From Defence to Development

Redirecting Military Resources in South Africa

Edited by Reddlyn Cock and Penny Mckenzie
FROM DEFENCE TO DEVELOPMENT

Redirecting Military Resources in South Africa

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for The Group for Environmental Monitoring

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Thenjiwe Mtintso

This book addresses some of the most controversial aspects of our transition from apartheid to a non-racial and non-sexist democracy. The creation of a representative and legitimate defence force is probably the most difficult aspect of our commitment to create a common society and to build institutions which unite rather than divide us. The role of the new defence force is to protect and consolidate democracy: this implies a total break from the past when the South African Defence Force helped to make South Africa a terrorist state reliant on fear to maintain its authority. In the past vast resources were devoted to the SADF to support white minority rule. Today military expenditure must be appropriate to our central task: to address the real threats to our security — poverty and unemployment. In the past military issues were also shrouded in secrecy, whereas today we are committed to transparency.

In this context there is an urgent need for extensive public debate on defence and security issues. We need to empower civil society through access to information and alternative perspectives so that debate is not dominated by insider security experts, and to enable a broader range of our people to contribute and make their voices heard. Both the consultation around the 1996 Defence White Paper and the Defence Review process have allowed for some participation from civil society, but that participation must be widened and deepened. In particular, efforts must be made to ensure that women participate because they suffer the most from poverty, unemployment and environmental degradation. As a contribution to the public debate on defence and security issues, the publication of this book is to be welcomed.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book draws on research which was conducted for the Group for Environmental Monitoring (GEM) between 1993 and 1997. GEM is a small NGO based in Johannesburg which seeks to build an environmentally sustainable and just society through participatory research and the sharing of knowledge. For this end we were fortunate to obtain the intellectual and financial support of the International Development Research Centre in Canada. We would like to express our gratitude to the IDRC and to everyone at GEM for their assistance and encouragement.

Every effort has been made to trace and acknowledge copyright holders of photographs. Should any mistake or omission have been made, the publishers apologise and will correct it in the next impression.
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INTRODUCTION

Jacklyn Cock

Contemporary South Africa has been described as the most important experiment in democracy since the end of the Second World War (Smith, 1996:31). The consolidation of this democracy depends on the capacity of the post-apartheid state to meet human needs. This book presents an argument for shifting resources from the military towards this goal.

Throughout Africa, the military has been a major obstacle to achieving democracy, and war has been instrumental in the continent’s development crisis. It has meant death and injury for millions, absorbed vast amounts of national resources, caused ecological damage, destroyed infrastructure and social organisation, distorted production, and created millions of displaced people and refugees. Even when there has been victory in liberation struggles against colonial rule, or cease-fires after civil wars, real peace has often been short-lived and democratic government has not been realised. Frequently, the reason for this is the failure to demilitarise. The successful transition to peace and democracy in South Africa, as elsewhere, depends on a process of demilitarisation that involves shifting power and resources away from armed formations and military elites.

Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired, represents, in the final analysis, a theft from those that hunger and are not fed, are cold and are not clothed.

Dwight D. Eisenhower

South Africa is among some 40 countries that have changed from authoritarian to democratic rule over the past twenty years. In this political transition, restructuring the military is crucial. Huntington points out that in almost all cases, the new democratic regimes have reduced the size of their military forces and attempted to instil in them a greater sense of military professionalism. By and large, the new democracies have been reasonably successful in establishing civilian control, in orienting their militaries towards professionalism, in reducing military power, in constricting military roles and in establishing patterns of civil-military relationships that resemble those in established democracies (Huntington, 1993:36). It is debatable whether South Africa has achieved this.

The shift from separate to sustainable development in South Africa
depends partly on how the new government deals with the military resources it has inherited from the apartheid era. These resources are extensive: the Government of National Unity (GNU) inherited the most powerful army in sub-Saharan Africa, with sophisticated weaponry, infrastructure and equipment, and an extensive arms manufacturing capability. South Africa became highly militarised during the period 1976-90 as resources were mobilised for war at political, economic and ideological levels (Cock & Nathan, 1989).

However, a process of demilitarisation has been under way in South Africa for some time. This is evident in the closure of several military bases, in dramatic reductions in defence expenditure, in significant conversion initiatives in the defence industry, in the abolition of conscription, and in the downsizing of the military to conform to notions of a core force. Thousands of South African National Defence Force (SANDF) personnel have been retrenched, retired or transferred in line with rationalisation programmes undertaken by the Department of Defence. The merger of eight different armed forces into the new SANDF involved significant moves towards the creation of a more representative structure. Demilitarisation is also indicated by the 1989 decision to dismantle the nuclear weapons industry and the 1997 ban on the use, production and trade in anti-personnel land-mines. Since 1994, attempts have been made to secure the subordination of the military to civilian control. These include the establishment of a Defence Secretariat and the re-examination of the mission, roles and tasks of the SANDF through the White Paper on Defence (1996) and the Defence Review.

The military’s consumption of resources is illustrated by the fact that in the USA an F-16 jet taking off for a regular training mission is likely to consume . . . almost twice as much gas as the average US motorist during one year.

Birchem, 1992:2

The new policy framework is a significant break from the past. Laurie Nathan argues that the White Paper on Defence (1996), which sets the policy framework for the Defence Review, is an agenda for demilitarisation. However, it is arguable that the Defence Review has interpreted the Defence White Paper as an agenda for rearmament. The emphasis is on the creation of a modern, technologically advanced core force. Furthermore, while prioritising the function of territorial defence, the new policy does not strictly limit the defence force to this and situations of national emergency. The provision in the Constitution for the deployment of the SANDF for service in support of any department of state for the purpose of socio-economic upliftment [my emphasis] is problematic. The task of socio-economic upliftment belongs to other state agencies in co-operation with civilian society. Deploying soldiers in this role is reminiscent of the winning hearts and minds programmes of the Total Strategy doctrine of the apartheid army, the South African Defence Force (SADF).

Increasing concern is voiced at the deployment of the SANDF in supporting the police in essentially political tasks. Internal deployment peaked at 20500 during the April 1994 elections. Gavin Cawthra points out that this was a far more extensive operation than...
at any time during the State of Emergency and the SANDF claims that more troops were deployed internally at this stage than during the Angolan war (Cawthra, 1995:3). Although the numbers have declined, thousands of SANDF soldiers are still deployed on a daily basis in policing tasks.

SANDF deployment in both roles—policing and development—is being used to legitimise military and defence expenditure. While Nathan argues that the *White Paper* states explicitly that the new approach to security does not imply an expanded role for the armed forces, Seegers points out that the SANDF has warmed to civilianised and developmentalist notions of its tasks (Seegers, 1996:320). Most importantly, the secondary functions of the SANDF do not require a technologically advanced army. The SANDF has now completed the training of two battalions for peace-keeping operations. It is conceivable that the SANDF will play a role in regional crises, such as those in Lesotho and in the Great Lakes Region. However, participation in peace-keeping operations requires further public debate within a broad policy framework of demilitarisation.

The process of demilitarisation initiated in South Africa is complex and uneven, and has had some contradictory consequences. For instance, the proliferation of small arms is partly the outcome of incomplete disarmament and demobilisation in post-conflict peace building. This has increased the supply of guns and maverick banditry throughout the region and represents a form of privatised militarisation. Besides the private-public tension, there is a tension between the local and the global: the increasing emphasis on arms exports from South Africa is, to some extent, a consequence of the reduction in domestic defence procurement. The relation between development, defence and security cannot be considered in purely narrow, national terms. In addition, the ideology of militarism, which views violence as a legitimate solution to conflict and problems, remains intact. Demilitarisation needs to go beyond restructuring state institutions and recast social relations in a much broader project of social transformation. As the 1996 National Crime Prevention Strategy document asserts, we need to weave a new social fabric, robust enough to withstand the stresses of rapid change in a new-born society.

One has to acknowledge that the argument for demilitarisation rests on potential long-term benefits. In the short term it may produce additional costs; examples include the cost of paying and retraining demobilised soldiers, assisting arms industries in transition, and the environmental clean-up of former military bases. These may be costly enterprises, but the argument is that the costs involved in demilitarisation in the transfer of resources for social and economic development will help to tackle the real threats to collective security: environmental deterioration, poverty and social instability.

There is much agreement on which the demilitarisation debate can
build. In some ways there is a converging of interests between the current military’s commitment to rationalisation and the demilitarisation movement’s conversion agenda. Military leaders stress that downsizing and reshaping our defence force will save considerable funds (Deputy Minister Kasrils, cited in *Sunday Independent*, 1 December 1996). Both Kasrils and the *White Paper on Defence* clearly prioritise the daunting task of addressing poverty and the socio-economic inequalities resulting from the system of apartheid.

The argument for further demilitarisation is based on the negative impact of the military in terms of its direct destructive effects and the diversion of resources, skills and technology which could be employed in economic and social development. There is a need to move beyond the narrow understanding of conversion as referring mainly to shifting the defence industry to civilian production, to that of a multi-dimensional process involving the orderly redirection of human and material resources employed in military activities to development.

This broader understanding of conversion was the objective of the Group for Environmental Monitoring (GEM) project *Redefining Security: Militarisation and the Ecology of Southern Africa*, initiated in 1993. GEM is committed to expanding the conceptual framework of conservation and conversion. The key notion is that we need to move beyond conservation in the sense of protecting threatened plants, animals and wilderness areas, to the broader understanding that conservation refers to the natural resource base on which all economic activity depends. While GEM is concerned broadly with linking concepts of biodiversity to sustainable development, this particular project aimed to conduct research that would empower civil society to engage meaningfully in debates about future defence policy.

Environmentalists are concerned about defence issues for three reasons: because of the direct, negative impact on the environment; the military’s consumption of scarce resources; and the relation between environmental scarcity and conflict. As Gavin Cawthra argues, rethinking the notion of security is the key to understanding the links between demilitarisation, environmental protection and sustainable development. The legacy of armed conflict over the last 30 years and the process of militarisation in southern Africa have created a precarious, mutual vulnerability in the region. Current threat analyses confirm that there are no military threats. The *White Paper on Defence* (1996) acknowledges this and the Deputy Minister of Defence has admitted publicly that there is no conventional enemy threatening to invade us (Ronnie Kasrils speaking on television, 6 October 1996). While Kasrils argues that, in an unpredictable world, one needs high defence expenditure as an insurance policy, this only makes sense if there is a strong likelihood of attack by a foreign power. Without this, security and defence needs have to take into
account the variety of security problems prompted by the effects of poverty, war, drought, disease and social
dislocation. It is increasingly recognised that a broader concept of security one which emphasises ecological and
developmental factors is necessary.

Rethinking security involves confronting a powerful paradox: that the military the institution meant to protect
and defend in reality represents a threat to security. As Dr Rosalie Bertell, from the Toronto-based Institute of
Concern for Public Health, stated at the World Women s Congress for a Healthy Planet, in 1991: It is the military
who are destroying the earth, and they are doing so in the name of national security. The Congress agreed that
the growth of huge military establishments, the hundreds of wars fought since the Second World War,
the nuclear arms race and nuclear power development with their legacy of health-destroying nuclear
wastes, and unrestricted trade in weaponry and lethal technology, via both governments and private
dealers, dangerously pollute our natural environment. They destroy lives, damage the health of
women, men, children, fetuses and other living creatures. They consume resources that could be used
to benefit humankind, preserve biological diversity and protect our planet.

This paradox is clearest in the growing body of evidence on the disastrous environmental impact of military activity,
including research, development, weapon production, testing manoeuvres, the presence of military bases and the
disposal of toxic wastes, in addition to the direct impact of armed conflict.

**Militarisation, poverty and the environment**

If further evidence was required of the negative environmental consequences of military activity, the Gulf War has
supplied it in abundance. The Gulf War demonstrated that wars and environmental protection are incompatible
(Renner, 1991:2). However, environmental damage is not limited to episodes of war and armed conflict, but is implicit
in militarisation, the process whereby resources are mobilised for war. Military activities, even in peacetime, affect the
environment. Such activities include the production and testing of weapons, training and exercises, the establishment
of military bases and installations, the maintenance of a state of alert and combat readiness, and accidents of various
kinds (United Nations, 1991:12). Furthermore, military activities consume resources urgently needed for economic
development and environmental protection. For example, approximately 20 per cent of the world s scientists are
engaged in military research to the detriment of research into environmental issues such as alternative energy sources
and conservation. High
THE SADF AND THE DESTRUCTION OF WILDLIFE

The Kumleben Commission

War in the southern African region has taken its toll on wildlife. In October 1994, President Mandela appointed a commission under the chair of Mr Justice Kumleben to investigate the alleged smuggling of and illegal trade in rhino and ivory horn in South Africa.

One of the key allegations was that the South African Defence Force (SADF) had covertly slaughtered and destroyed elephant herds and rhino in neighbouring countries, especially Angola and Mozambique, and had been involved in the sale and export of ivory and rhino horn. It was alleged that such operations were sanctioned by authorities in the SADF and ministers of state.

Allegations of SADF involvement in the decimation of wildlife date to the mid-1970s. For example, a submission by a consortium of non-governmental organisations to a United States Congress Subcommittee stated that The South African military has cynically aided the virtual annihilation of the once-great elephant herds of Angola. In the same year, Jonas Savimbi said South Africa had provided aid to UNITA but not at any price. We pay for aid with our diamonds, timber and ivory (Kumleben, 1996: 19).

A member of the South African parliament, Rupert Lorimer, took up this issue and, in 1988, an internal military inquiry was appointed under Brigadier Ben de Wet Roos. This inquiry was closed to the public and the findings were kept secret. Kumleben described this inquiry as a charade and not an honest attempt to fulfil its terms of reference and seek the truth. Military personnel who gave evidence before the Kumleben Commission described it as superficial and slap-dash (ibid., 89).

The Kumleben Commission uncovered startling evidence of SADF involvement in the decimation of elephant and rhino. One of the witnesses at the Kumleben Commission was Colonel Jan Breytenbach who was stationed in western Caprivi, Namibia, from 1970 to 1975. He described an area called Cuando Cubango in southeast Angola as breathtaking... I’ve never seen anything like it in my life before... the number of animals and the diversity of wildlife species was such that it put the Kruger National Park completely in the shade. When we’re talking about elephants, we’re talking about tens of thousands of elephants roaming all over the place, hundreds of rhino, huge herds of buffalo, especially along the Luiana River, sables, roan antelope, tsessebe, blue wildebeest, zebras (ibid., 26). When he returned in 1983, The elephants were... over a thousand strong, and they diminished decreased gradually as we were going along until 1987 when I only could count about 180 elephants (ibid., 27).

The Kumleben Commission concluded:

- The SADF was directly involved in dealing in ivory and probably rhino horn from mid-1978 to the beginning of 1980.
- In 1980, the SADF established a front company called Frama which engaged in smuggling ivory and no doubt rhino horn from Angola to South Africa until about 1986. The SADF ensured that Frama vehicles were not searched on their journey through Namibia to South Africa. The SADF continued to transport ivory by air to South Africa during this period.
The Military Intelligence Division was responsible for the above activities.

- It is not known what quantities of ivory and rhino horn were smuggled, but indications are that they were substantial.
- The SADF must take responsibility for other acts of smuggling which were rife during its presence in Namibia. The poor example set by the SADF, and later by Frama, must have served as an invitation to both military personnel and civilians to climb on this lucrative bandwagon.
- SADF involvement in the handling and transportation of ivory and probably rhino horn was illegal in that, at least from 1980, the necessary permits were not obtained.
- There is no evidence that, since 1987, the SADF or the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) has been involved in the illicit handling of these products (ibid., 129-31).

At the time of publication of the Kumleben Commission’s findings, a number of ex-conscripts called in to a Johannesburg-based radio station to confirm Kumleben’s conclusions. Some described seeing 300-400 shot elephants and described the activities of the SADF as barbaric, while another commented, “We were sent into an area to decimate everything there whether cattle, ivory or people” (Radio 702, 18 January 1996).

(Source: The Kumleben Commission)
(Cartoon by Zapiro, Sowetan, 19.1.1996)

defence expenditure means that less is available for safeguarding our deteriorating environments.

The world’s armed forces are a major cause of environmental degradation across the globe (Finger, 1991:220). Renner estimates that the military sector’s share of oil and energy use world-wide is about 3-4 per cent and double this if indirect use is included (Renner 1991). He also points out that about 0.5-1 per cent of the planet’s land mass is used for military bases alone. The operations of the armed forces may account for 6-10 per cent of global air pollution and the armed forces of the world are the largest producers of hazardous chemical and nuclear waste. Within the United States, the military is the largest generator of hazardous waste. The Pentagon’s annual toxic output nearly 500 000 tons exceeds that of the top five US chemical companies combined (Birchem, 1992:1).

Most military bases world-wide are probably heavily contaminated. The US Department of Defense has found almost 15 000 contaminated sites in about 1 600 military bases within the US alone. It is likely that the pollution problems are even worse on the US bases abroad (Finger, 1991:221). Thus with its choreographed violence, the military destroys large tracts of the land it is supposed to protect (Birchem, 1992:2).
The relation between militarisation and environmental degradation is particularly obvious in the southern African region. The cost of SADF-sponsored wars in Angola, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe has been estimated as involving the loss of 1.5 million lives and US$45 billion since 1980 (Steiner, 1993:3). In 1992, the death toll in the Angolan civil war reached 1,000 per day. While the human and economic costs of these wars have been relatively well documented, their environmental impact has been neglected. Johnson and Martin maintain that the impact of apartheid on the region in ecological, economic and human terms represents a holocaust (Johnson & Martin, 1989:11).

Ecologists returning to Mozambique's Gorongosa National Park and Maromeuy Delta report that the war has decimated much of the area's wildlife. All that is left are small numbers of the previously abundant impala, waterbuck, hartebeest and nyala (Dutton, 1994). Furthermore, there are reports that anti-personnel land-mines were sown in unmapped localities throughout these parks.

About 20 million land-mines, or one-third of the world's total, are located in southern Africa. Alex Vines relates how land-mines have been a major source of human injury and suffering. Angola has the highest rate of amputees in the world and there are millions of internal refugees displaced by the war in which the SADF played a central role. In 1996, the Kumleben Commission found that the SADF was involved in the illegal smuggling of ivory and rhino horn from Angola and Namibia from mid-1975 to 1986. The SADF has acknowledged that it helped UNITA sell ivory from elephants killed during the Angolan war (General Magnus Malan, cited in The Star, 19 January 1996).

The Madimbo Corridor wilderness area in the Limpopo River valley has been degraded by military activities over decades. According to a recent report, concrete slabs and abandoned buildings of old bases litter the wilderness and the area has been carved up by numerous roads now eroding into dongas in the sandy soil (Allen, 1996:7).

Another example of direct damage to environmental resources is evident in the SADF's responsibility for herbicide contamination. In the 1970s, a sisal hedge was planted on the Zimbabwe border as a security barrier. The use of illegal and dangerous herbicides to remove it caused a major ecological disaster, contaminating farmers' crops and natural vegetation along the Limpopo River. Herbicide contamination was detected in soil in the Limpopo Valley and in water from Messina to the Kruger National Park (The Star, 22 February 1996).

Apart from direct environmental damage, general environmental deterioration damage to the natural resource base on which all economic development activity depends is a direct threat to security. Southern Africa could become caught in a cycle in which environmental scarcity and degradation lead to tensions, local disputes and
violence, which lead in turn to civil and inter-state wars, and thus to further environmental degradation. This has been termed the greenwar factor – the recognition that in the complex web of causes leading to social and political instability, bloodshed and war, environmental degradation is playing an increasingly important role (Bennett, 1991:2). As Raymond Williams warned, the continuation of existing patterns of unequal consumption of the earth’s resources will lead us inevitably into various kinds of war, of different scales and extent (Williams, 1982:55). Southern Africa’s population of about 145 million is expected to double within the next 25 years, resulting in scarcities of some non-renewable resources, unless present consumption patterns are altered. Martin Rupiah indicates how water could become a source of conflict and tension in the region.

Other direct threats are poverty and the proliferation of light weapons, which is linked to increasing rates of violent crime. A World Bank study established that almost half of South Africa’s population lives in poverty. In this study, poverty is defined as an income of R301 or less per adult per month. The study found that the bottom 20 per cent lived on an income of R118 or less per adult per month. These figures are cold and lifeless indicators of human misery, hunger and homelessness. At the same time, South Africa has one of the most unequal distributions of income in the world. The current defence budget clearly absorbs resources which could be invested in infrastructure such as housing, clinics and schools. Civil society needs to be empowered to question why the state is spending R875 million on 12 Rooivalk attack helicopters. The Rooivalk project has soaked up some R1,17 billion in research and development money and has failed to create more than a few hundred jobs. While much attention has been given to the relation between the military and political power in South Africa, as Feaver points out, less obvious, but just as sinister, is the ability of the military to destroy society by draining it of resources (Feaver, 1996:152)

Another direct threat to security is the rising level of violent crime related to the proliferation of light weapons. Light weapons are a development issue: land-mines impede post-conflict social and economic recovery, and the availability of small arms exacerbates political violence and social instability, and has direct effects on economic development. Post-apartheid South Africa is undergoing a domestic arms race in which sub-state groups (principally, organised crime and private citizens) have acquired arms and are contributing to the militarisation of society. Firearm killings are the fastest-growing form of violence in South Africa; every day, 19 people are murdered with a firearm. The main cause of the proliferation of light weapons is the armed conflict that has taken place in the region, and ineffective disarmament and demobilisation in post-conflict peace building. The main source of small arms is leakage from the various armed forma-
Increasingly, global conflicts are caused by, or exacerbated by, competition over scarce natural resources such as land, fuel and water. The World Bank, for example, estimates that at least 40 per cent of the world’s population lives in housing that has neither potable water nor plumbing, and that 80 countries have difficulty in providing water. It predicts that, unless rationalising measures are introduced, future wars will be fought over water (*Business Day*, 23 August 1995).

Water is life and its absence could generate conflict both globally and regionally. Mechanisms need to be established to anticipate water needs in the region and oversee its equitable distribution. These are necessary to prevent conflict arising over water scarcity.

There are a number of causes of water scarcity in the region. Firstly, rainfall levels in southern Africa have declined over the last 95 years. There has been a steady 10 per cent decline in average rainfall every season, combined with two severe droughts every decade. Every fourth year, over the same period, inadequate rains of just below drought conditions have been registered.

Secondly, the advent of peace in the region has accelerated the consumption of this precious commodity. Large development projects, such as roads and airports, have used vast amounts of water. Huge forests have been replaced by tarred surfaces that do not absorb heat and have permanently affected the environment. There have been increased temperatures in the day and night, averaging 1.2 per cent and 0.6 per cent respectively. This results in increased evaporation levels followed by increased rainfall. For example, in Zimbabwe the dams lost more than one-third of their holdings, from 5 billion to 3 billion litres before the onset of the hottest months of the dry season. Rapid surface water evaporation also affects groundwater levels, drying out wells, boreholes and natural river systems.

The final factor contributing to water scarcity is population growth and increasing urbanisation. Governments are faced with the daunting task of providing adequate water supplies to a rapidly expanding population. Southern Africa’s present population of 145 million is expected to double in the next 25 years. Increasingly, governments are having to rationalise the amount of water used.

Finding solutions to the water crisis in southern Africa is made difficult by the fact that the states’ abilities to obtain water from known sources is unequal. Some states have the technical skills and resources to extract water, while others, which may be worse off in terms of water availability, do not. Consequently, these sources become potential areas of conflict between states. The Zimbabwean Pungwe Water Project on the border with Mozambique, the Lesotho Highlands Water Project aimed at supplying South African industrial, commercial and residential needs and the Matabeleland Zambezi Water Project constitute potential flash points.

What is the alternative? Given the difficulties of reversing declining water levels coupled with increasing demand, the region needs to establish a water authority. Its mandate and responsibilities would need to include:

- overseeing the equitable use of water in the region;
assessing and evaluating existing access to water, present abstraction methods and their impact;
• improving existing catchment areas which influence neighbours flows and the environment;
• drawing up damming and other development plans, based on regional priorities, and being empowered to source
donor support on behalf of member states;
• being the sole authority arbiter to vet and co-ordinate future water rights applications; and
• being the sole and final arbiter of any regional disputes over water issues.

Acute shortages make water a strategic commodity that can become a source of conflict. Conflict resolution
mechanisms need to be in place to avoid such crises. A credible, legally empowered and adequately resourced water
authority is an important initiative that can be put into place immediately.

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Inter and Local Terms

The link between professional military establishments and the modern nation-state should be
subject to critical scrutiny. There are strong grounds for questioning the existence of state military structures when the
nature of war has changed from its conventional inter-state character. Almost all contemporary wars are civil wars.
Virtually all of the conflict involves violence between internal groups (often ethnically defined) rather than states.

This leads to a crucial question which is at the centre of this book. How far should demilitarisation go? Armies and
soldiers are not fixed and inevitable features of a nation-state, as the experiences of Costa Rica, Panama and Haiti
show. President Figueres of Costa Rica has urged African nations to eliminate their armies if they really want
development (The Star, 30 April 1996). The Costa Rican situation is very different from South Africa’s, but this is the
moment to radically rethink security and defence needs. Throughout the twentieth century, South African armed
forces have never been used in a classic role to repel an invader. The SADF was used largely as an instrument of
repression to maintain white rule. Since 1994, the SANDF has faced a crisis of legitimacy. Its response has been to try
to position itself as a bastion of order. A frequent argument is that the SANDF needs to move away from offensive to
pragmatic capabilities, such as participating in peacekeeping operations, border protection and disaster relief. It
remains geared for offensive action north of the border. This is the logic behind the decision to purchase 12 Rooivalk attack
The province of Gauteng, containing South Africa’s industrial and mining base, has the highest concentration of people per square kilometre and a great thirst for water. Without sources of its own, the water engineers of the 1980s looked to inter-basin transfers to slake this thirst. The solution was sought in importing water from the Tugela basin and the Lesotho Highlands, source of the Orange River, which flows from the Maluti mountains to the Atlantic Ocean at Alexander Bay, just south of Namibia.

When eyes were cast upon Lesotho’s water in the mid-1980s, the then prime minister, Chief Leabua Jonathan, once a creature of the apartheid government, turned hostile. Support for the African National Congress (ANC) had allowed South African exiles to shelter in the mountain kingdom and led to raids on the capital, Maseru, by apartheid forces. Jonathan was not keen to enter into a water deal with Pretoria. The World Bank was reluctant to put its imprimatur on any project without willing signatures on both sides. At the end of 1985, South Africa faced an impasse.

Early in 1986, apartheid’s military forces besieged Lesotho, preventing all movements into and out of the kingdom, which South Africa surrounds on all its frontiers. Lesotho nationals could not seek work in South Africa and the flow of migrants’ remittances was curbed. Within a week of the siege being initiated, the Jonathan government collapsed and Major-General Lekhanya of the Royal Lesotho Armed Forces assumed power. Within months, the treaty providing South Africa with water was signed and ratified. Funds were soon released by the World Bank and the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) to finance the project in the highlands.

The project, therefore, has its origins in apartheid-style planning and is associated with a lack of democratic decision-making in Lesotho. Ten years later, the project is still the object of controversy about its implementation and impacts.

Implementation of the first phases, 1A and 1B, have created a number of problems for the highland communities. Phase 1A, consisting largely of the construction of the Katse dam, has resulted in the dislocation of many villagers, the inundation of arable land, and the disruption of communications between villages near the dam. Problems of alcoholism and sexually transmitted diseases have become a social crisis in the highlands. Compensation for loss of fields and livelihoods has been inadequate, breeding land hunger as never before. Seismic activity caused by filling the dam has wrecked many houses in the village of Mapeleng. In September 1996, mounted police shot and killed a number of Lesotho workers on the project, during a strike protesting against racially based employment practices and differential pay for Lesotho and foreign nationals. Water scientists have also begun to express their misgivings about the project. If all phases are implemented, the supply to communities further downstream, as the river passes through the arid Kalahari and Namib deserts, will be reduced.

Despite the urging of the World Bank, the Lesotho-staffed implementing agency, the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA), has not been effective in solving problems faced by the highlanders. The
South African authorities have been reluctant to demand the highest standards of their Lesotho counterparts, despite provision in the treaty which guarantees the project will not jeopardise living standards.

Attention to the highlanders’ plight has been underlined by the work of several international aid agencies, foremost of which is Christian Aid, a division of the British Council of Churches, international non-governmental organisations (NGOs), such as the San Francisco-based International Rivers Network, and the Environmental Defense Fund in Washington. Locally, the Highlands Church Action Group and other NGOs have played a role in publicising the issues. In addition, the Group for Environmental Monitoring hosted a workshop in Johannesburg in August 1996 to bring together key players in an attempt to unblock the stalemate in relations between the community and the implementing agency. Some of these initiatives have raised publicity for the resolution of problems associated with the project.

The South African Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry, Professor Kader Asmal, has renewed his pledge to maintain living standards for highlanders. The LHDA has undertaken to work more closely with NGOs to monitor progress. However, the pace of improvement remains slow. Both the World Bank and the DBSA have become more circumspect about financing further stages of the project. Rand Water, the utility which receives the water, is paying more attention to resolving Gauteng’s water crisis through increased water conservation, recycling, plugging systemic leakages and the use of other demand-management techniques.

More people are realising that South Africa’s water security cannot be based on the dislocation of economically and politically vulnerable communities elsewhere in the region. These dislocations do not breed optimal conditions for water or any other forms of security.

helicopters. According to an American expert, my conversations with military planners in South Africa confirmed that they are going ahead to plan on the basis of conventional threats (personal communication from Charles Knight, Project on Defense Alternatives, April 1996). Paradoxically, there is simultaneous acknowledgement by military leaders that there are no conventional threats.

While recognising that demilitarisation and conversion are contested concepts, the GEM project formulated in 1993 points to seven ways in which military resources could be redirected to environmental protection and sustainable development:

- Ideological conversion to a new understanding of security which emphasises its link to development and meeting human needs.
- Conversion of land previously used as military bases.
- Conversion of defence force personnel and equipment for development.
- Demobilisation, retraining and integration of ex-combatants into development institutions and programmes.
- Conversion of informal military structures, such as self-defence.
units, into development-related projects.
• Conversion of the defence industry to civilian production.
• The reallocation of defence expenditure.

**Ideological conversion: redefining security**

A broadened concept of national security, which emphasises the importance of ecological security, is emerging globally. It is increasingly recognised that defining national security largely in military terms fails to recognise many other crucial determinants. Real security can only be attained by reducing spending on armaments and systematically redirecting resources to meet critical human and environmental needs. Real defence is making people stronger by meeting their basic needs. There can be no better fortification than a healthy, well-housed and literate population.

Kaplan argues that West Africa is becoming the symbol of world-wide demographic, environmental and societal stress in which criminal anarchy emerges as the real strategic danger (Kaplan, 1994:46). In his analysis, environmental scarcity is the national-security issue of the early 21st century (Kaplan, 1994:58). Similarly, the former UNCED Secretary-General Maurice Strong maintained that our security is threatened more by environmental risk than by traditional military conflicts (Disarmament Times, March 1992).

A distinction has been drawn between the old world order of the last half century organised around ideological conflict and a new world order organised around environmental sustainability. From this perspective, high defence expenditure has been compared to dismantling a house in order to erect a fence around it. The implication is that a shift of resources is necessary away from military preparations (with their toxic, polluting side-effects) in favour of environmental restoration and sustainable development.

In the old or traditional approach, security was about preserving state sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity. Security was defined as a military issue. However, Nathan has pointed out that this approach has a number of shortcomings: it ignores the underlying reasons for conflict, consumes resources and neglects the various forms of non-violent conflict resolution. This statist and militarist approach to security creates what is termed the security dilemma. The military steps taken by a state to enhance its security may induce insecurity in other states, particularly those with which it has adversarial relations. The inevitable reaction of those states is to heighten their own military preparedness. As the arms race escalates, war preparations become more likely to cause than prevent hostilities (Nathan, 1994:2).

The new concept of ecological security is linked to economic development and human rights. In 1991, it was proposed that a security basket or calabash link security, stability, co-operation and develop-
The consequences of civil war in Angola (Photo: Mail & Guardian)

ment in the African continent. The Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Co-operation, held in Kampala, motivated for the notion of common security on the grounds that the problems experienced by individual African countries are shared problems, and that instability in one state inevitably reduces the stability of neighbouring states. The implication is that security should not only be defined at the level of nation-states, but linked to larger issues of global security and smaller issues of personal security.

In this sense, the notion of human security has always been implicit in the concept of development. Its dimensions include:

- personal and physical security, including a safe and healthy environment;
- economic security, including access to employment;
- social security, including protection from discrimination based on age or social status, combined with access to safety nets;
- political security, including access to justice and protection from abuse; and
- ethnic and cultural security a social climate in which minority populations feel secure in expressing their cultural identity (Buttedahl, 1995:14).

In the old South Africa, in the period of Total Strategy, security was defined primarily with reference to white domination and military power. It is only now that we are beginning to learn of the killing and torture perpetrated by the apartheid state in the name of national
security. Current threat analyses focus on the variety of security problems in the southern African region resulting from poverty, drought, disease and social dislocation. In the new South Africa, security is defined primarily by meeting basic needs.

There is a need to move away from the narrow statist and militarist concept of security as defence from external aggression, to a more holistic approach which recognises that security is a multi-faceted concept with economic, social, political and ecological dimensions. The White Paper on Defence (1996) represents a significant shift in this direction.

**The conversion of military bases to alternative land use**

Demilitarisation involves the closure of some military bases and the dismantling of military installations. Base re-use is complicated by environmental damage and the economic dependence of local communities, but in Penny McKenzie’s pioneering research there are strong ethical arguments for the redistribution of military land. The redistribution of SANDF land was one of the demands made at the National Land Committee Conference held in February 1994, attended by 700 delegates from 353 rural and landless communities. This demand was echoed in a GEM workshop held in 1996, and could resonate to a limited extent with SANDF rationalisation plans.

In 1991 the SANDF was the fourth-largest land-controlling authority in South Africa, managing some 60 military facilities which cover approximately 600,000 hectares of land. According to a military source, these facilities are used for a variety of military purposes including training personnel, for ammunition depots, for air force bases, for shooting and bombing ranges, and for weapon testing sites (Godshalk, 1991:10).

However, there are allegations that the military has occupied pristine land for recreational purposes. There are reports that one of the most attractive camps in the Kruger National Park, Jakkalsbessie - operated for years as a secret SADF camp. There have been reports that the SANDF has built a multi-million rand, 16-bed luxury camp, on pristine coastal dune at the mouth of KwaZulu-Natal’s Kosi Bay, one of the most environmentally sensitive areas in the country. According to a press report there is evidence that what was presented as a small operations base has become a holiday lodge for top-ranking officers (Sunday Independent, 6 October 1996).

This book relates how some military land was acquired through the dispossession and forced removal of communities under the apartheid regime. Documentation by the Surplus People Project (SPP) indicates that the SADF benefited from at least four forced removals. One of these occurred in 1973, when 1500 people were moved from Riemvasmaak near Upington, after the area was declared a military zone. An SPP spokesperson described the removals as one of the
most cruel of all the removals that were taking place around that time. This peace-loving and settled community was divided along racial lines and then according to how officials had chosen to categorise them sent to different destinations. Those whom the state chose to call Xhosa were sent to the Ciskei 1 000 km away and those classified Damara were sent out of South Africa to Damaraland in Namibia over 1 300 km away. Houses were burned in front of the people’s eyes.

In 1993, the Riemvasmaak community applied to the Commission on Land Allocation for permission to return, and did so on 21 May 1994. Riemvasmaak has been used as a model of restitution. However, the community’s legal representative, Henk Smith, has pointed out that restitution entails more than the acquisition of lost land. It involves good planning, resettlement of people, provision of infrastructure and services, economic support programmes, sustainable development and community institution building (Winberg, 1994:24). Minister Derek Hanekom stresses that Riemvasmaak demonstrates the value of mediation and negotiation in the restitution process (ibid.).

The SADF also benefited from the forced removal of 3 500 people from the shores of Lake St Lucia between 1968 and 1979, to establish a missile testing range, and about 3 500 people were removed from the Makatini flats in Zulu land in 1972 and 1973 when a buffer zone was established between Mozambique and Natal (Sunday Times, 4 October 1992).

Lohatla, in the Northern Cape, is a removal site that is generating intense controversy. Two black communities the Maremane and Gatlhose were forcibly removed in 1977 to allow the SADF to build the world’s second-largest battle school. A third group, the Khosis, resisted removal. These displaced groups have claimed back parts of the battle school, which covers 135 000 hectares of land. Despite these claims, the SANDF engages in massive war games on this site against a phantom enemy.

Both Lohatla and Riemvasmaak demonstrate the problems of military contamination. There have been several cases of injury to local people thought to have been caused by unexploded ordnance. The question of military contamination is dramatised by the use of land-mines as offensive weapons in southern Africa.

However, there are precedents for the conversion of military land: a nature reserve Greefswald, near Messina was handed over to the provincial administration. There are plans to develop the whole Limpopo Valley as an ecotourism destination and as part of a system of trans-frontier national parks.

The question of trans-frontier peace parks is another dimension of the land conversion issue. This is anchored in the idea that co-operation across political borders around the management of common
natural resources can simultaneously enhance regional peace and security, and protect biological diversity in the region. However, Koch (1995), for example, has questioned whether the peace park process can promote social development in the region.

Redeploying troops and equipment in development projects

The conversion of human resources is an important challenge for the military and one that is discussed in this book by Rocky Williams. A swords into ploughshares report by a United Nations study group recommends developing mechanisms for transferring some of the world's vast military resources to environmental protection and development programmes for example, using military-related satellites and other information-gathering systems for global monitoring and sharing environmental data, and creating UN international environmental disaster relief teams. The Green Helmets, akin to the UN's Blue Berets peacekeeping teams, would rush to scenes of environmental disaster to provide emergency assistance, measure damage and help to enforce treaty provisions by verifying compliance.

Many governments are reducing the size of their military establishments and some of the human, material and technological resources in this sector are being deployed in environmental protection. In China, military personnel and aircraft have participated in tree planting, forest protection and emergency relief work. In Germany, surveillance flights by special aircraft help to discover and monitor oil spills. A German scout tank, used to detect chemical weapons and radioactive contamination under battlefield conditions, has been modified to detect air and soil pollution.

In Sweden, army helicopters, tracking vehicles and bridging equipment have been used in a variety of environmental emergencies such as wildfires, snowstorms and floods. Both army and navy units have been used to deal with oil spills. Ships with hazardous cargo are monitored by naval command posts. In Brazil, the armed forces provide logistic support to institutions charged with environmental protection. For example, navy units survey extensive areas of the Amazonian forest and territorial waters to prevent the smuggling of endangered species and illegal fishing. Ghana has used its armed forces to increase the mobility, accessibility and monitoring capabilities of the National Environmental Protection Council. On request, the air force carries out reconnaissance flights to monitor encroachments on forest reserves, land usage and desertification, poaching, the use of illegal fishing methods, dumping at sea, and coastal pollution and erosion.

