the direction of collective defence, and demand more consideration of the principles of confidence-building defence in revisiting the Defence Review.



### **The internal crime situation in South Africa**

Despite the stated policy that the SANDF should disengage from its ongoing policing role, the pressure placed on the SAPS by the high crime rate in South Africa has kept the SANDF involved in providing support to the police. Last year the SANDF had an average of around 3,000 soldiers deployed on operations Intexo (border control) and Stipper (rural protection) on an ongoing basis.

The SANDF has currently started disengaging from such support and has also announced the phasing out of the commando system (SANDF territorial reserves). This has led to many concerns about how the SAPS will be able to cope with the more organised and militarised forms of crime, and the feasibility of replacing the commando system with an, as yet, undefined policing system.

### **The strategic defence acquisition packages**

Since completion of the Defence Review, the South African government and the DoD have embarked on an ambitious project to replace obsolete equipment in the SANDF force design with new acquisitions through the so-called 'strategic defence package' deal. It provides for the acquisition of four corvettes, three submarines, 30 light-utility helicopters, 24 lead-in fighter trainer aircraft, and 28 fighter aircraft.

These acquisitions are aligned with the force design of the Defence Review, but it can be argued that they did not take cognisance of real priorities and trends in the defence budget and expenditure. They favour the air force and navy above the army, while it is the army that is at the forefront of deployments into Africa. They also tie the defence budget down to a high expenditure on capital equipment, while the operating budget for force development, force preparation and force employment is shrinking. This has led to many problems vis-à-vis maintaining standards, and a general deterioration in the preparedness of the SANDF.

### **CONCLUSION**

The new, post-apartheid DoD and SANDF differ vastly from that which existed in South Africa before 1994. The MoD has been strengthened and the functions of head of department and accounting officer are vested in the civilian secretary for defence. The civilian Defence Secretariat is responsible for the overall development of defence policy, financial management of the department and for the management of

departmental acquisition processes. The inspector general also reports to the secretary. In the previous situation, all these functions were conducted by the military.

Democratic civil–military relations are assured through the active role played by the National Assembly’s Portfolio Committee on Defence, and are further enhanced through the significant capacity for the management of the South African defence function that exists within the Ministry and the Secretariat. This has led to a high level of transparency and accountability in the management of defence in South Africa.

The DoD is reasonably representative of the South African population due to the strong emphasis placed on the integration process and rationalisation strategies. This is obviously a complex process and has its associated problems. Rationalisation has led to a loss of skills due to the concentration of such skills in the hands of the whites during the apartheid era. There is no instant solution, and only time can rectify this situation.

The SANDF is today extensively deployed in peace support operations in Africa and is coping well with this new challenge. This is an important development because these deployments will greatly enhance the skills basis of the new defence establishment through the exigencies of such operations. These operations will serve as a testing ground, but also as a learning experience for the new SANDF in the fields of operational planning, intelligence, logistic support and management of deployed personnel.

The South African DoD and SANDF have done well in their short history and can serve as an example of successful defence transformation to many young and emerging democracies. The integration process, the inclusive and consultative defence review process and the establishment of a capable civilian defence secretariat, among others, are commendable achievements.

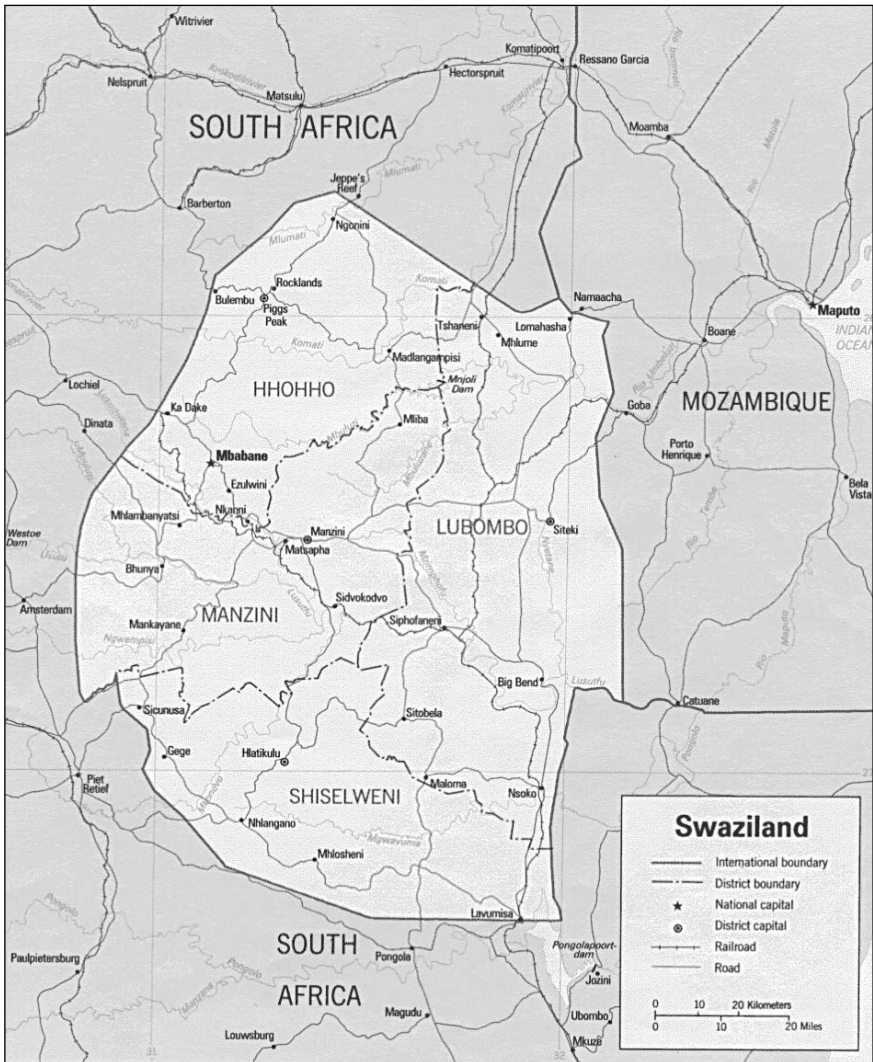
The major challenges facing the South African DoD and SANDF in the near future will be to: readdress the issue of its primary function being aligned with current challenges; balance policy with budget; improve its skills basis; integrate successfully the newly acquired weapon systems into its force design; and meet the demands of the CADSP. This is a daunting task, but given the way in which the SANDF has met the challenges of its first ten years of existence, there is little reason to doubt its capability to overcome these challenges.

## NOTES

- 1 With acknowledgement to the South African Government Communications and Information Service (GCIS), *SA an overview* <[http://www.gov.za/sa\\_overview/index.html](http://www.gov.za/sa_overview/index.html)>.
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 R M Williams, *Guerrilla armies, guerrilla strategies and guerrilla culture: The impact of guerrilla armies on the creation of South Africa's armed forces between 1912–1999*, unpublished paper, ISS, p 10.
- 4 Note on the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa: Section 24(1) of Schedule 6 to the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996), determines that “Sections 224 to 228 of the previous Constitution continue in force as if the previous Constitution had not been repealed”. These sections contain the provisions referred to in references to the Interim Constitution 1993.
- 5 GCIS, op cit.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act 108 of 1996), Republic of South Africa, *Government Gazette* 378(17678), Cape Town, 18 December 1996, Section 200(2), p 88.
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- 10 Ibid.
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 Rocky Williams was a member of MK, a member of the MRG and one of the principal negotiators of MK during the JMCC. At integration in 1994 he obtained the rank of colonel in the new SANDF and later became the Director of Defence Policy at the South African Defence Secretariat. Williams was the Convenor of the Defence Review Working Group and one of the most influential individuals in the South African and African defence discourse. Roland de Vries led the South African Army delegation at the JMCC. He later became the Director Transformation of the new SANDF and then the Deputy Chief of the South African Army.
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- 26 Ibid, p 112.
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- 30 South African White Paper on Defence 1996, Chapter 4.
- 31 Ibid.
- 32 Ibid.
- 33 Rules of the National Assembly, Chapter 12: Committee System, Rule 201(1), <[www.parliament.gov.za](http://www.parliament.gov.za)>
- 34 Defence Vote (Vote 22), <<http://www.treasury.gov.za/>>, p 599.
- 35 Preamble to the Solemn Declaration on a Common African Defence and Security Policy, 28 February 2004, p 2, para 5.
- 36 South African Defence Review 1998, Chapter 8.





Source: [www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/index.html](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/index.html)

# Caught between tradition and regional warfare: The *Umbutfo* Swaziland Defence Force since 1968

Jeffrey Tshabalala, Cyprian Nhlengethwa & Martin Rupiya

## INTRODUCTION

A number of factors may have motivated newly independent African states to establish defence and security institutions, such as:

- external threats against the state, including territorial claims by neighbouring states; and
- internal threats against that state.

The latter point may stem from the way in which the new power came to office (through force or peace treaty) and the effort now required to maintain that power through military means to ensure it is not snatched away by adversaries.

This chapter focuses on Swaziland and examines its motivations for establishing defence and security institutions. Swaziland was one of three British High Commission territories that included Botswana and Lesotho. The country gained independence on 6 September 1968; but before tackling the late 1960s post-colonial era we will discuss, as background, the colonial period and its legacy vis-à-vis the military history of Swaziland.

For Swaziland, the late 19th century was characterised by unique colonial interventions in the country. When Britain decided to withdraw, however, Swaziland was soon caught up in the liberation armed

struggles ravaging the region in Portuguese East Africa, now Mozambique, and apartheid South Africa. Under the 'Total Strategy' South Africa co-ordinated the political and military strategies of other colonial powers in the region, such as Portugal in Portuguese East Africa and Angola, and Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). The apartheid-inspired Total Strategy was South Africa's response to the decolonisation wave sweeping across the African continent during the 1960s.

South Africa's aggressive foreign policy posture therefore had implications for newly independent former protectorates such as Swaziland, and impacted on the formation and characteristics of Swaziland's national security and defence policy at the time.

With the collapse of apartheid in late 1989, Swaziland was finally able to embark upon a truly unfettered home-grown restructuring of its armed forces. In this, it is evident that the central role of the traditional military culture has remained relevant to the formal and conventional defence force structure as we know it, the *Umbutfo* Swaziland Defence Force (USDF).

#### **SWAZILAND'S COLONIAL MILITARY HISTORY—LATE 1800S TO 1902**

Swaziland occupies only 17,400 km<sup>2</sup> and is nestled between the two geographic giants and former imperial playgrounds: Mozambique to the east and north, with 105 km of shared borders; and South Africa to the west and south, with 430 km of shared border. Significantly, both these countries block Swaziland from access to the nearby Indian Ocean.

For the purposes of this study, a brief social and economic history starting from the late 1800s is useful in order to provide a context for the political and military events that characterised Swaziland's later developments.

In the struggle between the Afrikaners and British colonialists, Swaziland found itself at the mercy of the Transvaal Boer Republic. The Transvaal Republic was itself anxious to secure a route to the sea in order to avoid paying the high taxes levied by the British-controlled province of Natal, through which its imports and exports had to travel. Relations between Swazi King Mbandzeni and the Transvaal Boer Republic were based on the threat of use of force. The latter held the advantage, drawn from its superior conventional military organisation, more modern weaponry and organised troops. While the Swazi's had large military formations organised according to the traditional warrior system under the Swazi chief, they were generally armed with spears and *knobkerries*.



Operating through merchants and traders, the Boer Republic in 1876 prevailed upon the Swazi King to allocate land to the Boers for exclusive purchase and use. Based on this arrangement, large tracts of Swazi farmland were made available to Boer farmers on which they produced maize, tobacco and citrus fruit, and reared beef cattle and sheep. Most of the produce was for export—back into the more lucrative South African market—denying Swazi locals similar opportunities.

The climate on the Swazi mountains favoured sheep farming during particular months of the year. In a practice known as *treksheeping*, thousands of sheep would be pushed over the border at appropriate times for pasture and grazing before returning to South Africa for slaughter and marketing. At its height, *treksheeping* involved anything between 300,000 and 400,000 sheep, let loose for foraging on specially preserved pastures in Swaziland, denying Swazi's access to those same tracts for their economic survival. For instance, as late as 1930—even after the Boer Republic had been defeated and colonial control had changed hands to the British after 1902—as much as 360,000 ha of land was still set aside for this purpose.

The arrangement in which inhabitants from the neighbouring Boer Republic benefited from the exclusive use of the land naturally raised the ire of the locals, resulting in strained relations between the community and their King during his reign.

One downside to this *trekking* practice was its impact on the fragile environment when thousands of sheep were let loose on the *veld*. A second damaging practice was that once the sheep had been herded back to South Africa, farmers burned the remaining grass to encourage the germination of fresh vegetation for the next season. The corollary of this was, of course, serious soil erosion as the wind and rain lifted fragile fertile soil off the charred earth. The fertile top-soil was quickly washed down, chocking the Usutu River system. At the time, the Usutu River had the greatest water carrying capacity south of the Zambezi, serving as the basis for peasant production in the country. The giant life-giving river measured 21 m at its shallowest point and 1,862 m at its deepest point, although this was quickly reduced as a consequence of siltation.<sup>1</sup>

The initial trade and purchase by the Boer Republic soon increased to significant levels, motivating the Boers to seek effective occupation and control of Swaziland. In 1898, the Transvaal Boer Republic took over the administration of Swaziland. The occupation allowed further allocations of land to Boer farmers, while at the same time boosting other related commercial enterprises. The result was increased

investment by the Afrikaner business community, creating early entry points for capital. Much of this was directed towards establishing agro-based industries in sugar, forestry, citrus and related primary processing plants, designed to add value before products were re-exported to South Africa. Transvaal-based Afrikaner mining houses also joined the bandwagon, setting up iron ore and asbestos plants.

The Boer Republic's colonial control of Swaziland was, however, soon disrupted following the outbreak of war with the British. The conflict spanned the period 1899–1902, at the end of which the Boer Republic was defeated. As part of the war settlement and war booty, the Boer Republic was relieved of its authority, including its colonial possession of Swaziland.

Throughout Southern Africa, Britain established protectorates around kings and ethnic groups such as the BaSotho in Basutoland (now Lesotho), BamaNcwato in Bechuanaland (now Botswana) and the Swazis. Governors were appointed in each protectorate and they reported to the London High Commission Territories Office. Robert Coryndon was appointed resident governor of Swaziland and took up his post in the capital, Mbabane.

Governor Coryndon's tenure can be described as the third wave of colonial influence that visited Swaziland. During his governorship more land was taken and most of the African male population was turned into cheap labour for local white entrepreneurs, with many more sent to work on the Witwatersrand mines.

Coryndon had a reputation for favouring settler/capital interests. His policies assisted land re-allocation towards white farmers and entrepreneurs, entrenched the creation of labour reserves and ultimately benefited conditions for primitive capital accumulation for those classes in true frontier tradition. During his tenure Coryndon declared only a third (37.6%) of the country as 'Native Area', leaving the rest available for exclusive use by European and commercial companies. Of the 11% of the country that is suitable as arable land, white commercial farmers had exclusive access to 62%, comprising mainly pastures. This created a considerable land shortage among the local Swazis, who pressured the monarchy to act on their behalf.

Reacting to the colonial trend of land dispossession, the Swazi Royal leadership after Mbandzeni embarked upon sustained land recovery and re-purchase, mainly from white farmers who were becoming largely absentee landowners. This land recovery effort was assisted somewhat by the colonial Native Land Settlement Scheme, which returned former white reserved lands that were derelict to local people.

At independence in 1968, land amounting to 56% of what was once greater Swaziland had been recovered. However, the absence of 44% of the land—including strategic portions that provided access to the sea—has continued to weigh heavily on the Swazi body politic. The Land Commission (which survives to this day) was primary responsible for recovering lost tracts. It reported directly to the King, demonstrating the significance of this aspect to Swaziland.

The defence and security policy of the colonial administration rested on internal and external dynamics. After the Boer Republic administration had been displaced in 1902, Robert Coryndon in 1907 motivated for the establishment of a police force complete with a local police mobile unit (PMU) based in Mbabane. The role and function of the police and PMU was to:

- ensure internal security through population control;
- prepare to deal with riots and strikes;
- enforce border control;
- act as a show of force; and
- act as a Ceremonial Guard of Honour within the protectorate.

The police and its PMU paramilitary structure fell under the command of the resident governor, and further support in cases of emergency was readily available from the British military might outside the colony. The police and its complementary PMU structure were to survive into independence in 1968.

#### **THE ROLE OF THE TRADITIONAL SWAZI LEADERSHIP**

In order to properly appreciate the evolution of the military in Swaziland, we need to understand the pre-colonial and post-colonial political role and resource capability of the traditional Swazi leadership.

Traditional leaderships that survived in the protectorates played, and play, a benevolent role and leadership function within their communities. At the outset it is important to acknowledge that traditional chieftainships were not destroyed by the colonial administration. Although subordinate to their colonial masters, the kings and chiefs acted as a partial control mechanism through which the colonialists exercised their power. Consequently, the colonial administrators deliberately retained monarchs in Basutoland, Bechuanaland and Swaziland, which monarchs exercised control on

behalf of the resident governors. The political power of the monarchs was carefully preserved without making it sufficient to challenge the colonial structures. Since most monarchs had acquiesced to colonial rule they received revenue from Britain and commercial companies operating in their territories. The interaction with the new capitalist classes provided significant resources to the monarchs, enabling them to later become key players in their respective economies.

In the period after Mbadzeni's rule, Swazi King Sobhuza II had used available funds as state resources to buy back white-owned farms and return the same to Swazi sovereignty. This action endeared the nation to the benevolent monarch. (The phenomenon of affluent monarchs is unique to Southern Africa and its history of protectorates, especially when compared to the fate of traditional leaders elsewhere in Africa.)

A further advantage after decolonisation was that the former protectorates all fell under the new South African Customs Union (SACU) financial arrangement. This provided some sort of capitalist framework over the entire region and meant that each country had access to resources from South Africa's central bank in Pretoria.

Under the SACU arrangement the three protectorates had their economies harmonised under the larger economy of South Africa and fixed customs revenue percentages were worked out. During the 1960s Swaziland's share of the annual customs gross revenues in the SACU area was 0.149%, while Bechuanaland's share was 0.276% and Basutoland's was 0.885%. In total, the three countries shared 1.310%, arrived at by working out a complex weighting system of trade and other related factors.<sup>2</sup> As a direct result of this economic participation, the Swazi kingdom after independence developed into "... a successful enclave, a tribal reserve, subsisting on the export of labour and other primary produce."<sup>3</sup>

Since the monarchs were able to marshal significant amounts of resources—and apart from their roles as traditional leaders—they became central to how the armed forces were established in the post-colonial era. As commander-in-chief, the monarch in Swaziland has been able to support the civil service, the police, the military and occasionally subsidise selected areas of the country when called upon to do so.

## **INDEPENDENCE**

With decolonisation gaining popularity across the continent in the 1960s, the political landscape in Southern Africa began to share a

common characteristic—namely, the existence of nationalists in each of the colonies who had been educated at mission schools, with the majority coming from the Catholic Roma and Fort Hare universities in Basutoland and South Africa respectively. Graduates from these institutions of higher learning comprised the intelligentsia and emerged to challenge both the colonial regime and traditional leaders who were dominant in the protectorates. This leadership role played by the intelligentsia continued even after independence. Their storm troopers were factory workers and miners, especially on the Witwatersrand: this was the melting pot for activists, drawn from migrant workers from across Southern Africa.<sup>4</sup>

While in 1966 both Botswana and Lesotho gained independence, Swaziland had to wait a further two years before attaining similar status. In order to prod the British government into leaving, the Queen Mother, Labotsibeni, dispatched a 12-member delegation to London to negotiate transfer of power. Whitehall acquiesced and the country prepared for independence on 6 September 1968.

With the whiff of political independence in the air, two internal groups immediately emerged as political opponents. On the one side were those in support of the monarchy, the Royalists or Imbokdvo National Movement (INM); and on the other were those drawn from the tertiary-educated intelligentsia who agitated for a reduced influence and role of the monarchy. Dr Ambrose Ngwane led the Ngwane National Liberatory Congress (NNLC) that was supported by the labour movement and which advocated for universal suffrage, and Simon Nxumalo led the Swaziland Democratic Party (SDP).<sup>5</sup>

However, the 1970s were to witness the most vicious protracted wars of the armed struggle in the Southern African region. Already in 1962 both the African National Congress (ANC) of South Africa and the Mozambique Liberation Front (Frelimo) had established offices in Dar es Salaam and had taken the decision to engage in armed struggle in order to fight for independence from their colonial oppressors. Against this background the stage was set for a protracted conflict period in which Swaziland was to be held hostage, as its security was tied to that of the regional players.

#### **FORMATION OF THE ROYAL SWAZILAND DEFENCE FORCE**

Five years after independence, on 15 March 1973, King Sobhuza II passed a decree establishing the Royal Swaziland Defence Force.

Knowledge of this development emerged during the King's address to the nation on various issues at his traditional headquarters at the Lobamba Royal Residence. At the close of his address, the King commanded the Second World War veterans and traditional warriors from the *Umbutfo* who were present to board waiting trucks and proceed to the nearby Etjeni Camp (located near the present Matsapha industrial site) for registration. The ready presence of war veterans at the address partly confirms the assumption that there had been some prior consultation.

The King also provided the model of the military structure to be established. The actual armed forces would therefore comprise a dual system that had at its core a small permanent force, supported by a much larger part-time, active reserve.

In the King's view, the new armed forces would be made up of only a small cadre of instructors and commanders as permanent members. The rest would be an active part-time revolving force called up for periods of six months at a time. For those called up, this period would involve initial training and some operational service before they were stood down and passed on to the active reserves. A subsequent intake inducted for yet another six months would be timed to be activated before the first group was stood down, and this would continue until all available, able-bodied males below the age of 60 had been trained. This would constitute an active reserve, ready to be called up in emergencies if required. Gradually, the rotation and short stints by volunteers would result in the whole nation being exposed to conventional military training, effectively transforming the existing traditional warrior class.

Payments offered were limited and expected not to attract significant numbers. During the six months that a volunteer would be under training and subsequent military commitments, he would be paid a monthly allowance of R36. Funds to cover the new initiative were provided by the King through the Tibiyo TakaNgwane Trust.<sup>6</sup>

The make up of volunteers entering the new army included elements seconded from King Sobhuza II's two trusted *Umbutfo* traditional regiments—the *Lindimpi* (watchman/guard) and *Gcina* (the final protector). These created the platform upon which the new army was to be built. Training of the new force was delegated to the Second World War veterans who were in command, assisted by the Matsapha Royal Swaziland Police (RSP).

It is illustrative to review briefly what the *Lindimpi* and *Gcina* regiments represented, as the secondment of elements from these units

was significant for several reasons. First, each traditional regiment was almost close to a conventional brigade with manpower levels at around 5,000. As a result, the combined strength of the *Lindimpi* and *Gcina* regiments was about 10,000 men. In military conventional terms, this represented a contemporary combat group of three brigades of 3,000 troops each, plus support arms or logistical back-up. The military capability of the Swazi traditional system to marshal such a force was significant. Second, for a population of just under half a million, to have in place a 10,000-strong force was also a formidable achievement. Third, there were inherent command-and-control advantages in absorbing into the new army the traditional military structure. All that was now required was to equip and train the same in conventional methods. Drawing troops of existing regiments obviated the need to address basic training and unit organisation issues, and also provided a ready and effective command structure that was integral to the units, and from the units to the head of state and commander-in-chief, and vice versa.

A fourth aspect is that the regular Swazi army emerged as part of the larger traditional military structure, and remained wedded to this system through the formal and informal appointments made. This dynamic has remained true to this day.

Finally, founding the new army on the basis of the trusted traditional forces, transferred the close links and trust generated by their earlier role as the monarchy's personal aides and protectors. The new army did not have to earn its stripes, so to speak, as this loyalty and trust was inherent; this was because cadres were drawn from the already existing traditional army, complete with disciplinary code and hierarchical command. However, the inclusion of such forces as the core of the new army strongly influenced the type of civil-military relations that developed between the armed forces and the monarchy, essentially characterised by an even closer relationship between the two, and much more pronounced deference to the King.

In practice, the more amorphous traditional force has continued to serve as the reserve to the lean, permanent regular force. This defined the relationships of recruiting, basic unit configuration, command-and-control and part-time versus full-time forces, as well as the appointment of military officers of the new army, and the link between the institution and the monarchy.

Given the challenge to establish a new force in the post-colonial era, the new roles and functions of the armed forces were to:

- defend the territorial integrity of the country;
- support the constitution and the flag;
- protect the institution of the monarchy (VIP and ceremonial duties);
- serve in support of the civil authorities; and
- assist the RSP.

The paradigm shift in post-colonial defence policy was significant. Not only had the thrust moved from controlling the population to supporting the constitution, but it now also provided for protection of the monarchy. For the first time, employment of the instrument of force had been turned inwards towards benefiting the wider interests of the Swazi people.

Second World War veteran and Prince (Sgt) Bhekimpi Dhlamini was appointed commander of the permanent cadre force. The appointment of a prince as head of the regular armed forces ensured that the traditional system and authority extended into the new structure.

When state structures are functioning in a parallel or dual system, a particular responsibility of senior office holders of institutions is to ensure the harmonisation and integration of policies between the traditional and modern government systems.

Enthusiasm for signing up into the new army was overwhelming: for Swazis, the call to arms had touched a deep chord in society. Volunteers came from the unemployed and private and public sector employees, including business people who were also prepared to fund part of the initiative. In retrospect, for the thousands of unemployed males and war veterans who came forward, an important motivating factor appears to have been the opportunity to secure gainful employment. The implications of this are discussed below.

Given the different categories for military training, many of which had not been anticipated, it was decided to create two elements that would reinforce each other. The first category followed the initial small active force engaged for six months before being transferred to the active reserve as originally envisaged. The second was to establish a part-time active reserve able to train and hold exercises at weekends, but being a segment that now existed between the permanent force and those on the active reserve list, although not formally mustered.

