In Memoriam
Sarah Meek

11 March 1970 – 26 October 2006

Sarah Meek, Head of Development at the Institute for Security Studies (and previously Head of the Arms Management Programme), passed away in a car accident near Pretoria, South Africa, on 26 October 2006. At the time of her death, she was editor of the African Security Review and was involved in the compilation of this issue.

Sarah graduated from the Graduate School of International Policy Studies at the Monterey Institute for International Studies (MIIS) in December 1994. She then became programme manager for the Program on Arms Control, Disarmament and Conversion at MIIS, which was directed by Professor Ed Laurance, and co-authored the first influential policy paper on the global problem of small arms and light weapons, The new field of micro-disarmament (published by the Bonn International Center for Conversion).

From 1996 to 1999 Sarah was a senior researcher with the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) in Pretoria. During this time she earned a global reputation for her field and policy research on armed violence in Africa. She was also responsible for various ISS publications, including the Nedcor-ISS Crime Index and African Security Review.

While at International Alert, a London-based NGO, Sarah focused on conflict prevention. She also played a central role in creating the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA), a global coalition of NGOs working to stop the proliferation and misuse of firearms and small weapons through policy changes and practical action at international, regional and national level.

In January 2002 Sarah returned to the ISS as Head of the Arms Management Programme. She was a member of the Small Arms Survey (SAS) board, and during her tenure with the ISS Arms Management Programme she developed a strong working relationship with SAS and many other international and African organisations that were working on arms control and disarmament issues.
In 2005 Sarah was promoted to the position of Head of Development at the ISS, where she was responsible for the overall delivery and quality assurance of human resources, information technology, publications and financial services, as well as the development and co-ordination of research and fundraising opportunities. With the executive director of the ISS, she was in charge of regional development and overall management of ISS offices in Cape Town, Pretoria, Nairobi and Addis Ababa. She again became editor of the African Security Review, which she took into an entirely different league. In effect, she functioned as deputy director.

Sarah served as consultant to the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms in 2003 and 2006. The register, which has been in operation since 1992, is a voluntary arrangement that captures the bulk of the global arms trade in major conventional arms. According to Hannelore Hoppe, director and deputy to the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs at the United Nations, Sarah's contribution to the work of the GGE “has been invaluable and essential to the successful outcome of their work”.

On the very day of the accident, the UN small arms process was ‘saved’ after the disastrous Review Conference in July (see ASR 15.2) by the passing of a resolution that reinstates biennial meetings of states to map the progress they are making in implementing the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (UNPoA), as well as a resolution to start work on an international arms trade treaty. This second vote paves the way for a feasibility report by the Secretary-General and the establishment of a group of governmental experts – a milestone in the fight to bring the global arms trade under control and something Sarah believed was essential for human security.

Her death was announced at the plenary session of the United Nations First Committee - a sub-committee of the UN General Assembly that deals with disarmament and international security. This indicates the impact she had had before and after the UN agreed to the UNPoA in 2001. According to Rob Wensley of South Africa's Department of Foreign Affairs, “it was noted by the committee's chairperson that Sarah was someone who had contributed a great deal to disarmament”.

Sarah excelled at the highest levels of the UN system and was able to inspire others, particularly women, to see the work she was doing and think to themselves, “I want to be her!” This is particularly significant in the arms control field, which is largely male-dominated.

Sarah was dedicated to her work and played a significant role in the development of the ISS over a number of years. Her passing away will leave a tremendous gap. At the same time, Sarah left much to remember her by, and while we grieve with her family, we celebrate her rich life – one that we will continuously recall, treasure and draw inspiration from.

Jakkie Cilliers
Executive Director, Institute for Security Studies
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EDITORIAL
Challenges for defence planners in Africa: Ensuring appropriate, adequate, accountable and affordable armed forces

Len Le Roux*

The defence debate in Africa has been characterised by two main tendencies. The first is the dominance of the military in many African states preventing effective debate on defence owing to arguments of ‘the need to know’, ‘confidentiality’ and ‘national or state security’. It has kept the defence and security debate outside the domain of civil society and led to the ‘mystification’ of defence and security issues. It has effectively prevented transparency and accountability in defence management in many countries of the continent. The second tendency is the donor-driven debate on cutting defence expenditure and downsizing African armed forces. It takes the rationale that spending on defence is counter-productive to the needs for development and that defence spending must be cut to the ‘thumb-suck’ figure of less than 2 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) before donor funds for development will be made available. This donor

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conditionality has led to inappropriate cuts in defence spending and also caused poor budgeting and expenditure control practices such as off-budget revenue and spending. Both these lines of argument are clearly simplistic, baseless and not supportable. We do not want defence forces that are shrouded in secrecy, a power unto themselves and non-accountable, and defence forces that are designed purely from a cost perspective and reduced to ineffectiveness we do not need.

Yet, there is much more to the defence debate than these two approaches. Africa and African states need defence forces. This assertion is amply supported by developments around the Common African Defence and Security Policy (CADSP), the African Standby Force (ASF) – consisting of the five sub-regional Standby Brigades, the SADC Protocol on Politics, Defence and Security and the SADC Mutual Defence Pact (MDP) – as well as by the lack of ability to respond to the many crises on the continent. As we write, a tragic human disaster is taking place in Sudan and Africa is incapable of intervening. Even when African military forces are deployed in peace operations such as in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Burundi and Sierra Leone, such deployments are dependent on the Western powers for funding, strategic transport, and logistic sustainment and support.

So, if we need defence forces in Africa, what type of defence force do we need? It is postulated here that Africa and African states (and nations) need defence forces that are appropriate, adequate, accountable and affordable.

Africa needs defence forces that are appropriate to the realities, needs and challenges of our continent. These include fast reaction to humanitarian disasters, forceful responses to despotic regimes and warlords, effective support to civil authorities, and the ability to act in concert with one another. The hype of defence against external military aggression and major conventional battles that is so often used as the sole driver for the design of African armed forces should be left to those who see Africa as an arms market only.

Africa needs defence forces that are adequate to her demands. When we deploy our defence capabilities – as we shall – for peace enforcement, peacekeeping, peace-building, disaster relief, the maintenance of essential services and other operations in support of civil authority, we need to ensure that we have equipped them adequately for their task. As civil society, and as we demand a say in defence matters, we should take responsibility for our soldiers. We should never expect our soldiers to ‘take the punch on our behalf’ if we are not committed to the cause for which we have recruited and deployed them.

Yet, Africa needs defence forces that are accountable and affordable. Accountability is ensured through democratic civi–military relations and includes the issues of transparency, civil control of defence management and parliamentary oversight. This enhances the ability of governments to prioritise national and regional developmental and security needs
and also serves as a regional confidence-building measure. Yes, we need appropriate and adequate defence forces, but the question is who decides what is appropriate and adequate. The answer to this question is, simply put, the elected representatives of the people.

And ultimately we need armed forces that are affordable and therefore sustainable. Far too many of Africa’s defence forces are ineffective and not operationally ready because of unserviceable equipment and untrained personnel as a result of poor acquisition processes and financial mismanagement. Affordability will be ensured through correct design and efficiency in defence management. African states must ensure that defence expenditure is maintained at the absolutely essential level and in so doing release scarce resources that are so desperately needed for developmental and social requirements. African states must also ensure that funds allocated to defence are used as efficiently as possible. This will be achieved by good practice in management, ensuring proper tooth to tail ratios (the ratio between operational forces and administrative and support staff) and proper provision for and use of reserve forces – amongst others.

This issue of the African Security Review looks at many of these issues. It addresses the issues of the development of an African Standby Force to serve the continent’s needs for conflict prevention and intervention, defence economics and the effect of defence spending, public expenditure management as related to the defence sector and civil-military relations in general. It is the hope of the editor that it will contribute to the achievement of appropriate, adequate, accountable and affordable defence forces on the African continent.

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A Pan-African army: The evolution of an idea and its eventual realisation in the African Standby Force
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African military spending: Defence versus development?
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A Pan-African army: The evolution of an idea and its eventual realisation in the African Standby Force

Benedikt Franke*

The idea of establishing a permanent Pan-African army has for long caught the imagination of Africans as a potential solution to many of their continent’s manifold security problems. This feature tracks the quest for a Pan-African military force through the past five decades covering the feeble attempts of Africa’s freedom fighters to join forces, the repeated failure to establish an African High Command (AHC) in the early years of decolonisation, the subsequent inability of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) Defence Commission to agree on a common defence structure, and the various fruitless initiatives of the international community to set up a Pan-African peacekeeping force in the 1990s. On the basis of this retrospective journey, the article argues that the African Union’s current initiative to establish an African Standby Force (ASF) based on five regionally administered standby brigades should be seen in the tradition of this long quest and not as a groundbreaking new conceptual development, as argued by some. It further contends that even though the ASF is conceptually closer to the Standby Arrangement of the United Nations (UNSAS) than to a Pan-African army as envisioned by leading Pan-Africanists such as Kwame Nkrumah, it nonetheless marks a substantial development in Africa’s continental self-emancipation which should be greeted and supported by Africans and the international community alike.

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Introduction

Much has been written on the African Standby Force (ASF) in this and other publications ever since the July 2002 Durban Summit endorsed its establishment as one of the cornerstones of a new African security edifice. Little, however, is generally known about the many attempts at establishing some sort of Pan-African military force which preceded the creation of the ASF and which had a profound impact on the way in which the AU’s current security architecture has evolved. This paper aims to shed some light on this long quest for a Pan-African force, emphasising the rationale(s) offered for centralising the responsibility for the security of the African continent as well as the many obstacles thereto. It is divided into three parts: The first part introduces the reader to the various (failed) initiatives that set the stage for the establishment of the ASF. The second part tracks the conceptual evolution of the latter from the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution agreed upon during the 1993 Cairo Summit of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) to its present form. The final part discusses the current stage of development and shortly elaborates on the remaining challenges. The feature concludes by arguing that the African Union (AU) should be credited for realising a worthy military concept, not failing to caution that not all of the political tensions underlying inter-African security cooperation which had crippled the ASF’s conceptual predecessors have yet been convincingly resolved.

The origin of the idea (1922–1958)

With the plans of several colonial powers to establish large African armies limited by their respective geographical control, the idea of a Pan-African military force seems to have grown out of communist revolutionary propaganda. As early as 1922 an article in the Communist Review demanded that “no opportunity should be lost for propagandizing the native soldiers in the colonial armies and for organizing secretly a great Pan-African army in the same way as the Sinn Fein built up the Irish Army under the very nose of England”.\(^1\) Over the years, as the struggle for liberation from colonial rule intensified, so did the calls for uniting the military resources of Africa in order to achieve the continent’s independence.

The topic was frequently discussed at Pan-African conferences across the world but did not receive serious political support until Ghana’s first president, Kwame Nkrumah, voiced the idea of an African High Command (AHC) and the establishment of an African legion during the All-African People’s Conference in 1958. According to him, the objectives of such a military construct were threefold, namely to defend the increasing number of independent African states from imperialist aggression, to offer African states a feasible alternative to disadvantageous military pacts with the Cold War powers, and to spearhead the liberation of areas under colonial and white supremacist control.
The quest for an ‘African High Command’ (1958–1963)

Despite its popular appeal, Nkrumah’s radical proposal encountered passionate opposition from the growing number of nationalists among Africa’s leading politicians who saw the centralisation of military power as a first (and irreversible) step towards the political unification of the continent. While this was exactly what several politicians such as Nkrumah himself had hoped and worked for, many other African leaders believed in a more gradual approach to continental unity that would not infringe upon the newly won sovereignty of their states. This irreconcilable difference in perspectives eventually combined with divergent views on ongoing developments such as the international intervention in the Congo crisis and the war in Algeria to polarise Africa’s states into opposing groups.

The so-called Casablanca group consisted of countries who proposed the immediate creation of a political union for Africa in which economic, cultural and military activities would be coordinated centrally. The states in the rival Brazzaville group (later to be called the Monrovia group) considered themselves more conservative and gradualist. Instead of a close organic identification within some form of constitutional Union of Africa, they advocated a unity that was not “political integration of sovereign states, but unity of aspirations and of action”.

Given this divergence in objectives, it is hardly surprising that the two groups attempted to institutionalise two very different conceptions of military cooperation and integration. While the Brazzaville states opted for a simple Joint Defence Command (with a purely advisory role) to be based in Ouagadougou, the capital of Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso), the Casablanca states were far more ambitious. Article 2 of the January 1961 African Charter of Casablanca not only created a Joint African High Command as one of four specialised committees, but also charged it with the setting up of a viable unified military structure capable of freeing all African territories that were still under foreign rule.

For several reasons, among them most states’ increasing preoccupation with domestic issues, neither group’s concept was realised before a general rapprochement culminated in the 1963 establishment of the OAU (and the groups’ subsequent dissolution). Far from marking the end of his quest for an AHC, this re-organisation of Africa’s institutional landscape tempted Nkrumah to renew his calls for the establishment of a unified military structure “to ensure the stability and security of Africa”.

However, despite his passionate plea Nkrumah failed to get the idea entrenched in the OAU Charter and a far less authoritative Defence Commission was created in its stead as one of the organisation’s five specialised commissions.
The OAU Defence Commission

The central purpose of the Defence Commission was to work out a formula for coordinating and harmonising the defence policies of member states to enable the OAU to execute the defence role it assumed under Article 11 of its charter. Even though the proposal for an AHC had been rejected by the majority of founding members as premature, the idea was repeatedly re-introduced to the meetings of the commission and discussed under ever new names such as African Defence Organisation, African Defence Force, or African Peace Force. However, no matter how often or under what name and parameters the idea was discussed, the increasingly entrenched concepts of territoriality and sovereignty that had already plagued continental politics before the inception of the OAU continued to prevent the establishment of a supranational military organisation.

Nonetheless, the issue never quite disappeared. Instances of insecurity such as mutinies (for instance Tanzania in 1964), mercenary raids (such as the seizure of Kisangani in 1967) as well as attacks by colonial powers and white supremacist regimes (for example the Portuguese invasion of Guinea in 1970) occasionally reminded Africa’s states of their own vulnerability and generally led to renewed discussions on the need to join forces. In that way, the quest for some kind of Pan-African military force as possible organ for the preservation of Africa’s territorial integrity and spearhead for the continent’s liberation served as constant background music to inter-African relations, until the end of the Cold War changed many of the underlying dynamics. The following examples present some of the evolutionary concepts and milestones on the long and winding road to the ASF during that period.

The 1963 Ghanaian proposal (a Union High Command)

During the Defence Commission’s first meeting in Accra in late 1963, the Ghanaian delegation presented yet another elaborate proposal for a unified military structure, including the strategic siting or re-siting of military bases throughout Africa and the drawing up of actual plans for the immediate liberation of the dependent territories of Africa. The proposal provided for the establishment of a military organisation controlled by one military authority and a Supreme Command Headquarters to be responsible to the Assembly of Heads of State and Government. Besides the setting up of a Union Joint Services Supreme Military Command Headquarters, the plan also included four Joint Services Regional Headquarters to be responsible for the defence of the four ‘free’ regions of Africa (North, East, Central and West) and an extremely ambitious Union Joint Services Strategic Reserve Command which (very much like today’s conceptual ASF) would be in a state of readiness to counter any military threat that might arise anywhere in Africa (see Figure 1). In addition to a union army, union navy and union air force, there would also be a union strike force and even a union military intelligence organisation, union military research and development organisation and union military planning organisation.
This proposal was strongly opposed by the Nigerian delegation, which raised three main objections to it: that it involved a substantial loss of sovereignty; that the cost of having such a military structure was prohibitive, and that it would inevitably be bedevilled by other problems such as manpower, equipment and weapon standardisation, problems of logistics, unified training, deployment of troops, and the appointment of the Supreme Commander. To underline its argument, the Nigerian delegation repeatedly alluded to the failure of the Casablanca group’s Joint African High Command to achieve any practical results as an indication of the difficulties.

The majority of delegations subsequently voted against the Ghanaian proposal and instead recommended the establishment of an insignificantly staffed permanent military headquarters within the OAU secretariat.

The 1965 Sierra Leonean proposal (an African Defence Organisation)

At the second meeting of the Defence Commission in Freetown in February 1965, the delegation from Sierra Leone submitted a somewhat more moderate proposal calling for the establishment of an African Defence Organisation (ADO). Instead of advocating a permanent standing army as Nkrumah and his Ghanaians had done, the Sierra Leonean delegates suggested a continental clearinghouse for national armed forces (which would
later serve as a model for the ASF Regional Headquarters) supported by a committee of military experts. Under this clearinghouse, each OAU member state would have been asked to earmark one or more units of its armed forces to be placed at the disposal of the OAU for specific operations. These forces would have remained stationed in their own countries and would have been mobilised and used under the aegis of the OAU only at the express request of one or more member states attacked from outside Africa, or suffering from serious internal trouble, or in conflict with other OAU member states.10

Despite its more moderate character, the Sierra Leonean proposal was opposed by the majority of delegations. While the Nigerian delegations saw it as “yet another clever manoeuvre to skip in the concept of an AHC by the back door”,11 many other delegations expressed concerns about capabilities, financing and security implications as well as the possible role of ADO forces in maintaining oppressive and unpopular governments in power. Following this fruitless discussion, the Defence Commission was not revived until December 1970 in Addis Ababa in order to examine the growing threat posed by Portugal and the white supremacist regimes in South Africa and Rhodesia.

The 1970 Nigerian-Ghanaian turnaround and the rise of a regionalised defence structure

In an ironic reversal of positions, the Nigerians finally came to embrace the idea of an AHC when their civil war ended in January 1970, while the Ghanaians, having expelled the leading advocate of the idea, President Kwame Nkrumah, seemed less and less enthusiastic. However, even with the strong support of the Nigerians and continental attention redrawn to the need for common action by the OAU’s inability to respond to the Portuguese invasion of Guinea in November 1970, the Defence Commission rejected the formation of a centralised High Command and in its stead recommended the creation of regional defence units. Based on the original division of the continent into four zones proposed by Nkrumah nearly a decade earlier, these units were supposed to consist of national armed forces which could be placed at the disposal of the OAU for specific operations. An executive secretariat for defence composed of one regional chief of staff and his deputy, as well as representatives from the various national armed forces, was to coordinate the regional units.12 Just like the previous plans, this one was not implemented, once again confirming OAU Secretary-General Diallo Telli’s lamentation that “nowhere is the sense of urgency so lacking in the majority of member states as towards the idea of an African High Command whose creation is the outstanding task of the Defence Commission”.13

The 1978–1980 discussion (an OAU Defence Force)

The call for a Pan-African force which had flared up occasionally since the debate in the early 1970s (especially during the height of the civil war in Angola in 1975) became
particularly loud again during the Council of Ministers’ 31st ordinary session in Khartoum in July 1978. By then, events such as the increasingly frequent attacks by South Africa and Rhodesia on the frontline states or the Zaire government’s use of transport provided by non-African powers (notably Belgium) to deploy troops from Morocco and other African countries within its borders had driven even Tanzania’s previously sceptical President Julius Nyerere to declare that “it might be a good thing if the OAU was sufficiently united to establish an African High Command and a Pan-African Security Force”. Following a heated debate, the Council called for the reactivation of the OAU Defence Commission to consider “the desirability of establishing an inter-African military force under the aegis of the OAU”. In April 1979, the sixth ordinary session of the Defence Commission agreed that it was both desirable and necessary that the OAU should finally set up an OAU Defence Force whose role was to be fourfold, namely to support member states in the event of an aggression from non-African powers; to assist liberation movements in their struggles; to provide peacekeeping and observer forces in the event of conflict between member states; and to cooperate with the UN in matters of defence and security affecting member states.

Even though the chances for the establishment of a Pan-African military force thus seemed better than ever before, the OAU Summit held in Sierra Leone in July 1980 avoided a decision on the Defence Commission’s proposal and simply referred the OAU Defence Force scheme back for further study. Once again, as soon as the states’ shock over their vulnerability and thus the felt need for action had receded, so had their enthusiasm for tackling all the political obstacles and severe practical, structural, institutional, technical, logistical, financial and operational difficulties associated with the creation of a Pan-African force.

While it is certainly true that various leaders’ personal conceptions of African unity played an important role in the repeated attempts to establish a Pan-African military force, the security situation on the continent at any one time was the all-important determinant. Every serious discussion on such a force since 1965 had been triggered by an incident of insecurity (and had eventually ebbed away again with the memory of that incident and its particular imminence). Without such an accompanying unifying threat to overcome the enormous introversion of African states, a proposal for military cooperation or even integration did not stand a chance against the continent’s many vested interests.

**The OAU Peacekeeping Operation in Chad (1981–1982)**

Beginning with the initiation of a mediatory process in 1977, the OAU’s involvement in the decade-long civil war in Chad eventually culminated in the organisation’s unprecedented military intervention in December 1981. For the first time ever, an African force was mandated by an African organisation to conduct peacekeeping operations within one of its member states and many saw this as a first step towards
the eventual institutionalisation of continental military cooperation. However, the OAU force soon encountered immense difficulties and was hastily withdrawn in June 1982.

The many problems that beset the OAU peacekeeping force in Chad – reaching from logistical and financial shortages to an unclear mandate and a lack of interoperability – were a practical demonstration of all that the opponents of the Pan-African high command or any other form of Pan-African military force had been saying all along.18 Not surprisingly, the operation’s unmitigated failure had a great impact on the continental willingness to contemplate further Pan-African security initiatives. Instead, the subsequent institutional frustration and regional disillusion led to a devolution of such initiatives.

Devolution and the emergence of regional security initiatives

The devolution was a historically and politically logical process resulting from the OAU’s cautious approach which prevented it from establishing the mechanisms and framework necessary to tackle the security problems of the continent.19 Regional initiatives such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) or the Front Line States’ Inter-State Defence and Security Committee (ISDSC) eventually filled the void that had been created by the OAU’s inability to set up an integrated defence mechanism.

Established in November 1976 to advance regional economic cooperation and integration, ECOWAS, for example, implemented a number of security protocols in the early 1980s that would lay the basis for the organisation’s Ceasefire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) to successfully intervene in the Liberian civil war in August 1990. Named Operation Liberty, this intervention received widespread praise as “the first real attempt by African countries to (re)solve an African conflict” and OAU Secretary-General Dr Salim A Salim anticipated that the experience would make Africans realise the need for the establishment of an African High Command as well as military cooperation.20

As the section below will show, Dr Salim was right in more than one way. The intervention in Liberia did not only set a remarkable precedent and reinforced the trend towards regionalised military cooperation, but it also increased the international community’s attention to and support for the concept of “African solutions to African problems”.21 It thereby set the stage for the proliferation of African security initiatives in the 1990s and thus eventually also for the creation of the ASF.


After more than three decades of futile attempts to establish a Pan-African military force, the tide had slowly begun to turn in the early 1990s. With the Cold War’s shackles
gone, the continent exploded in violent conflicts which, directly or indirectly, led to four important developments on the road to the ASF, namely the OAU’s decision to establish an Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution; the international community’s growing substitution of support to African security initiatives for its own direct involvement in the continent’s troubles; the increasing acceptance of regional organisations as possible pillars for and implementation agencies of a continental security structure; and last but certainly not least, a twofold change in the continental self-conception.

The Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution

The deteriorating security landscape in Africa, the international community’s diminished interest in the continent, and the omnipresent wind of political change quickly forced the OAU to reconsider its own role with regard to Africa’s security and development following the end of the Cold War. As early as 1990, Africa’s leaders noted the urgent need for collective action to tackle the continent’s manifold security problems and following the 1991 landmark all-African conference on ‘security, stability, development and cooperation’ in Kampala, the continent finally appeared willing to overcome many of the hindrances which had plagued previous attempts at continental security cooperation. The 1992 report of the OAU Secretary-General on conflicts in Africa entitled ‘Proposals for an OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution’ subsequently argued for a replacement of the OAU’s obviously inadequate ad hoc approach to conflict management with an institutionalised framework. The African leaders endorsed the report and the OAU began to conceptualise the structure and process by which it could effectively manage conflicts in Africa. Hardly a year later, the OAU member states assembled in Cairo to formally establish the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution. Over the next seven years, the Mechanism’s activism was to transform the OAU into a more credible organisation with an increased visibility and an elevated profile in the conflict management arena. 22

International initiatives to promote and support ‘African solutions to African problems’

Aware of Africa’s manifold security problems, but increasingly reluctant to continue intervening directly in the continent’s many troubles, the international community gradually substituted the promotion of home-grown African initiatives for its own physical involvement. The tragic (and, arguably, preventable) events in Somalia and Rwanda in the early 1990s further amplified the pressures on the international community to specify the concepts for such a promotion and advance their speedy implementation. The three most notable concepts to emerge were the African Crisis Response Force/Initiative (ACRF/I); the French programme Renforcement des Capacités Africaines de Maintien de la Paix (RECAMP); and the so-called P-3 Initiative.23
In September 1996, in the midst of both the US presidential elections and the Zairean-Rwanda crisis, it was announced that President Bill Clinton had approved what The Guardian called an ‘African Crisis Army’ and the US Administration referred to as ‘African Crisis Response Force’ (ACRF).24 According to the newspaper, the latter would be 10,000 strong, trained and equipped by the US and her allies, and dispatched to “countries where insurrection, civil war or campaigns of genocide threaten mass civilian casualties”. However, as the initial ACRF concept generated only limited African support, it was subsequently reformulated into the African Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI) and later morphed into Operation Focus Relief, all of which essentially aimed at establishing and training an African peacekeeping force.

The French RECAMP programme, on the other hand, did not focus on the establishment of such a force, but intended to enhance African capacities on a non-discriminatory basis in order to facilitate their participation in peacekeeping operations within the framework of, for example, the UN Stand-by Arrangements System (UNSAS). Thus very much centred on the national level, France has since been extraordinarily active in training and supplying various African armies in order to increase their peacekeeping potential.

In 1997, realising their increasingly wasteful duplication of effort, France, the United Kingdom and the United States announced a joint ‘P-3 Initiative’ which was to harmonise their various peacekeeping capacity-building programmes in Africa. This initiative was to generate an overarching umbrella for a broad range of valuable individual programmes and seek out areas of possible cooperation. Even though the P-3 Initiative, like RECAMP, was not geared towards the creation of a Pan-African force, it nonetheless helped to prepare the ground for the ASF by increasing African peacekeeping capabilities as well as furthering essential building blocs such as the interoperability between the various emerging regional security initiatives.

Regional organisations as pillars and implementations agencies

In the early 1990s, many observers believed that the increasing devolution of security initiatives would mean the end to any continental conflict management scheme involving the creation of a Pan-African military force. However, quite to the contrary, this devolution (supported and advanced by the international community) was to prove one of the most important milestones on the road to the ASF. Proponents of the idea of a Pan-African force quickly realised that by basing their suggested continental initiative on these regional pillars in which many member states seemed to have more confidence, stakes and (perceived) direct control than in the OAU, they had finally found a way to circumvent many of the problems that had crippled their previous initiatives. It was in this new region-centric spirit that the OAU Chiefs of Defence Staff were able to agree in their second meeting in Harare in 1997 that “the OAU should earmark a brigade-sized contribution to standby arrangements from each of the five African sub-regions
as a starting point [to a continental peacekeeping capability]. Without the obvious success of regional peace operations such as Liberia and the building of reliable regional frameworks on the shoulders of powers who would have continued to oppose the concept of centralising the responsibility for peace on the continent had they not felt some direct ownership in the process, nothing like the ASF would have ever made it past the proposal stage.

Changes in the continental self-conception

The last development is a twofold change in the continental self-conception. First, following what Uganda’s President Yoweri Museveni had called a ‘decade of awakening’ in the face of an increasingly felt impact of globalisation on Africa’s desolate economies, waning superpower interest and the prevalence of horrific humanitarian catastrophes on the continent, Africa begun to experience a new wave of cooperative Pan-Africanism in the late 1990s. The resultant willingness to overcome many of the aforementioned hindrances to effective regional and military cooperation had sprung from the realisation that if Africa wanted to break the cycle of violence, poverty and underdevelopment that had caused so much suffering and kept it persistently at the bottom of every international league table, it finally had to take charge of its own destiny.

Second, the resultant wave of Pan-Africanism differed markedly from the preceding ones. Previous attempts at continental cooperation were dominated by the Westphalian notion of sovereignty so entrenched in the OAU’s Charter since Africa’s heads of state had pledged non-interference in each other’s internal affairs at the organisation’s founding conference in 1963. The wave, however, has been pitting the values of unity and solidarity against those of democracy, accountability, democratic governance and transparent politics, all of which it considers vital correlates to continental security. As a result, Africa now seemed ready to makes some qualifications to the principle of the sovereign rights of nations, or as Fouad Ajami has put it: “In the face of an absolutist doctrine of the rights of nations, there is now a tentative right to interfere. Man cannot eat sovereignty, we have learned; the order within nations is just as important as that among them.” This readiness culminated in the formulation of the AU’s Constitutive Act, which by defining sovereignty in the conditional terms of a state’s capacity and willingness to protect its citizens had shifted the focus from regime security to human security and which even goes so far as to recognise the AU’s right to militarily intervene in the affairs of its member states.

The African Standby Force

All the above developments contributed in their own way to the establishment of the African Standby Force at the 2002 Durban Summit. However, as the above outline of the history of the concept of a Pan-African military force over nearly five decades has shown,
it should not come as a surprise that its eventual birth was not an easy affair. Indeed, there were such serious disagreements among the summit’s participants on the purpose of the future force that the entire concept was at risk. While old-guard leaders such as Colonel Muammar Gaddafi (who actually called for an amendment of the Constitutive Act to include a single army for Africa), President Robert Mugabe and former Kenyan President Daniel arap Moi saw the primary purpose of the force as that of defending Africa from external threats, many of the younger leaders, including Thabo Mbeki, saw the ASF as a peacekeeping force with a capacity to intervene in the continent’s internal conflicts.31 In the end, the young leaders were able to build on the four developments discussed in the previous section and their version of the ASF was endorsed as part of the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council (PSC) of the African Union. Besides this, the protocol also provided for a continental early-warning system, an eminent Panel of the Wise, a Military Staff Committee and a special Peace Fund as the main pillars of the new African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). In February 2004, the latter was completed by the formulation of a Common African Defence and Security Policy which delineates the member states’ collective responses to both internal and external security threats.

As currently foreseen, the ASF will consist of five regionally administered standby brigades of about 3,000 troops each, providing the AU with a combined standby capacity of about 15,000 troops trained in peace operations ranging from low-intensity observer missions to full-blown military interventions. Very similar to the proposal made by the delegation from Sierra Leone at the Third Ordinary Session of the OAU Defence Commission in 1965, the concept behind the ASF does not entail the establishment of a standing multinational force for military operations, but is built around an African version of the current UN Standby Arrangement Systems (UNSAS) whereby states earmark and train specific units for AU operations and then keep these units ready for rapid deployment at appropriate notice.32 The five regional headquarters and their planning elements as well as the ASF section in the AU’s Peace Support Operations Directorate (PSOD) act as clearinghouses for these national contributions and ensure their interoperability as well as common training standards. In this way, Africa’s Regional Economic Communities (RECs) such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), or ECOWAS are continuously involved in the process of establishing and running the ASF, while the AU bears overall strategic and operational responsibility for the force. By epitomising a much-needed common objective which may finally channel the multiplicity of resources, initiatives and ambitions devoted to African capacity-building into one direction, the ASF thus aids the consolidation of inter-African security cooperation.