It is debatable whether the military is the best institution to perform these tasks. The South African Constitution provides for an extensive role for the SANDF. Its responsibilities are To defend the sovereignty and territorial integrity of South Africa; to fulfil South
Africa’s international obligations; to preserve life, health and property; to provide or maintain essential services; to uphold law and order, in co-operation with the police; and to support socio-economic upliftment. The White Paper on Defence suggests that socio-economic upliftment involves three dimensions for the SANDF: meeting basic needs, building the economy and developing human resources. It is anticipated that the Service Corps (SC) will play a major role in the last respect.

The SANDF has resources, equipment, skills and infrastructure which could be of considerable benefit to reconstruction and development. In terms of infrastructure, according to the Director of Programming and Budgeting in the SANDF Finance Division, South African Navy facilities could be made available for training in diving, signals, catering and computers, and there are South African Air Force facilities with existing infrastructure available at Hoedspruit and Pienaarrivier (Van der Merwe, 1994). The SANDF could also be involved in adult education and literacy, in providing health facilities through the South African Medical Services (SAMS), and in loaning earth-moving and other construction equipment. There is a valuable repository of skills in the South African Army Engineer Formation and the SAMS.

However, there are profound dangers attached to SANDF involvement in the RDP. One argument is that, given the militarised nature of South Africa’s past, the new defence force should be limited to territorial defence and not deployed in socio-economic development. It has been suggested that such an expanded role would strengthen the military’s legitimacy and block the demilitarisation process.

The 70 000 personnel force level projected for the new army will be extremely costly to maintain. South Africa faces no conventional military threat and a large standing army could constitute a political danger. Huntington has warned that, in societies which have undergone democratic transition, the absence of a foreign threat . . . may leave the military devoid of a legitimate military mission, and enhance their inclination to think about politics (Huntington, 1993:63). The force levels of the new army reflect a tension between social and defence needs. The current emphasis on social needs is influenced by the immense political danger which a compulsory and harsh reduction in numbers would pose, unless linked to a comprehensive demobilisation programme.

In terms of environmental issues, the SANDF could arguably be deployed in tasks similar to those undertaken in Ghana, Brazil and Sweden. The Environmental Services Division of the SANDF requires further investigation, as do the ways in which other countries utilise the military in environmental projects. India may be the most successful example of the use of armed forces for environmental protection. At the National Defence Academy, a crash course in conserva-
tion is part of the syllabus. Every major Indian army formation has an environmental cell which is expected to maintain a close liaison with the Ministry of the Environment, Forests and Wildlife. Vast areas of degraded and semi-desert land have been reclaimed by tree-planting, irrigation schemes and protection of wildlife (World Disarm, 1992:7).

It is necessary to debate the deployment of SANDF personnel in non-military roles and probe the implications of non-offensive defence. This is a strategy, materialised in a national posture, that emphasises defensive rather than offensive military options.

Retraining ex-combatants in developmental programmes

Measures providing for the social integration of demobilised soldiers form a crucial part of the demilitarisation process and have been analysed by Penny Mckenzie and Tsepe Motumi in this book. Demobilised soldiers represent potentially both a security threat and a personnel resource. While demobilised soldiers may have demonstrated exceptional levels of courage and commitment, as a social category they usually have limited skills beyond military training, a disrupted education and minimal employment experience. They are therefore ill-equipped to compete in the civilian labour market.

Demobilisation is seen by the World Bank and other international agencies and development groups as perhaps the most critical step in a country’s post-conflict reconstruction. Various demobilisation schemes in Africa have proved problematic. For instance, the attempt in Zimbabwe to deploy some 9 000 ex-combatants in agricultural work, Soldiers Employed in Economic Development (SEED), collapsed very quickly (Oloa, 1991, cited by Cock, 1993). At the end of the war in Namibia, some 40 000 former PLAN and SWATF combatants were demobilised, and only 5 000 (mainly PLAN) fighters were selected to join the new Namibian Defence Force, which was increased to nearer 7 000 in 1991. The Development Brigade centres set up to provide training and short-term employment for ex-combatants encountered many problems (NSER, 1991, cited by Cock, 1993). In Mozambique, demobilised soldiers were a major source of instability, despite a demobilisation scheme involving altogether 45 000 personnel, which included transport to the district of their choice and six months’ salary as a personal incentive to actively reintegrate into economic and social life (Republic of Mozambique, 1992:4). The African country with the most successful demobilisation scheme is probably Uganda, which has been working since 1992 to demobilise 42 000 soldiers and reduce its army by half, with funds raised by the World Bank.

A key aspect of reconstruction and development in South Africa is the development of human resources through various forms of training and education. A number of demobilisation strategies which could contribute to human resource development should be explored.
It is suggested that we need a Soldiers’ Charter similar to that which benefited many white, male ex-soldiers after the Second World War. This could include access to training institutions similar to that provided by the GI Bill in the US (Cock, 1994).

**Conversion of informal military structures**

Informal military structures are a legacy of the militarisation of South African society. There are initiatives under way to convert these informal structures, such as self-defence units (SDUs), to civilian purposes. For example, in this book Adele Kirsten reports how the Peace Corps in Daveyton trains people in conflict resolution. Another project, involving the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, trains ex-SDU members in group building skills and organisational management, and is planning to offer job training in relation to small business development, a youth advice centre and the establishment of a recycling centre. The last is of special interest in terms of environmental protection and sustainable development. There are also reports from the East Rand that former SDU guerrillas operate as tour guides to sites of violent conflict in Tokoza and Katlehong.

**Conversion of the defence industry**

Under the apartheid regime, South Africa developed a massive arms industry. At its hub lay the Armaments Development and Production Corporation (Armscor) which made South Africa the world’s tenth-largest arms exporter, supplying perhaps 30 different countries across the globe (Baynham, 1990:405).

Armscor plans to expand arms exports by 300 per cent in the next five years, increasing arms sales to approximately R2.4 billion (Willett, 1994). These plans are generating debate, particularly in view of the evidence presented to the Cameron Commission, which exposed Armscor’s sales of weapons to a number of war-ravaged countries. For example, there is evidence that Armscor sold R100 million worth of weaponry to the Rwandan government in the five years prior to October 1993. There have also been allegations that South Africa supplied a further R50 million worth of weapons to the Hutu forces during June 1994, after the main acts of genocide against the Tutsi population had taken place.

Recent cancellations of sales to Rwanda do not detract from the reality that South Africa has become a major player in the global arms market with $272 million worth of exports in the 1995/6 financial year to 58 different countries (Jane’s Defence Weekly, 8 May 1996). Despite the formal criteria established by the new arms control body, the National Conventional Arms Control Committee (NCACC), and statements from President Mandela and the Department of Foreign Affairs on the country’s commitment to disarmament and of making
our world a more friendly place to live in (Department of Foreign Affairs, 1996), South Africa contributes to violent conflict, repression and the erosion of human rights and welfare throughout the world.

The conclusion is that, in both local and global terms, South Africa's arms industry is a source of moral contamination. It has played a crucial role in maintaining the apartheid regime and its exports have supported wars and oppressive regimes around the world; it should therefore be dismantled. Arguments about the benefits of the arms industry in terms of jobs, foreign exchange and international prestige are devoid of ethical considerations.

Economist arguments maintain that the defence industry is a national asset, a crucial repository of advanced technology, skills and expertise and, on the basis of the jobs and foreign exchange it generates, should be protected. However, according to Peter Batchelor, research indicates that the economic benefits are greatly exaggerated, especially when taxpayer subsidies and offsets are subtracted. Furthermore, the arms industry absorbs disproportionate numbers of science and technology graduates and skilled technicians. As Willett and Batchelor write, Many studies suggest that arms production is inefficient and expensive. It may encourage growth in the short run, but it distorts the structure of the national economy in the long run and has only limited export potential, particularly at present when international demand for weapons systems is declining and the arms market is saturated (Willett & Batchelor, 1994:4).

It has been claimed that, in 1993, South Africa's arms exports generated 15 000 jobs and only accounted for between 0.7 and 1.3 per cent of total annual exports during the last decade. From these figures, Batchelor concludes that the defence sector's contribution to overall economic performance is far less significant than claimed. If the value of government subsidies is removed from annual sales, the contribution of South Africa's arms exports to the balance of trade and the balance of payments is marginal.

Economists such as Willett, Batchelor and Fine argue that the economic costs of the domestic defence industry outweigh the benefits, and that the future must involve a careful conversion to civilian production with the co-operation of government, industry and the trade unions. There are difficulties with conversion at plant level, but there is also evidence that the process is under way in South Africa. Until 1990, the mechanical engineering company Reumech was oriented towards military output, but has been successfully transformed into a manufacturer of commercial products, and is only about 50 per cent dependent on the defence market (The Star, 6 June 1996). However, these initiatives need to be part of a holistic approach to demilitarisation and understood as part of industrial restructuring.

While the social and moral impact of the arms industry is subject to increasing debate, its environmental impact has not been system-
ically investigated.

Generally, weapon production and testing involve considerable environmental degradation. Several reserves in South Africa have been used as missile testing sites. In 1991, 72 000 hectares of land at St Lucia, parts of which had been used as a weapons testing ground since 1968, were transferred to the Natal Parks Board. There are reports that weapons testing caused considerable environmental damage in a pristine area from Cape Vidal to Sodwana (*Saturday Argus*, 12 October 1996). An Armscor demonstration of a multiple rocket launcher resulted in a massive fire which raged across St Lucia for days (*The Star*, 7 June 1991). In 1996 about 20 powerful surface-to-surface missiles, at least six of which were live, were discovered in the area (*Saturday Argus*, 12 October 1996). It should be noted that St Lucia was one of the first four conservation areas to be proclaimed in Africa in 1987. It is a designated wetland of international significance under the RAMSAR Convention.

De Hoop Nature Reserve, near Arniston in the Western Cape, is still a military zone and used for testing ballistic missiles developed by Armscor. This is where South Africa, in conjunction with Israel, tested an intercontinental missile capable of carrying nuclear warheads.

**Reallocation of defence expenditure**

Increasing numbers of South Africans are concerned about high levels of defence expenditure—now R10.5 billion, which amounts to about 2 per cent of GDP. Although it has decreased in real terms by 50 per cent since 1989, South Africa still has the largest defence budget in Africa. A commitment to a technologically advanced military force is extremely expensive. The Defence Review advocated the purchase of major items such as naval patrol vessels, submarines, jet fighters and 12 Rooivalk attack helicopters as support for ground troops. Kasrils has argued that these purchases will enable South Africa to acquire military hardware while creating jobs and training opportunities. But it has been clearly established by scholars such as Nicole Ball and Paul Dunne that defence spending has a negative effect on economic growth. Planned, orderly reductions in defence spending could mean alternative investment in sustainable development generally and environmental management programmes specifically. At the very least, every defence expense must be considered in relation to a host of competing demands for resources to meet basic needs.

**Conclusion**

The process of democratisation in South Africa is extremely fragile. Now that a pluralist political system and universal franchise have been secured, the consolidation of democracy depends on the trans-
formation of economic and social relations. This requires a shifting of power and resources away from the military to social and economic development.

There are seven areas in which this could be achieved in a planned, orderly and holistic way. The conversion and reallocation of military resources to alleviate poverty and environmental degradation should be priorities. As Eisenhower said, “Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired, represents, in the final analysis, a theft from those that hunger and are not fed, are cold and are not clothed.” In South Africa, the victims of theft are the 40 per cent of the population who live in poverty. In the interests of both justice and social stability their needs must be met.

For this to happen, civil society needs to be empowered. Debates on defence policy issues are not particularly well informed and there is no strong, mass-based demilitarisation movement to challenge the power of the defence establishment. This is a serious problem. In developing countries, but especially in Africa, the military has accumulated power and resources, and subverted democracy partly because civil society has lacked the capacity to engage with it. Healthy civil-military relations require the empowerment of civil society to engage with defence issues; to challenge insider security expert assessment of security needs and budget justification. Further research and public debate on a multi-dimensional conversion programme are urgently needed. It is hoped that the publication of this book will advance that process.
South Africa’s post-apartheid government has inherited the most powerful armed forces in Africa south of the Sahara. This military power was achieved at considerable expense during the apartheid era. By the late 1980s:

- defence spending had increased to around one-quarter of the state budget and 5 per cent of GDP;
- white adult males faced 14 years of intermittent military service, including two years of full-time duty;
- the defence industry constituted the largest manufacturing sector;
- a nuclear capability had been developed; and
- government was largely in the hands of the military-dominated National Management System, which became the engine of counter-revolution during successive states of emergency.

While South Africa was never under military rule as such, the defence force exerted a strong influence over state policy. Development objectives were linked to security imperatives and the defence force had first-call on the state budget. Strategic industries, including defence, petroleum, and iron and steel, were prioritised in efforts to achieve self-reliance in the face of a hostile world (Cawthra, 1986).

Considerable demilitarisation took place under the presidency of F.W. de Klerk:

- the National Management System was disbanded;
- defence spending was cut by 40 per cent (although much of the money saved was transferred to the police);
- the defence industry went into sharp decline;
- conscription was reduced;
- unilateral nuclear disarmament took place; and
- greater civil control was asserted over the military.
GUNS OR BUTTER

Adam Smith

For more than 200 years, economists have been concerned with the trade off between guns or butter. Adam Smith concentrated on this in his *Wealth of Nations* by focusing on the four French wars and two Dutch wars, and their impact on the productivity and treasury of a nation. Smith put the matter succinctly: In the course of the four French wars, the nation has contracted more than a hundred and forty-five million of debt, over and above all the other extraordinary annual expense which they had occasioned, so that the whole cannot be computed at less than two-hundred million. So great a share of the annual produce of land and labour of the country, has, since the revolution, been employed upon different occasions, in maintaining an extraordinary number of productive hands, whose labour would have replaced, with a profit, the whole value of their consumption. The value of the annual produce of the land and labour of the country, would have been considerably increased by it every year. More houses would have been built, more lands would have been improved, and those which had been improved before would have been better cultivated, more manufactures would have been established, and those which had been established would have been more extended . . . (Laurence Klein, Bonn International Center for Conversion, *Bulletin 3*)

The process of demilitarisation was far from complete by May 1994, when the ANC-led Government of National Unity (GNU) was inaugurated. The new government adopted a development-oriented programme stressing the need for economic growth and distribution, the extension and consolidation of democracy, and the improvement of social conditions. These priorities were incorporated into the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). However, even within the ANC and its alliance partners, there was disagreement over the extent to which the new priorities should be funded by further defence cuts. Furthermore, the relationship between defence spending, the defence industry and economic growth was disputed.

These disagreements were sharpened when it came to defining defence budgets. The 1994/5, 1995/6, 1996/7 and 1997/8 budgets resulted in cuts in military spending. (Although 1994/5 showed a slight increase due to the short-term cost of integrating the various armed formations, with integration costs excluded, there was a 13 per cent cut.) In the 1997/8 budget, defence was allocated R9.579 billion (US$2.1 billion) – about 5.2 per cent of government expenditure and 1.5 per cent of GDP. With the defence budget halved since 1989, and well within the target of 2 per cent of GDP recommended by the World Bank for developing countries, it would appear that those
advocating demilitarisation have won a decisive victory.

However, the defence force has been agitating for new equipment notably naval corvettes and Rooivalk helicopters. This has proved another source of disagreement. Many argue that the money would be better spent on the RDP, while the defence ministry insists that new purchases are vital to prevent block obsolescence, and to protect South Africa’s sovereignty and economic interests.

These debates indicate that, for the first time in South Africa, it is possible to have a reasonably open discussion on key questions related to defence, security and development. The White Paper on Defence, adopted by parliament in May 1996, and the subsequent Defence Review, were the result of a wide-ranging and open consultative process. To some extent policy was still made in smoke-filled rooms, but the new South Africa has approached defence policy-making with a degree of transparency and accountability that compares favourably with that of advanced democracies.

**New approaches to security**

At the heart of the new debate is a different concept of security. In a narrow sense, security and development are two issues. During the Cold War, security was seen as defence by a sovereign state from external aggression. Since the end of the Cold War, this concept has been progressively modified: security has been widened to embrace social, economic and political issues, and both trans-national and subnational factors (Buzan, 1991; Booth, 1991).

This holistic approach to security is becoming commonplace; it pervades the ANC’s security policies. It is, however, not entirely new, and it contains a number of sand-traps for those seeking to employ it in the service of demilitarisation. In apartheid South Africa between 1977 and 1989 (roughly the period of P.W. Botha’s presidency) a multi-faceted security strategy was implemented, involving economic, social and political dimensions as well as military prowess. However, this Total Strategy proved extraordinarily reductionist in its concept of a communist total onslaught into which it categorised virtually all significant opposition to apartheid. As the crisis deepened in the 1980s, Total Strategy fell back onto military and police repression, and counter-insurgency doctrine.

The ANC, in its policy documents, has argued for a multi-faceted or holistic approach to security. This is based on democratisation of all aspects of life: security should not be restricted to military, police and intelligence matters, but political, economic, social and environmental dimensions. Underdevelopment, poverty, lack of democratic participation and abuse of human rights are regarded as grave threats to the security of people (ANC, 1992: Section Q2). This approach is implicit in the RDP. Peace and security form one of the
THE YEAR 2000 CAMPAIGN TO REDIRECT WORLD MILITARY SPENDING TO HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

The world's governments spend $868 billion a year to support military forces of more than 27 million soldiers. This phenomenal expenditure for achieving security is itself a threat to security: global military spending represents 12 per cent of all government expenditure at a time when citizens in both developed and developing countries face sharp cuts in social programmes such as health and education. Global military spending must be reduced and accompanied by an increase in funding for human development.

It is the belief of the Year 2000 Campaign that, by reducing global military spending, demilitarising societies, and developing concrete plans for regional conflict prevention, global security in the 21st century can be preserved and enhanced.

Dr Oscar Arias, former President of Costa Rica and a patron of the Year 2000 Campaign, argued that developed nations bear a large part of the responsibility for the $868 billion price tag on global security, accounting for 75 per cent of the world's military spending. The United States alone spent $270 billion on its defence budget in 1993 - a third of the world's total - allegedly to keep force readiness high enough to fight two simultaneous wars. However, for many countries, including the United States, sufficient military security can be achieved at far lower levels of spending.

Not only are the developed countries big military spenders; they are also responsible for 90 per cent of arms transfers to developing nations. The dangerous global proliferation of arms and weapons technology has contributed to inciting and prolonging many of the world's 44 regional and internal conflicts, most in developing countries.

Developing countries spent $221 billion on armed forces in 1993. While this is far lower than military spending by the developed world, it is still a tremendous drain on these nations' already limited resources. Military spending exacts a particularly heavy toll on the social sector in the developing world and too often means a trade-off in which the rest of society loses.

The Year 2000 Campaign has a six-point plan of action to cut military spending and redirect resources to human development:

- The Security Council and General Assembly of the United Nations call on all nations to meet with their neighbours to identify and implement confidence-building measures and mutual reductions in military threats. These nations will seek substantial reductions in military forces and expenditures by the year 2000.
- Special envoys be appointed by the United Nations Secretary-General to organise these demilitarisation talks by region.
- Every nation meets with its regional envoy to present plans for regional security at reduced force levels.
- With savings from reduced military spending, all nations, in co-operation with grass roots organisations, implement related reforms, such as conversion, land-mine clearance, community reconstruction, and the reintegration of demobilised soldiers.
- Industrialised nations condition their bilateral and multilateral aid to promote demilitarisation. They will exchange debt forgiveness for military conversion efforts, promote full transparency and reductions.
in military budgets, and bring about the end of military involvement in the civilian economy.

- All arms-exporting nations agree to a code of conduct on arms transfers that would bar arms exports to non-democratic governments, countries engaged in armed aggression in violation of international law, countries that do not fully participate in the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, and governments permitting gross violations of internationally recognised human rights.

(Source: An edited version of the campaign statement by Dr Oscar Arias, December 1995)

six principles of the RDP as originally formulated by the ANC. An integrated programme, based on the people, that provides peace and security for all and builds the nation, links reconstruction and development and deepens democracy these are the six basic principles of the RDP (ANC 1994: Sections 1.3.4, 1.3.8).

To talk of an integrated programme begs the question of the exact relationship between defence and development: on this the RDP both in its original formulation by the ANC and in the White Paper issued by the GNU is virtually silent.

**Defence expenditure and economic development**

Unfortunately, most studies of the effect of the armament process and the build-up of military forces on economic performance deal with developed industrial countries, and have little relevance to a developing country like South Africa. Nevertheless, since the late 1960s, the effect of militarisation in developing countries has been the focus of considerable research, particularly as many have fallen to military coups.

In the 1960s and 1970s, some researchers argued that the military were modernisers. With their managerial-technical capabilities, often lacking in civil society, they could marshal the resources of the state for nation-building. This was the argument that P.W. Botha used when he ushered the military into the political decision-making process at the end of the 1970s, with consequences that led South Africa to the brink of civil war. The appalling experiences of military rule in Argentina, Chile, Burma, several Middle East countries and literally dozens of African countries have effectively put paid to arguments supporting a developmental role for the military.

Even if soldiers stay safely in their barracks, there is the complex question of the relationship between investment in armed forces and defence industries and socio-economic development. For some time the debate centred on the study made by Benoit in 1973, in which he
Sue Willett

For three decades, southern Africa was the location of some of the most deadly and protracted conflicts in the world. Angola, Mozambique, Namibia, Zimbabwe and South Africa have all experienced violent struggles against white minority rule. Superpower intervention extended conflict in the region, intensifying the scale of destruction and death.

Huge amounts of scarce resources have been allocated to military expenditure to sustain war in the region. For example, in 1993, regional military expenditures reached a total of US$5.7 billion. The military diverted resources from much-needed development goals such as education, welfare and infrastructural projects.

The region is moving towards peace, reflected in lower levels of military expenditure, disarmament, demobilisation and the reintegration of ex-combatants into civil society. The transition to peace is also captured in the emphasis on sustainable development, multi-party democracy and collective regional security.

The significant decline in military expenditure is potentially positive for development, particularly if defence savings are translated into socio-economic gains. According to International Institute for Strategic Studies estimates, regional defence spending has declined by about 10 per cent between 1992 and 1996.

Within the region, there are some notable exceptions to the general trends of decline in military expenditure. Zimbabwe, Botswana, Lesotho and Namibia have all reversed the trend of decline in the last few years. Most of these increases are the result of buying new equipment. For instance, in 1995 and 1996 Botswana embarked on an ambitious programme of arms acquisition which included placing orders for second-hand Leopard tanks, combat aircraft (F-5s) and anti-tank missiles. Zimbabwe has ordered US$3.3 mil-

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<tr>
<td>(Expenditure in constant 1993 prices, US$m.)</td>
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<td>Angola</td>
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Source: The Military Balance. various. International Institute for Strategic Studies
lion worth of armoured personnel carriers from France. Reactions to these purchases have been somewhat alarmist, given the small scale of these procurements compared to the overwhelming balance of military power sustained by the SANDF. South African military expenditure is now below 2 per cent of GDP, but it represents almost three times the combined expenditures of the rest of the region.

Given multilateral and bilateral pressure from donors to reduce defence expenditure and reallocate resources for development goals, it is likely that overall regional defence spending will continue to decline in the future. Realising these benefits in the southern African context will not be automatic. In the short term there are many problems associated with military expenditure cuts, such as providing for effective reintegration of ex-combatants into civil society. Another problem is that the peace dividend too easily disappears into deficit funding, for war-torn economies are inevitably debt-torn economies. In this way, expectations of the socio-economic benefits of peace are thwarted, fuelling social and political discontent. This situation raises some uncomfortable issues for multilateral and bilateral donors whose preoccupations with macroeconomic stabilisation and debt repayment are at odds with the pressing need for post-war economic reconstruction and sustainable development.

Without sustainable development there is no guarantee of peace and stability in the region. Indeed, a failure to address the pressing socio-economic and environmental needs can only result in a return to discord and strife. Southern African governments and donors alike need to work in harmony to maximise the benefits of the region’s potential peace dividend.

It is common sense that countries which spend a lot on armaments will have less to spend on health, education and other social services. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has argued that developing countries need to move away from spending on

\[1\] As used by the United Nations Development Programme, the HDI measures life expectancy, level of education and provision of health.
defence for the state (more often the regime in power rather than the people) and towards human security. While poor countries' defence expenditure is a fraction of developed countries' spending, channelling it towards human security would make a huge difference (Ul Haq, 1995). In part, this is happening. Developing countries' spending on defence peaked at the end of the 1980s and has been declining since then (although the process is uneven for example, expenditure in East Asia is increasing rapidly). This is not necessarily a result of political elites coming to their senses: the causes include constant debt (preventing the import of arms), donor pressures, the end of military client arrangements with the superpowers, and the implosion of states.

Nevertheless, many developing countries spend a greater proportion of their GDP on defence than developed countries, although there are discrepancies. There is little correlation between military rule and military spending: civilian governments are often the biggest spenders. Why do some developing countries spend more on defence than others? Why do developing countries' governments continue to spend on defence when they face pressing social problems? More to the point, given that these governments are usually threatened by internal unrest originating in social deprivation, poverty, marginalisation, environmental degradation and ethnic exclusion, why do they waste money on defence? It has been calculated that for one modern jet fighter, schooling could be offered to a million children. Surely this would be a better guarantee of security?

There are no simple answers. Patronage, the international arms market, elite formations and ideology all play a part. Most developing countries are ruled by weak regimes which lack legitimacy and are marginalised in the world system. As a result, they have become obsessed with security, leading to military spending, a high political profile for the military and the distortion of economic development priorities for security reasons (Ayoob, 1995:192). Furthermore, militaries have become powerful actors within weak states, as witnessed by the succession of coups in Africa.

The dilemma is that, for development to occur, there needs to be a degree of stability and the state needs to be able to carry out some functions. If this is achieved through militarism or military dictatorship it usually proves anti-developmental. Development will depend on the evolution of a strong civil society and a democratic system in which human security is achieved. It is difficult to see how the poorest countries are ever going to reach the point where both state and human security requirements are met. While Africa has undergone a wave of democratisation, this is very fragile and periodic reversions to military intervention in politics appear inevitable.
The SANDF and the RDP

What of the defence force, and its possible role in socio-economic development and in delivering the RDP? A key aspect of the RDP is the development of human resources, and it is in this respect that South Africa is least competitive internationally. The military demobilisation and rationalisation process could assist in the development of human resources if soldiers are properly retrained and their skills converted for use in civil society. A successful historical example is the GI Bill passed in the United States after the Second World War, where demobilised soldiers were given educational credits to study at the academic or training institution of their choice. The Soldiers Charter in South Africa benefited white male ex-soldiers. But there are considerable dangers inherent in demobilisation if former military personnel are not properly reintegrated into civil society.

The SANDF has already provided an inventory of facilities and resources it might offer to the RDP. This includes training and education (adult education and literacy), the provision of health facilities through the South African Medical Services, and the loaning of earth-moving or other construction equipment (De Kock, 1994). The SANDF clearly has resources, equipment and human skills of use to the RDP, especially as much of it is underutilised due to the demilitarisation process. It also has a formidable logistics capability which has been used to excellent effect during times of crisis.
It is tempting for those involved in the RDP to look to the SANDF for logistical and other help. There seem to be compelling reasons for the SANDF’s involvement in a new war against poverty and inequality. Nevertheless, there are profound dangers, both for civil society and for the defence force. It is not in the long-term interests of the SANDF to be too involved in civilian development issues. This detracts from its primary role of protecting the sovereignty of South Africa and its people. Prolonged exposure to such tasks will also, inevitably, have a politicising effect. Armies are not necessarily as efficient or as cost-effective as they might seem (Ball, 1988). Military equipment is far more costly than civilian equipment and soldiers are often expensively trained—it is clearly not cost-effective to use armoured vehicles to bring in a potato crop.

For these reasons, care should be taken at the outset to determine exactly under what conditions the defence force involves itself in the RDP. As with peacekeeping operations, it may be easier to get in than to get out, and unless objectives and time-frames are determined in advance, it could become a protracted and increasingly messy engagement.

This cautious approach is government policy, as expressed in the White Paper on Defence (1996). Nevertheless, the government has accepted that, under exceptional circumstances, service delivery by other departments might break down—for example, through natural disasters—and the SANDF’s expertise might be needed. The White Paper specifies that, under such circumstances, the employment should be requested from the Department of Defence (DOD) by the relevant government department; it should have the consent of the affected community; it should have a limited time duration; and it should be subject to civilian control (Department of Defence, 1996: 31).

Where surplus capacity is involved, it may be wise to look at conversion to civilian use. The SANDF is already engaged in negotiations with other government departments for the handover of land and facilities. The same can be done with some vehicles, equipment, and health and welfare facilities now surplus to requirements (although many of these are unsuitable for civilian use or too expensive to maintain for these purposes).

While the RDP cannot be delivered in a climate of lawlessness and disorder, it is evident that high levels of investment in security will deny resources to the RDP and hinder its implementation. Arguments for justifying defence expenditure on the grounds of RDP support are unsound.

**Defence and development within the SADC**

South Africa’s development-oriented approach to security, resting on a commitment to human security and the consolidation of democra-
cy, has been echoed in the approach adopted by the Southern African Development Community (SADC). South Africa is committed to regional development and security, and regards the two as closely related. The 1994 RDP White Paper is unequivocal:

A central proposal of the RDP is that we cannot build the Southern African economy in isolation from its neighbours . . . If South Africa attempted to dominate its neighbours, it would restrict their growth, reducing their potential as markets, worsening their unemployment and causing increased migration to South Africa. If it seeks mutual co-operation it can develop a large, stable market offering stable employment and common labour standards in all areas (RSA, 1994: Section 1.4.14).

This commitment to co-operation for development is paralleled by support for common security. The SADC states will shape their political, security and defence policies in co-operation with each other. Many problems are shared and ignore borders: refugees, environmental degradation, trafficking in drugs and light weapons. While the White Paper on Defence supports a co-operative approach to defence (sharing of intelligence, logistics, training and the adoption of common doctrines) it points out that most of the region’s security problems are non-military and require political and economic solutions (Department of Defence, 1996: Chapter 4).

The SADC has taken on political and security tasks, and economic development functions. An Organ on Politics, Security and Defence, functioning at presidential, ministerial and technical levels, was established during 1996. It was charged with a list of tasks, including:

- preventive diplomacy;
- harmonising foreign policies;
- conflict resolution;
- facilitating peacekeeping;
- collective security;
- mutual defence from external aggression; and
- police, intelligence and defence co-operation (SADC, 1996).

The Inter-State Defence and Security Committee, an extensive network of committees overseeing defence, police and intelligence co-operation, forms the backbone of the Organ.

The SADC has called for a new approach to security in which socio-economic development and the consolidation of democracy are seen as the key to addressing security threats over the long term. This approach was developed at a ministerial workshop in Windhoek, Namibia, during July 1994, in which mechanisms to ensure human rights, arms control and disarmament, and conflict resolution were
discussed (SADC, 1994). However, the organisation has now settled on a far less elaborate structure. While it has the benefits of flexibility, it has been criticised by a number of South African non-governmental organisations for failing to institutionalise mechanisms for dealing with human rights violations.

Despite its commitment to a new approach, it is likely that the SADC will fall into the habits of most regional organisations which have sought to combine security functions with development to concentrate on state (or regime) security rather than human security. There is clearly a tension between a commitment to disarmament and a non-military approach to security, and a simultaneous commitment to developing capacity for mutual defence and peacekeeping. It remains to be seen how the SADC will manage this tension and in which way it will evolve.

**Conclusion**

Given the absence of an external threat, South Africa’s security will rest primarily on meeting the needs of the population. This should imply a continual move away from investment in defence. Nevertheless, most South Africans would argue that at least some defence capability should be retained, given domestic and regional requirements. Achieving the optimum balance between expenditure aimed at meeting the wider needs of human security, and expenditure on defence and policing to provide the stability needed for development, will not be easy. Much will depend on an informed and transparent assessment of options and the consolidation of democratic processes.
THE DEFENCE BUDGET AND SOME ALTERNATIVES

Rob Thomson

The South African defence budget could be redirected to meeting socio-economic needs and help to create the stability and social justice on which South Africa’s security depends. The South African defence budget for 1997/8 amounted to R9 579 million, that is 5.2 per cent of the total budget, or about 1.5 per cent of GDP (Republic of South Africa, 1997b). Although this level is considerably lower than some of the militarised economies such as Russia, the United States, Israel and some Middle East countries, it is notably higher than the most recent figures for such countries as Austria, Japan, New Zealand, Mexico and Brazil (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 1996; United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, 1995). In absolute terms, South Africa’s military expenditure exceeds that of any other country in Africa.

As indicated in Figure 1, the budget comprised a general defence account of R8 346 million and a special defence account of R1 233 million. The general defence account was to be used for the general running costs of the various South African National Defence Force (SANDF) defence programmes as indicated in Figure 2. A breakdown of those running costs is indicated in Figure 3. The special defence account was to be used for the acquisition of armaments and the purchase of ammunition, spares, etc. Besides these amounts, the sum of R418 million was carried forward from the 1996/7 financial year.

Military intelligence costs were met from the national defence budget, but the details were not disclosed. Civilian intelligence costs, for national and foreign intelligence, were met from the state expenditure budget; an amount of R768,4 million was budgeted for secret services in 1997/8.

Defence property is the responsibility of the Department of Public Works. In the 1997/8 budget, an amount of R45,5 million was allocated for the erection or purchase of land, buildings and structures for defence. Military pensions were met from the Department of Finance’s budget. In 1997/8, an amount of R128 million was provided for.
There were substantial shifts in expenditure between 1995/6 and 1996/7, as indicated in Figure 4. General running costs increased by a total of R1 371 million, partly because there was a carry-forward of R854 million from the 1994/5 financial year, which reduced the 1995/6 budget. Even after allowing for that effect, the increase in general running costs amounted to 6.6 per cent. The decrease in the special defence account was largely due to the carry-forward from 1995/6. If allowance is made for that carry-forward, there is an actual increase of 11 per cent. In comparison with 1995/6, therefore, the 1996/7 defence budget showed no commitment by government to any significant reduction in defence spending.

Figure 4 indicates a levelling-off of the general defence account and a reduction of the special defence account in 1997/8. However, the expenditure should be increased by funds rolled over from the previous year, which amount to R418 million. The amount made available to the SANDF has thus reduced from R10 246 million to R9 996 million, a decrease of only R250 million before adjustments that will inevitably be granted later in the year. In 1996/7, adjustments amounted to R419 million. It is therefore quite possible that 1997/8 will show a nominal increase in military spending.

Frequent reference is made by the Ministries of Defence and Finance to the substantial cuts in the defence budget since the 1980s. However, it must be remembered that, during those years, the apartheid regime placed itself on a war footing and was engaged in internal and external military actions. The country has not merely returned to the state of preparedness that existed in the early 1970s, when military expenditure was comparable with present levels, but to an absence of military threat. Defence expenditure should therefore be a small fraction of its 1970s levels, let alone those of the 1980s.

Alternatives to defence spending

The amount currently spent on the SANDF is a drain on government finance and on the economy as a whole. Resources need to be redirected to address the massive socio-economic inequities created by 46 years of apartheid government. The reconstruction and development of South Africa is essential for the establishment of peace and security. How could an amount of R9,6 billion be better spent?

Housing

In terms of the national housing policy, the state subsidises new home owners by up to R15 000, depending on their earnings (Department of Housing, 1996). It is estimated that, at the end of 1995, the housing backlog was 1,5-million units:

| Family units in urban shacks | 500 000 |
| Family units in rural shacks  | 300 000 |
| Family units sharing housing  | 700 000 |
|                                | 1 500 000 |

In addition, there were 1,3 million family units in traditional dwellings and, with national population growth, it is estimated that 2 million additional units will be required over the next ten years. Government is nevertheless only targeting 1 million houses in the five years ending 1999. It is estimated that, even without
replacing traditional dwellings, the cost of housing the nation over the next ten years on the basis of R15 000 subsidies will be R4,5 billion per year.

Subsidies of R15 000 are regarded as inadequate and tend to leave home-owners excessively indebted. The economic multiplier effects that should be realised from housing are not being achieved. Increasing the subsidy to R15 000 would increase the cost to R5,5 billion per year. The 1997/5 budget allows only R2,5 billion for capital additions to the South African Housing Fund, so that the total increase required is R3,3 billion per year.

**Education**

Government policy provides for ten years of compulsory schooling. In formerly African schools this means enrolling those currently out of school, reducing pupil-teacher ratios to 40:1 and 35:1 for primary and secondary schools respectively, eliminating the shortfalls in textbooks and other materials, upgrading teachers qualifications to the required standards, and building an estimated 127 000 new classrooms (Department of Education, 1995). The cost of meeting this objective over a five-year period is about R7,5 billion per year.

It has been estimated that there are about 3,5 million out-of-school youth in South Africa (Everatt & Jennings, 1995). Reports indicate differences in the cost per participant in providing appropriate training (Joint Education Trust, 1995). Assuming a cost per participant of R2 000 and a take-up rate of 30 per cent, the cost of addressing the issue over a five-year period will be R0,4 billion per year.

About 5 million South African adults are functionally illiterate and potential participants in adult literacy and basic education provision (Aitcheson, 1996). A government programme could be launched to remedy this situation over a five-year period. Assuming a 15:1 learner-educator ratio and a 25 per cent take-up of the service, it is estimated that the cost of the programme will be R0,3 billion per year.

**Electrification**

The process of extending electricity connections to all South African homes is being partially addressed by Eskom. The costs of this programme are being met by cross-subsidies from electricity tariff payers. By the end of the programme in 1999, Eskom estimates that only 30 per cent of rural South African houses will be electrified (Eskom, 1995). During 1995, the capital expenditure on rural and urban connections was R3 370 per connection (Eskom, 1996). Most of these connections are not expected to be profitable in the long term. Furthermore, the capital costs of rural connections are considerably higher than those of urban connections. To extend electricity supply to a substantial majority of rural homes, higher capital outlays will be required (Davis, 1996).

It has been proposed that electrification capital costs should be subsidised through fiscal allocations (Davis, Pickering & Steyn, 1996). With subsidies it has been estimated that the total annual disbursement will be about R1,7-billion per year (ibid.).

**Water and sanitation**

The Department of Water Affairs and Forestry defines basic water and sanitation services as 25 litres of water per person per day, obtainable within 200 metres from the dwelling, and one ventilated improved pit per household (Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, 1994). By its admission, this is not considered to be adequate for a full, healthy and productive life. The department estimates that 12 000 to 15 000 communities do not have adequate water and sanitation services. Government policy is to subsidise the cost of constructing basic services but not operating, maintenance or replacement costs.

To meet the goal of providing universal basic water supply and sanitation services
to all citizens over a seven-year period, it will be necessary to increase the department’s allocation of 1.16 per cent of the national budget to 3.24 per cent, that is R3.8 billion (Republic of South Africa, 1997b; Department of Water Affairs and Forestry, 1994).

**Health**

The 1997/8 health budget was 10.7 per cent of the national budget (Republic of South Africa, 1997a), yet some provinces are having to close clinics because of budgetary constraints. The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) emphasises the building of clinics, and ongoing staffing and management will represent a greater cost in the long run (Republic of South Africa, 1994). Furthermore, the services provided at local authority clinics need to be extended so that comprehensive services are provided 24 hours a day. To achieve this goal, local authority subsidies will need to be increased. It has been estimated that the additional cost of providing a needs-based primary health-care package will be about R5.8 billion (Rispel, Price & Cabral, 1996).