The development also revealed that during the colonial era the traditional military ethos of the Swazis had continued to produce age sets of trained cadres who then found themselves outside the military orbit as a consequence of taking up employment as civil servants or



going into business. The subsequent material and financial contribution by business people augmented funding from the King's Tibiyo Fund.

The call to arms by the King in the early post-colonial period provided the first opportunity for Swazis to exercise their traditional military skills, although now in a conventional setting. Since training was limited to weekends, however, the volunteers could still continue with their normal daily activities. Viewed in a wider sense, however, in cases of war or national emergency this buffer category was still part of the active reserve and would complement the small national permanent cadre force in regular employment as the standing army.

Maintaining the new active reserve list meant that a dedicated administrative body had to be put in place to manage this segment. Reaction to Swaziland's initial efforts at establishing a conventional standing army revealed the gaps that always exist between policy and implementation. Part-time force training was moved from Etjeni Barracks to Zombodze Barracks, deliberately separating the active reserve's training from that of the regular force. Equipment suitable for a conventional army, which included trucks, tents, ammunition, weapons, uniforms, bedding and rations, was sourced from Britain and South Africa.

The establishment of the new army occurred at an opportune time. Barely a month after its formation on 12 April 1973, King Sobhuzha II repealed the constitution, ruling by decree until his death (at the age of 83) in 1982. Attempts to rewrite a new constitution continue to this day.

## THE NEW GEO-STRATEGIC LANDSCAPE

A year after the suspension of the constitution in Swaziland, the Southern African region experienced a seismic shift in its political and security arrangements following the armed forces coup in Lisbon in April 1974. The political change in Portugal almost immediately translated into independence for the country's colonial possessions—namely, Angola and Mozambique—by mid-1975.

For apartheid South Africa, the loss of Portuguese control of its colonies in Southern Africa was perceived as bringing ANC militants to its borders. And the subsequent coming to power of Frelimo in Mozambique only served to reinforce the spectre of ANC Umkonto we Sizwe guerrillas now hovering too close for comfort.

The nascent threat resulted in urgent security restructuring by Pretoria. The redrawing of external frontiers now considered those of former protectorates, including Swaziland, which were perceived as

possible entry and exit points for guerrillas travelling to and from South Africa. In other words, Pretoria reacted to the new geo-strategic landscape in Southern Africa by defining roles for the neighbouring states that shared borders with Angola and Mozambique. Swaziland featured prominently in this consideration.

In the case of Botswana, soon after independence the country joined the Front Line States—together with Nigeria, Tanzania and Zambia—and supported the liberation movements, although still remaining within SACU. Developments in Lesotho were also complex, with Pretoria sponsoring the opposition in order that it serve as a counterweight to the Lesotho government's perceived role in supporting the ANC.

The Swazi army struggled to evolve in this tumultuous regional security and political context, and enjoyed short-lived independence only during the first year of its formation. As we shall see, the mid-1977 period was to witness further internal upheavals that retarded the development of the Swazi army.

#### **EVOLUTION OF THE ROYAL SWAZILAND DEFENCE FORCE UNTIL 1977**

In the first four years of establishment, the Royal Swaziland Defence Force experienced several internal and external challenges that impacted on its evolution. These challenges included:

- that volunteers were not prepared to leave after the initial six-month training period;
- a burgeoning part-time force;
- a tense political environment in which the King now ruled by decree; and
- the deteriorating security situation in Southern Africa following Mozambique's hasty independence in 1975.

All these factors required an urgent review of the military thinking that was dominant before March 1973 when the formation of the defence force was first decreed.

First, the call to arms under a regular permanent force structure was met with an overwhelming response. The numbers coming forward were beyond the capacity of the emerging permanent cadre headquarters,

supported by the police, to handle. Furthermore, despite remaining in the forces there were complaints regarding the low allowances received.

Second, the suspension of the constitution had created a tense political situation in which the question of security became heightened throughout the country. For example, officers given command responsibilities came under greater scrutiny regarding their loyalties.

Third, the war veterans strongly resisted the more rigorous training regimes and demands of a modern army, and staged a 'mini-mutiny'. This was quickly resolved by the King when soldiers marched to his Royal Residence at Lobamba to complain. The King allowed the veterans to retire gracefully from the new army, with retirement packages, while creating incentives for younger people to remain.

This situation revealed, however, the military commanders' lack of decisive authority, as yet another source of appeal that circumvented their power had been created. The military commanders' response was to motivate for the creation of a military police element that would curb future similar actions. Once the initial induction and teething problems had been overcome, the new military started operating alongside the police. There was, however, now a need to redefine the security-related tasks of the two forces that reflected a division of labour.

The primary tasks of the armed forces in the area of internal security now included:

- protecting the King/monarchy (i.e. Queen Mother, princes and princesses);
- protecting royal residences across the country; and
- safeguarding key strategic points.

While the police had carried out these duties in the past, it must be remembered that elements seconded to the new army had been drawn almost exclusively from the King's personal aides and regiments. Providing them now with this role was only a continuation of their traditional role, after receiving military-oriented training.

In carrying out these duties, however, service rivalry soon erupted, with near clashes reported between the lower ranks of the new army and the established police. These were only averted by the timely intervention of senior commanders.

Military commanders also began to appreciate their daunting defence-related tasks, beyond their internal commitments, and became convinced that the training received from the RSP was inadequate to

prepare them for the new demands. Based on the commanders' recommendations, government began to scout around for military institutions elsewhere that would be willing and able to provide advanced training. Swaziland's High Commissioner to Kenya successfully negotiated an agreement with the Kenyan government to provide military training facilities and instruction, with the Kenyan Officer Training College at Lanet being made available to potential Swazi cadets.

#### TRAINING OF THE COMMAND ELEMENT

While the internal PMU arrangement sought to provide 'paramilitary' training to former war veterans now earmarked to become the nucleus of the new army, the first contingent to be trained was the commanders of the new Swaziland defence force. The King was advised to select a member of the PMU to be dispatched to Kenya for military officer orientation, after which the candidate would take command and facilitate the further training of his colleagues. Police Superintendent Mfanwenkosi Maseko was chosen for the task. He was attached to the 3rd Kenyan Army Rifles as part of his training schedule and returned to Swaziland in 1974 after completing the one-year attachment.

However, the choice of Maseko to command the army was opposed by elements within the monarchy, and as a result Maseko was never appointed to that post. A reason for this was because Maseko was from the Seko clan, a faction perceived to have a grudge against the King. It was therefore believed that Maseko would likely use his new position to topple the monarchy.

Consequently, six cadets were dispatched to the Lanet-based Kenyan Armed Forces Training College for a one-year officer training course. The six had been selected from the traditional *Ludlukhala* ('eat while you cry') Regiment that comprised one of the most trusted echelons of the traditional army. The *Ludlukhala* Regiment is likened to present day presidential guard units and was responsible for the personal safety and security of the King.

The young officer cadets returned to Swaziland in 1975 and were commissioned with major and captain ranks. This group was the first to take command of the Swaziland Defence Force. However, no sooner were they integrated with the older veterans, another clash occurred—again based on the apparently physically demanding training methods introduced by the new officers. A repeat of the 1973 events followed.

Some 600 soldiers all from existing traditional units marched to the King's Embo Estate, defying lawful instructions from their officers, and appealed to the King to intervene against the tough training schedule. The King listened to their pleas and prevailed upon the new military commanders to restrain themselves.<sup>7</sup>

Marches to the King's palace to resolve differences between the veteran soldiers and the new officers reflected not only the state of civil-military relations but also the power relations that existed between the King and the nascent officer corps. In situations as those described above, the officers were left powerless; their authority was partly restored by the method chosen by the King and Commander-in-Chief to resolve disputes involving the emerging conventional army.

The officers had not earned their stripes and therefore did not constitute a recognised structure of command in the military hierarchy that was different from the traditional structure. The establishment of an officer corps under a country's constitution is an important development, conferring powers and diluting the authority of the commander-in-chief. In Swaziland, however (which has no constitution and operates instead under the King's decree), the traditional system of command-and-control still dominated, making it impossible for the officers to exercise their new-found authority and enforce discipline.

The King's influence as commander-in-chief was and continues to be dominant, although tempered with a deliberate subordination of his own authority to the officer corps. However, the soldiers attempted to exploit the gap that existed during the institution's early phases for decisions they knew would favour their interests against the officers' interests.

When assessing the role of the King during this period, it is clear that he exercised benign leadership, playing a moderating role but at the same time undermining the military commanders' authority. In the end, each side got what it wanted in the interests of nation building and the establishment of the armed forces.

In fact, in each incident the process shifted power relations in favour of the emerging commanders through the deliberate actions of the commander-in-chief. In resolving the veterans' second march on the King's residence, the King in his benevolence instructed the young officers to concentrate their skills on new recruits and not on the veterans. It became clear that the veterans' days of service in the new army were numbered, and in 1976 many were offered redundancy and retirement packages with honourable discharge.

The departure of the veterans and the growing influence of the military officers heralded a major restructuring of the armed forces that was launched in 1977. Overall, the period 1973–76 was critical in facilitating the emergence of a trained and capable officer corps whose task was to command the new conventional and modern force, drawn from the larger traditional army.

#### **ESTABLISHMENT OF THE USDF**

Reforms carried out in 1977 were in response to several considerations. The most important of these was the publication of a new Army Code whose provisions came into effect on 10 October 1977. The Army Code provided for an armed force, with the King as commander-in-chief, comprising three elements: the army, air force and navy.

A second development was the announcement of a name change: the army was now called the *Umbutfo* Swaziland Defence Force (USDF). This was the traditional army name that had now been officially transferred to the regular force, cementing the relationship that existed between the two institutions and making them one. This was a significant development in a country where tradition and culture run deep, signifying an acceptance of the new army into the existing folds of respectability and core values, as well as forging an important national symbol of the Swazi nation.

New commanders were appointed: Col Maphevu Dhalimini was appointed Army Commander and Maj Gideon Dube (selected from one of the six officers trained in Kenya in 1975) was appointed as his deputy. Several other officers of the ex-Kenya contingent were also appointed to command positions.

The next phase focused on developing the internal capacity of the army. Under the established command element and officer corps, a number of sub-units were set up. We will assess these briefly in order to reflect on the nature of the USDF's evolution. Consignments of new weapons and equipment were also acquired as part of the restructuring effort.

The United Kingdom (UK), Switzerland, Taiwan, Israel, South Africa and Kenya all made military assistance and training available to Swaziland. However, viewed in the context of the armed struggle that was gripping the region in the mid-1970s, countries offering military assistance reflected mostly neutral or pariah states largely propped up by the United States.

## INFANTRY TRAINING SCHOOL

Attention was of course placed on continuing with the basic training of soldiers in such aspects as small arms and support weapons training, tactical training, map reading and bush-craft. A new infantry training school for non-commissioned officers was established for this purpose at Mbuluzi Barracks, and Maj Jameson Mangomeni Ndzimande was appointed commandant.

## INTELLIGENCE TRAINING AND UNIT

An intelligence cell established in 1976 appeared to have provided the background for the more focused restructuring of the armed forces that took into account the regional dynamics which existed at the time.

Taiwan invited 11 officers from the newly formed USDF intelligence branch to train in that country. These officers were later to become the nucleus of the intelligence branch that was formally established in 1977. A further significant expansion of this branch occurred a decade later (in 1987) when, with the assistance of South Africa, a Defence Intelligence School was set up. Again it is clear in retrospect that this development was partly motivated by South Africa's attempts to counter ANC and Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) incursions from Mozambique via Swaziland.

## BORDER CONTROL TRAINING AND DEPLOYMENT

Given the geo-strategic developments during this period, emphasis was placed on training troops in border patrol duties, since the seemingly lax control at international borders was blamed for the unremitting flow of guerrillas, and this had to be stopped.

This perception was strongest in Pretoria and was soon borne out by events on the ground. The USDF border patrol unit in the Eastern Region was particularly active, dealing with ANC and PAC military cadres from Mozambique and later, after 1980, with Mozambique National Resistance (Renamo) elements infiltrating Mozambique from South Africa. In addition to the political and military adversaries that were using Swaziland territory, smugglers, illegal immigrants and refugees were flowing across the border.

The USDF faced a different type of problem—namely, criminal activities—in the Western Region bordering South Africa, ranging from vehicle smuggling to drug trafficking.

Switzerland seconded Col Newkom to the USDF, with special responsibilities to train the military in border control duties. Newkom's operational base was the Mdzimba Mountain Barracks from where he conducted extensive border control training activities. Two years later, in 1979, Newkom's border control training unit was re-deployed to Phocweni Barracks. After completing their training, graduates were deployed along the kingdom's 535 km border. The military divided the country into 14 sectors. These sectors covered the Eastern Region with Mozambique, just beyond Mhlume and stretching all the way to Big Bend and the Western Region, adjacent to South Africa.

The sectors came under the command of seven operational base commanders that were provided with vehicle patrols. The result was the creation of an integrated web of military supervision of the entire country. Operationally, any border violations would be reported to central intelligence, while efforts were made on the ground to deploy forces to intercept violations. The military units along the border were deliberately not structured to undertake offensive seek-and-destroy operations, but simply to act as a trigger or early warning, enabling the larger South African Defence Force (SADF) to react.

#### **COMMAND-AND-CONTROL TRAINING—BRITISH MILITARY ASSISTANCE**

The UK seconded Lt John Clive Perry, with the task of assisting to set up a conventional command-and-control headquarters and hierarchy. His task went beyond this though, and included creating the modalities of civilian political control elements, such as a civilian ministry and the armed forces.

#### **FURTHER RESTRUCTURING**

Although a new constitution was promulgated on 13 October 1978, it was not formally presented to the nation and its provisions still banned the establishment of political parties. The 1978 Constitution did not materially change the role and functions assigned to the USDF,<sup>8</sup> although the armed forces continued to be the source of political infighting and insecurity in Swaziland—a situation that the military has always had to take into consideration vis-à-vis broader civil-military relations within the country.

This dimension was given deeper significance when the King decided to appoint the army commander and his deputy as prime minister and



chair of the Civil Service Board (CSB) respectively. The appointments reflected a fusing of political–military relations with the King’s bureaucracy.

However, this arrangement and the ongoing restructuring of the armed forces suffered a setback in 1979 when the Army Commander and Prime Minister, Maphevu Dhlamini, died of natural causes. A power vacuum was created in the growing modern state institutions of the military and civil service, and attempts to address this vacuum appeared only to exacerbate an already difficult arrangement that was still in its experimental stages.

King Sobhuzha II appointed Deputy Army Commander and CSB Chair, Lt Col Dube, as Acting Prime Minister while the Commandant, Maj Jameson Ndizimande, was promoted to full colonel and appointed as substantive Commander of the Army on 12 February 1981.

Under the new arrangements, the former Deputy Army Commander was now Prime Minister, but with a lower military rank of lieutenant colonel; while his junior, the Commandant, now assumed command of the army with a superior rank of full colonel.

The military officers appointed to civilian posts regarded their army appointments as more important than the civilian posts. The latter were seen as almost ceremonial posts, and because of the differences in military ranks, this was a source of conflict between incumbents in the Prime Minister’s post and the Army Commander’s post.

The personal differences between the military officers was exacerbated by factions in the Royal House which split and joined the different camps. This development soon received the King’s attention, with factions imploring him to rescind his decision. After much discussion the King agreed and Army Commander Ndizimandze’s promotion was annulled.

The move then left no authority with adequate rank and stature in charge of the defence forces, and created animosity among the various factions that backed the different officers. The situation was complicated further a year later (1982) with the death of the King. His death left the service chiefs’ appointments unresolved and saw differences between the elites move beyond the military to the political.

A fierce power struggle erupted between the Royal House (that is, the Queen Mother who now exercised political authority as Regent) and the Traditional Advisory Council of the *Liqoqo*. During the next few years the Queen Mother alleged attempted assassinations, coups and other related unconstitutional methods to overthrow her. Furthermore, a

direct attempt to force her to hand over power was thwarted when she refused to abdicate her position.

The power struggle that had been kept at bay during King Sobhuzha II's long reign now surfaced. Prince Bhekimpi was eventually appointed Prime Minister amid rumours that some factions, including those colluding with the military, sought to usurp political power and the institution of the monarchy. Political activists added their voices to the crisis, arguing for the opening up of the political space. These included the Swaziland Federation of Trade Unions, the Swaziland Youth Congress, the Human Rights Association of Swaziland, and the People's United Democratic Movement.

A new attempt at resolving the impasse regarding the command element of the armed forces was made in 1983. Former Deputy and CSB Chair Lt Col Dube was removed from his Acting Prime Minister post, and after being promoted to brigadier was appointed Army Commander as well as Minister of Defence. The dual political and military appointment reflected the phenomenon whereby senior military officers were expected to discharge political responsibilities together with their command functions in the armed forces. Brig Dube's appointment as Minister of Defence found him reporting to the civilian ministry. But Ndzimandze, who was made Chief of Staff and therefore remained at Defence Headquarters, was perceived to be the effective military commander. By the following year, the situation between the two military commanders and their supporters had deteriorated and was fast becoming untenable.

Amid this tumultuous environment, Chief of Staff Col Ndzimandze and Police Commissioner Titus Msibi were both arrested and imprisoned, and later relieved of their duties under a newly promulgated 60-day detention order. Next, the staid pace of replacing the late King Sobhuzha II was accelerated with the appointment to the throne of King Mswati III by two years in 1986. These actions soon created conditions of stability and allowed the armed forces hierarchy to lower their political profile for a while.<sup>9</sup>

Externally motivated pressure on the monarchy at this time (1984) also saw the signing of a secret security understanding with South Africa. The agreement was to regulate relations between Swaziland and its larger, dominant neighbour until the early 1990s when Nelson Mandela was released and the ANC was un-banned.

South Africa dangled a carrot which it knew the Swazis would respond to, namely, the return of lost territories. The adjoining

'homelands' of KwaMashu and KwaNgwane, where the majority of inhabitants are of Swazi origin, was offered back to the Swazi nation as part of the co-operation agreement. It was only in late 1989 that this posture was abandoned by South Africa when President De Klerk started a process of power transfer to the ANC.

## RETURN TO PEACE

Rapid political developments swept through Southern Africa in the late 1980s. While the period 1984–1986 was the worst in terms of the impact of apartheid South Africa's destabilisation policy on the region, the next two years witnessed a rebound from the precipice.

The Nkomati Accord was signed between South Africa and Mozambique in March 1984, in effect representing an admission by the latter that Pretoria's actions were beginning to hurt its economy.<sup>10</sup> In theory, Mozambique agreed to desist from hosting ANC guerrilla units, while South Africa pledged to stop supporting Renamo. In practice, however, while Mozambique observed its side of the agreement, South Africa did not. This had severe security-related consequences for Swaziland.

In October 1986, Mozambican President Samora Machel died in a mysterious plane crash near the Swazi border, in an event that represented the apex of the conflict in the region. The physical departure of South African military influence in Swaziland towards the end of the 1980s also followed controversial assassinations and raids carried out by the SADF against ANC and PAC combatants in exile in Swaziland. In 1986–87, scores of South African guerrillas were hunted down and killed in Swaziland, culminating in tension and prompting student and worker protests.

But in 1988, apartheid South Africa signed the Bicesse Agreement with Angola under the supervision of the Troika comprising the US, Portugal and Russia, which provided for the withdrawal of Cuba and the independence of South West Africa, now Namibia. The following year the De Klerk regime in Pretoria announced the release of Nelson Mandela from prison and the ANC was un-banned soon after.

This thawing of relations in South and Southern Africa had a direct (but this time positive) impact on the security situation in Swaziland. And given the turmoil that had prevailed in Swazi political circles since the death of King Sobhuzha II in 1982, this newfound peace has allowed Swaziland to attend to the consolidation of the USDF without undue external influence, as outlined below.

### THE USDF IN THE 21ST CENTURY

The USDF is currently estimated to be about 3,000 strong, organised as follows (*see Figure 1*):

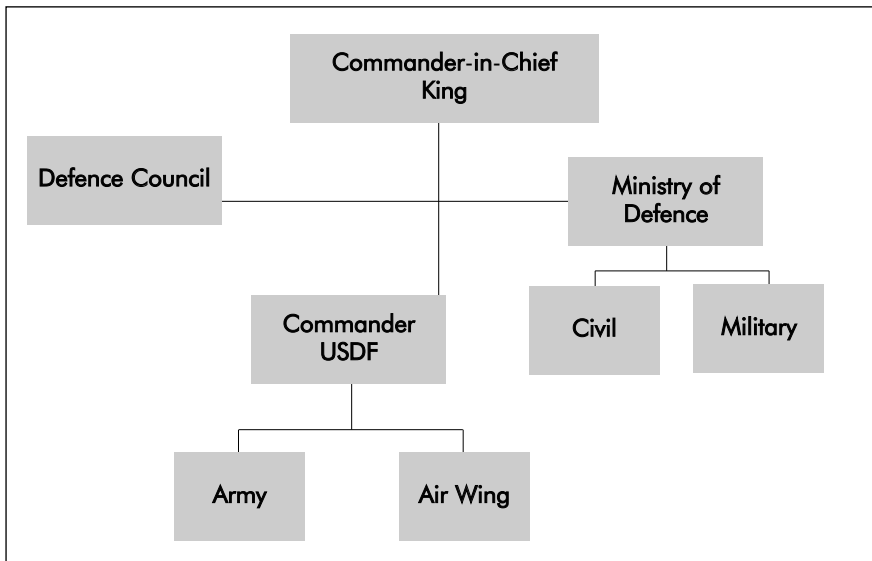
- The King as commander-in-chief.
- A Defence Council, which is responsible for advising the King on issues of national security and defence. The King appoints members to the Defence Council who are drawn from all walks of life. Among its membership is the USDF commander, who is an ex-officio member.
- A civilian-led Ministry of Defence manned by both civilian and defence force members and leaders. It is the political link between Parliament and the armed forces and is responsible for the daily political-military management of the defence forces.
- Headquarters commanded by a major general and a deputy brigadier.
- An Infantry Brigade—Formation.
- A small air wing, equipped with five planes, two helicopters, two small recce planes and two transporters, one of which is for VIP use.

### MILITARY EXPENDITURE

Expenditure on the military in Swaziland from 1973 to the mid-1980s appeared minimal and was funded almost exclusively by the King. Available information shows that during the 1990s Swaziland spent an average of 1.5% of gross domestic product (GDP) on military expenditure. For instance, approximately US\$23 million (or 1.9% of GDP) was expended during the 1995/96 financial year. There has been a steady increase in expenditure after 1999, averaging US\$30 million a year.<sup>11</sup>

Compared to other Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries, this expenditure places Swaziland in the middle band with, for example, South Africa, which is spending less than 2% of GDP on military expenditure—Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo are at the top end of the UN recommended maximum of 1.5% of GDP, while Malawi is at the bottom end of the scale.

Figure 1: Current organisation of the USDF



### SWAZILAND AND THE SADC REGIONAL STRUCTURE

Swaziland is a full member of SADC and participates in all its structures, including the Organ on Defence, Politics and Security. To this end, while hosting the Chair of the Organ in 1999, Swaziland was instrumental in arbitrating a potentially explosive inter-state situation between Angola and Zambia.

At the time, Angola accused Zambian government officials under President Frederick Chiluba of being complicit in the re-supply of arms, fuel and ammunition to Jonas Savimbi's UNITA.<sup>12</sup>

Swaziland's successful intervention demonstrated that the country is held in high regard by its neighbours and is seen as a full partner in the regional integration drive. However, this is a double-edged sword. By the same token, SADC has exercised its leverage in internal Swazi disputes.

At the 2004 Summit in Mauritius, SADC called on King Mswati III to address the constitutional impasse gripping his country and recommended that political parties be allowed to form, thereby creating conditions for further democratisation.

**CONCLUSION**

Swaziland has a military culture, and as far back as the late 16th century had organised regiments. The history of the Swazi armed forces since 1968 is understandably steeped in this traditional system, to which it remains wedded even today.

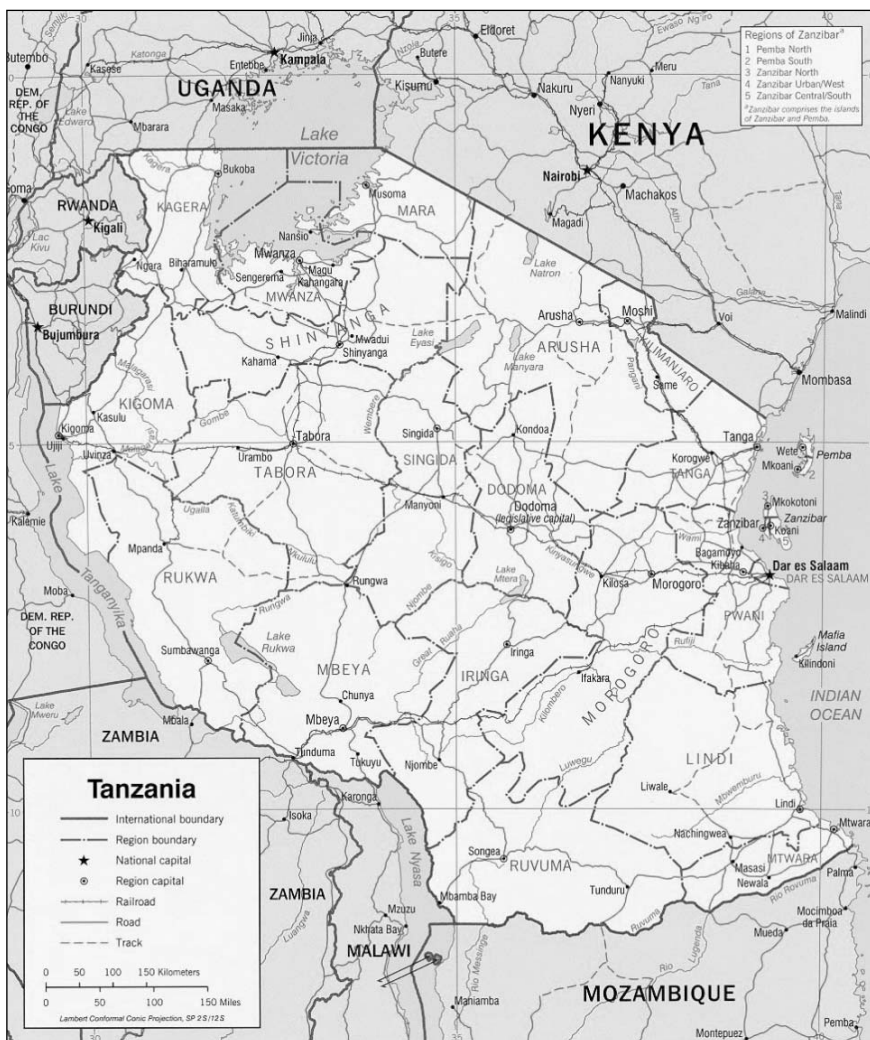
The British colonialists left the country with no more than a paramilitary capacity. A regular army with a mandate and responsibility for internal and external defence therefore had to be created from scratch.