Even though the ASF is therefore relatively dissimilar to a fully centralised Pan-African army as envisaged by Kwame Nkrumah, it is not unlike the African Defence Organisation proposed in 1965 or the OAU Defence Force suggested in 1979. In any
way, the fact that it was actually established marks a substantial development in Africa's continental self-emancipation which should be greeted by Africans and the international community alike. It clearly shows that Africa as a continent has begun to accept the responsibility of dealing with its own security problems. It also shows that the common African bond has grown stronger in the face of great challenges and that many of the divisions that thus far have kept the continent’s states from cooperating in security matters are no longer unbridgeable.

Obstacles to a Pan-African military force

If what the previous sections have argued is an accurate representation of the quest for and eventual creation of a Pan-African military force, the basic factors responsible for the failures of pre-ASF initiatives as well as the reasons for the success of the current attempt are relatively easy to discern. Whether one talks of a high command, a military standby system or any of the other known appellations referring to some joint African force, it seems that the underlying problem is the inevitable tension between states’ perceived need to maintain full control over national capabilities in order to keep peace at home and project strength abroad and the necessity of relinquishing at least certain aspects of their national command authority to a supranational body like the OAU. Many of the above attempts at establishing such a force failed because their institutional setup was not able to resolve this and similar tensions and was thus considered a threat by many states.

Admittedly, through its unique reliance on regional frameworks, the ASF’s likelihood of failure in this area is significantly lower than that of its predecessors. The regional character of the ASF ensures that member states of the RECs feel ownership in the process of establishing a continental security architecture while continuing to strengthen their institutional links with the AU. The ASF allows the latter to incorporate all states into a common framework under its coordination without infringing on their national and regional authority or responsibilities. This mutually beneficial symbiosis not only reduces the risk of competition between the continental, regional and national levels of inter-African security cooperation, but also increases the stakes all actors have in the process, builds up helpful peer group pressure, and thus reduces the chances of failure.

Nonetheless, the tensions continue to exist and are not likely to disappear any time soon. Consequently, the AU and its international supporters need to ensure that the bridges built over the past five years are not torn down in a moment of crisis, but instead are continuously reinforced. In addition, the AU still has to find persuasive answers to many of the arguments raised against previous Pan-African security initiatives, namely the difficulty of agreeing on a workable funding arrangement (in order to decrease and
eventually erase the ASF’s dependence on international financial aid) and ensuring the force’s interoperability.

Conclusion

This feature tracked the conceptual evolution of a Pan-African military force from the Union High Command proposed by Kwame Nkrumah in the late 1950s to the African Standby Force formally established in 2002. While the idea of establishing such an African force had merely found a lone and idealistic voice in the Ghanaian president in the early post-colonial years and only occasionally attracted attention thereafter, this feature argued that the concept of today’s ASF rests on a broad consensus among Africans and the international community alike which itself is based on a realistic appraisal of the continent’s state of affairs. Changes in the geo-political security situation, the continent’s organisational landscape and self-conception as well as the level of international support have finally allowed the African Union to centralise the responsibility for peace and security on the continent and institutionalise an appropriate framework. By basing this framework on regional pillars, the AU has successfully circumvented many of the obstacles that have crippled the ASF’s many predecessors. Not only does such a pyramidal approach ensure less opposition to a continental initiative, but it also helps to concentrate international capacity-building support. Nonetheless, the ASF will not be operational before 2010 and thus, in light of the ongoing conflicts in Somalia, Congo and Darfur, for the moment the quest continues for an African tranquillity capable of being protected and maintained by Africa herself.34

Notes

2 The Casablanca group consisted of Egypt, Algeria, Morocco, Libya, Ghana, Guinea and Mali. The Brazzaville group comprised Cameroon, Congo-Brazzaville, Côte d’Ivoire, Dahomey (Benin), Gabon, Upper Volta (Burkina Faso), Madagascar, Mauritania, Niger, the Central African Republic, Senegal and Chad. Eventually, the Brazzaville group merged into the Monrovia group resulting in an increased membership of 24 (including Nigeria, Liberia and Togo).
10 See Amate, op cit, p 174.
11 See Aluko, op cit, p 137.
12 M Wolfers, *Politics in the Organisation of African


17 Two specific proposals were the African Task Force and the Collective African Intervention Force. The African Task Force was proposed by Nigeria at the 1972 OAU Ministerial Council Meeting and was to be a joint force to which all OAU member states would contribute and was to be based in independent African states bordering on the Portuguese colonies in an effort to hasten their liberation. The Collective Intervention Force was suggested by OAU Secretary-General William Eteki Mounoua in his report to the OAU ministerial meeting in Libreville, Gabon, in 1977. The aim was to create a force which could be rapidly mobilised to move against any attacks on the frontline states.


23 For a detailed discussion of these initiatives see E Berman, French, UK and US policies to support peacekeeping in Africa: Current status and future prospects, Paper No 622, Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, 2002.


33 For a detailed discussion of the impact of competing regionalism(s) on Africa’s emerging security architecture see B Franke, Africa’s competing regionalisms and their impact on the continent’s emerging security architecture, forthcoming.

This paper aims to extract empirical regularities from the extensive but often contentious econometric literature on the relationship between military expenditure (‘milex’) and socioeconomic development in the Third World, with special reference to Africa. It finds that African states invest in defence at low levels by global standards, and their defence burdens correspond to political, security, and economic realities. Security conditions are the main drivers of military spending, which in turn produces a complex mix of socioeconomic effects. Such relationships are not uniform across large heterogeneous groups of countries, but are mediated systematically by specific structural economic, political, and security conditions (eg resource-rich versus resource-constrained, conflict vs non-conflict, arms producers versus arms importers). Presumably, other yet-to-be-hypothesised intervening factors will also prove to be determinants of milex-development patterns among Third World and African countries. We can state with confidence that (1) milex produces a mix of both positive and negative effects that vary across countries; (2) its overall effects, whether positive or negative, are usually not pronounced; and (3) the modal economic impact of defence spending in the Third World is slightly negative, more so in Africa. Negative relationships between defence and development are most evident and severe in countries experiencing legitimacy/security crises and economic/budgetary constraints. Among the implications of these findings are that ‘one size fits all’ analytical or policy models of defence – development relationships are problematic and prone to failure. Considering that milex provides a public good (security), its negative socioeconomic effects are not excessive, at least in states enjoying higher legitimacy, socioeconomic standards, and peace. Ironically, states that enjoy relative peace and plenty reap more economic benefits from defence spending, while those afflicted by conflict and poverty pay higher economic costs for their defence. In the larger scheme of things, conflict- and poverty-reduction efforts will likely produce more beneficial milex-growth linkages than well-intended appeals to reduce military spending in favour of development.

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Introduction

African military expenditures have historically been but a tiny fraction of global outlays for defence. According to World Military Expenditures and Arms Transfers (WMEAT) data published by the US government, in 1979 all African states less Egypt accounted for only 1.8 per cent of worldwide military spending, and in 1989 the portion had dropped to 1.5 per cent.1 Ten years later it had risen slightly, to 2.4 per cent, but a handful of states – the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Ethiopia, Eritrea and Nigeria – represented most of this recent growth.2 In other words, since the 1970s Africa’s 50 countries, representing 29 per cent of the nations covered in WMEAT, have accounted for only about 2 per cent of defence outlays worldwide.

Nevertheless, in Africa – as elsewhere – milex not only competes with other public spending programmes, but also affects the allocation of available public goods and broader socioeconomic conditions. Hence the longstanding research interest in Third World defence spending has been primarily concerned with ‘guns versus butter’ issues, that is, whether military expenditure helps or hinders economic growth and socioeconomic development.3 Not surprisingly, the results are mixed, but most studies have demonstrated that Third World defence spending has either insignificant or somewhat negative effects on growth and socioeconomic performance, and some recent papers have explored linkages between military expenditures and conflict.4 Yet, despite the controversies and contradictions that continue to be generated – or more accurately, repeated – by yet further studies, clear patterns are emerging across the research results.

This paper aims to distil empirical regularities from the large, variegated, and conflicted literature on the relationship between defence spending and economic growth/development in the Third World and Africa, including both cross-national econometric analyses and salient case studies, to present a coherent crystallisation of its findings. It also seeks to determine whether the impact of military spending in African states conforms to or deviates from patterns observed in Third World studies. Finally, it deduces some implications concerning the prospects for realising greater benefits from defence spending while avoiding or offsetting its potential socioeconomic costs.

Preliminaries: Meaning, measurement, muddles and models

Before proceeding to review the substantive results of empirical research on the defence burden–economic growth relationship, we need to acknowledge its manifold methodological afflictions. Social scientists know all too well that how they define terms, conceive of relationships, specify models, and select, operationalise, and measure
variables, largely determine the results they get. In this regard, those who analyse milex are among the most vulnerable to methodological miasma, for a host of reasons.

The problems begin with data availability and quality: the data are, to be blunt, grossly inadequate, of dubious reliability, comparability, and meaning, and deficient in other significant respects. The long-suffering efforts by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) and WMEAT editors to collect, standardise and publish time series data on worldwide military spending have been both heroic and quixotic. Simultaneous reviews by Blackaby and Ohlson, and Fontanel in 1987 revealed some of these data discrepancy issues. As a concrete example of how research results can differ drastically depending on which data source is used, Chan cited a 1983 study by Deger and Smith in which WMEAT data for Africa produced a negative impact on GNP growth four times that of SIPRI, but for Latin America WMEAT showed a negative effect on GNP growth while SIPRI figures yielded a positive impact! Another analyst also evaluated the reliability of data published by WMEAT and SIPRI regarding the direction of military spending growth: over time their military expenditure estimates diverged significantly, especially in Africa and the Middle East. Scholars are truly between a rock and a hard place: these are often the only available data, so with ample qualifiers and caveats, and a few ‘Hail Marys,’ they march on.

Having made the first two fateful decisions – to conduct such a study, and to use one of the available datasets – analysts then face an array of tough data-related methodological choices. Aggregate data on annual defence outlays, the only measure used in many studies, may be too coarse for determining specific or even overall economic effects. Some research designs employ variants such as milex per capita, or milex as a percentage of GNP/GDP or central government expenditures. Beyond that, should analysts use annual levels or rates of change? Are the impacts of defence spending to be measured synchronically or over time? In the short, intermediate, or long terms? Still other questions: Are military budget/appropriation decisions assumed to become outlays/expenditures the same year? Are the economic effects of milex assumed or specified to be simultaneous or lagged? Furthermore, but certainly not finally, do expenditures for military personnel wages and benefits, training, equipment, housing, base construction and maintenance, weapons procurement (local or international), etc, have different economic ramifications? If the answer to this last question is yes, the analyst can stop right here: such detailed function- or account-level data are not available for most countries, certainly not over time.

As if these data-related problems are not enough, the difficulties of milex-growth research are compounded by a host of theoretical and methodological issues. Analysts have made different assumptions, postulated alternative models, used different universes or samples of cases that vary across studies, and often treated the Third World or regional groupings thereof as a single bloc of countries presumably having more commonalities than differences.
Indeed, as we shall see below, failure to control for crucial differences within and between states is at the root of the contention and confusion that continues to pervade the literature.

This paper is hardly the first to take stock of the field and point out its methodological muddles. As Chan cautioned two decades ago, “analysts need to be especially sensitive to how the differences in their data bases, country samples, and research designs can contribute to inconsistent and confusing research findings”.8 He also pointed out the need to distinguish between and measure both direct and indirect effects of milex, in the near term and over time, across a wide range of dependent variables (eg direction and rate of changes in GNP, (un)employment, inflation, capital formation, investment, foreign aid, trade, balance of payments, debt, technological changes, human resources, social services, poverty levels, income distribution, industrial development, and government budget allocations), under a variety of situations and conditions. Similarly, Dunne outlined four theoretical perspectives that prevail among analysts (neoclassical, Keynesian, institutionalist, and Marxist) and highlighted their menu of methodological choices: level of analysis/degree of abstraction, diverse concepts, varied types of analysis (eg historical, qualitative, quantitative, institutional, or some combination thereof), time period (short term, intermediate, or long term), countries or regions to be included, statistical methods (eg correlation, regression, factor analysis), different clusters of dependent variables (eg resource allocation and mobilisation, organisation of production, socio-political, external relations), and different ways to operationalise them.9

Fortunately, over the years a number of scholars have summarised, synthesised, and evaluated the literature on the relationship between defence spending and economic growth. These periodic appraisal exercises are a mixed blessing. On the one hand, they simplify our task of assessing the field; on the other hand, they have produced little accumulation of empirical knowledge. Unlike the study of international war, where modest progress has been made in identifying empirical patterns or causal connections, the defence burden−economic growth literature remains hotly contested. Indeed, whereas Bennett and Stam have taken our understanding of war onset and escalation to new levels by scientifically testing and evaluating the relative explanatory power of various causal theories, the guns versus butter debate remains an academic civil war zone.10

But all is not lost. Despite the methodological morass, and amidst the confusion and frustration perpetuated by those who hypothesise but don’t find uniform, consistent, or strong relationships between milex and growth, there is a saving paradox: that so many studies using so many different research designs and datasets have reached essentially similar but undramatic results should increase our confidence in their overall characterisations of the milex−growth relationship.

In the next three sections we review the findings of empirical studies of the economic impact of military spending in the Third World and Africa, and distil from this variegated
literature several significant conclusions and empirical regularities that have not been sufficiently proclaimed as reliable research results.

**Milex and economic growth in the Third World**

In this section we seek to answer two basic questions:

- On balance, does milex have a positive or negative effect on economic conditions in the Third World?

- To the extent that the economic impact of defence spending varies across developing countries, what factors seem to account for such variations?

As noted above, Chan surveyed the field and found more confusion than consistency. Ram listed 29 studies and tried to sort out their diversity by concluding: “There is very little evidence of an overall positive effect of defense outlays on growth in a typical case … However, it is also difficult to say that the evidence supports the view that defense outlays have an overall negative effect on growth.”\(^{11}\) According to Dunne, who summarised the results of 54 studies in the period 1973–1996, “military expenditure has at best no effect on growth. It is likely to have a negative impact – certainly there is no evidence of a positive effect.”\(^{12}\)

More recently, Smith assessed that the “large literature … does not seem to indicate any robust empirical regularity, whether positive or negative,” nor has the “vast empirical literature” on the determinants of economic growth “found military expenditure to be an important determinant of growth …” In short, “the literature on military expenditure and growth is inconclusive.”\(^{13}\) He went on to argue that we should not even expect to discern empirical regularities: if defence spending and economic growth were closely related, reciprocal causality produces both negative and positive interactions between them. Moreover, when security-related variables are factored in, the relationship between milex and growth will be either positive or negative depending on whether growth or threat conditions are constant or changing. Smith concluded that “military expenditure probably does have a small negative economic effect on output in the long run – but measuring that effect requires care, sophistication and being lucky enough to get the right historical pattern of events to reveal it.”\(^{14}\)

I agree with Smith: the absence of clear, consistent, significant bivariate associations between milex and economic development in the Third World should come as no surprise given the diversity of conditions obtaining within and between this heterogeneous grouping. Yet, while valid, universal, cross-national relationships have eluded researchers, those who have posited *intervening variables* as determinants of such relationships have
achieved a measure of progress. For example, Looney’s studies have found “a consistent pattern whereby certain groups of third world countries – usually the more successful economically, the most stable politically, or those engaged in military production – derive positive impacts from military spending. Those countries less successful economically, more politically unstable, or lacking a domestic arms industry fail to derive any positive economic impacts from defense expenditures.” Nevertheless, even the former category of states can and do suffer some negative effects, and both regime types (civilian versus military) and indigenous arms production capacity also produce a mix of positive and negative economic effects.

Picking up on such discriminating observations, Heo’s work has reinforced the importance – indeed the necessity – of controlling for key variables in the study of defence-growth relationships. As others before, in his tabularised summary of 49 empirical studies published during 1973–1998 he found no empirical or theoretical consistency, but rather a variety of findings including positive, negative, and no significant relationships. He then investigated selected economic growth-related effects of military spending in a mix of 80 developed and developing countries (including 22 African) for the period 1961–1990, using a three-sector production function model (military, non-military and external). His findings echo most of Looney’s:

- The effects of defence spending on economic growth varied across countries.
- The level of defence burden had a significant effect on growth: in countries where the relationship is negative, increases negatively affect more countries; where positive, increases positively affect fewer countries.
- Lower per capita income countries experienced higher negative effects than those over $1,000 per capita, but above that figure there was not much difference.
- Regime type had no pronounced effect on military externality effects, but did have a significant effect on non-military externality effects and on productivity in the non-military government sector.
- Arms production capability was not related to the effects of milex on growth.

Having observed that clear and consistent global relationships between milex and development have not been found and are not likely to be discovered, due diligence obliges us to pay attention to Stewart’s article, which is interesting in two respects. First, his results challenge analysts who contend that the effects of milex on economic growth are not consistent across countries and regions but rather depend on an array of intervening variables, particularly economic and fiscal. Second, he contests others’ findings that higher levels of military spending are associated with lower growth rates
across nations. Using samples of 19 Latin American and 13 African states (varying
dates, 1950–1970), Stewart found that both large defence and non-defence burdens
increased economic growth over the longer term. More remarkably, the positive effect
of the defence burden was more pronounced than the non-defence burden, so that
increasing relative outlays for non-defence programmes will lower GDP growth over
time! Since these effects were constant across regions, Stewart contended that universal
generalisations can be made about the impact of milex. However, quite aside from the
more complex methodological technicalities of his study, his sample of 13 African states
(including four in North Africa) hardly appears representative of the continent.

We can now offer tentative answers to the two questions posed at the beginning of this
section, based on empirical research results:

**Question:** On balance, does milex have a positive or negative effect on economic
conditions in the Third World?

**Answer:** Milex produces a variety of both positive and negative effects, with a
varying mix in different countries. Overall, its effects, whether positive or
negative, are not pronounced. Rather, to the extent that one can generalise,
the modal economic impact of military spending (after sorting out the
pluses and minuses) is slightly negative.

**Question:** To the extent that the economic impact of defense spending varies across
developing countries, what factors seem to account for such variations?

**Answer:** The economic effects of military spending vary by levels of economic poverty/
prosperity, political (in)stability, and possibly arms production capability.
Presumably, other yet-to-be-hypothesised intervening factors will also prove
to be determinants of milex-growth patterns among Third World countries.

**Milex and international debt**

In addition to investigating the economic growth/development-related effects of milex,
analysts have also paid some attention to whether defence spending (particularly for
arms imports) affects external debt. More than twenty years ago Brzoska drew attention
to the implications of the changing character and structure of arms import financing
during the 1960s and 1970s: as grants were superseded by credit and cash sales, the level
of external debt incurred by Third World arms importers grew substantially.19

Accordingly, in this section we seek to answer two basic questions:

- On balance, does milex have a positive or negative effect on the international debt of
  Third World countries?
To the extent that the debt-related impact of defence spending varies across developing countries, what factors seem to account for such variations?

In this regard, Looney and Fredericksen sought to determine if the availability of external and internal resources affected the relationship between military spending and economic growth in 61 developing countries during the 1970s and early 1980s. Although they discerned no statistically significant relationship between milex and growth for the entire sample, the relationship was positive in countries with relatively unconstrained resources and negative in resource-constrained countries. Looney then investigated whether milex had contributed to public debt accumulation in 77 Third World states up to 1982. Again he found no global pattern, but resource-constrained and non-arms-producing countries did accumulate higher external indebtedness. His later study of Africa, which controlled for the effects of conflict, revealed that non-conflict states enjoyed greater access to international credit (ie, higher debt) than conflict states, while the latter relied more on domestic resources and incurred greater socioeconomic costs as military spending rose.

The arms-related debt of the Southern Cone of South America (Argentina, Brazil, and Chile) has also been studied. Milman argued that increasing military spending and arms imports in those three countries during 1971–1983 raised foreign debt by producing negative balance of payments and driving up national budget deficits. Using simple least square regression, he found that nearly 90 per cent of their foreign debt increase was explained by variations in milex. Recently, however, Dunne, Perlo-Freeman and Soydan (2004) used more sophisticated techniques to investigate the impact of milex on external debt in the same subregion in the 1980s. They found no evidence of such effects in Argentina and Brazil, but some evidence of rising debt in Chile, which was the least affected among the three countries by debt-related problems.

In the Middle East, Alami showed that Arab states’ military debt – which in 1990 ranged from US$45 billion to US$90 billion (or 40 per cent of total debt, three-fourths of official debt, and more than two-thirds of public external debt) – was a major factor in six of the nine highly indebted Arab states studied, and also impacted civilian credit markets and the ability of these states to service and repay debts.

We can now offer tentative answers to the two questions posed at the beginning of this section, based on empirical research results:

**Question:** On balance, does milex have a positive or negative effect on the international debt of Third World countries?

**Answer:** With the possible exception of more highly militarised states (eg those in the Middle East), the effects of milex on external debt are not pronounced, may be both positive and negative, and the mix varies across countries.
**Question:** To the extent that the debt-related impact of defence spending varies across developing countries, what factors seem to account for such variations?

**Answer:** The debt-related effects of military spending vary by levels of economic poverty/prosperity, political (in)stability/conflict, and possibly arms production capability. In general, states with more resources and political stability experienced more positive effects of milex, whereas resource-constrained, conflicted, and non-arms producing countries experienced more negative effects including higher external debts. Presumably, other yet-to-be-hypothesised intervening factors will also prove to be determinants of milex-indebtedness patterns among Third World countries.

**Milex and economic growth in Africa**

Having surveyed the literature and drawn some conclusions about the economic effects of milex in developing countries at large, we now turn to Africa to see if the same or different relationships obtain. As previously, here we seek to answer two basic questions:

- On balance, does milex have a positive or negative effect on economic conditions in Africa?
- To the extent that the economic impact of defence spending varies across African countries, what factors seem to account for such variations?

Africa remains relatively understudied in the defence burden–economic growth debate. For example, a substantial bibliography on the economic aspects of global ‘disarmament and [defence] conversion’ listed 41 pages of ‘cross-national’ studies on defence spending and its economic effects, but just 46 titles on Africa (one-half of which were on South Africa!). Moreover, only a portion of these related specifically on defence spending. Nevertheless, as the research summarised below demonstrates, the results of empirical evaluation of the socioeconomic effects of milex in Africa mirror the larger body of Third World studies.

Nabe conducted a cross-sectional analysis of the impact of defence spending on industrialisation in 26 African states during 1967-1976. Although he found a positive relationship between GDP manufacturing and social and economic factors of development, there was no direct relationship between defence spending and industrialisation. Furthermore, military expenditure exhibited a negative relationship to GDP manufacturing through both social and economic development factors. Ten of 11 analyses showed no significant covariation between milex and development, whereas all analyses showed positive relationships between economic and social development factors.
and economic development. In short: military expenditure had neither notable positive nor negative effects on economic development.²⁷

As in earlier sections, Looney’s work is of particular significance for distinguishing between conflict states and non-conflict states in Africa. However, rather than using indicators of political violence or armed conflict, his criteria related primarily to government legitimacy and effectiveness. Non-conflict states consistently displayed lower military burden and better socioeconomic performance than conflict states. Interestingly, only in the former category was military spending positively and significantly related to quality of life measures, showing that the socioeconomic effects of milex vary with regime characteristics. But even in conflicted states, the relative defence burden produced a mix of positive and negative outcomes for socioeconomic development indicators.²⁸

The distinction between conflict and non-conflict states also mattered in Looney’s analysis of external debt, with non-conflict states relying more heavily on external public debt to cover military needs while conflict states more typically absorbed military costs internally at the expense of domestic social programmes. Finally, while non-conflict states consistently imported arms in direct proportion to their ability to pay for them, their conflicted counterparts tended to buy weapons without regard to current economic conditions, thereby imposing additional burdens on their people especially during times of austerity. In concluding, he argued that this “demonstrates the futility of attempting to generalize about the costs of military expenditures in the Third World” and in the case of Africa, “the level, composition, and ultimate socio-economic impact of military expenditures are greatly influenced by internal conditions, notably the effectiveness of a government in either meeting or containing the demands of citizens, and the degree to which it can count on them to comply voluntarily with its policies”.²⁹

In an extension of this work, Looney later analysed the effect of military spending on the socioeconomic performance of 33 African states during 1970–1982. Again the distinction between conflict and non-conflict states proved significant: the former experienced almost uniformly negative linkages between military expenditures and socioeconomic indicators, while in the latter group of countries the pattern was reversed.³⁰

Ghanaian scholar Gyimah-Brempong, using a sample of 39 African states 1973–1983, examined the effects of an increased defence burden on GDP growth rate, the mechanisms by which milex affected economic growth, and whether it influenced economic growth directly and independently. His results indicated that defence spending affected economic growth through its effects on investment rate and skilled labor supply to the civilian sector, military spending did not have any significant direct effect on economic growth, and overall, the effects of the defence burden on economic growth are “significantly negative”.³¹ In a later study Gyimah-Brempong, this time with a sample of 40 African states 1967–1987, found a peculiar pattern in which governments
in every geographical region, and regardless of their oil-exporting or -importing status, tended to reduce defence spending when overall budget resources are increasing but to increase military spending in times of austerity. When constrained, such spending raised the defence burden when governments and their citizens were least able to afford it.32

Taking a different approach, Mbaku investigated relationships among democracy, military spending, and economic growth in Africa during the 1980s. He found that democracy fostered growth, but defence spending retarded it. In other words, the military has larger claims on resources in dictatorships (both military and civilian), which frustrates economic development.33

Dunne and Mohammed studied the determinants and effects of defence expenditure on a sample of 13 (supposedly) relatively homogenous sub-Saharan countries during 1967-1985. Analysing this group of countries as a whole, using different statistical techniques, they found no indication that military spending had positive economic effects, but both aggregate and individual country results showed substantial negative impacts, especially on growth, trade balance and investment.34

In their literature survey on the impact of African military spending on economic growth and development, Mohammed and Thisen reviewed studies that found both positive and negative direct effects, but the overall impact was negative when indirect effects on human resources, investment, and foreign trade balance were included; no studies reported uniform or overall positive effect on economic growth. Their own modest statistical test involving 23 African countries for which consistent data were available for 1970–1991 also produced mixed results, with 44 per cent of the sample experiencing negative impacts and 30 per cent insignificant effects. In addition, countries with high and rising milex incurred substantial economic costs, those with moderate military burdens had insignificant effects, and countries with low military burdens enjoyed overall positive effects.35

Another review of the African literature by Olaniyi generated the sweeping judgment that “[t]he conflicting theoretical conclusions and empirical results suggest that the demand and supply of military spending depend on and generate a complex web of sometimes opposing relations among various economic and non-economic variables within an economy. The direction and magnitude of these relationships depend on divers endogenous and exogenous factors that generate primary and secondary effects contingent on the historical realities of each country.”36 He went on to apply a supply-side model to 25 African countries 1993–1994, distinguishing between substitution and externality effects of defence spending, and between agricultural economies and industrialising/mineral-exporting economies. The results showed that defence outlays had negative but statistically insignificant effects on economic growth regardless of a country’s economic basis.
In addition to the cross-national studies cited above, several empirical case studies have been conducted. Not surprisingly, South Africa has attracted the lion’s share of the attention. McMillan’s statistical analysis of the relationship between economic growth and defence spending in South Africa during 1950–1985 produced a mix of positive and negative effects. A few years later Roux used a four-equation model to analyse the effects of milex on South African economic growth 1960–1990. He also found mixed results, but overall the military burden negatively affected economic growth. Even more emphatic are the results obtained by Dunne and Vougas, who used causality techniques that recognise the long-term relationship (co-integration) between military spending and economic growth. Their work revealed that defence spending had a “significant negative impact” on economic growth in South Africa during 1964–1996. Finally, Birdi and Dunne, after reviewing the various models and results embodied in the literature on milex and growth in South Africa, used cointegrating vector autoregressive (VAR) techniques to obtain, yet again, mixed results, consistent with several other reports showing that milex, on balance, had somewhat negative or insignificant effects on growth.

Finally, in another African empirical case study, Oyinlola’s econometric analysis of Nigerian defence spending also yielded mixed outcomes. More precisely, he concluded that “the Nigerian defence sector contributes positively to real growth in gross domestic product, it has a progressive distributional effect and a dampening effect on inflation. However its impact in these respects are [sic] very low and insignificant. On the contrary, the impact on importation where defence has a negative effect on the economy, is significant.” It is therefore fair to conclude that the net economic impact of military spending in Nigeria has been negative.

We can now offer tentative answers to the two questions posed at the beginning of this section, based on empirical research results:

**Question:** On balance, does milex have a positive or negative effect on economic conditions in Africa?

**Answer:** Like the Third World as a whole, most studies have found that milex in African states produced a variety of positive and negative effects (varying by country), but its modal overall socioeconomic impact was somewhat more negative.

**Question:** To the extent that the economic impact of defence spending varies across African countries, what factors seem to account for such variations?

**Answer:** Little research has been conducted along these lines, but based on Looney’s work, the economic effects of military spending in Africa vary by levels of regime legitimacy and effectiveness, and the incidence of conflict. Presumably, other yet-to-be-hypothesised intervening factors will also prove to be determinants of milex-growth patterns among African states.
Before proceeding to summarise and draw some implications from our review and analysis of the empirical literature, we need to digress momentarily from the central question of this paper by asking not how defence spending affects development, but to pose a prior question: *What determines levels and patterns of military spending in the Third World and Africa?* The answer turns out to be straightforward. The declared purpose of armed forces is to provide security, so it is not surprising that McKinlay found that security and military-related factors determined Third World military spending. The same is true of Africa, as shown in Dowdle’s analysis of military spending patterns of 24 sub-Saharan states. In this region, milex varied in accordance with the nature and immediacy of perceived security threats to the regime and state, and internal security threats (particularly civil war) drove up defence allocations more than actual and potential external threats. Likewise, Mohammed investigated the determinants of military spending in 13 sub-Saharan states from the mid-1960s through mid-1980s, using time series, cross-section, and pooled cross-section analyses of several political, military, and economic factors. He too found that security-related political and military factors were the major determinants of military spending, with economic conditions (especially resource constraints) accounting for most of the variations across countries. Having established that security conditions are the main drivers of defence burdens borne by developing/African countries, we can now elaborate our principal conclusions about milex—development relationships and deduce some of their implications.

**Conclusions and implications**

This paper has sought answers to fundamental questions relating to whether and how military spending determines socioeconomic conditions in developing countries, with special reference to Africa. Notwithstanding the apparently contradictory and confusing empirical research results about relationships between defence expenditure and economic development in developing countries, we can state the following conclusions with reasonable confidence:

- The defence burdens of African and Third World states generally correspond to the political, security, and economic realities they face.

- African states invest in their defence at low levels by global standards.

- Military spending—development relationships cannot be characterised in terms of universal empirical regularities governing large heterogeneous groups of countries such as the Third World or Africa.

- Rather, such relationships are elusive, complex, and variable.
Nevertheless, these variations can be explained substantially by controlling for key economic, political, and security factors.

Among the differentiating national attributes or conditions that have been shown to affect socioeconomic development systematically are regime legitimacy, stability, and effectiveness, the presence or absence of conflict, arms production capacity, and availability of economic resources.

Further research will likely show that other theoretically relevant variables will also prove to be partial determinants of milex-growth patterns among Third World and African states.

Defence spending produces a variety of both positive and negative effects.

The precise mix of such effects varies across countries.

The overall effects, whether positive or negative, are usually not pronounced.

The modal socioeconomic impact of defense spending is slightly negative.

In Africa, such negative effects seem to be somewhat wider and deeper.

Negative relationships between milex and development tend to be most evident and severe in countries experiencing legitimacy/security crises and economic/budgetary constraints.