**State old-age pensions**

With effect from 1 July 1997, the maximum old-age pension will be R470 per month. More than 2.8 million people receive monthly grants. A real increase in the maximum old-age pension to R500 per month, with proportionate increases to other grants, will cost about R0.8 billion per year.

**Policing**

The South African Police Service budget for 1997/8 was R11.9 billion, that is 6.5 per cent of the national budget (Republic of South Africa, 1997b). To extend full services to historically under-serviced areas, an additional 339 police stations will have to be built and staffed. Over a five-year period, the average additional budgetary requirements will amount to about R0.6 billion.

**Summary**

The increases in budgets proposed above amount to R24.2 billion:

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<td>Housing</td>
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<td>Education:</td>
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<td>Primary and secondary</td>
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<td>Out-of-school youth</td>
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<td>Adult basic education &amp; training</td>
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<td>Electrification</td>
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<td>Water and sanitation</td>
<td>3.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>5.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>State old-age pensions</td>
<td>0.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Policing</td>
<td>0.6</td>
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Not all of these items could be met from the defence budget, nor would it be feasible to eliminate the defence budget in the short term. Furthermore, problems cannot be solved merely by throwing money at them; adequate consultation, planning and organisation are needed to ensure delivery. But the alternatives outlined above all represent more pressing needs than corvettes, submarines and attack helicopters. These alternatives would avoid wasting money on ineffectual enterprises and, in the cases of housing, education, electrification, water and sanitation, constitute an investment in the future. Providing additional funds for health, state old-age pensions and policing would help to create a responsible level of socio-economic justice in South Africa.
In May 1996, parliament ratified the *White Paper on National Defence for the Republic of South Africa*. This was the culmination of a yearlong process of consulting parliamentary defence committees, political parties and civil society interest groups with the view to forging a national consensus on defence matters (preface to the *Draft White Paper on National Defence*, 21 June 1995).

The *White Paper* covers the following topics: the transformation of defence policy; civil-military relations; the internal and external strategic environment; regional security; the primary and secondary functions of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF); human resource issues, including integration, demobilisation and affirmative action; budgetary considerations; arms control and the defence industry; and land and the environment.

The *White Paper* marks a fundamental break from the aggressive and repressive strategies of the National Party government over several decades. It seeks to bring defence policy into line with the new democratic dispensation, Bill of Rights and strategic environment in South Africa, and with international law on armed conflict. It also seeks to reverse the high level of state militarisation which characterised the apartheid era.

Militarisation and demilitarisation can be measured by the size, and the increase or decrease over time, of a country’s armed forces, defence budget and weapons holdings. Yet these quantitative factors are, at least in part, a logical consequence of the extent to which that country is engaged in internal and external conflict. They may reflect, but they do not describe or explain, the degree to which government relies on force to solve problems and manage conflict.

Militarisation and demilitarisation can also be assessed in terms of political and social processes, relationships and values (Cock, 1989). For example, Andreski identifies the following phenomena as indicators of militarism:
First, . . . an aggressive foreign policy, based on a readiness to resort to war; second, the preponderance of the military in the state, the extreme case being that of military rule; third, subservience of the whole society to the needs of the army which may involve a recasting of social life in accordance with the pattern of military organisation; and fourth, an ideology which promotes military ideas (cited in Cock, 1989:3).

These issues are examined below, at the level of national policy and the state, by comparing the previous government’s approach to security and defence with the positions adopted in the White Paper. Five themes of the White Paper are considered: transformation; national security policy; regional security; defence posture and functions; and civil-military relations.

The chapter concludes with a brief discussion of the relationship between defence policy and practice. It is argued that substantial progress has been made towards state demilitarisation, but that significant exceptions exist in a number of areas, most notably that of arms exports.

**Transformation**

The overarching theme of the White Paper is the transformation of defence policy and the SANDF. This imperative arises from four sets of factors: the history of the South African Defence Force (SADF) as an instrument of repression under apartheid; the advent of democracy and the adoption of a Constitution which enshrines fundamental rights; the new strategic environment after the ending of minority rule and the Cold War; and government’s commitment to alleviating poverty and socio-economic inequality.

The White Paper presents the following principles of defence in a democracy as the framework for transformation.

- National security shall be sought primarily through efforts to meet the political, economic, social and cultural rights and needs of South Africa’s people, and through efforts to promote and maintain regional security.
- South Africa shall pursue peaceful relations with other states. It will seek a high level of political, economic and military co-operation with southern African states in particular.
- South Africa shall adhere to international law on armed conflict and to all international treaties to which it is party.
- The SANDF shall have a primarily defensive orientation and posture.
- South Africa is committed to the international goals of arms control and disarmament. It shall participate in, and seek to strengthen,
international and regional efforts to contain and prevent the proliferation of small arms, conventional armaments and weapons of mass destruction.

- South Africa's force levels, armaments and military expenditure shall be determined by defence policy which derives from an analysis of the external and internal security environment, which takes account of the social and economic imperatives of the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), and which is approved by parliament.
- The SANDF shall be a balanced, modern, affordable and technologically advanced military force, capable of executing its tasks effectively and efficiently.
- The functions and responsibilities of the SANDF shall be determined by the Constitution and the Defence Act.
- The primary role of the SANDF shall be to defend South Africa against external military aggression. Deployment in an internal policing capacity shall be limited to exceptional circumstances and subject to parliamentary approval and safeguards.
- The SANDF shall be subordinate and fully accountable to parliament and the executive.
- The SANDF shall operate strictly within the parameters of the Constitution, domestic legislation and international humanitarian law. It shall respect human rights and the democratic political process.
- Defence policy and military activities shall be sufficiently transparent to ensure meaningful parliamentary and public scrutiny and debate, in so far as this does not endanger the lives of military personnel or jeopardise the success of military operations.
- The SANDF shall not further or prejudice party political interests.
- The SANDF shall develop a non-racial, non-sexist and non-discriminatory institutional culture as required by the Constitution.
- The composition of the SANDF shall broadly reflect the composition of South Africa. To this end, affirmative action and equal opportunity programmes will be introduced.
- The SANDF shall respect the rights and dignity of its members within the normal constraints of military discipline and training. (Department of Defence, 1996:2(11.1-11.16))

The transformation agenda is radical in its content and orientation. Most of the principles listed above stand in direct contrast to military policy and practice under the previous government. The agenda is also radical in its scope. The implementation of these principles requires a fundamental reorientation of defence posture, doctrine and operations; military training, education and institutional culture; defence expenditure, procurement and exports; civil-military relations; and human resource policy.
Many of the principles are explicitly anti-militarist. The only suggestion of a contrary tendency is the reference to the SANDF as a technologically advanced military force. This phrase was included in the interim Constitution of 1993 at the insistence of the SADF. It was dropped from the final Constitution of 1996 and replaced in defence policy documents by the term technologically appropriate.

**National security policy**

The foremost goal of security policy under apartheid was to defend the racially exclusive state and maintain the system of minority rule. The principal strategy was repression through military and paramilitary means. While the liberation movements and internal anti-
apartheid groups were regarded as the major threats to security, the targets of state violence included large sections of the civilian population in South Africa, Namibia and Angola (Cock & Nathan, 1989; Cawthra, 1986).

Elsewhere in the world, security policy was shaped largely by the conditions of the Cold War. For close on four decades the international system was characterised by acute tension between rival ideological blocs and the prospect of another major war in Europe; in this context, the debate around security focused on states and military stability (Booth, 1994). The primary response to perceived insecurity was the threat of force in the North and the use of force in many regions of the South.

In contrast to the above, the *White Paper* emphasises the security of people and the non-military dimensions of security:

> In the new South Africa national security is no longer viewed as a predominantly military and police problem. It has been broadened to incorporate political, economic, social and environmental matters. At the heart of this new approach is a paramount concern with the security of people.

> Security is an all-encompassing condition in which individual citizens live in freedom, peace and safety: participate fully in the process of governance; enjoy the protection of fundamental rights; have access to resources and the basic necessities of life; and inhabit an environment which is not detrimental to their health and well-being.

> At national level the objectives of security policy therefore encompass the consolidation of democracy; the achievement of social justice, economic development and a safe environment; and a substantial reduction in the level of crime, violence and political instability . . . (Department of Defence, 1996:3(1-3)).

Two critical assumptions underlie this holistic perspective. First, state security is not necessarily synonymous with the security of people; in much of the world the main threat to citizens is their own government (Thomas, 1991). Second, non-military problems like poverty, oppression and environmental degradation present grave threats to the security of people; if these problems are inadequately addressed, they may lead to violent conflict and threaten the security of the state (Booth, 1994; Buzan, 1991; *Kampala Document*, 1991).

The new approach to security bears a superficial resemblance to the apartheid doctrine of Total Strategy, which similarly stressed the political, social and economic dimensions of security (Swilling & Phillips, 1989). In substance, however, the two models are diametrically opposed. The apartheid model sought to militarise all aspects of national policy, while the new approach seeks to demilitarise the
This distinction has significant implications for strategy and the distribution of state resources. The White Paper argues that the greatest threats to the South African people are underdevelopment, various socio-economic problems and violent crime, rather than the prospect of external aggression. Accordingly, one of government’s policy priorities is the RDP (Department of Defence, 1996:2(5-6)).

The RDP is the principal long-term means of promoting the well-being and security of citizens and, thereby, the stability of the country. There is consequently a compelling need to reallocate state resources to the RDP. The challenge is to rationalise the SANDF and contain military spending without undermining the country’s core defence capability in the short- or long-term . . . (2(6-7)).

The White Paper states explicitly that the new approach to security does not imply an expanded role for the armed forces. Although the SANDF may be employed in a range of secondary tasks, its primary function is defence against external aggression (2(8)).

The SANDF therefore remains an important security instrument of last resort but it is no longer the dominant security institution. The responsibility for ensuring the security of South Africa’s people is now shared by many government departments and ultimately vests in Parliament (2(9)).

In summary, the White Paper adopts a broad approach to security and a narrow approach to defence. The combined effect is to downgrade the status of the armed forces in the state’s definition of security, formulation of strategy and allocation of funds. Whereas previously security had virtually the same meaning as defence, the latter is now seen as a discrete subset of the former.

**Regional security**

From the late 1970s, Pretoria’s regional policy was predicated on, and exacerbated, antagonistic relations with most neighbouring states. These states were subjected to an intense programme of destabilisation, leading to thousands of deaths, massive economic destruction, a regional arms race and a greater resolve by the international community to end apartheid. The net result was perpetual insecurity for the states and people of South and southern Africa (Hanlon, 1986).

The destabilisation campaign was not solely a product of apartheid. It also reflected, at a deeper conceptual level, the Cold War perspective that international relations are inescapably conflictual. In
early 1994, as political tensions in southern Africa began to thaw, SADF officers continued to argue that states do not have allies, they only have interests and that the international system is based on the law of the jungle (author’s interview with SADF officers, Pretoria, March 1994).

The Palme Commission reports on disarmament and security issues provide compelling motivation for an alternative, non-adversarial model of common security. The commission stressed that countries have become increasingly interdependent in the modern technological age, and that common problems transcend national borders as never before. States can no longer protect their citizens through unilateral military means. They share an interest in joint survival and should begin to organise their security policies in co-operation with each other (Palme Commission, 1984, 1989).

Common security is not based on idealistic assumptions about the international system. It does not deny that inter-state relations are characterised by competing interests and the risk of armed hostilities. Rather, by emphasising the interdependence of states and the potential for military and political co-operation, it seeks to manage such competition and risk without resorting to the use or threat of force.

With the ending of apartheid and the Cold War, the South African government has embraced this perspective.

For political, strategic and geographic reasons, defence co-operation with other Southern African states is a priority. South Africa
will seek to strengthen the security and defence forums of the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

Following trends in other parts of the world, South Africa will encourage the development of a multilateral common security approach in Southern Africa. In essence, the SADC states should shape their political, security and defence policies in co-operation with each other . . . (Department of Defence, 1996:4(6.4; 12)).

The *White Paper* argues that this approach is essential for three reasons. First, many of the domestic threats to the SADC countries are shared problems and impact negatively on the stability of their neighbours. Second, it is possible that inter-state disputes could emerge over refugees, trade, natural resources and previously suppressed territorial claims. Third, since the subcontinent is politically volatile and its national and regional institutions are relatively weak, internal conflicts could give rise to cross-border tensions (4(13-15)).

Common security arrangements would have many advantages in this context. They could facilitate defence co-operation, the sharing of resources and intelligence, and the early warning of potential crises; resolve inter-state conflict by peaceful means; co-ordinate peace support operations; negotiate security agreements; and implement confidence- and security-building measures which provide for greater transparency in military matters in order to promote regional confidence and stability (4(16-25)).

While the *White Paper* naturally focuses on the military dimensions of common security, it insists that defence co-operation is not the central vehicle for tackling the security problems afflicting the region.

Regional instability and underdevelopment can only be addressed meaningfully through political reform, socio-economic development and inter-state co-operation in these spheres. Similarly, the prevention and management of inter- and intra-state conflict are primarily a political and not a military matter.

. . . Domestic peace and stability will not be achieved in a context of regional instability and poverty. It is therefore in South Africa s long-term security interests to pursue mutually beneficial relations with other SADC states and to promote reconstruction and development throughout the region (4(11; 29)).

Over the past five years, aggregate force levels, weapons holdings and defence spending in southern Africa have declined (International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1996:311). The *White Paper* assumes that further cutbacks are desirable and possible through the conclusion of multilateral treaties on disarmament and conventional arms control (Department of Defence, 1996: 4(26)).

The *White Paper* acknowledges that South Africa has a particular
responsibility in this regard because of its relative military strength on the subcontinent. Lower force levels and weapons holdings might stimulate a broader process of disarmament in Southern Africa, and the adoption of a defensive and non-threatening posture would contribute to building confidence and positive relationships (4(27-8)).

**Defence posture and functions**

As noted earlier, from the late 1970s South Africa’s foreign posture and military doctrine became increasingly offensive. The SADF occupied northern Namibia and southern Angola, and engaged repeatedly in cross-border raids and pre-emptive strikes against Zambia, Mozambique, Angola and Botswana.

In contrast, the White Paper provides that the SANDF shall have a primarily defensive orientation and posture (2 (11.4)); that the SANDF shall not contravene the law on aggression (2 (13)); that South Africa does not now, and will not in the future, have aggressive intentions towards any state (4(3)); and that South Africa will only turn to military means when deterrence and non-violent strategies have failed (5(6)).

Governments have an inherent right and responsibility to ensure the protection of the state and its people against external military threats. South Africa will employ the following principal strategies to this end:

*Political, economic and military co-operation with other states.* In this context, a common security regime, regional defence co-operation and confidence- and security-building measures in southern Africa are particularly important.

*The prevention, management and resolution of conflict through non-violent means.* Conflict resolution, in the form of diplomacy, mediation or arbitration, may take place on a bilateral basis or under the auspices of an international or regional body.

*The deployment of the defence force.* The use or threat of force against external military aggression is a legitimate measure of last resort when political solutions have been exhausted. (5(5-5.3))

In preparing the White Paper, the Department of Defence grappled with the dilemma of determining the appropriate size and features of the armed forces in the absence of a conventional threat. Since the SANDF is unlikely to be deployed against external aggression in the foreseeable future, one option was to design the force around its main secondary tasks: domestic support of the police; regional defence co-operation; and international peace operations. The White Paper rejects this option, insisting that the size, design, structure and budget
of the SANDF will be determined chiefly by its cardinal function of defence against aggression (5 (3)). This position is based on a number of considerations, including a concern about perpetuating the militarisation of the apartheid era.

The government is disinclined to employ the SANDF in socio-economic development. Such employment blurs the distinction between the military and civilian spheres; it contributes to the militarisation of civil society; [and] it undermines the preparedness and capabilities of the force with respect to its primary function (5(30)).

Similarly, the White Paper maintains that it is inappropriate for armed forces in a democracy to be utilised in a domestic policing capacity on a permanent or semi-permanent basis.

Armed forces are not trained, orientated or equipped for deployment against civilians. They are typically geared to employ maximum force against an external military aggressor.

Ongoing employment in a law and order function invariably leads to the defence force becoming increasingly involved in non-military activities.

Efforts to apply military solutions to political problems are inherently limited and invariably lead to acts of repression (5(14.1; 14.2; 14.6)).

The dilemma was resolved conceptually by the notion of a core force, defined as a balanced and sustainable nucleus which is able to deal with a range of small-scale contingencies of a short-term nature and which maintains the core capabilities required for expanding to appropriate force levels within a realistic warning period should the threat situation deteriorate significantly. The SANDF should be downsized and rightsized to this end (5(7-8)).

This core force approach takes account of government spending priorities and the fact that the self-defence problem is likely to be limited in the short- to medium-term. It does not require a large standing force. Instead, the SANDF will comprise a relatively small regular force and a sufficiently large part-time force (5(9)).

The main purpose of the Defence Review, which was initiated after the completion of the White Paper and remains under way at the time of writing, is to provide greater detail on the size, structure, weaponry, equipment and other features of the core force.
Civil-military relations

From the late 1970s, the South African state became increasingly militarised as SADF officers were drawn into prominent and sometimes dominant positions in the State Security Council and the National Security Management System. In the mid-1980s, defence analysts concluded that a silent coup had taken place. Apart from the fact that soldiers had no constitutional or electoral mandate to play a role in government, their presence in these structures contributed to a preoccupation with military solutions to the political and social problems of apartheid (Cock & Nathan, 1989; Grundy, 1988; Frankel, 1984).

Civil-military relations, defined here as the distribution of power and influence between the armed forces and the civilian authority, are a critical issue in most societies because of the military’s capacity for organised violence. This capacity may be intended to thwart external aggression, but it can also be used to subvert the political process and present an internal threat to government and citizens. The extreme scenario is a coup d’etat.

Democratic states control their armed forces through a variety of legal, executive and parliamentary mechanisms. The governing principle is civil supremacy over the armed forces. In other words, the military is subordinate and accountable to the elected and duly appointed civilian bodies. In countries like South Africa which have undergone a transition from authoritarian rule, the formation and consolidation of democracy are scarcely possible if soldiers do not accept this formal arrangement.

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of May 1996 embraces the principle of civil supremacy by stipulating a clear hierarchy of authority on defence matters. The Chief of the SANDF enjoys executive military command of the armed forces; this command is exercised according to the directions of the Minister of Defence and subject to the authority of the President (as Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Force); and the minister is in turn accountable to cabinet and parliament.

Parliament has a range of formal powers in respect of military affairs. It formulates, amends and ratifies defence legislation; it approves the defence budget; and it reviews, and may overturn, a decision by the President to deploy the SANDF. The parliamentary defence committee has powers of investigation, recommendation and supervision over the armed forces.

During the apartheid era, most of the functions of the Department of Defence were performed by the SADF. The Defence Amendment Act of 1995 establishes a new, civilian Defence Secretariat. The White Paper states that two guidelines will be used to determine the respective roles of this body and defence headquarters: first, civilians for-
mulate policy and the military executes policy; and second, civilians are responsible for the political dimensions of defence. This breakdown does not prevent officers from contributing to policy formulation on the basis of their functional expertise (Department of Defence, 1996: 3(26)).

The *White Paper* notes further that the Secretary for Defence will perform such duties and functions as may be necessary for democratic and civilian management of the defence function and to enhance parliamentary and ministerial control over the SANDF. To this end, the Secretary will monitor compliance with directions issued to the Chief of the SANDF by the President or the Minister (3(24)).

Whereas in democratic societies the pinnacle of the hierarchy in civil-military relations is the law, in authoritarian states the armed forces typically stand above the law. At the height of resistance to apartheid in the mid-1980s, for example, state of emergency regulations granted security personnel indemnity from civil and criminal prosecution for any act done in good faith; official tolerance of misconduct by these personnel led a local newspaper to assert that the term law enforcement officer no longer applies to the security forces and their government (Nathan, 1989a:75).

In contrast, the new Constitution provides that no Act of parliament authorising the declaration of a state of emergency, and no legislation enacted or other action taken in consequence of such declaration, may permit or authorise the indemnification of the state or any person in respect of any unlawful act (Section 37(5)(a)).

The chapter on security in the Constitution is at pains to emphasise the rule of law: the security services must act, and must teach and require their members to act, in accordance with the Constitution and the law, including customary international law (Section 199(5)); no member of any security service may obey a manifestly illegal command (Section 199(6)); and the primary object of the defence force is to defend and protect the Republic . . , in accordance with the Constitution and the principles of international law regulating the use of force (Section 200(2)).

The *White Paper* expands on the requirement that soldiers must be taught to act in accordance with the Constitution. To promote awareness and respect among military personnel for the core values of a democratic South Africa, the Minister will oversee the design and implementation of a civic education programme on defence in a democracy (Department of Defence, 1996: 3(35-6)). The programme will cover the following subjects: the key elements of the political process in a democracy; the constitutional provisions on fundamental rights and defence; the significance of the Constitution as supreme law; the principles of democratic civil-military relations; international law on armed conflict; and respect for multicultural diversity and gender equality (3(37)). During 1996, a ministerial task group prepared
The programme will be integrated into all aspects of military education and training, applied to the military context through lectures, simulated exercises and case studies, and oriented towards the translation of taught values into lived values. The Minister recognises that the programme will have no value if misconduct is in any way sanctioned by the military or civilian authority. The institutional culture of the SANDF will only be imbued with respect for human rights and the rule of law if its members are subject to disciplinary action in the event of abuses (39; 40)).

Finally, government appreciates that parliamentary oversight would be frustrated or rendered ineffectual in the absence of transparency on defence matters.

A measure of secrecy will undoubtedly be necessary in order to safeguard national security interests, the lives of military personnel and the integrity of military operations. However, the governing constitutional principle is freedom of information. Exceptions to this principle will be limited, specific and justifiable in a democratic society, and will be dealt with in legislation (37)).

**The relationship between policy and practice**

The previous discussion explored five themes of the White Paper with the view to illustrating the anti-militarist character of South Africa’s new policy on security and defence. An obvious question arises from this exercise: To what extent has the policy been realised in practice?

The conduct of government invariably diverges from formal policy. This may be due to expedience on the part of Ministers who pursue interests at the expense of declared norms and values. It may also be due to opposition from civil servants, particularly where major policy reforms follow a transition from authoritarian rule to democracy. If state employees of the former regime retain their posts, they will inevitably resist change, whether for reasons of habit or conviction.

These conditions prevail in South Africa in all areas of public life. In the defence arena, the gap between policy and practice is evident especially in relation to transparency; affirmative action for women and black soldiers; the return of SANDF-controlled land to communities which were dispossessed under apartheid; and arms exports.

The White Paper on Defence provides that South Africa will not export armaments to countries which systematically violate human rights and fundamental freedoms; and it will avoid arms transfers which are likely to contribute to the escalation of regional conflicts and regional instability, and negatively influence the balance of power (16; 17)). Yet government has sold, or indicated a willingness to sell, military equipment to Rwanda, Syria, Morocco, Algeria, Malaysia, Congo and Indonesia.
THE ROOIVALK HELICOPTER

Gunvant Govindjee

The Rooivalk order is at odds with the SANDF’s professed defensive posture and the aim of scrapping offensive weapons. It is a legacy of apartheid that will place an unnecessary burden on scarce financial resources. Like the corvettes, it is a project conceived in the apartheid era and brought to fruition in the democratic era. However, unlike the corvettes, no arguments can be made for the Rooivalk assuming secondary functions such as search-and-rescue or conservation. The Rooivalk is an attack helicopter only useful in war. At a cost of R876-million for 12 helicopters, this is a diversion of scarce resources that could be better spent on meeting basic needs. Furthermore, in the context of a shrinking international arms market and competition from other manufacturers of attack helicopters, it is doubtful whether the Rooivalk will find substantial export markets.

The Rooivalk is based on the French AS 330 Puma. It is a helicopter designed for attack with a weapons system consisting of a chin-mounted cannon turret that can be armed with four hundred 20 mm rounds; eight ZT-35, laser-guided anti-tank missiles; and four V3C Darter infrared homing air-to-air missiles.

During the intensification of the Angolan war in the early 1980s, the SADF identified the need for an attack helicopter. The French, who had historically supplied helicopters, were not prepared to break the United Nations arms embargo against South Africa. Armscor therefore decided to produce its own attack helicopter. The project was driven by strategic considerations rather than budgetary constraints. A total of R1,7 billion was spent on research and development costs (Sunday Independent, 28 April 1996).

With the end of South Africa’s military involvement in Angola, and subsequent defence cuts, the Rooivalk programme was temporarily halted. However, reported export interest and discussions with possible development partners led to the revival of the programme as a venture predominantly funded by Atlas Aviation (now renamed Denel Aviation).

By the beginning of 1996, despite its display at international air shows in Dubai and Malaysia, and an aggressive marketing campaign costing millions of rands, no overseas orders had been received. The arms industry therefore lobbied extensively for the South African Air Force (SAAF) to buy 12 Rooivalk helicopters at a cost of R876 million to give the aircraft a semblance of prestige and to promote its marketability overseas. The first delivery to the air force is due in 1998 and the last in 2001.

It is unclear why South Africa needs to purchase the Rooivalk given that there is no foreseeable military threat and that it cannot be used for secondary functions. The Chief of the SAAF, Lieutenant-General James Kriel, initially opposed the order because he did not deem the Rooivalk essential in view of more pressing priorities such as the replacement of the Impala jet trainers and Alouette helicopters. General Kriel is reported to have held the view that the Rooivalk will send an unnecessarily aggressive message if used either inside South Africa or externally (Sunday Independent, 28 April 1996). Major-General Ian Khama, chief of the Botswanan defence force, has already used the Rooivalk deal as justification for increased
spending on tanks and armoured cars. There have been questions from a military perspective whether it makes sense to invest vast sums in single weapon systems given the vulnerability of helicopters to ground fire, evidenced in Afghanistan with the Hind helicopter (Macksey & Woodhouse, 1992:153).

For the South African taxpayer, the Rooivalk will be costly. Added to the purchase cost of R73 million for each helicopter are maintenance and flying costs. Pilot training is expected to cost more than R5 million per pilot. Critics of the project have described it as Mossgas with rotary wings (Sunday Independent, 28 April 1996).

One of the key arguments in favour of this project is that the Rooivalk will generate foreign exchange and create jobs. However, although more than 50 South African companies will be involved, Denel has admitted that almost 40 per cent of the project will be manufactured overseas. Denel claims that the Rooivalk programme will generate 70 000 jobs, but others have disputed this, arguing that less than a few hundred jobs will be created and translate into a cost of more than R1 million a job (Sunday Independent, 28 April 1996).

It is not clear whether there is an overseas market for the Rooivalk in the context of a shrinking arms market and competition from other attack helicopter manufacturers. The Rooivalk faces competition from the Russian Hind, the Franco-German Tiger and the United States Apache. Unlike the Rooivalk, the performance of these helicopters has been battle-tested. There has been interest in the Rooivalk from Malaysia. In December 1995, Denel signed a memorandum of understanding with Malaysia's Airod Company to manufacture and market the Rooivalk jointly. However, it has been reported that the United States has exerted pressure on Malaysia to rescind the agreement so that it can sell its Apache helicopters (The Star, 11 October 1996). Should other states, especially those in the Middle East with close ties to the United States, show an interest in buying the Rooivalk, it is likely that they will face similar if not stronger pressure.
In terms of civil-military relations, institutional transformation has been retarded by a number of factors. The transfer of functions from military headquarters to the Defence Secretariat has been slow and fractious; the Secretariat is staffed largely by military officers; the leadership of the SANDF is dominated by former SADF personnel; and the Minister, known for his hawkish views, is accused of being led by his generals.

Notwithstanding these problems, it would be overstating the case to suggest that the White Paper is little more than a declaration of good intentions. Tangible progress has been made towards implementing the principles and strategies outlined earlier. The achievements to date may fall short of some normative ideal, but they are substantial when compared with the militarisation of the past.

The current agenda of the anti-militarist lobby is an interesting indication of progress. In the mid-1980s, activists and academics focused on the militarisation of national policy, the state and civil society through the doctrine of Total Strategy, the National Security Management System, the deployment of troops in black townships, school cadets and compulsory conscription. A decade later, the focus has narrowed to the ethical and socio-economic dimensions of the defence budget; the armaments industry; arms transfers; the production and export of land-mines; and demobilisation.

The issue of greatest public concern is arguably the proposed purchase of major weapons systems like corvettes, submarines and attack helicopters. While the Minister insists that such acquisition is necessary to replace obsolete equipment and maintain core defence capabilities, others believe that the systems are extravagant in the light of fiscal constraints and the poverty of the majority of citizens.

Given the conflicting interests and perspectives on defence and development, the debate around guns versus butter is unlikely to be resolved. There are no objective criteria for determining how much is enough. Prior to 1994, anti-militarists proposed that defence spending should not exceed 2 per cent of GDP, but they changed their minds once spending dropped to 1,8 per cent of GDP. The SANDF’s stance on the proposal has similarly changed, in the opposite direction.

Despite the subjective nature of this debate, the key quantitative indicators confirm significant downsizing. Between 1989 and 1996 the defence budget was reduced by 51 per cent in real terms, the capital budget declined by 85 per cent, and military spending as a percentage of total government expenditure fell from 15,3 per cent to 5,8 per cent.1 Following the integration of armies and an envisaged process of demobilisation and rationalisation, the number of active military personnel is expected to stabilise at 75 000 (The Star, 17 August 1995), down from 106 400 in 1985 (International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1996:311).

1. These figures were supplied by Peter Batchelor, senior researcher at the Centre for Conflict Resolution, University of Cape Town.
Another sign of progress is the changing nature of public discourse on military matters. In the 1980s, opposition to militarisation was regarded as treasonous; activists were vilified and imprisoned, and their meetings and publications were often banned (Nathan, 1989b). Today, criticism of defence policy is not only legitimate but frequently effective. Public pressure played no small part in cabinet decisions to suspend the purchase of corvettes in June 1995; to ban anti-personnel land-mines in February 1997; and to cancel an arms sales contract with Rwanda in November 1996.

More striking still is the participatory nature of the process of defence policy formulation, once the preserve of military officers. In June 1995, the Minister published the first draft of the *White Paper on Defence* with an invitation to parliament and the public to comment thereon. The subsequent draft incorporated proposals from political parties, non-governmental organisations, academics and the public. A further three drafts were produced, prior to finalisation in May 1996, to accommodate the views of the parliamentary defence committee.

In conclusion, South Africa has become considerably less militarised since 1989, largely as a result of the improved national and regional security environments following the end of apartheid and the Cold War. This tendency has been reinforced by the adoption of an anti-militarist paradigm for understanding and managing the security and defence functions of government.
CORVETTES

Terry Crawford-Browne

The controversy over the proposed corvette deal sharply highlighted the guns versus butter debate. In 1996, there was public outrage at the proposal of spending R1.6-billion on four corvettes. Street demonstrations in front of parliament demanded houses before corvettes. Teachers and nurses demanded salary increases before warships. In June 1995, the Minister of Defence, Joe Modise, announced that the purchase had been delayed because of budget constraints and the lack of national consensus (The Argus, 22 June 1995).

South African admirals complained about the neglect of the navy during the P. W. Botha era and budgetary cuts. The navy argued that their three French-built Daphne submarines and nine Israeli-designed strikecraft were obsolete and unsuitable for South African maritime conditions. Naval officers reasoned that new frigates were critical to the navy’s survival.

In June 1993, Armscor called for tenders from 40 naval shipyards around the world. When the United Nations arms embargo was revoked, it announced a shortlist of five shipyards in Denmark, Germany, France, Britain and Spain.

The justification for purchasing corvettes rested on two arguments. First, that corvettes are essential for the defence of South Africa’s ports, coastline and strategic sea route in times of conflict; and second, that in times of peace their job would be to guard South Africa against drug- and gun-runners, protect sea fisheries and other marine resources against plunderers, and in pollution control (Deputy Minister Kasrils, cited in Cape Times, 25 October 1994). The controversy over Spanish poaching of Canadian fishing resources provided a useful backdrop for this argument.

In terms of the first argument, the ministry failed to convince the public on the matter of perceived enemies. Deputy Minister Kasrils argued that our immediate enemy is unpreparedness (Mail & Guardian, 12-18 May 1995).

In terms of the second argument of peace-time use there was little critical debate on whether coastguard functions are best performed by the navy and the type of equipment best suited to this role. Some environmentalists argued that purchasing satellite systems, smaller strikecraft, helicopters and other equipment would be more suitable than corvettes to carry out coastguard functions. The Department of Sea Fisheries suggested that five, medium-sized fast patrol boats, costing one-tenth of the corvettes, would adequately protect South Africa’s marine resources (The Argus, 28 April 1995). Marine conservationists also pointed out that the key poaching problem in South African waters was near-shore poaching by South Africans—a matter about which corvettes could do nothing.

The Deputy Minister highlighted that one of the major causes of war is conflict over scarce resources and that the corvettes could prevent this from arising. He seemed to overlook the contradiction that pouring resources into preparation for war means that there are fewer resources for meeting basic needs, and that unmet needs potentially heighten social conflict.

Proponents of the deal argued that, because of counter-trade offers, the deal was pure butter. The counter-trade proposals gave the impression that the
corvettes would be cost-free, and generate new jobs and export opportunities. For example, the Spanish promised to invest R4 billion, to create 20,000 jobs, to double their coal purchases, and to build massive new fish-processing factories along the coasts to empower disadvantaged communities. The fishing industry countered that there are not enough fish in South African waters to supply the proposed factories, which, if built, would result in the collapse and closure of existing industry (personal communication with Eckart Kramer, chairperson of the Deep Sea Trawlers Association, June 1995). The British offered a R3,2 billion counter-trade package which included investing R1,5 billion in power stations to generate low-cost electricity. Yet it is known that South Africa currently has an electricity-generation overcapacity and that there is no need for additional capacity. Aspects of the British counter-trade deal were problematic. The Yarrow shipyard is a wholly owned subsidiary of Britain’s largest armaments contractor, General Electric Corporation (GEC). A R500 million long-term partnership with Kentron was proposed. Kentron, a subsidiary of Denel, supplies close-range missiles, remotely piloted aircraft and avionics systems to the military market. Much of Kentron’s technology is suspected to have been pirated or stolen from the United States, where Armscor, Kentron and other South African companies were indicted on 67 counts of conspiracy, fraud, money laundering and tax evasion. Further provisions suggested that GEC would co-opt South Africa into manufacturing British weapons and components under licence for export to politically sensitive regions such as the Middle East and Indonesia.

There was insufficient public information, debate and assessment of these offers. Armscor initially failed to consult the ministers responsible for the RDP, Trade and Industry, and Finance. On 9 May 1996, a briefing of parliament’s defence committee on tendering for the corvette programme was closed to the media at the request of the defence force and Armscor. There were few details on how counter-trade would work.

At the time of writing, it seems that the navy’s request will be granted and that South Africa will spend almost R2 billion on warships that are unlikely to be used for the purpose for which they are designed: to fight war. In the context of limited resources, choices have to be made about their allocation. Despite extensive arguments for the corvettes, many remain unconvinced that spending R1,69 billion in the context of no enemy and dire social needs is an appropriate choice.
The apartheid military was a repository of many resources, including vast tracts of valuable land. In 1993, Nelson Mandela, president of the African National Congress (ANC), stated that a new government would redress land inequality by using, among other mechanisms, the redistribution of land controlled by the South African Defence Force (*Farmer's Weekly*, 1993:10). The election in 1994 of a democratic government committed to land reform has placed the conversion of military land, from defence to development purposes, firmly on the agenda.¹ The military's historical use of land has been controversial for three reasons. First, some of the land was acquired through the systematic dispossession and exclusion of people who owned it or enjoyed access to it; second, some of the land is located in ecologically sensitive areas with high conservation value; and, third, military activities have had negative environmental impacts.

Dramatic political change in the international and domestic arenas has promoted the reformulation of the military's approach towards land use. There is a potential convergence of interests between downsizing within the arms industry and the South African National Defence Force, and demilitarisation, including the conversion of military land to developmental needs. However, since the election of the democratic government, there have been intense struggles around the restitution of military land to communities who were forcibly removed. These have demonstrated the need for military land conversion to be dealt with in a systematic and planned manner, according to clear principles. Development is a component of conversion and particular attention needs to be paid to the challenge of building community capacity to guide development.

This chapter examines the Riemvasmaak community as a case study.² It looks back at how the military gained access to the land and the impact of its activities, and looks forward to the conversion of military land for development.

Riemvasmaak has a special place in South African history as it was

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¹ There are three key components to the government's land reform programme: land restitution, redistribution and tenure reform. The Restitution of Land Rights Act (1994) established two bodies to deal with restitution claims: a Commission on the Restitution of Land Rights and a Land Claims Court. The Land Claims Court will ratify claims which the Commission settles and deal with cases the Commission is unable to resolve. In terms of redistribution, the government aims to facilitate access to land for poor, landless and disadvantaged people. Tenure reform aims to extend secure tenure rights to all rural and urban South Africans (Department of Land Affairs, 1995:4-10).

² Three data-gathering techniques were used in this research: in-depth interviews
conducted between July and December 1995; site visit; and primary sources. Since the development of Riemvasmaak is ongoing, some details may have changed since writing this chapter.

the first land restitution case after the election of a democratic government. In 1994, some Riemvasmakers returned to the land from which they had been forcibly removed 21 years earlier. Riemvasmaak offers rich and valuable lessons for the land reform process broadly and the conversion of military land more specifically. As a case study, it supports the central arguments of this chapter. First, it is a graphic example of how the military gained land at the expense of its rightful owners. Second, it highlights the negative impact of military activity on the land. Although ecological damage has been minimal, some people even arguing that the land has benefited from the military presence, military debris is a legacy with which the community will have to live for many years. Third, Riemvasmaak demonstrates the intransigence of the military through the drawn-out struggle that communities undertook to regain the land. Finally, Riemvasmaak encapsulates the difficulties communities face as land use shifts from defence to development. The Riemvasmakers struggle was far from over when they regained land from the SANDF, and has taken different forms as the people attempt to develop the land and rebuild a sense of community. Development has been a complex, protracted, and, at times, conflictual process. This is the result of a range of factors, including inadequate assistance from an ill-equipped Department of Land Affairs; social divisions in the community along gender, ethnic, class and political lines; and a lack of community capacity to engage with development processes.

This case study sketches life before the community’s removal from Riemvasmaak, the circumstances of the removal, and the hardships endured by the community at the places they were removed to. The period of SADF occupation is then examined, focusing on the impact of the military’s activities on the land. This is followed by an account of the struggle to regain the land and the community’s return. Some of the difficulties faced by the community after their return are also considered. Finally, lessons are outlined for the SANDF’s transformation and land reform processes.

**Life before removal**

The founders of the Riemvasmaak community chose an isolated and arid place to settle, but one rich in minerals and with unusual natural features such as a thermal spring. Riemvasmaak is a relatively isolated area about 56 kilometres from Kakamas in the Gordonia district of the Northern Cape. It comprises 74 563 hectares and borders the Orange River to the south and Namibia to the west. The Augrabies Falls National Park is on its south-eastern border. It is an arid area. The mean annual rainfall is 124.4 mm. The mean annual temperature is 21.6°C with a high of 37.4°C in January. When considered on a monthly basis, at no time during the year does water
availability exceed evaporative demand and a state of permanent drought therefore exists (Hoffman et al., 1995:1/18). There are four river systems in Riemvasmaak, but only three of the twenty water points sampled in 1994 contained potable water (Toens, in Hoffman et al., 1995:1/23). The area includes a number of mineral deposits and also has a rich archaeological heritage.