Initially established with the expectation that the Second World War veterans would comprise the core of the new army, it was soon clear that the country needed more robust assistance from outside, which was provided by Kenya. Kenya's military assistance targeted the leadership and officer command-and-control element that was later to take charge of the new army. But Swaziland was to be caught up in the internal conflicts of its neighbours as well as in the regional warfare that lasted from the 1970s to the 1990s. Its nascent army was therefore clearly embroiled in the demands and dynamics of regional security associated with the armed struggle phase in Southern Africa. It was during this period that dimensions of border control and intelligence were extensively developed.

In practice, the Swazi experience represents complex formal and informal, modern and traditional decision-making nuances that are unique to the kingdom.

## NOTES

- 1 R Palmer & N Parsons (eds), *Roots of rural poverty in Central and Southern Africa*, London, Heinemann, 1999, pp 16-19. Statistics contained in this passage are drawn from this reference.
- 2 Ibid, pp 18, 24, 131.
- 3 Ibid, p 19.
- 4 Activists such as Clement Kadalie of Nyasaland (now Malawi) were instrumental in establishing ANC branches throughout Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and Malawi. Herman Toivo Ja Toivo of South West Africa (now Namibia) was also part of this generation, as were Joshua Nkomo and Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe.
- 5 J Kalley, *Swaziland election dossier 2003*, No. 1, EISA, Johannesburg, October 2003, pp 2-4.
- 6 See K Matlosa, Constitutional development, in *Swaziland election dossier 2003*, op cit, p 10.
- 7 J B Mzizi, The dominance of the Swazi monarchy and the moral dynamics of democratisation of the Swazi state, *Journal of African Elections* 3(1), June 2004, p 100.
- 8 *CIA Swaziland Fact File*, <[http://www.africa/swaziland\\_fact\\_file.htm](http://www.africa/swaziland_fact_file.htm)> (11 August 2004), p 3.
- 9 Prince Sibusiso Barnabas Dlamini was appointed Prime Minister on 9 August 1996 and since his tenure has allowed stability to return to the management of government affairs.
- 10 P Stiff, *The silent war: South African recce operations 1969–1994*, Galago, 1999, p 376.
- 11 *CIA country fact file*, <[http://www.thebtr.com/pages/Africa/Swaziland\\_fact\\_file.htm](http://www.thebtr.com/pages/Africa/Swaziland_fact_file.htm)> (11 August 2004), p 7.
- 12 O Manda, Swazi King in peace bid, *Sunday Times*, Lusaka, 9 May 1999.



Source: [www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/index.html](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/index.html)



# **A changing conception of defence: A historical perspective of the military in Tanzania**

Nestor Luanda

## **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter examines the historical development of the military in Tanzania, beginning with a background to the Tanganyika Rifles (TR). The legacies of Tanzania's colonial history form an essential background, providing the basis from which major adjustments were made at independence. The chapter then reviews early attempts at formulating a defence policy in Tanganyika. The country was initially pre-occupied with developmentalism, and it was only after 1963 that glimpses of foreign and defence policies began to emerge; the TR mutiny of January 1964 was the turning point in the conception of a defence policy.

Tanganyika's commitment to the liberation war from very early on provides another pillar in the country's conception of defence and foreign policies. The chapter then argues that from its inception the Tanzania Peoples' Defence Force (TPDF), largely an infantry army, was ideologically oriented. With the advent of multiparty politics and political liberalisation, however, this ideological orientation has been de-emphasised. As a result the conception of defence has also changed and become liberalised.

## **THE COLONIAL ROOT OF THE NATIONAL ARMY**

Since the King's African Rifles (KAR) was the precursor to the TR, we begin by outlining the main characteristics of the former in order to underscore the colonial roots of the latter. The KAR was inextricably

linked to the history of colonial conquest, pacification and occupation of East and Central Africa. Like many a colonial army, it was an adjunct of the colonial administration.

The KAR dates back to the days of chartered companies which had to raise local forces in order “to pacify the countries and to bring law and order”.<sup>1</sup> The forces were “scantily equipped levies armed with out-of-date rifles and employed on local expeditions against ill-armed tribes”.<sup>2</sup> KAR troops were mostly drawn from satrapic members of African societies; they were armed with antiquated rifles and possessed little superior marksmanship to that of the men they fought. These soldiers of fortune developed into a mercenary force with no local affinity to an area where they might be called on to operate, and controlled thousands of their own kind. The KAR was essentially an active service force whose main tasks were colonial pioneering, pacification, policing and counter-insurgency commitments.

However, the point stands that the KAR commanders held their African troops in contempt. The legendary loyalty and courage of the Askari was founded upon stereotyped inferior qualities of the African. When a new arrival asked a veteran KAR officer about the force, he commented:

... the great thing about the KAR is that they only enlist the thick ones to be soldiers, ... these are the ones that have plenty of *esprit de corps*, so long as there are European officers it can all be channelled in the right direction. The other trouble with all Africans, whether they're educated or uneducated, is that they are totally unreliable, but I imagine military discipline caters for that in the KAR.<sup>3</sup>

#### **PATTERN OF TRANSITION**

A permanent military barracks was established at Colito in Dar es Salaam in 1954, marking a watershed in the history of the military in Tanganyika. This 6th Battalion comprised rifle companies. Two years later the nucleus of a new battalion—the 26th Battalion, Kalewa Barracks—was formed at Urambo. Both battalions came under the control of East African Command and provided periodic garrison duty in Mauritius until 1957.

The point is that during crisis periods—notably the First and Second World Wars, and Mau Mau uprising—the War Office took control of the colonial forces. From 1957 to 1960, however, the respective governors

of Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika took control of the KAR units under a loose federal body called the East African Land Forces' Organisation; but the organisation was disbanded in 1960 and the KAR units were again taken over by the War Office.

In short, the 6th and 26th KAR battalions were forerunners of local constabulary forces designed for internal security duties in Tanganyika. They were indeed skeleton battalions whose companies fused, fissured or simply disbanded as expediency required; this holds true throughout the history of the two battalions. Another interesting feature of the 6th and 26th battalions is that they were continuously moved from place to place, but especially to Mauritius for garrison duty. A cynic once remarked that Tanganyika was unable to support military units and that the best way to avoid incurring maintenance costs was to let others do it by providing them in return with garrison duty.

There were other implications too. The 6th and 26th KAR battalions were particularly small; they were more or less a superior police force organised for rapid deployment to quell tax revolts, labour disputes or nationalist demonstrations. Dar es Salaam (Colito Barracks) and Tabora (Kalewa Barracks) were really transit camps or rest stations for the battalions' rotating units. The upshot is that technical and expert fields dealing with, among others, electrical, motor vehicle, weaponry, heavy machinery and engineering were concentrated in Kenya. A training wing (infantry) was not established at Colito Barracks until 1956. A number of interviewees for this study claim that despite their relatively good educational backgrounds, they were denied a chance to take specialised training.

Up to 1963 Kenya remained the centre for specialised courses such as signals, stores, medicine, driving and non-commissioned officers (NCOs). For example, 12 out of the first 18 top appointments in 1957 were Kenyans. It is unclear how many came from Uganda, but only one was from Tanganyika.<sup>4</sup>

Before the outbreak of the Second World War, the promotion of African NCOs was arduously slow. All command positions from top to bottom were occupied by the British. In theory, it would take an African soldier two years to become lance corporal, six years to become corporal, and 10 years to reach sergeant—but in practice very few Africans were promoted. Most Africans did not join the army for a career. However, during the Second World War years, and especially in the early 1950s, Africans in general began to be promoted to NCO positions and were first appointed as warrant officer platoon commanders (WOPCs).

But the responsibilities given to African NCOs, including WOPCs, was a façade: the British never allowed African NCOs to assume full command of a unit, be it a platoon or a section—there was always a British counterpart who was the senior of the two. For example, a platoon would have a British national service subaltern and an African WOPC. The African platoon commander would, however, take charge when it came to such arduous tasks as foot slogging. However, the African WOPC would have to report to the British subaltern for orders regarding every administrative, tactical or logistical decision. The same was true for platoon sergeants; they took orders from the British sergeants. The British in East Africa gave no serious thought to commissioning Africans until the late 1950s. As mentioned, the highest rank an African in the KAR could aspire to was WOPC. The rank gave the African a semblance of responsibility but it was an NCO rank nevertheless. In addition, the standard of education particularly among the WOPCs was appallingly low.

#### **THE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT AT INDEPENDENCE**

Both the 6th and 26th battalions were part of KAR's 11th Division. The 6th Battalion had distinguished itself in battle at Colito, Ethiopia during the First World War, with the Colito Barracks (1954) in Dar es Salaam named after that battle. The 26th Battalion had fought gallantly at Kalewa, Burma during the Second World War and the Kalewa Barracks (1956) in Tabora was named after that battle.

Minus the two world wars and the nationalist uprisings in the 1950s, colonial units were maintained through colonial revenues. Of Britain's East and Central African colonies, Tanganyika was the runt of the litter, so to speak, and the KAR units in colonial Tanganyika operated on a threadbare budget. The KAR in Tanganyika was a poorly equipped infantry army: the Mark IV, with pounder mortar and rocket launcher thrown in, was the KAR's most important weapon.

#### **THE SEARCH FOR A DEFENCE POLICY**

At independence on 9 December 1961 the KAR units in Tanganyika—namely the 6th and 26th battalions—became the First Battalion (at Colito Barracks in Dar es Salaam) and Second Battalion (at Kalewa Barracks in Tabora) Tanganyika Rifles respectively. It is important to emphasise that the change was in name only: the British continued to

hold sway. All commanding positions were held by British officers—35 British officers and 25 British NCOs (from the KAR) were inherited intact to command the TR.

During the first two years of independence Tanganyika did not formulate any articulate defence or foreign policy. It was only after 1963 when there were clear perceptions of an external threat that moves were made to establish a defence system to confront this threat.

Parliamentary debates are key to understanding the search for a national defence policy.<sup>5</sup> The substance of parliamentary debates during the pre-mutiny period was heavily oriented towards development policies as well as the strategies and tactics necessary to bring about this development. The dominant view was that British colonialism had been overthrown and the only task ahead worthy of attention was economic reconstruction. The ‘enemy’ was defined as poverty, ignorance and disease. There was even a pervasive sense of impatience and contempt towards those who looked beyond the borders to define the country’s enemies; such perceptions were seen at best as fantasies and at worst as deliberate diversions. This pre-occupation with internal enemies was underscored by the rather naive belief that the international environment was supportive of Tanganyika’s development efforts.

Questions of imperialism or neo-colonialism did not attract political attention until 1963. As Nyerere said: “The general concern was to take over the instruments of political power and to consolidate the political control of the country.”

Many African countries subscribed to the belief that political independence could be consolidated within the structural strictures of imperialism. Whether this was the objective reality of the time is a moot point. Generally, there was a pervasive influence of the political development and modernisation ideology, and its extreme pre-occupation with political stability and the maintenance of an environment conducive to imperialist exploitation.

Most parliamentary debates in early independent Tanganyika concerned issues of political, economic and social development. Those few debates that focused on foreign and defence policy issues were quite controversial and instructive.

Two opposite, broad propositions were taken on the question of defence: the pro-army position was that Tanganyika needed a sizeable professional army which would be responsible for defending its national borders and which could also make a contribution to the liberation struggle in Southern Africa. The anti-army position held that Tanganyika

had no external enemies and thus did not need a large army. It was argued that the nominal force inherited at independence should be deployed to undertake nation-building activities. The most extreme version of this argument was that Tanganyika should dissolve even the small force inherited at independence and place the country's defence in the hands of the United Nations, in order to demonstrate its peaceful intentions.

An interesting component of the debate was the position of the Liberation Committee, which had been established in Dar es Salaam in March 1963 after the Addis Ababa Summit. The issue was also tied up with the question of the position and activities of the liberation movements that had established offices in Dar es Salaam since 1962. At the international level questions were being raised about the legality of Tanganyika giving succour to forces hostile to other sovereign states (such as South Africa). On the home front, similar questions were raised in the National Assembly: some members felt that there had to be a total commitment to the liberation cause, even to the point of taking up the offensive, while others tended to be more cautious. On the whole, however, there was general consensus on engaging in some form of active support for the liberation struggles in the region.

A third issue that featured prominently in the 1963 debate concerned the position and role of British officers in the army. Those who expressed support for a strong defence force for both national security and liberation struggles were rather wary of the presence of British officers in command and training positions. They believed that the army they envisaged had to come under African command as soon as possible.

It is clear that between 1961 and early 1963, there were two contending schools of thought about national defence policy in Tanganyika. During this period the anti-army sentiment dominated the scene, and as a result no clear policy on defence had emerged by the end of 1962. However, by 1963 there emerged a strong perception of threat posed by the settler colonial regimes to the south of Tanganyika. Similarly, the young nation believed that it had a historical responsibility to participate in the liberation of Africa. While Tanganyika was still searching for a defence policy, its colonial inherited army mutinied in January 1964.

#### **THE TURNING POINT IN DEFENCE POLICY**

The January 1964 TR mutiny prompted a major change in the conception of defence and foreign policy. The mutiny was a turning

point in terms of Tanganyika's conception of the military, and the TR was overhauled and reorganised. According to the country's President, Mwalimu Julius K Nyerere: "Tanganyika has to reorganise and rebuild its army. We cannot afford a large or elaborate military establishment nor does our foreign policy require one. But our army must be efficient."<sup>6</sup>

At this stage Nyerere's conception of the military was informed by the conventional well-trained, professional and disciplined army. To all intents and purposes, Nyerere was still agonising over the conception of the military: "I request TANU Youth League [TYL] members wherever they are to go to enlist. We shall reconstruct our Republic's army from TYL members."<sup>7</sup>

Nyerere was resolutely opposed to military intervention in the political domain: "We will always oppose a system whereby the gun becomes the ballot box."<sup>8</sup> He believed that self-discipline, leadership, combat skills, determination, dexterity of mind, dedication to soldiering and corporate responsibility were the cornerstones of military professionalism.

The most important consideration in recruiting the new army was political loyalty to the ruling Tanganyika African Nationalist Union (TANU): membership of TANU was compulsory for recruitment into the army. A few days after the mutiny thousands of TYL members from across the country arrived in Dar es Salaam, responding to President Nyerere's appeal for recruitment into the new army. In May 1964 a few hundred members of the Zanzibar Youth League arrived in Dar es Salaam to be recruited into the new army.

It is important to emphasise that all recruits (including former TR officers and troops) had to pass through *Jeshi la Kujenga Taifa* (National Service) before they could be enlisted.

The new army, *Jeshi la Wananchi Tanzania* (JWTZ) was officially inaugurated in September 1964 with about 1,000 men. In his address to the newly created army at the National Stadium, President Nyerere emphasised the four requirements of loyalty, obedience, bravery and patriotism, and stressed the core concept of national service:

It is the government's intention that everyone shall go through National Service. In future the National Service will serve as the main gate. One will not proceed to any other profession without passing through the National Service ... . In future no one can join the Army without going through National Service first. We sent out people to summon you to come here. I presume they put you into two groups.

They told you that one group would be recruited directly into Tanganyika Rifles and the other group would join the National Service. We say, absolutely no ... All of you will have to go through National Service first.<sup>9</sup>

One can delineate three phases in the history of the military in Tanzania. The formative period, 1964–69, laid the foundation for the national army, during which much emphasis was placed on recruitment, training and laying the administrative infrastructure of the Tanzania People's Defence Force (TPDF). With assistance from Canada, an air transport unit was started during this period; however, the TPDF remained largely an infantry army. At its inception the TPDF boasted three battalions namely: the First Battalion at Lugalo in Dar es Salaam; the Second Battalion at Tabora; and the Third Battalion at Nachingwea. Units for heavy mortar and anti-aircraft were also formed during this period.

During the second period of consolidation from 1969–80, a naval wing was established with assistance from the Chinese. In 1979 an air defence regiment was established, with help from the former Soviet Union. Compulsory National Service remained the major recruiting ground for the TPDF. Both the TPDF and National Service fell under the Ministry of Defence. In 1975 the National Service, originally an autonomous organisation, became part of the TPDF; all officers of the National Service became officers of the TPDF. The commander of national service was responsible for all the affairs of nation building and production, while military matters became the responsibility of the commander of the defence force. It was also during this period that the TPDF was restructured into Eastern, Southern and Northern Infantry Brigades.

The most important point to make is that during both the first and second phases, the TPDF was an army of liberation. This is an important point to bear in mind in understanding the chequered history of the TPDF. In fact, when war broke out between Tanzania and Uganda, the battle-ready units were those of the Southern Brigade.

The third phase in the history of the military in Tanzania is the period 1980 to the present. This is a period of political liberalisation which has seen the military become de-politicised.

#### **TPDF: AN IDEOLOGICAL ARMY**

Within five years of its establishment the TPDF was slowly but surely moving beyond the conventional basic military requirements of loyalty,



obedience, bravery and patriotism. Over and above its normal functions, the TPDF was charged with the task of becoming a higher institution of learning as well as for disseminating *Ujamaa* (brotherhood). On Heroes Day, 1 September 1969, when the TPDF was also celebrating its fifth anniversary, President Nyerere said:

A soldier of Tanzania must be patriotic. It is imperative that our soldier understands the politics of our country. Our army must accept this fact. Otherwise, I am unable to tell the difference between you and the colonial [army]. Our army must accept the principle of equality. Our army must be the highest institution of learning in matters of defence and socialism.<sup>10</sup>

Nyerere was serious and quite emphatic about integrating the military into the ideological machinery of the sole ruling party, TANU/Afro—and later Chama cha Mapinduzi (CCM).

The Monduli Military Academy—whose precursor was the Kurasini Officer Cadet School—opened in 1974. The academy provided a grander opportunity to fulfil Nyerere's vision of putting the military under the mainstream political ideology of the party. The Monduli Military Academy catered for both military commanders and ruling party leaders and cadres. Graduates from the academy could be posted either to the military, the party or the government.

Army officers are [simultaneously] leaders of the party. We want our army officers to understand this. It is true we did not fight a [liberation] war. However, the military belongs to the Party. I do not have to say this to Frelimo. Frelimo knows this to be the case. One does not need to tell the Chinese that the military belongs to the Party. It would be like telling them that these are my eyes! My eyes are mine, [who] else's can they possibly be? The military is an instrument of the Party.<sup>11</sup>

The novelty of Nyerere's conception of the military was that he wanted a small, well-trained, highly professional and disciplined regular army, but one that was decidedly political. Furthermore, the TPDF was charged with the task of liberation:

In co-operation with other progressive forces [the TPDF] will continue to be the bulwark in the struggle for justice and [the]

liberation of Africa. Apart from its task of defence [the TPDF] is a liberation army.<sup>12</sup>

The significant point is that from its very inception the TPDF was recognised as being part of the ruling party.

A number of steps had already been taken to bring the military under the control of the party. But a much more significant step in the politicisation of the military was the formal institutionalisation of the CCM party in the armed forces and other sectors, such as the police and prisons, in 1987. The armed forces formally became *Mkoa wa Majeshi* of the sole ruling party, CCM. *Mkoa wa Majeshi* was represented in all the CCM organs on an equal footing with the other regions.

Politicisation of the military under one-party rule seriously eroded professionalism of the military. Discipline, leadership and corporate responsibility probably suffered most. The military command structure is founded on discipline and leadership, while political parties are premised on debate, argumentation, banter and even disagreement. The two do not mix well and Nyerere saw that this could undermine discipline in the military.

However, Nyerere staunchly believed that he could build an ideologically oriented, disciplined and professional army. The CCM party invention, *kofia mbili*, was hastily imposed on the military (and defence forces in general). Nyerere told the military commanders at the opening ceremony of a CCM meeting at the TPDF:

In your capacity as leaders of the Party you do not give many orders. As Party leaders you give elaborate explanations and engage in lengthy argumentation. However, you are also army commanders. In that capacity you do give orders and argumentation is restricted. We want a professional army. Military commanders should be professionalised to the highest possible standards. We want professionalism and discipline. The Army is a University for defence and socialism. CCM professes socialism. The Army must be an army of socialism.<sup>13</sup>

## CIVIL–MILITARY RELATIONS

Many are agreed that military professionalism is the decisive factor in keeping soldiers out of politics. Soldiers anywhere are technicians in the management and organisation of violence. It has been noted above that the role of the military is to provide force or the threat of force at the

behest of the state. However, the military cannot be run like a democracy. In other words, the military should be able to perform its violent tasks in a way that is responsible to public opinion and without compromising the political process. However, the use or threat of force even on a small scale can have catastrophic practical and political consequences if things go wrong.

All these issues have a significant bearing on civil–military relations. Civil control involves and entails the obedience which the military owes to the state. In simple terms, the military is one of a number of state instruments, such as the police and the diplomatic service. Like these other instruments, the military has a duty of loyalty to its employer, the state. On its own the military is not a competent authority to decide on defence policy—it can only advise.

#### **MULTIPARTY POLITICS AND THE CONCEPTION OF DEFENCE**

In 1991, a presidential commission, the Nyalali Commission, was set up to evaluate whether or not Tanzanians wanted a multiparty system of governance.<sup>14</sup> Based on its findings the Nyalali Commission recommended that Tanzania should adopt a multiparty democracy. The transformation of the political landscape in Tanzania from one-party rule to a multiparty system brought with it the reformulation of defence and security policy.

Currently, Tanzania boasts about 17 registered political parties. Liberalised political systems require that the military stays out of active politics. Accordingly, the Nyalali Commission recommended that soldiers may enjoy their civil right of association (as individual citizens they may join political parties), but should not actively demonstrate allegiance to any political party. Similarly, soldiers are not allowed to aspire for a leadership post in a political party.

Generally then, members of the TPDF enjoy the same fundamental rights as other citizens. However, owing to the unique nature of the armed forces and military service in particular, certain exceptions to this principle have been necessary. The exceptions are limited and specific. With specific reference to political participation, military personnel are entitled to vote in national and civic elections but shall not be members of any political party. Military personnel shall not attend political rallies in uniform except when they are on official duty.

During the one-party political regime the armed forces constituted a *Mkoa wa Majeshi* made up of four districts namely, the TPDF, the police,

prisons and armed units in the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar (Chuo Cha Mafunzo, JKU and KMKM). The armed forces *Mkoa wa Majeshi* (and its constituent districts) had political commissars.

The Nyalali Commission further recommended dissolution of the armed forces *Mkoa wa Majeshi*. In effect, this involved the banning of active politics in the armed forces. Similarly, political commissars were required either to remain in the military or to return to their former posts. However, the Nyalali Commission recommended that soldiers should receive instruction on the constitutions of the United Republic of Tanzania and the Zanzibar Revolutionary Government, as well as on nationalism—in a liberal democracy the military should receive training in national interests and core values, which should hopefully lead to responsible nationalism and nation building on the part of the military.

Peace, tranquillity and national unity form the cornerstones of the new vision and direction for defence. This new conception of defence places priority on the protection of Tanzania's national interests and core values which include: preservation of national independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and protection of natural resources; preservation of the Union; peace and tranquillity; democracy; economic prosperity and socio-economic development; regional peace and stability; and social justice.

Tanzania is a secular democratic state with a pluralist political system and a liberalised market economy. According to the constitution every citizen has the duty to protect, preserve and maintain the independence, sovereignty, territory and unity of the nation. In this regard, defence as part of national security is sought primarily through efforts intended to meet the political, economic, social and cultural rights and needs of Tanzanians through efforts to promote and maintain domestic security. In this regard, too, the defence forces (regular force, regular reserve and volunteer reserve) and disciplined forces (police, prisons and national service) should operate strictly within the bounds of the Constitution, domestic legislation and international humanitarian law.

The TPDF should respect human rights and the democratic process; it should neither further nor prejudice political interests. Much more significantly, the defence forces should be subordinate and fully accountable to civilian authority.

Civil–military relations refer to the hierarchy between the executive, Parliament and the armed forces, as well as to civil control over the armed forces. Stable civil–military relations depend to a great extent on the professionalism of the armed forces—professionalism should be

consistent with democracy, the constitution and international standards. In most developing countries democracy is understood and indeed limited to the physical exercise of the electorate casting votes in general or civic elections. Admittedly, democracies that sprung up during the last quarter of the 20th century—the greatest period of democratic ferment in the history of modern civilisation—are fragile and must live on compressed time.

Although the democratic wave has swept through sub-Saharan Africa, it has more often than not left distortions of democracy. There are certain defining components, the presence of which are indispensable to modern political democracy. These include the following:

- Control over government decisions about policy is constitutionally vested in elected officials.
- Elected officials are chosen in frequent and fairly conducted elections in which coercion is uncommon.
- Practically all adults have the right to vote in the election of officials.
- Practically all adults have the right to run for elective offices in government.
- Citizens have a right to express themselves on political matters, broadly defined, without the danger of severe punishment.
- Citizens have a right to seek out alternative sources of information. Moreover, alternative sources of information exist and are protected by law.
- Citizens also have the right to form relatively independent associations or organisations, including independent political parties and interest groups.
- Popularly elected officials must be able to exercise their constitutional powers without being subjected to overriding opposition from unelected officials. Democracy is in jeopardy if military officers, entrenched civil servants, or state managers retain the capacity to act independently of elected civilians or even veto decisions made by people's representatives.