These findings convey both good and bad news. The good news is that Third World and African military spending patterns reflect rational adaptations to ‘conditions on the ground’, are explicable in terms of specific sets of political, economic, and security variables, and typically do not impose undue socioeconomic costs, especially if the public security/defence benefits are included in the balance sheet. The bad news is that generations of analysts and policymakers too often have been barking up the wrong tree on the dual assumptions that military spending is wasteful – if not detrimental – to development and that its reduction or reallocation to social and economic programmes will be beneficial. Furthermore, their chimeraquest to discover global milex-development relationships has produced more cacophony than coherence. The absence of clear, uniform relationships between military spending and development means that ‘one size fits all’ assumptions, theories, models, measurements, judgments, and policy recommendations on guns versus butter issues are bound to be problematic at best and likely to fail. Analysts and policymakers need to see milex-development issues as more complicated and convoluted than they have before. Research and policy designs need to identify and take into account key factors that determine the nature, level, and distribution of positive and negative effects of national defence burdens.
The above findings also reveal a bitter irony or paradox: states that enjoy relative peace and plenty seem to reap more economic benefits from defence spending, while those suffering from conflict and poverty pay higher economic costs for their defence. The implications of this dualism are not comforting, analytically or policywise: states afflicted by legitimacy crises or armed conflicts, especially civil wars and other security crises that threaten incumbent regimes, are unlikely to heed pleas to reduce military spending, nor will such appeals resonate strongly in relatively placid and prosperous states. Hence in the larger scheme of things, conflict- and poverty-reduction efforts will likely produce more beneficial linkages between defence and development than well-intended calls to reduce military spending in favour of development.

Note

3 I use the terms military and defence spending/expenditure/outlays/budget/burden interchangeably, as well as ‘milex,’ the common shorthand for military expenditure. Likewise, economic growth and (socio)economic development are alternative terms.
12 Dunne, op cit, p 439.
13 R P Smith, Defence expenditure and economic growth, in N P Gleditsch, G Lindgren, N Mouhleb
14 Ibid, p 23.
16 Ibid, p 219.
Parliamentary oversight of public expenditure management: A focus on the security services

Len Le Roux*

This paper argues for effective parliamentarian oversight of the expenditure of the security services. It discusses the general principles of public expenditure management and submits that, as the security services render a public service using public monies, they need to be subject to the same principles. The most important of these principles in relation to the security services are those of transparency and accountability. The security services are, however, involved in sensitive issues of state security and some modification in the application of these principles can be substantiated. Not detracting from the principles of public expenditure management and parliamentary oversight, special provisions regarding the management of security expenditure can be instituted. These include special legislation, the conduct of closed parliamentary committee meetings, and the institution of special parliamentary committees. The fundamental question is, however, ‘who decides’. The paper argues that the answer to this question lies squarely in the domain of parliament, which should ultimately decide on any deviations and exclusions from these principles as related to the security services.

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Introduction

The essence of the science of economics is that, globally, there are more needs and requirements than resources. This compels one to use resources efficiently and economically in order to obtain the maximum benefit.

The need for the economic management of resources, though global, is even more acute when it comes to public monies – specifically in the developing world. In Africa, for example, the needs for development, social upliftment and improved levels of welfare are great and available economic resources restricted, making effective and efficient public expenditure management crucial for the wellbeing and human security of the continent’s people.

Owing to this scarcity of resources and the need to use these resources effectively and efficiently, the fundamental consideration in public expenditure management is that, as governments spend public monies, they should do so for the public good. This demands that the people have a say in the spending of their resources, essentially through the oversight and control of public expenditure by their elected representatives.

If this statement holds true for public expenditure management in general, the question arises as to whether it can be applied to the security services. The paper looks at the principles of public expenditure management in general and then considers their applicability to the security services, as well as the need for any deviations, adaptations and special procedures. It places special emphasis on the principles of transparency and accountability, as well as on the role and responsibility of parliamentarians in the oversight and control of public expenditure management.

The principles of public expenditure management

As stated, the essence of parliamentary oversight of public expenditure management is that governments manage public money for the public good. To ensure that this end is being achieved, it is necessary to work according to generally accepted norms and guidelines for best practice. To assist parliamentarians in this regard, the following widely accepted principles of public expenditure management need to be kept in mind at all times:

- **Comprehensiveness**: Budgets must encompass all financial operations of government; off-budget expenditure and revenue are prohibited.

- **Discipline**: Decision-making must be restrained by resource realities over the medium term; the budget should absorb only those resources necessary to implement government policies, and budget allocations should be adhered to.
- **Legitimacy**: Policymakers who are in a position to change policies during implementation must take part in the formulation of the original policy and agree with it.

- **Flexibility**: Decisions should be deferred until all relevant information has become available.

- **Predictability**: There must be stability in general and long-term policy and in the funding of existing policy.

- **Contestability**: All sectors must compete on an equal footing for funding during budget planning and formulation.

- **Honesty**: The budget must be derived from unbiased projections of revenue and expenditure.

- **Information**: There should be medium-term aggregate expenditure baseline against which the budgetary impact of policy changes can be measured; accurate information on costs, outputs and outcomes should be available.

- **Transparency**: Decision-makers should have all relevant information before them and be aware of all relevant issues when they make decisions; these decisions and their bases should be communicated to the public.

- **Accountability**: Decision-makers are responsible and accountable for the exercise of the authority provided to them.

As with all principles, these principles are based on general truths that have been observed and evaluated over time. As general truths and guidelines, they should be considered for all situations and only adapted or ignored if there is a strong case to be made for such changes. As is often argued in considering the well-known principles of war during the planning and conduct of military operations, “adherence to these principles will not always guarantee success, but to ignore them is a sure recipe for failure”. These principles are therefore the ideals that public officials should have in front of them as a guide when dealing with public finances. Most probably, no public expenditure system anywhere in the world will get top marks on all ten principles, but this does not detract from the need to seriously consider them when designing and managing public expenditure management systems and procedures. The point is to progressively improve adherence to these principles and to deviate from them only when well-founded reasons can be argued and agreed.

Parliamentarians and parliamentary committees have a crucial role to play in ensuring that national budgeting and expenditure control policies, processes and procedures adhere to these principles. They do so through interrogating the budgets of national
departments, ensuring budget alignment with approved and promulgated policy, and monitoring and overseeing the execution of approved plans and budgets, as well as through their crucial role as members of the parliamentary committees on public finance that scrutinise and consider the reports of the Auditor-General. In so doing they can evaluate the degree of comprehensiveness, legitimacy and honesty of budgets and plans, enhance discipline, predictability and flexibility, and ultimately ensure transparency and accountability in the management of public monies. Budgets are the ultimate expression of policy, and who controls them *de facto* controls policy implementation. This belongs in the hands of the elected and accountable representatives of the people.

**Public expenditure management and the security services**

Whereas these principles and their application is normally easily agreed and accepted, the question is often raised whether they also apply to the security services. Do considerations of national security, threats against the national interest and secrecy obviate these principles from being applied to the security services? If the answer is not a firm yes, it can be further asked whether these principles should be modified and, if so, how. Finally, the question is: ‘What is the role and responsibility of parliament and parliamentarians in approving and overseeing such modifications?’

The basic approach to answering this question should be that ‘the security services are a public good using public monies and should equally be governed by the principles of good public expenditure management’. According to Nicole Ball, “sound financial management of a country’s entire security sector is essential if the country is to have effective, efficient and professional security forces that are capable of protecting the state and its population against internal and external threats. Highly autonomous security forces that are able to act with impunity in the economic and political spheres are invariably professionally weak and bad value for money.”

In general, the governance of the security sector should recognise that the security forces should be accountable to elected civil authorities and civil society and should be transparent in security-related matters. There should be an acceptance of the clear hierarchy of authority between civil authorities and the security forces, and a clear understanding of the mutual rights and obligations of civil authorities and security services. The civil authorities should have adequate capacity to exercise political control and constitutional oversight of the security sector and there should be adequate capacity within civil society to monitor the sector and to provide constructive input into political debate on security policies.

As the security sector is a subset of the state and security policy formulation, planning and budgeting must occur within the broader national policy and national fiscal framework.
If this were not done, it would be impossible to achieve alignment of government policy and ensure that public monies are spent according to national priorities.

The two principles of public expenditure management that are most often contested in the security environment are those of transparency and accountability. Those opposing or questioning the applicability of these two principles to the security forces will argue that such issues as threats, state security and the defence of the country, as well as the need to know, are overriding and that these principles are therefore either not applicable or have a limited application. On the other hand, there are those who will argue that these principles are especially applicable to the security services, as they hold a monopoly on force and capacity for violence of the state. In addition, adhering to these principles could serve as important confidence and security building measures in the regional security context, enhance the efficiency of the security services, and build the generally elusive national consensus on security issues. It will also ensure that the security services and their activities are synchronised with government and public priorities.

The question arises: ‘Who is right and who is wrong?’ The answer probably is that both approaches are essentially correct and that it is a matter of degree rather than principle. Obviously, transparency and accountability are crucial issues in the allocation and management of defence resources for all levels of planning, programming and budgeting. If defence resource allocation and management are not transparent, defence will never be able to achieve public support or the cooperation and support of broader government. If defence is not accountable to government and the people, it becomes a cause unto its own and will not be aligned with national interests and priorities. It will be easily corrupted and decision-making will be easily manipulated to serve self-interest. Civil involvement and control of overall budget decisions, as well as careful auditing at all levels, can help ensure that resources are actually used to accomplish policy objectives.

Yet the arguments about state and national security are real – internal and external threats to peace, security and stability do exist and there are requirements for confidentiality and secrecy. This moves the question from the simple need for transparency and accountability to the issues of degree and ‘who decides’ …

Regarding degree, we submit that the largest part of security policies, plans and budgets should be totally open and transparent. The issues of personnel numbers and costs; capital and infrastructure procurement and acquisition; general force and institutional preparation; and development and general management and administration should be totally transparent and subject to parliamentary scrutiny. Only issues of specific capabilities (the winning edge), operational preparedness, and specific operational and contingency plans and activities can be afforded a degree of confidentiality. And then, such confidentiality and secrecy should only be allowed in the domain of the general public and never from their elected representatives – the legislature.
The issue of ‘who decides’ is of the utmost importance. Admitting to the need for confidentiality and secrecy – as needs to be done – should never empower the security services to decide themselves what should be transparent and what not. This is not even a decision in the exclusive domain of the executive. Only the elected representatives of the people, the legislature, should have this right and authority. If this principle is not adhered to, it makes nonsense of the concept of democracy, the fundamentals of public responsibility, and the ideal of governance for the people, by the people.

But how can the issues of degree and authority be formalised and exercised in practice? The answer to this probably lies in three domains: the provision of a legislative framework for access to information; the vigorous exercise of the authority vested in the elected representatives of the people; and the acknowledgement and acceptance of joint responsibility for security by the executive, the legislature and the people.

Let us now address the key issue for the success or failure of responsible and effective management of public expenditure in the security sector, namely parliamentary oversight and control.

The roles and responsibilities of parliament

The fundamental role of parliament is that of legislation and oversight. In democratic societies, parliaments approve policies, laws and regulations at national level, and should also monitor and oversee their implementation.

In the case of public expenditure management in the security services, parliaments and parliamentary committees have the following roles and responsibilities:

- Parliaments should, through the committee system, participate in the formulation of national security, defence and public safety policy and legislation. Furthermore, parliaments should ultimately approve such policies and laws.

- Parliaments should ensure that public finance management, public service and access to information acts and regulations are in place to guide the processes of planning, budgeting and control of national departments, including the security services.

- Parliamentary committees should be briefed about strategic plans for the security services, including personnel, infrastructure and acquisition. In the absence of such long-term plans, budgets are meaningless and ad hoc in nature, often leading to fruitless expenditure.

- Parliamentary committees should regularly visit the security services at their bases, offices and other places of work to remain abreast of developments. Visits and
inspections should be both pre-arranged and impromptu to receive inputs from all levels.

- Parliaments should appoint independent experts to advise parliamentarians and parliamentary committees on issues of policy and budget. Submissions should be requested and public hearings held to ensure the broadest involvement of the public in security policy-making.

- Parliamentary committees should scrutinise budgets and parliaments should ultimately approve all national departments’ budgets.

- Parliaments, through their public finance and accounts committees, should scrutinise all reports by the Auditor-General and call the executive to account for all irregularities found during the audit process.

To adhere to the principles of transparency and accountability and yet allow for the special needs of confidentiality required in certain matters of defence and security, special measures can be implemented. These include:

- The provision of legislation guiding the issues of security classification and determining the authority and procedures for decisions relating to secrecy and non-disclosure of information. In South Africa, the Access to Information Act, as approved by parliament, provides this framework for decision-making. It ensures that the right to secrecy is vested in the proper authorities.

- The holding of closed meetings by parliamentary defence and security portfolio committees. This allows for a high degree of confidentiality while adhering to the principles of transparency and accountability to elected representatives.

- The appointment of special committees in cases of very sensitive issues. This mechanism once again balances the needs for secrecy and sufficient transparency and accountability.

The ultimate question remains, ‘who decides?’ Transparency and accountability do not imply that everything should be in the public domain. Even though as much information as possible should be open to the public in the interest of good governance and national consensus, there are certain sensitive issues which should be treated differently. These should still be subject to transparency at the appropriate level and to accountability to parliament. The levels of confidentiality and appropriate procedures should be approved by parliament. Parliamentary oversight should never be surrendered.

Some obstacles and difficulties will be encountered in the process of oversight and control. These need to be dealt with in a firm yet cooperative manner.
First, much defence and security planning and budgeting occurs in a vacuum – an absence of a constitutional framework and of security policy and legislation. It is therefore difficult to interrogate and evaluate plans and budgets.

Second, there is a lack of policy and regulation regarding public service and public finance management on the African continent. This results in the introduction of ad hoc processes, as well as procedural inconsistency among national departments. It allows the security services to ‘do their own thing’. In South Africa, the existence of the Public Service Act and the Public Finance Management Act and related regulations avoids this pitfall and has greatly contributed to an exceptionally high degree of transparency and accountability in the plans and budgets of the security services.

In the third place, lack of expertise can hamper parliamentarians from effectively engaging with and overseeing security management. This can be resolved by the use of outside expert analysts and advisors, increasing the research capacity of parliaments and – importantly – by improving the relations between parliament and the security services through regular visits, interchanges and workshops.

Lastly, security functionaries who do not understand the principles of civil oversight and control can be disruptive to these processes. This can best be addressed by improving relations between parliamentarians and officials through regular interaction, instituting civic education programmes at all levels of the security services and replacing ‘resistant to change’ officials with more progressive individuals.

The bottom line is that the creation of healthy relations between the security services and parliamentarians is fundamental to good civil oversight and control and also to good public expenditure management in the security services.

**Conclusion**

The ultimate aim of the management of the security services should be the establishment of appropriate, adequate, accountable and affordable services that are professional in the conduct of their duties and operate within the principles of security in a democratic environment. This entails, among other things, security services subject to the principles of public expenditure management and not highly autonomous and non-transparent institutions.

In a democracy, the role of parliament is to approve policies and legislation as well as strategic plans and budgets for the security services. Parliament should also oversee the execution of such policies and plans, as well as expenditure. As budgets constitute the
ultimate expression of policy, the oversight of the management of public finances in the security services of a nation is of the utmost importance and requires special attention by parliamentarians. Security and finance committees therefore have a crucial role to play in the oversight of public expenditure management in the security services.

The main obstacles to good public expenditure management include the absence of constitutional, legislative and policy frameworks; the hiding of defence expenditure and income; lack of expertise, staff and facilities; lack of control and responsibility; and convoluted defence information.

The most effective solution to this problem is a commitment at all levels to national interests and objectives and the development of clear and transparent planning, programming and budgetary processes and the required systems to implement and oversee them. These processes must of necessity be aligned with the national management framework.

Notes


4 Omitoogun & Hutchful, op cit, chapter 11.
Zimbabwe:
Confusion worse confounded
Chris Maroleng

Nigeria and Cameroon:
Diplomacy in the Delta
Richard Cornwell
Zimbabwe: Confusion worse confounded

Chris Maroleng*

The rapid socio-economic decline that has been a key feature of the Zimbabwean crisis would seem to be beyond the control of the authorities in that country. Nor is there much indication that negotiations will take place between the main political forces, an event suggested by some as an inevitable prerequisite for a solution to Zimbabwe’s policy woes.

That such a resolution to the Zimbabwean imbroglio becomes ever more critical is highlighted by the annualised rise in price inflation, which has now broken through the 1,000 per cent mark. This symbolic watershed has led some previously sober commentators to speculate about a stage, soon being reached, at which the general public finally loses patience with Mugabe’s government, or at which the collapse of the

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economy and the society it is supposed to sustain actually comes to constitute a clear and present danger to regional security.

Concerns surrounding the possible implosion of Zimbabwe have been heightened in recent months as public anger swells over the rising cost of living and the recently introduced monetary policy. Many economic analysts have described the Zimbabwe central bank’s new policy as cosmetic, since it fails to address the root causes of the country’s economic crisis. The governor of the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ), Gideon Gono, presented this new monetary policy to the nation during his mid-year monetary policy review on 31 July 2006, in which he announced a number of piecemeal economic measures under what he labelled ‘Project Sunrise’.

According to the RBZ, this new economic policy – which has seen the devaluation of the local currency by 60 per cent – is focused largely on small and medium enterprise (SME) development. It has also included the removal of three zeroes from the currency from 1 August 2006 through the introduction of a new series of bearer cheques. The central bank chief, who is now being tipped as a presidential candidate when incumbent Robert Mugabe leaves office, gave Zimbabweans until 21 August this year to dispose of old notes in their possession.

However, difficulties experienced in the implementation of this new monetary policy came to fore when Gono had to cut short an official business trip to China after his austerity package brought widespread confusion, principally caused by the limited period allowed for exchanging old money for new, and restrictions on the amount of currency that could be changed per day. People with substantial sums of bearer cheques to dispose of were being required to produce proof of the source of the money in cases where the funds involved were in excess of Z$100 million for individuals and Z$5 billion for companies. Where such proof was not satisfactory, the funds were confiscated and deposited into an ‘anti-laundering bond’ for two years at a zero interest rate. This, of course, constitutes a new kind of confiscatory tax for the cash-strapped government. In a further attempt to curtail money laundering and parallel foreign exchange activities, the RBZ limited daily cash withdrawal to Z$100,000 for individuals and Z$750,000 for companies.

‘Project Sunrise’ has also seen the introduction of nation-wide roadblocks and stricter border patrols involving the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority, Zimbabwe Republic Police and ‘The Youth’ to investigate the illegal export and import of local currency. Gono estimates that there is more than Z$33 trillion outside the country in what he termed ‘mini central banks’. Under the new measures, anyone caught with currency in excess of Z$5 million will be prosecuted. Meanwhile, the RBZ says that of the Z$45 trillion (US$180 million at the old official rate) of old bearer cheques that had been in circulation, Z$35 trillion (US$140 million) had been returned, leaving $10 trillion (US$40 million) – 22 per cent of the money in circulation – unaccounted for.
Hyperinflation is one of many symptoms of Zimbabwe's severe economic crisis that has also spawned shortages of fuel, electricity, essential medicines, hard cash and just about every basic survival commodity. More ominously for Zimbabwe's ageing head of state, the economic meltdown has also begun severely to affect members of Mugabe's security establishment who in the past have acted as guarantors for his regime's extended shelf-life. It is not surprising that, in his efforts to ensure that the people entrusted with his security remain loyal, President Mugabe has awarded some of the most important civil positions to 'securocrats', clan and family members. Close family members, such as his sister, Sabina Mugabe, and his nephews Leo Mugabe and Patrick Zhuwawu, wield considerable influence within the administration, and active or retired senior army officers now occupy many key posts.

Retired Generals Zvinavashe and Mujuru both carry considerable weight in many security-related matters, and General Mujuru’s influence has increased considerably since his wife was appointed vice president. Retired General Nyambuya has been appointed Minister of Power and Energy, Retired Brigadier General Chiwenza is on the board of the Zimbabwe Electricity Supply Commission, Brigadier General Nyikayaramba is chairman of the National Railways' Board, Air Commodore Karakadzai is general manager of the National Railways of Zimbabwe (NRZ), Retired Colonel Muvhuti is general manager of the Grain Marketing Board, Retired Major General Mbewe heads National Parks and Wildlife, Major General Regeje directs Zimbabwe Broadcasting radio programmes, and Colonel Mutize is supervising Operation Maguta, the military supervision of agriculture.

The opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) and Western governments blame the current crisis on repression and misguided government policy, epitomised by Mugabe’s seizure of productive farms from whites for redistribution to landless blacks. The farm seizures destabilised the mainstay agricultural sector and caused severe food shortages after the government failed to provide black villagers resettled on former white farms skills training and input support to maintain production.

President Mugabe, who has ruled Zimbabwe since the country’s independence from Britain in 1980, denies mismanaging the country and says its problems are because of economic sabotage by Western governments opposed to his seizure of white land. Additionally, President Mugabe persists in his belief that the main opposition party, the MDC, is carrying out an external foreign agenda and does not qualify as a ‘national’ political entity.

This location of the MDC outside a legitimate national discourse has provided the pretext for Mugabe’s continual refusal to accept the need to engage in a constructive dialogue with the political opposition aimed at finding an end to the crisis. It has also set the context for the international dimension of Mugabe’s political message, which had
emerged in the 2000 general election, marked the 2002 presidential election, and would once again be the refrain in the 2005 general election. This interpreted the political battle in Zimbabwe as essentially over the land question, and between a liberation movement and its former colonial oppressor. Clearly absent from this discourse was the articulation of a plan that would extract Zimbabwe from the quagmire. The central bank’s recent adoption of ‘voodoo economics’ presages worse still to come, and international bankers are predicting that inflation will top 4,000 per cent before 2007 is out.
Nigeria and Cameroon: Diplomacy in the Delta

Richard Cornwell*

On 14 August this year, Nigerian troops in the disputed territory of Bakassi formally handed control of the area to representatives of the government of Cameroon. The Nigerians are due to complete the withdrawal of their 3,000-strong garrison by the middle of November 2006, though the islands of Atabong and Akwabana in the west of Bakassi will remain under Nigerian administration for two more years.

This development marks a victory for African diplomacy and was hailed as such by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and by various countries. It came about as the result of an agreement signed on 12 June 2006 by Presidents Olusegun Obasanjo (Nigeria) and Paul Biya (Cameroon) on the Greentree Estate, Manhasset, New York. This also constituted a significant step towards the resolution of a border dispute that has simmered between the

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two countries for decades, bringing them close to war in 1981 and marked by sporadic clashes throughout much of the 1990s. Nigerian citizens living in Bakassi will have two years to decide whether to accept Cameroonian nationality, remain as Nigerians, or relocate to Nigeria.

**Prologue to a conflict**

The Bakassi peninsula is an area of some 1,000 km² of mangrove swamp and half-submerged islands protruding into the Bight of Bonny (previously known as the Bight of Biafra). Since the 18th century the peninsula has been occupied by fishing settlements, most of whose inhabitants are Efik-speaking. Today those communities, dotted around the peninsula in corrugated iron huts and shacks, have grown to number between 250,000 and 300,000 people. They have no electricity, no potable water (this has to be fetched from the mainland), no roads, and only such educational and health facilities as they can provide themselves. At first sight, it seems surprising that so neglected and unpromising an area should have excited such attention from the governments of Nigeria and Cameroon over the past thirty years or so, to the point when full-scale war has occasionally seemed imminent.

In June 1884 the German government proclaimed a protectorate over the Cameroon region and that October notified the other European powers and the USA, in general terms, of the extent of this territory. On 23 July and 10 September 1884 the kings and chiefs of Old Calabar signed a treaty placing their territories under the protection of Great Britain. That same September other kings and chiefs of the region, including those of Bakassi, signed treaties acknowledging that their territories were subject to the authority of Old Calabar and were therefore also under British protection. The Berlin Conference of 1884/85 recognised the validity of the British claim to this area as the Oil Rivers Protectorate, which became part of the Niger Coast Protectorate in 1893, and the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria in 1900. In 1906 Southern Nigeria, still including the Bakassi peninsula, came under the administration of the Colony of Lagos, but in November 1913 the Protectorates of Northern and Southern Nigeria were amalgamated into a single Nigerian Protectorate, though Lagos remained a separate colony.

By then, however, the status of Bakassi was already in question. Since 1884, it had been accepted that the boundary between British and German spheres of influence ran along the west bank of the Rio del Rey. Agreements signed on 11 March and 12 April 1913 redefined the maritime boundary as the Akpayafe River, placing the Rio del Rey and the entire Bakassi peninsula under German authority. When the kings and chiefs of Old Calabar protested to the British parliament that it had no right to sign away their territories, they received the assurance that there was no intention of doing so.
Nevertheless, it appears that the demarcation of the new boundary went ahead, and it was interrupted only by the outbreak of war between Britain and Germany in August 1914.

Circumstances now apparently made the 1913 agreement all but irrelevant, not only because of the scale of the carnage in Europe, but because in 1916 British and French colonial forces eventually conquered the German colony of Cameroon, which was divided between them in 1919 under mandates of the League of Nations. The Bakassi peninsula formed part of the British mandate, along with a broad strip of territory along the Cameroon-Nigeria border. For now, British Cameroons was administered from Lagos, virtually as an integral part of Nigeria. For the next forty years the old boundary between Nigeria and Cameroon thus ceased to be a matter of any importance.

The modern Cameroonian claim legally rests largely upon the status of the 1913 agreement. The Nigerian position was that the agreement was never ratified by the British parliament, and therefore was not a treaty in force. Other, neutral, authorities have pointed out that the agreement was not an international treaty in form, and that it was made in circumstances in which the two governments were bound to accept the delimitation of the commissioners, provided the latter acted within the scope of their authority. On this view, ratification may neither be here nor there, though the commissioners’ work was certainly left incomplete.

In February 1961 the 1913 agreement again came to the fore when the UN conducted a plebiscite in the British Trust Territory of Southern Cameroon to allow the local population to decide whether they wanted to form part of independent Nigeria, or become part of Francophone Cameroon. The plebiscite included the people of the Bakassi peninsula, which Nigeria, rejecting the 1913 delimitation, claimed to have been an irregular procedure. Nonetheless, the majority of people in Southern Cameroon’s Trust Territory decided to throw in their lot with independent French Cameroons, in a federation which appeared to give them a guarantee of autonomy. There was significant opposition in parts of Southern Cameroon to incorporation, however, notably in the Bakassi peninsula, some 90 per cent of whose population was of Nigerian origin.

To complicate matters further, the people of the old Southern Cameroons Trust Territory subsequently launched their own political campaign for autonomy or even independence, claiming that the late President Ahmadou Ahidjo’s abrogation of the federal constitution and promulgation of the United Republic of Cameroon in 1972 constituted a violation of their federal rights guaranteed by the UN. Indeed, there is an extreme view which argues that the Bakassi peninsula should never have been a point at issue between Nigeria and Cameroon at all, because the territory forms part of Southern Cameroons, which claimed that the UN had no legal right to hold a plebiscite in 1961 and demanded recognition of its independent sovereignty as the state of Ambazonia. Some local elements disgruntled with the latest developments, and
angry at what they interpret a Nigeria’s abandonment, have threatened to resuscitate these independence claims.

In 1965 the Nigerian government initiated a joint commission with Cameroon to settle their ill-defined border, which was giving great freedom of action to smugglers. The process of marking the border was interrupted by the crisis of 1966 and the ensuing Nigerian civil war. Cameroon took some advantage of the chaotic situation in Biafra to assert its authority in the disputed coastal region, and the Nigerian federal government was only too grateful that Cameroon prevented the flow of war material to the secessionists.

In 1970 the Nigerian and Cameroonian government reconstituted the joint commission, which accepted the Anglo-German Agreement of 1913 as its point of reference. Disagreement between the parties centred upon the definition of the course of the Akwayafe River. In the midst of this series of deliberations, in April 1971 General Yakubu Gowon visited Yaoundé and signed charts defining the new maritime boundary. Subsequently the commission redefined the maritime boundary as the Ngoh-Coker line. This remarkable finding transferred the control of the Calabar channel to Cameroon and was shortly retracted by the Nigerian government.

Gowon again went to meet President Ahidjo in Garoua in August 1972. Another meeting in Kano in 1974 moved matters further along, though the Nigerians succeeded only in having the boundary shifted slightly to the east of the Ngoh-Coker line and had to concede the presence of Cameroonian oil rigs in the Calabar channel. From 30 May to 1 June 1975 Gowon and Ahidjo met at Maroua, by which time the Cameroon authorities had already passed decrees renaming the settlements on Bakassi. The Maroua Accord certainly conceded Cameroonian sovereignty over Bakassi, and a lot more besides, but two months later Gowon had been ousted by General Murtala Mohammed, whose Supreme Military Council simply refused to ratify. Murtala Mohammed subsequently repudiated the Maroua Accord, saying he would sooner go to war. His successor, General Olusegun Obasanjo, then in his first presidency, repeated the repudiation in August 1977.

Nevertheless, the Maroua Accord, with the 1913 Agreement, remained central to the Cameroon government’s case.

Towards the brink of war

Until 1981, there appears to have been little trouble on the peninsula. The first serious skirmish between Nigerian and Cameroonian forces occurred on 16 May that year, when Nigerian patrol boats came under fire on the Akwayafe River. Five Nigerians were killed and three seriously wounded. Nigeria’s demand for an apology and compensation
were initially refused, and relations between the two countries took an ominous turn. In July 1981, however, Cameroon undertook to pay compensation, and the crisis eased, with plaudits to Nigeria’s President Alhaji Shehu Shagari for his restraint and for containing his hawkish military. The incident led to the resuscitation of the joint commission and the border dispute was officially reopened.

These discussions had little real effect, however, and the inhabitants of Bakassi continued to protest to the Nigerian authorities in Cross River state of the exactions of Cameroonian gendarmes, who demanded payment for fishing licenses. Later raids by the gendarmerie were evidently more violent, involving looting, rape and the destruction of fishing equipment. Throughout the 1980s relative quiet in Bakassi was punctuated by the sudden descent of Cameroonian gendarmes; then, in May and June 1991, the Cameroonians entered nine fishing villages, hoisted their national flag, and announced that they were renaming the settlements. They also promised that health and education facilities would be provided, though they demanded the payment of taxes.

By this time the governments of Nigeria’s President Ibrahim Babangida and Cameroon’s President Paul Biya were far too occupied with their shared experiences of the difficulties of ‘democratisation’ to allow the possession of a few fishing villages to stand in the way of good neighbourliness. The joint commission was reconvened for August 1993 and talked of the need for a final and definitive settlement, in a communiqué which was full of harmony and promises of joint ventures. By now, of course, Babangida was approaching the end of his rule, and he stepped down on 26 August in favour of an interim administration under the nominal leadership of Ernest Shonekan. A period of grave domestic instability followed, culminating on 17 November with the announcement that Shonekan had been replaced by his deputy, General Sani Abacha, a man much less inclined to compromise.

One can only speculate whether it was this change in the leadership and the firm re-entrenchment of the soldiers at the head of affairs that triggered the next moves on Bakassi. In any event, on 21 December 1993, a battalion of Nigerian troops occupied Diamant and Jabane, two islands on the peninsula. By 13 January 1994, the joint commission was again in session, but by the end of the month the fishing communities were bombarding Calabar and Abuja with requests for assistance against the Cameroonians, and early in February some 18,000 fled into Cross River state.