The Riemvasmaak community settled in the area at the turn of the twentieth century. In the 1870s, families of Damara, Nama and Herero origin trekked to the Cape Colony to escape conflict in Namibia, and it is believed that some of the founders of Riemvasmaak originated from these groupings. The founder of Riemvasmaak was Dawid Dawids. Also known as Koning Dawid, he had fled Namibia, and it is believed he settled at Riemvasmaak because the white farmers would not allow him grazing land for his large flock of sheep. Dawid’s grandson was born at Riemvasmaak in 1903 (Zaby, in SPP, 1993:4). These early settlers were joined by coloured pastoralists and Xhosa people from south of the Orange River. In 1923, a Catholic priest, Father Fages, asked the Upington magistrate for a place where the community could settle permanently, and obtained permission for them to settle at Riemvasmaak. In 1933, the Minister of Land Affairs made the area available to the Department of Native Affairs for the use of the natives (SPP fact sheet, undated).

Most household heads worked and many farmed on a small scale. In the 1960 census, only 8 of the 318 household heads surveyed said that they were cattle farmers; most worked as farm labourers outside Riemvasmaak. Almost all household heads possessed at least one animal, indicating the importance of keeping stock (Hoffman et al., 1995:2/8-14); some had vegetable gardens and grew cotton and wheat. Social services such as schools and clinics existed. There were four schools at Riemvasmaak three run by the Roman Catholic Church and the fourth by the African Methodist Episcopal Church. All received funding from the Department of Coloured Affairs.

The high level of social organisation within the community is evident from the manner in which livestock was managed. There were regional committees in each village and the people on these structures were known as the voormanne (headmen). They regularly discussed livestock matters. There were also open community meetings at which land tenure and veld management issues were discussed (Hoffman et al., 1995:2/15).

Despite different ethnic origins, there was a close sense of community, with much intermarriage and a high degree of integration. The common language was Afrikaans and remains so despite the removal. Even allowing for romanticising the past, many of the older community members have very positive memories of the old Riemvasmaak. People knew each other, we were like one big family (Informant 4:


4. Almost 95 per cent of the community were Catholic. The main settlement developed around the mission station.

5. See Hoffman et al. (1995) for a more comprehensive overview of how livestock was managed, and how grazing land and watering points were allocated.
Riemvasmaak community member). The forced removal ended this way of life and caused untold suffering.

**The removal**

From 1948, the apartheid state embarked on a programme of mass removal as it sought to consolidate the Bantustans and remove black spots. The ethnically mixed nature of the community did not fit into neat apartheid plans, nor did the presence of a black community within white South Africa. The state offered alternative land to Riemvasmakers from as early as 1942, and increased the pressure to move in the late 1960s. In 1967, the Department of Coloured Affairs threatened to withdraw support for the schools, as they claimed that Riemvasmaak was a Bantu reserve. The church and the teaching staff rejected these intimidatory moves (SPP, 1993:10). In 1971, the Bantu Affairs Commissioner for Kakamas, G.J.J. Jordaan ordered the Riemvasmakers removal. The rail warrants which they were given stated that tickets would be issued in terms of *swartkolopruiming* (black spot removal) (SPP, 1993:12).

The forced removal of the community was particularly brutal. Approximately 1 500 people were divided into three groupings. Those who were classified under apartheid laws as Xhosa were moved to Welcomewood in the Ciskei in 1973. Those who were classified of Nama or Damara heritage were forcibly relocated 1 300 kilometres away to Khorixas in northern Namibia in 1973 and 1974. Finally, those who were classified as coloured remained in the areas surrounding Riemvasmaak, such as Marchand, Augrabies and Keimoes.

Different racial classifications resulted in some families being split by the removals. In part, this arose because, in 1957, some people acquired Bantu reference books. They felt they had no choice, as they were told they would be fined and would have to leave Riemvasmaak if they did not take them. Others refused and, when the time came for removal, families were split according to the artificial classifications imposed upon them (*Cape Times*, 12 October 1973).

The removal to Namibia was postponed several times due to heavy rains and many families spent nearly a month in tents as they waited for the flood-damaged railway lines to be repaired. A series of articles in the *Cape Times* outlined the nature of the removal. Heartbreaking scenes of uprootment . . . have fallen officially on deaf ears, blind eyes. The juggernaut of Nationalist Party ideology is impervious to tears. Human emotions and feelings don’t count. Only the plan, conceived in some soulless Pretoria office is deemed important . . . It is authoritarian. It is heartless. It is typical of so many Government actions against people who cannot vote back (*Cape Times*, 13 October 1973).
Community members recalled: They chopped those houses with axes, the houses built with timber they burnt and put people in tents. It was raining, raining, raining. They said, Even if God himself comes from this mountain, you will move tomorrow. People were crying and God sent the rain to say I am coming from the mountain and they will move when I want them to move . . . The people living in the tents were watching the smoke and the flames and crying and praying (Informant 3: Riemvasmaak community member). All our possessions were taken out of our houses and loaded onto lorries. A few rand were shoved into the hands of the homeowner, 6 Then the officials turned around, lit a match and set the house on fire in front of the head of the house. Cruel, barbarous and unapproachable (Badela & Vick, 1993:9).

The community did not feel in a position to resist the removal. Ons het die wit man bevrees wat die wit man se was die wet (We were terrified of the white man what the white man said was the law) (SPP, 1993:11).

The SADF gained control of the land in 1974, soon after the removal. This led some people to believe that the reason for the removal was to make way for the SADF. They used to say our people who fought for liberation were terrorists. They wanted to block these terrorists and Namibia is our neighbour, so they moved us, it was a political thing to block Swapo here (Informant 3: Riemvasmaak community member). Another informant argued that the Northern Cape was used strategically by the apartheid state, which established a number of military bases in the region. There was the suggestion that the apartheid government wanted the Northern Cape to remain underpopulated and had deliberately and strategically underdeveloped the province (Informant 13: ANC official). This claim is denied by the military, who argued that the community was moved in terms of apartheid policy and that the land was only subsequently offered to the SADF. The then Deputy Minister of Environmental Affairs and Defence, Wynand Breytenbach, said at the time of the land claim, I don t want the perception it was the SADF who moved the people (Argus, 1 December 1993). Clearly, however, the SADF benefited from the removal.

Scattered like a handful of desert sand 7

Those removed to Welcomewood in the Ciskei found themselves in a Xhosa community, whose culture they did not understand and whose language they did not speak. They had to pay R100 for small wooden huts and were promised a tractor but never received one, which made farming difficult (SPP, 1993:18). They were 30 kilometres from the nearest shops, and only one of the 50 houses had a telephone. As they refused to take Ciskei citizenship, they did not receive pensions. They

6. The government paid R68 000 compensation, of which R60 000 went to the Catholic Church for improvements to the land and R8 000 to the victims of the removal (SPP files).

7. This phrase is from Badela & Vick s article in Work in Progress, June 1993.
were also harassed by headmen sympathetic to Brigadier Oupa Gqozo, military ruler of the Ciskei. According to a community member’s statement in the SPP submission to the Commission on Land Allocation (CLA), Since my livestock died my life became a struggle because I depended to a large extent on those animals. I can’t plant anything here because of the drought of this land. For over a year now we are without clean water which we used to get from a borehole and now we have to depend on water which we get from dams, which is not healthy for human consumption.

Most families in Namibia had to endure hardships. Some were placed at Otjiwarongo without shelter or means of protection, although there were lions in the area. They suffered stock losses and the government eventually moved them to De Riet. Life at De Riet was not much better. They are completely cut off from the rest of the world, having no telephones, transport, schools or clinics. They state that they are living at the mercy of a group of elephants who, on average, visit the settlement once a week looking for food and water. If there is no water in the dam, the elephants break the wind pump. They regularly rip up and devour the vegetable gardens whose produce is essential to supplement the diet of this very impoverished group (SPP, 1993:16-17). People found it difficult to get employment in Khorixas without Namibian citizenship, although some did manage to build up their farms and find employment (SPP, 1993:16).

The coloured Riemvasmakers who remained in the Northern Cape lost access to their grazing land and had to find new jobs, but suffered less than the other groups (SPP, 1993:17).

Among these tales of hardship, survival and courage shines the experience of one individual’s tenacious resistance. Mr Andreas, member of the group moved to Welcomewood, was very unhappy and, in 1975, moved back to Riemvasmaak. The SADF searched his house without a warrant, stole some of his livestock and disturbed his animals by flying helicopters over his home. Despite this harassment he continued living at Riemvasmaak (SPP files). His story perhaps symbolises the Riemvasmakers’ indestructible link to their land.

**The defence force occupation of Riemvasmaak**

The SADF gained occupation of the land in 1974 and established a base at the Riemvasmaak mission station. The area was used for training by 8 South African Infantry Training Unit (8 SAI) and the South African Air Force (SAAF). Armscor also used the area for weapons testing. These activities had minimal impact on the vegetation but have left a legacy of spent shells and unexploded ordnance from aircraft, artillery and infantry support munitions.

8 SAI used three areas for training, which comprised about 6 per cent of Riemvasmaak: the valley north of the Riemvasmaak mission

8. The SADF retained the use of the classrooms at the mission station, but the rest of the school buildings were destroyed in military exercises.
station; the region north-east of the mission station; and the sandy pediment in the Gyam-Vaalputs region. In addition they used the area south of Riemvasmaakkop as a mortar range and an area south-west of Riemvasmaak as a driver training area. From 1988, 8 SAI became mechanised, which meant that heavy vehicles such as Ratels were included in manoeuvres, as well as 12.7 mm and 20 mm ammunition.

The SAAF also used Riemvasmaak for weapons testing: an area of 30 000 hectares was set aside for this purpose. Fibreglass models and scrap vehicles were placed in the Loeriesfontein and Kourop valleys, and in the plateau areas east and west of the Kourop River Valley, for target practice.

Armscor used the Gyam-Vaalputs area for testing vehicles, armaments and ammunition. Long-range artillery equipment was fired to targets 35 kilometres to the west at Donkiemond, a few kilometres east of the Namibian border. Armscor also used the driver training area to test vehicles and vehicular equipment.

In 1982, 4 500 hectares of Riemvasmaak was incorporated into the Augrabies Falls National Park. In 1988, the SADF and the National Parks Board entered into an agreement which established the land as a contractual national park. Some 60000 hectares of Riemvasmaak were to be jointly managed by the two, and the remaining 15 000 hectares were to be used for training and weapons testing. One of the key features of the park was the presence of black rhino (SPP, 1993:20). In 1993 there were press reports of the Ministers of Defence and the Environment viewing the land which the black rhino occupied. This provided the opportunity for the community to voice their outrage. They say our land is going to be used as a reserve for the rhino. Well if I see a rhino there, I’m going to shoot him. I really love that animal but if its happiness means more to the white man than my people’s happiness, then I’ll shoot him . . . (Badela & Vick, 1993:8).

**The impact of military activities on the land**

There have been positive and negative environmental consequences of the military’s presence. Hoffman et al. (1995) concluded that less than 15 per cent of the land was impacted on by the military. They argued that the land benefited from the lack of agricultural activity and that the vegetation of Riemvasmaak is in an excellent condition. It has benefited greatly from the 20 years without domestic livestock and this view is corroborated by the testimony of Riemvasmakers who have returned to the region (Hoffman et al., 1995:ix). The view that the military had minimal impact on the vegetation was supported by most informants, including the three National Parks Board officials interviewed.

However, negative impacts of military activities were obvious in the areas north and north-east of the Riemvasmaak mission station. The SADF stated that there was moderate disturbance of the sandy pedi-
ment in the Gyam-Vaalputs region, but in places the disturbance was more than moderate (Hoffman et al., 1995:2/24). Some areas appeared to be heavily disturbed as there was a low level of plant cover and dominance by classic disturbance species such as *Rhigozum trichotum* and annuals. No thorough account of the condition of the land existed before SADF occupation, so it cannot be stated that the SADF was solely responsible for the state of the land in this area; several decades of livestock farming may have been responsible (Hoffman et al., 1995:1/60).

**Struggle**

Following the political changes of 1990, a group of Riemvasmakers began organising to get their land back. It was decided not to take the case to the Advisory Commission on Land Allocation (ACLA) but to approach President De Klerk directly. President De Klerk, however, subsequently referred the case to ACLA. In August 1992, the community informed the commission of their intention to apply for land restoration. With the assistance of the Legal Resources Centre (LRC), the Land Development Unit (LDU) and the Surplus People Project (SPP), the community prepared a submission to the CLA. ⁹

Riemvasmakers elected sub-committees in Marchand and Welcomewood, to keep the community informed about the land claim and to elect representatives to a national meeting of the Riemvasmaak community. In May 1993, Riemvasmakers from all over the country met to decide on a course of action. Due to logistic and financial difficulties, the community in Namibia were unable to attend this conference. Nonetheless, a programme was decided upon and the Riemvasmaak Co-ordinating Committee was elected to take it forward (SPP, 1993:2).

The programme combined negotiations with mass action. For example, they protested at the World Trade Centre where political parties negotiated the transition to democratic rule in South Africa. They also held a march in Kakamas. The Riemvasmakers’ case drew support from organisations such as the ANC, who stated at the time, ‘We deplore F.W. de Klerk’s failure to respond seriously to the approaches made to him and demand he take immediate steps . . . to return the people of Riemvasmaak to their land’ (*Cape Times*, 24 August 1993).

The CLA hearings took place in Upington on 1 December 1993. Riemvasmakers from all areas attended the hearings. The SADF, three local farmers’ organisations and the Department of Agricultural Development opposed the application. The SADF did so on the grounds that they required all of the land for army training, air force target practice and weapons testing. They also cited their role in conservation as a justification for their continued use of the land.

The community had met with members of the National Parks Board

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⁹. The Advisory Commission on Land Allocation (ACLA) changed its name to the Commission on Land Allocation (CLA).
on a number of occasions before the hearing and were successful in persuading them about the merits of their case. The National Parks Board subsequently played an important role at the hearing. Dr Hall-Martin announced on behalf of the National Parks Board that it recognised that people had been dispossessed of their land and indicated support for their return. This move, while welcomed by the community, earned the ire of many neighbouring farmers (Informant 5: National Parks Board official). The decision by the National Parks Board was an important one in that all the groups opposing the claim had supported the Board’s retention of control of the land. It was, however, also in the interest of the National Parks Board, which was attempting to transform its image and to be seen as supporting neighbouring communities. The bottom line is that the National Parks Board has to be seen as having a national identity, and that means that the majority of people must have an affinity and care for national parks. We are responsible to parliament. That’s another way of saying that we are responsible to the people of South Africa. The way in which the Riemvasmakers were expelled was immoral and we couldn’t be associated with that (Informant 11: National Parks Board official).

In February 1994, the Department of Land and Regional Affairs announced that the Riemvasmakers had won back their land based on the commission’s recommendations. The CLA concluded that the racially based policies of the state led to the removal of the Riemvasmaak community from the land and that the persons removed were factually prejudiced in view of the distance which they were removed and the environment in which they were resettled (CLA, 1993:3). The commission recommended that:

- Riemvasmaak be returned to its rightful owners;
- 20 000 hectares of land on the eastern side of Riemvasmaak should remain for the use of the defence force;
- a trust be established, as proposed by the Riemvasmaak community, to consider, in consultation with Riemvasmakers, land use options and to prepare and implement development plans;
- the Catholic Church repay the amount of compensation paid to them if they decide to reoccupy their former buildings; and
- the SADF should, as far as practically possible, clear the land of military pollution (CLA, 1993).

The recommendation that the military retain some of the land was rejected by the community. This led to a process of negotiation with the military about their presence. Some informants voiced criticisms about the manner in which these negotiations were handled, suggesting that the community alienated the military unnecessarily and that the military were consequently uncooperative on their departure. One
informant saw the confrontational approach of the community as the result of NGO interventions. The army was not asked to leave the area. The army was chased from the negotiating table . . . The people who chased the army away are the people who did not live at Riemvasmaak. It was the outsiders . . . With proper negotiation we could have saved money and it could have happened in a much better manner (Informant 10, translated: local government official).

Others, however, argue that the community’s hostility towards the military seemed to have had very little to do with outsider intervention, and was based rather on the experience of the community. We refused, we didn’t want the SADF, we believed they were part of the apartheid government and responsible for our problems (Informant 4: Riemvasmaak community member). The hostility was exacerbated by the manner in which the SADF handled negotiations. Some informants argued that, during visits by stakeholders to Riemvasmaak, before the community returned, the military displayed a lack of sensitivity. For example, the defence force welcomed them to Riemvasmaak in a manner which some felt was offensive as they did not need to be welcomed to their own land.

When the SANDF finally left Riemvasmaak completely, there was controversy about the manner in which they did so. They took with them water pipes, a generator, road repair equipment, electrical wires and a communication system, which further soured relations with the community. When the military were told that they had to leave, they took engines, pumps and pipes. Some of the engines turned up on surrounding farms. At that stage they should have left with dignity . . . When it was obvious that they had to relinquish the land they should have made things better for themselves, for the image of the army, and they didn’t even try (Informant 7: development worker). The community tried to intervene. For example, when the SANDF plans to take water pipes were discovered, they approached the Ministry of Water Affairs and Forestry, who supported their request that the pipes remain (SPP files).

Return of the Riemvasmakers

The tensions surrounding the SANDF’s departure did little to dampen the joy of the Riemvasmakers’ return. It was a special occasion for the community and an important symbol of the government’s intentions to address the historical injustices of land dispossession. New Ground magazine evocatively described the homecoming. The rickety old bus comes to a standstill at Riemvasmaak. People step out. A woman kneels on the ground, scoops soil into her hands and rubs it onto her face, wetting it with her tears. Dis soos n duisters wat skielik lig kry. n Swaringheid am die bars wat verdwyn, says Sophie Basson. (It’s like a darkness that suddenly gives way to light. A weight
Tears, laughter, silence. It is the 21st of May 1994. The people have returned to their land (Winberg, 1994:22).

While the return was an important victory for the community, they have had to deal with a number of problems. These include lack of infrastructure, social problems, accidents arising from military waste, and intra-community conflict.

**Infrastructure and social services**

By June 1995, 96 families had returned to Riemvasmaak and a further 168 people were expected. Eighteen families came from the Eastern Cape and the rest from Namibia. There was very little infrastructure when the people arrived and development plans had to be formulated. Conditions were very difficult for the first few months. There was no housing apart from a few structures and houses remaining from the days of the mission. The people lived in rows of tents which were hot in warm weather and cold in cool weather. The community shared taps and toilets and two public telephones. There was no electricity. When I got there, it was quite an experience because people complained of gastro, there was clearly no medication and it looked like the water was a problem. People had no income, there was no shop, no transport, people were cut off because the army had removed the communication infrastructure. I think there was a crisis (Informant 6: development worker).

The area was served by a primary school offering classes from Sub A to Standard 5. In 1995, there were three teachers teaching classes of approximately 40 children. By June 1995, the principal had not been paid although she began teaching at the beginning of February 1995. About 40 students attended the high school in Kakamas, where they boarded and returned home once a month. A mobile clinic visited the area and visiting priests conducted weekly services.

**Social problems**

The community faced a number of social problems. Unemployment was very high; many Riemvasmakers who had jobs elsewhere sent unemployed relatives to Riemvasmaak to secure their rights, but did not move themselves, perhaps waiting to see how the development process would unfold. Lack of income was exacerbated by the fact that many pensioners did not receive immediate pension payments. One of the causes was that people had to relinquish their Namibian citizenship to return, but did not immediately receive South African documentation enabling them to receive a pension.

Many initially survived on food sent by relatives living in Upington and Kakamas. The government distributed food parcels, as did the Regional Services Council and the Roman Catholic Church; these were often shared with neighbours.
Health was also a problem. A community member said that two children had died since the return. Some people thought this might have been related to unhygienic conditions, while others felt it was because the children were already malnourished. The same informant also suggested that there was alcohol and dagga abuse in the community, and perhaps mandrax abuse (Informant 3: Riemvasmaak community member).

Conflict within the community

Infighting and conflict impeded the development process. Despite years of separation, people were initially able to unite successfully in the struggle to get their land back. This took resources, energy and commitment from the activists in the community and the NGOs, particularly the SPP, the LRC and FARM-Africa.

It appears, however, that once the goal of land restoration was achieved, the glue that had held the community together began to dissolve and divisions emerged. Development was bound to be conflictual and contested. While development is ideally meant to raise standards of living and empower the poorest sections of society, in reality in the context of scarce resources it often ends up benefiting those who are most vocal, most visible and most organised. This is generally not the poorest section of a community. Hence development processes have the potential to exacerbate social cleavages and cause conflict, particularly if they only benefit some sections of a community at the expense of other groupings. The conflict with the National Parks Board demonstrated this point.

The National Parks Board leased 4 270 hectares of land, known as Melkbosrand, which was used to accommodate six black rhinos from the Riemvasmaak Community Development Trust, a community structure of nine people elected to oversee the development process. The National Parks Board was eager to enter into agreements with the Riemvasmakers to develop eco-tourism ventures, utilising natural features such as the thermal spring, the history and archaeology of the area, and the arts and crafts of the Riemvasmakers. 10

The relationship with the National Parks Board has, however, caused deep divisions within the community. Approximately 40 families who historically lived at Melkbosrand wanted to return to the area. There was distrust among this grouping related to their experience of conservation in Namibia. 11 These suspicions were explained by a National Parks Board official who commented, The people in Namibia lived with lions and elephants which walked through their kraals and broke their kraals. The Namibian conservationists didn’t do much . . . Now the people come back with the impression of only one model of conservation, which is the Namibian one, and they think we are all one conservation group (Informant 5: National Parks Board official).

10. The National Parks Board is training some Riemvasmakers as rangers.

11. The tension with the National Parks Board was evident when it attempted to remove buck from Riemvasmaak. The warder was locked in and sections of the community refused to let the buck be taken.
Kosi Bay is a precious nature reserve, but to members of the SANDF it is a seaside haven designed for wildlife pursuits of a different kind. They have transformed it into a Mala Mala-style multi-million-rand holiday camp. Yet despite widespread outrage from the government, conservationists and local communities, the army is refusing to budge from what it describes as a small operations base.

The camp is located at the Kosi Bay estuary mouth, within the Kosi Bay coastal forest reserve managed by the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Nature Conservation. Kosi Bay mouth is regarded as one of the most environmentally sensitive regions in the province; it belongs to one of the last unspoilt estuaries in the country and is a wetland of international importance. When the army erected the camp as a small listening post it did not conduct an environmental impact assessment. Since its completion, the dunes on which the camp is built are showing signs of erosion.

A recent report on KwaZulu-Natal’s coastal dunes, commissioned by the Town and Regional Planning Commission in Pietermaritzburg, clearly underscores the causes and dangers of dune erosion. It warns that unrestrained trampling and vehicular traffic, and the construction of permanent structures on foredunes . . . destroy their stability and threaten their value as sand reservoirs and coastal buffers. Pleas by environmentalists, politicians and the local community for the camp to be demolished or moved have gone unheeded by the military.

The site is totally unsuitable for development, said Pete Conant, chief researcher for the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Nature Conservation.

Local communities, who have been prevented by the army from harvesting in the area, also believe the SANDF ran roughshod over the KwaZulu-Natal authorities. There was no need for the army to build a base inside proclaimed land without consulting the original owners, said Vusi Mhlongo, a representative of the community at Kosi mouth, the KwamVutsgane. We have asked for an urgent meeting with Isivuno [the Department of Nature Conservation] to explain how the army got there.

In mid-1994, the SANDF approached the KwaZulu-Natal authorities for permission to build a three-bed listening post the fourth such military camp-site along the Maputaland coast in the wilderness area of the nature reserve, about one kilometre from the Mozambique border.

After long discussions, it was agreed that, given the arms smuggling and illegal-immigrant situation, a discreet military facility wouldn’t be inappropriate, said Nick Steele, chief director of the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Conservation. It was not intended to be a holiday resort.

Soon after, the site of the military post was inexplicably shifted closer to the sea and onto the most sensitive, prime area of the entire Kosi system. Building began in November 1996 and the camp was paid for with taxpayers’ money, built by army personnel using local labour at an estimated cost of more than R3 million.

The fully electrified, luxury chalets with braai areas and a built-in bar were officially opened in July 1997. Since then, locals and conservationists have reported drunken orgies and flagrant disregard for conservation rules by army personnel who drive their 4x4 vehicles along the beach. This is
a turtle-breeding area and vehicles are strictly forbidden.

Nature conservation officials say that they have never seen the army units at the camp carrying out duties that resemble anything remotely official.

According to Dan Archer, regional head of the Department of Nature Conservation for Maputaland, When we became aware of the new site, we asked the army to make a presentation to our regional planning group. This was never done and is a deviation from the normal procedure.

What we are questioning is how it happened so quickly, why there was no environmental impact assessment, and why the camp is situated in one of the most sensitive areas of the system, said Edward Russell of the Community Resource Optimisation Programme (CROP). We are at pains to get the local community to do things as environmentally soundly as possible. How is it possible that other people simply do as they please?

The SANDF denies its military camp merely serves to camouflage a hedonistic haven. An army representative insisted that its purpose was purely crime prevention and that the site posed no threat to the area's ecosystem. However, when journalists visited the camp there were no signs of life. The only indications of recent human presence were track marks on the otherwise pristine stretch of beach in front of the camp, and the visibly eroding dunes.

(Edited version of the article by Hazel Friedman and Jill Gowans in Open Africa supplement to the Mail & Guardian, No. 24, November 1996)

The people from Melkbosrand were concerned that their land would be taken from them again and that they would be forced to enter into an agreement with the National Parks Board to retain government support for development. They asked: As ons n park toelaat salons die grond verloor? (If we allow a park to be created, will we lose our land?) and As die gemeenskap n ooreenkoms met die park aangaan, watter voordeel hou die park vir die gemeenskap in? (If the community makes an agreement with the park, what benefits will the park provide for the community?) (GEM, 1995) The conflict was publicly evident at the celebration to mark the return of the Riemvasmakers when some people held placards protesting against the development worker, the chair of the Trust and the National Parks Board.

There was an ethnic dimension to this conflict in that the people who wanted to return to Melkbosrand were almost exclusively from Namibia, while those who supported retaining the links were primarily from the Eastern Cape. At a GEM workshop it was noticed that people did not refer to themselves as Riemvasmakers, but from the Eastern Cape and from Namibia. Symbolically, people from these two areas sat on opposite sides of the meeting area.

Political fractures resulted from the very different experiences the people had had while apart. The power dynamics within the community had shifted. The people classified Xhosa and removed to the Eastern Cape were, and currently are, in the minority, yet they were

12. There were members of the Namibian group who supported links with the National Parks Board.
a powerful and vocal block, mainly because of their experience in the Eastern Cape, one of the most organised and politicised regions in South Africa. In contrast, those removed to Namibia had been isolated from political and social events. People from the Eastern Cape seemed less cautious of the National Parks Board and prepared to engage with them, whereas some of the people from Namibia accused those from the Eastern Cape of being *skoothondjies vir die blankes* (lapdogs of the whites) (GEM, 1995).

Age also seemed to shape conflict, in that older people generally appeared more conciliatory and perturbed by the degree to which the community was divided. Some spoke of how they had struggled to get the land, how unnecessary the strife was and how important it was that people unite. *Ons het gedink dat ons sal saambly. Ons het hard gewerk, ons het nie gesit, ons het baklei vir Riemvasmaak. Ons het gese dankie dat ons Riemvasmaak gekry het . . . nou moet ons leer om saam te bly.* (We thought we would live together. We worked hard, we were not passive, we fought for Riemvasmaak. We were grateful that we got Riemvasmaak back . . . now we must learn to live together.) It was argued that the reason they had survived the removal and were able to fight for the return of the land was because God was with them, and that people needed to remember this in the conflict. *Ons was 22 jaar van ons geboorteplek weggejaag, laat ons saam werk.* (We were chased away from our birthplace for 22 years, let us work together.) (GEM, 1995) Older people appeared to be more attached to the land than the younger people, as was evident in their romanticised view of Melkbosrand. The families returning to Melkbosrand wanted to farm goats, but the 4 720 hectares did not have the carrying capacity. The conception exists that Melkbosrand is a land of milk and honey. The river has changed its flow and some of the channels which were active then are dry today. In that area there is bad grazing and little potential for crop production (Informant 9: National Parks Board official).

People's varied connections and experience of the land determined what they perceived to be the best development option for Riemvasmaak. Some people want to go back to what it was and others look forward. It is an emotional issue, the old people cry, it means so much, and others wouldn’t care if it turned into Sun City if it made money (Informant 1: development worker).

Material interests may have exacerbated the conflict. As the Trust derived income from Melkbosrand, it clearly had a vested interest in the continuity of this source of income. Furthermore, some of the trustees involved in negotiations with the National Parks Board accrued benefits, such as flights to Riemvasmaak and accommodation in the park.

Also evident in this conflict was the lack of institutional capacity within the community. Although the Trust held a series of meetings

13. A new board of trustees was elected in January 1996. This chapter discusses the first board of trustees unless otherwise indicated.
with the National Parks Board, it did not report back adequately to the community. Initially, the National Parks Board relied almost entirely on meetings with the trustees and did not engage with the community directly. While it may have been a reasonable assumption that the trustees would report back, this did not happen, resulting in suspicion. For example, people who wanted to move to Melkbosrand did not know that it was leased and that the Trust received R20 000 for the land. They received this information from a National Parks Board official. The lack of trust between the community and the Trust was evident when some people spoke of being sold out by the Trust.

**Understanding the difficulties**

The problems at Riemvasmaak are complex. They are the result of an interplay of factors, including the nature of the development process, the role that the government has played in this process, the composition of the Riemvasmaak community and its lack of institutional capacity. The combination of factors has slowed the pace of development and promoted frustration and conflict. Nonetheless, valuable lessons can be learnt from the experience to inform other rural development and land reform processes. The Riemvasmaak experience is particularly useful for those communities reclaiming land from defence use.

**Development at Riemvasmaak**

At the ceremony celebrating the Riemvasmakers return, the Minister of Land Affairs, Derek Hanekom, correctly stated that restitution is more than getting land back. It also involves resettling people, providing infrastructure, sustainable development, economic development and community institution building (Hanekom, 1994). This begs the question why the government allowed restitution to take place before infrastructure or development plans were in place. The answer may lie in the twin pressures of the community’s demands and the democratic government’s desire to be seen to be addressing the land question, one of the most emotive and critical political issues.

People were very eager and adamant and determined to come back. It was spelt out that there was no housing and that accommodation would be in tents and that water needed attention. It was pointed out to them. They were aware. It was a very emotional thing; people were determined to come back. They knew the conditions, but it couldn’t have been slowed down, we would have been very unpopular. It was a politically delicate issue to deal with and to slow it down at that stage would have done more damage (Informant 12: Department of Land Affairs official). Some informants thought that it was politically expedient of the government to allow the return, given the conditions. The process was driven by the need for political impact.
People were coming back, were getting their land back, and there was a political and emotional element about it. Emotions are all well and good, but you can’t eat them (Informant 11: National Parks Board official).

For Riemvasmakers the connection with the land is very deep, particularly for those who experienced the forced removal personally or via their parents. After 21 years, the critical issue for many people was to get back the land, no matter what the state of development was. I was born here, I like this place, I feel at home. I came to the place I was born... The people love the land very much. We said even if we stay under trees we’ll come back (Informant 3: Riemvasmaak community member).

Despite the difficult conditions at Riemvasmaak, there may have been material factors which prompted people to move. Life was very difficult for people in Namibia and many thought that conditions in South Africa would be better. For example, some of the younger people thought that unemployment insurance was available in South Africa, and the South African pension of approximately R355 per month was more than the Namibian pension of R135.

The combination of government and community concerns resulted in resettlement without the other components of restitution being in place. It is this lack of development which has caused difficulties and challenges for all involved.

A key issue which hindered the development process was the unclear relationship between the various tiers of government. The return occurred soon after the first democratic elections, which meant that both national and provincial governments were in the process of establishing structures, defining programmes and recruiting staff. The Northern Cape provincial government had to be created almost from scratch. There was lack of clarity as to what level of government would be responsible for particular aspects of development. The resettlement process is driven by central government, but the responsibility for ensuring development lies at a provincial and local level. This led to a clash between provincial and central government over the provision of housing, schools and clinics (Informant 11: National Parks Board official). There was also evidence of a lack of co-ordination among the three levels of government. For example, the Department of Land Affairs delegated tasks to local government officials who did not have the authority to do work without the permission of their superiors.

The Riemvasmaak case study highlighted the lack of capacity of the Department of Land Affairs to drive the development process. The department was understaffed. Many staff were involved in other projects and, as a result, too busy to follow up and ensure that programmes were implemented (Informant 1: development worker). An example of the degree to which staff were stretched or, alternatively,
the degree to which the department allocated staff inappropriately, was that the Regional Director of Land Affairs in
the Northern Cape was personally involved in moving the Riemvasmakers (Venter, 1995:6). An additional constraint
was that many of the people in the department were appointees of the former government. They tended to have limited
experience of community work compared to the depth of experience among NGOs. Some informants argued that
officials lacked commitment to participatory democracy, which means grassroots access to decision making. The
Department of Land Affairs just don’t know what the hell they are doing. Some are incompetent, some are very old
fashioned and some deliberately block the process (Informant 7: development worker).

The exclusion of NGOs such as SPP, LRC and LDU and local farmers from the development process was a
serious mistake. The NGOs had worked closely with the community and had a sense of its dynamics. Their exclusion
had the effect of diminishing the contributions such NGOs could have made to ensuring that capacity was built within
the community and in ensuring the accountability of the Trust to the community.

**The nature of the community**

Two aspects of the Riemvasmaak community had profound implications for the development process. First, it is
probably a misnomer to speak of one community. A new community had to be built from the disparate communities
separated by time and geographical distance. Second, it is important to examine the nature of the community that
returned and settled at Riemvasmaak.

The notion of the Riemvasmaak community as a homogeneous entity is an erroneous one. The concept of community
was especially fragile at Riemvasmaak because a new community had to be built. After 21 years of separation and
various political and social experiences, people had developed different expectations and aspirations. They did not
know each other and were uncertain about each other. *Die gemeenskap was lank uitmekaar en mense moet met
mekaar gesels en moet hoar wat mense voel. Mense moet tyd gegee word om mekaar weer te leer ken.* (The
community was apart for a long time and people need to talk to each other and hear about people’s feelings. People
must take time to get to know each other again.) (GEM, 1995) This made the process of rebuilding the community
difficult and unique. One informant captured this process most articulately: In a microcosm we are trying to reverse
apartheid, we are trying to reverse the worst kind of social engineering with reference and sensitivity to the past and to
the new constitution which enshrines social justice and equality. We are trying to reconstruct an old community in a
new order, which is unheard of (Informant 2: lawyer).

It seems that many employed people chose to see what happened
before returning to Riemvasmaak. Anyone with an income and a job, who has the vaguest idea what Riemvasmaak is like, needs their head read to sit there (Informant 11: National Parks Board official). Those who settled at Riemvasmaak represented the more marginalised and less powerful sections of the original community—namely the elderly, children and the unemployed. An informant argued that the resettled people did not make individual decisions to return. Other people made the decision—Let them go and risk it—and it is these people who cannot take development forward... Women and children have been sent there by their men and then other men start exploiting these women and children who have been left there helpless. For example, shopkeepers start exploiting people and people develop political allegiances to their creditors (Informant 2: lawyer).

The composition of the returnee community had enormous implications for the development process. Initially, the Department of Land Affairs was reluctant to engage in development planning before the return of the Riemvasmakers. Yet the people who came back were largely unable to take the planning forward. These factors created conditions for a vicious circle whereby planning with the group could not happen effectively, yet if development was delayed, people would become increasingly desperate and, having very little to lose, were open to patronage, exploitation and political manipulation. During the GEM People and Parks workshop it was clear that there were dominant personalities leading the factions, at least one of whom was a trader. Land Affairs said that they could not plan until the people are back, but you can’t plan with children and old people. They thought they had brought planning material back. Instead they have created the opportunities for super-exploitation, which undermines the planning process (Informant 2: lawyer).

**Institutional weaknesses in the community**

A contributing factor to the problems in Riemvasmaak was the lack of capacity within the community to engage with the development process. For instance, criticisms were raised about the undemocratic manner in which the Trust operated. While subjective factors, such as dominant personalities and bad decisions, may have contributed to this, there are objective factors that will face most resettled communities. The development process requires strong institutions within the community and people with a broad range of skills. Institutions are needed to manage the development process in a democratic manner, make difficult decisions, resolve conflict and deal with large sums of money. The Riemvasmaak case study points to the importance of building institutions within communities to deal with these issues. The lack of skills within the Trust had negative implications for the development process. FARM-Africa argued that the main factors constraining the development of Riemvasmaak are a lack of appro-
priate managerial skills in the Riemvasmaak Community Development Trust and its committees, information concerning the development options available at Riemvasmaak, and a lack of certain technical skills at farmer level (FARM-Africa, 1995:9).

While the Trust deed provides for democratic decision-making structures and rules that development plans must be approved by all beneficiaries, it proved difficult to ensure democratic practice. SPP, for example, raised concerns with the Trust about the lack of consultation with the broader community (Informant 1: development worker). Criticisms were made about Trust decisions which exacerbated tensions in the community. Part of the problem of friction in the community is friction with the leadership (Informant 11: National Parks Board official). For example, houses remaining from the time of the mission were allocated to some of the older members of the community and to one of the teachers. There was some tension about the allocation and the people from Khorixas issued ultimatums for the occupants to vacate the houses (Informant 3: Riemvasmaak community member). Concern was raised by some informants about the granting of trading licences as no one from Namibia had received a licence (Informant 11: National Parks Board official).

To be fair, there were objective hurdles which made it difficult for the Trust to operate in a democratic manner. For example, two trustees lived in Cape Town and the rest in different towns in the Northern Cape, the Ciskei and Namibia. This made it very costly to organise meetings, and time-consuming for the trustees who had to travel long distances. It was difficult to organise meetings because of poor communications, particularly with Namibia, and the expense of telephone calls. For these reasons, the Cape Town-based chairperson was not always able to consult with the other trustees and took many decisions alone. Consequently, some of the trustees felt excluded from decision making. They felt ill equipped for the task and overwhelmed by the workload (Informant 1: development worker). Even after the return of the community, only a minority of trustees actually lived at Riemvasmaak, highlighting another contribution to the communication breakdown between the Trust and the community.

While it may have been difficult for people to participate in decision making, given the scattered nature of the original inhabitants, this was not the case after their return. Once the people resettled they wanted to be actively involved in decision making. As most were unemployed, they certainly had the time to be involved in community decisions.