- The polity must be self-governing; it must be able to act independently of constraints imposed by some other overriding political system.

A perusal of the defining components of modern political democracy would show that democracy could be inconsistent with defence policy. However, liberal democracy and its practice is essential to defence policy. In other words, democratic control of the defence and security forces is a cardinal principle in a liberal democratic constitution. Defence and security establishments should adhere strictly to the principle of subservience to civil authority and institutions.

There are essentially two mechanisms for democratic control of the military. The first mechanism involves a public relations exercise: the civil elite must demonstrate by work and deed that they are in control. Similarly, the defence forces themselves have a role to play: they should deliberately increase their public relations exercises by, for example, holding lectures at schools, opening up museums, and distributing publications, leaflets and flyers. The public relations exercise is significant because it situates the civil elites, the general population and the military to the grassroots. This in turn enhances democracy.

The second cornerstone of civilian control of the military is parliamentary oversight. This is a legalising mechanism for whatever transpires in the armed forces, and is an important element in democratic governance. It also enshrines democracy. It is also important that there should be joint training among senior military personnel, senior civilian government officials and those from civil society. These training exercises should be well thought out, integrated and regular.

In brief then, the mission of national defence is to defend national independence, the people, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the United Republic of Tanzania.

The specific tasks of the TPDF in a democratic Tanzania are, among others, to:

- make a contribution to Tanzania's foreign and security policies and their promotion;
- direct and provide a defence effort that meets the needs of the present, prepares for the future and insures against the unpredictable;
- create, develop and nurture a research and development organisation;

- generate modern, battle-winning forces and other defence capabilities to prevent conflicts and build stability, resolve crises and respond to emergencies, and protect and further national interests;
- support and render necessary assistance to the civil authorities in dealing with national emergencies and natural disasters;
- support and assist the civil power in internal security operations;
- contribute to peace-time support and humanitarian operations; and
- participate in national social and economic activities during peace time.

## CONCLUSION

Having mapped out the mission of national defence in Tanzania, we conclude by highlighting the threats that confront the military and discipline forces in the country. The nature and character of these threats manifest in a complex interplay of globalisation, regional and domestic processes. Most of the security threats are economic in nature and character, and also threaten territorial sovereignty and international co-operation. These global security threats include: illicit drug trafficking; small arms proliferation; displaced people, refugees and illegal immigrants; political intolerance; religious extremism; terrorism; and organised crime.

The continued growth in the number of sub-Saharan African countries with civilian governments chosen through multiparty competitive elections, testifies to the persistent ascendancy of democracy during the 1990s. Importantly, however, this democratic push has coincided with a marked increase in violent conflicts in the continent, which conflicts have accounted for more than half of all war-related deaths in the world during this period. The conflicts have further resulted in more than eight million refugees, returnees and displaced people. A geo-political survey of Africa shows with painful clarity that the continent is steeped in violent conflict for which the military is largely responsible.

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- 10 Jemadari Mkuu, mwalimu J K Nyerere, Ahutubia Wakati waKilele cha Sherehe za Miasa 20 ya Jeshi la Wananchi Tanzania (JWTZ) Uwanja wa Taifa, Dar e alaam, 1 September 1984 (mss in author's possession).
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- 13 Rais Mwalimu JK Nyerere, op cit.
- 14 Jamhuri ya Muungano wa Tanzania, Tume ya Rais ya Mfumo wa Chama Kimoja au Vyama Vingi vya Siasa, Kitabu cha Kwanza: Taarifana Mapendekezo ya Tume kuhusu Mfumo wa Siasa nchini Tanzania.







Source: [www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/index.html](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/index.html)

# The **Zambian military—trials, tribulations and hope**

Hanania Lungu & Naison Ngoma

## **THE CHALLENGES**

The military is an important part of a country's history, reflecting the challenges it has gone through, the problems it has encountered—and survived. In the case of Zambia, the military reflects its trials, tribulations and hopes. This chapter is a 'snap shot' of the Zambian defence and security forces. It cannot be a full history of the defence force, which spans the entire history of the country itself; neither can it contain all the details of the past 40 years, which reflect Zambia's modern history. Rather, this is an attempt at recording some of the many issues in the birth of a country; its survival through the traumatic era of independence struggles when the Southern African region faced formidable enemies; and finally the political growth of a state whose government, people and their military have focused on a brighter, more peaceful and secure environment for both themselves and the region at large.

The chapter begins by tracking the formation of the Zambia Army and Air Force in the new state of Zambia, and follows the trauma of its political growth which was characterised by the transition from a plural political system to a single party system and, finally, a return to multipartism. The focus here will be on the establishment of the new army and air force; the 'false' sharing of the military arsenal held during the previous federal government system; and the robust changes taken to meet the challenges at hand.

The next epoch of Zambia's military history traces some of the major issues that the military had to go through during the liberation wars and

insurgencies that were waged in Southern Africa for the ‘heart and soul’ of the region. The issue of the military in a democracy is then addressed, followed by an assessment of some intra-state and regional challenges that the military is set to face.

### **BIRTH OF A MILITARY**

The first Zambian government at independence on 24 October 1964 was formed by the United National Independence Party (UNIP), which ruled Zambia from independence until 1991. Certain that it was poised to form the first government of an independent state, UNIP had in its manifesto thought through some issues about the defence and security of an independent Zambia. UNIP’s 1962 manifesto states as follows:

When a UNIP government is formed, the armed forces of Zambia will be strengthened and made more efficient in order to ensure internal security and to provide effective Defence against external aggression. However, a self-governing Zambia will be entitled to the benefits of the Commonwealth Defence schemes .... A UNIP government will pursue a policy of non-alignment. A free Zambia will not align itself with either the West or the East.<sup>1</sup>

### ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ZAMBIA ARMY AND AIR FORCE

During the colonial period, the colonial authorities established a police force to look after their security needs, known as the Northern Rhodesia Police (Military). On 28 April 1933, this title was changed to Northern Rhodesia Regiment,<sup>2</sup> and at independence the Northern Rhodesia Regiment became the Zambia Army.

In the case of the air force, however, Northern Rhodesian needs were covered by the air force of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, known as the Royal Rhodesia Air Force (RRAF), and which was under the Central African Command.

Following the dissolution of the federation in 1963, the Northern Rhodesian government changed the title of the air force to ‘air wing’ and that of the territorial force of the air force to the ‘auxiliary air wing’.<sup>3</sup> At independence, the Northern Rhodesia Air Wing became the Zambia Air Force in accordance with the Zambia Independence Order, 1964, the Republic of Zambia (modifications and adaptations) (General) Order, 1964, para 3(l), which states:

Any reference in the existing laws to the ‘military forces of the territory’ shall be read and construed in respect of any time, or any period commencing on or after the appointed day as if it were a reference to the Defence Force.<sup>4</sup>

The nature and character of the pre-1964 history of the Zambian military is critical to understanding subsequent developments in the post-colonial era.

#### THE FALSE SHARING OF THE MILITARY ARSENAL

Zambia’s treatment at independence in the case of the two Rhodesias may probably go down as one of the greatest injustices ever to occur in the sharing of goods and services between states previously in a federal system of government. This was particularly evident in the sharing of the military arsenal between the two Rhodesias.

Northern Rhodesia was the richest territory in the federation, despite the federation’s capital being in Southern Rhodesia. One would therefore have expected the sharing to have been in favour of the highest contributor to the purchase of that equipment—or, at the least, an equitable distribution. This was not to be.

Southern Rhodesia received the lion’s share, leaving the new state of Zambia with some old and out-of-service aircraft (four DC-3 Dakotas and two Pembrokes) and little of anything else. In addition, the new state of Zambia did not have its own indigenous officer corps—all officers were from the British Army and the British Royal Air Force, or from the ‘white’ settler communities from both Southern and Northern Rhodesias (now Zimbabwe and Zambia respectively) who had decided to cast their lot with Salisbury—another distinction for Southern Rhodesia. The dishonest nature of the British colonial power on this matter is best illustrated by Martin Rupiya who in his doctoral dissertation writes:

When dissolution faced Central Africa, Britain’s arbitration at the Victoria Conference was uneven. She allowed all the weapons to be retained by S. Rhodesia and when she was challenged in the international United Nations (UN) Security Council chambers, used her veto power, for the first time since Suez in 1956. In the middle and late 1950s, the motive to have a powerful air force changed from Dominion status to becoming the corner stone and pillar supporting white minority rule.<sup>5</sup>

**Table 1: Organisation of the Royal Rhodesian Air Force during the Central African Federation**

No. 1 Squadron	Day Fighter/Ground Attack
No. 2 Squadron	Ground Attack/Advanced Flying Training
No. 3 Squadron	Transport Supply
No. 4 Squadron	Light Ground Attack/Basic Flying Training
No. 5 Squadron	Light Bomber/Ground Attack/Photographic Recce
No. 6 Squadron	Flying Training
No. 7 Squadron	Vertical Support – Helicopters

Some of the aircraft ought to have been shared following the massive contribution by the Northern Rhodesian treasury of £300,000 over three years towards the purchasing of the aircraft and the costs for aircrew, engineers and technicians.<sup>6</sup> Table 1 provides an indication of the size of the air force that the Northern Rhodesian government contributed towards. This imbalance continued to exist right through the tumultuous history of the Southern African region, characterised by the liberation wars fought by the Zimbabwean nationalists organised as the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) representing the Shona in the central, eastern and northern parts of the country, and the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), identified with the Ndebele in the south, in what had now become Rhodesia. It is, of course, a matter of conjecture (and dealt with later) what effect this military imbalance had on both Zimbabwe's liberation struggle as well as on Zambia's ability to ensure its own peace and security.

#### THE INDEPENDENCE ORDER OF BATTLE

The Zambia Defence Force was established at independence in 1964 under CAP 131 of the Laws of Zambia, section 4(1), which on the maintenance of the defence force stipulates that the new republican defence force shall consist of an army and an air force as follows:

*An army comprising:*

- the regular force of the army;
- the home guard;
- the army reserve; and
- the territorial army reserve.

*An air force comprising:*

- the regular force of the air force;
- the auxiliary air force;
- the air force reserve; and
- the auxiliary air force reserve.

CAP 131 under section 5 also indicates the employment of the defence force and that it shall be charged with the defence of Zambia and with such other duties as may from time to time be determined by the republican president. Section 6 covers the employment of the defence force outside the republic in whole or in part, while section 7 provides for the establishment of a Defence Council which shall advise the president on such matters of policy and matters affecting the command, discipline and administration of the defence force. The Defence Council was also designed to perform such other functions and duties as the president may refer to it from time to time.

Another important provision in CAP 131 is section 165, which relates to the command of the defence force. Under this provision the president shall appoint an officer to be the commander of the army and another officer to be the commander of the air force.

On independence day, 24 October 1964, the defence force inherited the army headquarters from the colonial forces, as well as a brigade group comprising:

- brigade headquarters in Ndola;
- two infantry battalions;
- one armour squadron;
- one artillery battery;
- one squadron of engineers;
- one signals squadron;
- one transport squadron;
- one ordinance supply company;
- one medical unit; and
- one training school.

The defence force also inherited the British Joint Services Training Team (BJSTT), established to train Zambians on the various army and air force jobs. The circumstances prevailing meant that the defence force had to be run and commanded by British officers and men. However, the hostile political environment with Zambia's southern neighbours who

had yet to achieve political independence required that the new defence force seek an urgent solution to its dilemma whereby it was commanded by officers whose loyalty could not be guaranteed.

The presence in Zambia of liberation movements from Rhodesia, Mozambique, Angola and South Africa made Zambia a military target, especially since it did not have an adequately manned and equipped defence force. It was therefore important that the country should consider accelerated training of its indigenous peoples as a solution to the threat it was facing.

#### ENTER ZAMBIANISATION

The process of indigenisation referred to as 'Zambianisation', started in 1963 just before the first Zambian Army officers graduated from the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. The Royal Air Force (RAF) at RAF South Cerney, RAF Church Fenton, RAF Biken Hill and RAF Granwell trained air force officers. Professional training for pilots was introduced in Zambia at ZAF Livingstone, and some aircraft technicians were trained at RAF institutions in the United Kingdom. Soldiers were trained in Zambia.

With an exclusive focus on male candidates, the defence force recruited volunteers from all parts of Zambia regardless of colour, religion or tribe. The recruits and officer cadets were not allowed to be active in politics and were required to sign a declaration stating such.

British defence personnel were replaced by Zambians, as well as by some contracted personnel from 'friendly' countries such as India and Ghana. The first Zambian army and air force commanders were appointed in 1971. In 1973 the first female officers and other ranks were recruited into the military. The air force took longer to indigenise due to its technical nature and since indigenous people had in the past not been given opportunities to join.

#### GROWTH AND EXPANSION

As indicated earlier, the Zambia Defence Force inherited at independence could not match the magnitude of the threat facing the country from the 1970s onwards. Consequently, Zambia had to redesign and expand its defence force. New and more equipment was purchased and new air force bases and army barracks were built, coupled with unprecedented levels of personnel recruitment and training from 1963 to 1980.



In line with its pre-independence declared policy of non-alignment, Zambia procured military equipment from various countries including Britain, Italy, Yugoslavia, India, China and the Soviet Union. Some countries which were sympathetic to the liberation struggle in Southern Africa, such as China, even donated equipment to Zambia. Officers and men were sent abroad for training in such countries as Britain, Canada, Italy, Yugoslavia, India, the Soviet Union, China and Pakistan. Likewise, training teams from some of these countries were contracted to train Zambians locally. Several training institutions were established, which then meant that training abroad was minimised.

All these developments were taking place in a very hostile environment; Zambia was being attacked by the colonial and racist regimes under the pretext of their 'hot pursuit' of freedom fighters. Against all odds, the Zambia Defence Force expanded rapidly and was able to face the threat squarely by the time the liberation wars reached their peak from the late 1970s to 1980.

Young, inexperienced and relatively out-resourced, the Zambian military nevertheless had to withstand many challenges—this meant that it had to mature within a very short period of time. The wars of liberation and internal instability played a significant role in maturing the military; however, the administrative development of the country's military posed some serious challenges.

At independence the defence force inherited a non-unified command structure in which the commanders of the army and air force reported individually and directly to the commander-in-chief through the minister of defence—the arrangement that is presently followed.

However, during the mid 1970s there was a desire to seek better co-ordination between the two services—especially since the country was at that time experiencing some serious threats by the settler regimes in Angola, Mozambique, Rhodesia and South Africa. The Zambia National Service (ZNS) was yet to be formed.

In 1976 the President announced that the defence force would now employ a unified command system. The defence force—comprising the army, air force and the ZNS—was to be known as the Zambia National Defence Force (ZNDF). The Commander of the Army, Maj Gen Kingsley Chinkuli (presently Zambia's ambassador to Germany) was made commander of the new ZNDF and was promoted to the rank of full general, while the Commander of the Air Force, Air Commodore Peter Zuze, was made Deputy Commander of the ZNDF and promoted to lieutenant general. The air force rank nomenclature that was identical

to that of the British Royal Air Force was changed to that used by the army. The 'symbolic' change in uniform was, however, not well received by Zambia Air Force personnel, judging by the ultimate switch back to the traditional 'blue'.

Nonetheless, there was seemingly a firm political decision to achieve a strongly unified military force. A general staff was created to oversee and co-ordinate operations of the ZNDF, and the army, air force and ZNS were each headed by a chief of staff co-located in Arrakan, an army barracks in Lusaka.

Regional commands were established in each province of Zambia—including where there were no military units. Members of the different services were cross-posted to units not necessarily of their original service. Some army officers were therefore posted to command air force units and vice versa. Even staff cars were cross-posted—including relatively new air force staff cars that were 'posted' to the army and old ones from the army to the air force.

Most senior appointments in the ZNDF were filled by army officers; a move that created resentment and rejection of the ZNDF by the air force and ZNS, which felt dominated by the army. The general feeling was that their identity was obscured and their professionalism interfered with. The extent to which the latter could be regarded as a reality is debatable. Nevertheless, the system created discomfort for the chiefs of staff, who felt overshadowed and over supervised. Consequently, the ZNDF was disbanded in 1980 and the defence force reverted to the command system inherited at independence.

However, some value of the system appeared to have been identified clearly enough; in 1990 Lt Gen Hanania Lungu, then Air Commander, was appointed Minister of Defence in a unified command structure, re-introduced with some modifications. This time, the army, air force and ZNS headquarters were at different locations. The services maintained their structures and autonomy but the commanders reported to the chief of general staff. In essence, a Department of Defence had been created; however, Lt Gen Lungu—the new Minister of Defence—was also appointed chief of general staff to oversee the transition up to the eventual appointment of a chief of the defence force.

With the re-introduction of a multiparty system of government in 1991 under a new political party—the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD)—the unified command structure was abolished and the defence force structure reverted to that inherited at independence. Zambia has continued with this system, making the Zambia Defence

Force unique in a region where all defence forces employ a unified command structure.

### THE ERA OF TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS

The challenges that faced the Zambian military took a number of forms. The most serious was as a result of the Zambian government's commitment to support liberation movements in the Southern African region. This undertaking brought immense suffering to the people of Zambia, and the related insurgency operations by neighbouring states challenged the military.

Another set of challenges involved the attempts at unconstitutional changes of government.

### LIBERATION WARS AND INSURGENCIES

The young republic—and consequently the equally young military—had to deal with aggression by the numerically larger and better equipped militaries of the 'white' settler regimes of Portuguese Angola and Mozambique, Rhodesia and South Africa. Faced with the decision of providing refuge and a staging point for the liberation movements from these countries and collaborating with them, the Zambian government chose the former.

The decision unleashed repeated intrusions by the enemy forces into Zambia, leaving destruction, injury and death in their wake. The Zambian military was kept on continuous operational duties until 1994 when South Africa finally became a democratic state.

The aggressive attacks by South Africa's infamous race units, Rhodesia's 'D' Squadron, Special Air Services and Selous Scouts complemented by their regular army and air force units, only served to mature and harden the Zambian military.<sup>7</sup>

Insurgents trained and equipped by apartheid South Africa also subjected the Zambian military to attacks. In what was code-named 'Operation Plathond', the Bureau for State Security and the South African Defence Force joint operation unleashed the Mushala insurgency on the Zambian government, designed to destabilise it and that way reduce or indeed stop it from providing support to the African National Congress.<sup>8</sup>

The 200-strong insurgency led by Adamson Mushala (a former wildlife game ranger) under the command of Col Jannie Breytenbach of

South Africa's first Special Forces unit operated in the jungles of north-western Zambia from 1976 to 1982.<sup>9</sup> The group killed and destroyed property until it was defeated by the Zambia Army. Adamson Mushala was himself shot dead by the Zambia Army in 1982, putting an end to the eight-year scourge of abductions, looting and burning of villages, destruction of state infrastructure and general attacks on selected targets in the province. The insurgency was destroyed before it could spread to other parts of the country.

The experience gained by the military during its counter-insurgency operations in Zambia's North-Western province came in handy when it was confronted by yet another insurgency in the country's Eastern province. The Mozambique National Resistance (sometimes referred to by its Portuguese acronym Renamo) carried out incursions into Zambia in the 1990s, burning villages and killing and abducting villagers. The Zambian military counter-insurgency operations in the area finally ended the incursions.

#### ATTEMPTS AT UNCONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES OF GOVERNMENT

A dimension of instability that is often difficult to write about is that of the military itself, or part of it, being the cause of instability. It is true, however, that the military has also been known to be the institution that reverses the problem; in the case of Zambia, the latter has indeed been the case.

The military in Zambia—unlike its counterparts elsewhere in Africa—has been able to defeat efforts by disaffected members of the military and population, as well as the designs by other forces external to the country, to change the government through illegal means. The military coup attempts in 1980, 1989, 1990 and 1997 failed due to the commitment of the Zambian defence and security forces to democratic ideals.<sup>10</sup>

#### THE MILITARY IN A DEMOCRACY

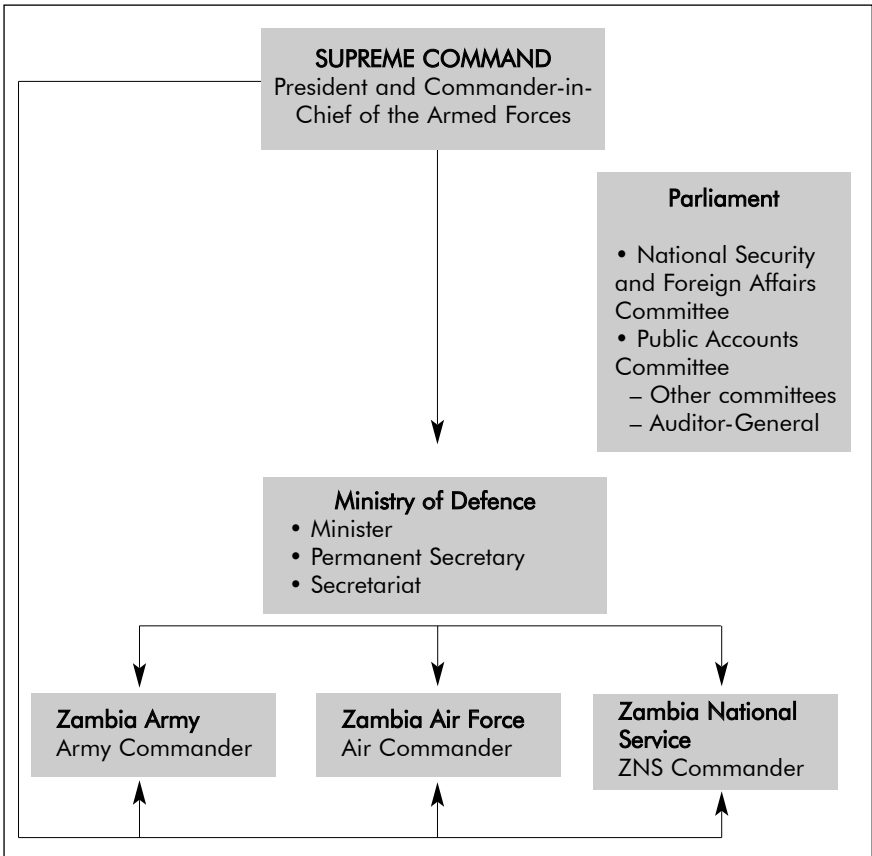
Discussion of the military in a democracy presupposes a variety of notions, including the extent to which the defence and security forces have been able to exist in an era of high political activity. In the case of a democratic space—generally interpreted to suggest a multiparty environment in which the government usually adopts liberal economic policies—of interest would be to see how the defence forces adapted to the changes taking place at the political level.

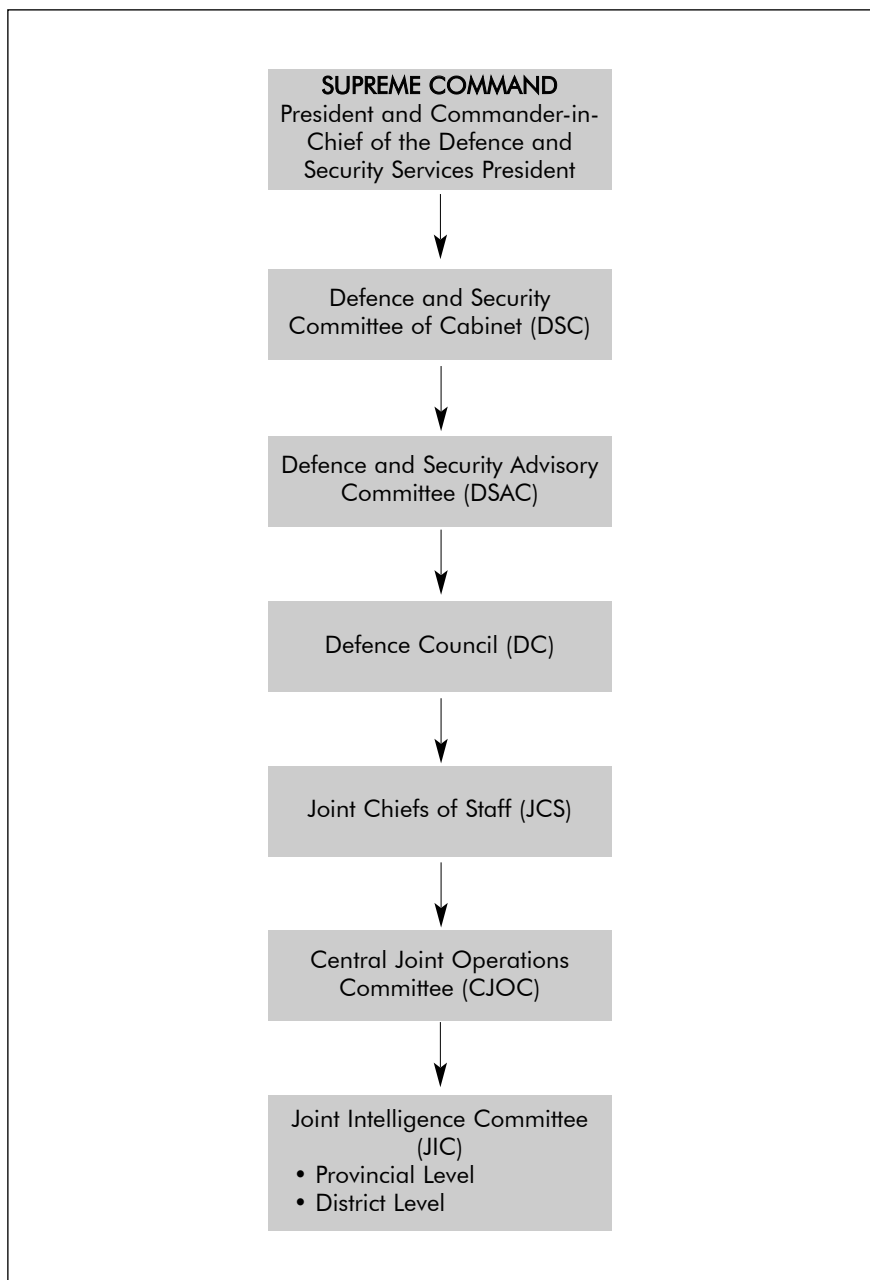
In the case of Zambia, three distinct eras may be identified: 1994–1973 when the country was under a multiparty political system; 1973–1991 when the country was under a single-party system;<sup>11</sup> and 1991 to the present period, with the country once again governed by a multiparty system. We turn now to the military’s response to these different political experiences.