A number of official visits were exchanged between the two countries in January and February 1994, but Nigeria was evidently also reinforcing its presence in the area, and on 18 February the Cameroonians claimed to have come under concerted attack as Nigerian forces attempted to cut off Bakassi from the mainland. Biya immediately announced that he was appealing to the UN Security Council, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) to confirm Cameroon’s
ownership of Bakassi as reflected in the Anglo-German Agreement of 1913, the 1961 referendum, and the Maroua Declaration of 1975.

Nigeria’s government expressed surprise that Cameroon should seek to internationalise the conflict, a theme which has been repeated until today. Nigeria, perhaps conscious that its legal title to the disputed territory was far weaker than a claim based on the Nigerian provenance of most of Bakassi’s population, sought to settle the matter bilaterally, where Nigeria’s overwhelming military and economic clout could also be expected to influence matters.

Diplomatic exchanges continued through March 1994, raising hopes in Nigeria that a summit could be arranged between the two presidents. By mid-June 1994 Togolese mediation appeared to be bearing fruit, and a rare moment of reconciliation between Biya and Abacha was engineered at the Tunis summit of the OAU. Yet while Nigeria studied the Togolese proposals for a settlement, there was still no sign of the promised summit.

Attention now shifted to the preparation of cases for presentation in The Hague, and on 16 March 1995 Cameroon presented a dossier of 617 pages and archival documents to the court. Nigeria now had nine months in which to prepare its response. On 13 December 1995 Nigeria’s submission arrived at The Hague, questioning the competence of the court to decide a border issue at dispute between two members of the Lake Chad Commission. Before the court could make a ruling, it was again approached by Cameroon, protesting against a renewed Nigerian offensive in Bakassi on 3/4 February 1996. Cameroon asked the court to rule on Nigeria’s aggression and to demand the withdrawal of forces to positions held before the fighting of 3 February. It also demanded the cessation of all military activity to allow the court to gather evidence in situ.

Serious fighting resumed within weeks, however, resulting in the customary pleas for restraint from the OAU, the Security Council and the ICJ. A UN mission was despatched to the region on the ICJ’s recommendation, and on 15 March 1996 the court made an interim ruling. This found that the evidence in support of Cameroon’s allegations of Nigerian aggression was contradictory and insufficient for a categorical ruling to be made. Nigeria promptly hailed this as a victory. The other parts of the ruling, that both sides withdraw from positions occupied since 3 February and that the ceasefire be observed, were simply noted.

Barely a month later, between 21 and 24 April, the fighting began and only the arrival of the UN mission in mid-May seems to have persuaded both combatants to greater discretion.

By the end of September 1996, matters still seemed no nearer a solution. The ICJ had announced no new findings, and a UN mission to the region proved to have a goodwill rather than fact-finding brief.
Judgment of the Court

Matters dragged on indecisively until 10 October 2002, when the ICJ finally decided in favour of the Cameroonian claim. This created a political uproar in Nigeria, where some media went as far as to identify a Western conspiracy against the country. In effect the Nigerian government refused to withdraw from Bakassi or cede sovereignty as demanded in the Court’s ruling.

The UN now stepped in to persuade the Nigerians to accept the ruling. Kofi Annan chaired a summit in November 2002, at which Presidents Obasanjo and Biya agreed to the establishment of a commission to facilitate the peaceful implementation of the ICJ decision. Another summit in January 2004 made further progress, but it was only on 13 June 2006 that the final breakthrough was made.

One can only speculate whether President Obasanjo’s administration would have been quite so accommodating were he to be preparing for a third term in office, as many of his supporters wished. Certainly the concessions he has made have not been popular domestically, and are seen as an affront to the nation’s considerable pride. Nevertheless, the settlement of the dispute places does a great deal to reinforce his reputation as a statesman, whose skills would seem to be in growing demand in this troubled continent. A post-presidential career on the international stage would appear to beckon.

Interestingly, the Cameroonian response to the Nigerian withdrawal has been kept quite low-key, possibly out of a reluctance to inflame those among the local population who valued their Nigerian citizenship. The volatility of Delta communities has been a dangerous feature of the politics of Nigeria’s south-eastern oil-producing states for some years, and may be expected to make itself felt increasingly as that country moves towards elections. Cameroon shares the interest of those Nigerians banking on a smooth transfer of power from President Obasanjo to his successor, and has no intention of embarrassing its giant neighbour unnecessarily. For this reason, too, the local activities of Cameroonian gendarmerie are likely to be monitored fairly closely by the authorities in Yaoundé. There may also be a fear that if Cameroon takes too bold a stance, matters could still unravel, even at this late stage, especially if Obasanjo’s successor finds it expedient to beat the nationalist drum.

The Cameroonian government, whose revenue stream is under growing pressure from the declining production of the country’s existing oilfields, will also seek a mutually beneficial outcome from the forthcoming negotiations with Nigeria over the precise demarcation of their maritime borders, which would facilitate the extension of exploration into the Gulf of Guinea. Likewise, there will have to be an understanding reached with the government of Equatorial Guinea. Should the expectations of significant oil and gas resources be proven correct, this would have a massive impact on the fortunes of Cameroon, in particular.
International debt relief has so far failed to convert into any real benefits for the ordinary Cameroonian, and this has created a crisis of expectations. The implementation of the Bakassi judgment may pave the way for some relief on this front, if the rumoured oil bonanza is realised. Whether this will prove an altogether unmixed blessing for the people of Bakassi itself remains to be seen.
Military spending, socio-economic challenges and foreign policy demands: Appraising South Africa’s predicament
Theo Neethling

Defence transformation in South Africa: Sharing the experience with the Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo
Roland de Vries

Civil–military relations in Africa: Navigating uncharted waters
Naison Ngoma
Military spending, socio-economic challenges and foreign policy demands: Appraising South Africa’s predicament¹

Theo Neethling*

¹ The extensive reduction of defence expenditure for post-apartheid South Africa has created challenges for force development and preparation as well as the ability of the armed forces to deliver on expectations. For example, budgetary allocations were more than halved between 1989 and 1997, a development that was soon followed by a stagnant 1.6 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) defence allocation. This decline in financial resources also manifested itself in the human resources element, reducing the 93,000 posts declared in 1999 to the projected 70,000 (including civilians). Against this background, South Africa’s socio-economic commitments as well as deployments in support of foreign policy have continued to escalate forcing the current expenditure revision to rise to 2 per cent of GDP. However, against the considerations of an increasing influence and interest in Africa and international affairs, even with a domestic unemployment rate of 42 per cent and widening income disparities, this investment is considered worthwhile. The essay argues the existence of is a minimalist approach, adopted by the South African government in which there is a careful mix of foreign policy, economic rationality and limited military involvement to produce a military credible capacity that is consistent with the country’s ability to finance but whose main (primary) task is to operate in support of its wider interests on the African continent. In the final analysis, the paper argues that if South Africans should compare what they are paying for the military, they would actually discover that they are paying far less than most other nations.

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Introduction

A continuous decline in military spending has been a major feature of South Africa’s budgeting over the past decade. In fact, where the defence budget was at 4.6 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP) in 1989/1990, defence spending was reduced to less than 3 per cent of GDP by the mid-1990s, that is, less than 10 per cent of total government spending. In real terms the defence budget was cut by 50 per cent between 1989 and 1997. In recent years the country’s defence expenditure has been pinned down at approximately 1.6 per cent of the GDP; that is, between 6 per cent and 7 per cent of government expenditure.

In an overall sense, because of cuts in defence spending, there has been a downscaling of the military and, as a result, a number of bases have become redundant. The downswingging defence budget also translated to a cut in the personnel budget of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF). In March 1999 the Minister of Defence approved plans to reduce military personnel from 93,000 to 70,000 permanent posts (including civilians).

The declining budget is widely believed to have had serious implications in terms of the maintenance of bases and equipment, and on the ability of the military to perform its primary and secondary functions – and ultimately on force readiness. Yet, some analysts and commentators continue to consider South Africa ‘relatively highly militarised’ with a relative ‘large military strength’. In particular, the announcement in November 1998 that Cabinet had approved a two-phase weapons purchase programme requiring an initial payout over eight years of R21.3 billion, with the option of spending an additional R8.5 billion by 2004, sparked a debate on the necessity to spend taxpayers’ money on defence requirements. The following statement was typical of the reaction on the part of anti-militarist groupings:

There is growing anger that the ANC government has failed to deliver any improvement to the lives of most of its constituents. The wealth gulf between rich and poor is even wider than it was during the apartheid era. Unemployment is 42%, and the number of people living in shacks continues to increase … To the electorate, however, the arms deal has become symbolic of an appalling waste of energy and resources that could go to social improvement. The credibility of our constitutional democracy is at risk.

But while some individuals and roleplayers were critical towards the acquisition of new military equipment, other commentators or observers manifested their support of the defence acquisition package:

Generals are at least talented at inducing apocalypse as they are presenting themselves as the only defence against it. So it is not always sensible to
believe their dire predictions. Yet, in the case of the SANDF, our generals appear to have a good case. Almost everyone with a claim to some military expertise – from military commanders to security analysts and opposition defence spokespeople – agrees that the SANDF is woefully inadequately equipped and underfunded.¹⁰

More specifically, defence analysts argued that key weaknesses in the SANDF are readily visible:¹¹

- The SA Army simply does not have enough troops to take on more missions, and does not dispose of an adequate airborne force for effective rapid deployment, let alone what is sometimes referred to as ‘forcible entry’.

- The SA Air Force (SAAF) does not have sufficient airlift capacity for the rapid deployment of a credible force, to sustain it and, should it become necessary, to briskly extract it. Pending the delivery of new Gripen fighter jets, it also lacks fighter aircraft suited to a distant deployment to support ground forces in a peace enforcement mission or to interdict the aerial smuggling of weapons.

- The SA Navy (SAN) does not have enough sealift capacity to deploy the equipment and vehicles of a credible force and, pending the delivery of the new patrol corvettes, does not possess a sufficient number of combat vessels to interdict seaborne weapons deliveries and to support operations in coastal areas.

Ultimately, the question needs to be addressed whether excessive or unnecessary military spending prevails in South Africa – spending that detracts from the nations’ financial health and its prospects for economic and social advancement. To this end, the aim of this essay is twofold: to assess to what extent South Africa’s military spending corresponds with its contemporary socio-economic challenges and political climate, and to view the country’s military spending in comparative international context.

Background on South Africa’s military potency

Since the early 1990s – when the demise of the apartheid political system began – South Africa, in common with most of the international community, has been witnessing a reduction in defence expenditure. Defence spending averaged 16.4 per cent of the state’s budget in the 1980s: it ranged from a high of 22.7 per cent in 1982 to a low of 13.7 per cent in 1987, but rose to 15.7 per cent of state spending in 1989. By the mid-1990s, defence spending had been reduced to less than 10 per cent of total state spending. It soon became evident that the SAN and SAAF desperately needed rejuvenation by way of new equipment.¹²
The navy, whose task it is to patrol our long coastline, is barely functional. But the non-availability of spare parts internationally for South Africa’s three ageing submarines makes keeping them serviceable so expensive that, at any one time, only one submarine is seaworthy. Moreover, two of six strike craft and at least five mine hunters and minesweepers have either been decommissioned, placed in reserve or cannibalised for spares in recent years.

The air force’s difficulties are similar. Because of the age of the equipment and shortages of spares, the air force is battling to maintain an effective deterrent and a minimal fighting component in the air. A significant

Table 1: Military potency – top positions

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portion of attack craft – about 12 Impala fighters/trainers, 22 Mirage fighters, and 14 Cheetahs [South African-built variants of the Mirage] are out of commission or have been scrapped.\textsuperscript{13}

From earlier studies published in the London-based \textit{New International Security Review 1998}\textsuperscript{14} it became clear that South Africa’s military power was on the wane. This index is compiled by measuring data such as force numbers, defence spending in dollars, defence spending per capita, and the defence budget as a portion of GDP. These figures are married to subjective concepts such as the government’s commitment to defence and popular support for it. Although the index is said to be a fairly subjective evaluation, it nonetheless has some validity and confirmed what many analysts have maintained since the mid-1990s: South Africa’s defence status was directly related to its defence budget, which had seen many years of consecutive cuts. The first 50 positions in Table 1 should be noted.

Out of the more than 180 countries surveyed in the index, South Africa – with a rating of 6.03 compared to 6.63 in 1996 – ranked 45, just above Belgium. When compared with other countries, South Africa’s decline in military potency was second worst on the African continent, with war-ravaged Sudan in the first place. Globally the country’s decline was fourth worst, after Croatia, Belarus and the former Yugoslavia.

It is evident from the \textit{New International Security Review 1998} that there was no country in Southern Africa which came close to South Africa’s potency in 1996. With a measure of just more than 6.00 points, the countries closest to South Africa’s potency were Angola and Zimbabwe with 4.88 points each. Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia all scored below 4.00.\textsuperscript{15} In sub-Saharan Africa, the only country that came close to South Africa was Nigeria with a score of 5.46.\textsuperscript{16}

However, the consequences of the drop in South Africa’s potency in the 1990s seem significant when the drop is compared with other Southern African states in the period 1998–2000, as indicated in Table 2 (taken from the Rusi Index of Martial Potency as a follow-on publication of the \textit{New International Security Review 1998}).\textsuperscript{17}

Although it is important to note that South Africa has a smaller force in terms of military personnel, it has a vastly superior force in terms of numbers of heavy weapons.\textsuperscript{18} However, it is significant that South Africa’s rating dropped to a score of below 6.00 in 1998, while Angola moved to a score of over 5.00. This should be seen against the background of the fact that within Southern Africa, South Africa’s drop in potency between 1996 and 2000 had by far been the worst, with Mozambique, Malawi and Lesotho reporting marginal declines in potency. Further afield, it is interesting to note that Nigeria and Sudan have moved up to scores of 6.00 and 4.88 respectively in 2000, while Egypt and Morocco have reported figures of 6.72 and 5.79 respectively.\textsuperscript{19} This means that three African
states, namely Egypt, Nigeria and Morocco, ranked above South Africa’s score of 5.82 on a global scale, with Sudan only marginally behind.

Against this background Cabinet decided in 1998 that South Africa would procure the following military equipment:

- Nine dual-seater Grippen and 12 Hawk aircraft from British Aerospace/SAAB to replace the SAAF’s Cheetah and Impala aircraft. A further option was taken on the balance of the 12 Hawk Aircraft and 19 single-seater Grippens.

- Thirty light utility helicopters from the Italian helicopter manufacturer Agusta, which would replace the Alouette helicopters that have been in service since 1962.

- Four patrol corvettes from a German frigate consortium to replace the present ageing strike craft of the SAN, which have been in service since 1979.

- Three submarines from a German submarine consortium, which would replace the ageing Daphne submarines that have been in service since 1971.20

The cost of the equipment package was estimated at R21.3 billion over a period of eight years. If the option to procure additional equipment were exercised, the total estimated cost would rise by R8.5 billion to R29.9 billion over 12 years. Cabinet’s decision was based on the Defence Review, which determined that the specific force design required for South Africa should be a high-technology core force, sized for peacetime, but which could be expanded to meet an emerging threat. Importantly, the deal was combined with certain offset arrangements spanning a variety of industrial sectors and underpinning the government’s industrial strategy.21
However, immediately after the announcement of the government’s plans to equip the SANDF with new military hardware, anti-militarist lobby groups and individuals strongly objected to South Africa’s ‘militarisation’.\textsuperscript{22} As one commentator stated:

What seems to be driving South Africa’s milex decisions, given the lack of any international security risk? The first explanation is a strong military pressure group, including an extensive arms industry, much of which is state-owned. It is entirely to be expected that this group will work to maintain or increase milex … The second belief which strengthens the effectiveness of the military lobby is that a strong military brings status to a country … This status, it might be noted, is in developed country terms rather than African terms.\textsuperscript{23}

Currently, many questions are still suspended in mid-air as regards the merits of defence spending at a time of desperately needed social spending in South Africa – questions which are difficult to clarify in the dust of discourses. Unfortunately, the merits of defence spending – specifically the procurement of new military hardware – have been further clouded as a result of allegations that there were tendering irregularities and malpractices in the concluding of contracts.\textsuperscript{24} Be that as it may, the question is: how does defence spending relate to the country’s socio-economic and political challenges?

**South Africa’s socio-economic climate and challenges**

The beliefs and efforts of anti-militaristic pressure groups should be viewed in the broader context of international initiatives to exert pressure on developing states to cut back on military spending and inventories. It also forms part of post-Cold War initiatives in the international community to encourage progress in the demilitarisation of global politics. For many people, at the end of the Cold War there was hope for peace, stability and a stronger focus on human development rather than on military power. The concept of defence conversion also became a prominent issue on the international agenda with the notion that redundant military resources could now be converted for civilian use.\textsuperscript{25}

Admittedly, if ever a government feels the need to waste a large amount of money, it could resort to military spending to do so. For there are few items as expensive as modern military hardware. Recruiting, training and equipping modern armed forces constitute very expensive burdens for nations all over the world. Therefore, anti-militarist bodies in South Africa are able to claim that they would like to see resources used for productive purposes. In this regard, Economists Allied for Arms Reduction
South Africa, a non-governmental organisation who has been most vocally criticising the South African government’s arms package, argues that

... the wealth gulf between rich and poor is even wider than it was during the apartheid era. Unemployment is 42 per cent and the number of people living in shacks continues to increase. High crime rates affect all communities, and HIV/AIDS will have some six million South African deaths expected by 2010 ... To the electorate, however, the arms deal has become symbolic of an appalling waste of energy and resources that could go into social improvement.26

Based on life expectancy, educational attainment and adjusted real income, South Africa is ranked 120, between Egypt (119) and Equatorial Guinea (121), in the 2005 Human Development Index Report. With a life expectancy of 48.4 years, an adult literacy rate of 82.4 per cent and a combined enrolment rate of 78 per cent for secondary and primary schools, South Africa clearly faces daunting socio-economic challenges.27 Much progress has been made since 1994 in that almost 8.4 million people have gained access to clean water, 3.8 million to electricity, 1.5 million to housing and 6.4 million to sanitation.28

Still, anti-militarists and other commentators are quick to resort to socio-economic challenges in their stance against procurement of new military hardware. Gumede, for instance, argues that “South Africa should hardly be spending billions on sophisticated military hardware instead of on poverty alleviation and social upliftment”.29 Moreover, it is argued that failure to use the tax system to redistribute wealth has to rank as one of the great disappointments of democracy. “The feeling in some ANC alliance quarters is that South Africa’s black and mostly impoverished majority has borne the brunt of freedom’s price.”30 However, as much as South Africa’s socio-economic challenges are immense and should clearly be considered in any discourse on defence spending, the country’s level of defence spending should also be appraised against the background of political demands placed on the SANDF. Specifically, it should also be realised that a high premium is being placed on South Africa’s political-military leadership and role in the region.

**South Africa’s (international and regional) political challenges**

The SANDF – like all militaries – is a foreign policy instrument. In this regard, Du Plessis rightly points out that the past years have seen the re-emergence of the military instrument in South Africa’s foreign policy. Specifically, whereas the post-1994 policy was characterised by a notable near-absence of the military instrument in South Africa’s foreign policy, the use of military means has become more salient, most notably in the
field of peace support. This trend produces a foreign policy dilemma concerning the conciliation of international and foreign policy demands placed on the SANDF on the one hand, and the capacity for meeting these demands on the other, as discussed in the section below.

**Demands placed on South Africa’s political leadership**

In today’s community of nations, South Africa could be regarded as a ‘middle power’. Currently, South Africa ranks 46 on the World Competitiveness Scoreboard 2005. Between Jordan and Portugal on the one hand, and Columbia and Turkey on the other, South Africa is the only African state among the 60 listed countries in terms of international economic competitiveness. The country seems to align and present itself as part of that consortium of countries that includes developed states such as Norway, Canada, Sweden and the Netherlands, and developing countries such as India, Cuba and Brazil.

In economic terms, South Africa’s economy vis-à-vis that of the rest of the African continent is such that South Africa’s gross national income (GNI) as a share of sub-Saharan Africa’s GNI is 40 per cent, while the country’s population as a share of sub-Saharan Africa’s GNI is only 6 per cent. Furthermore, with only 13 per cent of Southern Africa’s area and about 21.5 per cent of the Southern African population, South Africa has nearly one-half of the region’s paved roads and railroads, the seven largest and most effective ports among the region’s nineteen, and a near monopoly of both telephones and host computers in Southern Africa. Thus, not surprisingly, South African observers often contended in the 1990s that South Africa should be a leader in Africa and that inevitable responsibilities and commitments flow from its position of economic and military strength. Soon after the political transformation of South Africa in 1994, there were growing expectations that South Africa would take up its responsibilities as a potential regional leader and to exert its influence in creating a stable region. Cilliers, for instance, asserted that South Africa’s position in the region was that of an economic powerhouse and that the country would, therefore, need to go to extraordinary lengths to make multilateralism, consultation and peace building reflective of its engagement in the region. Malan similarly pointed out that

… [p]articipation in international peacekeeping is a passport to international respectability and to an authoritative voice in the debate on the future of international conflict management and the reform of intergovernmental organisations such as the United Nations, the Organisation of African Unity and the Southern African Development Community. It is through such participation that countries with far less resources such as Ghana,
Senegal, Kenya, Botswana and Zimbabwe enjoy a stronger voice in these debates – despite the considerable insight and analytical capability of South Africans in this arena.\(^\text{37}\)

Against this background the White Paper on South Africa’s Participation in International Peace Missions starts with an opening statement that, since 1994, domestic and international expectations regarding South Africa’s role as a responsible and respected member of the international community have steadily grown: “These expectations have included a hope that South Africa will play a leading role in international peace missions.”\(^\text{38}\) The White Paper also states that South Africa is committed to responsibly fulfilling its obligations under the charters of the UN and the OAU,\(^\text{39}\) as well as the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Treaty.\(^\text{40}\) Therefore, South Africa’s decision-makers became fully aware of international expectations that the country needed to play an increasingly significant political-military role in African peacekeeping requirements and international peacekeeping endeavours. In this context, the former Director-General of Foreign Affairs, Jackie Selebi,\(^\text{41}\) stated the following in an address to the South African military:\(^\text{42}\)

> I believe it is our collective intention as constituent role-players in our foreign policy establishment, to seek, to locate the country in its rightful place in the community of nations, and to transform ourselves as a nation into a global player that is capable of making a meaningful and significant contribution to the advancement of the welfare of the nations in the world. I also believe that we are jointly seeking to rapidly develop and continuously evolve in us all, as this country’s foreign policy role-players, an adequate capability to engage the international community at all levels, bilateral, regional and globally. We should all seek to situate this country as an indispensable and very necessary part of the international decision-making processes, whether such matters affect international security and peace, international politics and economics, or international trade or environment … Given the fact that the SANDF remains Africa’s most capable and sophisticated military instrument, there is naturally great expectation that this country should increasingly be involved in peace-keeping, peace-making and peace-enforcement operations, especially in Africa.

In 2002, the former Deputy Minister of Defence, Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge, stated that “we are now confronted with playing an even greater role because of the progress being made in peace negotiations in the Great Lakes Region. Our country, led by President Thabo Mbeki, has taken Africa to greater heights with the launch of the African Union.”\(^\text{43}\) Likewise, in a public address early in 2003, the former Chief of the SANDF, General Siphiwe Nyanda, asserted that “South Africa, has, relatively speaking, [a] wealth of resources and capabilities to contribute [to peace missions] … South Africa
has involuntarily been thrust in a leadership role, which ultimately serves South Africa’s national interest.” He also stated that South Africa “has just recently become widely involved in peace missions in Africa, and more deployments are on the horizon”.44

Coinciding with the above, the Minister of Defence, Mosiuoa Lekota, stated in parliament in 2003 that as the largest economy in the Southern African region, South Africa would have to carry a great deal of responsibility for the (then still envisaged) sub-regional force45 to be established within SADC as one of the building blocks of the African Standby Force (ASF).46 In a similar reference to SADC and the ASF, Rear Admiral Rolf Hauter, former Chief Director Strategy and Planning in the SANDF, stated that “[e]ach individual country will have to decide to what extent it can contribute to the common good of the region and to the continent as a whole … We, as South Africans, will have to come to terms with the fact that, as the biggest economy in the region, our country will always have to carry bigger responsibilities.”47 Moreover, the prospect of the SANDF being drawn into further peacekeeping missions was reiterated by African National Congress (ANC) member of the Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Defence, Dr Gerhard Koornhof, who stated in August 2004 at the University of Pretoria that the SANDF “will probably result in an increase in ordered deployments in the region as we are moving towards a more collaborative approach to defence and security in our region”.48 It should, therefore, be clear that South Africa’s political leadership is conscious of South Africa’s profile and international demands placed on South Africa’s leadership and military capacity, and that the country needs to be responsive to calls for military contributions to peacekeeping.

Meeting peacekeeping challenges and demands

By issuing the White Paper on South Africa’s Participation in International Peace Missions, the South African government firmly declared that, as a member of the UN, South Africa should assist the world body in its peacekeeping task. Also, in view of its economic and military strength, many observers have identified South Africa as a key player in efforts to help ensure effective peacekeeping in African conflicts. Accordingly, South Africa has experienced “a constant barrage of calls for assistance, intervention and mediation in African crises”.49 This may appear quite dramatic, but there could be no doubt that South Africa is (sometimes rather simplistically) perceived as a regional leader. Neither could there be any doubt that South Africa would remain subject to multiple pressures to ‘do something’ to help put an end to fighting in conflict-stricken African states. In fact, the former Secretary-General of the OAU, Salim Ahmed Salim, made it clear during a visit to South Africa in December 1998 that he had been disappointed by South Africa’s reluctance (at that time) to play a more active role in conflict resolution in Africa.50 In this regard, former Director-General Selebi informed the South African military in 1999 that “it is no secret that many outside our borders have been rather
disappointed by the limited number of operations in which our National Defence Force has been involved in terms of peace-keeping operations”.

However, South Africa has officially declared its commitment to playing a meaningful role in Africa and the rest of the international community, and has (at least by implication) stated its aspiration to become a permanent member of the Security Council of the UN. Against this background it is important to note that the White Paper explicitly states that participation in peace missions is increasingly becoming a prerequisite for international respectability, and for a strong voice in supranational organisations and in debates on multinational conflict management. In fact, General Nyanda made it clear that South Africa would not be taken as seriously as it should, if “we are not willing to be serious about the security in our region”. With its contributions to the peace support efforts in especially Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and recently also in Sudan, South Africa has clearly demonstrated its commitment to be significantly involved in international peacekeeping endeavours. In this regard, it is clear that the South African government is taking the view that participation in international peacekeeping is important for playing a significant role in the international community, in Africa and in the regional environment. In view of the above, it was publicly stated in February 2003 that about 900 SANDF members were deployed on African soil. It was also announced that another 1,268 members were to be deployed within the framework of an expanded UN Mission in the DRC (MONUC). This materialised in June 2003 when the SANDF deployed to the war-ravaged Kindu in the eastern part of the DRC. In addition, more than 300 members of the SANDF have been deployed in Sudan’s conflict-stricken Darfur area as part of the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) since 2004 – thereby making another substantial contribution to conflict resolution and peacekeeping on the African continent.

Today, the SANDF finds itself involved in a number of peacekeeping endeavours and a considerable number of force members have gained valuable experience in practical peacekeeping tasks. Although no officers have thus far been engaged in full-scale peace enforcement roles, the SANDF’s contributions could certainly be regarded as significant and have surely increased the country’s peacekeeping profile in political and military terms. This coincides with General Nyanda’s earlier statement that “South Africa and the SANDF are unquestionably going to play an [even more] important role in peace missions in Africa over the next decade … South Africa could become one of the foremost contributors of forces for peace missions.”

This said, it should be noted that one of the realities of recent peacekeeping missions in Africa relates to financial constraints. In the past years, the extent of African peacekeeping was not limited by political will or the availability of troops, but rather by insufficient funding. Peacekeeping endeavours are by their very nature costly affairs. The recent peacekeeping experience is that even the relatively small and lesslogistically demanding
unarmed military observer missions undertaken were so costly that the AU and its predecessor, the OAU, were unable to finance them from their own budget. Moreover, it could be pointed out that the budget for the OAU Liaison Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (OLMEE) amounted to US$1.8 million per year in 2000. Its original planned strength was 43 civilian and military personnel, but it had an actual strength of 27 in 2000, comprising 11 military staff and 16 civilian support staff – directly as a result of financial constraints. It could furthermore be noted that the African Mission in Burundi (AMIB) was considerably larger than any mission the AU (or the OAU before it) has undertaken. With 3,335 personnel and an operational budget of approximately US$110 million in 2003, it was a significant expense in the African peacekeeping context from the outset – especially when viewed against the AU budget of approximately US$32 million in 2003. Moreover, in the case of Sudan it was reported in April 2005 that “[t]he African Union Mission in Sudan in its present strength is over stretched to address the security concerns. In consequence therefore, there was the need to enhance the mission by increasing its strength and providing it with adequate logistical support.” It was also reported that the mission “lacked basic elements of a balanced military force.” As the AU already stood in arrears from previous budgets in recent years, observers assert that the AU would have to depend on the strength and goodwill of ‘lead nations’ among its member states – most notably South Africa in Southern Africa – and the international community for financial support if it wishes to develop and utilise the ASF as a standby reinforcement system on the continent.

Political demands and budgetary constraints

It has already been noted that reduced military spending and a dwindling defence budget had been at the centre of significant budgetary changes in South Africa since the mid-1990s – a situation that seems to put some strain on the peacekeeping requirements emanating from demands placed on South Africa on the one hand, and the capability of the SANDF to meet such requirements and challenges on the other. In this context, the Minister of Defence warned parliament in June 2003 that “[w]e are deploying twice as many members of the defence force than was anticipated in the Defence Review, while our budget, as anticipated in the same review, has not been met.”

Against this background, the former Chief of Joint Operations in the SANDF, Lieutenant General Godfrey Ngwenya, likewise urged caution against overstretched the capacity of the SANDF in deploying more troops in peace support. Specifically, it was stated in July 2003 that close to 2,500 members of the SANDF were deployed to the DRC, Burundi and Ethiopia, and that the SANDF’s force structure did not allow for more deployments on foreign soil – implying that South Africa has effectively reached a ceiling as far as troop contributions were concerned. Yet, the figures continued to rise as information indicates that as of 30 September 2003, 1,414 SANDF members were
serving as UN ‘blue helmets’ in the DRC, while about 1,600 SANDF members were deployed to Burundi.65

In August 2003, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) officially requested the South African government to send troops to war-ravaged Liberia. The initial South African response suggested that the government was cautious not to overextend the capabilities of the SANDF as the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Aziz Pahad, stated that “[i]t’s not just a question of finances. We also have to consider whether we have the capacity to send more troops on such missions and whether we are not stretching ourselves too much.”66 Yet, shortly afterwards the government indicated that the SANDF would indeed contribute to the Liberian peace process – albeit in a limited capacity.

This, then, coincides with the government’s stance that South Africa, as a member of the UN, has to assist the world body in its peacekeeping task. Also, in the words of General Nyanda: “After a healthy pause, post 1994, during which time the SANDF integrated and transformed, the SANDF is on the march – a march for peace, development and prosperity.”67 In this regard, it needs to be noted that a figure of close to 4,000 South Africans deployed as (UN and non-UN) peacekeepers brought South Africa close to the forefront of international troop-contributing nations for peace support endeavours.

