

# The transformation of the South African defence sector since 1990

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The aim of this paper is to outline progress made in transforming the South African defence sector in terms of its organisational effectiveness, representativeness and its service delivery between 1992 and 2002.

### **A note on concepts: the meaning and scope of defence transformation**

To understand the progress that has been made in the South African defence sector between 1992 and 2002, it is necessary to understand the meaning of transformation, the scope of defence transformation and the type of transformational challenges that the Department of Defence (DoD) has faced over the past ten years.

Transformation was a term adopted by the African National Congress (ANC) during the negotiations of 1990–94 to refer to the restructuring of the apartheid state so as to best meet the needs of the anticipated new democracy. Transformation, as a concept, was juxtaposed with the term ‘reform’, the latter being seen as a piecemeal and incremental approach to state restructuring rather than the complete overhaul of the normative, organisational and cultural environment within which the new democracy would have to function.

Transformation, as the South African defence community learned from 1990–2001, is a concept that spans a wide variety of inter-related fields. Transformation processes, if thoroughly pursued, impact on virtually all aspects of an organisation’s existence and, therefore, require astute management if they are to be successful. For transformation processes to be successful it is essential that three factors be acknowledged during the management stage.

1. The importance of decisive and strategic leadership of the process itself.
2. The importance of ensuring that the process enjoys high levels of legitimacy (‘buy-in’).
3. The importance of determining the scope of the transformation process itself – such as organisational culture, traditions, leadership style, and racial and gender composition.

In essence, four major transformation ‘clusters’ can be identified in regard to the management of any transformation process, and these are particularly relevant to the manner in which the South African defence sector has been transformed over the past ten years.

- **Cultural transformation** This entails the transformation of the culture of the institution in question, of the leadership, management and administrative ethos of the institution and of the traditions upon which the institution is predicated. It also involves the transformation of the value system on which the institution is based.
- **Human transformation** This entails the transformation of the composition of the institution with regard to its racial, ethnic, regional, and gender composition and its human-resource practises.
- **Political transformation** This process strives to ensure that the conduct and the character of the institution in question conforms with the political features of the democracy within which it is located – for example, acknowledgement of the principle of civil supremacy, institution of appropriate mechanisms of oversight and control, and adherence to the norms and practises of accountability and transparency.

- **Organisational transformation** This constitutes a more technocratic process under which the organisation in question is ‘right-sized’, its management practises and its diverse organisational processes are made more cost-effective, and its ability to provide services is rendered more efficient.

The DoD had to meet these transformational challenges in a number of different spheres. Although not all of these are examined in this paper, some of the major ones that are included here are set out below.

- Aligning the defence budget with the reconstruction and development challenges of the new government.
- Managing and completing the integration process.
- Creating a viable and effective Ministry of Defence (MoD) and Defence Secretariat.
- Ensuring that the DoD reflected the racial, gender and force-of-origin realities of South Africa.
- Procuring new equipment for the South African National Defence Force (SANDF).
- Redefining defence roles and tasks to reflect the demands of a changed strategic environment.
- Redefining the leadership, management and command culture of the SANDF.
- Ensuring the retention of a viable and effective reserve force system.
- Institution of a comprehensive demobilisation process within the SANDF to align force levels with budgetary realities.
- Formulation of a new defence policy that is aligned with the government’s existing and emerging policy.
- Ensuring the retention of technology and skilled personnel.
- Managing an organisational transformation process to ensure the creation of a representative, output-based and cost-effective institution in accordance with government policy.

The DoD has managed to meet most of these organisational challenges, although considerable progress still needs to be made in certain areas, for instance, ensuring a representative officer corps. The extent to which the DoD has managed to meet these transformational challenges is examined in more detail below.

### **Historical overview of the defence sector**

The SANDF has undergone profound changes over the past ten years. The scope and enormity of the challenges and the extent to which they have all been completed, largely successfully, are only apparent if one considers the historical backdrop against which change was initiated.

#### **The ‘Total Strategy’ period, 1978–90**

During the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s, the former South African Defence Force (SADF) played a prominent role in determining the strategic direction of the apartheid state as a whole, especially via the ‘Total Strategy’, which was the overarching policy framework of the state under the premiership of P.W. Botha. The Total Strategy had a

number of different aspects: improving the administrative efficiency and coordination of the state; political and economic reform within the apartheid framework; upgrading the armed forces and mobilisation for counter-revolutionary war; and the adoption of a militaristic domestic- and foreign-policy approach.

During the Total Strategy period, the SADF not only became increasingly involved in military operations in defence of apartheid – domestically and regionally – but it also became an important actor within the state itself, especially through the National Security Management System (NSMS). This was a national governance system that operated at the national, provincial, district and local levels and, in many cases, replaced civilian structures of government.

During successive states of emergency in the second half of the 1980s, the SADF, through the NSMS, gained strong influence over government as a whole, including at the local level. This situation was exacerbated by lack of civilian policy oversight of the defence force: the secretariat for defence had been abolished in 1968.

#### **‘Talks about talks’ and agreement on principles: the CODESA process, 1990–93**

Both the South African government and the ANC kept their respective armies out of the negotiation process that was initiated in February 1990 for a variety of different reasons. The first was a deliberate attempt by the two sides to use their security forces as a ‘security fall-back’ in the event that the negotiations collapsed (a 1990 cabinet decision referred to the SADF as the ‘stable core around which the dynamic of change could occur’). The second reason was the immense resistance of the SADF and the public to any suggestion that the armed forces of the belligerents would be eventually integrated into a new national defence force.