THE CONTEMPORARY DEFENCE FORCE

The Zambia Defence Force is unique in two ways: first, the defence force does not employ a joint or unified command system of

Figure 1: An administrative layout of the lines and levels of authority in Zambia’s armed forces



**Figure 2: Operational structure of the defence and security services in Zambia**

administration where there is a single commander of the force. Instead, the commanders of the army and the air force report independently and directly to the commander-in-chief (the republican president) through the Ministry of Defence.

Second, the ZNS is part of the defence force in the sense that it is a strategic reserve for the army and the air force and therefore provides resources when required. This service, which in many respects is different from the traditional military structures exhibited by the army and air force, was established and is maintained under CAP 121, Part 2 of the Laws of Zambia. A similar message is repeated in Part 7, sections 24(2) and 25, which state that “the functions of the service shall include the training of citizens to serve the Republic and the employment of its members in tasks of national importance of which the defence of the Republic is a part”.<sup>12</sup> The ZNS was designed to be largely developmentally oriented, with arming, bricklaying and carpentry as some of the service’s major activities.

The army, air force and ZNS are nevertheless organically interlinked and complementary in their functions. Figures 1 and 2 show the administrative and operational structure of Zambia’s armed forces.

Although the defence services mentioned in Figure 1 operate as distinct entities, their operational functions are co-ordinated by the Ministry of Defence. Figure 2 shows operational level command-and-control. At the apex of the command-and-control hierarchy is the Defence and Security Committee, which comprises Cabinet ministers and is chaired by the president. Below this is the Defence and Security Advisory Committee, which is chaired by the minister of defence. This Committee is responsible for the military and other security institutions such as the Intelligence Branch, Police Service, the Immigration Department and the Anti Drug Commission.

Critical to the operation of the defence sector is the amount of resources available to it. With an economy not yet performing as well as it used to in the 1960s and 1970s when the country’s resource base (copper) was at its highest, coupled with myriad social and political demands, the needs of the Zambia military are not always met. Table 2 shows the current force level of the country’s 18,000-strong active force.

#### PROFESSIONALISM AND DEMOCRACY

The level of stockholding has not affected the performance of Zambia’s military. During the difficult period from the 1970s to the early 1990s,

Table 2: Zambia's force levels

Service	Force level	Units	Equipment	Forces abroad
<b>ARMY</b>	16,500		<b>MBT</b> 10 T-55, 20 PRC Type-59	<b>DRC</b> (MONUC): 21 include 18 obs <b>Ethiopia/Eritrea</b> (UNAMEE): 14 include 10 obs <b>Sierra Leone</b> (UNAMSIL): 833 include 9 obs
	3	bde Hq	<b>LT TK</b> 30 PT-76	
	1	Arty regt	<b>RECCE</b> 70 BRDM-1/-2 (~30 serviceable)	
	9	Infantry bn	<b>APC</b> 13 BTR-60	
	1	Engr regt	<b>TOWED ARTY 76mm:</b> 35M-1942; 105mm; 18 Model 56 pack; <b>122mm;</b> 25 D-30; <b>130mm: 18 M-46</b>	
	1	Armd regt -1 tank bn -1 armd recce bn	<b>MRL 122mm:</b> 50 BM-21 (~12 serviceable)  <b>MOR 81mm:</b> 55; <b>82mm:</b> 24; <b>120mm:</b> 12 <b>ATGW</b> AT-3 Sagger <b>RL 73mm:</b> RPG-7 <b>RCL 57mm:</b> 12 M-18; <b>75mm:</b> M-20; <b>84mm:</b> <i>Carl Gustav</i> <b>AD GUNS 20mm:</b> 50 M-55 triple; <b>37mm:</b> 40 M-1939; <b>57mm:</b> ~30 S-60; <b>85mm:</b> 16 KS-12 <b>SAM SA-7</b>	
<b>AIR FORCE</b>	1,600			A few on obs in UN missions
	1 sqn (12)	<b>FGA</b>	F-6 (MiG-19)	
	1 sqn (12)	<b>FGA/</b>	MiG-21 MF	
	(8 being refurbished)	<b>Interceptor</b>		
	1 sqn	<b>TPT</b>	4 An-26, 4 C-47, 4 DHC-5D, 4 Y-12(11)	
	1	<b>VIP Transport</b>	1 HS-748, 2 Yak-40	
		<b>Liaison</b>	5 Do-28	
		<b>Training</b>	2 F-5T, 2 MiG-21U, 12 Galeb G-2, 15 MB 326GB, 8 SF-260MZ, 8 K-8	
	1 sqn	<b>Helicopter</b>	4 AB-205A, 5 AB-212, 12 Mi-8	
		<b>Liaison Helicopter</b>	12 AB-47G	
		<b>Missiles</b>	ASM 1T-3 Sagger, SAM 1 bn; 3 bty: SA-3 Goa	
<b>PARA-MILITARY</b>	1,400 (2 bn)		Mobile Unit & Police Paramilitary Unit	

Source: IISS Military Balance, 2003-2004, pp 226-227



the good military performance was largely the result of the highly professional way in which the defence force carried out its tasks, despite it being severely under resourced.

Possibly the most trying factor on Zambia's military was the country's fluctuating political landscape. Zambia was initially governed by a multiparty democracy from 1964–1973, then by a one-party system of government from 1973–1991, and is now once again using a multiparty system.

One would expect differing professional standards among the defence and security forces during these periods. Furthermore, the fact that the defence and security services were highly interwoven in the political structure of the one-party state would imply their intense politicisation, and consequently an expectation by 'conventional wisdom' that the level of professionalism would correspondingly drop.

Indeed, the defence and security services were extremely close to the party political and governmental structures, to the extent that service chiefs were members of the party Central Committee, and some were even appointed to political and governmental positions, such as district governors, cabinet ministers and diplomats. Additionally, this period coincided with the time of Zambia's highest security risk, and the successful way in which the defence and security forces responded to the challenge reflects their high professional standards.

Furthermore, the military's easy adaptation to the reintroduction of multipartism highlights the extent to which it has remained focused on its primary role of providing peace and security to Zambia, regardless of the political system that obtains at the time. The presumed inverse relationship between professionalism and democracy has, at least in the Zambian case, not been apparent.

#### THE MILITARY AND TENETS OF GOOD GOVERNANCE

Just as much as the military in Zambia has maintained its professionalism over time, so has it also responded positively to the challenges of good governance, which demand a defence and security force that is both transparent and accountable.

In this respect, the military in Zambia has during the post-1991 era been subjected to stringent parliamentary oversight. This has been conducted by a number of parliamentary committees (mainly the Committee on National Security and Foreign Affairs and the Public Accounts Committee) as well as by the Office of the Auditor-General.

The auditor-general, who is an officer of the National Assembly, releases an annual report on the financial activities of government—and the defence sector is one such government department that is studied. The auditor-general's report usually identifies any cases of unconstitutional expenditure, and the report is considered by the various parliamentary committees. Since the report is available to all, the executive, and indeed the Zambia Army, Air Force, ZNS, Police and Security Intelligence Service can note the findings and explain these to the relevant parliamentary committees as well as to the executive, while also undertaking corrective measures where possible and appropriate.

The auditor-general has often observed cases of both excess and under expenditure, as well as inappropriate procurement and acquisition of goods and services, some of which border on corruption and corrupt practices.

Since the resumption of open debates in Parliament, the executive has tended to act decisively on some of these cases. There are currently parallel investigations<sup>13</sup> on what is popularly referred to as the 'plundering of state resources'. The auditor-general's report on the accounts for the financial year ended 31 December 2002 has revealed some severe cases of unconstitutional expenditure.

### **INTRA-STATE AND REGIONAL CHALLENGES**

Inasmuch as Zambia's defence and security forces have responded positively to the various challenges they have encountered, their contribution to the overall goal of human security may be seen in their operation in non-traditional areas, such as food production and disaster relief, both within the country and the region.

In addition, the military has been actively involved in the maintenance of peace and security under the UN. The Zambia Defence Force and other security wings have participated in peacekeeping operations in Chad, Angola, Yugoslavia, Mozambique, Burundi and most recently in Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Zambia remains an active member of the Southern African Development Community and of its Inter-State Defence and Security Committee, which is attempting to harmonise the region's defence and security needs. Towards this end, Zambia has been an active participant in a number of regional exercises that, among others, are required in order to achieve the interoperability needed for collaborative missions.

HIV/AIDS is another challenge, the exact magnitude of which has yet

to be determined beyond the mere acceptance of its seriousness as a global, continental, regional and national challenge. Any significant statistical evidence showing the magnitude of the pandemic in the military has been described as ‘speculative’.<sup>14</sup> The need for intensive research in this area is one of the major tasks facing Zambia as it tackles the pandemic at national level.

## NOTES

- 1 UNIP Manifesto 1962, (1) and (2).
- 2 General Notice No. 192 of 1933.
- 3 *Northern Rhodesia Gazette Supplement Government Notice*, 1964, Vol. 1, Government Notice No. 28 of 1964, p 333.
- 4 *Northern Rhodesia Gazette Supplement Government Notice*, 1964, Vol. 2, Government Notice No. 497 of 1964, p 1967.
- 5 M Rupiya, *The development of the Southern Rhodesia military system from the 1926 Defence Act to the dissolution of the Federation in December 1963*, unpublished PhD thesis, University of Zimbabwe, 2001.
- 6 See D Cowdrey & R C Nesbit, *War in the air: Rhodesian Air Force 1935–1980*, Calgo, South Africa; and R Wellenky, Comments, *Annual Defence Report*, 31 December 1959, p 113.
- 7 See also JRT Wood, Rhodesian insurgency, <<http://home.wanadoo.nl/rhodesia/wood2.htm>>
- 8 <<http://www.stanford.edu/class/history48q/Documents/EMBARGO/2chap>>
- 9 <<http://skylla.wz-berlin.de/pdf/2001/p01-304.pdf>>
- 10 See also G Machona, A harvest of treason trials, in A Onadipe & D Lord, *African media and conflict*, <[http://www.c-r.org/pubs/occ\\_papers/afmedia/machona.shtm](http://www.c-r.org/pubs/occ_papers/afmedia/machona.shtm)>.
- 11 The government regarded this period as a ‘one-party participatory democracy’. In view of the various forms of democracies or levels of democracies, it may therefore be argued that the period exhibited a sort of democracy.
- 12 Part 7 sections 24(2) and 25(1)-(2) provide the ZNS’s function in times of national insecurity or war through the use of arms and weapons of war. During the war of liberation in the region, some members of the ZNS saw active service and a number were killed. Their level of performance was high, evidenced by the various commendations received for their heroism during active service.
- 13 The Zambian government is currently undertaking widespread investigations of cases of theft of government resources. President Frederick Chiluba and some senior members of the executive, including former head of the country’s Security Intelligence Service, have since been charged and are already appearing in court. This action by the Zambian government is unprecedented in the country in particular, as well as regionally and internationally.
- 14 Prof. L Simbayi, *Behavioural and social aspects of HIV/AIDS*, Human Sciences Research Council, Cape Town, South Africa.



Source: [www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/index.html](http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/index.html)

# **Tracking Zimbabwe's political history: The Zimbabwe Defence Force from 1980–2005**

Knox Chitiyo & Martin Rupiya

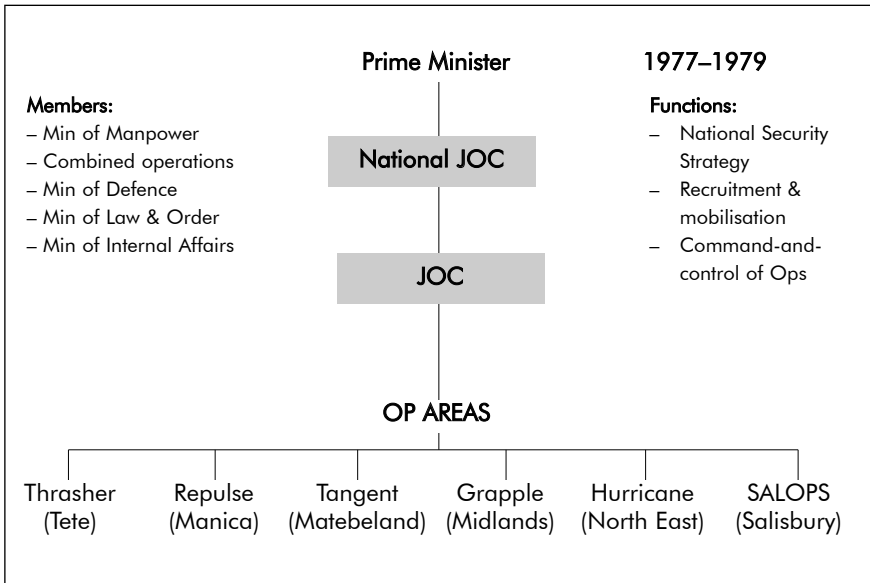
## **INTRODUCTION**

Zimbabwe suffered protracted conflict even before the collapse of the Federation of Rhodesia(s) and Nyasaland—made up of Nyasaland (now Malawi), Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) and Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe); creating an environment of peace and stability in the independent Zimbabwe of 1980 therefore meant surmounting several major challenges. The process was expected to overcome entrenched and inherited socio-political legacies and the regional geo-strategic security dynamics that had developed, as well as to overcome the deep divisions that had grown between the nationalists during the period of armed struggle. It is against this backdrop that the Zimbabwe Defence Force (ZDF) was established and evolved from the independence elections of February/March 1980.

## **HISTORIC OVERVIEW**

While decolonisation and African majority rule had become a reality in Malawi and Zambia in 1964, the minority white settler regime under the Rhodesian Front (RF) in then Rhodesia issued a Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) on 11 November 1965. It then set about creating a formidable military machine aimed at crushing African aspirations for independence—with assistance from the neighbouring imperial and colonial-dominated states of Portuguese East Africa and South Africa. Military reorganisation included creating the Joint Operations

Figure 1: Rhodesia military structure, 1977–1979



Command (JOC) to formally integrate the operations of the police, army and air force (see Figure 1).

The minority regime in Rhodesia then continued policies that perpetuated the colonial status quo. Stated briefly, the territory was occupied in September 1890 by the British South Africa Company, a commercial company armed with a royal charter, which was owned and financed by former Cape province Premier Cecil John Rhodes. From the time of military occupation, interaction with the local people was characterised by the violent dispossession of fertile land, cattle theft and other domestic assets. Able-bodied Africans were coerced into offering their labour for no payment, and were politically marginalised based on race and property ownership in the new cash economy. Meanwhile, the colonials' conduct drew vociferous protests from victims—that is, the African majority population. Significantly, UDI in Rhodesia enjoyed the support of the United States (US)<sup>1</sup> and Great Britain.<sup>2</sup> Nationalist armed struggle against the Rhodesian Front therefore had domestic, regional and international dimensions.

During the late 1950s a major umbrella political party, the National Democratic Party (NDP), had emerged in Rhodesia as part of the federation-wide African and labour unions, based on political

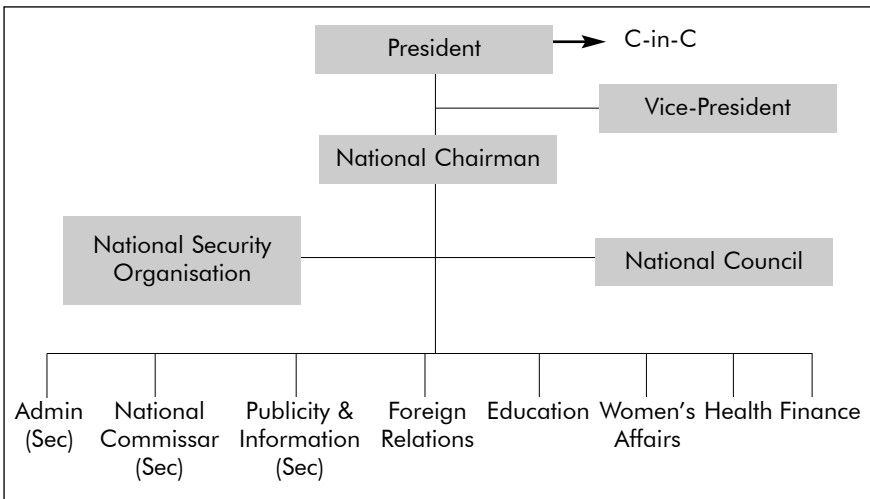
consciousness and formal organisation. The NDP was banned by 1960, but soon re-emerged as the Zimbabwe African People’s Union (ZAPU).

However, in May 1963 ZAPU split on regional, ethnic and strategic differences over the execution of civil disobedience and later armed struggle against the RF government—this division was to remain in place for the next 24 years.<sup>3</sup> The new splinter movement, the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), drew its supporters from Mashonaland and Manicaland.

Both ZAPU and ZANU drew recruits from the emerging military faction that was already evolving in Zambia and Tanzania.<sup>4</sup> Based on the post-1963 nationalist political divisions, ZAPU formed the Zimbabwe People’s Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA), while ZANU created the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA). Each liberation movement established elaborate political and military hierarchies, responsible for managing the armed struggle.

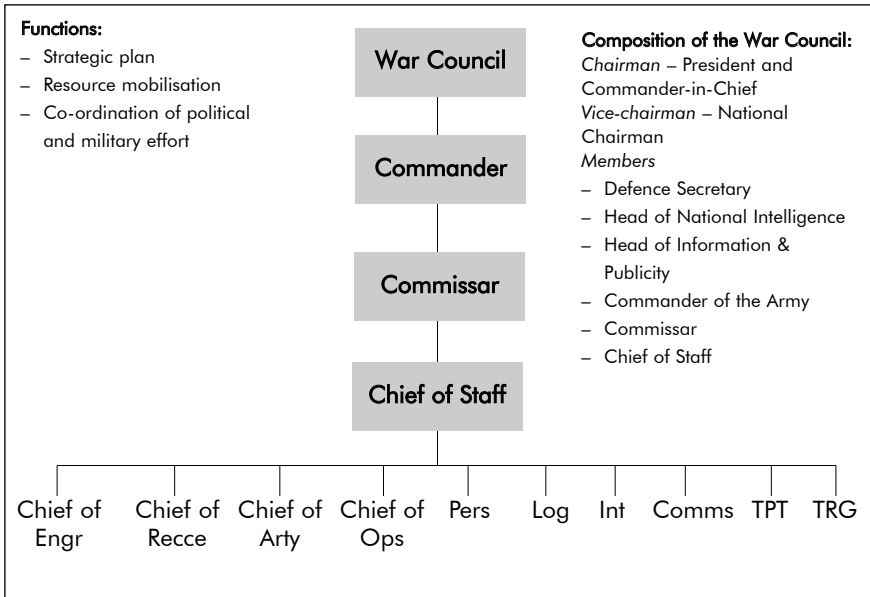
The institutional evolution of ZAPU—including codifying the relationship between the party’s political leadership and its armed wing (ZIPRA), as well as establishing a coherent grand strategy with a clear and achievable military-political goal—was influenced by ZAPU Vice President J Z Moyo’s ‘Our path to liberation’, a strategy paper that Moyo presented to the party in 1976.

Figure 2: ZAPU political structure



Source: ZAPU documentation, no date (in authors’ possession)

Figure 3: ZIPRA command structure



Source: ZAPU documentation, no date (in authors' possession)

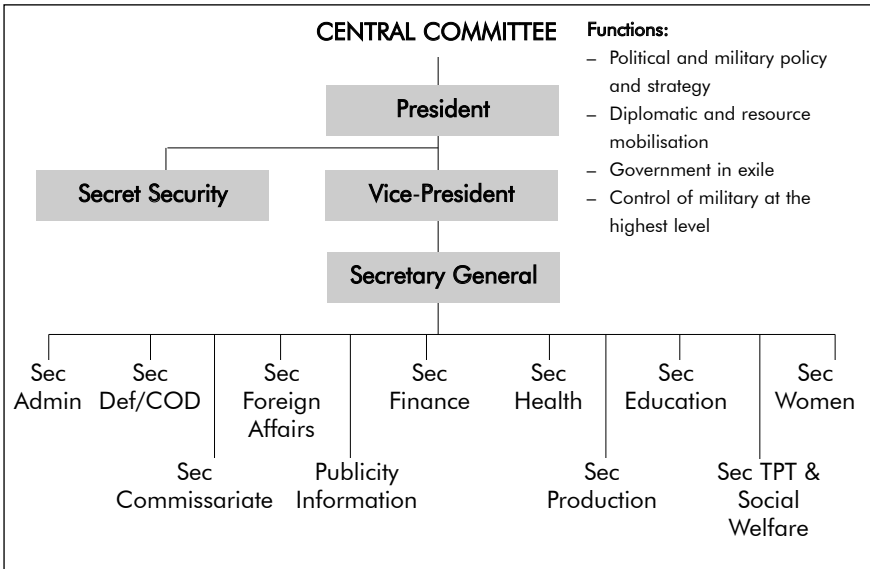
In the late 1970s ZAPU created the Revolutionary Council—a representative body of party officials and military commandos (*see figures 2 and 3*). The War Council was the executive body that would take decisions emanating from Revolutionary Council discussions, and was linked directly to the ZIPRA High Command. Although the proliferation of councils was often bureaucratic, it did address a fundamental issue raised by ZIPRA rank-and-file in the late 1960s—namely, that ZAPU and the army leaders were out of touch with the political and military ‘foot soldiers’.

ZANU’s military strategy evolved through the various phases, in parallel with the often traumatic political evolution of the party. By the end of 1979, ZANLA had a total force of over 40,000, a third of whom were active in Zimbabwe at any given time.

ZANLA had evolved from comprising gangs, to groups, to being an army with a military hierarchy with ranks (albeit different from the Rhodesian Security Force [RSF]), a disciplinary code of conduct, an Intelligence Directorate, logistics and education departments and motivated personnel (*see figures 4 and 5*).

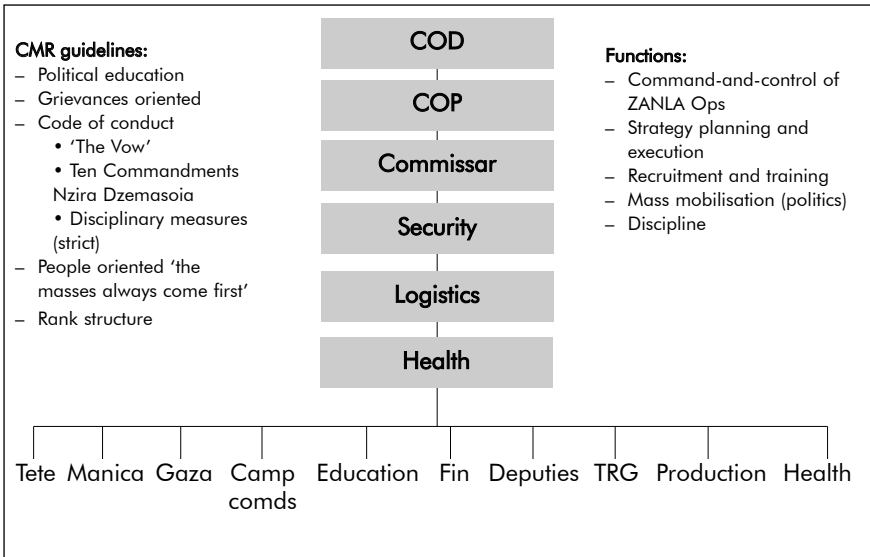


Figure 4: ZANU political organisation, 1977–1980



Source: ZANU documentation, no date (in authors' possession)

Figure 5: ZANLA High Command



Source: ZAPU documentation, no date (in authors' possession)

Initially, each liberation movement engaged in war employing different strategies. In 1966, ZANLA launched its first military action in Chinoyi—an act that has since become symbolic. For its part, ZIPRA during 1969 engaged in a phase of joint military operations with Umkhonto we Sizwe, the military arm of the South African liberation movement's African National Congress. ZANLA's strategy was based mostly on classic Maoist guerrilla warfare, but was tempered by the realities of local conditions and experiences, and enhanced with guidance from Mozambique's Frelimo veterans. As ZIPRA's institutional professionalism improved, the army's capability grew from 'pure' guerrilla tactics with relatively small units, to include forces trained and armed with heavier calibre weapons aimed at not merely attacking territory but also seizing and holding it.

Later, after the mid-1970s, the fighting strategy was co-ordinated under the banner of the Patriotic Front (PF), encouraged by the Front Line States (FLS). The Armed Forces coup in Lisbon in April 1974 resulted in the speedy independence of Angola and Mozambique in 1975. As part of the FLS, both countries threw their support behind Zimbabwe's liberation movements, offering bases, material support, military training and political support at international forums.