Yet, it should be clear that the SANDF does not have an unlimited capacity – given the current financial constraints within the South African budgetary framework. In fact, some defence analysts argue that the SANDF would be able to handle its immediate commitments for some time, but that it would not be able to sustain those deployments for any length of time or take on any other extended large-scale missions. It has even been suggested that South Africa’s leadership is letting “its enthusiasm outrun its military capacity”.68 This said, it is argued that there is a general international view that a developing country at peace can reasonably spend some 2 per cent of its GDP on defence – and that the current defence budget in South Africa is simply insufficient to meet additional or more extended peacekeeping responsibilities. This point has also been raised by Defence Minister Mosiuoa Lekota, who stated that “[f]or a country that has responsibilities such as we [do], with regional partners that are not so strong, it seems unavoidable that our country must consider raising defence expenditure”.69 In fact, Lekota stated that he would like to see defence spending increased in stages from the current figure of about 1,6 per cent of GDP to about 2 per cent. This statement was a reiteration of an earlier address to parliament in June 2003 when Lekota said that “[w]e are deploying twice as many members of the defence force than was anticipated in the Defence Review [of 1997], while our budget, as anticipated in the same review, has not been met”.70

In terms of practical demands, Heitman asserts that South Africa should be capable of sustaining the deployment of at least a small brigade (about 4,000 troops) or two battalion
groups (about 3,000 troops) for an extended period, and still have the ability to respond effectively to a sudden but short-term crisis.\textsuperscript{71} Taking a regional-military perspective, South Africa is Africa’s biggest and most industrialised economy and its strength should lie in providing capabilities that the poorer and less industrialised countries cannot afford or cannot support: airborne forces, inter-theatre airlift and sealift, combat helicopters, fighters capable of independent operation, patrol aircraft, and warships able to patrol for extended periods. South Africa is virtually the only country south of the Sahara that is able to sustain an effective capability in those categories.\textsuperscript{72}

Against this background it is interesting to view and appreciate South Africa’s military potency in international context by comparing some relevant indicators. The following section expands on this with a view to clarifying whether excessive military spending or a militaristic ethos currently prevails in South Africa.

**South Africa’s defence spending in comparative international and regional context**

Although one may argue that South Africa should not be concerned with the relative military strengths of its neighbours and other African states, but should rather focus on its own financial situation, domestic budgetary needs and national interests, it is nonetheless illuminating to compare South Africa in the contemporary African context as regards GDP, population figures, and total (active) members of the armed forces.

**Table 3: African armed forces compared**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>GDP\textsuperscript{73}</th>
<th>Population\textsuperscript{74}</th>
<th>Armed forces\textsuperscript{75} (’000)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>US$75.1 million</td>
<td>68.7 million</td>
<td>400–450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eritrea</td>
<td>US$0.9 billion</td>
<td>4.4 million</td>
<td>200–250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>US$84.6 million</td>
<td>32.3 million</td>
<td>100–150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angola</td>
<td>US$20.1 million</td>
<td>13.9 million</td>
<td>100–150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>US$8.0 million</td>
<td>69.9 million</td>
<td>150–200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>US$50.0 million</td>
<td>30.5 million</td>
<td>150–200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>US$19.5 million</td>
<td>34.3 million</td>
<td>100–125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libya</td>
<td>US$29.1 million</td>
<td>5.6 million</td>
<td>75–100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>US$72.1 million</td>
<td>139.8 million</td>
<td>75–100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>US$0.6 million</td>
<td>7.3 million</td>
<td>50–75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRC</td>
<td>US$6.5 million</td>
<td>54.7 million</td>
<td>50–75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>US$1.8 million</td>
<td>8.4 million</td>
<td>50–75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>US$212.7 million</td>
<td>45.5 million</td>
<td>50–75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>US$6.8 million</td>
<td>25.9 million</td>
<td>50–75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>US$28.1 million</td>
<td>10.0 million</td>
<td>35–50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Note, for instance, South Africa’s relative position in 2002–2004 compared to African states with armed forces of 35,000 and above in Table 3.

Although the table does not take into account types of capabilities that are maintained, nor the threat perception and regional conflict potential of any state, it is evident that a substantial number of African states have fairly sizeable forces – many of them much larger than that of South Africa. South Africa’s figures are even commendable if it is taken into consideration that South Africa is the only African state that ranks among the world’s 50 top nations as regards GDP, while the size of its defence force is less than that of a significant number of other African states – all of which have considerably smaller economies. In fact, whereas South Africa is indicated as spending more or less 1.6 per cent of its GDP on defence in recent years, almost half of all African states were spending more than 2 per cent of their GDP on defence. Indeed, various states were spending more than 3 per cent of their GDP on defence in 2004 – a figure that is fairly high in any terms (see Figure 1).76

Comparatively speaking, South Africa’s defence spending seems to be fairly conservative in relation to the international average of roughly 2 per cent of the gross world product in general,77 and specifically in comparison with sub-Saharan Africa in general (2.6 per cent); the Middle East and North Africa (7.2 per cent); Central and Southeast Asia (2.6 per cent); East Asia and Australasia (2.1 per cent); and NATO (2.6 per cent).78
Appraisal and conclusion

Military power cannot solve all problems of insecurity and there is no requirement for South Africa to have a large, modern armed force or to spend on defence at relatively high levels. Therefore, the government should be commended for a ‘minimalist approach’ by, for instance, not having added the replacement of South Africa’s present inventory of main battle tanks to the arms procurement package announced in 1998.\textsuperscript{79} Also important is that the intended weapons purchase programme has been the result of a drawn-out consultative process in which considerable emphasis has been placed on favourable terms, facilitated by soft loans, with long-term repayments, at low interest rates and backed by credit guarantees. In addition, investment in the local industrial sector was also considered. It is also encouraging to note that there has been some healthy understanding in recent years of two fundamental issues concerning military spending:

- Concern for human security and for meeting the socio-economic needs of South Africans; and

- That military force should be used only as a last resort.\textsuperscript{80}

Yet, anti-militaristic groupings maintain that few inter-state conflicts were recorded in the past years. Also, with a global decrease in the commitment of GNP for defence purposes, there has been a strong urge for demilitarisation in South Africa and much hope that the government would focus more on human development than on the military. For many such people, spending on the military implies that the ‘peace dividend’ has not been realised. From their point of view, human security is less about procuring arms and building military strengths, and more about strengthening the social fabric of societies and improving their systems of governance by means of poverty alleviation and human development programmes. For anti-militarists

… the new leaders rapidly latched on to the importance of a military and issues such as the peace dividend and defence conversion took a back seat … Despite the restructuring and transformation of the military in South Africa, defence conversion, though important, remains a neglected issue. Its true potential has not been embraced … since 1998, the hope of defence conversion driven by the government seems to be fading especially in the light of the R43 billion rearmament package that was announced by the government.\textsuperscript{81}

In governmental circles on the other hand, spokespersons were always swift to point out that in 1989, defence spending was 4.5 per cent of the GDP and that it dropped to 1.4 per cent in 1999. These reductions, according to anti-militaristic groups, have enabled government to shift substantial resources to socio-economic upliftment, providing an
“impressive peace dividend”. From the government’s viewpoint, however, in the words of former Deputy Defence Minister Ronnie Kasrils, it was never a “guns or butter – houses or corvettes” issue, but rather “guns, butter, peace and security”.

Be that as it may, a commentator once argued that spending on arms would always look idiotic when the only arithmetic applied is the kind that says that for the price of one corvette the South African government could build, say, 20 schools. Furthermore, it could be argued that, irrespective of the low frequency of inter-state wars in the current global order, the impact of external military aggression is so severe that defence against such aggression should remain a primary objective for a country such as South Africa.

The fact that the defence budget for 2001/02 has been set at R15.8 billion, just over R18 billion for 2002/03, 20.5 billion for 2003/04, and R22.5 billion for 2005/06 – way below 2 per cent of GDP – is a clear indication of the government’s spending priorities and bears testimony to the point that belt-tightening rather than spending on the military has been and still is the current government strategy or outlook.

At the same time, it should be reiterated that the past years have seen the re-emergence of the military instrument in South Africa’s foreign policy. Specifically, whereas the post-1994 policy was characterised by a notable near-absence of the military instrument in South Africa’s foreign policy, the use of military means has become more salient, most notably in the field of peace support. This trend produces a foreign policy dilemma concerning the conciliation of international and foreign policy demands placed on the SANDF on the one hand, and the capacity for meeting these demands on the other.

This said, far more than deterrence and a fighting capability are at stake. A considerable number of African states have been and are still gripped in ongoing conflicts, the blowback of which has seriously impacted on West, Central and Southern Africa. South Africa’s requirements for military equipment are not only set by a threat and task assessment, but are also concerned with the pursuit of its national interests in respect of regional security. Thus if the government believes that it is in the national interest to play a significant role in UN peace missions and that the SANDF has to actively assist in multinational peacekeeping operations on the African continent and even further afield, it seems sensible to equip the military appropriately. If not, this could leave South Africa not being able to shoulder its responsibility in the region and even exposed to serious instability to the north of the country and the negative spillover effects thereof. It could leave South Africa with inadequate means to help enforce decency in a future genocide on the continent but also leave the SANDF without the force necessary to defend its legitimate interests against those who hold them in contempt. It could rightly be asserted that peace is a precondition for economic development. Moreover, in the words of Heitman, “South Africa is a developing country and is at peace. But Africa is not at peace and South Africa cannot afford to stand by and watch it deteriorate. 2% of
GDP would be a small price to pay for investing in long-term stability and the economic growth that only stability can make possible.\textsuperscript{90}

In the final analysis, the question remains: What price is South Africa prepared to pay for its security in a potentially unstable neighbourhood and global community? In view of the foregoing and given that the current defence budget amounts to way less than 2 per cent of GDP, it could be argued that if South Africans should compare what they are paying for the military, they would actually discover that they are paying far less than most other nations.

\textbf{Notes}

1. The author would like to express his appreciation to Dr Ariane Neethling of the Subject Group Mathematics in the Faculty of Military Science, Stellenbosch University, for assisting in the reporting of statistical data in this paper.
15. Royal United Services Institute for Defence Studies, op cit, p 338.
18. Harris, op cit, p 69.
21. Ibid.
22. Harris, op cit, pp 71, 73–74.
23. Ibid.
29. Gumede, op cit, p 111.
30. Ibid.

34 Figures obtained from Professor A Roux, Stellenbosch University Business School, 29 September 2003.


36 Cilliers, op cit, p 1.


39 The OAU was effectively replaced by the AU as continental organisation in Africa in July 2003.

40 DFA, op cit, pp 5, 23.

41 Currently Commissioner of the South African Police Service.

42 Selebi, op cit, p 7.


45 An AU Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council, adopted in July 2002, provides for the establishment of an African Standby Force (ASF) to enable the AU Peace and Security Council to perform its responsibilities with respect to the deployment of peacekeeping missions and intervention pursuant to the provisions of the AU Constitutive Act. The ASF will consist of five sub-regionally based brigades (3,000 to 4,000 troops) in addition to a sixth, continental formation based at the AU’s headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.


49 F Vreÿ & A Esterhuyse, South Africa and Southern Africa: Isolationist or regional conflict manager, *Conflict and Development Watch* 2/1, April 2000, p 12.


52 DFA, op cit, p 22.

53 Nyanda, op cit, p 4.

54 Ibid.


57 Nyanda, op cit, p 4.


60 Ibid.


62 Msomi, op cit, p 4.

63 Currently Chief of the SANDF.


65 UN Department of Public Information, Contributors to United Nations peacekeeping operations: Monthly summary of contributors, <www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/contributors/September2003Countrysummary.pdf> (10 August 2003); SAPA-DPA, Afrika-union se vredesmag vir Burundi reg om ontplooi te word ('African Union...
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66 R Munusamy, SA asked to send troops to Liberia,
67 Nyanda, op cit, p 4.
68 See for instance Römer-Heitman, op cit.
70 Msomi, op cit, p 4.
71 Römer-Heitman, op cit, p 19.
72 Ibid.
73 The World Bank Group, Total GDP 2004,
74 The World Bank Group, Population 2004,
75 Sources differ on the official number of armed forces in African states. The intervals reported in this table are based on the following sources: UNDP, Human Development Report 2005, Indicators: refugees and armaments, <http://hdr.undp.org/statistics/data/indicators.cfm?x=224&y=1&z=1> (4 October 2005);
77 Ibid.
78 The International Institute for Strategic Studies, op cit, p 340.
79 The Defence Review of 1998 indicates the replacement of the present inventory of 224 Olifant Mk1A/1B tanks by new-generation tanks from 2009 – but did not obtain Cabinet’s endorsement in recent years.
81 Abrahams, op cit, pp 1, 2, 9.
83 Kasrils, op cit, p 26.
84 Ibid.
85 Anon, Styging help nie (‘Increase doesn’t help’), Beeld, 21 February 2002, p 2.
86 Anon, Defence, Intelligence and Foreign Affairs get a bigger slice of the South African budget pie, African Armed Forces Journal, February 2003, p 9.
90 Römer-Heitman, op cit, p 20.
Defence transformation in South Africa: Sharing the experience with the Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo

Roland de Vries*

“There is nothing more difficult to carry out, nor more doubtful of success, nor more dangerous to handle than to initiate a new order of things. For the reformer has enemies in all who profit by the old order, and only lukewarm defenders in all those who would profit by the new order”

– Machiavelli

This essay was written after a team of the Institute for Security Studies visited the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) to share their experiences of the challenges of defence transformation with Congolese officials and members of civil society.

It discusses the South African defence transformation process and experience in detail and highlights the imperative for visionary leadership, commitment and communication as prerequisites for successful transformation. The DRC faces a unique opportunity to design and create an optimal national defence force for itself, which will reflect its new and evolving national policy on defence, and therefore the needs of the nation. This poses an exciting challenge and true opportunity to move beyond survival into a new age. The essay aims to make a contribution to this process.

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Introduction

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is facing the most daunting challenge in its history – to transform into a democratic society, to build a defence force of national unity, and to contribute to peace and prosperity in Africa.

This is possible despite the devastating conflict out of which the country is emerging. The reason lies in the hearts and minds of the Congolese – there is an almost cohesive sense of Congolese identity that is a powerful imperative for national unity and nation building. People are tired of war and there is an unprecedented international commitment to the transformation process that the Congolese leaders are taking full account of and cannot ignore.

One such spontaneous area of support ensues from countries in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region. In support of such efforts, the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) recently hosted a solidarity visit to Kinshasa in the form of a workshop on defence transformation. The purpose of the workshop was to share experiences of a few SADC countries with those of their Congolese colleagues involved in defence transformation. Specifically, the workshop aimed to compare relative experiences to provide broader understanding of transformation dynamics, the challenges and the practical implementation of the process.

Wide-ranging transformation processes such as those that the DRC is facing are immensely difficult to accomplish in their entirety. The transformation of the security sectors in Lesotho, Sierra Leone and South Africa has demonstrated this complexity. Shifting priorities, resource limitations, skills deficit, weak leadership and the sheer novelty of the transformational environment may impact negatively on such initiatives. The restructuring of the security sector of many African countries – particularly those that have emerged from either an authoritarian or a violent past – demands a visionary and integrated transformational strategy capable of ensuring that the country’s security institutions do not regress into previous destructive behavioural patterns.

African armed forces have attempted, to varying degrees, to deal with these transformational challenges. These differ from country to country and are, self-evidently, conditioned by the specific political, institutional and cultural requirements of the country in question. A number of examples serve to highlight these developments. Uganda has undergone a wide-ranging and largely successful reintegration of thousands of combatants into civilian life. Namibia and Zimbabwe both managed to integrate former belligerents successfully into capable and cohesive national armies. Countries such as Ghana, Senegal, Botswana and Kenya have managed to accumulate considerable experience and respect in the field of peacekeeping, while Nigeria has played and continues to play a prominent and constructive role in regional security initiatives.
Perhaps one of the most comprehensive and successful transformation processes has occurred in South Africa itself, where seven armed forces, some of them former adversaries, were fused into one national defence force.

The purpose of this essay is to share the South African defence transformation experience as it might relate to the challenges faced by the DRC defence transformation community. Its aim is to develop insight in effecting organisational transformation and highlight the most important fundamentals in transforming defence establishments.

**Transformation implies taking ownership and responsibility**

So what if there is an exhaustive list of signed agreements and decrees, drafted laws, conventions and committees on DRC defence reform – if the leaders and their people do not embrace change and take full ownership and responsibility, the process is destined to fail. Successful transformation requires strong leadership at the forefront, commitment from every individual, and staunch political will. Transformation impacts on the whole defence establishment. To be effective, transformation implies a change of heart, mind and spirit of all who participate in this great patriotic challenge. Transformation involves radical change such as the change of organisational culture, policy, structures, how the organisation does its work, how it leads, commands and manages its resources and people and, more so, changing the behaviour of people to a constructive and positive level.

Transformation embraces both the ‘hard’ and the ‘soft’ disciplines of an organisation, but in essence it is a call for leaders who have the head, the heart and the will to transform the organisation. It requires astute leadership and management if the success of the process is to be ensured. One such crucial issue is the building of trust amongst those involved in this complex process.

The greatest challenge is to get people involved and excited about this endeavour, helping each other and generating high levels of positive emotional energy. The South African experience reflects on former combatants sharing stories around campfires in the evenings, and building new friendships while involved in a continuous intensive planning process to build a new national defence force.

In transforming the defence sector one requires to strike a balance between the conflicting pressures of stability and change and the need to manage the process sensitively. In the process one will have to deal effectively with resistance to change and other setbacks. Transformation is a difficult process to carry out and it is imperative that the transformers develop a clear case for change, make a firm decision to transform, and develop an integrated master plan and team to do so.
Generally three crucial mission success factors are acknowledged for the management of the process:

- Providing decisive strategic leadership over the process itself;
- Ensuring that high levels of legitimacy (‘buy-in’) accrue to the process;
- Determining the true reasons for change and the scope of the transformation process such as organisational culture, traditions, leadership styles, ethnic and gender composition and other factors.¹

In essence this comes down to answering the questions: Where are we now? What do we want to become? What are our objectives? How are we going to achieve them?

Why is transformation necessary?

Most military forces are adapting or transforming to meet new requirements in their strategic environment. The South African National Defence Force (SANDF) faced a changed strategic and regional environment with changed defence needs. Fundamental political change and a shift in national priorities to socio-economic issues resulted in changed government spending priorities and a reduced defence budget.² These changes suggested that a smaller defence force was needed for South Africa. However, as a result of the integration process required by the constitutional settlement, there was suddenly a larger SANDF.

Democratic political changes resulted in the necessity of a transformed public service that was more representative of the whole South African population. A larger, integrated SANDF with new defence tasks – for example peacekeeping – but a smaller budget was thus faced with new requirements for civil control, transparency and representivity.³ In addition, the SANDF force design prior to transformation was not optimal for these new defence tasks; there was under-investment in defence equipment and systems and also inherent inefficiencies and waste in such a large organisation. There was thus a need for greater effectiveness and efficiency in the way the SANDF would be structured and in the way that it would perform its tasks.⁴ These changes and issues compelled the SANDF to reconsider its size and shape and to optimise its operational capability within a given budget to meet the changing defence needs of South Africa. These needs were reflected in the newly approved White Paper on Defence (1996), which described the national defence policy, and were further expanded in the Defence Review (1998) and Defence Act (2002). The SANDF had to undergo fundamental transformation to meet these changing defence needs.

The DRC is at a similar juncture in history now as South Africa in 1994, though with unique properties. The DRC is transforming from war to peace with a transitional
government in place since July 2003 and enjoying the strong support of the international community. Pressing issues (imperatives for change) necessitate general transformation. These are constitutional and statutory by nature and are critical to growth, development and general upliftment: the Eastern provinces are still wracked by sporadic fighting; the quest continues to establish proper civil control over areas previously under rebel administration; the building of a new Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo (FARDC) is at stake, while disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) lie at the heart of the challenges. In the meantime the demobilisation of foreign military forces in the east of the DRC is still a concern. This includes the demobilisation of the ex-Rwandan soldiers, the Forces Démocratiques de la Libération du Rwanda (Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda, FDLR) and the Ugandan rebel group the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). This continues to threaten the state of security in the region, with fears of a resurgence of war.

The above factors have a direct influence on the DRC’s future defence plans and trigger the process to embark on major change. The DRC will have to subject these factors to severe scrutiny in order to determine the optimal forces required for responding to these possible and perceived threats to national security, safety and stability, within severely curtailed resource allocations.

**Transformation focus areas**

The transformation of any defence establishment requires a multifaceted approach, which includes finding an optimal force design and enhancing the efficiency of the department. It is intended to lead to a professional, balanced and modern national defence force, representative of all groupings of a country. It contributes to a safe and secure environment within which national and regional reconstruction, development, growth and prosperity can be pursued. It must be aligned with, and give effect to, new and evolving national defence policies and principles of civil–military relations and it must earn national and international respect as a professional and reliable institution. Transformation must be seen in the context of the broader society, the transformation of the public service and the country’s evolving defence policy. In this sense, the SANDF started transforming in April 1994 with the integration of seven armed forces and has continued ever since, guided by evolving defence policy.

The 1994 transformation initiative could be deemed the first wave of transformation, the second followed in 1996 as will be explained later in more detail. The principles guiding transformation are set out in the White Paper on Defence, as mentioned earlier, and cover a range of issues, for example civil control; accountability and transparency; the composition of the defence force; a holistic view of national security; the determinants of military expenditure in relation to other national priorities; and defence policy on
issues such as rationalisation, integration, disarmament and demobilisation. These can all serve as examples to the forthcoming DRC defence transformation process.

In essence, four major transformation ‘clusters’ can be determined in the management of any defence transformation process. These are:

- **Cultural transformation:** This entails the transformation of the culture of the institution in question, the leadership, management and administrative ethos of the institution, and the principles upon which the institution is predicated. It also entails the transformation of the value system upon which the institution is based.

- **Human transformation:** This entails the transformation of the human resources composition of the institution with regard to its racial, ethnic, geographic and gender composition, as well as its human resource management practices.

- **Political transformation:** This process strives to ensure that the conduct and character of the institution in question conform to the political determinants and attributes of the democracy within which it is located – an acknowledgement of the principle of civil supremacy, the institution of appropriate mechanisms of oversight and control, adherence to the principles and practices of accountability and transparency, and so on.

- **Organisational transformation:** This constitutes a more mechanistic process within which the organisation being transformed is designed, structured and rightsized. It includes the improvement of its internal management and leadership practices and organisational processes to achieve greater levels of efficiency and effectiveness.

Gouillart and Kelly propose, in *Transforming the organisation*, that corporations are inherently whole and that transformation should therefore consider the entire body. Transformation is viewed as the central leadership challenge. Transformation can be defined as ‘the orchestrated redesign of the genetic architecture of the organisation achieved by working simultaneously – although at different speeds – along the four dimensions of reframing, restructuring, revitalisation and renewal’ (refer to Figure 1).

During the transformation process of the South African Department of Defence, six closely interlinked goals of transformation embracing the above dimensions were selected as focal areas. These focal areas in general terms are:

- **Maximising operational capability and establishing an optimal force design:** This process focuses on the development of a professional, balanced and modern defence force aligned with the foreseen mission, roles and tasks of the defence force. The principles guiding the design should follow military strategy development and guidelines set
out in overarching defence policy such as the White Paper on Defence. The process will also provide for the requirements of the supporting elements, which focuses on optimising defence spending – this is contained in the next strategic goal.

- **Optimising the effectiveness, economy and efficiency of the defence function through improved processes and structures:** This process focuses on rationalising and streamlining internal processes and structures with the purpose of efficiency and effectiveness and minimising defence cost. This domain considers the command and control and all supporting processes, systems and structures. This path will ensure that the overall force design and structure is optimised. In the case of the South African Department of Defence, four core processes were developed. These processes and the overall military strategy were taken into consideration for the eventual force design and
structure. These core processes can be summarised as follows and are reflected in Figure 2.10

- The provision of strategic direction to the department;
- The support of the operational forces through joint agencies;
- The provision of combat ready forces by the combat services;
- The employment of joint forces when so ordered.

Ensuring durability and continuity of optimal performance through the institutionalisation of appropriate leadership, command and management principles, processes and practices (LCAMPS): The powerful impact of quality leadership on any community or organisation cannot be denied. Strong leadership provides the decisive edge and can be viewed as the most essential dynamic of operational effectiveness and ensures astounding success in daily work and life. This is further supported by the need to conduct civic education programmes to teach young and even older military leaders the important role they have to play in developing democracies and to be non-partisan. Culture and esprit de corps also have a profound effect on the conduct of a force as it relates directly to high productivity, satisfaction and high morale, and individual and organisational growth. An appropriate leadership, command and management (as well as culture) concept is necessary, together with an ideal force design and sound internal work processes, to ensure that the defence force performs optimally – although it must be noted that countries have unique circumstances that must be considered.

The South African Department of Defence developed and promulgated such an integrated concept on which civic education and future professional development and training were based. This was fundamental to the establishment of a new code of conduct and to affect the required culture change of the new national defence force. These programmes were carefully tied into the ‘communication and change management enabling goal’ discussed below. Leadership plays the most important part in facilitating durable change. It is therefore important to have a committed able leadership in this regard.

Transformation programme management: Achieving synergy and coordination of results will require vigorous programme management. A high-performance team
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should be established, with the necessary power and credibility, to ensure that the planning, organising, scheduling, monitoring and coordination of the transformation programme and all related projects are done according to the best project management principles, practices and standards.

■ **Communication and change management assistance:** Communication and change management assistance should be provided owing to the critical importance and specialised nature of internal and external communication and change management actions during transformation. Experience teaches that communication and change management are crucial to success and when properly executed will make a major difference, especially during the initial phases of change. The changed nature of politics and internal and external environmental influences may also require new communication and networking channels and change management techniques. Herein lies one of the DRC’s key challenges, because of the vast expanse of the country and difficult communication lines.

■ **Transformation management information systems:** The management of the transformation process will require extensive management information support, to provide appropriate, timely and accurate management information. A mass of new knowledge, concepts and data will be generated during the process that will have to be captured and archived. This system will evolve to become the eventual management information system of the transformed defence force.

Taking the above structured and focused approach into consideration, one is perturbed by the fact that the DRC’s transition process is still perceived to be somewhat slow and incomplete. Severe frustrations and unresolved key issues stand in the way of progress causing deep-routed misalignment on the plan to move forward. Unanswered questions relating to disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of the respective armed groups are also threatening the process. The ‘brassage’ of 12 Congolese Brigades with the help of Belgium, South Africa and the Netherlands raises the question: What about the rest of the force, and is there a strategy and structure for the transformation process as a whole? A serious danger lies in designing and structuring a defence force before strategising and determining the true policy, mission, roles and tasks for the future.

Successful transformation will provide adequate, appropriate, affordable and accountable defence for a country. ‘Adequate’ implies that the strategic gaps which can be exploited by potential adversaries will have been reduced to manageable risks; ‘appropriate’ implies defence which is commensurate with the nature of the perceived strategic environment and the norms, nature and composition of the particular society; ‘affordable’ implies adherence to the given budget; and ‘accountable’ implies transparent and under civil control.
Mobilising commitment and support for the transformation process

Transformation can be successful only if the defence force obtains optimal support and commitment from external and internal stakeholders and implements best management practices and systems.

Involvement of external stakeholders

In order to obtain public involvement and as an expression of civil oversight and transparency, wide consultation on defence issues should take place with the public, community leaders, various non-governmental organisations and parliament. This approach impacts on defence planning and implementation in many ways. Defence policy should be discussed widely and the White Paper on Defence must be approved by parliament. A widely discussed Defence Review will translate the principles of the White Paper into the structures, strategies and plans including force design and force structures. The Defence Review must be approved by parliament before transformation implementation can really start. Those strategic and policy matters influenced by politics can therefore not be implemented by the defence force until political approval has been obtained. Issues such as civil control, transparency, the composition and representivity of the defence force, affirmative action and equal opportunities, as well as the size and shape, posture, and expenditure on defence, are vital for the transformation process and are ultimately decided by the political decision-makers. The advantage of this is that transformation can be launched and conducted in a legitimate and transparent manner, and that the process is proactively linked to wider public service renewal initiatives.

Involvement of internal stakeholders

Transformation will only be successful once it has been implemented on a sustainable basis throughout the defence force. The understanding, support and personal commitment of members at all levels are important. These are challenges and responsibilities that all members in the defence force should share. The role of commanders and supervisors at all levels will be crucial. They will have to manage the uncertainty, fear and resistance often associated with change. Adequate and timely communication will be a crucial controlling and supporting mechanism in the planning and implementation of the complex and lengthy transformation process, and in the management of change.

It is important that new, relevant and confirmed information be communicated to commanders and supervisors, and also by them, to all members of the defence force as soon as it becomes available. Similarly, meaningful and rapid feedback to higher levels about the reaction to transformation at ground level is also essential. Transformation is a process which must involve all members of the organisation being transformed.
Comprehensive briefings and participative sessions should be planned which will involve the command cadre down to unit level and, ultimately, all members. This interaction will be a crucial part of the transformation process. A particular challenge, but one worth the effort, will be to develop a comprehensive, practical and innovative communication system and to utilise media that will effectively reach the vast expanse of the DRC and its people.

Forging the vision

The first and most critical element of transformation is leadership at the top. Top leadership should be directly and actively involved in establishing an environment that encourages change, innovation, risk taking, pride in work and continuous improvement. Alignment of the top team in understanding transformation and the need for change, as well as giving clear guidance, will constitute the most important factor in transforming the National Defence Force of the DRC.

Transformation will be extensive and will have a major impact on the organisation. Hence there will undoubtedly be bad news for some; structures will be changed and old mindsets questioned. Layers of bureaucracy should be reduced, reducing still further the size of the force. Decision-making will impact on financial and budgetary devolution. Activities such as command, management, leadership, training and support will probably change to a joint service basis and approach, because one expects almost all future activities and operations to be conducted jointly. Greater rationalisation will mean closure of non-viable assets and establishments. Some activities will be civilianised and others outsourced. There will inevitably be job losses and redundancies. Sound leadership and management will have to provide for these organisational dynamics. The challenge will be to proceed with investments necessary to maintain the required operational capability within an affordable defence budget.

It will thus be imperative for the top leadership to ‘waken up and unfreeze’ the organisation to the need for change. This is the most emotionally wrenching and challenging aspect of transformation. The protagonists have to shake up the status quo enough to release the emotional energy for the process: create a sense of urgency; articulate the necessity for change; deal effectively with resistance. It is imperative that leadership develops a compelling vision and mission of the future national defence force as a desired end-result of the transformation process. This should be done through organisation-wide participation. The process could start with the top team developing the desired characteristics of the future force and the design principles to be used in the planning process.

The vision and mission will serve as guiding principles during the transformation process. When people truly share a vision, they are connected, bound together by
a common aspiration – it must become personal. Personal commitments derive their power from an individual’s deep caring for the shared vision. A shared vision creates a sense of commonality that permeates the organisation and gives coherence to diverse activities. So, what is the vision that the soldiers of the DRC share and how are their leaders creating common caring about the future?

Transformation is not a single event, and change is a cyclical process. The process an organisation must repeatedly engage in to navigate transformation successfully is illustrated in Figure 3.12

Success of transformation will depend strongly on the DRC’s leaders’ ability to manage the above cycle and organisational change effectively and efficiently through all its phases. Only the willingness and positive attitudes of the people will see it through. They are the key assets for leverage, together with the DRC’s transformational leaders that will make this drastic perceptual shift possible – the lever here is the almost universal sense of Congolese identity.
This can only be achieved through the art of leadership and communication. What are we telling our soldiers, what do they believe in, and how involved are they in the process?