Initial contact between the commanders of the SADF and the Umkhonto We Sizwe (MK) (the ANC’s military wing) – but also including such armies as those of the Transkei, Venda, Bophuthatswana and Ciskei (TVBC) states – were, however, made during the political negotiations – the commanders often represented their political heads in a non-military capacity. Informal ‘track two’ discussions were also initiated between the commanders by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and, on occasion, by the political heads of the armed forces themselves.

The ANC made its position on the restructuring of the defence, police and intelligence community clear in the ‘Peace and Stability’ section of its national policy guidelines, ‘Ready to Govern’, adopted in May 1992. These policy positions were approved after extensive discussion with the ANC and with significant input from ANC-aligned NGOs and think-tanks.

In 1992, a series of off-the-record meetings were held between SADF and MK commanders in an attempt to initiate a discreet dialogue. The first of these was a meeting between SADF Chief-of-Staff Lieutenant-General Pierre Steyn and MK Commander Joe Modise in November 1992. In early 1993, a series of further meetings (eight in all) took place between SADF and MK commanders with the agreement of their respective political principals. These exploratory talks served to achieve a loose consensus between the commands of both forces. However, they did not involve discussion of substantive issues, such as force design, force levels, equipment requirements and timeframes.

The first formal meetings between the SADF and the MK took place, ironically, over the South African Air Force (SAAF)'s proposed purchase of the Pilatus training aircraft from Switzerland. (Given the sanctions imposed by the United Nations (UN), such a purchase was illegal and the SAAF was, therefore, keen to secure MK approval of the deal.) In April 1993, SADF and MK commanders met at Simons Town, where issues pertaining to respective force levels, equipment and training were discussed. This meeting laid the foundation for the subsequent collaboration that was to emerge during the period of the Joint Military Co-ordinating Council (JMCC).

### **The Joint Military Co-ordinating Council, November 1993–April 1994**

Following the establishment of the Transitional Executive Council (TEC) and its six Sub-Councils in 1993, the Sub-Council on Defence ordered that a JMCC be established, consisting of all of the armed forces of those political parties represented in the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) process, including the SADF, the MK and the armies of the TVBC states. The Azanian People's Liberation Army (APLA), the armed wing of the Pan Africanist Congress, joined the integration process in May 1994.

Two co-chairs were elected to preside over the JMCC: General George Meiring (Chief of the SADF) and Commander Sphiwe Nyanda (MK Chief-of-Staff). The SADF's Directorate of Strategic Management monitored and evaluated progress in the military negotiations via its Strategic Planning Process (mutually agreed by all of the armed forces present). The key tasks assigned to the JMCC are listed below.

- To draft plans pertaining the force design, force levels and strategy of the proposed SANDF.
- To draw up plans for the management of the proposed integration process.
- To specify certified force levels for each constituent element prior to its integration into the new national defence force. Certified Personnel Registers were established, listing the strengths of the SADF, MK, APLA and homeland defence forces (TVBC armies) (see below).

To accomplish these objectives the JMCC was structured as follows.

- The JMCC Steering Committee, co-chaired by Meiring and Nyanda.
- Six Functional Workgroups (personnel, intelligence, operations, finance, logistics and non-cardinal issues), responsible for the formulation of plans for the restructuring of their respective area. The Non-Cardinal Workgroup examined issues like uniforms and medals.
- Four Arms of Service (AoS) Workgroups (army, air force, navy and medical services).
- A Ministry of Defence Workgroup, established in February 1994 as a result of submissions to the JMCC from various think-tanks. This body provided the plans for the civilianisation of large sections of DoD head office and for the creation of the Defence Secretariat.

The workgroups were for the most part co-chaired by a member of the SADF and the MK, although, on occasion, TVBC officers performed the role. The plans that the JMCC

produced were eventually approved by the TEC and were to become the basis upon which the restructuring of the SANDF was to proceed over the next seven years.

### **Entities constituting the defence sector**

The parameters of the defence sector are fairly clearly defined, both in international and South African literature and in practice, although some terminological confusion exists (concerning the roles of a department of defence and a ministry of defence, for example). Furthermore, the relationship between defence industries and defence-related industries and the DoD remains unclear.

At the executive level, and as currently constituted, the president is commander-in-chief of the defence force, and he/she appoints a minister of defence and, if required, a deputy minister of defence. The minister, the deputy minister and their offices constitute the MoD. At the parliamentary level, the following committees were set up as a result of the Interim Constitution, which was adopted following the multi-party negotiation process of 1993.

- **The Joint Standing Committee on Defence** This was a multi-party joint committee of the National Assembly and the National Council of Provinces (formerly the Senate), which involved the largest parties in parliament. Its responsibilities were to ensure oversight of the activities of the DoD and to make broad policy recommendations on the management of the defence function if and when required. The committee was amalgamated with the Portfolio Committee on Defence after a parliamentary restructuring process in 2002.
- **The Portfolio Committee on Defence** Situated in the National Assembly, all members of political parties can sit on this committee on a proportional basis if so required. It is primarily responsible for approval of all legislation emanating from the DoD.
- **The Select Committee on Safety and Security** This is located in the National Council of Provinces.

The national defence function is organised on five tiers.