To a large extent, development rests on the ability of communities to participate democratically and shape the process. This is particularly true in situations where land is held communally, and where decisions need to reflect the position and interests of the majority. A community faces many choices and decisions in developing, using and
managing land. At Riemvasmaak, these include tourism, poultry farming, crop production, table-grape farming, mining and the establishment of businesses such as transport and bakeries (FARM-Africa, 1995:22). These decisions are time-consuming and often require access to specialist knowledge and skills.

Because development has differential impacts, there is potential for conflict within communities which needs to be mediated and resolved. For example, many members of the Riemvasmaak community are interested in owning livestock, yet it has been estimated that the carrying capacity of the area is 935 head of cattle or 6047 goats (Hoffman et al., 1995:ix). Not all of those interested can have livestock and difficult decisions need to be made about who may own livestock. This requires a degree of skill within institutions responsible for overseeing development.

An additional burden facing communities is the management of large sums of money. Many funders now choose to fund community-based organisations directly. For instance, Riemvasmaak received a grant directly from the Independent Development Trust. Poor communities may have access to funds but often lack the necessary skills to manage them.

It is necessary for government to take capacity building seriously and to consider the constraints under which communities operate. The need for participatory and democratic processes, access to specialist knowledge, and skills to manage funds indicates that the government needs to pay close attention to the process of capacity building. NGOs are often well placed to assist in capacity building, particularly where they have a history of involvement. As the first restitution case since the election of a democratic government, the Riemvasmaak community has had a plethora of organisations and experts made available to it. This is unlikely to be the case in all restitution cases. Government needs to develop strategies to ensure that capacity is built in communities as part of the restitution process.

**Conclusion**

Riemvasmaak is an example of how the military benefited from apartheid forced removals. It also highlights the need for clear policy and mechanisms to guide the process of restitution of military land.

The case of Riemvasmaak indicates that there are many lessons to be learnt about the development process:

- resettlement should not be allowed without the provision of basic infrastructure;
- development capacity needs to be built in communities and government, and is a process in which NGOs could be more involved; and
- in the case of large-scale returns, the appointment of a development
A number of recommendations can also be made about military land.

- Policy needs to be developed about the principles, process and mechanisms of restitution and redistribution of military land.
- This policy needs to be co-ordinated between the Ministries of Land Affairs, Defence and Public Works.
- The defence force should indicate its commitment to social justice by returning land from which people were forcibly removed to its rightful owners, through a process of negotiation.
- The defence force should commit itself to clearing land of military debris when land is returned.
- Educational programmes and material should be developed to empower civilians who return to former military land.
- Sound environmental management of military properties is essential particularly to ensure the continuous clean-up of military debris to prevent restitution and redistribution being hindered at a later stage.
- Environmental education should be incorporated into the basic training of all soldiers and in the core management functions of all officers.
- Ongoing research and monitoring of the impact of military activities on the environment must be undertaken.
- The capacity of communities needs to be built to manage the conversion of bases to civilian purposes.
THE SANDF: CONSERVATION OR CONTAMINATION

Penny Mckenzie

South Africa has experienced little local debate about the relationship between defence and the environment. This is partly the result of the narrow way in which both defence and environmental issues have been understood in South Africa. The military emerges from a repressive and secret past, while environmental issues have historically been viewed as white, middle-class concerns. The relationship between the SANDF and the environment has been ambiguous and contradictory. While it has prided itself on being environmentally conscious, it has also been implicated in such environmental scandals as ivory and rhinohorn smuggling. Furthermore, it both benefited from and was directly involved in dispossession to acquire some of its land.

The SANDF does not own land but is allocated land by the Department of Public Works. In theory, the SANDF recognises the responsibility of this relationship, arguing that defence force land should be considered a national asset given in trust to the NDF to utilise for national purposes. Therefore, this land should be utilised and managed in such a way as to ensure its long term potential for non-military use after the NDF does not require it anymore for military use (SANDF, n.d.). However, communities involved with the SANDF have alleged that the military often conducts negotiations as if they own, rather than control, the land (Mckenzie, 1996).

In 1991, the SANDF was the fourth-largest single land-controlling authority in South Africa (Godschalk, 1991:10). Until 1993, the SANDF controlled 600 000 hectares or approximately 0,5 per cent of the land in South Africa. In 1993, the SADF stated: Of this, 500 000 ha is undeveloped and is used for training areas, bombing ranges, shooting ranges and buffer zones around airstrips and ammunition depots (Farmer’s Weekly, 1993:10).

Subsequent rationalisation of military land has indicated the SANDF’s recognition of the increasing pressures to use the land for other purposes. General Meiring, Chief of the SANDF, said at the 1995 awards for nature conservation, Land and the utilisation of land has become a very prominent issue in the Republic of South Africa. Demands and pressures to utilise land under control of the defence force for other purposes are increasing daily (SANDF, 1995). Since 1986, the defence force has returned 227 680 hectares of land to the Department of Public Works (Defence Secretariat, 1997:2). The Riemvasmaak Training Area (70 000 hectares) has been returned to the community and there is agreement to hand over the Schmidtsdrift training area. The defence force currently controls 492 140 hectares of land (Defence Secretariat, 1997:2).

Some of the larger defence force areas are:

- Lohatla 135 854 ha
- Touwsrivier Training Area (Cape) 14 857 ha
- Oudtshoorn Training Area 13 393 ha
- Vastrap Weapons Range (Upington) 49 994 ha
- Schmidtsdrift Training Area (Kimberley) 34 986 ha
- General de Wet Training Area / De Brug (Bloemfontein) 16 974 ha
- General de la Rey Training Area (Potchefstroom) 23 599 ha
- General Piet Joubert Training Area (Wallmansthal) 13 706 ha
Madimbo Training Area 27 899 ha
• Hell’s Gate Training Area (St Lucia) 3 800 ha
• Boschhoek Training Area (Dundee) 3 381 ha
• Grahamstown Training Area 5 970 ha AFB Hoedspruit 5 375 ha
• 97 Ammunition Depot (De Aar) 6 284 ha
• Pomfret Training Area 5 192 ha
• Mosita Training Area 4 043 ha
• 91 Ammunition Depot (Roedtan) 3 895 ha
• Sterkrivier Training Area (Gravelotte) 5 648 ha
• AFB Louis Trichardt 4 032 ha
• Artonvilla Training Area (Messina) 3 135 ha
• Roodewal Weapons Range (Pietersburg) 3 240 ha

There are a number of indicators that the SANDF is concerned about environmental issues. These include the existence of an environmental unit, the management of some facilities as conservation areas, and the running of an annual competition for units that show the best progress in certain aspects of environmental services.

The defence force established a Nature and Environmental Conservation Unit in the early 1980s. Initially, the environment was conceived of mainly as an area for nature conservation and the preservation of flora and fauna. The scope was later extended and functions such as environmental planning were incorporated. The name of the unit was changed to the Environmental Services Unit (interview with SANDF officer 1995).

The unit has six areas of activity:

• integration of environmental planning into military activities;
• research into the environmental impacts of military activity;
• ecological management of military properties;
• environmental management of the built-up military environment (base areas);
• cultural resource management at defence force facilities; and
• environmental education (SANDF, n.d.).

There are gaps in the unit’s work which might be the result of low staffing (there were between 20 and 25 people in the unit in 1996) and resource constraints. The lack of sufficient funds for environmental services has to a large extent prevented the development of effective environmental service support for the military utilisation of NDF facilities (SANDF, n.d.). The unit has done little research into the impact of military activities on the environment. We know very little of the impact of the military . . . There is a need to give more attention to military impacts on properties and involve external people in this (interview with SANDF officer, 1995).

Another positive aspect of the SANDF’s approach to the environment is that all military facilities are managed as conservation areas. Five areas have been proclaimed nature reserves and seven have been registered as Natural Heritage Sites because they contain rare fauna and flora. The Heidelberg Training Area is one of only two places where the Heidelberg copper butterfly is found. The heath Erica heleogena is only found in its natural state at the Klawer Valley military area near Simon’s Town. Middelburg has cycads and Boschhoek has an indigenous forest (Godschalk, 1991: 10; Deacon, 1994:28).

Ecological management includes soil erosion control, veld management, invasive plant and bush encroachment control, controlled burning programmes, wildlife management and special conservation measures for numerous rare or endangered species on military property (Godschalk, 1991: 11).

There is a range of game on SANDF land including kudu, springbok, gemsbok,
The SANDF regards its record for managing game populations on training areas as one of the most outstanding success stories. For example, at the General de Wet Training Area near Bloemfontein there were only 32 springbok when the land was acquired for military purposes in 1955. The number of springbok increased to the point where 14 000 had to be removed between 1976 and 1991 (Godschalk, 1991: 12). The SANDF’s pride is perhaps reflected in the naming of military equipment after animals such as the Buffel, Ratel and Cheetah.

Among some conservationists, the SANDF is regarded as having a good conservation record. For example, a review of SANDF bases concluded that even if the impossible happened and the SADF disbanded entirely, its priceless natural assets would be handed back to the nation with a clear conscience (Deacon, 1994:30). As demonstrated in the case studies, the positive impact of military activities on the environment lies in the fact that protected areas from human impact. The flip side of protection is that people were disadvantaged by being denied access to the land.

Two issues highlight the negative side of the SANDF’s environmental record: the militarisation of conservation areas through the activities of the SADF and its role in rhino and ivory poaching.

The activities of the SADF have resulted in the militarisation of conservation areas. Close links existed historically between the military and some national parks. Game reserves situated near borders such as the Kruger National Park and the Ndumu Game Reserve were regarded by the SADF as buffer zones preventing the entry of illegal immigrants and guerrilla soldiers. The SADF had two units in the Kruger National Park—one to protect wildlife against poachers and the other to arrest Mozambican refugees. Some of the park staff were former members of the SADF, and some Kruger National Park rangers were former reconnaissance unit members (interview with National Parks Board official, 1995). The militarisation of some parks is visually demonstrated by the military-style uniforms worn by staff, saluting and the military approach to wildlife protection. Militarisation of nature reserves led to a perception among neighbouring rural people that the parks were linked to the apartheid security apparatus (interview with development worker, 1995). Direct evidence of this link is that reserves under the control of the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Nature Conservation were used to train the Inkatha Freedom Party’s Self-Protection Units (Mail & Guardian, 22-28 September 1995).
5
WEAPONS TESTING
Its Impact on People and the Environment

Penny Mckenzie

Weapons testing has had a negative impact on people and the environment. Three of the most controversial weapons testing sites in South Africa are De Hoop and Rooi Els in the Western Cape, and St Lucia in KwaZulu-Natal. These sites have a number of common features. First, they are located in ecologically sensitive areas. Second, they were established in a shroud of secrecy and in an authoritarian manner. Third, communities were adversely affected by their establishment. Finally, there is evidence of negative environmental impact resulting from weapons testing.

At St Lucia and De Hoop the testing ranges are located in nature reserves; at Rooi Els the range is in an ecologically unique area. St Lucia is one of the oldest reserves in South Africa. It is also the largest crocodile breeding ground south of Uganda, a major waterbird breeding ground and a wetland of international importance in terms of the Ramsar Convention (Endangered Wildlife, 1991:26).

The De Hoop Nature Reserve is the second oldest reserve in the Western Cape. Its most important floral feature is its relatively unspoilt fynbos. It was described by Cape Nature Conservation as one of the most diverse, if not the most, floral habitats in terms of the biota on this planet (Cape Nature Conservation submission to the Hey Committee). It has the second most productive population of the endangered Cape mountain zebra, and is an important breeding colony of the declining Cape vulture and the Damara tern, South Africa’s rarest sea bird (African Wildlife, 1983a:33). The De Hoop lake is classified as a wetland of international importance in terms of the Ramsar Convention (African Wildlife, 1983a:35). The coast off the reserve is also an important breeding ground for the southern right whale (Hey, 1983).

Although Rooi Els is not a nature reserve, it is located in the Kogelberg area, at the heart of South Africa’s fynbos region. Only the Kruger National Park, which is 66 times larger, has more plant species than the Kogelberg area. There are several high-yielding water
catchments in the range, including the Buffels River catchment area. Rooi Els and neighbouring coastal villages rely on a dam situated on land known as Portion 186 of the farm Hangklip for their water supply. This is the land leased to Somchem for weapons testing by the Caledon Divisional Council (later known as the Overberg Regional Services Council).

Although these are three unique and ecologically sensitive areas, the apartheid state decided to establish weapons testing ranges on them. This was done in an undemocratic manner in the name of national security. Ironically, the very security of the communities living in or near these areas was threatened through exclusion from the land.

The decision to use St Lucia as a missile testing range was a secretive one. People working in the park were merely informed of the decision. Some raised objections within park structures and took the matter up with the authorities. The response was silence. Nobody was allowed to mention a word of this to anybody and we were muzzled from speaking to the press (interview with former Natal Parks Board employee, 1995). Many conservationists were afraid of the consequences of protest in an authoritarian political climate, while others were sympathetic to the notions of security and national interest propagated by the government. A newspaper editorial argued, But defence is an emotional issue in South Africa. Consequently conservationists, who might otherwise have protested more strenuously against the selection of St Lucia as the site for a range, appear to have been won over by arguments that it is vital to the nation's defence (Daily News, 15 October 1968).

The decision to establish a weapons testing range at De Hoop was also made in a clandestine manner. The Cape Department of Nature and Environmental Conservation, which owned much of the land, was not informed of the proposal until one week before the announcement. The provincial opposition spokesperson for nature conservation highlighted the undemocratic nature of the proposal when he said, It would appear that Armscor had hoped to complete the deal before the matter became public, specifically to circumvent public debate. Where the relocation or siting of a missile testing range can affect landowners, involve the relocation of communities, deprive fishermen of their livelihood and hold enormous consequences for conservation, the public has a right to be informed (Cape Times, 27 May 1983). The announcement sparked enormous public outcry, which prompted the government to appoint a committee of enquiry into the environmental implications of the weapons testing range. The committee of enquiry, known as the Hey Committee, supported the establishment of the Armscor range.

The testing range rear Rooi Els was similarly established without public involvement. In 1978, the Armscor subsidiary Somchem applied to the Caledon Divisional Council to hire 35 hectares of land
in the Rooi Els area for the testing of sekere produkte wat vir die Suid-Afrikaanse Weermag bedoel is (certain products that are meant for the South African Army). Residents were not informed of Armscor's intention to establish the range and there was no opportunity for them to lodge objections. In 1987, the Caledon Divisional Council and Somchem signed a lease which gave Somchem the right to occupy a greater extent of the land for R25 a year for an indefinite period. The land was used to test propellants for a cannon and rockets as part of the development of South Africa's commercial space programme. The surrounding communities were unaware of the 1979 and 1987 deals which gave Somchem access to Portion 186 on a virtually permanent basis. Details of this deal only emerged from community investigations. When Somchem attempted to purchase the site for R500 in 1989, community resistance grew. The Rooi Els Local Council initiated court action in 1991 to have Somchem evicted.

Communities in the three areas were adversely affected by these secret deals. At St Lucia, about 60 families were removed to make way for the range. One of the difficulties in establishing accurate information about the St Lucia removals is that no documentation is available and reconstruction of the events depends on memory.

In contrast to St Lucia, where there was very little protest, activities at De Hoop were described at the time as probably the strongest protest on an environmental issue to date in South Africa (Hey, 1983). The affected communities were especially vociferous in their protests. These were white landowners, some of whom had holiday homes or farms in the area, a small group of predominantly coloured fishermen at Skipskop, and a settlement of 660 black people at Waenhuiskrans who were primarily reliant on fishing for a living. All
One of the most serious negative environmental impacts of military activities is unexploded ordnance such as mortars and shells left after training and weapons testing. It is expensive and time-consuming to clear land and impossible to guarantee complete clearance. Unexploded ordnance poses a danger to communities who return to their land. In poor communities such as Riemvasmaak and Lohatla the danger is exacerbated because people collect the scrap metal to sell even though it is dangerous to do so. In both communities there have been serious and even fatal injuries. It is important in terms of the polluter pays principle that the military take responsibility and bear the costs for continuous clean-up, and that there is ongoing community education about the danger of unexploded ordnance.

At Riemvasmaak, Schmidtsdrift and Lohatla in the Northern Cape, which are all land restitution cases, the issue of contamination of military land has been a bone of contention between the communities and the military. All three areas have been used as training as well as weapons testing areas. Lohatla for example is the army’s battle school and conventional military exercises have taken place there which have used heavy artillery. Sections of the battle school are heavily contaminated with spent shells and unexploded ordnance from aircraft munitions, heavy and light artillery and infantry support munitions. Some members of the Khosis community who were not removed but who remained living at the school felt that this showed a wasteful attitude on the part of the military and a disregard for efficient use of resources. *Daar is vele doppies en nog lewendige ammunisie wat so randle. Hulle gooi hulle sommer net neer, daar waar hulle geoefen het. Hulle gooi maar neer wat hulle nie gebruik het nie, want hulle moet mos nou alles klaar gebruik en hulle wil dit nie terug vat kamp toe* (There are many shells and live ammunition which lie around. They just throw it away where they have exercised. They just throwaway what they have not used because they are meant to use everything up and they do not want to take anything back to the camp) (Interview with Khosis community member, 1995).

In the Lohatl case the level of contamination was cited by the military as a key reason why the communities could not get their land back. The military have used the issue of contamination to argue that some of the land is unsuitable for the communities to use. At a community meeting concern was expressed that the military would deliberately make the land dangerous and ensure that the land was not safe to allow the communities to return (community meeting, June 1995). This view was also expressed by one of the Khosis leaders, *Eintlik het die mense nie so baie geoefen nie maar nou hoor hulle dat die mense sal hulle land terug kry, toe begin hulle nou vreeslik skiet . . . Die veld is vol van hierdie granate en al daai tipe dinge* (Actually the people did not exercise so much but now that they have heard that the people will get their land back, they are exercising often . . . The veld is full of these grenades and all those types of things) (Interview with Khosis community member).

The presence of unexploded ordnance is dangerous for communities. Ordnance has monetary value and, given the poverty in which people live, some of the unexploded ordnance is collected because the brass
and aluminium can be sold to scrap dealers. At Riemvasmaak a development worker described the issue of unexploded ordnance as a different kind of war, a different kind of destruction (Interview with development worker, 1995). Despite the clean-up at Riemvasmaak there have been three incidents since the community returned in which children have picked up unexploded ammunition and been injured. In one incident a child dropped wood he was carrying onto unexploded ammunition, which then detonated. His thigh and abdomen were injured. Another young person came into the camp with a hand grenade which he had found whereupon someone recognised what it was and told him to drop it immediately. The grenade exploded and he lost three fingers. Another child picked up ammunition and threw it. It exploded and she was injured by the shrapnel (Interview with Riemvasmaak community member, 1995).

Unexploded ordnance has already claimed the lives of two people from the Khosis community as Lohatla as well as some of the cattle. In February 1995, two people, a man and his son, were found dead. A bag with ammunition pieces from grenades, shells and anti-tank weapons was found next to their bodies. This would suggest that they were collecting scrap metal for resale when ordnance exploded, killing both of them (Interview with Khosis community member, 1995). The Khosis community have also lost cattle which have eaten ordnance. Die diere vreet ook hierdie goed van hulle, hierdie plofstowwe, en die diere raak siek daarvan (The animals eat these things of theirs, these explosives, and the animals become sick doing this) (Interview with Khosis community member, 1995).

Ordnance clearance is a time-consuming process. At Lohatla the costs of clearing the land are liable to be very high. In a report commissioned by the SANDF and prepared by Mechem, a division of Denel, it was estimated that to clear 10 000 hectares of the land would cost over R25 million. Mechem argued that at R0,25 per square metre this was cheaper than the United Nations rates for road clearance in Mozambique (at R1,33) and Angola (at R0,62) (Mechem, 1995:1). Mechem estimated that the area could be cleared up to a depth of 100 mm and to a clearance standard of 99,6 per cent over a period of one year. They argued that it was surface contamination which posed the greatest threat to people and animals. Surface contamination was estimated to constitute 8 per cent of total contamination. The other 20 per cent comprised aircraft and artillery ordnance, which could be embedded up to five metres beneath the surface (Mechem, 1995:2). After heavy rains it would be necessary to reassess the areas as rain or wind can shift and unearth unexploded ordnance.

It is impossible ever to give a 100 per cent guarantee of clearance, partly because the three areas comprise sizeable portions of land and because ordnance may lie too deeply buried beneath the soil and not get detected but may resurface over time with rain and wind. As a Riemvasmaak community member said, I am very, very scared. I m glad to be here but the fact that the land is polluted makes you feel uncertain, you just can’t walk for example in the river in the soft sand because the wind can move the sand which closes over these things (Interview with Riemvasmaak community member, 1995).

There has been tension between communities and the military at both Riemvasmaak and Schmidttsdrift about the extent to which the military should take responsibility for cleaning up and be liable for any damages which may arise subsequently. At Riemvasmaak the military said it could not give guarantees about clearing the land and argued, We clean the land as far as we can, you can never guarantee
absolute safety, we do as much as we can  (Interview with SANDF officer, 1995). The Defence Force initially wanted the community to sign a contract indemnifying the SANDF should anyone be injured or killed by unexploded ordnance. The community refused to do this. The community at Schmidtsdrift have argued that the SANDF should take responsibility for cleaning up the area for an extended period, such as thirteen years.

Any solution to this problem has to be ongoing and involve the community by means of extensive education and training programmes, particularly for the children. There is much that the SANDF could do in this regard such as developing ordnance awareness material in local languages, training teachers and parents, and involving local people in clearance.

Three communities were extremely unhappy about the proposal.

Some Skipskop people had lived in the area for four generations and practised traditional fishing with stone-packed fish traps. A fisherman argued, Surely we people who earn our livelihood from fishing should be heard in the matter. We are fisherfolk and this is our home  (Cape Times, 26 March 1983). Severe restrictions were placed on commercial and recreational fishing. During testing periods, commercial fishing was prohibited within a 5-kilometre-wide strip of sea extending 10 kilometres along the coast. Access to 10 kilometres of coastal area was prohibited east of Waenhuiskrans, between Skipskop and De Hoop. This affected not only those who relied on fishing for a living but recreational fishermen as well (Hey, 1983). Despite protests, the proposal went ahead and the holiday-home owners, farmers and small fishing community at Skipskop were expropriated, while the Waenhuiskrans community’s access to fishing areas was severely restricted.

The Rooi Els community was not affected in the same way since no one lived on the land, although access to the area for recreational purposes was restricted. However, residents were affected by the negative environmental impacts of weapons testing.

**Negative environmental impacts**

There are compelling arguments that defence and environmental protection are incompatible activities. As Renner argued, A world that wants to make peace with the environment cannot continue to fight wars or sacrifice human health and the earth’s ecosystems preparing for them . . . Despoiling and undermining vital natural support systems is a steep price to pay for freedom and natural sovereignty, if it was ever really necessary  (Disarmament Times, 1992:2). However, there is debate about the extent to which these weapons testing ranges are detrimental to the environment. It is difficult to establish the impact of weapons testing on the environment. The fact that data is often unavailable on the state of the natural resources before weapons test-
ing began makes it hard to quantify the impact. It is difficult to disentangle the effects of testing from other economic, biological, social or political processes and, in most cases, there were no formal programmes to monitor the impact of military activities. Much of the evidence is based on limited observations rather than rigorous monitoring and evaluation. Security considerations meant that conservation staff were sometimes denied access to areas, which limited their ability to monitor impacts effectively. For example, a staff member at St Lucia researching crocodiles commented, I objected when I was doing crocodile research that I couldn’t get access to the lake which was the main breeding ground in that area. I would have liked to go and see but I couldn’t because they wouldn’t let me in (interview with former Natal Parks Board employee, 1995).

Assessments of the impact of military activities on the natural environment are influenced by the manner in which people conceptualise the environment and threats to it. Those who view humans as the greatest threat to the environment are more inclined to argue that military activities have been beneficial. Where there were positive impacts of weapons testing it was largely because the environment had been protected from human impacts. If you come from a conservative position and you don’t like black people with cattle who practise shifting agriculture, and the army comes and moves the people out, then you will say that the army has done a good job. If you come from a background that says that people have a right to use areas because they always have and that it’s a question of sitting around with people and working out solutions, then you will have a different view... It’s the way you see the world (interview with Wildlife Society official, 1995).

At St Lucia, opinion seemed to be divided about the impact of the range on the birds and animals. One witness argued before the Hey Committee that it also became clear that birds and animals soon learned to tolerate the disturbance by aircraft and missiles, to the extent that it apparently did not affect them unduly (Hey, 1983). However, concern was expressed that the long-term ecological effects of testing might never be understood because so little was known about the area’s biology before the advent of the range (Hey, 1983).

In 1977 and 1978 there was negative publicity about the impact of the military at St Lucia. This led to the South African Air Force (SAAF) compiling a report on its activities. The report concluded that SAAF activities were having an extremely detrimental effect on the flora and fauna, especially the bird life (SAAF, 1980:2). The report noted the following disturbances:

- The desertion of eggs and chicks by 2 000 pairs of white pelicans in Selley’s lake area in July 1978. This was noted after military operations involving SAAF aircraft in mid-1978.

1. Ironically, the exclusion of park staff at St Lucia appears to have resulted in an increase in poaching, tree and reed cutting, and fish netting. A person caught snaring said, When we hear the helicopters and bangs we know the game guards stay at Bangazi and we can do what we like (Porter & Forrest, 1987).
Crocodiles, which were abundant in the channel west of Lane Island, had decreased over the previous four years and this may have been due to aircraft activity in the area.

Bird colonies on Lane Island were disturbed by the erection of a tower and the firing of missiles onto the island.

After missile operations, spoonbill, sacred ibis, grey-headed gull and Caspian terns deserted their breeding colonies on Lane Island and moved to Bird Island.

There was evidence that low flying over wilderness areas occurred often enough to cause disturbances.

Fires often occurred in the area north of the lake, which were started by falling flares and explosive material.²

Unexploded and exploded ammunition was found on the range which was a direct threat to human life and fauna and flora.

There were many vehicle tracks in the northern military area, some of which were unnecessary.

Litter was noticeable in some parts of the range.

The bulldozing of soil and trees on the north-western side of the Ndlozi peninsula had caused serious and unsightly erosion.

The erection of platforms and similar structures detracted from the natural scenery.

When the lake was closed for testing, launch tours on the lake and trails were stopped or seriously disrupted, which had a detrimental effect on tourism and related revenue.

Research programmes had been disrupted by the closures (SAAF, 1978:2-5).

Much of the public concern about the De Hoop range centred on the environmental impacts in the context of the ecological uniqueness and sensitivity of the region. There was concern about Armscor’s commitment to the environment after the executive general manager of Armscor remarked, “I would not recognise fynbos if I saw it. I’m only an engineer” (Cape Times, 30 August 1983). Conservation groups publicly campaigned against the range and submitted objections to the Hey Committee. The Wildlife Society collected 18 000 signatures supporting its objection to the proposed siting of the range (Hey, 1983).

The Hey Committee Report took into account the views of environmentalists and the communities. It outlined potential negative impacts on the natural environment, fauna and flora, recreation, education, agriculture, recreational and commercial fisheries, and the local community. The report presented a series of proposals to reduce the negative impacts. It then examined the advantages of using the area as a weapons testing range in terms of nature conservation, the local community and national interest. One of the key conclusions was that the current status of the coastal area was under threat from

² In 1983, during a trip organised by Armscor for journalists to witness the coexistence of the military and conservation, a fire broke out after the firing of a 127 mm artillery rocket. It raged for hours before it was brought under control (The Star, 7 June 1991).
a gradual degradation of the flora and fauna due to uncontrolled veld fires, the spread of alien vegetation, the increasing utilisation of the coastline for angling, other forms of outdoor recreation, and the demand for holiday townships (Hey, 1983). It concluded that existing and potential threats to the natural environment could be averted if the area was utilised as a weapons testing range. Furthermore, nature conservation could be improved since the existing reserve would not be used, the size of the reserve would be extended, and public access to the surrounding areas would be restricted.

The positive response of some conservation groups towards the report was interesting, in view of their initial rejection of the Armscor proposal. Bodies such as the Wildlife Society, the Southern African Ornithological Society and the Southern African Nature Foundation supported the Hey Committee Report. For example, the Wildlife Society had argued before the hearings that we oppose Armscor’s presence anywhere in the Arniston/Cape Infanta area, not just at De Hoop itself. After the publication of the report, it agreed that the area would benefit because the threat of development would be removed, serious damage done over the years will be offset and marine life in the inter-tidal zone would be allowed to recover (African Wildlife, 1983b: 176).

One of the key reasons for this about-turn by conservationists was that, having secured Armscor’s assurances about limiting the negative impact of its activities, they came to view Armscor as a potential ally,
rather than a threat. It was perceived that the military’s presence would enlarge the existing conservation area, stop further development, ensure that fewer people lived in the area and restrict access. It is interesting to note in the Hey Committee Report’s summary of objections that no conservation group raised concerns over the future of communities in the area. This omission underscores the argument that many conservationists adopted an approach which failed to take people into account.

In 1984, the government announced that it had appointed the Overberg Review Committee as a standing committee of the Council for the Environment. It was charged with reviewing all management plans and policy documents relating to the De Hoop Nature Reserve, to report any deviations from the Hey Committee’s recommendations to the council, and to ensure that proper records were kept of management plans, policy documents and approved variations of the Hey Report (African Wildlife, 1984:38).

Cape Nature Conservation officials were satisfied that Armscor activities had not had an adverse effect on the environment. In fact, they argued that its presence had benefited the environment since the reserve and the marine reserve were enlarged and some types of fish had increased in number. They reported good co-operation between themselves and the Armscor subsidiary Denel (interview with Cape Nature Conservation official, 1995). Dr Hey also indicated that Armscor/Denel had met all the recommendations of his committee’s report (personal communication, 1995).

Rooi Els is one of the few instances in South Africa where public debate has taken place over the environmental impact of military activities. While the environmental implications of Somchem’s activities were subsidiary issues in the legal arguments of the Rooi Els Local Council, they were of concern to many residents. Residents were concerned that the weapons testing caused noise, water and air pollution, disrupted the vegetation and posed a fire hazard (Save Hangklip Action Group, 1993). In 1991, there was a fire at the Somchem site but the residents were unable to extinguish it because of fencing around the property. There was also concern that fuel transportation along narrow and winding roads posed a danger to the environment.

The environmental impact of Somchem’s activities was deeply contested, with both sides drawing on scientists to support opposing viewpoints. For example, a botanist at the University of Stellenbosch argued in his affidavit that Somchem’s presence had benefited the area, considering the ecological disturbance which had preceded Somchem’s arrival (Somchem, 1993). One of the drawbacks of the case not being heard in court was that the arguments about the impact of weapons testing on the environment were never established or adjudicated on.

Noise pollution was a less contested issue than air and water pollution. The Rooi Els Local Council obtained expert evidence about

3. Somchem commissioned an environmental impact study before the establishment of the rocket range (Somchem, 1993).
the negative impact of Somchem’s activities on the water and the air. An affidavit by a professor of organic chemistry at the University of Cape Town stated that a major component of the emissions from the combustion of solid fuel is hydrogen chloride.\(^4\) This combines with water to generate hydrochloric acid, which is hazardous to humans and animals, and can cause inflammation and ulceration of the respiratory tract and skin irritation. An American expert at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), Steve Aftergood, stated in an affidavit that studies had shown extensive acidic fall-out and damage from space shuttle launches similar to those conducted by Somchem.

There was community concern that pollution would affect drinking water. Increased levels of aluminium were found in the drinking water, which caused alarm. For example, a resident who had his water analysed by an independent laboratory found 388 micrograms of aluminium content per litre, well above the recommended European Economic Community’s recommendation of 150 micrograms per litre. Somchem denied allegations that it was polluting the water and supported this with an affidavit from the head of the CSIR’s Water Division, who argued that the water in the Buffels River dam was in no way polluted and compared favourably with the water quality of the major dams in the Cape (Somchem, 1993). It later transpired that increased levels of aluminium were the result of problems in the water purification works (interview with Betty’s Bay community member, 1995).

Conversion of testing ranges

There have been changes at the testing ranges, some of which point to the possibility of their conversion to civilian use. At St Lucia in 1991, the SADF handed over the 70 000 hectares of land used for the testing range to the province, to be administered by the KwaZulu-Natal Parks Board. The handover was motivated by increasing demands on the military budget and the existence of an alternative range at De Hoop (Sunday Times, 26 May 1991). The SANDF retained some of the land at the Ndlozi peninsula for training purposes. The community which was forcibly removed intends to lodge a claim to get the land returned.

At De Hoop, the home owners and the fishing community at Skipskop are attempting to get their land back. The former landowners on the eastern side of the reserve argue that, since the land is no longer used for the reason for which it was appropriated, it should be returned. At Rooi Els, the court case was settled by an order of court which limited the lease period and the number of annual tests, allowed for Somchem to pay R40 000 annually to the Rooi Els Local Council, and established a Water Monitoring Committee. The opti-

4. A single rocket launcher test uses 10 tons of propellant in 52 seconds, which is the same amount of fuel used by a Boeing flying between Cape Town and Johannesburg (The Star 13 October 1992).
mistic predictions Somchem made for the space industry at the time of the legal action have not materialised.\footnote{Denel claimed that the establishment of a space industry would earn South Africa foreign exchange and provide an estimated 13 000 jobs in the Western Cape by the year 2000 \cite{CapeTimes,13 August 1992}.} The rocket development programme ended in June 1993 and the space programme was closed in 1994. Somchem subsequently embarked on a process of dismantling part of the site and rehabilitating it.\footnote{All buildings at the rocket test facility, apart from three, have been dismantled.} This process is taking place with public participation. The rehabilitation has involved ecological experts, representatives of environmental groups and the community. It is estimated that the project will cost Denel R300 000 and take about three years to complete \cite{Citizen,18 October 1995}. Part of the process has involved Denel upgrading a building formerly used as a control room and converting it into an environmental awareness centre \cite{interview with Betty s Bay community member, 1995}.

The testing ranges at Rooi Els, St Lucia and De Hoop were located in inappropriate sites with little consideration for the security of people and the well-being of the environment. It is hoped that restitution will return the land to its rightful owners and that weapons testing ranges will never again be established in areas of ecological importance.

\footnote{The rocket development programme ended in June 1993 and the space programme was closed in 1994. Somchem subsequently embarked on a process of dismantling part of the site and rehabilitating it. This process is taking place with public participation. The rehabilitation has involved ecological experts, representatives of environmental groups and the community. It is estimated that the project will cost Denel R300 000 and take about three years to complete \cite{Citizen,18 October 1995}. Part of the process has involved Denel upgrading a building formerly used as a control room and converting it into an environmental awareness centre \cite{interview with Betty s Bay community member, 1995}.}
South Africa’s transition to democracy was accompanied by a process of demilitarisation, which reversed the militarisation that took place during the 1970s and 1980s. At an economic level, this process of demilitarisation included dramatic cuts in the country’s defence budget and the implementation of various disarmament measures, such as the termination of the nuclear weapons programme. South Africa’s domestic arms industry, which had been built up under the presence of the United Nations arms embargo, also underwent a process of downsizing and restructuring in response to the defence cuts. It pursued a number of adjustment strategies such as retrenching workers, increasing exports, diversification and conversion, to survive the impact of the defence cuts. This chapter examines the effects of the defence cuts on South Africa’s arms industry, and considers the problems and prospects associated with its conversion within the broader process of demilitarisation. It argues that the lack of success with recent conversion efforts has been the result of a severe domestic economic recession and a lack of political will on the part of government to support (and finance) a national conversion strategy for the domestic arms industry.

The development of South Africa’s arms industry

South African society became increasingly militarised during the Total Strategy era of the 1970s and 1980s (Cock & Nathan, 1989). At an economic level, militarisation included increasing levels of military spending, the development of a domestic arms industry and growing institutional links between the state, the military and private industry. The militarisation of the South African economy, which took place between 1961 and 1989, is reflected in the trends in the country’s militarisation indicators (see the table below).

When human security needs are not met, we foster a cycle of violence. When we allow militaries to grow in power to control increasingly desperate populations, we have failed to address the root causes of conflict. Too many poor countries spend their limited resources on militaries that serve only to oppress their people. Unless we put an end to the arms trade, we will never put an end to violence.

Dr Oscar Arias, 1987 winner of the Nobel Peace Prize

The development of a domestic arms industry was one of the most significant aspects of the militarisation of the apartheid economy. South Africa’s arms industry was established with British aid just
prior to the Second World War, when training aircraft were assembled locally and the Pretoria branch of the Royal Mint manufactured small arms ammunition (Cawthra, 1986:89). During the war, the arms industry manufactured a substantial amount of basic weaponry for the Union Defence Force and the Allied forces, including armoured cars, bombs and ammunition. After the war, most of the wartime arms factories converted to their pre-war civilian activities.

During the 1950s and early 1960s, South Africa relied heavily on arms imports (mainly from Britain). However, South Africa’s withdrawal from the Commonwealth in 1961, and the imposition of a voluntary United Nations arms embargo in 1963, provided the impetus for a shift towards the establishment of a domestic arms industry. The Armaments Production Board was established in 1964 to control the manufacture, procurement and supply of all armaments for the South African Defence Force (Simpson, 1989:222). The board also took over the Department of Defence’s workshops and the ammunition section of the South African Mint, and was authorised to co-ordinate arms production in the private sector. By the mid-1960s, nearly a thousand private sector firms were involved in various aspects of domestic arms production.

In 1967, the UN Security Council passed a resolution calling on all states to stop supplying arms to South Africa. In 1968, the Armaments Production Board’s name was changed to the Armaments Board. It was tasked with the procurement of armaments for the SADF and ensuring the optimal utilisation of the private sector for arms production (Simpson, 1989:222). In the same year, the government established the Armaments Development and Production Corporation (Armscor). The Defence Ordnance Workshop and the Ammunition Section of the South African Mint became its first full subsidiaries. Over the next few years, Armscor took over various private sector companies, such as Atlas Aircraft Corporation, and established a number of new production and R&D facilities (Cawthra, 1986:98).

In 1973, the government established the Defence Advisory Council (DAC) to co-ordinate the private sector’s involvement in domestic arms production (Philip, 1989:205). DAC was chaired by the then
THE SOUTH AFRICAN ARMS INDUSTRY

The South African arms industry was born in secrecy and its purpose was to facilitate the wars of destabilisation of the armed contras of Angola and the third force units like Vlakplaas. The lines between unconditional war and criminality were blurred and associated with bribery, corruption and murder. R130 billion was squandered in defence of apartheid and it is shocking that this industry is not being phased out in the new South Africa. The current Ministry of Defence even shares offices with Armscor. The cabinet seems to have a perverse fascination with this industry as a form of jobs and finances despite the embarrassment caused by deals like those with Syria and Rwanda. Our arms deals have unfailingly brought us into disrepute. It is argued that South Africa has a right to self-defence even though we have never been attacked by another country. To argue that an arms industry is necessary for self-defence is nonsense, other countries manage fine without one. We need to sell 70 per cent of arms produced to be financially viable; one can’t have an arms industry without selling weapons. Everyone working in this industry is one less person working in development in South Africa. South Africa still has a chance to do things differently. (Bishop Peter Storey, Methodist Church)

Minister of Defence, P.W. Botha, and included the president of the Armaments Board and representatives from many of the country’s major private sector companies (for example, Anglo American, Barlow Rand, Tongaat and South African Breweries). The establishment of DAC represented the growing institutional links between the state, the military and private industry.