**Transformation methodology and management**

The South African Department of Defence transformation process as described serves as a case study for the DRC. In April 1994 South Africa completed the first phase of the process of moving to a truly democratic society. This radical turn-around of political control and social architecture impacted on all systems, including those of defence and national security, in a most dramatic way.

The first wave of transformation commenced in January to April 1994, prior to the national elections, when the forces commenced with integration and the planning activities started under a Joint Military Coordinating Committee. The next wave of transformation commenced in all seriousness when the new Council on Defence made the decision to transform in 1995. Subsequently the Minister of Defence took charge and a dedicated transformation management team was appointed as a staff planning body. At the same a management consultancy firm was appointed as the official consultants to support the Defence transformation effort. A British military advisory training team was also mobilised to support the integration process and bridging training and to assist and adjudicate in personnel ranking and staffing procedures.

It was decided that the leadership of the Department of Defence would assume responsibility for transformation with the aid of the consultants.

- The prime driving and decision-making authority within the Department of Defence was the Minister of Defence, as advised by the Council on Defence (CoD) (Minister, Deputy Minister, Chief of the National Defence Force, Secretary for Defence and the Chairman of Armscor).

- A new Defence Staff Council co-chaired by the Secretary for Defence and the Chief of the SANDF was formed that assumed primary responsibility for transformation management and process re-engineering.

- All projects were under the leadership of Department of Defence personnel who were responsible and accountable for results. Consultants worked as part of the integrated teams, but only to provide assistance.

A common methodology embracing a strategic planning process of which process re-engineering contributed a major element was adopted (as opposed to, for example, functional restructuring, rightsizing or functional rationalisation). It was decided to use a clean sheet approach and that restructuring would follow policy and process redesign.
In order for transformation to succeed an enormous amount of hard work and determination was required from the Ministers, the Secretary for Defence and Chief of the SANDF, and the entire management and staff of the department. Newly integrated members worked diligently side by side, day and night, in joint teams to achieve set milestones. The involvement of the Joint Standing Committee for Parliament on Defence (JSCPD) was vital in this process. The process was planned and executed from inception to end as a project and managed as such.

The overall project was defined in three phases over a three-year period:

- **1996/97**: A process was initiated to unfreeze the Department of Defence for change, to set-up the guiding coalition and to create a frame of reference.

- **1997/98**: The transformation management team and a first wave of project teams commenced with the planning of the new design and implementation and supporting activities.

- **1998/99**: Implementation of the new force design and structure commenced.

During the latter part of 1996 and early 1997 the core defence processes as described previously were developed for the Department of Defence (refer to Figure 2).

A new integrated Department of Defence consisting of the Defence Secretariat and Defence Headquarters was created in April 1997, whilst macro-level decisions were implemented and planning and implementations started moving to the lower levels of the newly created National Defence Force.

The above process approach led to a design workshop that was held towards the end of 1997 where all newly appointed Department of Defence top-level incumbents and roleplayers were tasked to develop their respective divisions in more detail.

The objectives of the design workshop were as follows:

- Develop system descriptions for the Department of Defence’s overall and major sub-systems and ensure that the overall design is sustainable under the annual budget.

- Develop a migration plan that specifies which projects and sub-projects are required to move from the current reality to the identified design.

- Develop project directives for identified projects in the migration plan.

The key results from the design workshop were:
Key principles for designing new systems and structures were determined.

High-level structure types were conceptually developed.

High-level costing and migration plans were developed as a result of the structuring types.

**Summary of implementation**

March 1998 to April 1999 was dedicated to ensuring proper implementation of the migration plan by:

- Creating and integrated programme management structure and organisation. This included integrating the transformation programme with the newly created strategic direction process;

- Conducting detailed planning prior to implementation;

- Focusing team efforts on implementation;

- Institutionalising a new culture and appropriate leadership, command and management concept;

- Establishing a value-based system;

- Establishing a new strategic direction process;

- Focusing on core business and outsourcing non-core business;

- Establishing a command and management information system;

- Institutionalising performance management;

- Ensuring reliable defence reserves;

- Overall programme evaluation and review.

Transformation management was structured in three distinct activity groups:

- Overall leadership by the Minister and the Council on Defence;

- Programme management by the new Defence Staff Council under the executive
leadership of the Chief of the SANDF and Secretary for Defence. The Transformation Management Team assisted this group;

- Project teams executing the designing, supporting and implementation activities. Project teams were created by the Defence Staff Council and existed until completion of a specific project.

An extensive Transformation Master Plan depicting high-level outputs, activities, training and time frames was devised. This plan contained the following primary deliverables:

- Transformation programme management, including configuration control, communication and change management;

- Design activities such as the institutionalisation of appropriate leadership, command and management practices, forging a new DoD culture, development of a new strategic management process and a massive re-engineering effort, which were to lead to the new structures;

- Supporting activities such as personnel rationalisation, supporting the current strategic management process and instituting the head of department and accounting officer function;

- Implementation activities – which entailed putting the above plans into practice.

In transforming the Department of Defence, it was vital that the capacity to sustain day-to-day operations was not undermined. This was achieved by having the Defence Staff Council meet in two distinct modes; a transformation mode addressing transformational issues and a plenary mode to address day-to-day strategic management of the SANDF.

A phased approach was followed until final integration of the ongoing and new defence business was achieved by 1 April 1999. It was true and in line with the South African approach followed, that radical intervention rather than short-term incremental operational adjustments achieved the desired result. Radical change should be aspired to, but ongoing synchronisation of the departmental design and budget and daily operations must be kept in a fine balance.

**Conclusion**

Transformation is very similar to the planning and execution of military operation:
The force must be assembled, grouped and prepared and imbued with the will to succeed.

Proper command and control and leadership must be mobilised and arrangements made for the management of the ‘battle space’.

Intelligence must be gathered so that one knows what one is in for and the ‘battlefield’ must be prepared.

The support base must be arranged and deployed.

The troops must be thoroughly briefed so that they know exactly what is expected from them.

The ‘start line’ and ‘forming up’ place must be secured so that one can set out on a correct and sound footing.

The ‘fight’ must embrace the principles of concentration of effort; economical use of force; speed and momentum – never let up.

The ‘fight’ must develop from one firm base to the next.

When ‘obstacles’ are encountered, these must be assessed, outmanoeuvred, outflanked or assaulted head on.

Use spoiling attacks, feints and ruses all along, so as to maintain the initiative and freedom of action.

Don’t fight onto the objective, fight through the objective and consolidate on the other side.

Bring your support base along as soon as possible after consolidation.

Debrief your forces, inspire them and thank them for a job well done.

Deploy all possible sensory means to ensure full situational awareness.

Prepare for the next battle as part of a continuous campaign.

Sit back, rest a while and reflect on the vast amount of knowledge that was generated and new insight acquired.

Think back of the tremendous achievement as a tribute to all who will be able to say they made it happen.
Document the lessons learnt.

A word of warning: weaned on a mechanistic view of corporations and military forces, most modern leaders are not fully prepared for the magnitude of the transformational challenges facing them. Few of them have studied such things as the hard issues of process design, shareholder value theory, and the information technology theory, and fewer still are comfortable – let alone intimate – with the latest concepts of cultural change, teambuilding, leadership development, and individual and team reward. Only a handful have tried to mix all of these together to meet the challenge of large-scale transformation. The leaders transforming the SANDF acutely experienced all these issues and so will those creating a new national Defence Force for the DRC.

Despite the uncertainty and apprehension with which transformation and change is often regarded, it must be realised that progress and improvement can only be brought about by change. Any defence force has a particular and unique opportunity to design and create the optimum national defence force for its own country which will reflect its new and evolving national policy on defence, and therefore the needs of the nation. Transformation is not a problem; it is an opportunity and solution for adapting a military force to its changed and changing environment. Although there will be many fundamental changes, there will also be a place for those aspects of any defence force which will have withstood the test of time.

Transformation poses an exciting challenge and true opportunity to move beyond survival in a new age. Transformation poses the opportunity to take a radical and clean sheet approach, to dramatically enhance defence capability, to learn, to care and to leave a legacy.

This is the challenge to the DRC; this is a once in a lifetime opportunity to create a new tomorrow – a proud Forces Armées de la République Démocratique du Congo. It must, however, be noted that each country has unique circumstances which must also be put into perspective in regard to transformation. These include past experiences, availability of resources, nature of integration, willingness to change, and the terrain of operation. The South African experience is presented in this essay in the hope that it will provide perspective and insight for the forthcoming defence transformation in the DRC.

Acknowledgement

The thoughts reflected in this essay emerged through countless enthralling discussions and work done with the transformation teams of the South African Department of Defence, the South African Army and the consultancy firm Deloitte and Touche since the integration of the respective armed forces that commenced in 1994. Acknowledgement is given to people such as Major-General (Retired) Len Le Roux, Brigadier-General Solly Mollo, Colonel Craig Harisson, Professor Roger Kibasomba, and the late Dr Rocky Williams, with
whom I consulted in Africa on transformation. Special acknowledgement is given to the team of the ISS whom I accompanied to the DRC in May 2004 to discuss transformation with our colleagues from the DRC. Our team was effectively led and guided by Lieutenant-General L M Fischer, Commander of the Botswana Defence Force. A special word of appreciation to President Olivier Kamitatu Etsu of the DRC National Assembly, who gave us clear insight into the challenges faced by the DRC and a clear vision of what the Congolese wish to achieve. Some of the thoughts in this paper were gained from Dan Cohen, who co-authored *The heart of change* with John Kotter from the Harvard Business School in Boston.

**Notes**


2 See also the South African White Paper on Defence, 1996, chapter 1, The challenge of transformation.

3 Ibid.

4 See also Le Roux, op cit, p 8.


7 See also South African Defence Review 1998, chapter 9, pp 49-51.


10 See also South African Defence Review 1998, chapter 9, pp 54 and 55.

11 R Williams, Defence in a democracy: The South African Defence Review and the redefinition of the parameters of the national defence debate, in Williams et al, op cit, p 221.

12 Noel M Tichy and Stratford Sherman, *Control your own destiny or someone else will*, HarperBusiness, 1994, p 305.
Civil–military relations in Africa: Navigating uncharted waters

Naison Ngoma*

“Perception is a second reality!”

This essay discusses the military as a part of wider society and the interactions between the two. It argues that civil–military relations are complex and not always harmonious. In its focus on Africa, the essay describes some differences in the development of African militaries and civil–military relations on the continent as compared with the West, but argues that the differences are merely a matter of degree. As civil–military relations on the continent have been strongly influenced by its colonial history, which caused fear and even dislike of the colonial military, it still impacts on these relations in the post-colonial era. After examining the relationship between the armed forces, democracy and politics in the politically turbulent African environment, it is concluded that a simplistic definition of civil–military relations is difficult to arrive at. The essay identifies the key principles of democratic civil–military relations and, although admitting that these principles are not always easy to adhere to, argues that as Africa develops civil–military relations, African militaries have moved and will move closer to observing these principles. To enhance this process it is essential for African militaries to include civic education programmes at all levels of education and training in order to gain a better understanding of and commitment to these principles.

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Introduction and definition of civil–military relations

Relations between the military and civil society have since time immemorial been both problematic and complex – beginning with a fused relationship, that is, one without distinction between soldiers and the rest of society. The contemporary era has, however, seen the military evolving into a professional and full-time establishment, distinct from civil society, which should adhere to the principles of democracy and be subservient to elected civil authority. Adedeji Ebo has defined civil–military relations (CMR) as follows:

[T]he web of relations between the military and the society within which it operates, and of which it is necessarily a part. Such relations encompass all aspects of the role of the military (as a professional, political, social and economic institution) in the entire gambit of national life. Civil–military relations involve issues of the attitude of the military towards the civilian society, the civilian society’s perception of, and attitudes to the military, and the role of the armed forces in relation to the state.2

Evidently CMR is of immense importance in the discourse of state development, especially in Africa, where the challenges of development are most acute. Not only is the state in Africa a nascent ‘project’, but also one that has become increasingly fragile in the face of the unpredictable global economic and political environment which is characterised by globalisation and the surge for liberal economic and political systems identified by a varying democratic ethos. Such a complex environment suggests that the nature and character of CMR would be equally complex.

This essay seeks to identify and discuss some of the relationships between the military and civil society on the African continent. It provides a general view of the African military and examines the nexus between the military, democracy and politics, as well the trends in CMR in Africa.

The African military: A general view

The character and magnitude of reality or myth of CMR in the African context require an investigation of two sets of issues: matters arising out of ‘civil control’ and the general linkage, or lack thereof, between the military and civil society.

This is best illustrated by Walter Millis, who stipulates that civil control evolved from “the eighteenth century fear and loathing of a standing Army [regarded] as a menace to the liberties of people”.3 Since the military normally deals with issues of security that
are generally shrouded in secrecy, comprehension of the military would, in turn, be the subject of a mixture of myths and realities. The extent to which Millis's statement can be regarded as descriptive of the African military is debatable. However, providing a comprehensive view of the myths and realities of CMR includes such factors as discipline, transparency, the military in politics, and a general outlook, with a focus on how people on the continent view the military. Pertinent to this discourse is the uniqueness of the African military and its neutrality in the political landscape.

Critical to this discourse is whether there are any substantive differences between African and Western militaries. The dominance of the latter in the CMR debate is based on a general acknowledgement that the West has had a longer history of democratic CMR. Despite this, it remains valid to question whether there is any substantive difference in character between an African and a Western military. Such a difference would imply the possibility of a fundamental departure in the nature of CMR. In this regard it may be argued that since the existence of differences in sociopolitical and economic histories of different geographical regions is not in dispute, there would be differences in the character of the militaries and the manner in which such militaries relate to the rest of society.⁴ Continuing from an earlier point, articulated by Singh, that in the West there was hardly any difference between the civil and the military, it can be surmised that the nature and level of its sociopolitical and economic history facilitated or determined that development. The same applies to the African scenario.

The traumatic sociopolitical history of the continent, together with the generally unstable economic environment, has affected all the actors in the African CMR model. Whether this necessarily places it apart from the Western model is debatable and possibly a matter of degree. Ultimately there is nothing inherently Western that sets it apart from African CMR. What is more accurate is that the differences are merely a matter of degree and therefore common to all. Differences in sociopolitical and economic development and the reality that this development is in a constant state of flux suggest that it is, after all, movement in the development that is the principal factor and not the nature and character of people from a particular region. As socio-economic and political conditions on the continent improve and become similar or identical to that of some countries in the West, so would their CMR become similar.

The nature and character of CMR across geographical space is a function of the material conditions prevailing on the continent (or in the country), and in the final analysis the African military is like all others in the world.⁵ And yet, the African military has often been referred to as a ‘people’s army’ to signify that it is a defence force whose mission is to protect the people.⁶ The extent to which this is factual or mythical is open to debate. The implication to CMR in this sense is that a close relationship intertwines the African military with the rest of society. The African military evolves from traditional farmers, hunters and other native functionaries. The pre-colonial African military was generally
not a standing one, but was only mobilised in times of need.\textsuperscript{7} Notably, this type of
military was interwoven with the society from which it evolved. In the words of General
Sir John Hackett:

\begin{quote}
What a society gets in its armed forces is exactly what it asks for, no more no
less. What it asks for tends to be a reflection of what it is. When a country
looks at its fighting forces, it is looking in a mirror; the mirror is a true one
and the face that it sees will be its own.\textsuperscript{8}
\end{quote}

Naming some contemporary militaries as the ‘people’s army’ is a desire to reflect the
closeness of the defence forces to their people, as opposed to mere instruments of
regime security. The aim is evidently to remove the notion of a military that is sensitive
only to the interests of a selected few. Africa’s colonial past (in which the colonial
military ‘played an apolitical role’ and ‘suppressed indigenous uprisings’) also presents
enormous challenges.\textsuperscript{9} For instance, its general failure to participate in liberation
struggles entrenched the military as ‘supporters of colonial masters’\textsuperscript{10} which in the
contemporary era may be regarded as ‘a tool of oppression’.\textsuperscript{11} The past shows a military
that is not just feared but also loathed, and current reality suggests a continuation of
these perceptions.

Comments by a Zimbabwean Roman Catholic priest on the deployment of military
officers in strategic positions outside the military signified an alliance between the regime
and the military to protect the former.\textsuperscript{12} In the cleric’s view the military is ‘blindly loyal’
to the political leadership and could therefore not be trusted to act in the interest of the
people. It is not surprising that the manner in which the military is perceived to have
acted during the 2005 parliamentary elections was regarded as evidence of President
Robert Mugabe’s corrupt relationship with the military. Huge salary perks of “up to
1,400 per cent to the troops” and “top officers [given] big commercial farms confiscated
from white farmers by the government”\textsuperscript{13} have been cited as evidence of this corrupt
relationship. The argument is that trust has been vested in the military “because [it]
follow[s] orders … will do what is required … [and that although] \textit{theoretically neutral}
[is] loyal to Mugabe and ZANU PF”.\textsuperscript{14} Closely related to the ‘corrupt’ relationship of
the military and political leadership is the presumed dysfunctional aspect of the latter.
Lieutenant-General Benjamin Mibenge (a former commander of the Zambian Army)
has observed that soldiers tend to be regarded as “an illiterate lot who could only write
their names”.\textsuperscript{15} The view of soldiers – especially during the colonial era – was that
they were “brutal and thrived on drugs making them indifferent to the treatment of
civilians”.\textsuperscript{16} A more bone-chilling perception of the military is the reference to it as the
“preserve of nincompoops”!\textsuperscript{17}

That drugs are associated with unpredictable behaviour should discount its use by
an institution that depends on discipline for the successful fulfilment of its missions.
It should also be pointed out that General Mibenge considers these negative views of the military as mythical. Dan Henk complements this view when he argues that the Botswana Defence Force (BDF) has “develop[ed] into a capable, well-educated and self-disciplined force that [is] attracting some of the nation’s most talented young people”. Although the BDF is evidently one of the better militaries on the continent in this respect, the generally negative views expressed cannot be accepted as symptomatic of the majority of the continent’s current militaries. There is a lack of data to support this conclusion and it would ignore the role that the military has played in the development of African society in more ways than mere application of brawn. Indeed, the critical role of the military is in the pursuance of a peaceful, stable and developed African Union that is progressively moving towards meeting the human security challenges confronting the continent. One of these challenges is the notion of a ‘neutral’ military.

The assumption of a ‘theoretically neutral’ military alluded to above is a matter that requires closer study. It is safe to stipulate that the claim of neutrality is only correct if, like the civil service, it relates to the essential requirement of serving whatever government comes to power through democratic means. The view that the military does not serve the interests of any particular ‘side’ (and yet is expected to be accountable to the side that has political control) is somewhat difficult to perceive and therefore very likely to be regarded as mythical. Indeed, dedication to a country’s sovereignty and the protection of its citizens have always been the fundamental role of the military, irrespective of its geographical location. What remains debatable is to whom the military is actually responsible and accountable.

The norm is that the head of state of a country is the commander-in-chief of the military. However, the frequency of extrajudicial actions by the military on the continent point to many armed forces having their own political agendas. The continent’s history has shown that many of its militaries’ allegiance to civilian authority is suspect. There is a view that the military is the ‘guardian of the state’, the ‘custodian of the constitution’ and that it ‘stands guard over parliament’. However, even the soldiers themselves seem to disagree on what their relationship with the state should be.

Although there may be some truth in some of these assertions (eg regarding the military’s responsibility towards the security of the state and its people) the relationship of the military with the constitution remains rather confused and the one regarding parliament misplaced. The constitution is the Grundnorm (ie, basic norm) that provides the guide to state structures and its people. Ebo put it as follows:

The armed and security forces are at the service of the Nation. Their mission shall be to guarantee, if necessary, by force of arms, defence of the Nation and its territorial integrity and ensure the protection of citizens and property.
This would suggest that the military acts in the national interest and not merely in its cooperative self-interest, as the previous claim appears to suggest. By definition, the military would be expected to place the interest of the people at the centre – as stated by Ebo. Even when the military has taken over the reins of political power in a military coup, this has generally happened in their belief that they were acting in the public interest. Although this notion at times had legitimate (if not legal) grounds, in a number of instances these grounds have been transformed to serve personal interests and therefore represent a reversal of the initial motivation.24 Ironically, the military has not only been epitomised as that which is ‘pure’ in the state, but also glorified by the public during military parades and other ‘open-day’ events. Ocran explains this idolisation of the military in Africa:

There is something in military uniform which reflects all that is best in a state, national pride, humility, patriotism, fair play and a feeling for the underdog.25

Characterising the military in the derogatory manner of some myths about the defence forces of Africa would not be fair to institutions that have by and large maintained the cohesiveness (with a few exceptions) of the continent. Stating the draft African code position, Ebo argues that the military ought to be “at the disposal of the constitutionally established political authority”.26 In this regard he describes a democratic power relation that is consistent with accountability of the military to civil authorities.

The nature of the military in Africa remains engrossed in both myth and reality. Indeed, characterising the military on the continent as ‘feared’ and ‘loathed’ explains only a part of the history of the continent and its military. During the colonial era the military was expected to project the dominance of the colonial powers. This entailed an acrimonious relationship with the indigenous populations from which the military was derived. Consequently the military was both feared and loathed. To a significant extent, some post-colonial governments on the continent perpetuated this relationship.

It is nevertheless not an exaggeration to argue, as has been done above, that militaries with a close affinity with society (eg those that experienced a rigorous liberation struggle) had served the interests of the people. It is this relatively close affinity of the military to the politics of a country that makes the participation of the military in politics so complex. Examining the relationship between the military, democracy and politics helps to understand CMR on the African continent.

The military, democracy and politics

The military, democracy and politics are intertwined to the extent that it is virtually impossible to discuss one without touching on the others. This is particularly true
for Africa, where the military (which, in the developed world, is generally a ‘silent’ partner) has a fairly visible presence in governance. Brigadier Osaigbovo Ogbemudia acknowledges that the military is “now an important factor to reckon with in the politics of developing countries”.27

Politics is a good place to begin examining this relationship. One definition of politics is that it is “the totality of interrelationships in a particular area of life involving power, authority, or influence, and capable of manipulation”.28 Since the military epitomises power and authority and would certainly be regarded as having relative influence in the governance of a state, it can be regarded as an important subset of politics. Both politics and the military operate within the wider environment in which governments operate.

A democratic environment – one premised on the principle of majority decision-making – is generally assumed within the debate on CMR. However, the dilemma is that the term ‘democracy’ is not as benign as is generally portrayed. An unknown sceptic has described democracy as just as bad as anarchy but not as loud – demonstrating the relative nature of the concept.

But the interrelationship between politics, the military and democracy is not merely academic.

The nature of the state – that is, the democratic environment in which it operates – determines the intricate relationship between the military and politics. This unavoidably relates to the matter of democratic practices. Indeed, the principles of democratic CMR are couched in references to accountability, adherence to rule of law, transparency, respect of human rights, political control, consultation with civil society, professionalism, and collaborative peace and security. Crucial areas of concern include the extent to which the military and political interests articulated by political elites acquire common ground. Indeed, it has been argued that “in most countries, the military is part of the elite structure and its corporate interest are interwoven with the very raison d’être of military rule”.29 However, the validity of this claim in Africa is placed in some doubt by the prevalence of military coups. Kourvetaris concedes to this when he notes that military intervention in politics in the ‘Third World’ political systems is so prevalent that it becomes “difficult to distinguish between civilians and military regimes”.30

A quick survey of the history of coup d’états in Africa tends to show a preponderance of militaries working in a generally self-interested manner, ostensibly in the national or public interest. While critical input may have been provided by civilian-political elites in some of these cases, the general character of military regimes tends to suggest dominance by the military.
The extent to which the military relates to politics is unclear, however. Ocran states that not only is politics “not within their [the military’s] province”, but that participating in politics necessarily makes them partial. The argument is that doing so would nudge them to “take sides in inter-party rivalries [and consequently] be unable to back the ruling government to maintain or restore peace and order should they be so required”. The call would therefore be for an ‘apolitical’ military which would avoid what Rupiya sees as a struggle between “partisanship and professionalism”. However, the flaw with this argument is that it fails to respond to the earlier reflection that militaries like those in Zambia during the country’s Second Republic and in Tanzania operated reasonably civilly in a political environment.

The very definition of politics assumes the participation of the military in matters of government and thereby reduces the validity of Ocran’s claim that politics is alien to the military. In the same vane, the argument of impartiality being a function of participation by the military in politics requires more research and analysis. It may also be argued that because of the cordiality and progressive relationships that exist between the military and civil authority in one-party systems in Africa, the impartiality thesis does not hold firm. It is nevertheless valid to view active political involvement by the military in a multiparty scenario as politically problematic and divisive. It would probably be more realistic to call for a non-partisan military than for an apolitical one.

In the final analysis, democratic tenets require that civil supremacy prevails, as “[t]he civilian-political elites exercise control of the military through rules which specify the functions of the military and the conditions governing the exercise of military power”. A way of inculcating the respect for civil supremacy is derived through civic education.

Faced with the monumental task of searching for peace and development, the militaries in Africa have been engaged in a variety of education and training activities. However, it has been argued that military education and training has itself been associated with some blurring of CMR issues.

Firstly it has been postulated that there is a direct relationship between military education and training and military intervention in the ‘new nations’. It is argued that as a result of ‘external reference’, or emulation theories, the trainees (or in the case of the officer corps, the officer cadets) subsume the traditions and values of the host country. In the event that the country providing the training has a ‘rich’ history of military coups, there would be a great likelihood that undemocratic traits would be assimilated and consequently emulated by students.

Logical as this may appear, Ocran identifies a major flaw in this hypothesis. For instance, Sandhurst Military Academy in the United Kingdom, where significant numbers of officer cadets from the continent have been trained, prides itself on “well-engrained
traditions and values of the British Army, which include abstention from partisan politics and adherence to the doctrines of non-interference in politics.” Yet countries such as Ghana and Nigeria, which have benefited from this institution, have had long histories of military interventions in their governments. This indeed is a paradox. This is especially the case since contagion theories point towards a significant level of prevalence of military coups premised on geographical proximity. This may entail a close relationship of military personnel from neighbouring countries (in conformity with contagion theories) at a variety of training institutions.

The second postulation, which projects a clearer movement from a mythical to a realistic dimension, is that “military career[s] and training almost everywhere produce the same basic qualities of honesty, loyalty, [and] public service”. Ocran may not be projecting the puritanical characteristics of the military discussed earlier, but rather describes an objective reality. This is in view of the general linkage between instruments of nationhood such as national flags and defence and security services.

Ultimately the aim should be to develop, improve and implement effective civic education programmes at all levels of education and training in all military forces of Africa. These programmes should concentrate on international humanitarian law, adherence to constitutional provisions, the rule of law, military ethics, military discipline, non-partisanship, and the general understanding of the role and behaviour of the military in a democratic society. Such programmes are underdeveloped on the continent and need much more prominence and support.

Towards democratic civil–military relations

Politicians, diplomats and military establishments have [their] own identities and interests that are not always shared by those for whom they supposedly speak.

Civil–military relations have been in existence since society created the military to look after its security needs. These relations have long been an issue of discussion evolving from the tripartite relationship of the military, the state and civil society. Alluding to the complex nature of CMR, but also regarding these relations as harmonious, Bilveer Singh defines CMR as “encompass[ing] the whole array of interactions and relationships between the Armed Forces and different segments of society in which they co-exist and operate”. How such a complex relationship can be devoid of conflict or tension is unclear, and a general appraisal of CMR shows inherent factors that more or less assure a turbulent existence. For instance, perspectives on CMR are not only time bound, but are also subjected to several other variables. Among these are the influence of a democratic ethos on the nature of CMR and the resolution of the allegiance question, which seeks
to interrogate in whose interest the military operates and to whom is it ultimately accountable. Other factors include the influence of education and training and the role of the military in politics. It may also be asked whether in fact geographical disposition has a significant effect on CMR. Focusing on democratic CMR (as the concept of democracy itself has done over time) surely pose challenges of its own.

The association of CMR with democracy seeks to signify the general tendency towards the continent’s intent to adapt democratic ethos. This means that the complexities associated with the concept and practice of democracy would inevitably apply to CMR as much as it does to the entire debate of democracy, in which it has been argued that democracy is transitional and therefore may not mean the same thing to every society. Bilveer Singh makes the point: “As no two democracies, even in the West, are alike and can exist on a wide spectrum, depending on the existing social system and political culture, can the same be said of civil–military relations?”

Two critical points arise here. First, just as the concept of democracy is not an entity but is rather transitional in nature, so are democratic CMR. Second, it follows that democratic CMR are at varying stages of development in different countries. The key is to adhere to the basic requirements of democratic CMR. This entails, among other things, a military that adheres to the key principles of the democratic governance of the sector. These principles have been identified by authors such as Ball, Fayemi and Le Roux and are summarised by the author in Table 1.

These principles are not always easy to adhere to, as experience in Africa tends to show. The numerous extrajudicial activities by the African military signify the failure of a number of the militaries on the continent to adhere to the tenets of democratic governance. Kourvetaris makes the point that military institutions do not always adhere to these tenets. A view exists within the military that it responds to a ‘higher calling’ and that it ‘protects national interests’. In this respect the military regards itself as separate from the rest of the society. These principles are summarised in Table 1.

**Table 1: The key principles of democratic civil–military relations**

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<th>Principle</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. To be accountable to civil authorities, independent oversight agencies and civil society</td>
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<td>2. To adhere to the rule of law, that is, international law and domestic constitutions</td>
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<td>3. Transparent planning and budgeting processes</td>
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<td>4. Respect for human rights and a culture of civility</td>
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<td>5. To be subjected to political control over operations and expenditure</td>
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<td>6. Regular consultation with civil society</td>
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<td>7. Professionalism</td>
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<td>8. To support collaborative peace and security</td>
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as the ‘guardian’ of the nation. That being the case, it acts as a power unto itself and therefore effectively transforms what may outwardly be a civilian-led government into a military-led one. What complicates this scenario is that “[in most countries, the military is part of the elite structure and its corporate interest are interwoven with the very raison d’être of military rule].”\(^45\) To characterise a government as effectively a military government on account of seemingly visible participation by the military is therefore conceptually problematic.\(^46\)

In a number of early post-independence governments on the African continent which tended to be single-party regimes, the military and the ruling party structures were closely intertwined at the highest level of the ruling regime (politburos/central committees). This is in contrast with the post-1990 ones, which were caught up in the whirlwind of multiparty systems that characterises the current liberal political dispensation. Despite party structures operating at the lowest levels in military cantonments, the military was not reduced to a mere tool of the ruling regime.\(^47\) It may even be argued that because of the close proximity of the military to the ‘popular’ political system (government and the general population) CMR were generally good. It may also be asked if this would be dissimilar from the Western notions of CMR characterised by “blurring of boundaries between ‘civilian(s) and [the] ‘military”.\(^48\) The assumption that militaries in a multiparty environment have greater respect for the supremacy of civil authorities and are therefore loyal to the government of the day has yet to be proven. However, the prevalence of military coups on the continent are clear evidence that the militaries in both single-party and multiparty systems have yet to settle the question of allegiance of the military.

The allegiance question has remained an important concern, albeit considerably less so in the contemporary era, in which military governments are regarded as pariahs.\(^49\) The loyalty debate has evoked such issues as loyalty of the military to the government of the day, the constitution, or the people. Apparently no thought has been given to the possibility that loyalty is not a zero sum game. Indeed, in a democracy, the civil service is designed to outlive a government. And so must the military as it strives to play its critical role in ensuring the maintenance of peace and security in its geographical space – the nation-state, sub-region or region. The establishment of an apolitical military (which is apparently the object of democratic CMR) may be a function of training, the character of its participation in politics, and the nature of its relationships – among a host of factors which may or may not reflect reality.