- **The Ministry of Defence (Level O)** The MoD consists of the minister of defence, the deputy minister of defence and a chief-of-staff, who are responsible for the organisation of those activities that are essential to the functioning of the ministry: political control, liaison with government, public relations and both military and civilian contact with the DoD.
- **The Department of Defence** The DoD consists of an integrated head office, comprising 18 Corporate Divisions and four AoS. These are constituted as follows:

*The Secretary for Defence (Level 1)* He/she is the head of department and manages a mixed civilian and military staff in a structure known as the Defence Secretariat. The secretary is responsible for the following tasks.

1. The **accounting function** within the DoD. The Finance Division is entirely civilian (although up until 1994 it was militarised) and the head of this division is civilian.

The secretary is directly answerable to parliament in regard to the expenditure of all DoD funds.

2. The **policy and planning function** within the DoD. The Policy and Planning Division consists of a mixed military and civilian staff, is headed by a civilian and is responsible for the formulation, integration and coordination of all policy initiatives within the DoD
3. The **acquisition function** within the DoD. The Acquisition Division is responsible for the management of all acquisition processes, inter-governmental liaison in relation to procurement, and liaison with the Armaments Corporation of South Africa (ARMSCOR) and the defence industry on potential equipment purchases for the DoD. The actual procurement function, however, is performed by ARMSCOR.
4. The inspector-General for the DoD falls under the authority of the Secretary for Defence.
5. Parliamentary liaison is also performed by the Defence Secretariat on behalf of the minister via a parliamentary office in Cape Town.

*The Chief of the South African National Defence Force (Level 1)* He/she is the commander of the country's armed forces and operates at the same administrative level (director general) as the Secretary for Defence, although he/she is not the head of department. The chief is responsible for commanding the SANDF and for directing the activities of staff members of all of the Corporate Divisions that fall under his/her responsibility (for further detail on these sub-divisions see below).

- **ARMSCOR** The office of the chair of ARMSCOR does not constitute part of the DoD but falls under the authority of the Minister of Defence. ARMSCOR is responsible for the procurement function within the defence family.

It should be noted that the DoD has undergone extensive and dramatic organisational changes since 1994 and further organisational changes are anticipated in future. The aforementioned structures will largely remain unaltered in the forthcoming decade, although certain organisational innovations may well occur in 2003. This will typically manifest itself in the renaming of certain structures, the possible restructuring of some structures (the Service Corps) and the transfer of certain functions from the Secretary for Defence to the Chief of the SANDF and the partial transfer of some of the latter's functions to the secretary for Defence.

### **Constitutional mandate**

The pre-1990 constitution paid little attention to the roles and functions of the SADF. Both the Interim Constitution (1993) and the 'New' Constitution (1995) outline the roles and responsibilities of the security forces in general and the SANDF in particular in some detail. The constitutional mandate governing the activities of the SANDF is as follows (Republic of South Africa, 1996).

- The defence force must be structured and managed as a disciplined military force (section 200(1)).

- The primary objective of the defence force is to defend and protect the republic, its territorial integrity and its people in accordance with the constitution and the principles of international law regulating the use of force (section 200(2)).
- A member of the cabinet must be responsible for defence (section 201(1)).
- Only the president, as head of the national executive, may authorise the employment of the defence force in cooperation with the police service in defence of the republic or in order to fulfil an international obligation (section 201(2)).
- The president must inform parliament of such activities promptly and in appropriate detail, or, if parliament is not sitting, he/she must notify the appropriate oversight committee (section 201(3)(4)).
- The president is commander-in-chief of the defence force, and must appoint the military command of the defence force (section 202(1)).
- Command must be exercised in accordance with the directions of the cabinet minister responsible for defence, under the authority of the president (section 202(2)).
- The president may declare a state of national defence, which must be approved by parliament within seven days (section 203(1)(2)(3)).
- A civilian defence secretariat must be established by national legislation to function under the direction of the cabinet member responsible for defence (section 204).

What is apparent from a reading of the new constitution is the extent to which the principle of civil supremacy and civil oversight of the activities of the armed forces are deeply ingrained in its various provisions.

### **Vision and mission of the Department of Defence**

The extent to which the management of the national defence function has changed dramatically is evident if one examines the vision and mission of both the DoD and the SANDF. Two visions exist within the Department of Defence: one for the DoD in its entirety and the other for the SANDF in particular (the respective AoS and Corporate Divisions also possess their own visions and missions). The vision of the DoD is specified below.

*'The Department of Defence, aligned to the principles of civil–military relations in a democracy, ensures the defence and security of the RSA through the maintenance of adequate, appropriate, affordable and accountable defence capabilities and contributes toward regional and international security, thereby enjoying national and international respect as a professional and reliable defence institution.'*

The vision of the SANDF is as follows.

*'The SANDF is a professional, balanced and modern Defence Force representative of all South Africans, which ensures a safe and secure environment within which national and regional reconstruction and development and growth of prosperity can be pursued.'*

The mission of the SANDF is set out below.

*‘To prepare for, and when so ordered, to conduct:*

- a. Appropriate military operations in defence of the RSA, its citizens and interests and*
- b. Operations other than war in support of other relevant and approved national goals.’*

The vision and mission relate to key government policies in the following principal ways.

- The constitutional responsibility of the SANDF to secure South Africa’s territorial integrity and sovereignty.
- Support of South Africa’s foreign-policy initiatives through operations other than war.
- Support of South Africa’s domestic-policy objectives, such as the Reconstruction Development Programme (RDP), the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) strategy, and civil-service transformation.

### **The defence-policy environment**

#### **The defence-policy framework**

The policy framework within which the DoD functions is set out in two major documents.