Increasing international opposition to apartheid, and world-wide demands for a mandatory arms embargo against South Africa, prompted the government to embark on a major reorganisation and expansion of the arms industry during the mid-1970s. In 1976, the Armaments Board and the Armaments Development and Production Corporation merged to form the Armaments Corporation of South Africa (Armscor). The restructuring and expansion of Armscor was funded by a secret government grant of R1 200 million (Landgren, 1989:42). The new Armscor assumed responsibility for the procurement and production of armaments for the SADF. It was no coincidence that the reorganisation and establishment of the new Armscor occurred in the same year as the United Nations mandatory arms embargo against South Africa (Resolution 418) (Cobbett, 1989).

During the 1980s, the domestic arms industry expanded considerably in response to South Africa’s increasing involvement in regional conflicts, which required a guaranteed supply of weapons of ever-increasing sophistication, and the growing militarisation of the state.
New state-owned research, development and arms production facilities were established, and the private sector became increasingly involved in domestic arms production. By 1984, more than 2 000 private sector firms were involved in domestic arms production, either as contractors or suppliers of military technology and equipment to the SADF (Armscor, 1984:7).

In the early 1980s, the arms industry began to experience economic problems as a result of increasing production costs, excess capacities and declining domestic demand. Drastic staff cuts were made at Armscor, several defence contracts with private sector firms were cancelled, some of Armscor’s production activities were rationalised, and a government commission was set up in 1984 to investigate Armscor’s financial problems (Cawthra, 1986:104). These problems were exacerbated by the embargo which forced the industry to adopt uneconomical practices, such as tooling-up for short production runs and stockpiling items which were not readily available in South Africa (Landgren, 1989:58).

By the end of the 1980s, the arms industry had reached a relatively high level of self-sufficiency and could meet most of the equipment requirements of the SADF. However, because of the country’s limited research and development (R&D) resources, and the presence of the United Nations arms embargo, the local arms industry did not try to reproduce or emulate the R&D which had already been carried out.
by the major Western arms producers (Brzoska, 1991:25). Instead, it concentrated on upgrading, modifying and modernising existing armaments and weapons systems. One of the ways in which South Africa became increasingly self-sufficient in arms production was through its ability to continue to obtain foreign inputs (technology, personnel, components) in circumvention of the United Nations arms embargo (Vayrynen, 1980; Landgren, 1989; Brzoska, 1991).

**Economic significance of South Africa’s arms industry**

The establishment and development of a domestic arms industry necessitated massive investment by the state and large-scale private sector involvement. By the late 1980s, the arms industry had developed into one of the most significant sectors of the country’s industrial economy, in terms of both employment and its contribution to the national economy. However, its expansion and increasing economic significance during the 1970s and 1980s occurred when the economy was performing poorly, and there is evidence to suggest that the development of a domestic arms industry imposed a substantial burden on the national economy and was a contributing factor to the country’s deteriorating economic performance in the 1970s and 1980s (Lipton, 1986; Kaplinsky, 1992).

The arms industry emerged as a significant creator of jobs during

**Arms Industry Employment, 1961-89**
the 1970s and 1980s. By 1989, over 150 000 were employed in the arms industry. Total arms industry employment as a percentage of total manufacturing employment increased from less than 1 per cent in 1961 to 10 per cent in 1989, while arms industry employment as a percentage of total employment in the formal sector increased from less than 1 per cent in 1961 to over 2 per cent in 1989.

Although the arms industry emerged as a significant provider of jobs during the 1970s and 1980s, most were highly capital- and skill-intensive and reserved for whites, given the strategic concerns of the industry. Thus the employment benefits of domestic arms production perpetuated the racist structure of the labour market and were inappropriate for a country such as South Africa with scarce capital and an abundance of unskilled labour. The arms industry also absorbed a disproportionate share of the country’s skilled labour at the expense of the civilian economy, thereby inhibiting the development of the more productive sectors of the civilian economy. By 1989, Armscor employed nearly 2 000 scientists and engineers over 10 per cent of the total number of R&D personnel in the national economy.

The use of scarce national resources for investment in arms production had negative consequences for investment in the civilian sectors of the economy. It has been suggested that the excessive share of state investment in strategic industries (for example, Armscor and Sasol) during the 1970s and 1980s represented a form of misinvestment, in that large amounts of scarce resources were invested in the wrong (capital-intensive) sectors and the wrong types of technology (for example, synthetic fuels) because of strategic considerations (Kaplinsky, 1992; Joffe et al., 1995).

While the establishment of a domestic arms industry was intended to reduce the cost of arms imports, by the end of the 1980s it was estimated that South Africa was still spending nearly R2 billion on arms imports per annum. The value of arms imports peaked in the years before the imposition of the United Nations arms embargo in 1977, then declined quite substantially throughout the 1980s, with marginal increases in the late 1980s. While South Africa became less dependent upon imports of completed weapons systems after 1977, it remained

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>South Africa Arms Imports (1970-89)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Figures are in Rm at constant 1985 prices. Figures in italic are percentages.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Import ratio*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arms imports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of total imports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of manf. imports</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Imports as a share of total procurement spending

Sources: South African Reserve Bank, *Quarterly Bulletin*, various issues; *Bulletin of Statistics*, various issues (Central Statistical Service); Armscor
highly dependent upon imports of machinery, technology and components which it needed for arms production. Thus, the development of a domestic arms production capability created new forms of dependency on foreign sources of technology and machinery, and ended up absorbing increasing amounts of scarce foreign exchange sources.

South Africa’s arms industry entered the international arms market in the early 1980s as a result of rising overhead costs, excess capacities and declining domestic demand (Cawthra, 1986:104). Armscor launched a massive international marketing drive in 1982, and by 1989 the value of South Africa’s arms exports had increased by nearly 400 per cent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Arms Exports</th>
<th>Arms Exports/Manf. Exports</th>
<th>Arms Exports/Total Exports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>0,2</td>
<td>0,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>0,3</td>
<td>0,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>0,4</td>
<td>0,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>1,8</td>
<td>0,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>1,7</td>
<td>0,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>2,1</td>
<td>0,9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>1,1</td>
<td>0,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>0,7</td>
<td>0,3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: ARMSCOR, South African Reserve Bank, Quarterly Bulletin, various issues; Bulletin of Statistics, various issues (Central Statistical Service)

Despite the increases in the value of arms exports between 1982 and 1989, the contribution to the national economy was fairly insignificant if one includes the costs of export subsidies, marketing (paid for by Armscor from the defence budget), and the fact that much of the R&D and production costs of export products were subsidised by the domestic procurement budget (Willett & Batchelor, 1994). South Africa’s trade balance in armaments remained negative between 1982 and 1989, despite the positive contribution of arms exports. The arms industry remained a net user of foreign exchange throughout the 1980s.

The evidence presented in this section suggests that the increasing militarisation of the South African economy, and particularly the development of a domestic arms industry, imposed costs on the national economy. The fact that the arms industry absorbed scarce resources (capital, labour, foreign exchange) at the expense of other sectors not only exacerbated many of the existing structural problems in the apartheid economy (for example, shortages of skilled black labour) but also contributed to the underdevelopment of civilian sectors.
Defence cuts and disarmament measures

South Africa’s external strategic environment changed dramatically after 1989. The end of the Cold War and the break-up of the former Soviet Union effectively put an end to superpower rivalry in many parts of the Third World, including southern Africa. The cessation of East-West contestation was accompanied by a reduction in ideological tensions within and among African countries, and by significant moves towards political pluralism in southern Africa (for example, Zambia and Malawi) (Nathan, 1993). These developments contributed to the resolution of most of the region’s historical conflicts (for example, Namibia and Mozambique) and provided opportunities for countries to reduce their levels of military spending and implement disarmament measures.

The interlinked processes of democratisation and disarmament which occurred had a positive impact on the South African state’s external threat perceptions, and led to dramatic changes in the country’s defence and foreign policies. South Africa withdrew its armed forces from Namibia and Angola in 1989, formally abandoned its policy of military aggression and regional destabilisation (for example, covert support for Unita and Renamo), and embarked on an ambitious programme of diplomatic and economic outreach to African states (Nathan & Phillips, 1992:116). These developments, together with the ending of apartheid, removed the dominant source of instability and antagonism in the region and led to a dramatic improvement in inter-state relations.

As a result of these positive developments, and in response to severe budgetary constraints and changing government spending priorities, the De Klerk government cut South Africa’s defence budget dramatically after 1989. Between 1989 and 1995, the defence budget declined by more than 50 per cent. With the defence cuts, the share of defence spending in GDP declined from over 4 per cent to just over 2 per cent between 1989 and 1995; the share of defence in total government expenditure declined from over 15 per cent to 7 per cent during the same period.

The structure of the defence budget exhibited significant changes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Defence Budget Trends (1989-95)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Figures are in Rbn at constant 1995 prices. Figures in italic are percentages.)</td>
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</table>

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Defence Budget</td>
<td>19.6</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% change</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>-14.4</td>
<td>-20.8</td>
<td>-7.3</td>
<td>-12.3</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>-14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defence/GDP</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defence/Govt. expenditure*</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Assembling a aircraft bomb in a munitions factory, 1989 (Photo courtesy of Beeld)

between 1989 and 1995. The share of personnel and operating costs increased at the expense of procurement and R&D spending. The increasing share of personnel costs during the pre-election period was related to the SADF’s internal deployment in support of the police, particularly as a result of the increasing political violence which accompanied the final stages of the constitutional negotiations (Friedman & Atkinson, 1994). The share of personnel and operating costs continued to increase after 1994 as a result of the integration process and the formation of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF). The dramatic decline in the share of procurement spending was related to the cancellation and postponement of several armaments projects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Structure of Defence Budget (1989-95)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Figures are in percentages.)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procurement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Despite the significant cuts in South Africa’s defence budget between 1989 and 1995, the country remained the largest military spender on the continent in absolute terms. In 1995, it accounted for nearly 65 per cent of total military spending in southern Africa, and 27 per cent of total military spending in Africa (SIPRI, 1995).

The defence cuts implemented after 1989 were achieved as a result
of, and in conjunction with, a variety of disarmament measures. These included:

- the rationalisation and restructuring of the SADF, including the disbanding of various SADF units and the closure and scaling-down of various bases and installations;
- ending compulsory conscription for white males at the end of 1993;
- the cancellation and postponement of major weapons projects;
- retrenchments of SADF and Armscor personnel;
- the withdrawal or sale of redundant and surplus military equipment;
- the termination of the country’s nuclear weapons programme (Nathan & Phillips, 1992; Batchelor, 1993).

The cuts in defence spending were accompanied by the restructuring of the public sector arms industry. As part of a policy of commercialising public enterprises, the government restructured Armscor into two organisations in April 1992. A new state-owned industrial company called Denel was formed under the Ministry of Public Enterprises, and inherited most of Armscor’s R&D and production facilities. Armscor remained part of the Ministry of Defence and retained responsibility for the acquisition of armaments for the SADF (Batchelor, 1993; Cilliers, 1994).

**The economic impact of defence cuts and disarmament**

Defence cuts, although desirable for a number of moral, political and economic reasons, can have short-term adjustment costs. These costs are normally felt in terms of job losses and the impact on towns and regions dependent on defence spending.

The defence cuts and disarmament measures implemented in South Africa after 1989 had a dramatic impact on the domestic arms industry. Many defence firms went out of business or exited from the defence market, and the industry as a whole underwent a process of downsizing and restructuring. The value of arms production (including exports) declined by over 40 per cent between 1989 and 1995. The contribution of the arms industry to the national economy also declined after 1989, and the value of domestic arms production in

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domestic Arms Production (1989-95)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arms production*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arms production/Manuf. output</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arms Production/GDP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Based on value of domestic acquisition spending and earnings from arms exports.

Sources: Armscor; South African Reserve Bank, *Quarterly Bulletin* (various issues)
total manufacturing output declined from nearly 8 per cent in 1989 to around 4 per cent in 1995 and, as a share of GDP, from nearly 2 per cent in 1989 to under 1 per cent in 1995.

The cuts in defence spending had a significant impact on employment in the domestic arms industry. Total employment declined by over 90 000 between 1989 and 1995, including over 10 000 in the public sector arms industry. Arms industry employment as a percentage of manufacturing employment declined from over 10 per cent in 1989 to 4 per cent in 1995. As a percentage of total employment, it declined from over 2 per cent in 1989 to just over 1 per cent in 1995.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arms Industry Employment (1989-95)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Figures in italics are percentages.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armscor /Denel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total arms industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arms industry/Manuf. employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arms industry/Total employment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Armscor; South African Reserve Bank, Quarterly Bulletin (various issues)

The declines in arms industry employment occurred within the context of a severe recession and corresponded to declines in manufacturing employment and total employment in South Africa generally. The job losses in the arms industry after 1989 were not offset by compensating increases in employment in other civilian sectors of the economy, and may have contributed to increasing unemployment in the economy as a whole. While it is possible that the lack of job creation in the civilian sector was linked to the presence of a severe domestic economic recession, the De Klerk government at no point used the savings from defence cuts to fund retraining schemes for defence workers or to create new civilian markets. Occupation categories, such as engineers, scientists and labourers, bore the brunt of the retrenchments in the arms industry and there is evidence to suggest that many found it difficult to find work in civilian sectors (Batchelor, 1996).

The negative impact of the defence cuts and disarmament was felt most acutely in those towns or regions which were heavily dependent on defence spending as a result of the location of military bases or arms production facilities (for example, Simon’s Town). The bulk of Armscor’s retrenchments (nearly 80 per cent) after 1989 were concentrated in the Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging (PWV) region, compared to the 20 per cent in the Western Cape, and less than 1 per cent in the Free State (Batchelor, 1996). These retrenchments corresponded to the geographical location of Armscor production facilities and the private sector arms industry (Rogerson, 1990). Although
CONVERSION: THE CASE OF DENEL

Peter Batchelor

Denel (Pty) Ltd was established as a state-owned industrial company under the Ministry of Public Enterprises in April 1992. It inherited most of Armscor’s production and research facilities, and over 15,000 employees. At the time of its formation, Denel restructured and reorganised the former Armscor subsidiaries into a number of divisions and subsidiaries within five industrial groups: systems, manufacturing, aerospace, informatics, and properties and engineering services.

Since its formation, Denel has faced a declining domestic defence market as a result of defence budget cuts. It has also been confronted with an uncertain policy environment, given the new ANC-led government’s commitment to restructuring state assets (privatisation) and the lack of clear government policy on the future of the domestic defence industry. The company has pursued adjustment strategies to commercialise the former Armscor subsidiaries and to reduce its dependence on local defence sales. The most common strategies have included diversification and conversion.

All of Denel’s divisions and subsidiaries have actively pursued strategies of diversification since 1992. Some through joint ventures or alliances with local and foreign civilian firms, and the purchase of existing civilian product lines. Ll W, which manufactures small arms and artillery systems, embarked on a joint venture with a civilian company, BELL (Pty) Ltd, to manufacture skid steer loaders. Somchem, which manufactures rocket systems, anti-Jarmour weapons and missiles, has entered into a licensing agreement with Tubi Sarplast from Italy to manufacture glass-reinforced polyester pipes. Simera, which manufactures fixed- and rotary-wing military aircraft, has a contract from Rolls Royce (UK) to build gearboxes for commercial aircraft engines.

Some of Denel’s divisions have pursued diversification through spin-offs, by developing civilian products using existing defence technology and production facilities. This strategy has been accompanied by significant investments in R&D, new product development, and a major marketing strategy to identify new local and foreign civilian markets. Kentron, which manufactures missiles and air defence systems, has developed new civilian products including traffic engineering systems, observation systems, and plastic and glass-fibre products. Eloptro, which manufactures electro-optical equipment for military purposes, has developed civilian products such as glass-moulding and night vision equipment. Musgrave, which manufactures rifles and shotguns, has developed new civilian products including cricket bats and motor vehicle parts. Somchem has developed civilian chemical and composite material products using its defence technology and production facilities. PMP, which manufactures small- and medium-calibre ammunition, has developed civilian products including brass and copper products, drill bits and pressed parts for the motor industry. Naschem, which manufactures medium- and heavy-calibre ammunition, has developed civilian products for the mining industry and a range of plastic products. Informatics, which is the major supplier of information technology (IT) products and services to the SANDF, has become one of the largest players in the local commercial IT market through equity partnerships (Information Database Technologies) and acquisitions of civilian IT companies, such as AZ Computers.

The success of these diversification efforts has been reflected in the increasing value and share of Denel’s civilian business. In
1992, civilian sales (domestic and exports) contributed about 20 per cent to Denel’s turnover. By 1995, civilian sales contributed about 30 per cent. In terms of value, civilian sales increased by nearly 40 per cent in real terms between 1992 and 1995, while the value of defence sales declined by 20 per cent during the same period.

Only one of Denel’s divisions, Houwteq, pursued a strategy of conversion after 1992. Having been involved in military satellites and missile launch systems, the company pursued the development of low-earth orbit satellites after 1992. During 1992 and 1993, the company developed two civilian products: Greensat (an observation satellite with remote sensing abilities) and Greensense (a resource management satellite system). Despite favourable reactions to both products from the international community, efforts to obtain an international partner or a client willing to invest proved unsuccessful, and the company’s activities were terminated in October 1994. The failure of this conversion effort was primarily related to political factors, particularly South Africa’s efforts to become a member of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), and not because the conversion products developed by Houwteq were commercially unviable.

Despite Denel’s success in increasing the value and share of its civilian business, its diversification and conversion efforts have been inhibited by internal and external factors. Internal factors have included the management culture of Denel, which has been protected from competitive market forces, a high dependency on defence sales and defence-specific technology in certain divisions, and the fact that many of Denel’s production and research facilities inherited from Armscor are commercially unviable. External factors have included a severe recession, the United Nations arms embargo (lifted in May 1994), and the absence of any clear policy direction from government on the future of the domestic defence industry.

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**Denel Organisational Structure**

```
 Board of Directors
/                     /
 Management Board
|                     |
Aerospace Manufacturing Systems Engineering Services Informatics & Properties Head Office
Sinesa Somchem
Houwteq Swartklip
OTR Naschem
喝
```

Source: Deniel, Annual Report 1992/93
defence cuts were concentrated in the PWV region, the size and diversity of the region’s economy meant that it was more able to absorb the impact than some of the country’s other regional economies.

**Defence industrial adjustment**

South Africa’s defence firms (public and private) pursued a variety of adjustment strategies after 1989 to survive the impact of the defence cuts. These included defensive strategies, whereby firms attempted to reduce their dependency on their defence business, and offensive strategies, whereby firms attempted to maintain or increase their defence business. Diversification is defined as an adjustment strategy whereby a defence firm attempts to reduce its dependence on military business by divesting itself of military divisions or by acquiring all or part of the assets or products of civilian companies. This strategy includes mergers, joint ventures and co-production agreements with civilian companies. Diversification usually involves the broadening of a company’s civilian production activities, and may be a permanent alternative to defence, or just a (temporary) complement during periods of limited or declining demand. The strategy of spin-off is a variant of diversification, with an emphasis on internal development rather than the acquisition of civilian firms or products. Using this strategy, a defence firm may attempt to develop civilian products utilising existing defence facilities.

Conversion is defined as the transfer of resources and the reorientation of productive capacities from military use to civilian purposes (Renner, 1992:32). At the level of defence firms, it involves the conversion of all or certain facilities to civilian production. It also includes the development of new or alternative civilian products using existing defence resources, the scaling down of plants and facilities, and the opening of new facilities (Southwood, 1991). Plant-based conversion involves the alternative (civilian) use of a specific defence plant’s existing skills, equipment and technology to produce civilian products swords into ploughshares (Dunne & Willett, 1992). In South Africa, the most common defensive strategies included diversification, spin-off and conversion. The most common offensive strategies included concentration and monopolisation of existing defence markets, increasing arms exports, and acquisitions and joint ventures with other defence firms.

**Defence industrial adjustment in the public sector**

With the restructuring of the public sector arms industry, Armscor retained responsibility for acquisition for the SADF, while Denel concentrated on R&D and the manufacture of armaments. Armscor retained other functions, including marketing support, arms control (the issuing of export permits), the sale of SADF surplus weapons, and,

1. See Brzoska & Lock, 1992; Renner, 1992; Southwood, 1991; Willett, 1990; and Dunne & Willett, 1992 for comprehensive discussions of the different types of adjustment strategies.
most importantly, overall co-ordination of the local defence industry.

In its new role, Armscor pursued several adjustment strategies: initiating and supporting technology retention and development programmes; pursuing export markets through international marketing and marketing support; introducing more competitive procurement policies; negotiating counter-trade agreements with foreign suppliers; retrenching staff, implementing internal cost-cutting measures; and expanding the corporation’s client base (Batchelor, 1996). These strategies were aimed at ensuring the survival of the domestic arms industry, which in turn constituted the rationale for Armscor’s existence.

From its inception, Denel pursued a number of adjustment strategies to commercialise the former Armscor subsidiaries and to reduce its dependence on the domestic defence market (Cilliers, 1994; Rogerson, 1995; Batchelor, 1996). Some of these strategies were aimed at reducing the company’s dependency on its defence business and included retrenching staff, internal cost-cutting, the closure of certain production facilities, spin-offs, diversification and conversion. Some were aimed at maintaining or increasing the company’s defence business local and foreign and included mergers, acquisitions and joint ventures with defence firms, and increasing arms exports. The adjustment strategies Denel pursued after 1992 were not mutually exclusive, in that the company made no attempt to get out of the defence market altogether. Instead, it pursued a dual-track approach which involved adapting to the declining domestic defence market by rationalising and consolidating its defence operations, and reducing its dependence upon the local defence market by diversifying into civilian markets and products, and through increasing arms exports (Batchelor, 1996).

Most of Denel’s divisions pursued strategies of diversification in order to reduce their dependence on the local defence market. These strategies of diversification included joint ventures, acquisitions or mergers with civilian firms, the purchase of non-military product lines or licensing agreements, and the development of civilian products using existing defence technology and production facilities (i.e. spin-off) (Batchelor, 1996). These diversification strategies were accompanied by significant investments in R&D and new product development as well as by a major marketing strategy to identify new (local and foreign) civilian markets.

Only one of Denel’s divisions, Houwteq, pursued an explicit strategy of conversion involving the transformation of all its resources and productive capacities to civilian purposes. Houwteq, formerly involved in military satellites, became involved in the development and marketing of low-earth orbit (LEO) satellites. However, its conversion strategy was commercially unviable and the division was closed in October 1994.

The outcome of Denel’s adjustment experience after 1992 was
reflected in the trends in the company's turnover and profitability, and in the changing composition of the company's business. Denel's turnover declined in real terms between 1992 and 1995, largely as a result of the dramatic declines in the value of domestic defence business. The company's poor level of profitability was related to the commercially unviable nature of many of the assets and facilities inherited from Armscor.

**Denel Composition of Turnover (1992-95)**
*(Figures are in Rm in constant 1995 prices. Figures in italics are percentages.)*

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<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Turnover</td>
<td>3 576</td>
<td>3 398</td>
<td>3 312</td>
<td>3 401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic defence/Total</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defence exports/Total</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic civilian/Total</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civilian exports/Total</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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Sources: Denel, Annual Report, various years

Despite this, the composition of Denel's business changed dramatically during the same period. The company's domestic defence business declined from 63 per cent in 1992 to 45 per cent in 1995, as a result of the declines in defence spending. This was offset to some extent by increases in exports (mainly arms) and civilian sales. The increasing value and share of Denel's civilian business were directly related to the company's diversification efforts.

Since coming to power in April 1994, the ANC-led government has consistently rejected the idea of privatising Denel. It has also failed to articulate a vision or strategy for the company, either in terms of its defence business or further diversification and conversion efforts. In the absence of a clear policy direction from government, Denel will continue to pursue new defence and civilian markets, while attempting to reduce its dependence on the local defence market. Its success in civilian markets will probably be limited to divisions such as Informatics (information technology), which utilise dual-use or generic technologies. Some divisions, such as LIW, which are heavily dependent upon defence business, will continue to find it difficult to diversify or convert their defence activities to civilian purposes.

*Defence industrial adjustment in the private sector*

The defence cuts which led to the restructuring and commercialisation of South Africa’s public sector arms industry had a dramatic effect on the private sector arms industry. The changes in Armscor’s procurement policies, which entailed more competitive procurement and acquisition from abroad, together with the formation of Denel as a contractor and competitor, fundamentally altered the cosy relationship between the public sector arms industry and the private sec-
tor. The cuts in procurement spending, which led to the cancellation or postponement of major weapons projects, resulted in a dramatic downsizing of the private sector arms industry and were accompanied by declining output, profitability and large-scale retrenchments. Private sector defence firms were forced to pursue adjustment strategies to minimise the impact of the procurement cuts.

The most common offensive adjustment strategies included the concentration and monopolisation of certain defence markets, increasing exports, and joint ventures and alliances with foreign defence firms. These strategies not only helped to consolidate the monopoly positions of the country’s three major private sector defence groups (Reunert, Altech and Grintek) in certain sectors of the domestic defence market, but allowed some medium-sized firms (for example, XCEL Engineering) to increase the value and share of their defence business. Most private sector defence firms embarked on export drives to offset the declining domestic demand for armaments and to find new markets for their defence products. Although there were some barriers to exporting, such as the United Nations Security Council Resolution 558 of 1984, which encouraged countries to refrain from purchasing South African armaments, many firms were successful in finding new export markets. The major defence groups, which had extensive links with multinational companies, were relatively successful in finding export markets for their products. Smaller firms with niche products (for example, Milkor) also managed to find export markets, while for some firms (for example, Northbend) arms exports exceeded the value of local defence business or replaced local defence business (Batchelor, 1996). Most firms pursued joint ventures and strategic alliances with foreign defence firms.

The most common defensive adjustment strategies involved retrenching workers, downsizing a firm’s defence activities and diversification. The private sector defence industry downsized dramatically after 1989, and this was reflected in the nearly 80000 workers retrenched between 1989 and 1995. Cutting back on R&D and capital spending contributed to the under-utilisation of resources (capital, labour and technology) in the manufacturing sector. Many defence firms were operating at sub-optimal production levels with large surplus capacities. Many adopted spin-off or diversification strategies, but very few attempted to convert their defence activities to civilian use. Some firms (for example, Grinaker Avitronics) were relatively successful in developing civilian products (microwave products, voice technology products) from existing military technologies, whereas smaller firms found it more difficult to develop spin-offs because of the resources needed to fund R&D. Many of the major defence groups were successful in acquiring civilian firms or product lines through licensing agreements. Conversion was not a popular strategy among private sector firms as it was perceived as expensive and difficult.
The private sector arms industry as a whole witnessed declines in the value of total sales, largely as a result of the cuts in defence spending. However, the share of civilian sales (domestic and exports) in total sales increased substantially after 1992. The value of private sector arms exports also increased significantly after 1992, despite a slight dip in 1994.

**Adjustment outcomes**

Between 1989 and 1995, the size and structure of South Africa’s domestic defence market changed quite dramatically as a result of the cuts in defence spending, the formation of Denel, the lifting of the United Nations arms embargo and South Africa’s reintegration into the international community. The size of the domestic defence market, as measured by Armscor’s total acquisition spending, declined by 30 per cent between 1992 and 1995. The share of imports increased slightly during 1995, with the lifting of the United Nations arms embargo in May 1994. Despite real declines in the value of Denel’s domestic defence business, it was able to maintain its share of the domestic market between 1992 and 1995. This resulted from the company’s attempts to subcontract less of its defence work to the private sector. The three major private sector defence groups (Reunert, Grintek and Altech) increased their collective share of the domestic market between 1992 and 1995 at the expense of the rest of the private sector, whose share declined quite dramatically after 1993. The private sector as a whole, including the three major groups, witnessed increases in its share of the domestic defence market between 1992 and 1994, before experiencing a dramatic decline in 1995.

One of the most significant adjustment outcomes of the declining domestic defence market has been the increase in South Africa’s arms exports. Almost all defence firms have pursued export markets aggressively since 1989, and particularly since the lifting of the arms embargo. Armscor’s international marketing efforts, the presence of South African defence firms at international defence exhibitions, together with the support of the ANC-led government, have contributed to the increasing value of the country’s arms exports, and the contribution of...
Structure of the South African Defence Market (1992-95)
(Figures are in Rm in constant 1995 prices. Figures in italics are percentages.)

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<tr>
<td>Total Armscor acquisition spending</td>
<td>5250</td>
<td>5328</td>
<td>4140</td>
<td>3652</td>
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<tr>
<td>Imports/Total</td>
<td>16,8</td>
<td>17,0</td>
<td>13,8</td>
<td>21,9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Denel/Total</td>
<td>42,9</td>
<td>33,8</td>
<td>38,4</td>
<td>41,9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Private sector groups/Total*</td>
<td>19,8</td>
<td>19,5</td>
<td>22,9</td>
<td>22,1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rest of private sector/Total</td>
<td>20,5</td>
<td>29,7</td>
<td>24,9</td>
<td>14,1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total private sector/Total</td>
<td>40,3</td>
<td>49,2</td>
<td>47,8</td>
<td>36,2</td>
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* Includes Reunert, Grintek and Altech.

Sources: Armscor, Annual Report, various years; Some Statistics of the SADIA Members of the Defence Industry (SADIA: Johannesburg, 1996)

arms exports to manufactured exports and total exports.

The nearly 200 per cent increase in the value of South Africa’s arms exports since 1989 has been accompanied by scandal. In September 1994, a consignment of surplus small arms, supposedly intended for Lebanon, was diverted to Yemen, which was involved in a civil war and was a prohibited destination for South African arms sales (The Star, 1 October 1994). The consignment, which included over 9000 AK-47s, 15 000 G-3 assault rifles and some 14 million rounds of ammunition, was the second part of a dual shipment, the first having found its way, illegally, to the former Yugoslavia (Cameron Commission, 1995a:38). The events surrounding these shipments led to the establishment of the Cameron Commission of Inquiry. Its mandate was to investigate the irregularities of the Armscor-Wazan deal and to comment on South Africa’s arms trade policies.

South African Arms Exports (1989-94)
(Figures are in Rm in constant 1995 prices. Figures in italics are percentages.)
In November 1994, it was alleged that elements within the South African armed forces had continued to supply arms to Unita in Angola for several years after the Bicesse Accords. It was also alleged that Armscor shipped consignments of weapons, mainly surplus weapons, to southern Zaire in late 1992 and early 1993, and that these weapons were intended for Unita (Human Rights Watch Arms Project, 1994:51). While Armscor and the South African government denied the charges, it admitted that rogue elements within the defence industry and private companies could be supplying arms to Unita. In

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<tr>
<td>Arms exports</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>713</td>
<td>405</td>
<td>689</td>
<td>604</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arms exports/ Manuf. Exports</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arms exports/ Total exports</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
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Sources: Armscor; South African Reserve Bank, *Quarterly Bulletin*, various issues
mid-1995 it emerged that certain South Africans had sold arms to the Hutu government in Rwanda before its defeat in 1994 by the Rwanda Patriotic Front (Mail & Guardian, 2 June 1995). While Armscor and the South African government stopped official arms sales in February 1993, it is evident that unofficial sales continued during 1993 and 1994. The cabinet asked the Defence Minister, Joe Modise, to investigate the alleged arms sales to Rwanda to prevent any damage to South Africa’s diplomatic relations. In October 1995, the Office for Serious Economic Offences began investigating certain irregularities in the commissions paid for the sale of 12 ex-SANDF Puma helicopters to Romania in March 1994 (The Star, 21 October 1995).

In response to these incidents the government appointed a ministerial committee in March 1995 to make recommendations on government arms trade policy and possible arms export control mechanisms (Van Dyk, 1996:5). The committee’s recommendations were submitted to cabinet, and approved in August 1995, just after the release of the First Report of the Cameron Commission. The Cameron Commission’s Second Report, released in November 1995, contained recommendations on arms trade policy. These included a code of conduct governing arms sales, a system of country and product classification, and an oversight role for parliament in approving arms sales. It also made recommendations on harmonising existing arms control legislation, and centralising the arms control function in a single agency or government department (Cameron Commission, 1995b:vi-xiii).

The conversion of South Africa’s arms industry

The process of demilitarisation which accompanied South Africa’s transition to democracy is a crucial element in the dismantling of the apartheid system. The short-term negative effects, such as job losses and the decline in industrial output, need to be balanced with the positive long-term aspects, such as the reallocation of resources to more pressing socio-economic needs and higher levels of economic growth. For the government and the private sector arms industry, the challenge is to optimise the transformation and reorientation of military resources for civilian purposes with minimal adjustment costs.

The declining domestic defence market, and the highly competitive nature of the post-Cold War international defence market, have forced most of South Africa’s defence firms to pursue defensive adjustment strategies such as spin-off, diversification and conversion. Diversification efforts, which have included mergers and acquisitions of civilian firms, acquisitions of civilian products, and the development of new civilian products based on existing defence technologies, have led to higher levels of civilian sales. However, in the absence of any government support for the conversion of the country’s defence resources
labour, capital and technology  defence firms have been expected to pursue conversion in accordance with market forces. Many firms  conversion efforts have met with limited success because they attempted to produce civilian prototypes of existing defence products without any real knowledge or understanding of commercial markets.

The limited number of successful conversion efforts in South Africa’s arms industry is not unique. International evidence suggests that without government support and the political will to support conversion, only those companies with relative strengths in dual-use technology markets, or those at the lower levels of the product hierarchy, will find conversion relatively easy. There have been no attempts in South Africa to reproduce the classic plant-based form of conversion that was immortalised by the Lucas Aerospace Plan in Britain in the 1970s. This is not surprising, given the tremendous barriers to exit from the defence market and the presence of a severe domestic economic recession which accompanied the declining domestic demand for armaments.

The failure to reallocate resources successfully from the defence to the civilian sector suggests that the government should take a more interventionist role in defence industrial adjustment. Support for a government-sponsored conversion strategy has come from several quarters, including the trade unions, church groups and elements within the ANC. However, beyond a rhetorical call of swords into ploughshares, little work has been done on the formulation of a conversion policy which optimises gains from the demilitarisation process. Understandably, in the absence of a coherent defence industrial adjustment policy, defence firms will continue to pursue strategies aimed at increasing their share of local and foreign defence markets. The top-down approach implied in government-orchestrated conversion strategies has not been particularly successful in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, which suggests that an alternative approach needs to be identified for South Africa’s arms industry.

Political conversion concerned with demilitarising the economy and restructuring the country’s industrial and technological priorities, rather than with the micro-level, technical aspects of conversion, seems to be the most appropriate approach in the South African context. The government should provide a conducive macroeconomic environment which encourages the conversion of resources from military to civilian purposes. This could be achieved through mechanisms and incentives such as tax breaks, subsidies to spin-off companies, retraining programmes for defence workers, and economic regeneration programmes for towns or regions affected by defence cuts. The government, in conjunction with industry, labour, local and regional authorities, and other interested parties, could formulate a national conversion strategy. This should be integrated with existing industrial and science and technology policies, and aim to redirect
industrial, technological and scientific resource capabilities towards meeting the country’s pressing socio-economic needs.

The conversion of South Africa’s arms industry is an important strategy for demilitarising components of the industrial base which were part of the apartheid military-industrial complex and which have survived into the post-apartheid era. It is the most appropriate mechanism for developing and regenerating the country’s industrial base and for eradicating the destructive legacy of militarism which is still pervasive in South and southern Africa.
ARMS EXPORTS AND ARMS TRADE POLICY IN THE NEW SOUTH AFRICA

Arms exports have become a contentious policy issue in the new South Africa. The country entered the international arms market in 1982, and during the 1980s exported armaments to its surrogate forces in Angola and Mozambique and to a number of pariah states such as Cambodia, Chile, Taiwan and Lebanon. These armaments were either locally produced or re-exports of captured or imported arms. Since the ANC-led government came into power in April 1994, various individuals and companies have been implicated in arms trade scandals. Most of these have involved small arms and ammunition rather than large conventional weapons. What is more important, the recipients of the exports have tended to be non-governmental sources (for example, opposition movements) or countries experiencing internal conflict, such as Rwanda, Angola and Yemen.

In response to these incidents, the government appointed a ministerial committee to make recommendations on government arms trade policy and possible arms export control mechanisms (Van Dyk, 1996:5). The committee's recommendations were submitted to cabinet, and approved, during August 1995, just after the release of the First Report of the Cameron Commission.

The Cameron Commission's Second Report, released in November 1995, contained recommendations on arms trade policy. While many of these recommendations have been incorporated into the government's new policy on arms trade matters, the cabinet is still opposed to some of the recommendations relating to aspects of transparency in arms sales and parliament's oversight role in approving arms sales.

New Arms Export Policy

Before the April 1994 elections, the export of conventional arms was controlled by Armscor in terms of the Armaments Development and Production Act 57 of 1968 (as amended). However, there was an anomaly in the system, in that Armscor was charged with marketing arms and issuing export permits (Van Dyk, 1996:5). During 1994, Armscor recommended that the function of issuing export permits be transferred to the Department of Defence.

Following the recommendations of the ministerial committee, a cabinet memorandum was issued on 30 August 1995 and provided details of the government's interim arms trade policy. The White Paper on Defence, which was approved by parliament in May 1996, contained a statement of government policy on the arms trade, and provided details of the new arms control processes and structures (Department of Defence, 1996:41-5).

The new arms control system includes four levels of control:

- a processing unit within the Ministry of Defence;
- a departmental review conducted by designated government departments;
- a scrutiny committee comprising the Secretary for Defence and the Directors General of the departments of Foreign Affairs and of Trade and Industry; and
- a cabinet committee the National Conventional Arms Control Committee (NCACC) under the chair of Kader Asmal, Minister of Water Affairs and Forestry. The NCACC comprises six ministers and four deputy ministers. The function of processing and issuing arms export...
permits, previously the responsibility of Armscor, is now carried out by the Directorate for Conventional Arms Control in the Defence Secretariat (Van Dyk, 1996:5).

Applications for arms exports are assessed on a case-by-case basis according to a system of product classification and the government’s policy guidelines. In theory, the following criteria are used in assessing each export application:

- the recipient country’s record on human rights and fundamental freedoms;
- existing tensions or armed conflicts, and the internal and regional security situation in the recipient country;
- the recipient’s record of compliance with international arms control agreements and treaties;
- the nature and cost of the arms to be transferred in relation to the circumstances of the recipient country, including its legitimate security and defence needs, and the objectives of least diversion of human resources and economic resources for arms procurement; and
- the degree to which arms sales are supportive of South Africa’s national and foreign interests.

Theoretically, South Africa will avoid arms sales that are likely to:

- cause, or be used for, the violation or suppression of human rights and fundamental freedoms;
- contravene South Africa’s international obligations;
- endanger regional or international peace by introducing destabilising military capabilities into a region, or otherwise contribute to regional instability and negatively influence the balance of military power;
- be diverted by the recipient country or re-exported to third countries;
- be used for purposes other than the legitimate defence and security needs of the recipient country; or
- contribute to the escalation of regional conflicts (Directorate for Conventional Arms Control, 1996:3-4).