Closely related to the allegiance issue is the matter of differences in CMR, not merely over time (as there would be) but, more significantly, between societies whose historical development has varied considerably. It may be asked whether states that have been through armed conflict necessarily experience CMRs differently from those who have had a more peaceful transition to independence. One could therefore argue that there is a flaw the presumption of a single African CMR model – as well as Western CMRs. With a
common colonial history – to the extent of having been colonised by the same coloniser, as has been large areas of West, East and Southern Africa – it would not be inconceivable to find similarities (and, indeed, differences) in CMRs. When Singh describes the sources of differences as the ‘function of the degree of effectiveness of civilian control’, he would be depicting the more mature democracies. What constitutes an African CMR model is open to debate, as is the linkage between political modernisation, development and the military.

The relationship between security and development may be fused or distinct, depending on the presence of conflict and the intensity of such conflict. In periods of conflict, security and development tend to be fused. This can be observed in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), where the United Nations Mission in the DRC (MONUC) and the AU and its sub-regional institutions have focused on both dimensions at the Great Lakes conferences, as well as in bilateral and multilateral arrangements.

The guns versus butter argument is a classic display of the nexus between security and development. Moreed Yusuf describes it as follows: “Critics contend that many of our development problems are a direct consequence of expenditure on defence; that the military takes away a large share of [the] country’s budget, leaving little for the enormous developmental needs.” Evidently the correlation between the reduction of military expenditure and development embodies the need for effective ways of addressing security challenges.

**Conclusion**

This essay has shown that there is a dialectic relationship between the military and the general society. Civil–military relations are therefore complex and not always harmonious. In its focus on the African continent, the essay has observed that although the militaries on the continent have developed somewhat differently from those in other parts of the world, particularly in the Western hemisphere, they nevertheless share some fundamental attributes. Although the essay argues that these differences are merely a matter of degree, it shows that the CMR on the continent have been strongly influenced by the colonial history of the continent. It is argued that fear and even dislike of the colonial military would appear to have continued in the post-colonial era.

The essay has also explored the relationship between the armed forces, democracy and politics. In the politically turbulent African environment, CMR have been equally challenging. Operating in an environment in which the state is in the process of developing, CMR have been difficult to define. Equally problematic has been the demands of democratic relations in which accountability, rule of law, transparency, professionalism, and consultation with civil society are some of the attributes of
democratic CMR. Indeed, the essay has attempted to address the juxtaposition of partisanship and professionalism in a turbulent political and economic environment.

Despite these complexities, it is possible to identify the key principles of democratic CMR. Although these principles are not always easy to adhere to, CMR in Africa have moved towards and will continue to move closer to observing these principles. Therefore it is essential for African militaries to include civic education programmes at all levels of education and training in order to gain a better understanding of and commitment to these principles.

**Notes**

1. An argument attributed to an unknown philosopher.
6. The term ‘people’s army’ has been commonly applied officially in countries closely associated with socialist-inclined states, for example Tanzania, Angola and Mozambique. The countries that may not have tagged their military as such have nevertheless tended to regard them in that manner.
7. See also B J Phiri, *Civil control of the Zambian military since independence and its implication for democracy*, in R Williams, G Cawthra & D Abrahams (eds), *Ours to know: Civil–military relations and defence transformation in Southern Africa*, Institute for Security Studies, Pretoria, 2003, pp 3–16. The account of the Ngoni system of a ‘people’s army’ was the general norm during the pre-colonial era save for the emergence of standing armies during the period of Dingiswayo, chief of the Mthetwa in the 18th century. See Wallace G Mills, *The Zulu Kingdom and Shaka*, <http://husky1.stmarys.ca>.
12. Interview in Pretoria, South Africa, on 8 June 2005 of a Zimbabwean Catholic priest. See also similar claims by C Sithole, *Military to run election*, 15 March 2005, <www.freeserbia.net/Editorial/Zimbabwe8.html> citing an introduction of a new Electoral Act designed to enable the military, police and prison officers to become workers in the Electoral Supervisory Commission (ESC); appointment of Brigadier Kennedy Zimondi, a retired army officer, to the post of chief election officer among other posts given to serving and retired military personnel.
14. Ibid. The italic emphasis is my own to highlight the significance of this assumption and its relationship to other legalistic/political concepts of national interest, individual interest and corporate self-interest, which will be a subject of later discussion.
15. Mibenge, op cit, p 32.
16. Ibid.
17 A perception that exists amongst some civilians according to Western Shilaho, a Kenyan member of a non-governmental organisation at a workshop on Peace Building at the Good Shepherd Retreat in Pretoria, South Africa, on 9 June 2005.


20 See also T M Ocran, Law in aid of development, Accra, 1978, p 61.


22 Ibid. See also Henk, op cit, p 94 who categorically states that the BDF has a clear norm that its soldiers should be “apolitical servants of the state and have no business involving themselves in partisan political squabbles”.

23 Ebo, op cit, p 16.

24 The Abacha regime, which has been accused of siphoning considerable amounts of state resources, is a case in point.

25 Ocran, op cit, p 64.

26 Ebo, op cit, p 8.

27 Quoted in Ocran, op cit, p 3.

28 Encarta World English Dictionary.


30 Ibid.

31 Ocran, op cit, p 58.

32 Rupiya, op cit, p 21.


34 Ocran, op cit, p 57.


36 Ibid, p 67. See also Henk, op cit, p 92.


38 Ocran, op cit, p 67.


41 Ibid, p 23.


43 Ibid.

44 Kourvetaris, op cit.


46 During the Second Republic in Zambia (a period referred to as a one-party participatory democracy), the military not only actively participated in the politics of the country, but also saw some senior officers entrusted with high government posts such of Minister of Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the country’s representative to the United Nations. The Tanzanian military was in a similar situation and continues to be fairly involved in the country’s politics.

47 See Lungu & Ngoma, op cit.

48 Singh, op cit, p 4.

49 See Constitutive Act of the African Union, Article 4(p) on the continental approach to military governments. Regional organisations have taken a similar position on these extrajudicial means of changing governments.

50 Singh, op cit, p 4.

How firm the handshake?
South Africa’s use of quiet diplomacy in Zimbabwe from 1999 to 2006
Victoria Graham

What we know about HIV and AIDS in the armed forces in Southern Africa
Martin Rupiya
How firm the handshake?
South Africa’s use of quiet diplomacy in Zimbabwe from 1999 to 2006

Victoria Graham*

The social, political and economic climate in Zimbabwe has worsened over the past six years and has now reached catastrophic proportions with vastly negative consequences for both Zimbabwean citizens and the country’s regional neighbours.

South African President Thabo Mbeki is very aware of the importance of stability in Zimbabwe. He has been quoted on numerous occasions as stating that South Africa and Zimbabwe are inextricably linked to each other, insisting that South Africa is “materially and directly interested in a Zimbabwe that is democratic, peaceful, stable and prosperous”. Yet Mbeki has consistently employed a policy of quiet diplomacy towards Zimbabwe and its president, Robert Mugabe. This soft approach has been the target of local and international speculation and criticism, especially in light

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of Mbeki’s stated commitment to the African Renaissance and good governance in Africa.

In addition, the concept ‘quiet diplomacy’, which has progressively become the *bon mot* of international relations, is a loose term, which is potentially problematic because as such it is bandied about in reference to many kinds of ‘soft’ diplomatic approaches. As such, this paper is an attempt to clarify the concept ‘quiet diplomacy’ through the use of a list of criteria assembled by this author\(^2\) and applied to South Africa’s use of quiet diplomacy in Zimbabwe from 1999 to 2006.

**Personal or direct diplomacy between heads of state or senior officials**

It is generally agreed that there is a better chance of success in attaining foreign policy objectives if there is direct communication between states conducted by heads of government or chosen representatives who meet face to face to talk, reason and discuss.\(^3\)

During the course of his presidency, Mbeki has met personally with Mugabe on many occasions and has always emerged from the meetings with a positive view about the situation and stating that there continues to be goodwill, progress and agreement between himself and Mugabe on several issues.\(^4\) At times, Mbeki’s enthusiastic efforts to side with Mugabe have resulted in feuds at home with African National Congress (ANC) allies.

For example, When a Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) fact-finding mission to Zimbabwe was deported by order of the Zimbabwean government in late October 2004, Foreign Minister Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma defended Zimbabwe’s right to expel foreigners and told the press that South Africa’s relations with Zimbabwe had not been affected by the incident.\(^5\)

In addition, at the ANC caucus meeting held soon after the deportation took place, South African Minister of Defence Mosiuoa Lekota expressed his irritation with COSATU’s actions, insisting that its lack of conferring with its alliance partners prior to the trip was an embarrassment to the ANC. It is instructive that the government chose to take issue with its own alliance partner, but did not utter a word of public criticism over Zimbabwe’s expulsion of the COSATU delegation, a decision that has significant implications in terms of how far Mbeki is willing to go to defend Mugabe’s actions.\(^6\)

That being said, Mbeki has been forced by sheer public pressure at home and by the international community to criticise some actions that Mugabe has taken. Mbeki
first spoke out about human rights violations when he expressed concern over the Zimbabwean government’s “actions, which deny the right of people to protest peacefully.”7 Mbeki even extended the hand of friendship to Zimbabwe’s opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai (leader of the Movement for Democratic Change, MDC) and emphasised the importance of dialogue between the Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) and the opposition.8

On more than one occasion Mugabe has promised Mbeki good behaviour. Following one meeting, Mugabe appeared on camera to declare that he would uphold the rule of law, that veterans who harassed farmers would be arrested and that all war veterans would soon be forced to leave the farms they had invaded in 2000. In return Mbeki promised to provide aid and mediate with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for funds. When Mbeki left, however, Mugabe publicly asserted that he had never said any of the things that he had in fact said the day before.9

Even after Mugabe’s blatant defaulting on his promises, Mbeki continued to back him in the international community. At the UN Millennium Summit in New York in September 2000, Mbeki tried to broker deals between the UN, UK and Zimbabwe, only to have them ripped apart when Mugabe once again refused to concede transparency and uphold the rule of law.10 In an interview with the BBC in 2001, Mbeki conceded that Mugabe had ignored his quiet diplomatic advice and that he [Mbeki] had tried persuading Mugabe to reform, but that he “didn’t listen to me”.11

Mbeki and South African government officials have met personally with Mugabe and Zimbabwean government officials on many different occasions. This is in keeping with a quiet diplomatic approach, but has not proved productive in any real sense.

The appearance of limited action or even inaction and media involvement

The principle behind quiet diplomacy is that it should be quiet. That is, it should take place away from critical public and media scrutiny. However, the unfortunate result of such tentative dialogues is that they are often seen as being ineffectual.

Mbeki’s policy towards Zimbabwe has been severely criticised and even referred to as a ‘non-policy’ since it is “non-verifiable, non-specific, has no clear or given objectives or deliverables”.12 Critics argue that quiet diplomacy is a flawed approach as it assumes that Mugabe, who has ignored basic principles of democracy and rule of law, will be influenced by a soft diplomatic approach to change. Even the governor of the South African Reserve Bank, Tito Mboweni, acknowledged that Zimbabwe would “never be moved by diplomacy”.13
Some suggest that South Africa’s diplomacy has amounted to “a complete and public excusing of Mugabe’s human rights atrocities” and has given the domestic public and the international community the general impression of acquiescence. Domestically, the independent media has consistently and strongly criticised the Mbeki government for its apparent inability to solve the Zimbabwean crisis.

Foreigners looked to South Africa to use its considerable power in the region to influence Mugabe’s government. Initially it did appear that the South African government had a method in mind to deal with the situation. It did not criticise Mugabe on the grounds that it was attempting “to make President Mugabe more amenable to negotiate behind the scenes”. This step is a legitimate method of quiet diplomacy as defined by the theory. As the months passed, however, the lack of an effective engagement strategy only weakened South Africa further and emphasised its apparent inability to promote adherence to the rule of law in the region.

The South African government has mostly excluded opinions from others on its foreign policy towards Zimbabwe. Businesses and labour unions’ views have not been taken into account. Former Archbishop Desmond Tutu’s criticisms have also been ignored. Until this stage Tutu was the only leading black figure to overtly criticise Mugabe, who he referred to as “almost a caricature of all the things the people think black African leaders do”.

In addition, two members of the tripartite alliance, COSATU and the South African Communist Party (SACP), have been ignored. Whereas the ANC has consistently shown support for ZANU-PF, COSATU has asserted that the increasingly violent situation in Zimbabwe is the direct result of a ‘careless’ government and an ‘arbitrary’ land reform programme. The SACP previously stated that it was “extremely concerned about the unacceptable levels of intimidation, violence, abuse of state resources and the enactment of repressive laws since the Zimbabwean parliamentary elections in 2000”.

Former President Nelson Mandela himself initially backed a quiet diplomatic approach to Zimbabwe. In an interview with BBC Radio, he argued that “[a]n approach through diplomatic channels without much publicity is more likely to bring about a positive result”. However, the day after Mbeki publicly embraced Mugabe, Mandela burst out denouncing liberation leaders who “despise the people who put them in power and want to stay in power forever. They want to die in power because they have committed crimes.” Although Mandela did admit to disagreeing with Mbeki on the Zimbabwe issue, he loyalty continued to back Mbeki’s policy of quiet diplomacy.

The South African government’s choice of policymakers could also easily have contributed to its failing quiet diplomacy. After all, many actors involved appear to have misread the situation in Zimbabwe or at least perceived it differently to the
international community. For example, Dlamini-Zuma responded to Zimbabwe’s very harsh media laws, which required all journalists to register, by stating that they posed no threat to media freedom. In similar vein South African Labour Minister Membathisi Mdlalana went to Zimbabwe and then came back giving Mugabe’s government a clean bill of health on its human rights conduct. The director-general in the Presidency, the Reverend Frank Chikane, accused those religious leaders who had demanded that the South African government take a tougher stance on Zimbabwe of “resorting to fabrications and clubbing together with political self-seekers in order to achieve their goals”.24

Similarly Dlamini-Zuma’s visits to Harare did not include meetings with the opposition. MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai noted in frustration that “the last time Dlamini-Zuma was in Harare she refused to accept that the murder, torture, political violence, rape and all the other brutalities associated with the Mugabe regime constituted a crisis that needed international attention”.25

Despite this initial choice by the South African government, Mbeki has since held discussions with the MDC on several occasions. In October 2004, he engaged in private talks with the MDC leadership four times to discuss ways to stop the growing rift between the opposition and ZANU-PF in light of Zimbabwe’s parliamentary elections in March 2005.26 However, despite these and other attempts to mediate between Mugabe and the MDC, talks have completely broken down, owing in part to the bickering within the MDC that resulted in it splitting in two in early 2006.27

When the heads of state and government met at the African Union (AU) summit in Durban in July 2002, they accepted the Durban Declaration on Democracy, Political, Economic and Corporate Governance. Once again African leaders declared their “commitment to the promotion of democracy and its values” in their countries through ensuring that the rule of law is upheld; good governance prevails; all citizens are regarded as equal; individuals have an inalienable right to participate freely in elections; and that individual liberties and collective freedoms are safeguarded.28 The following year Mbeki addressed the heads of state and government of the AU and remarked that African leaders, including himself, were taking “our destiny into our hands, creating for ourselves a continent of peace, democracy, prosperity and African and human solidarity”.29

These moral principles are commendable on paper and yet there has been little evidence of their application in practice. Not only has South Africa’s vague policy on Zimbabwe resulted in extensive international criticism, but South Africa is also in danger of losing its moral authority on the continent. Mbeki’s silence on the issues of law and good governance in Zimbabwe undermines the credibility of his loudly proclaimed vision of a new Africa and an African Renaissance.30
To be fair, when the crisis in Zimbabwe was beginning to spiral out of control in 2000, Mbeki was also attempting to translate his vision of an African Renaissance into what would eventually become the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) by the end of 2001. As a result, he was extremely sensitive to how South Africa was perceived by the rest of Africa. He needed the continent’s support for this new economic programme.31

Part of the NEPAD deal is that African countries pledge themselves to applying self-regulatory measures, which include isolating members who flagrantly disregard good governance and democracy.32 Hundreds of newspaper articles emphasised South Africa’s lack of credibility as a result of its quiet approach to Zimbabwe.33

As the champion of good African governance, the world waited for Mbeki’s response to Mugabe’s re-election in 2002.34 When it became clear that Mbeki accepted the results of the presidential election, as did other neighbouring African countries, it indicated to the world that African states do not intend to take NEPAD seriously as a guide to political and democratic conduct. Furthermore, South Africa’s apparent acquiescence in the questionable election results has jeopardised its reputation as “the African state with the keenest appreciation of global economic and political dynamics”.35

Apart from its dented credibility as the leader of the African Renaissance, South Africa is also increasingly in danger of losing its credibility as a powerful peacemaker in Southern Africa. The so-called ‘Mbeki doctrine’ refers to his belief that while South Africa cannot force its own views on others, it can assist in dealing with regional instabilities by offering its leadership to bring opposing groups to the negotiating table. In Mbeki’s view, the model of ‘peace, power-sharing and reconciliation’ that worked in South Africa could be applied elsewhere with effective results.

Another very important reason for South Africa’s lack of effective action against its neighbour is rooted in historical ties. Since the ANC was a former liberation movement supported by the frontline states throughout their struggle, it stands to reason that the ANC has a large debt to repay.36 South Africa feels indebted to Zimbabwe for its outspokenness against apartheid and its help during those years. The ANC feels it cannot turn its back on Mugabe and ZANU-PF, which it refers to as its ‘sister party’, since both the ANC and ZANU-PF fought colonialism and oppression in their respective countries.37

Mbeki’s quiet diplomatic approach to Zimbabwe is rooted in a number of good reasons. However, this has not altered the local public and international opinion that South Africa’s policy on Zimbabwe is ineffectual. Mbeki himself has recently appeared to rely on the efforts of others to affect some change in Zimbabwe. In May 2006, he admitted that he was waiting for the outcome of UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan’s
intervention in Zimbabwe on a visit there later in 2006 (a move that has been rejected by the Zimbabwean government).38

Constructive engagement through persistent negotiations

‘Quiet’ diplomacy is the opposite of ‘loud’ diplomacy and as such refers to non-violent measures. The principal idea behind constructive engagement is that it is possible to pressure a country to institute constructive change in its policies through negotiation, mediation and critical dialogue rather than military force.39

When Mbeki became president in 1999 the South African government began to employ a strategy of constructive engagement with Zimbabwe while publicly keeping quiet on many disturbing issues developing there. For example, when Aziz Pahad was probed on Mbeki’s policy towards Zimbabwe, especially in light of its human rights abuses, he sidestepped the question saying only that matters were being taken up “in diplomatic channels”.40

This policy continued over the next year and was designed “to encourage Mugabe to change course from lawlessness, violent coercion and racial scapegoating”, which he had been supporting since his defeat in the constitutional referendum. Even after the war veterans invaded farms and farmers were killed, South Africa continued to insist on a policy of ‘good neighbourliness’ and ‘non-interference’ with Mugabe.41 By the end of 2001 it was obvious there had been few substantial results from this constructive approach. However, the most important test of South Africa’s policy would be how it ensured that the 2002 presidential elections would be free and fair.42

Numerous South African political figures have argued that the principal objective of South Africa’s soft approach has been to try to avoid a complete collapse of authority in Zimbabwe.43 Mbeki was quoted as saying that such a collapse would not only be disastrous for Zimbabwe but also for South Africa. “We cannot afford a complete breakdown. I don’t know how we would cope with it,” he declared.44

The South African government has a distinct view on its constructive approach to Zimbabwe. Dlamini-Zuma has insisted that quiet diplomacy is an inherently African form of foreign relations and that “if your neighbour’s house is on fire, you don’t slap the child who started it. You help them put out the fire. This is the African way.”45 Dlamini-Zuma has also asserted on many occasions that South Africa will never condemn Mugabe’s regime, emphasising instead that the government “should work toward bringing the Zimbabweans back from the brink not to throw people over the precipice”.46
The new South Africa is still attempting to gain acceptance as a genuine African country. This attitude was perpetuated by South Africa's handling of the Nigerian crisis in 1995 when it was accused of not being 'African enough' and for acting like a bully on the continent. Mbeki is constantly trying to erase the suspicions that South Africa's agenda in the region is less than well intended. If the ANC government had threatened Mugabe's government with punitive measures, other regional states would have been furious. Mbeki is determined that South Africa cannot afford to lose face with its African 'brothers' again.

In Zimbabwe the ideology of a 'North–South' struggle and the African belief that "hegemonic powers continue their dominance and exploitation of the poor" are very apparent, with Tony Blair and international financial institutions being the so-called Western forces. Because of the Africanist diplomacy of solidarity that exists throughout the continent, South Africa has suddenly become a 'puppet of the West' and traitor to the 'struggle'. Black solidarity, brotherhood and support for former comrades in arms take precedence over the need to ensure freedom, rule of law and respect for human rights – which are ironically the very values that were fought for in South Africa's (and Zimbabwe's) liberation struggles.

Mbeki had reason to worry about accusations of being un-African or of siding with the West. For example, when he spoke out finally against the unfolding crisis in Zimbabwe towards the end of 2001, the state-owned Herald newspaper in Zimbabwe lashed out at him: "President Mbeki's alleged utterances neatly dovetail into Britain's grand plan for a global coalition against Zimbabwe." When Mbeki later sent a confidential letter to Mugabe in which he urged him to return to reconciliation talks with the MDC, the letter was leaked to Zimbabwe's state-owned media. Mbeki was once again accused by the Zimbabwean state-owned press of being 'manipulative' and of "furthering the agenda of a domestic and imperialist lobby."

Another example of this antagonistic response to South Africa's constructive engagement occurred in August 2005. South African Finance Minister Trevor Manuel and Reserve Bank Governor Tito Mboweni met with Zimbabwean Finance Minister Herbert Murerwa and Central Bank Governor Gideon Gono to negotiate South Africa's proposed aid package. The negotiations included a series of reforms among which was a new constitution that was agreed to by the MDC, as well as new elections as a prerequisite to South Africa releasing between US$200 million and US$500 million in aid. Following the meeting, a response came from a Zimbabwean minister rejecting the money and stating, "If South Africa wants to help us in good faith, fine, but if they try to hold us to ransom then we won't put up with that."

It is no wonder that Mbeki persists in soft diplomacy when any constructive proposals by the South African government are instantly refuted by the Zimbabwean government as proof that Mbeki is siding with the West.
Bilateral and multilateral efforts to resolve the Zimbabwean situation

Since Mbeki assumed the presidency he has been at great pains to assure fellow Africans that South Africa will not adopt a ‘big brother’ attitude on the continent. He has often declared that South Africa claims no right to impose its will on any country and will act only “within the context of its international agreements”.55

Mbeki’s preference has always been for an intra-African multilateral approach to Zimbabwe. While the rest of the world remains flabbergasted over South Africa’s response to the crisis, Mbeki wants the international community to leave it to the AU and Southern African Development Community (SADC) to resolve it in “the African way”.56

It has been suggested that behind the scenes Mbeki is only too aware of how disastrous a leader Mugabe is, but feels that he could have more impact on the situation if he uses “an attitude of sympathy and friendship to nudge Mugabe in the right direction”.57 Such was the atmosphere when Mbeki, Mugabe, Sam Nujoma (of Namibia) and Joaquim Chissano (of Mozambique) attended the Victoria Falls Summit in April 2000 to try to persuade Mugabe to stop the illegal occupation of white-owned farmland. The international community, particularly the UK, viewed this summit as a good opportunity for South Africa to take a stronger stand against Zimbabwe, but Mbeki continued his constructive engagement policy.58

Mbeki’s spokesman declared that Mbeki and his three counterparts had managed to get Mugabe to agree to stop the violence and withdraw the war veterans from white farms, while Mbeki had also asked Mugabe to stop his public attacks on Blair and Britain. In return, Mbeki and the other presidents would give Mugabe their full and public support and Mbeki would press Britain to provide funding for land reform in Zimbabwe. Mbeki was apparently so confident that he phoned Blair and told him that “a new chapter had been opened on the land reform question” and that there would be swift progress in settling all of the other remaining issues.59 However, Mugabe refused to stop the violence and continued to show disrespect for the rule of law. Mbeki’s hopes that Mugabe would fulfil his promises were dashed.

In the run-up to the presidential election in 2002, the international community looked once again to South Africa as the regional leader to begin applying some real pressure on Mugabe. However, this was not forthcoming. The South African observer mission described the elections as “legitimate” but not necessarily “free and fair” – a statement which resulted in its immediate ridicule. The ANC supported the mission’s findings instantly.60 South Africa was not alone in showing support for Mugabe as the then Organisation of African Unity (OAU), SADC, Kenya and Tanzania supported the elections as free and fair.61

Despite South African election observers regarding the poll as legitimate, the opposition in Zimbabwe said that Mugabe had “rigged the ballot and stolen the election”.62 The
Commonwealth Observer Team also concluded that the conditions in Zimbabwe “did not adequately allow for a free expression of will by the electors”. Mbeki, Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo and Australian Prime Minister John Howard formed the troika created by the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM). Based on the finding of the Observer Team, the troika decided to suspend Zimbabwe from the decision-making councils of the Commonwealth for one year.

Ever mindful of his fervent desire not to alienate South Africa from the rest of Africa, Mbeki was not comfortable with his position in the troika. This discomfort was perhaps most obvious when he came out so strongly against the decision of the 2003 CHOGM to continue Zimbabwe’s suspension, which he referred to as “undemocratic and unhelpful”.

In accordance with the policy of good neighbourliness, South Africa and its fellow SADC neighbours have generally refused to criticise Mugabe openly, insisting instead that Zimbabwe’s problems were internal and therefore the business of the Zimbabwean people. For example, when Mugabe launched ‘Operation Murambatsvina’ or ‘Operation Restore Order’ in April 2005, which resulted in a public outcry by the international community, the AU stressed the right that national governments had to conduct business inside their own borders without outside interference.

Despite this display of solidarity, which is so traditional of African countries, several of them have taken Zimbabwe to task. In September 2001 a special Commonwealth delegation met in Abuja to discuss Zimbabwe. Three African states attending the meeting, South Africa, Kenya and Nigeria, informed Zimbabwe’s foreign minister that Zimbabwe’s problems were basically Mugabe’s fault.

It has to be said that despite criticism of his policy, Mbeki has received support from African countries and even from US President George Bush, who unexpectedly backed Mbeki’s soft approach to Zimbabwe on a visit to South Africa in July 2003. Following private talks, Bush referred to Mbeki as the ‘point man’ on the subject of Zimbabwe. Mbeki even assured Bush that Zimbabwe’s political crisis would be over by mid-2004, an assurance that he had to renege upon when in May 2004 the situation had not improved.

What the above discussion proves is that Mbeki and the South African government are balancing on a rather fine line between attempts to show firm disagreement with Zimbabwean policy and keeping fellow Africans happy.

**Mbeki steers clear of sanctions**

Zimbabwe is largely dependent on South Africa for its fuel supplies, and on parastatals Zisco, Telkom and Eskom. Despite this vast economic leverage and the ability to use it
coercively against Zimbabwe by way of economic ‘sticks’, Mbeki remains adamant that South Africa will not alter its policy of quiet diplomacy.\textsuperscript{71}

The South African government’s choice of actions are limited by the fact that it believes there are no alternatives to quiet diplomacy other than ‘loud diplomacy’ or ‘throwing stones’, which it will not resort to anyway.\textsuperscript{72} Trevor Manuel was quoted as asking, “What should we do on Zimbabwe? Act like Ariel Sharon? Kick butt, blow them up, drive over their car, should we send in tanks?”\textsuperscript{73} Manuel’s statement is clearly in line with the theory of quiet diplomacy, which insists that there be no military involvement.

However, numerous alternatives to quiet diplomacy do exist without resorting to military intervention. These range from imposing sanctions to offering myriad incentives.\textsuperscript{74} After the questionable presidential election results in 2002, the EU and US imposed personal or ‘smart’ sanctions, including travelling bans on Mugabe, his wife Grace, and other prominent officials of the ZANU-PF government. Their assets were also frozen.\textsuperscript{75} The leader of the opposition Democratic Alliance (formerly DP) in South Africa, Tony Leon, insisted that South Africa apply smart sanctions as well. In addition he urged South African parastatals to “review their soft loans and easy credit terms with Zimbabwe”.\textsuperscript{76}

Yet, sanctions are a powerful tool in implementing foreign policy and therefore the impact of sanctions on the Zimbabwe regime would need to be set apart from the population with only specific individuals and organisations targeted. These ‘smart’ sanctions could be aimed at individuals associated with Mugabe’s government and could include the freezing of bank accounts, restrictions on travel and seizure of property. Sasol, Eskom, Telkom and Transnet could also curtail credit on oil, electricity, and transport and telecommunication services.\textsuperscript{77}

Should further measures need to be imposed, these could be in the form of multilaterally mandated sanctions in agreement with the UN, SADC, EU, AU and Commonwealth, and could include border blockades on imports and exports and either suspending or removing Zimbabwe from leadership positions in international organisations. Mugabe would perhaps need to exit his position as president, possibly through obtaining a leadership amnesty. Moreover, key states would need to be involved in applying sanctions, such as Mozambique, which is a large fuel supplier to Zimbabwe, and states would have to be united in the measures undertaken so that uneven application of sanctions could be avoided.\textsuperscript{78}

Among the reasons for South Africa’s ‘softly-softly’ approach to Mugabe was that punitive economic measures would have potentially destabilising consequences, only hastening the political and economic destruction of Zimbabwe.\textsuperscript{79} The consequences for South Africa included the possibility of a massive influx of refugees, disrupted trade links and an atmosphere of ‘generalised chaos’ on its borders.\textsuperscript{80} Ironically, it is South Africa’s soft
approach to Zimbabwe that has resulted in precisely that, with an estimated two million Zimbabweans pouring over the border to escape famine and high inflation and to seek employment.81

Conclusion

The international community has expected South Africa to assume the lead role in dealing decisively with Mugabe, given its vast moral authority and its considerable economic power in the region. This expectation is not unwarranted, given that Mbeki has espoused good governance and democracy as imperatives in the African Renaissance. However, this expectation is perhaps overly optimistic since Mbeki’s policy of quiet diplomacy with Zimbabwe has so far proved ineffective.

In an application of the quiet diplomacy indicators, the following became evident.

Mbeki has met personally with Mugabe several times. However, most of these meetings have proved fruitless, with Mugabe either reneging on his promises or denying that he ever made them in the first place.

Mbeki’s choice of actors has also been questionable. He seems to have surrounded himself with policymakers who appear unable to overcome Mugabe’s assistance to the liberation struggle during apartheid and who choose not to see what is really taking place in Zimbabwe. He has ignored views from respected public figures such as Desmond Tutu and former President Mandela.

The South African government has followed a policy of constructive engagement, which Mbeki insists is working, although there are no results to back up this claim. Mbeki also continues to assert that Africa has to solve its own problems and must be left to do so by the rest of the international community. However, it is evident that even in African multilateral forums, the Zimbabwe crisis remains unresolved since South Africa is unwilling to step on any toes.

Evidently, South Africa’s humiliation in its unilateral dealings with Nigeria in 1995 has influenced its subsequent foreign policy choices. South Africa cannot afford to be shunned by the rest of Africa. Consequently, African solidarity has once again been given more weight than respect for good governance principles.