- The 1996 White Paper on Defence provides the normative framework within which ‘defence in a democracy’ should be managed. It outlines the key principles and values that should underpin defence management in South Africa.
- The 1996 Defence Review provides the ‘blueprint’ according to which defence should be managed in the forthcoming decade and it outlines, in some detail, the roles and tasks of the SANDF, the proposed force design and force structure of the SANDF, and the human-resource requirements of the entire DoD.

The defence policy of the SADF was generally under-developed – apart from a 1977 White Paper on Defence little attempt was made to establish an inclusive defence policy thereafter. During the first session of the post-apartheid legislature, Minister of Defence initiated the process to develop a White Paper. The first draft of the White Paper was published for public comment on 21 June 1995. Many written submissions on the first draft were received from the public, NGOs, academics and analysts, companies involved in defence production, and the AoS and political parties.

A second draft, which incorporated some of these comments, was then sent to the Joint Standing Committee on Defence (JSCD), which went through it paragraph by paragraph with the aim of attracting multi-party support for the document. The JSCD was unable to resolve a small number of issues, which were sent to the minister for decision, resulting in a final document that was presented to the cabinet on 8 May 1996 and subsequently approved by parliament with multi-party support. This allowed the

to claim that the White Paper represented 'a national consensus on defence policy' (Minister of Defence, 1996:1).

This agreement was made possible in part by paying strict attention to the policy hierarchy: something approaching a national consensus had been achieved on the inter-departmental policy framework for the RDP, and also on the constitution. The White Paper, therefore, was careful to situate defence policy within this hierarchy.

As described above, the White Paper replaced the Total Strategy with a human-security paradigm and set out a number of normative requirements, as well as addressing the matter of governance and oversight in the security sector. However, as the White Paper lacked detail, and did not address the resource implications of the policy framework, a second-order policy process, in the form of the Defence Review, was initiated by in 1996. The objectives were, *inter alia*, to develop the White Paper's policy framework, to establish resource requirements and to determine operational doctrine.

The Defence Review process was remarkably transparent and consultative and the Defence Secretariat, which drove the process, went to considerable lengths to ensure public participation. What the ministry called 'stakeholder consultation' required a considerable amount of time and effort. As the process evolved, the secretariat made a distinction between 'stakeholders' and 'interest groups'. The former were defined as those who had an immediate material interest in the process and its outcomes (government departments, trade unions, the military, the defence industry and parliament); the latter were defined as those who had an interest but not necessarily a significant material stake in the process (academics, NGOs, research institutes and civil-society organisations). This allowed the Working Group to concentrate on achieving consensus with stakeholders but not necessarily with interest groups, although their views were taken into account.

The Working Group was initially restricted mainly to government departments and the JSCD, but a decision was taken at an early stage to invite a few academic consultants to participate and to assist in the drafting process, and to invite 'interest groups' to sit on the various sub-committees (in general, each chapter of the review was drafted by a different sub-committee). The Working Group maintained close links with the JSCD. The review document was approved by parliament in April 1998.

### **The foreign-policy environment**

The DoD maintains that defence policy is a subset of foreign policy and that the SANDF always deploys beyond the country's borders in support of the government's declared foreign-policy objectives. A factor that has bedevilled defence planning, though, has been the absence of a clearly integrated and holistic foreign policy.

This foreign policy has been present in parts and has been outlined mainly in presidential speeches, national visions (as delineated by the president in the form of the 'African Renaissance', for instance), and certain foreign-policy guidelines that have emerged in concept documents produced by the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA). These have served as broad indicators of what South Africa's intentions are within the sub-region, the continent and the international arena.

An exception to the above has been the formulation of a White Paper on Peace

Missions (1998), compiled jointly by the DoD and the DFA. Recent years have also seen the emergence of the African Renaissance and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) – the DoD is expected to become a major player in these initiatives. Towards this end, the DoD is actively involved with other government departments in determining what type of support can be provided to the African Union and NEPAD.

The coordination of defence policies and activities within the broader sphere of government policy and business is achieved at a number of different levels. At the ministerial level, it is accomplished via the six new Sectoral Clusters, which are coordinated by the Cabinet Secretariat within the Office of the President. These clusters comprise governance, economy and employment, peace and stability, international relations and defence, and social.

Defence interacts with two of these clusters: the International Relations and Defence Cluster (where defence plays a supportive role in regard to the government's diverse foreign-policy initiatives) and the Peace and Stability Cluster (where defence plays a supportive role in relation to internal efforts aimed at securing peace and stability in South Africa – most notably its role in supporting the South African Police Service (SAPS)). This level provides the political and policy guidance and integration for the activities of the DoD in these arenas. A Committee of Director General, on which both the Secretary of Defence and the Chief of the SANDF are represented, performs the work of the ministerial clusters.

The DoD (particularly the Policy and Planning Division of the Defence Secretariat) also interacts with the Policy Co-ordination and Advisory Services (PCAS) located in the Office of the President. The PCAS is responsible for overseeing, on behalf of the president, the activities of the policy clusters and ensuring that they are coordinated and consistent with government policy. The DoD interacts mainly with the Chief Directorate International Relations and Defence within the PCAS (the post of Chief Directorate Peace and Stability is vacant at present).

### **Executive transformation: defining the head office structure of the DoD**

Historically, South Africa possessed a Department of Defence that was divided at head-office level into two components: Defence Force headquarters (HQ) (containing the bulk of head-office personnel) and a civilian Defence Secretariat. This was largely inherited from the British colonial system of administration, under which a permanent secretary was always deemed to be both the head of the department and the accounting officer for the department concerned.