While the implementation of the new arms trade policy has contributed to tightening control on arms exports (including exports of surplus weapons), there are still a number of legal, technical and political issues that remain unresolved.

**Legislation**

Currently, there are different pieces of legislation covering the export of conventional arms, small arms and ammunition, teargas, explosives, weapons of mass destruction, dual-use technology, space technology and nuclear technology. The Acts are administered by different government agencies. New legislation on conventional arms control is required to give legal effect to the creation and operation of the NCACC and to transfer the issuing of arms export permits from Armscor to the Directorate for Conventional Arms Control in the Defence Secretariat. The Cameron Commission recommended that arms control legislation be harmonised and rationalised, and brought under the control of one government department or, preferably, a statutory arms control agency (Cameron Commission, 1995b:25-6). *Inspectorate*

The cabinet memorandum of 30 August 1995 approved, in principle, the establishment of an independent inspectorate to ensure that all levels of the arms control process are subject to independent scrutiny and oversight, and are conducted according to the policies and guidelines in the cabinet memorandum. It is expected that the inspectorate will make regular reports to NCACC and the cabinet. By late 1997, this inspectorate had not been established.
Monitoring and enforcement

Customs and Excise does not have a mandate to monitor and control arms exports, as evidenced by the allegations of illegal arms exports to Angola and Rwanda. The Cameron Commission has recommended that government regulations be promulgated to give Customs and Excise an explicit mandate to monitor compliance with arms export controls (for example, end-user certificates). Additional resources and training need to be made available to Customs and Excise to enhance its capacity to monitor and control arms exports. The Cameron Commission has also recommended much greater inter-agency functional co-operation between the police, Intelligence, and Customs and Excise, and the establishment of a dedicated police unit for investigating alleged arms control contraventions.

Transparency and Accountability

Despite the establishment of the new arms control system, including the NCACC, information on the value, content and destination of South Africa’s arms exports remains hidden from public scrutiny. Parliament, particularly the portfolio committees on defence and foreign affairs, do not have formal access to information on proposed arms sales or a formal role in commenting on such matters. The Cameron Commission has recommended that the government present an annual report to parliament, providing details of all arms sales conducted during the year, and that the relevant parliamentary committees should have a formal role in commenting on, and approving, proposed arms sales (Cameron Commission, 1995b:xi).
The southern African region is awash with light weapons. These are distinguished from major conventional weapons largely by their size, portability and ease of use. The category includes all small arms, such as handguns, pistols, revolvers, rifles, assault rifles and sub-machine-guns. The availability of light weapons exacerbates political violence and social instability, and has direct effects on economic recovery in the region. In Mozambique, northern Namibia and Angola, the proliferation of light weapons, especially anti-personnel land-mines, threatens to subvert social and economic reconstruction. This proliferation is largely the legacy of armed conflicts which contributed to the creation of high levels of poverty and social dislocation, as well as deep-seated ethnic, racial and ideological antagonisms.

Now that there is a pluralist political system and universal franchise in all the states of the region, the consolidation of peace and democracy depends on the transformation of economic and social relations. The proliferation of light weapons is a key issue which threatens the consolidation of regional security on which such transformation depends.

During the anti-apartheid struggle, a popular slogan was no peace without justice. In the post-apartheid era, peace also requires long-term stability. To achieve peace one needs to focus not just on the sources of violence (such as social and political development issues) but also on the material vehicles of violence (such as weapons and ammunition) (Gamba, 1995:xv). Gamba points out that the international community has not effectively straddled these two foci: on the one hand, the international community . . . has put a higher value on peace in the short term than on development and stability in the long term; and, on the other hand, those who do focus on long-term stability have put a higher value on the societal and economic elements of development than on the management of the primary tools of violence, i.e. weapons (Gamba, 1995:xiii).
The main source of this proliferation is leakage from the various armed formations involved in past conflicts, including wars of liberation against colonial powers and post-independence civil wars. In Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe, the post-independence period witnessed the continuation of armed conflict due to ethnic or ideological differences.

In Angola and Mozambique, and in the wars of liberation in Namibia and Zimbabwe, the apartheid state specifically the South African Defence Force (SADF), the South African Police (SAP), their surrogate forces and the apartheid arms industry played a crucial part in opposing these liberation movements. A boomerang effect is behind much of the current problem of criminal violence in South Africa, as it is fuelled by light arms flowing back into the country, particularly from Mozambique, but also from Namibia and Angola. Furthermore, not all of the negotiated settlements which marked the end of conflicts in Mozambique and elsewhere involved effective disarmament and thus large quantities of light weapons have been released onto the black market.

This chapter focuses on one category of light weapons: small arms. It is argued that the problem of gun violence has a social dimension; it is connected to social relations, values, beliefs, practices and most importantly to different social identities. The demand for guns is socially constructed and embedded in a gun culture; the supply is socially organised. Much gun violence is about contested identities. The solution includes altering the meanings, allegiances and identities which underlie acts of gun violence. I conclude that a contextualised demilitarisation movement which links peace to justice is necessary to bring about these social changes.

**Gun violence and identity**

Gun violence symbolises the crisis in the South African social order in the 1990s. The gun is a symbol of the failure to build a secure society. Firearm killings are the fastest-growing form of violence in South Africa.

- At present, every day 28 people are murdered with a firearm.
- In 1994, 7000 people were murdered with guns and 17700 attempted murders involved guns (this represents an increase of almost 50 per cent since 1991).
- Guns were used in 79 per cent of all robberies in 1995 (an increase of 16 per cent over 1994).
- In 1996, 17 600 licensed guns were reported lost or stolen by private individuals. This figure excludes theft and loss from the SAP and the SANDF (interview with Chris de Kock, SAP Crime Information Management Centre, January 1997).
As Shaw has pointed out, the availability of weapons erodes one of the key requisites of democratic transitions, the state’s ability to monopolise the instruments of coercion (The Star, 26 June 1995). It is in this sense that the extent of criminal violence linked to the proliferation of light weapons threatens to subvert the consolidation of democracy in South Africa.

These material vehicles of violence are neglected in much of the literature on the subject. Furthermore, the scanty literature that does address guns focuses on questions of supply, to the neglect of questions of demand. Guns are not value-neutral, ahistorical technologies. We can hope to wean people off firearms only when we understand why people are attached to them. This requires a fresh sociological and historical approach to the problem of gun violence.

Such an approach involves analysing the relation between guns and social identity. A concern with identity is central to the issue but it often involves a paralysing relativism and a retreat from political struggle. As Bondi has written, Lenin’s question, What is to be done? is replaced by Who am I? (Bondi, 1993:84). I argue that these two questions are inextricably connected.

Identity is neither fixed and essentialist, nor completely fluid and shifting, but rather historically and socially constructed in changing processes of social interaction. Identity depends on a sense of difference which distinguishes us from them. All identities operate through exclusion. The lines of difference imply the boundaries of identity. It follows that collective identities are defined negatively that is to say, against others. But as Hobsbawm has written, most collective identities are like shirts rather than skin, namely they are . . . optional, not inescapable (Hobsbawm, 1996:41).

Discussions of collective identities and difference need to be linked to an analysis of power relations; of how some social categories have the power to define difference as deficiency or threat. Ignoring difference perpetuates unequal power relations.

A crucial question is how difference and identity are transformed into antagonism. Freud suggested that the smaller the real difference between two peoples, the larger it loomed in their imaginations. He called this effect the narcissism of minor difference. Edward Said connects the process of identity formation in modern society directly to violence. One belongs either to one group or to another; . . . one acts principally in support of a triumphalist identity or to protect an endangered one (Said, 1988:54). He concludes that while it would be a mistake to ascribe all . . . violence to . . . identity demands, it would be an even graver mistake to ignore the process altogether (Said, 1988:58).

Part of the solution to gun violence involves recasting the relation between guns and social identity. This will be demonstrated in relation to a particular weapon: the AK, the Kalashnikov assault rifle.
March by Pagad (People Against Gangs and Drugs) to protest against drug dealers on the Cape Flats (Photo by Roger Bosch)

The AK-47: contested social meanings and identities

The Kalashnikov assault rifle is not just a gun; it is the most potent symbol of conflict and violence in the closing years of the 20th century (Smith, 1996:1). Since its production in 1947, some 70 million AKs have been manufactured. It has been described as the most effective assault weapon in the world and has changed the way wars are fought.

The AK is invested with powerful symbolic force. For many young, black South Africans the AK became a mythical icon during the apartheid era, a marker of group identity, a kind of code to assert one’s political allegiance that carried great significance. At this time, the AK was an important ingredient in the state’s portrayal of the ANC as a demonic force. Part of the process of demonisation involved stressing the relationship between the ANC and the Soviet Union, and the AK provided the link. The AK was the bearer, the material evidence of the communist onslaught; it was constantly described as a Russian-made weapon, and there were frequent references to Russian arms and ammunition in the state-controlled media and in media displays of captured weapons. This was the evidence to support the regime’s assertion that resistance to apartheid was not indigenous, but inspired by the Soviet Union. Thus the identity of this gun marked the identity of the Russian demon-terrorist.

Ironically, AKs were an important part of the undeclared war of
destabilisation directed by the apartheid regime against neighbouring states externally and against the ANC internally. They were included in weapons supplied to Unita, Renamo and Inkatha. For example, almost 40000 AKs were purchased by the apartheid state from Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Hungary and China between 1976 and 1986 specifically to be given to Unita (Cameron Commission, 1995). The Cameron Commission pointed out that it is no small irony that the previous South African government which publicly regarded AK-47s as a symbol of communist terrorism, was clandestinely purchasing, selling and distributing thousands of these weapons (Cameron Commission, 1995:79).

The AK is attractive for a number of reasons. First, it is relatively cheap: in Namibia, Angola and Mozambique one can be bought for less than $15 or for a blanket, a bag of maize, or even second-hand clothes. In South Africa, the price can be as high as R1 500, so there are substantial profits to be made (Smith, 1996:43). Second, the AK is extremely robust: it has only 16 moving parts, is easy to maintain, durable and rarely breaks down. It is also easy to operate, which makes it particularly suitable for the increasing numbers of child soldiers in the world. For all these reasons, the AK is appealing to criminals and has become a powerful symbol of lawlessness. Criminals and terrorists, or revolutionaries and freedom fighters these are the contested political identities condensed in the image of the AK-47.

The contestations run deep. South Africa is not a consensual society; there are no shared maps of meaning. Current media accounts of gun violence involve fragments (what Gramsci termed traces) of knowledge which have acquired the status of ordinary common sense and are part of the attempt to impose order and meaning on our experience.

The reaction to gun violence in media accounts reflects a number of distortions concerning the AK. Despite the commonsense view, the AK is not the most commonly used weapon in violent crime compared with pistols and revolvers. For instance, in 1995 high-calibre automatic weapons, such as AKs, were used in only 6 per cent of the murders reported that year. Admittedly, this represents an increase from 1992, when less than 3 per cent of all murders were perpetrated with such guns. However, these figures would suggest that the obsessional focus on AKs in the contemporary South African media is an ideological hang-over from the demonisation of uMkhonto weSizwe (MK) guerrillas during the apartheid era.

It should be clear in this discussion of AKs that gun violence is not treated as a uniform, undifferentiated phenomenon but as a relation the relation between the incidence of gun violence and the social response to it. These social reactions reflect how the transition from authoritarian rule has created a deep well of social anxiety, as familiar social identities and traditional practices have been disrupted and
One consequence of this social anxiety is the emergence of a predisposition to the use of scapegoats into which all disturbing experiences are condensed (Hall et al., 1978:157). In the South African context there are two categories of scapegoats—the ex-combatant and the illegal immigrant. Much press coverage of gun violence reflects a sense of blame and indignation towards these social categories. In the vocabulary of social anxiety, ex-combatants and illegal immigrants are easy symbols of menace, social dislocation and threat.

The policy solution generated by this anxiety—the tightening of border security to block illegal immigration and prevent gun smuggling by Mozambican ex-combatants—is inadequate. Effective policy solutions have to include an understanding of how guns are invested with powerful social meanings and linked to contested social identities. The present romanticisation of the AK and other firearms is, in part, the legacy of colonial conquest and revolutionary struggle in southern Africa.

This legacy includes antagonistic social identities and an ideology of militarism which regards violence as a legitimate solution to conflict and a crucial means of obtaining and defending power. The material legacy of war includes a proliferation of small arms. Together, these elements form a lethal mix: guns provide the power to express social antagonisms in violent ways.

**The socially constructed demand for guns**

The social categories involved with small arms include not only criminal networks and political groupings with paramilitary formations, but also sportsmen, mercenaries, self-defence and self-protection units, the security forces, citizens and private security firms. There is no homogeneous category of gun owner, but small arms are often the basis of a militarised identity that is lethally connected to gender, ethnicity, race and nationality.

The largest category of people who possess small arms is the security forces—the police and the armies of the southern African region. The new Angolan army will have a force level of 70,000, the Namibian National Defence Force numbers 7,000, the Mozambican army 12,000 (considerably less than the planned 30,000), and Zimbabwe is currently reducing its force level from 51,000 to 40,000. The integration process which created the new South African National Defence Force (SANDF) involved hugely inflated, overblown force levels of 100,000 before rationalisation and demobilisation. This structure inherited the weaponry of the SADF, the most powerful army in sub-Saharan Africa. Considerable amounts of weaponry were issued to security force personnel in KwaZulu-Natal, the Transkei and Lebowa before the 1994 elections. For instance, it is
estimated that some 3 000 G3 rifles were issued by the KwaZulu police to civilians such as headmen and self-protection units at this time (Sunday Times, 20 August 1995). Arms were also issued to commando units of the SADF’s Area Defence System in rural areas. According to Colonel Williams of the SANDF, there was poor weapons control and it is doubtful whether the SANDF can provide an audit of the weapons it has provided the commandos in the past 20 years (Williams, 1995:6).

During the 1996 Defence Review process it was disclosed that the SANDF had a total inventory of almost 250 000 R1 rifles, almost 200 000 R4 and R5 rifles, 17 000 pistols and thousands of machine-guns excluding the war reserves.

However, many South Africans have no confidence in the capacity of the state to protect them. The outcome has been a privatisation of security. Increasing numbers of both black and white citizens have come to rely on possessing firearms and arrangements with private security firms. The growth of diverse forms of vigilantism, as demonstrated in the publicised actions of PAGAD (People Against Gangsterism and Drugs) is also an aspect of this process.

The number of private security firms providing armed guards to companies and residences has increased dramatically in recent years. Security is the fastest-growing industry in South Africa after tourism, and the number of private security guards in South Africa now outstrips the number in the police force. There are currently some 3 000 registered security companies and 240 000 registered guards in the country. They have easy access to weaponry, less training than policemen, and there is little regulation of their activities.

In many black communities, privatisation of security has involved the formation of community protection groups. Self-Defence Units (SDUs) were established by the ANC as a response to the violence of the apartheid state. Members of MK, the armed wing of the ANC, and SDU members tended to define themselves as soldiers fighting a war against the apartheid regime and its supporters. SDUs continue to exist in diverse, fragmented forms and see their key social identities as defenders of communities. They were established in many areas on the Reef from 1990 to 1994 when political violence peaked in what was widely understood as a war (Xeketwane, 1995; Rosenthal, 1994). During this time there was a notable failure on the part of the SAP to protect the private rights of black citizens against violent attack. The SAP was widely viewed as either partisan or ineffective. In many instances weapons are acquired in crime-ravaged areas simply to protect and to provide security for members of households threatened by criminal elements and political opponents. At the level of the [black] community, both self-defence units and hostel residents associations demand access to firearms for the same reason, to protect themselves on account of the fact that they have limited or no
A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE ON LIGHT WEAPONS

Jacklyn Cock

The twentieth century has been marked by a global scattering of violence and the material vehicles of violence—light weapons. Increased intergroup violence is a major characteristic of the contemporary world, with particularly harsh outbreaks in Bosnia, Burundi, Croatia, Kashmir, Nagorno-Karabakh, Georgia, Rwanda, Sri Lanka, Somalia, Sudan, Yemen and the Kurdish areas of Iraq and Turkey. This violence is often explained by essentialist arguments about a primordial ethnic identity.

The dangers of the reliance on a primordialist theory of ethnicity are illustrated in the case of Rwanda. The theory assumes that people are born into particular cultural identities which command their deepest loyalties. The violence in Rwanda between the Hutus and Tutsis and the violence in former Yugoslavia between Serbs and Croats is explained in terms of fixed, inherited identities. However, many scholars have emphasised that ethnic antagonism did not cause the 1994 Rwandan genocide, although the form it took involved the systematic manipulation of ethnic identities for political ends.

The 1994 Rwandan genocide also illustrates the impact of the systematic accumulation of modern weaponry. It shows how the growing global diffusion of small arms is contributing to the incidence and intensity of violence in the post-Cold War era. Western journalists have made much of the fact that a good deal of the killing was performed with knives and machetes, giving this episode a distinctive air of primitive savagery. It should be noted, however, that the killings began in a relatively systematic fashion... and that the earliest massacres were conducted by the army and organised militias equipped with grenades and assault rifles imported from France, Egypt and South Africa by the Rwandan (Hutu) government (Klare, 1995:36). There is evidence that some of the mass murders—for example, of 20,000 people in a stadium—were carried out using machine-guns. This is an item South Africa exported to Rwanda in 1992, but the managing director of Armscor, in a letter to Amnesty International, also used arguments about machetes and ethnicity to minimise South African responsibility.

The Rwandan case is part of a larger pattern; since 1989 there have been global changes in the nature of violence and armed conflict. There has been a shift away from war between states involving major weapon systems, to intra-state war involving light weapons. Instead of wars being fought between states with well-organised armies equipped with major weapons systems confronting each other across defined geographic boundaries, today's violent conflict is usually an internal struggle with irregular forces using light weapons. This set of changes constitutes a remarkable break with the past (Tilly, 1990:180).

The international disarmament agenda has focused on weapons of mass destruction and neglected light weapons. The threat of nuclear war has not disappeared—a threat captured in E.P. Thompson's warning of exterminism—but it is one that has diminished, while light weapons proliferate.

The global diffusion of light weapons is part of recent changes in the global arms trade pattern. Michael Klare has conceptualised these changes as a shift from the proliferation/arms race model that focused
on the transfer of arms and technology involved in major weapons systems from one state to another, to what he terms the diffusion/global violence model. The proliferation model was concerned largely with state-to-state transfers of major weapon systems from six or seven major industrial powers; under the diffusion model, there are more actors involved in the transfer of light weapons.

The changes in the nature of armed conflict in the post-Cold War world have led not only to shifts in the global flow of weapons but to dramatic changes in the social organisation of violence. In intra-state conflicts involving light weapons it is members of the opposing group who are seen as the enemy, not the armed forces of a hostile state (Klare, 1995: A1). The boundaries of opposing group identities are socially constructed and defined.

The current predominance of light weapons has reversed the trajectory whereby warfare was becoming increasingly impersonal: a process of killing and maiming by pushing a button or moving a lever. The technology of major weapons systems made its victims invisible as people . . . seen through the sights of firearms could not be (Hobsbawm, 1994:50).

Small arms are responsible for most of the deaths in current conflicts, the most common being the automatic assault rifle. The majority of actors in these conflicts are sub-state groupings. All the violent conflict under way in the world involves violence between internal groups, often ethnically defined, rather than states. According to one estimate, only 4 of the 82 armed conflicts recorded in 1989-92 were of a classic inter-state character, while all of the remainder entailed some degree of internal warfare, usually along ethnic and religious lines (Klare, 1994:38). Instead of the cats paw wars of the Cold War era fought by the superpowers using proxy forces, there are civil wars taking place within failed states, in what have been termed teacup wars (Gelb, 1994:36).

States are losing their monopoly of legitimate violence. The key narrative of the new world order is the disintegration of states and the key language of that dissolution is ethnic nationalism (Ignatieff, 1994:5). This implies the reversal of another historic trend: the disarmament of civilians in the process of Western state formation. Well-armed groups of citizens are forming all over the world (Tilly, 1991: 7) and this process threatens to subvert democracy.

faith in the security forces willingness or ability to protect them (ANC, 1992:11). Until recently, because of difficulties in the licensing procedures, black citizens were forced to obtain firearms through the illegal arms market.

SDUs were initially armed with knobkieries, spears and homemade weapons, but later obtained access to a variety of firearms including AK-47s and R4 rifles (Rosenthal, 1994). Rosenthal found that SDUs were not armed by MK, but by gun-runners operating in commercial rather than political interests.

The vast majority of licensed gun owners in South Africa are white. Whites were granted firearm licences more easily than blacks. It was customary during the apartheid era to demand that blacks, coloureds and Indians have training before they were granted firearm licences, although whites were not required to undergo such training (Saturday
Star, 12 May 1990). The number of licensed firearm owners has increased dramatically since 1976. At the end of 1996, the total number of licensed firearms in South Africa was 4.1 million.

Licences are easily available and enforcement is minimal. At present, you can get a licence if you are mentally stable (established in a ten-minute conversation, according to one police informant), have never been convicted of a serious (violent) crime in the last 10 years and are at least 16 years old. A number of informants maintained that there is a massive amount of police corruption in processing firearm licences, which extends deep into the Central Firearm Register.

Increasing numbers of licensed firearms are ending up in criminal possession. In contemporary South Africa, widespread poverty and unemployment have contributed to violence as increasing numbers of citizens have come to rely on criminal violence as a means of livelihood.

Analysing gun violence as a social phenomenon involves more than exploring individual biographies, motives and meanings; it involves examining the diverse social organisations, cultural frameworks, social practices, group attachments and institutions built up around guns. Collectively, these constitute a robust gun culture. Overall, this culture provides a social sanction to the possession of guns and much gun violence follows culturally defined repertoires of behaviour. The values, social practices and institutions which constitute this gun culture include what Raymond Williams calls consumerist militarism. It involves the normalisation, legitimisation and even glorification of war, weaponry, military force and violence through television, films, books, songs, dances, games, sports and toys. None of these are insignificant in the light of Mann’s definition of militarism as a set of attitudes and social practices which regards war and the preparation for war as a normal and desirable social activity (Mann, 1987:71).

All of these cultural forms constitute a kind of banal militarism which operates near the surface of social life. Banal militarism is embedded in everyday activities; it works through prosaic routines and rituals to make war, weaponry and violence appear natural and inevitable. It is exemplified in war games such as paintball, which has become increasingly popular among white South Africans since 1985. At its core, paintball simulates the sequence of killing. One Johannesburg informant involved in this gun culture spent much of his leisure time playing paintball, practising at shooting ranges and cleaning and stroking (his word) the 12 guns he owned. This behaviour is chillingly reminiscent of that of the killer responsible for Britain’s worst mass murder, the Dunblane school shooting of 16 children and their teacher in 1996.

This gun culture not only operates to glamorise war and weaponry, but to normalise these social arrangements. Part of this normalisation is the notion that private gun ownership is legitimate; a right, not
a privilege. A key institution which promotes this notion is the South African Gun Owners Association (SAGA). This is not as powerful as the National Rifle Association in the United States, but in 1995 SAGA organised petitions to the Constitutional Assembly stating that the Constitution should be amended to recognise the right to own firearms and to place a limitation on government’s power to disarm the civilian population. SAGA maintains that the anti-gun lobby’s emphasis shouldn’t be on guns; it should be on people. Guns are to crime as cameras are to pornography but they don’t ban cameras.

The notion that private gun ownership is legitimate is linked to the notion that guns are an effective and necessary form of protection. The gun combines two contradictory images: it is a means of order and of violence; paradoxically it is believed to provide protection from violence through the potential threat of violence. A common theme articulated by many informants who had purchased guns for self-protection was a sense of being powerless, of being victims of social forces beyond their control. But the psychodynamic power of the gun as protection is largely illusionary. Legally owned weapons contribute to the problem of violent crime.

The majority of crimes involving firearms are either committed with legally owned weapons used for an illicit purpose, or have been stolen from their legal owners. It follows that the distinction between legal and illegal weapons is a dubious one: guns are long-life commodities and their change of legal status does not affect their lethal power. The legal supply of small arms is generally the seedbed of illegal flows. The fact that over 17,000 licensed firearms probably fell into criminal hands in 1996 dramatises the dangerously self-contradictory potential of guns as a means of protection. There is reliable evidence—ironically, from the United States—that people are safer without guns. Epidemiological research has established that a gun in the home is 43 times more likely to kill a member of the household than to kill an intruder (Kellerman & Reay, 1986:1560).

While the gun culture is extraordinarily resistant to such evidence, there are disturbing parallels. The sociologist James Gibson has identified a highly energised, new paramilitary culture in contemporary America which he relates to a crisis of identity among American men. In South Africa many white male informants articulated a lack confidence in the government and the economy, and seemed uncertain of their future in relation to political change generally and affirmative action policies specifically. Both white and black male informants are also troubled by changing gender relations. There has been a reconfiguration of the discourse on gender since 1990, and women are presenting a challenge to customary male behaviour. Among diverse categories of men there seem to be different versions of a crisis of masculinity, which reflects a social dislocation and confusion about gender identity.
Men are the primary agents of violence in most societies (Beinart, 1992:473). Violence is not an exclusively male practice, but only for men is it bound up with their identity. Guns are part of the dominant masculine code in many cultures. For example, the Afrikaner resistance leader Eugene Terre Blanche once said, The Boer and his gun are inseparable (Cock, 1991).

Guns are often regarded as a marker of status and signal a particular style. For example, to many members of organised crime syndicates in Soweto, ostentatiously displayed firearms indicate the status of being a big man (Wardrop, 1996:8). However, the style that guns signal is not restricted to political allegiance or criminal defiance. Guns are also a form of social display which can signal male affluence. As one informant from Lenasia expressed, If you have a BMW, a cell phone and a glamorous woman, you’ve got a lot; if you’ve got a gun as well, you’ve got everything.

This militarised masculinity evokes an ambiguous response from women. In South Africa, increasing numbers of women are purchasing guns, which could indicate that a male style is being homogenised and spread more widely. This is part of a global trend. The growing power of women within the United States gun lobby was illustrated in 1996 with the election of a woman, Marion Hammer, as the National Rifle Association’s first female president. She has a solution to gun violence: Instead of getting rid of all firearms . . . why not just get rid of all liberals (who moan about gun violence) (New York Times, 14 April 1996).

For some informants, gun ownership among women represents an assertion of feminist identity. A South African woman firearm trainer argues that we have come through the sexual revolution to be regarded as equals. We have lost the male protector. Women have to take responsibility for their own protection (Saturday Star, 2 November 1996). She advises on how women can carry guns for self-defence and still look feminine, sexy and demure. This kind of thinking is one response to an increasing trend for women in both the United States and South Africa to be the victims of gun violence. In 1996, many of the 36 000 rapes reported, and domestic violence generally, involved firearms.

The gendered nature of gun violence is significant, but gender, class, race and ethnic identities are inseparable: they construct and reinforce each other. Much gun violence relates to deep-seated fears and insecurities grounded in racial and ethnic identities, which are antagonistically defined.

For many South Africans, ethnic identity is the strongest source of social cohesion. The mobilisation of ethnicity by Inkatha to secure economic and political goals has deepened animosities along ethnic lines, and the supply of weaponry enables these animosities to be expressed in particularly lethal ways. Similarly, some right-wing
Afrikaner groupings have mobilised around a politicised ethnicity, and have formed armed, paramilitary organisations. The availability of guns encourages militant political groups to engage in violent rather than democratic opposition. In 1996, for the first time people were being killed by guns more than any other weapon used in political conflict in KwaZulu-Natal.

Some of the worst gun violence in South Africa’s history, such as the random killing of 23 black people by Barend Strydom in 1988, is explicable partly in terms of the lethal mix of access to weaponry, gender identity and racial antagonism. Barend Strydom maintained that racial difference defined the boundaries of human identity and humane treatment.

The contested notion of non-racialism offers an alternative interpretation of difference and identity, and has been linked to an inclusive ANC nationalism. But nationalism also involves identities which legitimise violence and which guns potentially make lethal. Nationalism as an ideology involves two claims: firstly, that while men and women have many different identities, it is the imagined political community of the nation which provides them with a primary, fixed and categorical form of belonging that trumps all other identities; secondly, that violence is justified in defence of one’s nation against enemies. Of course, there is a paradoxical relation here: nationalism is persuasive because it both legitimises violence and offers protection from violence. This relates to nationalism’s two faces: one of group identity, solidarity and inclusion; the other of exclusion.

Until very recently, the nation was the main vehicle of warfare. National identity involved the gender-specific obligation of military service and was the chief justification for lethal combat. Today, however, as Ignatieff (1994) has argued, an ethnic nationalism is the main source of contemporary violence; it is what he calls a language of belonging and blood. He distinguishes it from civic nationalism, meaning a shared attachment to certain political institutions and laws. In contemporary South Africa, this ethnic-nationalist identity is being contested in the name of a more inclusive civic national identity which defines a common citizenship.

Less frequently contested is the connection between civic nationalism and militarism. Even the most inclusive statement of a common South African identity that of Thabo Mbeki marking the adoption of the Constitution in May 1996 involved invoking the militarist image of his identity as a foot soldier of a titanic African army, the ANC. This is partly a legacy of the apartheid era when citizenship involved national military service for white males and blacks were denied access to weaponry a denial which was articulated by Z.K. Matthews to involve a denial of African manhood as well as citizenship (Hellman, 1943:45). Militarised citizenship and militarised mas-
culinism will be very difficult to dislodge. However, a statement from an ex-SDU member points to a crucial aspect of the solution to gun violence in South Africa: the creation of new, demilitarised social identities that are sources of affirmation. Now part of the Daveyton Peace Corps, he commented, “I was really disappointed at not getting a gun when I first joined the Peace Corps in 1994. He went on to say, “After a while I realised that I did not need a gun . . . I now know that the community needs . . . and values us.

The first step towards creating such new, demilitarised social identities involves confronting the legacy of the past.

**Socially organised sources of supply of guns**

Demand from different social categories means that there is a resilient market in both legal and illegal arms. Arms smugglers operate in secrecy but with relative ease. The market involves an expansive social network and incorporates diverse social groups. Money is not the only means of exchange since ivory, rhino horn, diamonds, drugs and even second-hand clothing may be tendered in exchange for weapons. This suggests that light weapons are a widespread source of currency. Much of the available supply dates back to the periods of armed conflict in the region.

**Original suppliers of light weaponry during armed conflict**

During armed conflict in the southern African region, there were three main sources of light weapons:

**Former Warsaw Pact countries, Cuba and China**

These countries supplied arms to MPLA in Angola, PLAN in Namibia, MK in South Africa, ZIPRA in Zimbabwe, and Frelimo in Mozambique. This included rifles, carbines, AK-47s, land-mines, limpet mines, mortars, hand grenades, pistols and ammunition. Control over this material was uneven (Williams, 1995:2).

From 1987 to 1991 the Angolan government imported $4.6 billion in arms, 90 per cent of them from the former Soviet Union (Morrison, 1995:712). The Soviet Union remains a major supplier since the conflict resumed in 1992.

A South African police source estimated that the former Soviet Union had dumped an estimated 300 000 AK-47s in Mozambique during the mid-1980s (*Citizen*, 1 September 1993).

**Western countries including the United States, West Germany, France, Britain and Israel**

All these countries provided the apartheid state with military hardware. Various Western arms manufacturers sent clandestine military aid to South Africa in defiance of the United Nations arms embargo.
For example, during the 1970s two United States gun manufacturers shipped thousands of firearms and millions of rounds of ammunition to South Africa through front companies (Klare, 1988:23).

Apartheid South Africa and the United States were major sources of weaponry in Angola. According to Klare, in 1975/6 the CIA provided anti-Communist insurgents in Angola with 622 crew-served mortars, 42100 anti-tank rockets, 20900 rifles, and millions of rounds of ammunition . . . So abundant was this assistance that . . . Unita in Angola have been able to keep fighting for years after the cessation of United States aid with arms stockpiled during the Reagan period  (Klare, 1995:15).

The apartheid regime

From 1976 to 1990, the ideology of Total Onslaught provided the underpinning for the militarisation of South African society. The apartheid state mobilised resources for war on political, ideological and economic levels. This process was spearheaded by the SADF. The SADF was at the centre of an undeclared war of destabilisation that was directed first against neighbouring states, creating what has been described as a holocaust (Johnson & Martin, 1989:11), and later against the ANC inside South Africa.

As part of this process, the apartheid state supplied weapons to the SADF, SAP and various homeland armies and surrogate forces inside the country, as well as to Unita in Angola, Renamo in Mozambique and other rebel movements in the southern African region. This was done via the former SADF Directorate of Special Tasks (operating under Military Intelligence). According to Roland Hunter’s court evidence, at least during 1982/3, four such projects existed: Operation Disa (support of Unita), Operation Drama (support of Zimbabwe dissidents), Operation Latsa (support of Lesotho Liberation Army) and Operation Mila (support of Renamo dissidents).

Weapons for these projects were procured either through the South African arms procurement agency, Armscor, or were captured by the SADF during direct military action in Angola and Namibia. Many of these arms were of Soviet and Eastern bloc origin and included AK-47s, LMGs, RPG7s, hand grenades, mortar bombs and mines. Almost 40000 AK-47s were purchased from Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Hungary and China between 1976 and 1986, specifically to be given to Unita (Cameron Commission, 1995). AK-47s from Hungary and Bulgaria, obtained through Armscor, were also supplied to Renamo (personal communication with Hunter, 1995). Overall, the South African government amassed a large stockpile of captured light weapons.

Anti-personnel land-mines were among the most deadly light weapons produced and supplied by the SADF. As part of the apartheid state’s destabilisation strategy, the SADF delivered anti-
personnel land-mines and other weapons, ammunition, propaganda material, maize seed, sugar and tobacco to Renamo. According to an informant who was involved in Operation Mila, the material supplied was fairly constant from month to month, and in August 1983 involved 500 AK-47 rifles, various other weapons and large quantities of ammunition (personal communication with Hunter, 1995). There are many reports on how South African assistance was paid for with ivory and rhino horn.

After 1990, the destabilisation strategy of the apartheid regime was turned inward to weaken the ANC and to block the democratisation process. A crucial element in this strategy was the training and arming of a surrogate force in the form of Inkatha vigilantes, who operated under the direction and control of what came to be known as a third force. The third force was made up of elements of the army and police, and there is evidence that much of the township violence between 1990 and 1994 was organised by them. For example, there is clear evidence of SADF training of Inkatha hit squads which were deployed against the ANC.

Deaths from violent conflict (involving light weapons) between supporters of the ANC and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) peaked between 1990 and 1993, when almost 10 000 people were killed. The apartheid regime was not the only source of weaponry. Several informants maintained that IFP members had bought arms directly from Renamo. In 1991, an extensive and sophisticated arms network was exposed, supplying IFP members in the Johannesburg area with AK-47s, shotguns, Makarov pistols and scorpion sub-machine-guns (Weekly Mail, 7(15), 1991). The source of weapons was cited as ex-Mozambican soldiers and distribution was co-ordinated by an Inkatha supporter, with strong links to hostel residents.

Hostels housing mainly IFP-supporting migrants from Natal were crucial elements in the political violence on the Reef. The violence took various forms, including terrorist attacks on train and taxi commuters, and the ethnic cleansing of hostels as non-Zulu migrants were driven out. The hostels were used as launching pads to attack surrounding township residents and ANC supporters. Antagonism was rooted in the social construction of different political, ethnic and class identities.

In this low-intensity conflict many migrant workers defined the conflict as a war and several hostels became armouries. In a recent study of the relation between hostels and political violence on the Reef, all 31 residents of Meadowlands hostel interviewed mentioned one or more of the following weapons as frequently used by hostel residents against township inhabitants: AK-47s, R5, R4 and R1 rifles, pistols, shotguns, knives, axes, spears, knobkieries, sharpened iron poles, stocks, tomahawks, pangas and machetes (Xeketwane, 1995). In the same study, a third of the residents interviewed from Merafe
hostel maintained that many of the weapons used in political violence were manufactured in the hostel by inmates. These handmade guns fired various objects, including nails and conventional ammunition (Xeketwane, 1995). Hostels became not only armouries where weapons were stored, but factories where they were manufactured.

While the apartheid regime, the United States, Eastern bloc countries, China and Cuba were the major sources of supply of light weapons throughout the region during armed conflict, the lack of effective post-conflict disarmament is behind much of the current proliferation of weaponry.

**Ineffective disarmament in post-conflict peace building**

The assembly, audit, control and disposal of weapons were an important feature of most comprehensive peace settlements in the region. While the United Nations played an important role, disarmament has not been totally effective. In Mozambique, Namibia, Zimbabwe and South Africa the cessation of armed conflict led to the creation of new national defence forces which integrated previously antagonistic guerrilla and conventional armed formations. The process of integration theoretically involved disarming rival armies and collecting stocks of weapons and ammunition.

In South Africa, this was particularly complicated as it involved the integration of seven different armed formations into a single, legitimate and representative defence force. The most significant of these armed formations were MK, the SADF and the four homeland armies. During this process there was meant to be full disclosure of arms caches established in South Africa by MK. However, a leaking of weapons from MK and homeland military arsenals has occurred since 1990, and has undoubtedly contributed to criminal activity. MK arms caches were only cleared by the new defence force early in 1994. This was because, in South Africa, as in the course of peace negotiations in other countries, weapons and equipment have been held back for a variety of individual and political purposes, including the desire for an insurance policy if peace negotiations failed, or to maintain a material base for future political bargaining.

In several countries there was weak control over the former guerrilla armies and their weaponry in the lead-up to the integration process. Many armouries and caches established prior to independence were not claimed during the post-election period and either lay dormant (and were incrementally reclaimed for various uses) or leaked into civil society for use in a range of criminal and political activities (Williams, 1995:2). Williams cites the following examples:

The weapons depots in central and southern Mozambique were established by the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA) during the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe. In 1980, with
the advent of independence in Zimbabwe, many of these armouries and caches were left in the rear bases as ZANLA combatants returned home to be integrated into the new Zimbabwe National Defence Force. These caches were to be used, variously, by Frelimo, Renamo and commercial arms smugglers, depending on access and identification during the 1980s and the early 1990s (Williams, 1995:3).

The arms caches established within South Africa by MK included AK-47s, pistols, land-mines, hand grenades and limpet mines. Williams gives particular weight to the weaponry smuggled in during Operation Vula. This was an ANC initiative carried out between 1988 and 1990 to establish MK operatives with access to weaponry inside the country to promote the armed struggle against the apartheid regime. Williams estimates this weaponry to be in the region of 20 tons, and this was confirmed by another source from the state intelligence service. Williams maintains that the mass repatriation of guerrillas during the 1990/5 period, the inadequate accounting of MK inventories within the country after 1990, and the use of weapons by besieged ANC communities during the political violence of the 1991-4 period, saw the gradual and uncontrolled decimation of these caches inside South Africa (Williams, 1995:3).

Since 1994, there have been frequent press reports of arms caches discovered near the Swaziland, Lesotho and Mozambican borders. During 1992, 25 arms caches were uncovered by the police (SAIRR, 1994:301). In 1993, a cache of about 10000 rounds of AK-47 ammunition was discovered near the Lesotho border. A police source said they suspected the ammunition was hidden years ago by the Lesotho Liberation Army (Citizen, 17 June 1993). Arms continued to be smuggled into South Africa after the cessation of hostilities by MK. In January 1993, police discovered arms, ammunition and explosives hidden in the false bottom of a car allegedly belonging to a member of the ANC on the Transvaal-Swaziland border. Five alleged members of MK were arrested in the same month in connection with arms smuggling (SAIRR, 1994:300).