The combined military activity from the Zambian and Mozambican borders, as well as tacit political support from Botswana, soon had Rhodesia under siege. As a result, by late 1978 a military stalemate existed on the battlefield, creating conditions for political negotiations.<sup>5</sup>

The FLS pressured the Commonwealth to act, resulting in the Lancaster House Constitutional Conference held in London from September to December 1979. A ceasefire was signed, to become effective on 21 December 1979.<sup>6</sup> The protracted war had already claimed over 30,000 casualties.<sup>7</sup>

#### CEASEFIRE AND THE FORMATION OF THE ZIMBABWE NATIONAL ARMY

The Lancaster House conference and the formal agreements of 21 December 1979 charted the course for transition from minority rule Rhodesia to majority rule Zimbabwe. However, the Lancaster House constitutional talks did not prescribe the way forward on the military question: it simply provided for a constitution, ceasefire, the installation of a transitional authority, the temporary cantonment of fighting forces and the holding of supervised elections—this despite ZAPU leader Joshua Nkomo's desperate attempts to convince the Chair, Lord Carrington, to address the military issue.<sup>8</sup>

In December 1979, Lord Soames took up governorship duties in Salisbury, marking the beginning of the transitional phase that led to elections during the first quarter of 1980.<sup>9</sup> Governor Soames was accompanied by an advance party of the Commonwealth Monitoring Force (CMF) under 'Operation Agila'. The CMF's mandate was to: monitor the ceasefire; maintain contact with command structures of the PF and the RSF; and address violations. An eight-man Ceasefire Commission made up of two military representatives from each party—Britain, the RSF, ZIPRA and ZANLA—worked closely with the CMF during the ceasefire period.<sup>10</sup> The specific duties of the Ceasefire Commission were to:

- ensure compliance with the ceasefire;
- investigate violations; and
- assist the governor with security-related tasks.

When the CMF terminated its mandate in early March 1980, a total of 1,548 men and women drawn from the Commonwealth countries of Britain, Australia, New Zealand and Fiji had been deployed as part of the monitoring entity.<sup>11</sup>

Despite the presence of a few thousand guerrillas outside the assembly points (APs), the ceasefire was sufficiently monitored to allow for the conduct of the independence elections.

The elections were held on schedule. The white political party, RF, won all 20 'white' seats available on a separate voters' roll, while of the 80 African seats available, ZANU-PF secured 57, ZAPU 20, and the smaller United African National Council (UANC) three. The elections therefore symbolised a decisive paradigm shift to legitimacy, with power moving from whites organised under the RF banner to blacks under ZANU. Consequently, the struggle between the polarised races continued in a different form.

In military terms, the three armies remained in place, each with its own intelligence and command-and-control structures still intact. This constituted real potential for civil war if the political environment was not handled correctly.

The stakes were high: political and socio-economic transformation would be worthless in the absence of meaningful military integration. The national reconciliation policy would falter, and so would nation building. The creation of the Zimbabwe National Army (ZNA) was thus a prerequisite for the creation of the post-colonial Zimbabwe and for

nation building. Failure would mean civil war; success—as former President Rev Canaan Banana would later describe it—would be a “miracle”.

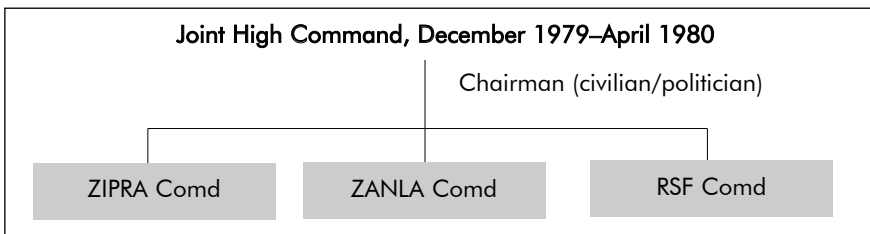
### **OPERATION MERGER:<sup>12</sup> FORMATION OF THE ZNA, 1980–1982**

The organisers of the Lancaster House Conference had refused to engage in talks aimed at creating a new army for the new state. The majority preferred this to be the prerogative of the new government that would emerge from the elections.

Against the political background of the coalition government, Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, Robert Mugabe, announced the state’s intention to establish a national integrated army of 35,000-strong by end-December 1980. This would be made up of two specialist units (commando and parachute regiment), four infantry brigades and supporting corps of signals, engineers, pay and administration, medical and logistics. Cadres for the new army were to be drawn from the three military factions in the bases and APs: the new army was to be made up of three equal proportions of three battalions or brigade strength from the former Rhodesian army units, and nine battalions or three brigades from former ZANLA and ZIPRA units.

One of the critical issues that had to be dealt with under the highly technical military integration exercise was that of command-and-control, the specific tasks being that of ‘equitable integration’ of the military High Command of each army. As such, several elements were transformed to constitute the chain of command-and-control. A new Minister of State Security, Emmerson Mnangagwa, had been appointed, and it was announced that part of his duties included heading the new Joint High Command (JHC).

**Figure 6: Transitional period**



Source: Compiled by authors

The JHC was in fact the old Ceasefire Commission that had now been reappointed in a new role. RSF Commander Lt Gen Peter Walls, was appointed commander of the JHC. He was charged with the responsibility of implementing the new defence policy, and managing the integration and conventional training that was to follow, while preparing to defend the state, the people and the country.<sup>13</sup> Walls's colleagues (and subordinates) in the JHC were the senior commanders of the Rhodesian Air Force, ZANLA and ZIPRA. The idea was that it was essential to demonstrate unity in the top echelons of military command in order to facilitate the same process in the middle levels of the military hierarchy, as well as among the rank-and-file.

A key component of the integration process was the British Military Advisory and Training Team (BMATT) whose role was to mediate between the three forces, as well as to train the officer corps of the fledgling ZNA. BMATT, together with the most competent and experienced officers, non-commissioned officers (NCOs) and field commanders, taught a series of comprehensive courses including commanding officer, company commander, NCO, drill instructor, administrator and tactical courses. Courses, duties and the daily routine of military life were shared by all former combatants, and emphasis was placed on making the officer selection process merit-based as well as on ensuring that the Officer Selection Board was a non-political department.

A short exercise designed to bond the officers who were going to be responsible for the integration was undertaken prior to their deployment. On 2 July 1980, 12 members from each of the three factions (ZANLA, ZIPRA and the RSF) were invited to a two-week get-together before flying off to Camberley in Britain for a special course and familiarisation tour of a functioning conventional army. This was significant as it quickly broke down the stovepipe political arrangements that had emerged during the armed struggle period.

More than 65,000 soldiers from the three factions were available for integration. The remaining 30,000 former combatants were to be processed through demobilisation or resettled in food and production enterprises that would continue to service the standing army. A fundamental conceptual tension was evident here between BMATT and Prime Minister and Minister of Defence on the future role of the armed forces. While the former sought to create a military professional force, the latter espoused the Chinese style of soldiers who also contributed through engaging in food and equipment production, organised more on militia and cadre lines than the purely military professionals.<sup>14</sup>

Several important developments occurred between 1980 and 1986 before the army, as it exists now, settled into a definite organisational pattern. After November 1986, the armed forces consisted of the following: special units of the commando, artillery, air defence, parachute regiment and mechanised infantry battalion; six infantry brigades and a presidential guard, as well as supporting corps of signals, engineers, education, pay and administration, directorate of army training and logistics/service corps. The force totalled 46,000 troops.<sup>15</sup> This was/is complemented by a 4,000-strong air force. At the same time the country's boat squadron was reorganised.

The first element to change in the implementation stage was the RSF. Having lost their political influence, most former RSF senior officers soon lost interest in the military, whose purpose (maintaining the colonial status quo) was now fundamentally different to that which had obtained when they joined. In June, Lt Gen Peter Walls tendered his resignation to the Prime Minister and Minister of Defence citing personal reasons, but admitting privately that his decision to leave had to do with frustration at the slow and difficult integration process. More generally, it had been widely believed that with a new political dispensation in place, the former white Rhodesian officers and soldiers were unlikely to fit in. Walls's departure, described by James McManus as "spiteful behaviour",<sup>16</sup> was soon emulated by senior Air Force Commander Alexander McIntyre, leading to an exodus of middle- and lower-ranking white soldiers.

The departure of Walls removed one of the pillars of the JHC and weakened the command-and-control structure of the RSF. After June 1980 the RSF was no longer as important in negotiating aspects of integration, and the remaining cadres were confined to matters purely military. ZANLA Commander Lt Gen Rex Nhongo was then appointed overall Commander of the Armed Forces, while his deputy was former ZIPRA military chief, Lookout Masuku.

The second development involved the traditional nationalist adversaries, ZANU and ZAPU, who had remained divided for 24 years. In August/September 1980, the country prepared to go to the polls to vote for local government representatives. Meanwhile, due to the slow and difficult integration process and the looming onset of summer rains, a decision had been taken to provide suitable accommodation for combatants who were still living in open-air APs. Combatants had entered the makeshift camps in January 1980 and several months later were still waiting to be integrated or demobilised. Some 17,000 ex-

combatants were therefore bussed in from the camps and settled into brand new council houses in the dormitory towns of Chitungwiza in Harare and Entumbane in Bulawayo.

Once political campaigning began, the fierce competition that had characterised the nationalist era of the 1960s soon erupted into open warfare. Party activists from both sides then marshalled forces from the thousands of armed ex-combatants either still in waiting areas or in the newly integrated battalions. In a statement, Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, Mugabe, announced that: "A pattern has emerged, overnight, revealing the sinister undertone and definite [political] party organisation."<sup>17</sup> After this comment, the country was thrown into near civil war.

Two related developments are important for our discussion. First was the immediate arrest of the top military leadership of ZIPRA, beginning with the Ceasefire Commission and later JHC representatives, Masuku, Dabengwa and eight other high-ranking ex-ZIPRA officers. In February 1982, ZAPU officials were removed from Cabinet and other influential government posts. By March 1983, senior ZAPU officials, including ZAPU leader Dr Joshua Nkomo, experienced unrelenting harassment and assassination attempts, forcing them to flee into exile. Second, some ZIPRA combatants already integrated in the army deserted and were struck off the rolls.

This meant that of the original tripartite military power-sharing arrangement mooted in April 1980, only ZANLA senior cadres remained. Much more significantly, from henceforth there was little to stop the full implementation of a factionally based security policy in the country. A number of units then emerged that can be best explained in this context.

The first unit emerged from a meeting held between BMATT and ZNA senior officers in February 1981. This followed an abortive drive-past assassination attempt on Mugabe at the Prime Minister's residence. It was suggested that a dedicated presidential guard unit be established, replacing the existing ad hoc arrangement of rotational units. The third unit of the second brigade (2:3 Infantry Battalion) was carrying out protection duties at that time. This was followed by a visit by the Prime Minister to North Korea in October 1981, where he was offered weapons, equipment and training worth £12.5 million. These assets, together with a contingent of 1,065 North Korean instructors led by Brig Sim Hyon Dok, established the 5th Brigade (an armoured regiment) and the Zimbabwe People's Militia (ZPM).

Before reviewing the fate of the ZPM, we must note that most of the units trained by the Korean contingent were ready for deployment by the beginning of 1983. The 5th Brigade was then deployed in the internal security role with disastrous results,<sup>18</sup> as all have come to agree.<sup>19</sup>

Against the backdrop of this national tragedy, a heated ZAPU Central Committee crisis meeting called for the establishment of a National Security Council. After deliberations, the meeting resolved that a supreme body be established, “headed, jointly by Nkomo and Mugabe”. If this was not accepted, ZAPU threatened to pull out of the coalition government.<sup>20</sup>

The ZPM emerged during the local government election campaign period in late 1980 in the Midlands, Gokwe area. This area is adjacent to the Zambian border and is home to bilingual Ndebele- and Shona-speakers. During the liberation struggle, this area had been the farthest ZANLA cadres could go from the eastern border with Mozambique. After independence, ex-ZIPRA combatants merged easily with the locals, making them difficult to distinguish.

A local ZANU-PF activist, Ndemera, then appealed to the party to deploy village defence militia. Initially these were referred to as the paramilitary, aimed at providing protection against the prevalence of ‘dissidents’ in the area who were targeting political opponents. Three camps were established in Gokwe, at Charamba, Mavhirimi and Nembudziya, where the para-military established operational bases. In October 1982 the ruling party responded by taking the first recruits to Bindura for training, marking the official start of the ZPM. Speaking on 4 October 1982, Minister of State (Defence) in the Prime Minister’s Office, Dr Sydney Sekeremayi, said that ZPM was:

... to be the eyes and ears of government and the people ... key installations to be guarded by those loyal to government. The attack on Thornhill Air Force and disappearance of arms at Cranborne Barracks were all ‘inside jobs’.<sup>21</sup>

Once the weaponry largesse and training capacity from Korea was in the country, Korean instructors were employed to train the ZPM.

While local dynamics in the Gokwe constituency had given rise to the ZPM, the subsequent increase in military operations by the counter-revolutionary Mozambique National Resistance Movement (Renamo) ensured that the unit quickly became an established entity.



Soon, a deputy minister (Defence) responsible for the militia was appointed, and senior and middle level officers were seconded from the army to command, train and manage the ZPM. An active ZPM unit of about 1,000 was always available, drawn from those who had just completed their four-month training and were in their second six-month active service phase.

Candidature for the ZPM was open to anyone between the ages of 18 and 60, with those undergoing training required to be below 36. Those engaged were paid only allowances. By 1985 when regulations were passed, the ZPM totalled over 20,000 troops.<sup>22</sup>

The ZPM, however, appeared to be tasked primarily with rooting out local political competition presented by ZAPU, and was therefore viewed as an appendage of the ruling ZANU-PF party and not necessarily as a national institution.

At this time, increased pressure on Zimbabwe from South African-backed proxy forces threatened the road and rail infrastructure and transport links to the sea, as well as communities residing along the border areas with Mozambique. The insecure conditions along the border drove thousands of villagers to military posts further inland, and government responded by creating village-based self-defence units organised under the ZPM.

Following the Unity Accord reached between ZANU and ZAPU in December 1987, the role of the ZPM within Zimbabwe became marginal. This eclipse was to continue with the release of Nelson Mandela in South Africa in February 1990, and with the first Rome Treaty protocols of 1991 reached between Renamo and the Frelimo government of Mozambique. With peace returning to Southern Africa in the 1990s, Zimbabwe embarked on far-reaching economic austerity measures, and one of the casualties of that process, launched in 1991, was the closure of the ZPM. Its demise was without much fanfare.

## **THE AIR FORCE**

After assisting the CMF, the Zimbabwe Air Force appeared to shrink from the limelight. In 1981 the Zimbabwe government bought US\$45 million worth of air-to-ground aircraft from Britain to replace the ageing inventory inherited from Rhodesia, which largely represented Second World War cast-offs. The planes were received from 16 September 1981.

The more modern helicopters had been on loan from South Africa, and returned to base once the political situation changed. A small

number of pilots from Zambia, Nigeria and even Mozambique had been dispatched to the air force and were finding integration difficult. Many were required to take basic conversion courses and raised numerous complaints about the slow pace of integration.

In July 1982, suspected South African-backed elements sneaked into Thornhill Airbase in the small town of Gweru and placed explosive devices on the planes: eight machines were destroyed, delivering a blow to the capacity of the nascent army.<sup>23</sup> An urgent board of inquiry was established but little evidence was found. There was, however, immediate reaction from the government and emerging army.

Deputy Army Commander Josiah Tungamirai and a score of more senior officers were redeployed to the air force with a view to take command after familiarisation in the shortest possible time. A temporary Air Marshall, Daudi Porta from Pakistan, was installed, and the root and branch integration of the air force was under way by late 1982.

The Chinese also stepped in by providing air defence capacity and field artillery; components that improved security at the air bases and strengthened their ability to defend the skies. Nigeria and Tanzania also assisted during the early period by providing assistance in the area of signals and motor maintenance and mechanics, respectively.

#### THE NAVY—LAKE KARIBA

There was also on-going reorganisation of the Boat Squadron: a sub-unit of the Engineer Corps established to police the 5,000 km<sup>2</sup> lake that provides a 330 km border between Zambia and Zimbabwe. The 1980 restructuring established five sub-units:

- A Troop, equipped with interceptor craft;
- B Troop maintained assault boats able to ferry troops ashore;
- C Troop, with a large transporter, the *Ubique*—a 72 tonne landing craft capable of carrying 30 tonnes of men and equipment including armoured cars. *Ubique* was also armed with 12.7 and 7.62 mm machine guns for self-protection and covering fire purposes;
- D Troop—this support group was trained for protecting beach-heads and making assault landings for non-specialised units, employing mortar and support weapons.

- E Troop was deployed for the purposes of guarding the harbours on Lake Kariba and around the rest of the squadron, as required.

A diving school, equipped with a decompression chamber, operated in conjunction with the commandos.

## DEMOBILISATION

With thousands of ex-combatants still hosted in the volatile urban areas, it appears that a decision was taken to change the previous slow pace of integration and to accelerate this, introducing urgent disarmament and then return to demobilisation and resettlement.

### OPERATION SOLDIERS EMPLOYED IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

‘Operation SEED’ ran parallel to the events of late 1980 and early 1981. As mentioned earlier, the operation employed the military in a wider sense, as expressed by the Prime Minister and Minister of Defence.<sup>24</sup>

The idea was, however, alien to the broader military, as espoused by the British advisers, and this attitude towards the operation was not entirely confined to external actors; similar thinking was prevalent among the combatants themselves and their commanders. Both saw themselves as gallant fighters not worthy to be troubled with engaging in agricultural production.

An early survey of preferred options by BMATT carried out on the 17,000 ex-combatants who were eventually housed in the urban areas revealed that less than 10% supported the idea of self-reliance work, crop-growing schemes and irrigation farming. However, the combatants would not publicly express preferences that ran contrary to the political leadership.

Conceptually, Operation SEED sought to create units of 700 soldiers drawn from ZANLA, ZIPRA and the RSF, and to allocate to each unit a government farm, complete with agricultural equipment. It would also facilitate marketing contracts for the produce with local government departments and parastatals. Soldiers would not have their weapons taken away; ostensibly to perpetuate the idea that those involved were still soldiers, but soldiers involved in economic development. A basic salary would be offered to each soldier, just under the amount for demobilisation pay as it was expected that these units would share in the profits made at the end of each season or cropping cycle. Farms were

acquired for this purpose in Sabi, Esigodini near Bulawayo and also near Harare. But soldiers involved in Operation SEED were affected when fighting broke out during campaigning for the local government elections; factional groups competed to get to the armouries from the fields in order to destroy each other. As a consequence, the majority simply abandoned the remote and isolated farms to return to the safety of the urban environments. This effectively destroyed any potential that was beginning to emerge in Operation SEED, shutting out one more alternative for the large army to reduce its size in a productive manner.

A reason for the rapid collapse must surely have been the fact that the troops had not worked together for long enough to build mutual confidence and trust, and to overcome the factional political diet that had informed their relations during the liberation period.

#### **FURTHER DEMOBILISATION**

A second attempt at demobilisation was launched in August 1981, soon after the security situation had stabilised and following the rapid induction of ex-combatants into the armed forces. The Ministry of Social Services, Labour and Welfare was provided with a budget of Z\$116 million, aimed at reducing the ZNA to about 30,000 troops. A mere Z\$43 million had been provided in 1980 and this had not made a significant impact.

A Demobilisation Directorate was created within the Ministry, and former Deputy High Commissioner to the United Kingdom (UK), John Shonhiwa, was recalled and appointed as director of the programme. Three options were to be followed:

- An involuntary option, under which lapsing contracts of RSF personnel would not be renewed.
- A voluntary package of four months' salary plus a monthly stipend of Z\$185 for two years would be offered, with persons encouraged to pool resources as co-operatives and to present viable business plans for which funding could be advanced.
- A disabled rehabilitation centre would be established for special cases.

The exercise also received outside financial and planning support from Norway (agricultural training) and other donors through the Zimbabwe

Reconstruction and Development Conference (ZIMCORD). ZIMCORD secured Z\$6.7 million towards the establishment of a rehabilitation centre in Ruwa, just east of Harare, which opened its doors in April 1983.

An information pamphlet was published, encouraging former combatants to rejoin schools, universities and other tertiary skills training centres. Demobilised personnel, once processed centrally, would continue to pick up their redundancy packages in the decentralised offices conveniently established countrywide.

By March 1983 the Demobilisation Directorate was closed, satisfied that it had completed its mandate. In reality, however, demobilisation had been an exercise in statistics and semantics that failed to address the core difficulties faced by demobilised personnel.

For a variety of reasons—ranging from ill-prepared combatants unable to manage large amounts of cash, to the limited availability of training colleges, and to a harsh, capitalist economy requiring sustained support and entrepreneur commitment—the majority of demobilised soldiers were within five years destitute and began asking for further state assistance.

Following years of demonstrations and appeals, in 1991 about 19,000 ex-combatants came together and established the War Veterans' Welfare Organisation that then formally entered into talks with the government for better support. Many still required the basics: skills training; accommodation; education; health care; employment; and general security. Owing to the missed opportunity in 1981, Zimbabwe is still trying to find an effective and permanent solution to its demobilisation problem, even as we write.

#### **ZDF INSTITUTIONAL DEFENCE POLICY AND COMMAND-AND-CONTROL FRAMEWORK**

The revised National Defence Policy that was published in 1997 enshrines an elaborate hierarchy of governance, command and control of the military. The president is the commander-in-chief of the ZDF, chairing the State Defence Council. This is the highest body responsible for national security affairs. The Council is normally attended by the ministers of defence, home affairs, foreign affairs and finance, as well as the commander defence forces and the secretary for defence—as Council members.

Below the State Defence Council is the Defence Policy Council, chaired by the minister of defence. Among its members are the

commander/chief of defence forces, the permanent secretary in the Ministry of Defence and commanders of the army and air force. The minister of finance is an ex-officio member of the Defence Policy Council.

Next is the Defence Command Council, chaired by the commander defence forces. The commanders of army, air force, chief of staff operations and plans, and chief of staff logistics and support services serve as members. The Zimbabwe Staff College commandant serves as a member when required.

Below this is the Programming and Planning Council, chaired by the secretary for defence. The commander defence forces, chief of staff operations and plans, chief of staff logistics and support services, the deputy secretary for finance, and the deputy secretary for policy and procurement serve as members.

The official position, as stated, is also quite clear on the role of the minister of defence, who is described as the political head; the permanent secretary, who is cast as the principal accounting officer; with the commander defence forces as the “professional head of all Defence Forces”.<sup>25</sup>

### **CIVIL–MILITARY RELATIONS**

The legal framework providing for the ZDF is the Lancaster House Constitution that provided for the defence policies formulated in the post-independence period and promulgated partly as the Defence Act by Parliament. The Zimbabwe Constitution and the organisational structure of the government provide mechanisms that facilitate civilian control and public accountability of the military.

The National Defence Policy resonates with these provisions. It acknowledges the primacy of the Constitution, elected civilian authority and Parliament when it points out that:

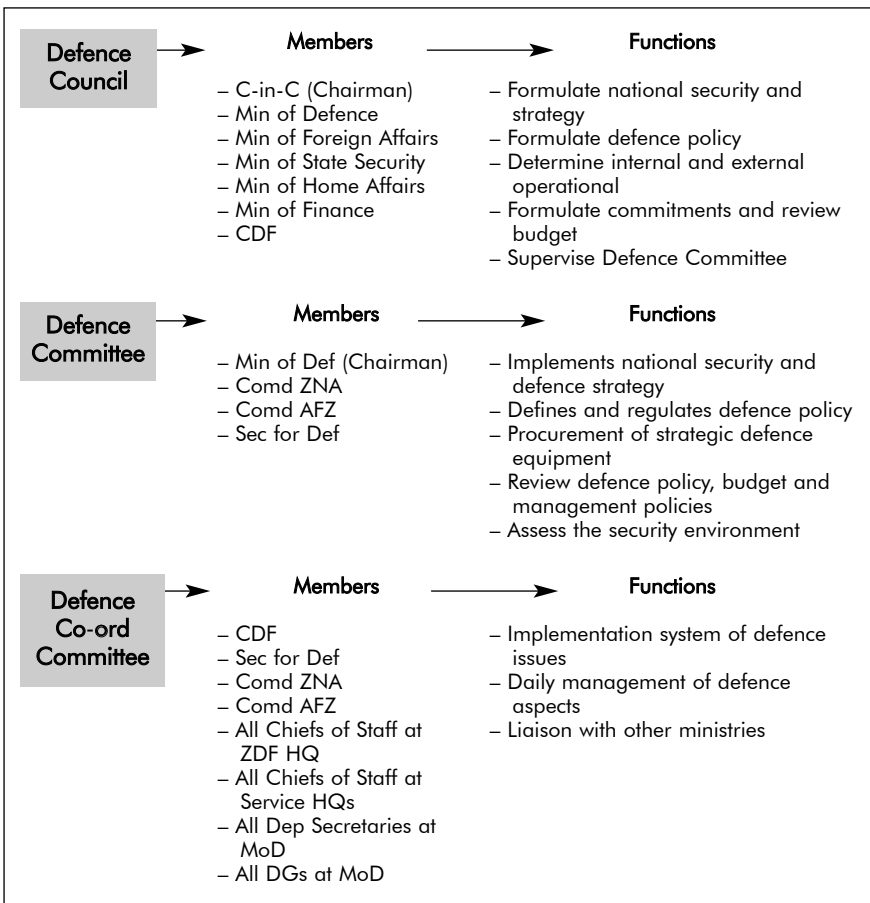
Civil Military Relations refers to the hierarchy of authority between the Executive, Parliament and the Defence Forces. A cardinal principle is that the Defence Forces are subordinate to the civilian authority.<sup>26</sup>

To this end, the document acknowledges that civilians formulate defence policy and remain responsible for the political dimensions of defence, while the military executes that policy. In this specialised effort, military officers assist civilians on a collaborative basis on the formulation of

defence policy.<sup>27</sup> It also respects military autonomy by asserting that government and politicians must not interfere with the operational chain of command and the application of the code of military discipline.

Chapter X, Paragraph 96 of the Constitution of Zimbabwe states that the president as commander-in-chief is empowered to determine the operational use of the defence forces and execution of military action. He is authorised to declare war or make peace, proclaim or terminate martial law as well as to confer honours. The president appoints the

**Figure 7: Management of defence in Zimbabwe**



Source: National Defence Policy, Government of the Republic of Zimbabwe, Government Printers, Harare, 1997

commander of the defence forces, and every commander of a branch of the defence forces, after consultation with a person or authority prescribed by or under an act of Parliament. The president's authority regarding the military is limited as he has to act on the advice of stipulated persons or bodies. The elected president appoints a minister of defence to manage the political daily functions of the military to whom the commanders report, except directly to the president in cases of emergency.