During the 1960s, however, the SADF began to undergo rapid modernisation and the role of the secretariat was increasingly called into question – not least because of its lack of understanding of military matters, personality clashes between the Secretary for Defence and the Chief of the SADF, and bureaucratic inertia within the secretariat. In 1967, shortly after having assumed responsibility as minister of defence in April 1966, Botha established the Verster Commission of Enquiry to look into the functioning of the Defence Secretariat. The Verster Commission of Enquiry found that the retention of a civilian Defence Secretariat was proving counter-productive to the management of the defence function for a number of inter-related reasons.

- The legal mandate of the Defence Secretariat was not clear.
- The institutional and personnel capabilities of the Defence Secretariat were weak.
- The roles and functions of the Defence Secretariat were vague.
- Personality differences between the Chief of the SADF and the Secretary for Defence were rendering head office ineffective.

Botha consequently decided to scrap the Defence Secretariat, to militarise its functions and to subsume them under the Office of the Chief of the SADF.

This situation pertained until 1994. During the early 1990s, however, the ANC and its allies became concerned about the lack of 'civilian control' of the SADF. This was particularly evident at the SADF HQ level where most of the key policy and political functions were militarised (such as defence-policy management, finance, and parliamentary liaison). The MoD became, in both word and leadership, little more than a symbolic actor in a large defence organisation.

The establishment of the Ministry of Defence Workgroup as part of the JMCC process in February 1994 and the subsequent appointment of a new Minister of Defence in May 1994 saw detailed plans being devised for the transfer of certain key functions from the SANDF to the newly established Defence Secretariat (the first Secretary for Defence was appointed in August 1994). The new Minister of Defence provided the following guidelines for the Workgroup, which were to prove apt as the process of creating the Defence Secretariat unfolded.

- The Defence Secretariat should reflect an appropriate civilian–military mixture and should contribute to healthy civil–military relations.
- It should be cost-effective.
- It should provide for the optimal development of human resources.
- Defence capabilities should not be adversely affected by the creation of the Defence Secretariat.
- The civilianisation process would be slow and military personnel should not be phased out entirely.

After much deliberation, a 'model' – known as the 'balanced' model – was identified as appropriate to meet South Africa's defence needs. The balanced model was essentially a political compromise: both the Secretary for Defence and the Chief of the SANDF remained at the same level (the Secretary for Defence was a Director General, while the Chief of the SANDF was a Superintendent General) with certain roles and responsibilities. These roles and responsibilities were defined as follows.

1. The Minister of Defence, as the political head of the DoD, was responsible for:

- political oversight of the DoD;
- provision of political direction to the DoD in accordance with appropriate cabinet guidelines;
- communicating the needs of the DoD to the political authorities; and
- approving defence policy, budgets and programmes.

2. A Secretary for Defence (the minister's principal defence-policy advisor) was responsible for:

- formulation of defence policy;
- acting as the DoD's chief accounting officer to parliament;
- managing the weapons acquisition process; and
- providing parliamentary liaison services to the DoD.

3. A Chief of the National Defence Force was responsible for:

- commanding the SANDF;
- translating defence policy into military strategies, plans, budgets and programmes (the Chief of the SANDF remained the minister's principal military advisor);
- offering advice on the military implications of defence operational commitments; and directing the activities of the defence staff.

The Defence Secretariat was duly established and today is responsible for managing the DoD's finances, policies, programmes and acquisitions and engaging in parliamentary liaison.

### **Organisational transformation: restructuring the SANDF**

As with all government departments, the DoD is subject to, must abide by and is required to implement Department of Public Service and Administration (DPISA) policies and regulations in relation to its organisational restructuring efforts, its management systems and its personnel practices. Towards this end, the DoD created, in 1996, a Transformation Unit to manage the process of internal restructuring and rationalisation, ensuring representativeness, accountability, transparency and cost-effectiveness. This unit was established in the Directorate Strategic Planning under the Office of the SANDF Chief of Staff Operations and was known within the DoD as the 'Transformation Process'.

The Transformation Process was strongly influenced by the principles of Business Process Reengineering and was advised by consultants Deloitte Touche. It produced a force design that centralised many of the hitherto fragmented functions within the DoD – thereby reducing much of the duplication of tasks between the AoS on the one hand and between the AoS and Defence Force HQ on the other.

Organisationally, this has resulted in wide-ranging changes to the structure and force design of the SANDF. The nine regional SANDF commands inherited from the SADF have now been reduced to five Regional Task Forces (RTFs), the AoS and the Defence Force HQ have dramatically reduced the size of their headquarters personnel, and a number of military units and bases have been closed. At present, the structure of the SANDF under the command of the Chief of the SANDF is as follows.

- Operational responsibility for the deployment of forces resides with the Chief of Joint Operations (Level 2) who commands the five RTFs, consisting of integrated Army, Air Force, Navy and Military Health Service personnel (Level 3). These RTFs – known

as Task Formations – are RTF West (Cape Town), RTF North (Pietersburg), RTF Central (Pretoria), and RTF East (Nelspruit). Task Formations are responsible for executing specific operations or exercises: they are temporary arrangements, which are disbanded on completion of the task. Combat-ready units and formations are prepared and provided by the AoS.