Moreover, South Africa does not view any other alternative to quiet diplomacy as being viable. Mbeki has warned against using any sanctions, which he insists will be detrimental to the ordinary people of Zimbabwe. He believes that such harsh action will exacerbate the situation in Zimbabwe even further.
Mbeki’s quiet diplomacy towards Zimbabwe has not effected purposeful change in that country. The result has simply been that South Africa appears to have, once again, chosen pragmatism over principle, sacrificing its high ideals of African renewal to appease its fellow Africans.

Notes

7 Cape Times, 27 March 2003.
8 Ibid.
10 Ibid, p 97.
14 Quoted by Johnson, op cit, p 61; M R Rupiya, Zimbabwe in South Africa’s foreign policy: A Zimbabwean view, South African Yearbook of International Affairs, South African Institute of International Affairs, Johannesburg, 2003, p 168.
19 Johnson, op cit, p 64.
20 Quoted by Taylor & Williams, op cit, p 560.
22 Quoted by Johnson, op cit, p 64.
23 Ibid.
26 Cape Times, 26 October 2004.
31 Quoted by Schoeman & Alden, op cit, p 5.
32 Sowetan, 14 March 2002.
33 Saturday Star, 9 March 2002.
34 Ibid.
37 Business Day, 25 March 2003; N Dlamini-Zuma,

38 Landry, op cit.


42 Hamill, op cit, p 35.

43 Schoeman & Alden, op cit, p 4.


46 Quoted by C Dempster, South Africa’s silent ‘diplomacy’, BBC news, <newsvote.bbc.co.uk/mpapps> (21 July 2003).

47 Schoeman & Alden, op cit, pp 18–19.


49 Quoted by Schoeman & Alden, op cit, p 18.

50 Schoeman & Alden, op cit, p 12.

51 W Mhanda, Relations among liberation movements: SA and Zimbabwe, South African Yearbook of International Affairs, South African Institute of International Affairs, Johannesburg, 2003, p 158.

52 Quoted by Khan, op cit; Schoeman & Alden, op cit, pp 18–19.


56 Cape Times, 27 March 2003; Citizen, 10 March 2003; Weekly Mail & Guardian, 25 April 2003.

57 Johnson, op cit, p 61.


59 Johnson, op cit, p 62.

60 Quoted by Hamill, op cit, p 35.

61 Taylor & Williams, op cit, p 561.


71 Hughes & Mills, op cit, p 11.

72 SAIIA, op cit, p 1.

73 Star, 16 May 2002.


75 Quist-Arcton, op cit.


77 Hughes & Mills, op cit, p 11.

78 Ibid, p 11.


80 Hamill, op cit, p 36.

81 Landry, op cit.
What we know about HIV and AIDS in the armed forces in Southern Africa

Martin Rupiya*

This paper is a summary of some of the key findings of an eighteen-month MilAIDS research project that focused on how militaries in the Southern African countries of Botswana, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe had coped with the impact of the HIV epidemic since it had been identified amongst the ranks in the 1980s. As a result, there is a single major source for citation, which is ‘The enemy within: Southern African militaries’ quarter-century battle with HIV and AIDS’. The summary does, however, contain other information related to developments that have emerged since the completion of the larger study, bringing us up to date with the contemporary discourse in the field.

The purpose of highlighting some of the elements in the larger study is twofold: to distil its main findings for easier consumption and to draw our attention to salient factors that are considered worthy of replication. A second objective of this brief paper is of course to whet readers’ appetite to read the more detailed work referred to above.

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‘Discovery’ of HIV in the armed forces in Southern Africa

The point of departure has to be the question whether the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) is present amongst the ranks. The available evidence confirms that HIV was ‘discovered’ in the African military in the early 1980s. Precise country data show that the virus was identified in the following periods:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Discovery date</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Botswana</td>
<td>1985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swaziland</td>
<td>1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>1983</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>1984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
<td>1985</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The available evidence does not necessarily indicate when the virus was identified in the armed forces, but reflects the national presence of the virus. It is important to realise that the current methodology is deficient in gathering accurate details about national prevalence rates.

Three areas of investigation form the crucial part of the methodology: surveys at antenatal clinics, followed by an analysis of blood transfusions and voluntary blood tests. An advanced medical infrastructure, knowledge and capacity are required in order to arrive at a national prevalence rate. However, in war-torn Southern African countries such as Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo these are largely not in place, making any claims associated with such countries mere guestimates. Given this background, the current debate is characterised by assumptions, some of which may need adjustment to reflect empirical reality.

Returning to the years of discovery, it is evident that HIV was identified almost simultaneously in the Southern African countries examined in the five-year period 1983–1987. By implication, and based on the incubation period of HIV, it is safe to say that the virus had already been present in the region in the early 1970s.

In the case of Tanzania, the genesis of HIV has been associated with the country’s military involvement in the war with Uganda. This started in late 1978 and lasted until the early 1980s, when Idi Amin was forced to go into exile. In that war, the physical deployment of the Tanzanian People’s Defence Force (TPDF) was through the Kagera Salient, a region that had been annexed by Idi Amin before Tanzania launched a counter-offensive.
The mode of spreading the disease in Southern Africa and among the militaries in the region is through heterosexual practice. Although the case studies refer to anecdotal incidences of homosexual practice, homosexuality has been criminalised in all the above states following attacks on the practice by the political elite.

As a result, when strategies are considered to combat the various modes of transmission, there is a muted debate and no credible options are put forward. This is an area that has now been culturally and deliberately swept under the table.

Global statistics compared with Southern African statistics

HIV prevalence in Southern Africa – specifically amongst the ranks – was in line with the global trend, as has been documented by the World Health Organisation (WHO) since. According to WHO statistics for the period 1980–2002, HIV prevalence rates in Africa rose at a much higher rate than in the rest of the world. Figure 1 is a graphic representation of this trend.

But more significantly: of the 70 per cent of global HIV in sub-Saharan Africa, the majority of cases occurred, and have continued to occur, in Southern Africa (see Figure 2).

*Figure 1: Trends in number of people living with HIV infection 1980–2002 by WHO region*
For instance, 20 per cent of the infected global adult population aged between 15 and 49 is found in the nine Southern African countries of Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The debilitating impact of this phenomenon was soon reflected in the life expectancy rates, as reflected in Figure 3.

After confirming the presence of HIV amongst the ranks, the next step was to combat the incidence, effects and propagation of the virus.

Figure 2: HIV prevalence in adults in sub-Saharan Africa, 1986–2001

Large differences in severity within Africa: Southern >> Eastern and Central > Western
- 20–39%
- 10–20%
- 5–10%
- 1–5%
- 0–1%
- Trend data unavailable
- Outside region

Figure 3: Life expectancy at birth in selected most affected countries, 1980–1985 to 2005–2010
Policy response to HIV in Southern Africa during the 1980s

Following the discovery of HIV amongst the ranks in Southern Africa militaries, during the 1980s and 1990s, all the states studied were either slow or unable to come up with policy-guiding institutional responses to the vagaries of HIV and AIDS. This phenomenon was not unique, as it was informed by dynamics that were playing themselves out at international level. At the time the WHO and the World Bank (WB) were the anointed torchbearers on providing guidance on international and national policies responding to the effects and spread of the virus. However, this leadership was soon discredited and ‘deposed’ in 1995/96 following widespread international dissatisfaction with the policy options that the two institutions were offering.

One of the basic challenges is the uneven impact of HIV as reflected in national prevalence rates, for example 1 per cent in the United States versus 40 per cent in Botswana and Swaziland. As a result of this disparity, there are differences in the national responses and the urgency of these responses. Second, the HIV types and strains are different, demanding different strategies and medicines. Third, states have different welfare, public and private health systems.

Evidence has shown that in the wealthy North, public and private health systems have generally been able to respond effectively because of the lower rate of infection. In contrast, in the drug-importing South – a region characterised by double-digit prevalence rates and a poor health infrastructure – the impact has been devastating. It created an emergency and demanded a similar response from policymakers who generally do not have adequate resources at their disposal, nor the necessary scientific support. This, in turn, has informed and influenced global state policy response.

Following the discrediting of the WHO and WB’s global leadership on policy, the ‘cluster approach’ was created to replace it. This approach drew its guidelines from the United Nations agency system led by UNAIDS (the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS). The latter was and continues to be headed by Dr Peter Piot, one of the first scientists to work on HIV in Kinshasa, to wit during the 1990s. However, in the 2006 Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic, Piot has admitted to a lack of policy coherence and clarity at the international level. This development has therefore not provided any firm policy guidelines that states could integrate with their national policy(ies) on HIV & AIDS.

The initial reaction by ministries of health in the above countries was to treat the virus as yet another epidemic (after sexually transmitted diseases, STDs) before attempting to align national policies with the external influence of the WHO/WB, and later, with suggestions from UNAIDS. Therefore there is a noticeable trend in the policy evolution that shows that HIV at first did not receive any special attention and that this
complacency only changed following the severe effects of acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) in the 1990s.

With states left floundering on HIV policy, militaries have been placed in the invidious position of having to maintain and prepare for their primary task while absorbing the incidence and effects of HIV. Below we cite some of the areas in which the military became involved.

**Mandatory HIV testing of new recruits**

Every country studied admitted that, in the absence of a guiding policy, armies have been implementing mandatory HIV testing of new recruits. Anyone found to be HIV positive is rejected on medical grounds and will not be recruited.

The above policy violates not only individual human rights, but also International Labour Organisation (ILO) employment guidelines. While states are aware of these transgressions, it is apparent that policymakers feel it is a small price to pay in order to deliver on their primary role.

Curiously, there have been unforeseen challenges in the implementation of the mandatory testing of new recruits that require an even more nuanced policy response:

- The first ‘discovery’, even in countries with high prevalence rates, is that most 17–19 years olds are HIV negative. The challenge is how to maintain this precious status. The responsibility rests on the individual, as well as the institution, to provide incentives or punishment, in a balanced fashion, so as to ultimately achieve the primary objective of an HIV-free soldier.

- A related challenge brought about by the mandatory testing of recruits is the notion that ‘HIV-negative’ posts should be created, considering the huge investment in training pilots, tank operators, and other personnel with specialised skills.

- The final challenge is the inability of the armed forces as an institution to deal with those found to be HIV positive. At present, there appears to be a perfunctory dismissal of candidates in the expectation that they will be captured by the national safety net – which in many cases does not exist.

**Mandatory HIV testing amongst the ranks**

Armies have also implemented mandatory HIV testing amongst all ranks as part of the annual fitness test regime. However, evidence has shown that only 88 per cent of serving soldiers have been captured in the second net. Some of the reasons accounting for the other
12 per cent were the lack of capacity for medical testing; a reluctance of some of the soldiers to come forward; making themselves unavailable at crucial times; and the lack of prioritisation when targeting this level of serving members. In cases where serving members who have been found HIV positive and operating in demanding roles/functions, they have been reassigned. However, in all cases, being HIV positive has not been viewed as a sufficient reason to stop candidates from operational deployment, including peacekeeping. Many have been and continue to be allowed to serve as long as their status has not been compromised. In all cases the armed forces has supplied the required drugs (including ‘takeaways’ in the case of Botswana – ‘takeaways’ being three months’ supply of HIV drugs).

As with the mandatory testing of recruits, the testing of serving members has produced unexpected challenges:

- The first challenge that has emerged in impoverished Southern Africa is that serving members placed on drug protocols were found to be ‘sharing’ their medication with their spouses. On recommendation from the Medical Corps the armies saw their constituencies expand to include spouses and dependants. However, this has budgetary implications, a factor that appears not to have been properly taken into account, given the difficulty to quantify.

- New skills have emerged as new trades. These range from diet and nutrition to quartermaster drug control and distribution; chaplaincy, social and counselling interventions including spouses outside uniform; home-based care; and other demands around HIV and AIDS.

- In the absence of national guidelines, home-based care and ‘early-retirement’ packages for terminally ill patients have become the norm. As is inevitable with HIV-positive people, their status at some stage becomes compromised and many are forced to stop working. In all the case studies reviewed, commanders at all levels have taken a humane approach along the lines of boarding members but without penalising them, especially where benefits are concerned. However, this ad hoc approach has onerous budgetary implications. In some cases, members discharged/released have survived for years while receiving salaries and having free access to drugs and home-based care. Meanwhile, the armies have not been able to fill the vacated posts, resulting in units operating below strength. The budgetary implications of this approach have not been quantified or fully appreciated by all stakeholders. The financial burden is still being borne through the traditional allocations to defence and security, without taking into account the impact and force reduction implications. Although the role of traditional medicine did not come out clearly in the texts, in practice, traditional medicines play a central role in the culturally rich traditions of Southern Africans. Those affected resort to consulting traditional healers and taking traditional medicines before, during and after taking antiretrovirals (ARVs). Certain notions and practices are rooted in the local
indigenous cultural setting, for example aspects of religious and psychological support that are crucial to the treatment of patients in Africa and Southern Africa, including burials. However, the contribution of traditional medicine has been marginalised in the current debates, which have placed the emphasis on modern and scientific protocols.

In the case of Zimbabwe, the case study in the book, citing submissions by the then Zimbabwean military attaché in Beijing, tells of military officers sent to China who then faced similar circumstances as the Ugandans in Cuba. Based on this development, according to Chiweza, his country had the first empirical evidence of HIV within the ranks, to wit among potential pilots. After these two early events testing of officers undergoing training in armed forces overseas has become commonplace. The exact impact and implication of this is still to be fully understood.

Access to HIV drugs

There has been a firm policy on the part of the various state sectors regarding access to HIV drugs, that is, not to create islands of special benefit and attention. All sectors enjoy equal priority, including the armed forces. Given the unique demands related to the primary role and task of the armed forces, as well as the sector’s tendency to be semi-autonomous, this even-handedness has affected the ability of the armed forces to respond effectively to HIV and AIDS.

Foreign assistance

There has been foreign assistance supporting the militaries in all five cases studied. This support has come mainly from the US in such areas as awareness campaigns; containment, care and treatment; and research and development. The aim was to build capacity in the Medical Corps (train the trainer concept) and to maximise the impact of foreign assistance. The training has focused on detection, treatment and care; limited research; and infrastructural support. To this end laboratories have been established, hospital facilities expanded, testing equipment made available, and drugs provided.

The institutional capacity that has developed in the armed forces through targeted external support has made the sector the obvious vehicle to champion the fight against the epidemic. Other attributes that are unique to the armed forces include its relative autonomy; strict discipline, especially in the areas of testing and adherence to drug taking; and its unique experience of having to balance living with HIV and AIDS over the last 25 years with its primary role and function of maintaining peace and security. Living with HIV and AIDS over this period has helped the armed forces to document knowledge and experience, including the budgetary implications of the pandemic. This information, if shared nationally and regionally, should result in countries taking a major step forward towards eradicating the disease.
Delayed action

There has been a serious time lag from ‘discovery’ to the roll-out of ARVs. In some cases, a decade passed before action was taken. We can only guess that these inordinate delays were perhaps a consequence of the international policy confusion, compounded by national policymakers’ initial denial or lack of recognition of the effects of the pandemic, particularly on Southern Africa. The poor scientific capacity in the region also did not help. Below we cite the date upon which each of the countries studied rolled out the provision of ARVs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Botswana</td>
<td>2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swaziland</td>
<td>2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
<td>1999</td>
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</table>

The implication of this delay is that the pandemic had taken its toll before (limited) capacity intervention was attempted.

National versus regional policies

Despite the factors listed below, there are no obvious linkages between national HIV and AIDS policies – most of them are in draft form – and regional intervention strategies policies:

- Regional calls to harmonise HIV and AIDS policies that would for instance benefit large-scale drug production, procurement and distribution;

- The regional nature of transmission in Southern Africa, which is revolving around various major culprits – transport workers, commercial sex workers and armed forces – does not recognise national borders and in fact thrives on cross-border ‘operations’;

- Peacekeeping missions, African Standby Force and Southern African Development Community (SADC) policy options;

- Benefits from shared experience.

New evidence after the study

There is emerging evidence of a levelling off and even reduction of prevalence rates. In Zimbabwe, a national HIV adult prevalence rate of 26 per cent in 2005 has fallen to 18.1
per cent. The reasons are tentative and still unclear, ranging from a positive impact of robust awareness campaigns to the increased use of condoms against previous cultural inhibitions; the impact of the UN’s 3 x 5 initiative that sought to scale up the provision of and access to ARVs; Southern Africa’s personal experiences regarding loss of close family members and loved ones; the provision of generic drugs as a cheap substitute for expensive protocols; and the effective prevention of mother-to-child transmission.

There is also growing evidence of the usefulness of male circumcision, which reportedly has shown as much as 75 per cent protection against infection compared to those not circumcised. This factor has not been captured in the case studies, but can be immediately brought to bear to reduce the incidence of new infections.

**Conclusion**

The above represents what we know in relation to the complex dynamics that have arisen between HIV/AIDS and the armed forces in Southern Africa since the ‘discovery’ of the virus in the early 1980s.

Further studies are required in areas that were not covered by the study. First, one should try and understand the tactical and socio-economic impact of the pandemic on the security sector. One purpose of such as study would be to help commanders to understand the nature and extent of the problem that they are dealing with in relation to their primary task of preparing forces for national security and defence.

Second, there is potential to use the armed forces as a potential change agent as well as a research community. Communities in the epidemic zone of HIV and AIDS in Southern Africa are encouraged to seize the opportunity offered by the empirical interaction that has been opened with the armed forces through this study. The research is clearly of benefit to other Southern African countries that did not participate in the study as a result of time constraints and limitation of capacity and resources.

Finally, the full knowledge of the challenges presented by HIV and AIDS in the armed forces is still elusive and more research is required to enhance our understanding of the complex dynamics that confront societies under siege of the pandemic.

**Notes**

1 HIV/AIDS in the Militaries of Southern Africa Project, funded by the Rockefeller Brothers Fund (RBF).
2 Forces involved in the selected study as a result of resources and time constraints.
4 Trends in numbers of people living with HIV infection.
What’s wrong with terrorism?
Robert E Goodin

Private security in Kenya
Francis Waigaru, Jan Kamenju and Mwachofi Singo
What’s wrong with terrorism?*

Robert E Goodin

Goodin provides vivid insights into the topical question of terrorism. The basis and inspiration of his writing, including why he chose such a rhetorical title for the book, is found in both the preface and the introduction of the book, where he states that the 11 September 2001 (9/11) terrorist bombings in the United States and the security mechanisms that followed thereafter completely transformed his view of life and freedom.

The thrust of the book is that terrorism is simply a deliberate tactic of frightening people for socio-political gain, as fear, once instilled into people, inhibits their ability to reason clearly and undermines their capacity for free integration. The author presents his analysis in a quasi-academic manner by adopting both narrative (prose) style in first person singular and academic research through citations. This he does in seven succinct chapters, aside from the conclusion.

The author sets the stage in the first chapter, which also forms the introduction, of what comes later in the book. Here, Goodin puts forward his perturbations concerning terrorism, in question form by wanting to know what the distinctive wrong of terrorism is, that makes terrorists different from, and morally even worse than, ordinary murderers, kidnappers and so on, when the offences of ‘killing people,’ ‘maiming’ and ‘destroying property not belonging to you’ are already on the moral statute books. The distinction between a terrorist and a murderer, concludes the author, is that the aim of the former is fundamentally strategic and aimed at instilling terror and frightening people for political advantage.

The introductory chapter of the book gives the reader a mixed feeling of academic work and mere philosophical rhetoric. This emerges when the author, in defining terrorism, makes no attempt to critique or assess other definitions of the same concept, as provided by other scholars apart from casual references of various definitions, in the second chapter. The author seems aware of this shortcoming, as he states towards the end of the chapter that scholarly apparatus is kept to the minimum, in an attempt to make the book accessible to all interested readers. This makes the book less useful for serious academic reference.

The second chapter provides quite a comprehensive examination of the impact the 9/11 bombings in the US. The author gives attention to the fine details that justify terrorism as unjust war focussed on killing of innocent civilians. In doing so, the author provides a systematic account of how the terrorist bombings affected human life both in the US and Europe. Goodin, in his castigation of terrorism, contends that much as the worst thing terrorists do is to commit murder, terrorists who kill many people at once are not ‘simple’ murderers but are, instead, what he calls ‘mass’ murderers. Based on this, the author posits that it is worse to commit multiple murders than a single murder, and it may also be worse, morally, to commit mass murder than merely multiple murders. Still, the author appears dissatisfied with his own analysis of the magnitude of crime that an act of terrorism spells, by concluding that terrorism seems even worse than mass murder. Similarly, in his discourse the author discards any views that may support terrorism based on the just-war theory, by stating that if there is such a thing as US military-industrial complex, and if it is guilty of moral atrocities, and if various other conditions of a just war are met, then its command centres would under just-war theory be legitimate targets, and not the Pentagon and the World Trade Center.

The author, in his argument, instigates philosophical debate on the trial of terror suspects when, on page 14 he states that the implication of charging terrorists with the just-war crime of ‘killing innocent civilians’ suggests that while the 9/11 targets were innocent civilians, there were others who would have been legitimate targets of similar attacks, as the category of ‘civilian’ makes sense only as a contrast case to ‘combatant’. The author then delves into the philosophical debate between terrorism and jus in bello (just conduct in the course of war) and jus ad bellum (the justice of going to war). The
weakness inherent in the author’s argument, however, is that at the end of the chapter he fails to provide a most appropriate form of punishment a convicted terrorist should be given that would be commensurate to the gravity of the crime.

In the third and fourth chapters, Goodin steps away from the just-war/terrorism arguments and centres on terrorism, state and politics. In chapter 3 the author looks at terrorism as a political tactic intending to instil fear. He posits that terrorism is best understood not as a psychopathology (a study of the causes and development of psychiatric disorders) or as an ideology but, rather, as a distinctive political tactic the essence of which lies in its attempt to frighten people for political advantage. At the end of deliberations on political implications of terrorism, the author, while agreeing with Michael Walzer on his writings on just war, sums up that terrorism is fundamentally a political tactic and a deliberate wrong making terrorists not mere murders.

In chapter 4, which is entitled ‘States can be terrorists too’, the writer does not hesitate to justify the title when he observes that a state can engage in terrorism both against its own people and against other states. To ground this observation the writer on page 51 makes succinct reference to L'Académie Française’s 1796 definition of terrorism, which acknowledges that terrorism had been used by political organisations with both rightist and leftist objectives, by nationalistic and ethnic groups, by revolutionaries and by the armies and secret police of governments themselves.

In his argument of state terrorism vis-à-vis acts of group terrorism, Goodin contends that hijacking an aeroplane clearly counts as a terrorist act and is condemned as such by international conventions. But it is also something that states do from time to time, such as when on 10 August 1973 Israeli jets intercepted a Middle East Airlines jetliner outside Beirut, forcing it to land in a military airfield in Israel. Another act the author passes as terrorism is the August 1973 abduction of Kim Dae Jung, the leader of the opposition to South Korean President Park Chung. The author goes on to provide other examples in the chapter in support of his arguments. This chapter further provides comprehensive analysis of other forms of terrorism, namely states terrorism against their own people and state-sponsored terror and crimes of complicity.

Chapters 5 and 6 deal with terror warnings and how those in their own way, according to the author, amount to acts of terrorism. The author raises a normative question when he states that duly elected public officials do profit politically from the fear that terrorism engender. The author elaborates that whenever any country comes under attack, the government of the day almost always benefits from the tendency to rally around the flag, with the aim of being perceived by the citizens to have ‘responded well’. This, according to the author, is a morally unexceptionable way in which elected officials might profit politically from terrorist incidents. In the proceeding sections of the chapter the writer refers to various examples drawn from the US, the UK and Ireland, before looking at the
aspects of threats and warnings, terrorist warnings versus warnings of terrorism and how each impact on society, as well as politicians intentions and expectations on terrorism.

The sixth chapter is therefore a continuation of the fifth, and here Goodin deals with how terrorist warnings, though sometimes very accurate, can be deliberately misleading. In the chapter the author discusses at length what he refers to as the psychology of risk perception and the sociology of the newsroom. His argument is premised on the fact that certain sorts of information are sometimes inevitably miscommunicated and misperceived. In the rest of the chapter the author preoccupies himself with addressing the gap between ‘objective facts’ and ‘subjective perceptions’ in reports on terrorism and to a certain extent, weapons of mass destruction.

Chapter 7 talks about terrorism as a political wrong, and here the author projects that people who are terrified do not reason clearly as they are panicked or cowed. In this way, according to Goodin, terrorism succeeds in producing terror, whose effect leads to undermining people’s capacity for autonomous self-government, both individually and collectively. The author tends to balance his approach by also looking at how the polity sometimes downplays fear of terrorism through approaches such as Northern Ireland’s notion of ‘acceptable level of violence,’ ‘half-accepted, half-repudiated’, as applied in the 1970s. Perhaps the most glaring aspect of the chapter is the author’s specific focus (p 164) on what he refers to as a salutary contrast between the UK and the US regarding how the post 9/11 warnings of the risk of terrorism have been handled. While the US raised its alert state and told everybody that it had done so, the British did not tell the man on the street exactly how much danger he is in, due to the fear that too much information is thought likely to induce panic.

In his concluding chapter, Goodin makes a scathing attack at both terrorists and politicians by likening them to each other, insofar as both of them act with the intention of frightening people for their own political purposes. Both, concludes the author, would be committing what ought be regarded as a capital crime against democratic politics, as they would all be intentionally undermining people’s capacity for democratic self-government by evoking visceral responses rather than reasoned reflections. To elucidate his point further, Goodin compares bin Laden and George Bush on a scorecard based on questions framed rhetorically, such as ‘Is b’inn Laden worse than B’ush?’ and ‘Are b’inn Laden and B’ush both guilty of terrorism?’

In totality the book provides a good read for any one interested in simply following the current debates on war on terror, with the 9/11 terrorist bombings as a basis of analysis. The author’s philosophical approach gives the book a certain level of academic analysis.

The greatest shortcoming of the book is that it does not explore at all terrorism acts out of Europe and the US, such as those that occurred in Africa in 1998 as well as in Asia.
at various times and whose causes are closely linked to 9/11. This blanket blackout by the author to focus on terrorism beyond Europe and the US gives the book a limited focus, far from what terrorism has evolved into: a global phenomenon requiring global attention.

Nelson Alusala
Private security in Kenya*
Francis Waigaru, Jan Kamenju and Mwachofi Singo

The private security sector has not only become a global phenomenon, it has become part and parcel of our daily lives. In particular it has swept the African continent to unprecedented proportions. With befitting cover pictures featuring a member of a private security company holding a walkie-talkie and a well-secured property surrounded by barbed wires, this monograph interrogates the issue of private security in Kenya. The first of its kind, the monograph is researched by Lieutenant-Colonel (Rtd) Jan Kamenju, the director of the Security Research and Information Centre (SRIC), Francis K Waigaru, an academic in the Department of Philosophy, School of Social, Cultural and Development Studies at Moi University, and Mwachofi S Singo, an academic in the Department of Political Science at Moi University.

In his foreword, the Group Managing Director/CEO of the Standard Newspaper Group, Tom Mshindi, rightly describes the study of the private security in Kenya as a “powerful exposition of the size, composition and impact of the private security industry in the country [in which] the reader is presented with a detailed, factual analysis of the disconnect the state’s undisputed role in providing effective security to the people, and the actual situation on the ground” (p vii). More importantly, Mshindi alludes to the fact that, while the monograph is a “powerfully written text”, the language used is “simple and the analyses, tables and figures presented are clear and illustrative”. This makes the monograph reader friendly, and enables any person from any field of study to grapple with the issue. These eminent scholars introduce the study by acknowledging that this industry is the fastest growing in Kenya. From this statement it is clear that one of the reasons for undertaking such a study is the magnitude of the industry in Kenya. This statement stimulates the reader’s interest in the “fastest growing industry” in Kenya (p 1).

In their introduction, the authors discuss the demand-supply factor in the industry and give their justification for undertaking the study: (1) the need to understand the dynamics of the private security sector; (2) the importance of the findings in influencing policy-making processes; and (3) the need to regulate generate researched data on security with a focus on the Kenya’s private security sector for purposes of informing policy concerns. The study therefore spearheads the development of Kenya’s policies in the regulation of its private security sector in order to make the industry “more vibrant and efficient and to cultivate a mutual and value-added relationship with the Government, especially the law enforcement agencies” (p 5). The authors also discuss the study’s objectives, methodology, and theoretical framework, as well as the concepts of security and private security. They discuss the different schools of thought on the meaning of these concepts and refer to relevant examples in Africa. The authors also demarcate the forms which the private security sector takes, namely private military companies (PMCs), being “corporate entities comprising military and intelligence entrepreneurs whose activities incorporate the provision of multi-purpose security-related products and services” and private security companies (PSCs), being those which provide all security-related products save for ‘direct combat operations’ (pp 17–18). Throughout the authors give examples of PMCs and PSCs operating in Africa. (The study, however, focuses on PSCs operating in Kenya.)

In investigating the dynamics of the private security industry in Kenya, in chapter 2 of the monograph the authors offer their understanding of the size and spread of the industry in terms of personnel, operations and scope, types of management and management style, the policy framework within which the industry operates, the challenges and opportunities experienced by private security providers, and the level of training and capacity of the personnel involved in the sector. Throughout this chapter, the writers present reader-friendly charts and tables and figures which help to get a clear picture of how security companies in Kenya operate.
The concluding paragraph of chapter 3, which looks into the issue of how private security clients view the industry in Kenya, deserves mention here: "The overwhelming positive support by clients for the industry is a pointer to the fact that the sector has a future and therefore urgently needs top gear up and keep pace with clients’ demands and expectations. The Government should ensure a harmonized growth of the industry, where mutual benefits for all stakeholders are guaranteed through proper and prompt regulation of the sector” (p 91). The authors acknowledge the importance of this sector in Kenya and urge the government to ensure that the industry is well nurtured for the benefit of the people of Kenya.

In chapter 4, the authors investigate how private security is executed in Kenya, with a focus on perspectives from the labour force. They see the private security industry not only as an economically viable one, but also as a labour-related one. A sample of 600 security guards who were interviewed in the study presents a comprehensive picture of how it is to work in this type of industry. Again, excellent charts, tables and figures accompany this. The problems associated with the labour force in the industry, coupled with the Kenyan government’s reluctance to address them, are highlighted in the chapter. These problems include meager salaries, job insecurity, absence of job satisfaction, low levels of education, absence of unionised personnel, and lack of job professionalising, to name but a few.

In chapter 5 the writers forcefully advocate the need to regulate the private security sector in Kenya. They note that owing to what they refer to as being a “force on the loose” (p 103) (resulting from the fact that they are only accountable to themselves), the private security sector in Kenya needs to be subjected to regulations. On the need to regulate the industry, among other things, the writers note that government must set policy regulations to control the sector especially on the use of force, that government has a duty to ensure that consumers of the private security sector get their money’s worth in terms of quality control and that the government is responsible for the protection of workers in the private security sector against exploitation and exposure to dangerous working conditions. The writers call for the standardisation of the quality service of the industry, which should result in its regulation. In the final analysis, the writers argue that the security interests of Kenya “must lead the sector into the mainstream and ensure that it has added value for the well-being of Kenya” (p 108).

In their concluding remarks, the writers acknowledge the fact that the private security sector in Kenya has a future, but sound a warning that “[w]ith the current trade liberalization and search for foreign investors, it is likely that we are going to have more people and companies competing for a share of this lucrative industry” (p 107). Lucrative as the industry may be, the writers list 20 recommendations on the industry, which are well informed by their findings as contained in the study.

For any reader interested in security issues, the monograph is a journey worth travelling.

Sabelo Gumede
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