Parliament provides an important military management mechanism. First, the ZDF branches are established by acts of Parliament; second, Parliament makes provision for the organisation, administration and discipline of the defence forces; and third, the ZDF is subject to the security and administration of regulatory parliamentary and security committees. These include Budget, Public Accounts and Security committees which censor the defence budget, scrutinise defence expenditure and monitor the activities of the defence, respectively. The judiciary, the third arm of government, also plays its role where judgment on criminal cases and civil suits against the military are concerned.

Military personnel are prohibited from active participation in politics. They can exercise their democratic right to vote and are not permitted to hold office in any political party or political organisation.<sup>28</sup> In practice, however, several generals are represented in the Politburo, Central Committee or other ruling party structures. As we write, there are several cases pending in the courts involving military members for alleged participation in opposition party politics.<sup>29</sup>

Notwithstanding the legal and constitutional provisions for civilian control, Zimbabwe's liberation era civil-military relations have had a profound impact on the country's body politic, reflecting a much more integrated and party based politico-military structure than what appears in the texts.

The ideology that political power comes from the barrel of the gun and that the gun is subordinate to the former, is a notion that has since been transferred to the present governmental machinery without fundamental reorientation. Thus, the principles and practices of liberation period civil-military relations constitute a major explanation for the general absence of coups and military indiscipline in Zimbabwe. However, this historical legacy also makes for paradoxical outcomes: on the one hand accounting for firmly entrenched modalities of civilian control, but on the other hand responsible for the incestuous and non-



transparent nature of civil–security relations that represent resistance to the introduction and evolution of mature civil–military relations in post-liberation Zimbabwe.

### ZIMBABWE'S DEFENCE POLICY

Zimbabwe's defence policy has been shaped by national, regional and global military, political and economic dynamics. Defence Minister, Dr Sekeramayi, explained the formulation of the national defence policy:

It develops on the basis of [the] economic foundation of our society and evolves from the overall national security and foreign policy. It is [a] symbiotic and harmonious linkage with the economy and political developments within which it is formulated.<sup>30</sup>

The basic premise of the country's defence policy, as outlined in the Constitution and in policy presentations and documents, is to preserve Zimbabwe's national and territorial integrity and sovereignty, and to protect the nation's citizens against internal and external threats. This means that the nation's overall defence sector must continually provide real time and projected threat and capability assessments. Decisions can then be made on the capabilities and resources of the armed forces to deal with that threat.

Zimbabwe's defence policy has evolved over more than two decades. In the 1980s it essentially comprised a triad of objectives: first, to secure the nation's political and military unity (as far as possible) to buttress the 'national reconciliation' policy; second, to counter the threat of dissidents and to prevent the possible secession of Matabeleland or the partition of the nation into two ethnic enclaves (Shona and Ndebele); and third, to counter South African destabilisation and provide a political and military counterweight as leader of the FLS against South Africa's hegemonic ambitions.

In the 1990s, the defence policy concentrated more on regional collaborative security, with the ZNA being deployed in peace support operations, and Zimbabwe being prominent in regional military-political security organisations.

The new millennium has witnessed another shift in Zimbabwe's defence policy dynamics. The post-2000 national crisis has resulted in national defence policy essentially being defined as the preservation of the ZANU-PF party and government, with the party and the state/nation

often being perceived as one and the same. This was clearly shown in the March 2002 presidential elections when Maj Gen Vitalis Zvinvashe and Air Marshal Perence Shiri—the respective heads of the ZDF and Air Force—categorically announced that the Zimbabwean armed forces would not support any leader who had not fought in the liberation war.

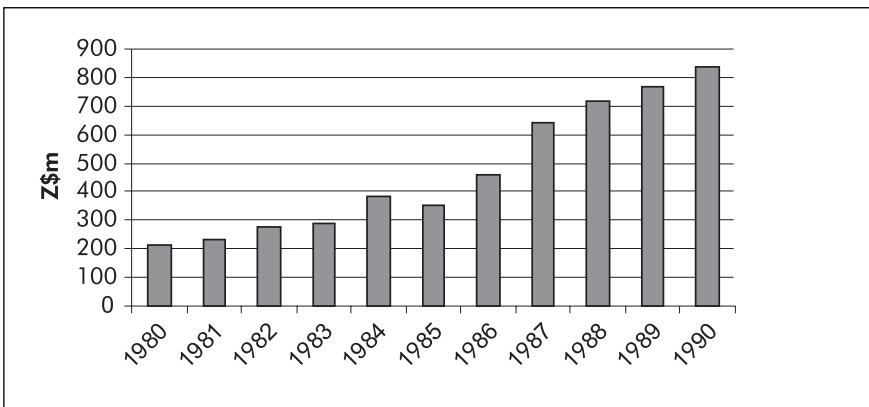
This praetorian proclamation, designed to prevent any support for the opposition, clearly illustrates that Zimbabwe has essentially become a military enclosure. It introduced a new and disturbing theme into domestic politics because it was essentially a pre-emptive coup not to remove the old order, but to preserve it by toppling the opposition.

Simultaneously, with the broadening of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to include the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), it is seen that national security is also dependent on the armed forces' capability to perform effectively in distant military operations (e.g. the DRC). A constraint of Zimbabwe's defence policy, however, is that the ZDF must have at the very least a two-front war military capacity: as shown in the 1980s and in the post-new millennium environments—the ZDF has to be able to buttress national defence policy by being able to engage simultaneously in internal and external operations.

### ZIMBABWE'S DEFENCE BUDGET

Military expenditure in Zimbabwe has always taken second place to education, although the government was determined to implement a

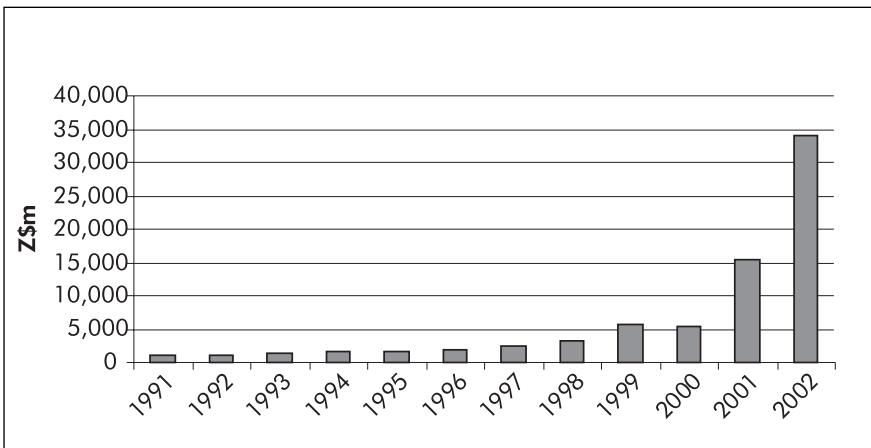
**Figure 8: Zimbabwe defence estimates of expenditure, 1980–1990**



Source: Parliament of Zimbabwe, Hansard, Parliamentary debates, Government Printers, Harare, 1980-90

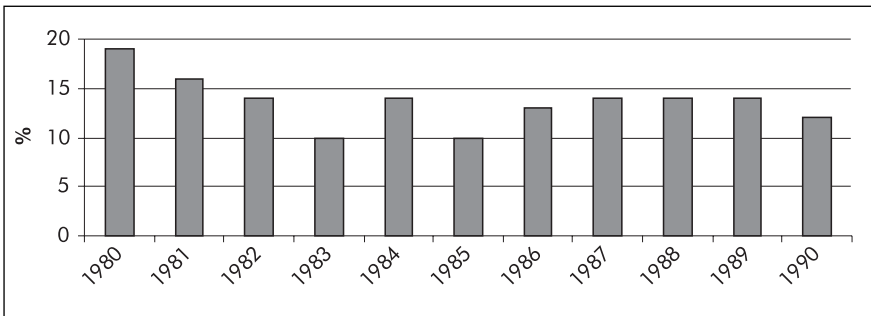
levelling off socialist policy from the beginning (*the statistical expenditure appears in Figure 8*). However, no development could take place in the conflict-ridden environment of the 1980s, and this partly explains the seemingly untoward allocation on military expenditure. Justifying expenditure during the first period of 1980–1993, then Defence Minister, Richard Hove, pointed out that: “... our expenditure levels in defence were dictated to us by the Pretoria regime’s threatening posture.”<sup>31</sup>

**Figure 9: Zimbabwe defence estimates of expenditure, 1991–2002**



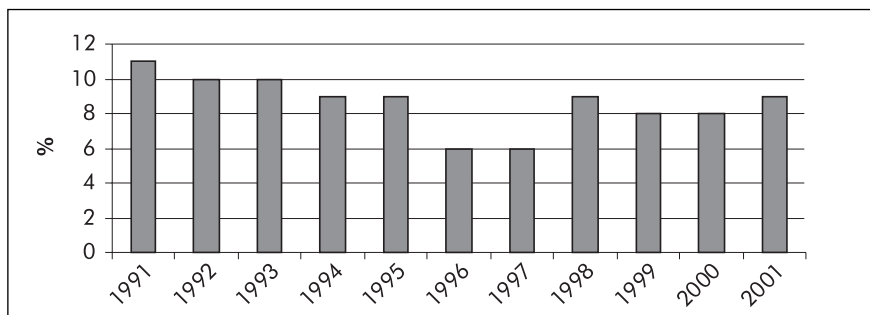
Source: Debates Parliament of Zimbabwe, Hansard, Government Printers, Harare, 1991-2002.

**Figure 10: Expenditure on Ministry of Defence as percentage of total budget 1980–1990 (using estimates of expenditure)**



Source: Debates Parliament of Zimbabwe, Hansard, Government Printers, Harare, 1980-90.

**Figure 11: Expenditure on Ministry of Defence as percentage of total budget 1991–2001 (using estimates of expenditure)**



Source: *Debates Parliament of Zimbabwe, Hansard, Government Printers, Harare, 1991-2001*

The security imperatives of military expenditure were emphasised by current Defence Minister Dr Sekeramayi, who said that the country's defence forces were the guarantors of peace, tranquillity and stability; a fact that makes expenditure on them absolutely vital.<sup>32</sup>

### **ZIMBABWE NATIONAL ARMY (ZNA) MILITARY DEPLOYMENTS: 1980–2003**

#### **THE ZIMBABWE DEFENCE FORCES (ZDF) IN MOZAMBIQUE 1982–1991**

While involved in the war against dissidents in Matabeleland, the ZNA was from 1982–1991 deployed in Mozambique as an ally of Frelimo and its army, the Popular Forces for the Liberation of Mozambique. The ZDF deployed in Mozambique early in 1981, convinced that the Rhodesian-created Renamo could be easily defeated.

Renamo, sponsored by the Rhodesian Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO), emerged after 1974 as a spoiler to ZANLA rear bases' security in Mozambique. Just when it was beginning to be effective, the ceasefire of 1979 was reached and the movement was hastily shipped out to Pretoria. The subsequent inheritance of Renamo by the South African Defence Force and the generous resources, training and other support rendered, soon witnessed an expanding war on Zimbabwe's border early in its independence. By then Renamo had emerged as a major threat to Frelimo.

The ZDF deployment was precipitated by a number of factors. Economically (and for landlocked Zimbabwe in particular), the FLS needed to loosen the noose of South African dominance.

Zimbabwe, acknowledged as the economic power house of the FLS, had a major role to play; the country needed to maintain trade routes comprising road, rail and other communications routes for exports and imports to and from ports in Mozambique and Malawi. By 1981 it was clear that Frelimo could not secure the vital transport routes, especially the Beira Corridor road and rail transport route. The ZNA would have to perform that task.

Using the alternative South African port route was an unacceptable political and financial burden on Zimbabwe, making it hostage to South African destabilisation. For Zimbabwe, reeling from the international fuel crisis, internal conflict and South African-sponsored proxy insurgents, naked self-preservation was as much a factor in deploying the ZNA as was assisting a troubled neighbour.

Politically, Zimbabwean involvement was a continuation of the liberation war era ZANLA–Frelimo alliance; this time against South African regional destabilisation, specifically that of Mozambique. Zimbabwe was also trying to assert its ‘great power’ status within the FLS, as a counterweight to South Africa’s regional domination.

Zimbabwe’s war to maintain the trade routes involved: mounting static sites along the threatened routes at intervals; convoy duties for road and rail services; protecting communities along the border areas; protecting railway lines along the Beira and Limpopo routes; and dominating known base areas in Mozambique’s Tete, Sofala, Manica and Gorongosa areas. Zimbabwe deployed most of the conventional units, including the mechanised infantry and air force elements, used in the conflict.

During the mid-1980s, other FLS countries became involved in the war, including Tanzania, Botswana and Zambia; this was at a time when the security situation facing Frelimo was dire as Renamo intensified its increasingly sophisticated operational activities. Crisis point was reached in 1984, with the two warring factions eventually compelled to sign the Nkomati Accord, and again in October 1996 (the 1984 ceasefire did not hold) when President Samora Machel was killed in an as yet unexplained plane crash.

The Zimbabwean forces were stretched to the limit but a decision was made to raise a 6th Brigade, destined to provide fresh troops to the Mozambican operation and under the command of Col Lionel Dyke.

The ZDF deployments only began to reduce with political developments in South Africa during 1989–90, and following the Rome Treaty protocols signed between Frelimo, Renamo and other stakeholders in 1991 and finally in 1992.

Zimbabwean forces withdrew from Mozambique in April 1993, making way for the United Nations Operation in Mozambique (UNOMOZ). Zimbabwe's 13-year involvement in the Mozambican war had provided valuable conventional battlefield experience throughout the army as almost all units had been rotated during that period.

In a remarkable presidential speech during the withdrawal, it was learnt that by December 1990, out of the eight battalions (nearly 70% of the ZDF) only one battalion was operating outside the limits set along the road and rail routes. This was targeted at retaining control of the Gorongosa–Cassa Banana Mountain, located some 100 km northeast of Chimoio. The reason for the revelation was to counter numerous Renamo claims that Zimbabwe was violating the terms of the Rome Treaty protocol and ceasefire.

#### ZDF-BMATT AND MOZAMBIQUE FORCES ARMADAS DE MOZAMBIQUE (FAM) MILITARY ASSISTANCE

The complete involvement of the ZDF in Mozambique took a surprising turn during the early 1990s when the ZDF joined BMATT in offering training, initially to the *Forces Armadas de Mozambique* (FAM) and later to the combined integrating military that included Renamo after the signing of the Rome Treaty in 1992.

The above deployment began with BMATT providing pre-deployment retraining for the ZDF battalions that were going on operations on the Beira, Nyamapanda and Limpopo corridors. This then graduated to retraining units that were being rotated during the 13-year deployment.

In 1986, the UK then reached an agreement with Mozambique on military assistance. Mozambique had begun to turn to the Commonwealth, an organisation it eventually joined; however, due to colonial sensibilities Britain did not wish to be seen to be undermining Portugal and therefore requested facilities in Zimbabwe to carry out this task. The Nyanga Border Camp was availed for the purpose, and Mozambican officers and troops came over the border for training. Soon, however, BMATT found that it made sense to reach an all round agreement that would involve some ZDF instructors assisting with FAM training.

Hence, when the Rome Agreement was reached—an accord that provided a military agreement—the ZDF found itself training some of the first elements for the new army in reconciled Mozambique. This

involvement closed the chapter on Zimbabwe's military deployment in Mozambique, with troops finally returning to Zimbabwe amid much pomp and ceremony on 14 April 1993, and with words of gratitude from President Chissano and the Mozambican people.

#### ZIMBABWE'S CONTRIBUTION TO UN PEACEKEEPING

In line with its defence policy that provides for meeting legal international obligations, the military in Zimbabwe on 2 July 1991 deployed its first peacekeeping mission to Angola. At the time, participation was bound by the tenets of traditional and consensus-building peacekeeping principles in which the parties in conflict were first consulted on the participation of particular countries before they could be invited. Consequently, the invitation from both the Angolan government and UNITA represented a milestone in the country's foreign policy realm. As then Foreign Minister Nathan Shamuyarira was to assert: "The invitation represents the greatest historical significance."<sup>33</sup>

Col Nyambuya led a contingent that included policemen and women to the peacekeeping mission, UNAVEM II, opening a new chapter in the history of the ZDF. Thereafter, the country participated in United Nations (UN) peacekeeping missions in Somalia, Rwanda and Eritrea, in the process exposing its troops to international norms and standards.

With the advent of new-found peace in the early 1990s, the FLS members gathered in Windhoek in 1992 and proposed a new security structure informed by the rapidly improving military environment in the region. Zimbabwe, through its defence force, engaged in the second step of consolidating its independence by strengthening regional military co-operation.

Through the establishment of the Regional Peacekeeping and Training Centre, and before that the Zimbabwe Staff College and Military Academy—both institutions that were made available to regional and continental forces—the ZDF positioned itself to play a decisive regional security role. Signs of this had been witnessed in the military co-operation with Mozambique just before and after the end of the conflict in that country.

#### THE ZDF AND THE DRC WAR

In August 1998 President Mugabe decided to send ZDF troops to the DRC to save President Laurent Kabila, who had succeeded President

Mobutu as head of state, from ‘rebel’ forces that were advancing from eastern Congo. This deployment—based on Mugabe’s personal initiative—began with the ZDF deploying 3,000 troops, but by 2001 that figure had increased to approximately 13,000—Zimbabwe’s largest military deployment since the ZNA had been sent to Mozambique.

This controversial deployment was supposedly a SADC initiative, since Angola and Namibia also sent forces in support of Kabila. Other SADC members, in particular South Africa, denied that this was a SADC initiative and that the ZDF had entered the DRC not for security or geo-strategy, but for power and plunder.

The war was unpopular even within Zimbabwe and the rebels initially mauled the ZNA in 1998, although the ZNA later regrouped and was able to take and hold ‘rebel’ positions. The besieged President Kabila held on to power, but the DRC conflict increasingly became a political and military morass, characterised by a constant shifting of military and political alliances, internal feuds, mercenaries and appallingly high civilian casualties. Although the ZNA has decreased its forces in the ongoing DRC conflict, they remain there to support President Joseph Kabila who came to power after his father’s assassination in 2002.

## **THE ZDF AND INTERNAL ENGAGEMENTS**

### THE BATTLE FOR BULAWAYO AND THE DISSIDENT WAR, 1980–1987

The first major internal engagement of the ZNA was the deployment of the Korean-trained 5th Brigade to crush the insurgency in Matebeleland and parts of Midlands. The resultant Battle for Bulawayo and the 5th Brigade’s notorious Gukurahundi campaign (which ended in 1987 with the Unity Accord between ZANU and ZAPU), were intertwined with the politics surrounding the establishment of the ZNA, discussed earlier. Suffice to say here that ultimately approximately 20,000 ZNA regular and other forces were deployed against the dissidents (who never numbered more than 2,000) in a classic counter-insurgency war that entailed the use of force in both rapid deployment search-and-destroy operations and garrison duties in ‘pacifying’ villages and districts.

### THE THIRD CHIMURENGA

After the boom years of the 1980s, Zimbabwe’s economy began to decline in the 1990s, due mainly to endemic corruption, the flight of



skilled professionals, declining foreign investment, and the government's increasingly authoritarian stance.

From 1997 to 2000, two events precipitated a socio-political and socio-economic crisis, namely: the state 'payout' of approximately Z\$4 billion to 'war veterans' (that is, guerrilla ex-combatants who had been marginalised by the state since independence); and the land redistribution exercise. In 2000, the previously sporadic and spontaneous grassroots farm invasions by landless peasants became a state-sponsored exercise in coercive land redistribution.

The resounding 'no' vote in the February 2000 referendum on the new constitution (which would have considerably strengthened presidential powers), the scheduled general elections in June 2000, and growing support for the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) opposition party, led ZANU-PF to declare that it was now fighting the 'Third Chimurenga'.

The Third Chimurenga was essentially ZANU-PF's version of the 'Total Strategy' which the South African apartheid state had used as a socio-political grand strategy. Believing that it faced a 'total onslaught' from internal and external opponents who wished to hijack the gains of the liberation war in modern Zimbabwe, the state responded with its own 'total offensive' (legal, political, cultural, economic and military) to ensure state survival and to preserve the gains of the land redistribution exercise.

In essence, ZANU-PF's struggle for survival became a military operation, and Zimbabwe was turned into an 'operational zone'. Zimbabwe's politics was militarised, and military coercion became the currency of politics. From March 2000, the state began Operation Tsuro, in which military means were used for political ends.

Operation Tsuro had three main facets. The first was that of command-and-control. In an ironic continuity with the RSF, the state recreated the JOC; this time combining the Ministry of Defence (ZDF), Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP), CIO and the Zimbabwe National War Veterans' Association. There were regular joint briefings and action plans to resolve the 'crisis'.

Second, operational zones were established. The task was to identify 'loyal' and 'opposition' communities and individuals. The former would be rewarded and the latter punished. The ultimate aim was that the rural areas in Mashonaland and Manicaland would be 'liberated'—that is, become pro-ZANU areas and 'no-go' areas for the opposition (Matabeleland was recognised as an opposition stronghold).

Third, the methodology of operations included persuasion and violence. At first, the ground troops were landless villagers led by both genuine and nominal 'war veterans', with the state and ZNA operating as armourer, provider of logistics and enforcer. Attacks were initially on white farms, which were invaded or repossessed; however, as the June 2000 elections neared, the scale of violence increased, with auxiliary forces attacking known and suspected pro-MDC groups.

Simultaneously, a system of mass politicisation began in rural areas, with villagers obliged to attend rallies and political indoctrination sessions known as *pungwes*. (The *pungwes* were also used by guerrillas in the Second Chimurenga as a politicisation technique.) This resulted in groups of internally displaced people, black and white, fleeing to the cities.

After ZANU-PF's narrow and controversial victory in the June 2000 elections, the state now formalised its coercive alliance with the war veterans and villagers, and also began to indoctrinate the youth in the tenets of coercive nationalism. Militia brigades and training schools were established at the Border Gezi National Training Centre in Mt Darwin and Mazowe (national conscription was also mooted), and the opposition continued to be attacked.

A corollary sub-text to the militarisation of politics has been the civilianisation of the ZNA High Command. Many of the highest ranking officers, when nominally retiring from active service, have received a horizontal transfer to directorships of civilian institutions in, for example, the banking sector. Top generals have also been appointed to run the CIO and as executive power brokers of the ZRP, to ensure the 'political reliability' of these organisations. The Third Chimurenga shows no sign of abating.

### THE ZDF AND HIV/AIDS

HIV/AIDS continues to pose a significant debilitating threat to the ZDF. According to the 2003 *Zimbabwe Human Development Report*:

A study in seven countries, including Zimbabwe, found that 75% of soldiers were dying of AIDS within one year of discharge.<sup>34</sup>

A host of factors explains the high HIV/AIDS prevalence rate in the ZDF, which exceeds the general population infection rate of 24.6%. These include: that the sector thrives on engaging the young and socially

inexperienced who transfer their militaristic fearless and aggressive traits into their private lives, including their sexual interactions; the nature of military operations, involving deployment on missions or for training in remote and poor areas; the attractiveness of military camps as high-income areas to these poor communities, in particular among commercial sex workers; and sexual favours with vendors and traders in return for their free passage at national border controls.

The ZNA component of the ZDF has developed an HIV/AIDS policy that encourages, among other strategies, safe sex, the provision of drugs to treat opportunistic infections, the provision of anti-retroviral drugs, and the opening of voluntary counselling and testing centres.<sup>35</sup> In line with this policy the ZNA in December 2004 held its first training seminar for HIV/AIDS peer educators, who would then disseminate awareness, prevention and care education within the army.

#### **FUTURE CHALLENGES**

Future challenges facing the ZDF including:

- implementing a coherent and sustainable HIV/AIDS management programme; and
- training military personnel, not only in order to sharpen their professional skills but to prepare them for productive civilian life when they retire from active military service.

#### **CONCLUSION**

The history of the ZDF from 1980 to the present follows the history of the country's political events. Emerging from three politically diverse factions, the ZDF project traversed the tortuous route that saw the departure of the former colonial military architects in 1980, and over the next four years nearly degenerated into civil war based on traditional party political, ethnic, regional and linguistic differences. The response to the regional challenge presented by South Africa early in the ZDF's formation, by default contributed to its national character around which the nation rallied to repel the aggressors.

While the structure, equipment and human resource composition of the ZDF was established by 1986, the problem still remained of reducing the force to a manageable level. Furthermore, strained

civil–military relations that appeared from late 2000 and 2002 also need attention if the project is to retain its national character. The tension is manifest in the ZPM and ZNS elements, appendages of the ZDF that seem to find life when there is internal political disharmony, but which are quickly marginalised when this ebbs. For example, the ZPM emerged after confrontations around the 1980 local government elections, while the current ZNS suffers from an equally partisan perception.

The role played by the ZDF in peacekeeping missions, both UN and SADC sponsored, has put Zimbabwe firmly in the Pan Africanist foreign policy camp. Finally, the Zimbabwe Constitution clearly outlines the role of the military in that country. There is also a deep understanding of participation in legal international duties, which makes the country an important player in regional security co-operation and integration.