- The Chief of the SANDF (Level 2) commands the South African Army, Air Force, Navy and Military Health Services. Unlike in the past, these AoS no longer have command responsibility over their forces but are instead responsible for force preparation via various Type Formations (such as artillery, infantry, engineers and signals). Type Formations are structures responsible for the preparation and development of specific types of combat-ready units (typically designated as regiments, battalions, or units and existing at Levels 3 and 4 within the DoD).
- The Chief of the SANDF directs the activities of staff in the Corporate Divisions that fall under his authority. There are 17 such corporate divisions, consisting of the Chaplain General, Defence Corporate Communications, Strategy and Planning Office, Chief of the Defence Reserves, Military Legal Services, Foreign Relations Office, Joint Operations Division, Defence Intelligence Division, Joint Support Division, Human Resources Support Centre, Service Corps, Command and Management Information, Defence Training Institute, Logistic Support Division, Military Police Agency, Chief of Logistics and Chief of Joint Training.

### **Completing the integration process, 1994–2002**

As stated earlier, one of the key tasks of the JMCC was to compile a Certified Personnel Register on which all potential SANDF members were placed prior to integration into the new national defence force. On paper this register comprised 90,000 SADF members and 11,039 TVBC Army members (together referred to as the Statutory Forces), as well as 28,888 MK members and 6,000 APLA members. Ultimately, however, only 11,738 former MK personnel and 4,901 APLA personnel were to remain within the SANDF – or some 16% and 7% of the total strength of their respective organisations. Not all 135,000 registered members of the SANDF reported for attestation and at its height it numbered no more than 101,000.

The discrepancy between these force levels and those of the Certified Personnel Register was the result of the demobilisation of older MK members during the post-integration period (some 7,238 MK and APLA members as of 1998), the failure of many MK members to report for attestation within the new national defence force (many got better jobs in the public and private sectors), and the difficulties encountered in tracing many of the members listed on the Certified Personnel Register.

In 1994, nine non-SADF generals (three lieutenant-generals and six major-generals) were appointed to a number of General Staff positions within the SANDF. Hundreds of senior MK officers were ranked by the organisation in preparation for their appearance before Placement Boards. The MK and the APLA determined the ranks of former guerrilla commanders on the basis of six inter-related criteria: command experience, operational experience, seniority, educational qualifications, military training and qualifications, and length of service within the organisation.

The Placement Boards mirrored those that had been used by the Zimbabwean and

Namibian governments during the integration of their national armies in 1980 and 1989 respectively. They were usually chaired by either an MK or an SADF officer and were overseen by a representative of a British Military Assistance Training Team (BMATT). The latter's presence ensured that a neutral arbitrator was on hand during the ranking and placement process. Although some disagreement did occur over the final ranking and placing of former MK officers, the process was, by and large, unproblematic.

By late 1999, the MK could claim reasonable representation within the new national defence force, especially given the fact that only 12,000 of its original 28,000 members remained within the organisation. The uniformed component of the SANDF consisted of 39,077 former SADF personnel (53%), 11,727 former MK personnel (16%), 9,580 new SANDF personnel (13%), 6,453 TVBC personnel (9%) and 4,901 APLA personnel (7%). The civilian component of the SANDF, meanwhile, consisted of 17,976 former SADF (91%), 11 MK personnel (0.06%), 790 TVBC personnel (4%) and one APLA member (0.01%).

Of the 41 generals within the SANDF (as of 1 April 1998), seven were former MK and APLA generals; of the 4,493 senior officers (major to brigadier-general), 548 were former MK and APLA officers; of the 6,046 junior officers (second lieutenant to captain), 998 were former MK and APLA officers; and of the 62,625 non-commissioned officers and soldiers holding other ranks, some 15,076 were MK and APLA personnel.

### **Human-resource transformation within the DoD: reflecting South Africa's demographic realities**

#### **Human-resource guidelines provided by the DPSA**

As with all government departments, the DoD is subject to, must abide by and is required to implement DPSA policies and regulations in its organisational restructuring efforts, its management systems and its personnel practises. The following aspects of the DPSA policy guidelines (as contained in the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service, 1996) are reflected in the manner in which the DoD does business.

- Management of DoD personnel policy in accordance with the targets, timeframes and monitoring mechanisms proposed by the DPSA. To ensure equal opportunity within the DoD, a Chief Directorate Equal Opportunity was created, headed by the SANDF's first female general. On numerous occasions, the SANDF argued for 'special dispensation' with regard to implementation of its Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action policy, given the longer periods of time required to prepare military personnel for competencies within their designated ranks groups.
- Human-resource training progressed in a manner consistent with the military requirements of the SANDF and the management requirements of the civilian members of the Defence Secretariat.
- In terms of labour relations and employment conditions, members of the SANDF were subject to the same regulatory framework as other civil servants with the following limitations:
  1. uniformed members were not allowed to strike. Initially they were not permitted to organise themselves into trade unions, although this was subsequently overturned in the Constitution Court after an application on its unconstitutionality

- was bought by the South African National Defence Force Union; and
2. members of the SANDF were not afforded the right to bargain over their service conditions due to their exclusion from public-sector unions and public-sector bargaining chambers.

### **The human-resource targets of the DoD: anticipated representativeness and current reality**

Given the above, the Defence Review set the following targets regarding the transformation of the demographic realities of the DoD – based on a force level of 70,000 personnel.

