

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

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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 overstretching 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 Ayooob, *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.
  - 20 Constitution of Botswana: Chap.1, Government Printer, Gaborone, p 00:31.
  - 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).
  - 22 Lunn, op cit, p 86.
  - 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.
  - 24 L S Thaga, *Unpacking and rearranging the boxes: The search for a new institutional matrix of democratic control of the military in Botswana*, MA thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California, March 2004.
  - 25 B Egner & S Grant, The private press and democracy, in J Holms & P Molutsi (eds), *Democracy in Botswana*, Botswana Society and Ohio University Press, Athens, Ohio, 1990, p 250.
  - 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.





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