## NOTES

- 1 G Horne, *From the barrel of a gun: The United States and the war against Zimbabwe, 1965-1980*, University of Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 2001, p 6.
- 2 When the FLS—comprising Nigeria, Zambia and Tanzania—at the time moved for the UN to censure Rhodesia in a resolution before the UN Security Council, Britain for the first time used its veto powers to thwart the move.
- 3 Actual reunion, following a temporary, externally generated flirtation, as members of the Patriotic Front during the war as demanded by the FLS, only occurred after independence on 22 December 1987.
- 4 Zimbabwe's major liberation movements have the unique history of having initially trained together before the political split occurred.
- 5 J Davidow, *A peace in Southern Africa: The Lancaster House Conference on Rhodesia, 1979*, Westview Special Studies on Africa, Westview Press, Boulder, 1984, p 15.
- 6 *Ibid*, p 14.
- 7 D Martin & P Johnson, *The struggle for Zimbabwe*, Zimbabwe Publishing House, Harare, 1981, p 70.
- 8 J Nkomo, *The story of my life*, Methuen, London, 1984, p 198. See also PF's opening address at the Constitutional Conference held at Lancaster House, London, September–December 1979.
- 9 Davidow, *op cit*, p 15.
- 10 Auckland and Adam Gourdon, UK; Rex Nhongo and Josiah Tungamirai, ZANLA; Lookout Masuku and Dumiso Dabengwa, ZIPRA; and Slatter and Barnard from the RSF.
- 11 J H B Auckland, The Rhodesian operation, *The Guards Magazine Journal of the Household Division*, Summer, 1980, p 46.
- 12 These were the official designations of the exercises.

- 13 *Debates in Parliament, First Session, First Parliament, 19 August to 19 September 1980*, 17 September 1980, p 964.
- 14 *Debates in Parliament, First Session, First Parliament, 20 January to 18 February 1980*, 17 September 1980, p 1392.
- 15 President's Speech to Parliament, 13 August 1990.
- 16 The balance sheet of independent Zimbabwe, *The Guardian*, UK, 29 August 1980.
- 17 *Debates in Parliament, Statement by the MoD, 13 February 1981*, pp 1923-1926; PM promises firm line on army unrest, *The Chronicle*, 12 February 1981.
- 18 This was the perpetration of the Matebeleland massacres where some 20,000 villagers died in the civil strife.
- 19 See *Breaking the silence: Building true peace: A report on the disturbances in Matebeleland and the Midlands, 1980-89*, Legal Resources Foundation & Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace; *The Justice Chihambakwe Report, 10-14 January 1984*; and *The Justice Enoch Dumutshena Inquiry, 1983*. The findings of the last two, although commissioned by government, have never been released to the public.
- 20 *The Chronicle*, 21 January 1981.
- 21 Similar comments were later expressed by the Prime Minister while addressing the group in Bindura on 7 July 1983; Be alert to enemy threat, *The Chronicle*.
- 22 *Statutory Instrument No. 141 of 1985, Defence (ZPM) (Non-Commissioned Members) (General) Regulations*.
- 23 New jets for Air Force, *The Chronicle*, 27 January 1982.
- 24 *Debates in Parliament, First Session, First Parliament, 14 May to 26 June and 23 July to 15 August 1980*, Vol. 1, 1980, p 403.
- 25 *National Defence Policy, 1997*, p 20.
- 26 *National Defence Policy*, Government of the Republic of Zimbabwe, Government Printers, Harare, 1997.
- 27 Ibid.
- 28 Ibid, para 25, p 20.
- 29 There appeared to be a cleansing of likely opposition members in the defence and security forces. However, members affected have taken up their cases in the courts, against the Army Commander, the Police Commissioner and the Prison Service head.
- 30 *The Herald*, 4 February 2005.
- 31 *Zimbabwe Defence Forces Magazine 7(2)*, p 12.
- 32 *The Herald*, 4 February 2005.
- 33 *The Herald*, 9 October 1991.
- 34 Zimbabwe's army, prisons hit hard by AIDS, <<http://uniformservices.unaids.org/country/Africa%20and%20the%20Middle%20East/Zimbabwe/Articles/2004-06-14%20Zimbabwe's%20Army%20Hit%20Hard%20By%20AIDS.doc>> (3 March 2005).
- 35 *The Herald*, 15 December 2004.



# Conclusion

Martin Rupiya

After two years of sustained research—beginning in November 2003 with a general call for papers, followed soon thereafter by a methodology conference attended by selected authors—the project on the history of militaries in Southern African has finally delivered a product.

This is the complete study. It focuses on a specific region of Southern Africa, is informed by a common development—the political decolonisation of African states—and is assessed over the specific period of December 1961 when Tanganyika achieved its independence until April 1994, when the last of the 13 states, South Africa, finally attained a similar status.

African military practitioners, academics and policy makers with considerable expertise and experience in the field (as explained in the introduction) wrote each of the national chapters. By providing a historical analysis that is empirically grounded, this contribution should be able to win over sceptics and those who have so far been reluctant to tell their own stories.

The chapters cover the history of militaries since independence in Angola, Botswana, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lesotho, Namibia, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The primary focus of *Evolutions & Revolutions: A Contemporary History of Militaries in Southern Africa* has been to document how independent states responded to the challenges presented by defence

and security threats that emanated from both internal and external sources in the post-colonial era. These reactions included formulation, adoption and implementation of policy options, the creation of institutions, the allocation of funding and the management of the impact of the processes throughout the life of each new state.

The common point of departure of all 13 case studies was from the era when leading agitating nationalists, either through civil disobedience or armed struggle, once in office, reacted to threat perceptions and created related instruments of force and coercion. It is against this background that the work attempts to provide insight into how an important part of the bureaucracy—the military—was/has been established, financed, controlled, equipped, commanded, reinforced and maintained in independent Southern Africa. Research results have provided a critical mirror that reveals, in retrospect, the rationale as to why policy makers and practitioners behave(d) in a particular manner in their quest to provide for national defence and security.

In facilitating the production of *Evolutions & Revolutions: A Contemporary History of Militaries in Southern Africa*, the project has achieved several firsts. Not only have we bridged the gap in our knowledge of Southern Africa's turbulent experience over the past 30 to 40 years, we have also demolished the myth associated with a reluctance on the part of African luminaries since the 1960s to put pen to paper. The customary preference for the majority of our African leaders is only to provide cursory reference to events in oral form, with the written culture still to be inculcated.

Yet another achievement is what we envisage as the impact of the book, first among our target audience (the security policy-maker and practitioner) as well as, of course, the chapter writers and other interested persons in the region and beyond. From the participants in the project, we also expect confirmation of the secondary aim of the project—that is, the creation of an impetus and nucleus of a cadre force that now takes forward the debate, through research and publication on military issues in the future. We are convinced that once this expectation becomes a reality, then this is likely to be emulated in other regions elsewhere, and specifically on the African continent.

There are a number of areas that spring to mind in this consideration. For example, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Summit has authorised the documentation of the liberation movements' history and that of the Front Lines States (FLS)—an organisation that included Nigeria among the participating Southern African countries.



The liberation history project by SADC has been placed under the former Tanzanian colonel, later brigadier, who was the point person for the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) Liberation Committee in the delivery and sharing out of war materiel to the region's liberation movements. We hope that this project will find common cause with skills flowing from this endeavour. This is because we are convinced that the experience gained from this project has already prepared and equipped some of the researchers with the ability to make a meaningful contribution to new, related research and publication oriented initiatives.

A second spin-off from the production of this book is that it now provides researched and analysed information on structures and capacities, in historical terms, of the foundations holding up the militaries in SADC. As a result, this knowledge can form the basis of undertaking the next crucial step—namely, that of encouraging wide-ranging security sector reform, initially at the national level but later at the regional level too.

To this end, the current discussion, protocols and intentions by the United Nations (UN) encouraging regions throughout the world to build adequate military capacity around common defence and security policy has found resonance in Africa. On the continent, the Peace and Security Council (PSC) has provided the political leadership and centre around which the Common African Defence and Security Policy (CADSP) has emerged, giving rise to the African Stand-By Force (ASF). As the region moves towards fulfilling the minimum requirements by 2010, as set out by the PSC through the CASDP, the envisaged structures of the ASF specifically within the SADC region are likely to benefit from the information on policy, strategy, composition and structure contained in this volume.

## **LESSONS LEARNT**

Important lessons can be drawn from the various chapters, and it is the purpose of this concluding chapter to draw attention to a number of these aspects. There are some general lessons as well as a few unique and specific experiences that we wish to review, while strongly urging readers to refer to the individual chapters for elaboration.

The first general lesson that emerges from a comprehensive assessment of the chapters is that there was a difference in approaching the military question between countries that attained independence

through negotiation and those that had to take up the armed struggle. Those nationalists who did not engage in the armed struggle appear to have assumed power without a blue-print in their manifestos on the military question. However, in Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Namibia and South Africa, where the armed struggle became very much part of the political settlement tool, in that environment, a military integration programme was a priority and became part of the immediate constitutional reform pillars.

By contrast, in Tanzania, Malawi and Zambia, security sector or defence and security policy reform was low on the list of nation-building priorities at the outset. It was only when the 'still weak and evolving state' was threatened that attention turned towards addressing the military question. For instance, in then Tanganyika of 1961 until the mutiny of January 1964, the new leaders appeared unconcerned with the military question. The prime minister and his new cabinet had their attention focused on other dimensions of poverty alleviation, and in the process offered the defence and security responsibility of the new state to the UN Trusteeship Office. This was politely refused. However, after the mutiny/military coup of January 1964, this hands-off non-interference policy changed radically, to result in the ruling Chama Cha Mapinduzi party taking direct and effective control of the military. After these events, the revolutionary methods became almost the normal reaction following a root-and-branch reform of the security sector. This internal security policy and civil–military relationship was only partly abandoned nearly 30 years later following global multiparty democracy and the recommendations made by the late Justice Francis Nyalali Commission of 1991. The latter called for a break with the past and distance between the civil service, the ruling party, government and the armed forces.

A similar trend was noted in the case of Mauritius following its independence in 1963 against the background of growing internal insecurity. The result was to push the leading nationalist political party into entering into formal security arrangements with the former colonial powers—France and Britain—even before formal political independence was bestowed.

The same can be said in identifying a particular regional trend with events in Malawi. In that country, the events around the August 1964 cabinet crisis that later culminated in invasions and insurrections in 1965 and 1967 created an environment in which Prime Minister Hastings Kamuzu Banda provided a new security policy to be implemented by a

faction of the ruling party—the Malawi Young Pioneers (MYP). While some attention had been paid to the Ghana-like national youth movements in 1963, the MYP was perceived to play a mundane role, concerned with motivating the nation on issues of food production and poverty alleviation. However, the internal security challenges that followed provided the rationale for Dr Banda to abandon the standing army and thrust the implementation of his security policy in the hands of the MYP. This reliance on the MYP was to continue until Operation Bwezani in December 1993, launched to effectively disband the MYP. The examples noted in Tanzania, Mauritius and Malawi provide an interesting perspective of how regimes in the new states reacted differently to almost similar internal challenges.

Meanwhile, the examples of countries emerging from the context of an armed struggle clearly indicate the level of priority accorded to the military question in the policies, institutions and expenditure patterns. Furthermore, in these states there is a clearly identified symbolism that includes defence and security structures. A distinct example is Namibia, where one of the roles of the armed forces is to foster integration in the wider, previously divided society.

Then there is a final category, the monarchies and former protectorates that were caught up in the whirlwind of wars and conflicts in Southern Africa. This includes Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland which, on closer examination, each took a different route in the evolution of its forces. Botswana adopted the most radical security policy, throwing its weight behind the OAU Liberation Committee and the FLS. A similar trend was followed by Lesotho and Swaziland—countries that had to balance their geographic location within South Africa with their support for the African National Congress (ANC) and Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), without upsetting their precarious relationship with apartheid South Africa. Meanwhile, Malawi was the odd man out in the region, prepared to work with colonial Rhodesia, Portuguese East Africa (Mozambique) and apartheid South Africa.

In concluding, we need to take a brief look at two aspects: foreign military assistance in the region from 1961-94; and a commentary on military expenditure.

#### **FOREIGN MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO SOUTHERN AFRICA**

The point to note on military assistance in the region is that under different ideologies and philosophies, countries have offered each other

political and military assistance. During the 1960s, the FLS marshalled military assistance on behalf of the OAU to liberation movements and their military formations from South Africa, Angola, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Namibia. In return, colonial regimes in Southern Rhodesia, Portuguese East Africa, Israel, Portugal, Taiwan and South Africa also provided support to proxy forces aimed at undermining the nationalist armed struggle project.

Over and above this, however, the region also witnessed the involvement of a number of countries offering military assistance of different sorts to countries in the region. Included here were the super powers—the United States and the Soviet Union—as well as France, Britain, West Germany and the former East Germany before the latter collapsed in 1989.

Most military assistance was to support the colonial and settler project against the nationalist armed struggle project, until full decolonisation in 1994. Thereafter, support switched to the independent states in different forms. The most interesting example of this was Britain's support of the Mozambican Armed Forces after the Rome Treaty of 1992, hosted in eastern Zimbabwe.

There were also other players outside of the Cold War context that offered military assistance through either sending contingents or equipment to the region, or providing opportunities in their own countries. Included here is Kenya, whose presence in Southern Africa in one country or another from the 1970s until the 1990s is unique. Kenya was involved in Swaziland, Namibia and Zimbabwe (in the Commonwealth Monitoring Force), and also had unsavoury involvement with Renamo in Mozambique and with the MYP in Malawi. Kenya therefore appears to be one of the countries that played a prominent role in Southern Africa, wading on both sides of philosophical and ideological divide during the armed struggle and beyond, such as serving later with the United Nations Transitional Administration Group (UNTAG) in Namibia that replaced the departing South African Defence Force.

The Ghanaian military also played a role, supporting the emerging Zambian Defence Force. India and Pakistan, despite their differences on that sub-continent, both played a role in Southern Africa, consolidating the Pan Africanist agenda. Their militaries were engaged in Zambia, Namibia, Lesotho and Zimbabwe (Zimbabwe also received support from China, Egypt and Vietnam). The Angolan government forces and the various peacekeeping missions launched in that country also received

support from Brazil, as did the Namibian navy; again to complement and consolidate the post-colonial independent project. Finally, assistance has also swung round to the West during the era of UN peacekeeping missions and regional integration.

### **A COMMENTARY ON REGIONAL MILITARY EXPENDITURE**

Significant amounts of money have been spent on the region's security demands and continue to be so allocated. For a number of factors, however, a summary of this expenditure using available Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) data, or any such similar tool, fails to provide an adequate regional picture.

This is because military expenditure has been furtive, in-kind and difficult to quantify. Take, for instance, Tanzania's military commitment to the FLS and its expenditure on its own national service, militia, the Islands of Zanzibar and even the financing of the Kagera War with Uganda from 1978 to (in theory) 1981, when the more overt actions were terminated although a presence continued to be entertained until the mid-1980s. It is impossible to correctly quantify these wide-ranging allocations.

Complicating the picture further are cases such as Malawi and Swaziland, where external factors not only directed these countries' security policies but also financed the process.

In this context, each chapter has attempted to provide some sort of indication of military expenditure in order to guide our interpretation of events in the region. The cautionary commentary by SIPRI, the renowned research institute, is important, however, indicating that graphs, expenditure columns and statistics must be treated with the proverbial pinch of salt. It is also instructive to note that SIPRI data is sometimes 'originated' from statistics produced by other organisations, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, whose calculations may seek to emphasise different points. Put simply, attempting to compare military expenditure figures between states—or even year-on-year within a state—may be as different as comparing oranges to apples.

To this end, SIPRI has this to say (<[http://first.sipri.org/non\\_first/result\\_milex.php?>](http://first.sipri.org/non_first/result_milex.php?>)):

Military expenditure data from different volumes of the Yearbooks should not be combined because of data revision between volumes.

Revisions can be significant; e.g. when a better time series becomes available; the entire SIPRI series is revised accordingly. When data are available in local currency but not in constant US\$ or as a share of GDP, this is due to lack of economic data. Revisions in constant dollar series can also originate in significant revisions in the economic statistics of [the] IMF that are used for these calculations.

Interestingly, and indicated in the table, force levels in the region have been declining steadily since South Africa's 'independence' in 1994. The available figures demonstrate that most countries (Tanzania, Angola, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Lesotho, Swaziland and Namibia) have cut their earlier force levels by half, while others appear to be remaining static.

Another important trend is that all the countries' militaries are for the first time working together, informed by a coherent security policy under SADC and the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security. The two trends are important in that they can be relied upon to precipitate long-neglected national security sector reform programmes that are guided by the regional reform agenda.

**Force levels for SADC countries, 1990–2003**

Year	Angola	Botswana	DRC	Lesotho	Malawi	Namibia
1990	115 000	6000	55 000	2000	7000	8000
1991	150 000	7000	60 000	2000	8000	8000
1992	128 000	6000	55 000	2000	10 000	8000
1993	128 000	6000	55 000	2000	10 000	8000
1994	100 000	6000	55 000	2000	10 000	8000
1995	100 000	7000	55 000	2000	8000	8000
1996	97 000	7000	60 000	2000	10 000	8000
1997	100 000	8000	60 000	2000	5000	9000
1998	114 000	9000	60 000	2000	5000	9000
1999	120 000	9000	40 000	2000	5000	9000
2000	120 000	9000	40 000	2000	5000	9000
2001	146 000	9000	40 000	2000	5000	9000
2002	100 000	9000	40 000	2000	5000	9000
2003	130 000	9000	40 000	2000	5000	9000
<b>Total</b>	<b>1 648 000</b>	<b>10 7000</b>	<b>715 000</b>	<b>28 000</b>	<b>98 000</b>	<b>119 000</b>

Source: Bonn International Centre for Conversion, conversion surveys, March 2005, <http://www.bicc.de/>

In the final analysis, *Evolutions & Revolutions: A Contemporary History of Militaries in Southern Africa* has been an effort to capture the rich and vibrant experience of the region during its conflict-ridden era.

The work has also been about trying to understand how the key bureaucratic components that are responsible for executing the states' monopoly of force and coercion—the military—were organised, financed, equipped, deployed, controlled and managed then and since. The next challenge must be focused on moving the agenda forward, motivating for a second phase that addresses the conceptual suggestions of a regional security sector project based on national security interests, inherent capacities, and geophysical and strategic advantages.

South Africa	Swaziland	Tanzania	Zambia	Zimbabwe	Total
85 000	3000	40 000	16 000	45 000	<b>448 000</b>
80 000	3000	40 000	16 000	45 000	<b>485 000</b>
72 000	3000	46 000	16 000	48 000	<b>445 000</b>
72 000	3000	46 000	16 000	48 000	<b>405 000</b>
84 000	3000	46 000	18 000	47 000	<b>392 000</b>
120 000	3000	35 000	18 000	45 000	<b>413 000</b>
107 000	3000	35 000	18 000	43 000	<b>397 000</b>
100 000	3000	35 000	22 000	39 000	<b>390 000</b>
95 000	3000	34 000	22 000	39 000	<b>285 000</b>
81 000	3000	34 000	22 000	39 000	<b>371 000</b>
73 000	3000	30 000	22 000	40 000	<b>360 000</b>
65 000	3000	27 000	22 000	39 000	<b>374 000</b>
60 000	3000	27 000	22 000	36 000	<b>320 000</b>
56 000	3000	27 000	17 000	29 000	<b>334 000</b>
<b>1 150 000</b>	<b>42 000</b>	<b>502 000</b>	<b>267 000</b>	<b>582 000</b>	<b>441 5000</b>





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# Index

## A

### Air force

Angola, 35, 37, 38, 39, 40  
DRC, 78  
Lesotho, 98  
Mauritius, 142  
Mozambique, 157, 165, 166, 182,  
184, 189, 190  
South Africa, 241, 247, 250, 251, 263  
Swaziland, 23, 284  
Zambia, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317,  
318, 319, 320, 321, 325, 328  
Zimbabwe, 332, 339, 340, 343, 344,  
348, 352, 355

### Armed struggle liberation movements

Angola, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15,  
16, 17, 18, 23  
DRC, 76  
Malawi, 131  
Mozambique, 156, 157, 159, 164, 167  
Namibia, 200, 201, 202, 208, 266  
South Africa, 160, 237, 246, 249, 238,  
248, 280  
Swaziland, 275, 284, 292  
Tanzania, 300  
Zambia, 318, 321  
Zimbabwe, 331, 332, 333, 336, 339

## C

### Civil-military relations

South Africa, 257  
Zimbabwe, 348

### Composition of armies

Angola, 8, 14, 35, 55  
DRC, 80  
Mauritius, 139, 148

Mozambique, 183, 190  
South Africa, 254  
Zimbabwe, 361

### Constitution

Angola, 34, 35  
Botswana, 46, 53, 55, 57  
DRC, 65, 70  
Lesotho, 86, 87, 94, 95, 100, 107  
Malawi, 115, 124, 125, 126  
Mauritius, 144  
Mozambique, 184, 185, 187  
Namibia, 205, 206, 207, 215, 216,  
217, 223  
South Africa, 235, 238, 239, 240, 241,  
242, 245, 249, 253, 257, 258  
Swaziland, 278, 279, 281, 286, 287,  
291  
Tanzania, 306, 307, 308  
Zimbabwe, 336, 348, 349, 359, 351,  
359, 362

## D

### Defence act

Malawi, 114, 118  
Mozambique, 184  
Namibia, 207  
South Africa, 257  
Zimbabwe, 348

### Defence budget

Angola, 35, 44  
DRC, 71,  
Lesotho, 101  
Mozambique, 169, 190  
Namibia, 212, 244  
South Africa, 258, 259, 260, 263  
Zimbabwe, 350, 352

**Defence committee**

Malawi, 113  
Zimbabwe, 349

**Defence organisations**

DRC, 68  
South Africa, 235

**Defence policy**

Angola, 8, 34, 35  
Botswana, 49, 52, 56  
Lesotho, 96, 98, 99, 100, 106  
Mozambique, 126, 162, 167, 168,  
169, 184, 186  
Namibia, 211, 218, 219, 220  
South Africa, 235, 240, 250, 253, 258,  
260, 262, 263  
Swaziland, 270, 278  
Tanzania, 295, 299, 300, 305, 308  
Zimbabwe, 339, 347, 348, 349, 351,  
352

**Defence review**

Malawi, 127  
South Africa, 243, 251, 252, 253, 254,  
263, 262, 260, 257, 255, 264

**Defence spending**

Lesotho, 101

**E****External deployment and peacekeeping**

Angola, 37, 39  
Botswana, 50, 57  
Lesotho, 102, 105  
Malawi, 113, 123, 127, 130, 131  
Mozambique, 160, 186  
Namibia, 204, 219, 220, 221, 222,  
223, 225, 226, 228  
South Africa, 261, 263, 264, 262  
Zambia, 328  
Zimbabwe, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358,  
362, 370

**F****Foreign military assistance**

Angola, 369  
South Africa, 64

**Foreign policy**

Botswana, 57  
Lesotho, 102, 105, 108  
Malawi, 111, 112, 117, 121, 127, 131  
Mauritius, 143, 151

**H****HIV/AIDS policy**

Botswana, 51  
Zimbabwe, 361

**I****Independence date**

Angola, 7, 13, 14, 16, 21  
Botswana, 45  
DRC, 65  
Lesotho, 85  
Malawi, 111  
Mauritius, 140, 151, 368  
Mozambique, 155, 160  
Namibia, 199, 210  
South Africa, 238, 245, 372  
Swaziland, 269, 273  
Tanzania, 298, 365  
Zambia, 314, 326, 317  
Zimbabwe, 331

**Integration**

Angola, 7, 8, 9, 21, 38  
Botswana, 57  
DRC, 67, 68, 77, 78, 79  
Lesotho, 99, 104, 107  
Malawi, 114  
Mozambique, 94  
Namibia, 199, 209, 210, 220, 230

South Africa, 235, 240, 241, 242, 253,  
254, 255, 262, 264  
Swaziland, 278, 291

### **Intelligence**

Angola, 27, 36  
DRC, 69, 72, 73  
Malawi, 120, 123, 126  
Mozambique, 156  
Namibia, 202, 203, 211, 212  
South Africa, 247, 250, 251, 252, 259,  
260, 264  
Swaziland, 285, 286, 292  
Zambia, 324, 325, 328  
Zimbabwe, 168, 174, 334, 337, 354

## **M**

### **Militia**

DRC, 63, 63, 78, 79, 81  
Malawi, 120, 122  
Mauritius, 141, 158  
Mozambique, 176  
Zimbabwe, 339, 241, 342, 343, 360

### **Military coups**

Lesotho, 86, 91, 93  
South Africa, 245  
Zambia, 322

### **Military expenditure**

Botswana, 54, 56  
Malawi, 123, 127, 128, 129, 130  
Mauritius, 149, 150  
Mozambique, 170  
Namibia, 219, 220, 221  
Swaziland, 290  
Zimbabwe, 352, 353, 354

### **Military policy**

Botswana, 54  
Zimbabwe, 335

## **N**

### **Navy**

Angola, 37, 38, 39, 40  
DRC, 78  
Mozambique, 166, 182, 184, 189, 190  
Namibia, 214  
South Africa, 243, 244, 250, 251, 252,  
263  
Swaziland, 284

## **O**

### **Operations**

Angola, 18, 20, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 36,  
37, 38, 39  
Botswana, 48, 57  
DRC, 64, 66, 69, 72, 75  
Lesotho, 88, 103, 105  
Malawi, 115  
Mauritius, 137  
Mozambique, 157, 163, 166, 167, 172,  
176, 178, 186, 189, 190, 192  
Namibia, 204, 211, 214, 221, 222,  
226, 227  
South Africa, 243, 246, 247, 248, 249,  
250, 251, 254, 259, 260, 261, 262,  
263, 264, 286  
Tanzania, 309  
Zambia, 320, 321, 322, 324, 328  
Zimbabwe, 331, 332, 336, 342, 345,  
348, 351, 352, 356, 358, 360, 361

## **P**

### **Police mobile unit**

Botswana, 47  
Lesotho, 86  
Malawi, 111  
Swaziland, 273

### **Parliamentary committees on defence and security, 327, 328**

**R****Regional integration**

Botswana, 57  
Lesotho, 99  
Namibia, 199, 230  
Swaziland, 291

**Royal Air Force, 318, 320**

**S****Security sector reform**

Lesotho, 85, 86, 87, 94, 97, 98, 100,  
106  
Malawi, 127  
Namibia, 199