- The proposed force strength of the SADF after the final wave of integration was to be 24.35% white, 10.22% coloured, 0.75% Asian and 64.68% African.
- The strength of the SANDF of the different forces of origin after integration was envisaged as 21.93% civilian staff, 34.15% former SADF personnel, 2.60% former Kwazulu Self-Protection Force (KZSPF) personnel, 5.50% former APLA personnel, 1.13% SANDF civilians, 9.27% SANDF personnel, 14.14% former MK personnel and 10.06% former TVBC armies.

The current (as of October 2002) full-time strength of both the regular force and the civilian element of the DoD is set out below.

- Regular force members: 58,961.
- Public-service appointees: 163,344.

The following racial, force of origin and gender data can be derived from these figures.

- 14.7% of the regular force is female.
- 43% of public-service members are women.
- 63.2% of the regular force is African.
- 10.6% of the regular force is coloured.
- 24.8% of the regular force is white.
- 1.4% of the regular force is of Asian.
- 56% of public-service members are African.
- 18.3% of public-service members are coloured.
- 25% of public-service members are white.
- 0.7% of public-service members are Asian.

An area where the process to secure representation has been less successful is the SANDF's reserve force system. The active reserve forces consist of 56,491 Territorial Forces organised mainly within the Commando system, which is primarily under the authority of the South African Army. The primary responsibilities of the Territorial Forces are to provide a rear area defence capability, home and hearth protection, and assistance to the SAPS if and when required.

The Conventional Reserve is located primarily within the South African Army

(86.3%) and provides the SANDF with the core of its conventional capabilities in the event of war. It has some 15,654 members, who are organised into various regiments, units and battalions located throughout the country.

In regard to the racial composition of the Conventional Reserve: 51.5% of the force is white; 35.6% is African; 1.1% is Indian and 10% is coloured. In regard to the racial composition of the Territorial Force: 61% is white; 27.7% is African; 8.7% is coloured; and 0.4% is Asian. The combined level of representation within the reserves, therefore, is as follows: 58.9% is white; 8.9% is coloured; 0.6% is Asian; and 29.4% is African. It is important to stress, however, that the commands of both the conventional Reserve and the Territorial Forces are almost exclusively white.

### **Becoming a responsible member of the international defence community: the DoD's international linkages and commitments**

The DoD currently benefit from a wide range of international linkages of both a formal and informal nature, which it never enjoyed during the apartheid years. The Defence Secretariat's Policy and Planning Division (Directorate Foreign Relations Policy) formulates the policy for these linkages, while the Chief of Foreign Relations (a Directorate located in Chief of Defence Intelligence) is responsible for their management. The linkages include the following types.

- Multilateral relations with international, regional and sub-regional bodies.
  1. Ongoing collaboration with the United Nations. Although the DoD does not have a permanent attaché at the South African Mission to the UN, it is in the process of approving such a post. It has provided, and continues to provide, seconded personnel to the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations.
  2. The stationing of a permanent military attaché at the Organization of African Unity in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; a representative of the Chief of the SANDF sits on the OAU Chiefs-of-Staff Committee; and there is regular liaison with the OAU Conflict Resolution Mechanism.
  3. The DoD is a member of the Inter-State Defence and Security Committee of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Both SANDF and Defence Secretariat members are represented on the Defence Sub-Committee and the Intelligence Sub-Committee and all of their respective sub-committees (14 in all).
- Bilateral relations with a wide range of countries. These are configured on three levels.
  1. Accreditation of military attachés to South African missions abroad. Presently, the DoD has representation in four American, six European and nine African countries, as well as in the People's Republic of China (PRC), India and Malaysia. A further 13 countries are covered by shuttle accreditation. Foreign military attachés based in South Africa include some 50 members. Ten of these are from Africa, 11 from Europe and the rest are from Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, India, Indonesia, Israel, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the PRC and the US.

2. Regular interaction via specific Bi-National Commissions (BNC) that include defence as one of their sectors. Examples include the Defence Sub-Committees of the US–South Africa BNC, the France–South Africa BNC, and the Nigeria–South Africa BNC.
3. Regulated interaction with foreign countries via appropriate Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs). These MoUs regulate interaction, for example, in the spheres of intelligence cooperation, defence-industry collaboration, weapons procurement, training, policy dealings, visits and staff exchanges. There are 53 MoUs with different countries at present.

### **Budgetary realignment**

The extent to which the DoD has reduced its budget is apparent if one considers the amount spent on defence prior to 1990. In 1989, for instance, the SADF received some 9,937 million rand, accounting for 4.6% of the country's gross domestic product (GDP). In 2002–03, the budget stood at 16,491m rand or 1.6% of GDP. In real terms this represented a decrease of 48.5%.

The division of expenditure in the 1989 defence budget was as follows: 19% for personnel costs (this low figure was due to the fact that conscription was the basis of the previous government's recruitment policy); 37% for operational costs; and 44% for capital costs. In 2002, 37% of the budget was earmarked for personnel costs, 26% for operational costs, and 37% for capital costs (the latter representing a 26% increase on the 1996 capital budget, largely due to the Strategic Defence Acquisition Package).

The Defence Review ultimately envisaged the following breakdown of defence expenditure: 40% for personnel costs, 30.4% for operating costs, and 29.6% for capital costs, indicating that, in 2002, the DoD was exceedingly close to satisfying the guidelines that the review had set for it.

### **Executing constitutionally mandated roles and tasks**

Transformation should never be mounted for its own sake but should be seen as a process that aims primarily to ensure improved output from the organisation concerned. The extent to which the DoD has managed to transform itself and to provide those services with which it is constitutionally entrusted is apparent if one considers the diverse tasks that it has been called upon to fulfil in the past nine years. These tasks, as defined by the Defence Review, have included the following.

- The provision of a core defence capability to protect South Africa from an external military threat. Although the SANDF has not been called upon to provide such services as yet, the establishment of the 'Core Force' (comprising a viable regular force and a reserve force) and the recent Strategic Defence Acquisition Package have been designed to provide the SANDF with this capability.
- The promotion of sub-regional security through defence cooperation within the current SADC security framework. Examples include the involvement of the DoD on various committees of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security and the Inter-State Defence and Security Committee, its participation in regional peacekeeping initiatives, such as the Blue Crane and Blue Hungwe exercises, and its role in other regional initiatives.

- The promotion of international security through military cooperation in support of South Africa's foreign-policy objectives. This was firmly demonstrated by deployment of South African military personnel to Lesotho at the request of the Lesotho government in September 1998 (Operation Boleas), the deployment of military personnel to Burundi to assist with the country's peace process in 2001, and the deployment of personnel to aid the (MONUC) in September 1999.
- The provision of a capability to maintain law and order in cooperation with the SAPS on an ongoing basis. This has been a task that the SANDF in general and the South African Army in particular have been fulfilling regularly since 1994. This will remain necessary until the SAPS has the capacity to carry out these tasks on its own and the DoD envisages a phased disengagement from this role except under exceptional circumstances when such assistance may be sought from the SANDF. The Territorial Forces provide this support to the SAPS at the local level throughout the country. The regular forces provide assistance to the SAPS with regard to a wide variety of anti-crime operations. Some high profile missions include the combating of urban terrorism on the Cape Flats, the stabilisation of high crime in the Kwazulu-Natal Midlands, and cooperation with the Mozambique government in locating and destroying illegal weapons (Operation Rachel), as well as special operations to help the SAPS protect marine resources in the western and eastern Cape, for example.
- The provision of military support to protect life and property in emergency situations. Over the past nine years examples have included the participation of the SANDF in the response to the Mozambican floods of 2000 and 2001 and the provision of assistance to Tanzania following the Victoria Lake ferry disaster in 1995. In addition, the military is engaged in fire fighting, casualty and medical evacuations, and disaster management, including flood relief within South Africa's borders.
- Aid to other government departments. This has included the safeguarding of the 1994 and 1999 general elections, overseeing the inaugurations of Presidents Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki in 1994 and 1999 respectively, and providing security at international summits and meetings in South Africa (the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the inauguration of the African Union in 2002, and the All Africa Games and the meeting of the Commonwealth heads of government in 1999). It has also included the provision of assistance to the government of Mozambique during that country's elections in 1999.

### **Impediments to the realisation of the DoD mission**

#### **Resource limitations**

Notwithstanding these eminently noble commitments, the DoD's capacity to realise its vision is limited by its own resource constraints. Much of this is borne out of the nature of the policy, planning, programming, and procurement process within the DoD itself. At present, the key pillar of the South African government's foreign-policy process is the prioritisation of the African continent as at first, and most important, sphere of influence. The role of the DoD will be to support the government's foreign-policy initiatives on the continent if and when they are instigated.

The likely areas of involvement for the South African government on the continent are peacekeeping, the enhancement of regional security arrangements, and the

provision of disaster relief and humanitarian assistance. To participate in these spheres it is critical that the DoD has the requisite equipment and personnel. Its ability to contribute, however, is limited by the following resource constraints.

- The bulk of the equipment approved by both parliament and the cabinet as part of the DoD's 1998 procurement programme is of a conventional nature and thus has limited utility in many of the aforementioned operational settings (jet fighters, jet trainers, and submarines, for example). The DoD is limited in its ability to participate in peacekeeping, disaster relief and humanitarian assistance at a strategic level by the lack of a strategic airlift capability, sufficient helicopters (as the 2000 and 2001 floods in Mozambique demonstrated) and logistical reach (the latter having been lost as a result of the recent DoD restructuring exercise).
- Much of the hardware that the DoD currently possesses and which can be used to support African initiatives is being used to help meet the DoD's internal operational commitments (naval support for the maritime authorities, SAAF support for the SAPS in the internal arena, and military support for the SAPS to help it combat crime and to protect the country's borders, for instance).
- The anticipated reduction in the DoD force level – from 78,000 to 70,000 personnel, as indicated in the Defence Review (and possibly 65,000, as indicated in the DoD's rationalisation strategy) – will deprive the department of much of the manpower with which to ensure more robust engagement beyond South Africa's borders. Many of the initiatives envisaged for the continent (such as peacekeeping) are landward and personnel intensive. While the Defence Review calls for the creation of a small regular force supplemented by a sufficiently large reserve force, it is probably more appropriate to speak of a large regular force supplemented by a sufficiently large reserve force if the DoD is to accomplish its diverse missions.
- The present under-funding of the SANDF reserve system in general and the conventional forces in particular limits the country's ability to utilise the expertise of the reserve forces in international peace missions.

### **Conclusion**

Although not immediately apparent to external observers, the DoD has undergone profound institutional changes over the past five years, including integration, 'downsizing', transformation, and re-education. The effects of these changes have been managed well, but have, in many cases, placed a profound strain on institutional cohesion and morale within the DoD. In addition, unlike the armed forces of the developed world, the South African DoD has had to transform itself while continuing to deliver services. The institution's short-term capacity to deliver on more ambitious projects, such as peacekeeping in the DRC, will be affected by these institutional strains and by the DoD's relative lack of experience in these areas.

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