An SAP source estimated that there were some 1.5 million AK-47s in existence in Mozambique in 1993, remnants of the war (Citizen, 16 July 1993). According to a number of informants, the integration and demobilisation process in Mozambique involved substantial weaponry leakage. Hidden arms caches were of major concern to the Cease Fire Commission as Mozambique prepared for national elections. According to one source in Mozambique, many weapons were stored in the assembly areas and not secured. (This is in contrast to Namibia where, according to Batchelor, weapons were moved from the assembly areas to a central state armoury and subject to very strict verification and control procedures.) A total of 186000 weapons
were collected by the United Nations, registered and handed over to the Mozambican government. The serial numbers were supplied to the South African government. However, many weapons were kept in unguarded buildings, and there was no independent verification of the storage. According to one source, the United Nations later located some 200 undeclared arms caches. One source pointed out that 186 000 weapons are considerably more than the number required by the new national defence force, which has a force level of 12 000.

The lack of effective disarmament in the negotiated conclusion of armed conflicts has been a major problem in the region.

**Inadequate control over new armed formations**

The problem of light weapon proliferation is sometimes due to inadequate control of the armed forces. Only South Africa, Namibia, Botswana and Zimbabwe possess well-organised, cohesive armies.

Leakages from official armouries not only occurred during the demobilisation process, but continued after the formation of new national armies. The new Mozambican army is not strong or cohesive. Low military salaries, inadequate discipline, low levels of morale, and a ready market for weapons in South Africa, has led to senior members of the Mozambican armed forces being implicated in illegal arms deals...the Mozambican armed forces have in the past, according to one source, leaked like sieves. South African members of the joint task force...estimate that the rate of recovery of weapons is fractional and isolate Mozambique as the major and unaudited ongoing source of arms transactions in the region (Williams, 1995:5).

**The failure of demobilisation policies**

The lack of control over new armed formations is related to the failure of demobilisation policies in Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Namibia particularly. Demobilisation rarely has involved effective social integration in the sense of restoring ex-combatants to their communities, with access to employment, supportive social networks and a culture of peace and respect for human rights. Instead, many ex-combatants throughout the region have reported a sense of marginalisation and social dislocation (Cock, 1993; Tapscott & Mulongeni, 1990; Alao, 1991).

In Mozambique, the United Nations set up 49 assembly points where Renamo and Frelimo soldiers were demobilised and disarmed. Some 90 000 soldiers were demobilised, supplied with transport to the district of their choice and 18 months salary as a personal incentive to actively reintegrate into economic and social life (Republic of Mozambique, 1992:4). However, integration has been problematic given the general lack of economic opportunity in Mozambique.
Several informants reported that demobilised soldiers had sold their weapons to support their families. The sale of weapons spells cash to buy transportation, food, shelter and medical equipment for those who have left war behind (Rana, 1995:14).

The SANDF has begun the process of reducing its present inflated force level of 100 000 to 75 000. This is planned to occur over four years and will involve cash payments based on years of military service, and low-level skills training in the Service Corps. Angola has begun the integration of the 150 000-strong government army and Unita’s 90 000-strong rebel army under United Nations supervision. It is planned that the new Angolan army will have force levels of 70 000, leaving 170 000 soldiers to be demobilised; each is scheduled to receive $2 000 per year for two years.

There is a clear need throughout the region not only for effective disarmament, but for demobilisation policies which provide for the effective social integration of ex-combatants. Such social integration involves re-socialisation and recasting of social relations – a process which is far more complex than one-off cash payments.

In summary, the tragic case of Angola illustrates the social processes outlined above. Armed conflict in the region, ineffective disarmament in the negotiations ending these conflicts, inadequate control over the new armed forces and ineffective demobilisation policies, all provide important sources of supply for the diverse social categories which represent markets for light weapons.

In South Africa, as elsewhere, the arms market is deep black and shades of grey: dead-of-night smuggling of undocumented weapons and covert shipment of arms licensed under false pretences. While it seems unlikely that the illegal arms market in southern Africa is controlled by some co-ordinated cabal of deep black operators, what is striking is the scale on which it occurs and the links between illegal arms and a range of economic activities connected to trade in ivory, diamonds, teak, drugs, endangered species, rhino horn and second-hand clothing.

The outcome of this legacy is that the supply of guns is deeply embedded in the South African social and economic order. Furthermore, the indigenous arms industry was built on links with most of South Africa’s major manufacturing companies.

**Legal arms marketing and manufacture**

Many light weapons are locally produced. A range of domestically manufactured small arms is available commercially and includes the production of semi-automatic rifles modelled on the R4, in standard use in the South African army, and small handguns. They are an important part of South Africa’s indigenous arms industry, which is a crucial and often overlooked source of supply.

The majority of informants with licensed guns obtained them at
prices ranging up to R8 000 from one of the over 600 licensed commercial gun dealers. Sometimes they did so on hire purchase terms of 10 per cent deposit and 12 months to pay. Most guns were imported but small arms are also locally produced. For example, the Denel subsidiary Lyttleton Engineering in Verwoerdburg produces R4 and R5 automatic assault rifles, which are developments of the AK-47. It also produces the Vektor small arms range which sells about 15 000 pistols a year to the civilian market. This includes the Vektor CPI 9 mm parabellum compact pistol, which was available for R2 500 in early 1996. One of the main weapons of violent crime is the 9 mm pistol.

The illegal arms market

No one has any real idea how many illegal firearms are in circulation. According to a 1993 report, whites are at the head of many of the illegal arms smuggling rackets in southern Africa (Citizen, 21 April 1993). The state is using a combination of amnesty, reward and heavy penalties to deal with the proliferation of illegal firearms.

There are three main sources of supply of illegal arms:

Cross-border smuggling

Smuggling of light weapons across the porous borders of Swaziland, Namibia and Mozambique into South Africa is common. According to the SAPS Centre for the Analysis and Interpretation of Crime Information, and numerous informants, the main source of illegal weapons is Mozambique. There are also reports of young women exchanging AK-47s for second-hand clothes on the Namibian border with Angola (information supplied by Karen Hansen). The exchange of guns for food by Angolans and Mozambicans is also said to be contributing to the dramatic increase in armed criminal violence in Zambia (Sunday Mail (Zambia), 20 August 1995).

Weapons are smuggled into the country by air, rail, road and foot. According to one source, smugglers use many ingenious methods, including hiding weapons in specially adapted fuel tanks. According to another source, smuggling into KwaZulu-Natal is organised as a large-scale commercial operation and involves ski-boats, sugar-cane trucks and private aircraft. This source also reported off-loading weapons on the coast.

In 1992, the police established a special task force to deal with cross-border arms trade, and in January 1995 President Mandela and President Chissano of Mozambique signed an agreement for cross-border police co-operation to find illegal weaponry. Operation Rachel was launched in June 1995, and within the first three months traced 1 164 weapons, 685 of them AK-47s (The Argus, 22 August 1995).

Illegal imports

Illegal exports from various countries, including the United States,
to South Africa in defiance of United States law and the United Nations arms embargo are another important line of supply. There have been media reports of illegal trade in weapons from the United States to South Africa, including shotguns made by United States companies, which have been used in township political violence. In May 1992, a sergeant in the KwaZulu police was arrested in connection with an arms cache which included shotguns made by a United States gun manufacturer, Mossberg & Sons of Connecticut (Weekly Mail, 18 September 1992). According to the Africa Fund, hundreds of semi-automatic pistols, revolvers, rifles, magazines and hundreds of thousands of rounds of ammunition, worth millions of dollars, left the United States but never arrived at their stated destination of Harare, Zimbabwe.

In June 1995, the former United States gun dealer Robert Mahler was sentenced to 18 months imprisonment for illegally shipping more than 200 guns from Oregon to South Africa. SAP reports stated that Mahler belonged to the right-wing Afrikaner extremist group, the AWB. In October 1993, South African authorities seized a container on a plot near Pretoria belonging to Mahler that held more than 220 rifles, pistols and shotguns and 46 983 rounds of ammunition (The Star, 15 June 1995).

Leaks from state armouries and security force personnel

There is weak control over weapons issued to the SANDF and inadequate control over state armouries. The pistol which killed Chris Hani was obtained in a raid from a state armoury. According to one informant, attacks on members of the security forces are more common than is publicly admitted. The Annual Report of the Commissioner of the South African Police in 1992 registered a 10-14 per cent increase in the number of firearms stolen from the national security armoury.

Several informants maintained that security force personnel were involved in the illegal arms trade, largely for profit. There are also reports of sales of R4s and R5s by high ranking former SADF officers, who had obtained them when the SADF left Namibia and Angola. Several sources maintained that poorly paid black policemen frequently sold their semi-automatic rifles (R5s), shotguns and handguns on the black market to the highest bidder. There are also reports of Mozambican policemen selling their weapons (Sunday Times, 27 August 1995).

In 1993, two policemen were arrested in connection with a large illegal arms network (The Star, 30 September 1993). In 1995, five policemen were arrested in connection with the theft of weapons from the police training college at Koeberg on the Cape’s west coast. In all, 38 firearms, 203 magazines and more than 2 000 rounds of ammunition were taken in the theft. A police spokesman said he believed the theft had been for financial gain and not for any politi-
In 1993, it was reported that a Ciskei state armoury had been broken into and R4 rifles stolen (Business Day, 13 October 1993). Several informants maintained that large numbers of G3s and ammunition issued to the KwaZulu police had entered the black market.

In 1994, an official investigation found that only 3514 of the 5634 firearms issued to police stations in the former homeland of Transkei could be accounted for. The 2 000 missing firearms included R4 rifles and various handguns (Sunday Times, 10 September 1995).

The current problem of proliferation is thus not only a legacy of the apartheid regime. In several ways, the post-apartheid state is encouraging proliferation and, paradoxically, contributing to the erosion of its own authority. It is doing so through its support for the import and manufacture of small arms, encouragement of private gun ownership in the form of liberal licensing, extensive arming of the security forces and weak control over their weaponry. Several informants maintained that security force personnel especially poorly paid policemen were involved in the illegal arms trade.

The consequent proliferation of the means of violence is one of the most distinctive features of contemporary South African society. The diffusion of arms suggests their dispersion and recirculation through multiple channels to all levels of society. It follows that solutions to the problem of gun violence have to be far reaching.

**Solutions to the problem of gun violence**

It is increasingly clear that the proliferation of light weapons is a destabilising force throughout the world. Establishing controls will be difficult since both the legal and illegal arms trade are embedded in intricate social relations, institutions and material interests. On the supply side, governments, manufacturers and individual dealers will want to continue making enormous profits. On the demand side, there are strong economic interests, cultural meanings, identities and social practices attached to the possession of light weapons. Meaningful arms control must be part of a broad process that emphasises demilitarisation, an unravelling of social identities that legitimise violence, and a shift in social values towards peace and human rights, as well as economic development and political legitimacy. In short, arms control has to be understood as part of the transformation of social relations in post-apartheid South Africa. The culture of violence and secrecy created by apartheid has to be replaced by a respect for human rights and the transformation of key institutions parliament and Armscor into accountable, transparent structures.

It is also crucial to establish the legitimacy of these structures. Politically, the critical issue in dealing with the use of small arms in intra-state conflicts is to bring small arms back under the authority of
the state, functioning through a democratic government which enjoys broad public support (Rana, 1995:18). This has particular pertinence given that one of the strategies of resistance to apartheid was a level of lawlessness to make the country ungovernable. Consequently, one of the legacies of the apartheid regime is a distrust of authority and minimal public respect for the law.

South Africa needs an integrated policy of transparency, oversight and control (Goldring, 1994:34). But the country also needs sustainable development: probably the single most important factor stoking the demand for arms is the prevailing gross disparity in income, wealth and natural resource capital. With an unemployment rate of 34 per cent and one of the most unequal distributions of income in the world, South Africa illustrates this factor, but there are high levels of poverty and unemployment throughout the region.

None of these measures will be achieved without an indigenous demilitarisation movement that involves the kind of mass mobilisation that marked the anti-apartheid struggle. The most important solution to the current problem of light weapons proliferation in the region is social: it means creating values and social organisations to work for national consensus on the need for a comprehensive programme of demilitarisation.

As the supply of guns is socially organised, the demand for guns is socially constructed and embedded in various social practices and cultural forms. Guns are connected to various overlapping social identities, particularly those defined by gender, race, class, age, political affiliation, nationality and ethnicity. All of these are strong representations of common interests and carry powerful mobilising sentiments. They are all relational identities; they involve boundaries demarcating us from them; they mark lines of exclusion and difference which perceptions of external threat and access to weaponry make potentially lethal.

In political terms, gun violence is ultimately about the contestation of power invested in these identities. The relation between power and violence is an ambiguous one. The power that grows out of the barrel of a gun in Mao’s phrase is often the obverse of moral authority and political legitimacy. Paradoxically, the perpetrators of criminal violence, such as robbery and car hijacking, belong to marginalised and powerless social groups to whom guns represent the power to enforce compliance.

Any solution to the proliferation of guns has to deal with these social relations and contested identities. At present, the state has established a number of structures to come up with policy proposals to reduce the number of firearms available to the general public. But a control policy that ignores the historically and socially constructed meanings attached to firearms will be ineffective: the allegiances and identities which underlie acts of gun violence need to be altered. Thus
the concern of traditional politics, Lenin’s question of What is to be done?, is inextricably bound up with the question of Who am I?

Contemporary social relations and identities have been shaped by the legacy of war in the region. The proliferation of small arms is one material legacy of war; antagonistic social identities and an ideology of militarism are part of the ideological legacy. Ex-combatants are often perceived as the direct bearers of these material and ideological legacies— they are marked by their experience of war, their training in the means of violence, lack of marketable skills and access to weaponry. Frelimo ex-combatants in impoverished Mozambique admit that guns can mean food and a way to survive. However, ex-combatants are only part of the problem; the failure to provide for their effective social integration, in the sense of restoring them to their communities with demilitarised social identities and access to employment and supportive social networks, is only one symptom of the broader failure to create a common society and a new collective identity for South Africans. To do so requires confronting the legacy of war through an indigenous demilitarisation movement.

This exists in embryonic form in organisations such as Gun-free South Africa and Cease Fire. However, the movement is marked by a social shallowness, being extremely small, fragmented, and mainly white and middle class. This movement is demanding a shift of power and resources away from the military and is challenging militarist values and social practices—especially the notion that guns are socially acceptable.

A limited process of state demilitarisation has been under way in South Africa for several years. However, it is a complex and uneven process and has had some contradictory consequences. For example, the increasing emphasis on arms exports is partly a response to the reduction in domestic defence procurement. Paradoxically, state demilitarisation is contributing to global militarisation.

Policy solutions that are overtly statist ignore the plurality of institutions and social relations with which the state must engage. The process of demilitarisation needs to go beyond the restructuring of state institutions and encompass a much broader project of social transformation. This involves de-linking guns and masculinity, a challenge posed by Virginia Woolf when she asked, How can we alter the crest and spur of the fighting cock? Today, many feminists are insisting on the need to create new gender identities. This cannot be achieved through equal rights feminism—a stunted feminism that is focused on specific issues such as women’s access to combat roles. Nor can it be achieved through radical feminism which focuses narrowly on domestic violence against women. It requires a transformative feminism which confronts the connections between private and public spheres, questions the understanding of difference and challenges the relation of gender identities to violence and power.
However, feminism is somewhat contaminated as a Western notion, and the social mobilisation necessary to create a demilitarisation movement is particularly difficult in South Africa. During the process of elite-pacting which marked South Africa’s transition from authoritarian rule, an alliance of militarists from the various armed formations, but particularly the SADF and MK, was firmly established. No strong grass roots anti-militarist movement emerged during the 1990-4 period to challenge this alliance. A militaristic nationalism has been inherited in South Africa which links prestige in international relations to military power. Subverting this requires the erosion of current antagonistic ethnic identities and the creation of a common society bound by shared values of peace and justice, democratic participation, equality of economic opportunity and respect for cultural diversity. Recognising light weapons as an issue of human security is one step on a long road.
For more than 30 years, land-mines have claimed civilian victims in southern Africa. In 1961, in northern Angola, a land-mine claimed its first human victim. By 1997, all countries in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) have had land-mine incidents on their soil, with the exceptions of Mauritius, the Seychelles and Lesotho. All countries in southern Africa maintain stockpiles of land-mines. It is the most mine-affected region in the world (Human Rights Watch, 1997:1-16).

Mines may be described as fighters that never miss, strike blindly, do not carry weapons openly, and go on killing long after hostilities have ended. In short, mines are the greatest violators of international humanitarian law, practising blind terrorism.

International Committee of the Red Cross

The production and importation of land-mines

Anti-personnel land-mines have featured prominently in the colonial and post-colonial wars that have plagued much of southern Africa for the last three decades. During this period, many millions of landmines were imported into southern Africa; others were manufactured in the region. More than 66 different types of anti-personnel mines from 21 countries have been found in southern Africa. These countries are Austria, Belgium, Cuba, China, former Czechoslovakia, France, former East Germany, former West Germany, Israel, Italy, Portugal, Hungary, Romania, South Africa, former Soviet Union, Spain, Sweden, Britain, United States, former Yugoslavia and Zimbabwe.

Most of these land-mines reached southern Africa in direct sales, although in the case of former Rhodesia and apartheid South Africa land-mines were purchased in contravention of United Nations sanctions. South Africa used stocks of land-mines captured in its invasions of southern Angola in the 1980s to supply insurgent forces in Angola, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. In covert aid up to 1991, the United States supplied land-mines to Unita rebels in Angola. The Malawian military has received United States-manufactured mines as part of a military co-operation agreement. More recently, in 1993-4, Unita rebels in Angola purchased weapons, including land-mines, on the

South Africa announced in 1997 that it will destroy most of its stockpile and retain a small number for training of troops in demining.
open market and in contravention of United Nations sanctions.

The transfer of land-mines to southern Africa has been complex. Stocks of French land-mines cleared in Algeria were sold to Mozambique in the 1970s. In Mozambique, government and Renamo mine clearance has not resulted consistently in their destruction; they have been preserved for re-use or sale. Algeria’s re-sale demonstrates clearly why land-mines should be destroyed as soon as they are lifted (Human Rights Watch, 1997:75).

Two countries in southern Africa have certainly produced anti-personnel land-mines: South Africa and Zimbabwe. Namibia may also have been a producer according to United States military assessments. The only other countries in Africa to produce land-mines are Egypt and Uganda. Zimbabwe Defence Industries produced an anti-personnel claymore mine, the ZAP, inheriting the capacity from the Rhodesians. Officials say that they stopped producing these mines in 1992, after Mozambique’s Rome General Peace Accord, but ZAPs were for sale at the Bulawayo International Trade Fair in 1993, and in 1996 the London-based Centre for Defence Studies reported that Zimbabwean-manufactured anti-personnel mines had been exported to Sudan’s Southern People’s Liberation Army (SPLA) (Smith, 1996:13). Zimbabwe Defence Industries recently opened its factory to inspection by the Zimbabwe Campaign to Ban Land-mines to prove it was no longer manufacturing anti-personnel land-mines.

BACKYARD LAND-MINE SALES

_Sue Wixley_

Campaigners against anti-personnel land-mines were horrified by an advertisement that appeared in a newspaper’s classified section offering land-mines as do-it-yourself protection for South African home-owners. A Cape Town-based man who described himself as a commodities dealer placed an advertisement in the Under R200 column of *The Star* for M-18 Claymore, SPM, PMN and PMD-2 mines. He claimed to have already sold a stock of mines to South Africans for about R150 each. He said that one or two people would be placing them in strategic places in their gardens near high security walls. He did not feel that land-mines were a serious danger to people since, in his view, they would explode only if an object or body weighing more than 45 kilograms was placed on them.

The South African Campaign to Ban Land-mines was quick to condemn the advertisement and to point out the deadly dangers of mines. Mines cause loss of limbs, burning, blinding and death. Injuries are difficult to treat because mine explosions drive dirt, cloth, metal and plastic fragments into the tissue and bone of the victim. The Campaign also argued that the incident underlines why it is important for governments to destroy stockpiles to ensure there is no leakage from state armouries.
Zimbabwe’s mines have been used in Namibia and Mozambique, although the date and method of transfer are uncertain.

South Africa has also produced a series of anti-personnel mines: the M2A2; the R2M2; the No.69 MK.1; Shrapnel Mine No.2; SA NonMetallic AP and the MIM MS-803. All were produced by Armscor. South Africa’s mines have been found in Angola, Mozambique, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe, and exported further afield to Cambodia, Rwanda and Somalia. There is no evidence that South Africa has exported anti-personnel mines since March 1994.

In 1996, the Minister of Defence stated in parliament that South Africa had 261 423 anti-personnel mines and 49756 anti-tank mines. In addition to its own mines, the country had stocks of more than 20 other types of mines from six other nations. In South Africa, Spescom (part of Denel) has a project to develop three separate mechanisms to self-detonate or self-destruct mines after a stipulated period.

On 19 February 1997, the South African government announced its decision to ban anti-personnel mines comprehensively. On 21 May the South African National Defence Force detonated the first of 211 controlled explosions of the stockpile, which consisted of 186 408 anti-personnel mines, 13 038 practice mines, 48 484 jumping mines, 2 059 practice jumping mines and 11 434 foreign mines. During a further stocktaking an extra 51 346 mines were discovered in state arsenals, bringing the total inventory to 312 779 anti-personnel mines. These stocks were valued at R47 million.

On 31 October 1997, local NGOs and the media witnessed the final destruction of the last of South Africa’s 1 000 operational mines. The SANDF maintains a stockpile of 5 000 mines, which are kept for research and development work on mine-protected vehicles and for the continued development of mine-clearance techniques. A further 13 000 training mines have been kept and used for training personnel in techniques of how to breach a minefield and how to remove mines.

**The consequences of land-mines**

Angola is the most affected country in the SADC; it has many millions of mines in its soil. Only Afghanistan is more heavily mined. Angola also has one of the highest rates of land-mine injuries per capita in the world. Out of a population of about 9 million, it has over 70 000 amputees (1 in 470 people), the majority injured by land-mines (Africa Watch, 1993:2).

A conservative estimate is that southern Africa has some 20 million mines in its soil, of which some 400 000 have been cleared since mine clearance efforts began in 1991. Land-mines have claimed more than 250 000 victims since 1961. Despite international clearance efforts in Angola, land-mines continue to be planted by both Unita and government forces. In 1996, land-mines were used in criminal acts in
Angola and Mozambique. The re-laying of land-mines in central Mozambique by criminal groups linked to drug- and gun-running, to stop the restoration of state control in remote areas, worried the government, particularly because some of these mines have been on access roads to the Cahora Bassa hydroelectric powerline rehabilitation project.

A close look at southern Africa’s land-mine legacy over the last 30 years reveals few examples where anti-personnel mines have provided real and lasting military advantages. The Kariba power station in Zimbabwe was protected by minefields by the Rhodesians in the 1960s and 1970s, but was ineffective unless also protected by observation and direct fire. Saboteurs simply shovelled their way across the minefield, did damage and left (Rupiah, 1996:112). Defensive minefields in Mozambique were quickly breached by Renamo rebels during the 1977-92 war, and in Angola the defensive mine-belts around the main towns did not stop Unita from capturing several of them.

Only when anti-personnel mines have been used in contravention of humanitarian law, and with tremendous civilian cost, have they provided short-term military advantages such as Frelimo, during 1972-3, in its Tete offensive against the aldeamentos (protected villages) in its nationalist struggle against Portuguese colonialism (Vines & Borges, 1995:21-2). In the 1976-92 war and in the 1992-4 war, Unita also used land-mines to deny food production and access to
water sources in certain areas of Angola, resulting in tremendous civilian suffering. Soldiers and guerrillas alike fear and dislike land-mines. Renamo had to offer special privileges to its forces to clear and use them (Human Rights Watch, 1994:30). An Angolan sapper from the Forcas Armadas Angolanas admitted in October 1996, I hate mines. They destroy the lives of Angolans on a daily basis and make our country poorer. They are the worst sort of environmental pollution you can find.

The land-mine legacy in southern Africa has serious environmental consequences too. In Zimbabwe, the border minefields have become a haven for tsetse fly. Wildlife also suffers. Mines used by poachers in Angola’s Mupa National Park have decimated elephant stocks, while in Zimbabwe since 1980, 9084 cattle have been reported killed in minefields. The Hwange and Gonarezhou national game parks have reported many mine incidents involving wildlife and there have been several cases of wounded buffalo attacking people living near the parks.

Unlike many other weapons, land-mines are blind weapons that cannot distinguish between the footfall of a soldier and that of a person gathering firewood. Casualty rates indicate that they recognise no cease-fire and, long after the cease-fire has stopped, they can maim or kill the children and grandchildren of the soldiers who laid them.

**Distinguishing features of land-mines**

Two characteristics distinguish land-mines from other weapons and cause them to be particularly insidious. First, they are delayed-action weapons. They are not meant for immediate effect, but are primed, concealed, and lie dormant until triggered. In theory, mines can be directed at legitimate targets. However, because of the time lapse between when mines are laid and when they explode, they frequently strike civilians. Land-mines are indiscriminate weapons or, at least, are weapons indiscriminate in their effects (McGrath, 1994:1-20).

The lifespan of a land-mine is long. A man who planted a landmine in northern Angola in 1965 returned 30 years later with a sapper. The mine was still operational and could have killed or maimed during that time. In many cases, those responsible for laying the mines have died, which makes locating them more difficult.

The ongoing threat created by live land-mines can prevent civilians from living in their homes and using their fields, and can seriously threaten the ability of an entire country to rebuild long after war has ended. Fear of land-mines, whether present or not, denies land and homes to people who are hesitant to return. In Mozambique’s Maputo province, the village of Mapulenge, which had been the centre of a community of 10 000 people, was deserted for four years because local people had been told it was mined. A mine clearance operation in 1994 took three months and uncovered only four mines;
these, and the spreading of rumours, had been sufficient to depopulate an area for four years. Four anti-personnel mines, costing US$40, resulted in years of fear and tens of thousands of dollars spent, before the community felt safe to return. In Mozambique, the United Nations concluded a contract for the clearance of 2010 kilometres of roads in 1994. Many of these roads had been closed for years, yet the clearance produced only 28 mines; other less hazardous ordnance items were also uncovered.

The SADF used mines in northern Namibia during their occupation, primarily in fenced and marked areas around military encampments and installations, but also around powerlines. Despite the strict precautions taken, maintaining the fields proved difficult and dangerous. Maintenance was important because animals and the effects of the weather had an impact on the fields. Soldiers involved in maintenance suffered accidents because, on occasion, mines moved some 30 centimetres in the ground. (International Committee of the Red Cross, 1996:31-2). The difficulty of maintaining minefields ensured that the SADF scrapped plans in 1988 to build a 30-kilometre-long minefield along Namibia’s northern border. It was also assessed that such a barrier would only delay any potential invasion by 30 minutes.

The land-mines planted by the SADF in northern Namibia still disrupt civilian life. South African-manufactured anti-personnel land-mines were not properly cleared when the forces withdrew just prior to independence in 1990. These have continued to result in the injury of people and livestock. On Friday, 22 December 1995, at 10.10 a.m., a 12-year-old boy, Absolom Luuwa, lost his left leg when he stepped on a South African R2M2 anti-personnel mine in the minefield South Africans had laid around Ruacana before Namibian independence in 1990. Absolom’s family was devastated. He could no longer walk to school and was sent 80 miles away to a hostel. His family cannot afford to pay for his medical treatment. The community is frightened by the threat of land-mines and has relocated the local school, causing children to lose study time. The councillor of Ruacana, Absolom’s uncle, explained in April 1996:

“This minefield has been cleared twice by the South Africans and now by the Namibian Defence Force with United States military help. But these mines still kill and maim. We don’t trust anybody now about these mines—Americans, South Africans and our government. The solution is to ban these mines, and those who make these killers should pay for their legacy. Ruacana cries because of mines. Our families want them eradicated. If you can do it for smallpox, you can do it for land-mines.

The second distinguishing feature of land-mine use is the particularly egregious nature of mine injuries. The majority of land-mine explosions that do not cause death result in traumatic or surgical amputation. In Angola, there could be some 70,000 victims seriously maimed by land-mine injuries. As reported in the British Medical
ANTI-PERSONNEL LAND-MINES FRIEND OR FOE?

One of the key arguments against a ban on anti-personnel land-mines is that these are weapons of high military value and that the indiscriminate effects can be moderated through compliance with military doctrine and the rules of international humanitarian law. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) surveyed the actual use and effectiveness of these weapons in conflicts.

The study concluded that there were few instances where anti-personnel land-mines have been used according to international law. Mines are rarely used correctly, whether by developed armies, Third World armies or insurgents and their effects cannot easily be limited as law and doctrine presume (ICRC, 1996:7). The study argued that it is unwise to justify the continued use of anti-personnel land-mines on the premise that they will be deployed in a carefully controlled manner.

The following conclusions were drawn about land-mines placed in a traditional manner in marked minefields:

- Establishing, monitoring and maintaining an extensive border minefield is time-consuming, expensive and dangerous. These minefields have not proved successful in preventing infiltration.
- Effective marking and mapping of land-mines is extremely difficult under battlefield conditions.
- The cost to forces using anti-personnel mines in terms of casualties, limitations of tactical flexibility, and loss of sympathy of the indigenous population is higher than has been generally acknowledged.

The evidence suggests that, even when used on a massive scale, anti-personnel land-mines had little or no effect on the outcome of hostilities. No case was found in which the use of anti-personnel land-mines played a major role in determining the outcome of a conflict.

The study described a number of alternatives to anti-personnel land-mines, such as fences, physical obstacles and direct fire, as well as improved intelligence, mobility and observation. It argued that these means have already been employed and found effective by military forces.

Many military veterans would support these conclusions and a ban on anti-personnel land-mines. Military veterans in South Africa from the Council of Military Veteran Organisations, the APLA Military Veterans Organisation and the MK Military Veterans Association favour a world-wide ban. They argue that the horrendous humanitarian impact of land-mines is far outweighed by any limited military usefulness.

(Source: International Committee of the Red Cross, 1996)

Journal in 1991: Land-mines . . . have ruinous effects on the human body: they drive dirt, bacteria, clothing and metal and plastic fragments into the tissue causing secondary infections. The shock wave from an exploding mine can destroy blood vessels well up the leg, causing surgeons to amputate much higher than the site of the primary wound (Human Rights Watch and Physicians for Human Rights, 1993:6-7).
The result for the individual is not one but, typically, a series of painful operations, often followed by a life at the margins of a society heavily dependent on manual labour. In Zambia, Sylvia Maphosa, a pregnant housewife, stepped on a land-mine laid over 15 years ago, while collecting firewood outside Lusaka. She sustained severe head wounds and had her right limbs shattered in the explosion. She cannot walk and speaks with difficulty.

**Clearing land-mines**

Mine clearance cannot effectively deal with the crisis; it is too little, too late. When undertaken at all, efforts are badly funded and poorly co-ordinated. Only US$45 million has been invested in mine clearance in southern Africa since May 1991, resulting in less than 400 000 mines being cleared, the majority from large defensive minefields.

Clearance efforts are not without controversy. In Mozambique, United Nations mine-clearance efforts became a victim of interagency competition for control over funds and bureaucratic delays. It was also thrown into disrepute when a US$7.5 million humanitarian contract for clearing priority roads went to a consortium consisting of the British weapons manufacturer Royal Ordnance, Lomho de Moçambique and Mechem of South Africa, a subsidiary of Denel. Royal Ordnance and Mechem are companies which have produced land-mines in the past, some of which, in all likelihood, have been found in Mozambique. Awarding mine manufacturers with clearance contracts is known as “double dipping”. In mid-1995, Mechem received a further United Nations contract for clearing priority roads in Angola and, in 1996, a new contract for Mozambique.

Even if de-mining was given top priority, it would not be a solution. World-wide, mines are being laid faster than they are being removed. Moreover, while the average mine costs between US$10 and $20, the average direct and indirect costs of removal range from US$300 to $1 000 per mine—a ratio frightening in its implications for a region with roughly 20 million uncleared mines and new ones still being planted. Even if technology and economies of scale brought mine-removal costs down by a factor of ten, the cost of mine clearance would still be so prohibitive that clearance alone could not ameliorate the crisis.

**The Land-mines Protocol**

The Land-mines Protocol, an international treaty intended to diminish land-mine use against civilians, has proved utterly ineffective in stemming the crisis. Although the original Land-mines Protocol of 1980 contained provisions to curb certain kinds of use, it had many failings. It did not touch upon the problem of temporal indiscrimina-
tion inherent in mine warfare: the effects of mines that outlast their military utility and place civilians at risk, typically on a long-term basis. In failing to take into account that mines will strike civilians and combatants without distinction, and that the effects of land-mine use cannot be controlled, the Land-mines Protocol failed to conform to existing customary international law, particularly as set forth in Additional Protocol I (1997) to the Geneva Convention of 1949.

Complex rules, discretionary language, and broad exceptions and qualifications further limit the utility of the Land-mines Protocol. It contains no enforcement mechanisms. Even its limited rules are rarely followed. Armies both regularly use mines deliberately against noncombatants and fail to take even minimal precautions to safeguard against collateral harm to civilians. For example, Zimbabwe inherited a lengthy border minefield, which the Rhodesians boasted was the second largest human-made barrier in the world, second only to the Great Wall of China. More than a million anti-personnel mines were laid in this minefield. The early minefields were constructed in a con-

Angolan victim of a land-mine (Photo: Mail & Guardian)
ventional manner, demarcated on both sides by security fencing on which were prominently displayed warning signs. By 1977, the Rhodesians stopped demarcating the minefield on the hostile side and stopped maintaining them. Mine laying became uncontrolled and unrecorded, and booby trapping flourished. This is in direct contravention of the Land-mines Protocol. These minefields remain lethal today, frequently claiming new victims. Clearing the minefield will be dangerous, costly and time-consuming.

The Land-mines Protocol is part of the 1980 United Nations Inhumane Weapons Convention and was reviewed from October 1995 in a three-stage process, ending in Geneva in May 1996. The revised Protocol continued to be weak, the result of the lowest common denominator being agreed upon in the search for consensus. Military considerations dominated the discussion, to the almost complete exclusion of humanitarian concerns. Nations concentrated on negotiating loopholes to restrictions on use, while giving no attention to negotiating the elimination of the weapon.

Perhaps the most objectionable part of the revised Protocol was its support of the continued use of anti-personnel mines. Rather than stigmatising their use as indiscriminate killers of civilians, the Protocol encourages nations to use a certain kind of mine that is promoted as having less impact on civilian populations: those that self-destruct and self-deactivate, and are detectable _smart mines_, as they are often called. But the _smart mine_ technological solution to the problem is not a lasting one. The southern African experience indicates that land-mines are rarely used responsibly, that there are often complications, and that a single mine accident can affect a community for years. Smart mines continue to have a failure rate that results in civilian casualties.

Among the other serious flaws in the Protocol are the absence of any verification provisions and the lengthy transition period. Many governments acknowledge its weaknesses, but argue that it is a modest step forward. The scope of the Protocol has been extended to internal conflicts, the cause of much of southern Africa’s land-mine contamination. Problematically, it is the state that will determine if and when an _internal disturbance_ becomes an _internal conflict_. The provision that all anti-personnel mines are detectable was welcomed but it will take eight years to come into force. The new article on suppression of serious violations is also welcomed, but may have little effect without accompanying verification measures.

To those unfamiliar with the consequences, mines may not initially evoke the nightmarish visions of warfare conducted, for example, with chemical or biological weapons, traditionally thought of as weapons of mass destruction. However, in their inability to distinguish between civilian and military targets, the numerous deaths and terrible injuries they cause, and their potential for massive long-term
devastation, land-mines are not very different.

The use, production, stockpiling and transfer of biological and toxic weapons were banned by international treaty in 1972 as repugnant to the conscience of mankind. Mounting evidence of the destruction caused by land-mines has led human rights groups, and humanitarian and development organisations throughout the world, to call for a similar total ban on land-mines. A total ban on production, stockpiling, transfer and use of land-mines is preferable to the existing restrictions contained in the Land-mines Protocol.

**A total ban on land-mines**

Only a ban on all uses of land-mines comports with customary humanitarian law, particularly as expressed in Protocol!. The experience of recent decades in southern Africa has been that if combatants have access to land-mines, they will use them in abundance, typically without regard for the limited, but quite complex, rules prescribed by the Land-mines Protocol. Since 1961, in every war, every group has used land-mines indiscriminately.

The Portuguese colonial military forces, apartheid South African units, Rhodesian forces, MPLA, FNLA and Unita in Angola, PLAN in Namibia, MK in South Africa, Coremo and Frelimo in Mozambique, and ZANLA and ZIPRA in the Rhodesian war all used land-mines in disregard of the rules prescribed by the Land-mines Protocol. The same is true in the post-colonial wars in Angola and Mozambique, where the governments, supporting forces such as Cubans, Tanzanians and Zimbabweans, rebel groups Unita and Renamo, and FLEC separatist groups have used land-mines in a manner in which civilians were the greatest victims.

A complete ban would be easier to monitor and enforce than intricate regulations that will always engender debate on whether a particular use is permissible or not. The current Protocol does not provide for monitoring respect of its conditions or penalties for violations.

Given the magnitude of the crisis, the only way to affect use is to attach to land-mines the same stigma attached to chemical and biological weapons. Such a stigma cannot come about if some uses of land-mines are legal and others illegal, with interminable arguments over particular cases. The stigma must be attached to the weapon itself. But it is not really possible to create universal revulsion against land-mines without a simultaneous ban on production, stockpiling and transfer.

Seeking a total ban is not based on idealism but on a realistic assessment of the facts. Experience has indicated again and again that if combatants have ready access to land-mines, they will use them. Only a squeeze on supply can affect use.
A ban on production and export will not drive all suppliers from the field. Nevertheless, it is easier to create international revulsion against the weapon if the number of supplier countries is reduced from the current estimated 50 to perhaps fewer than half a dozen. While 50 suppliers cannot be treated as international pariahs, a handful can. If the number of producers and exporters is reduced, remaining suppliers will see land-mines not as the relatively cheap commodity they are today, but as a weapon for which a premium can be charged. The premium would represent the monetised cost of breaking a political and legal ban on the weapon. The greater the revulsion, the greater the premium. No one knows how far the number of producers and exporters must drop to cause an increase in the unit cost of land-mines. No one knows how much the cost of land-mines would have to be raised to affect combatant behaviour and reduce land-mine use. The combination of a total ban, international stigmatisation of users and suppliers, and the possibility of censure or sanctions against producers makes the proposal for a complete proscription more viable than simply proposing further modest, and likely unenforceable, restrictions.

The move to a ban appears to have overtaken the Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW) as the approach to control mines, making the new Land-mines Protocol already irrelevant. Fifty nations support the call for an immediate ban. At the end of the CCW process, the Canadian government announced that it would hold an Ottawa Conference in October 1996, to which countries sympathetic towards a ban of land-mines would be invited. From 3 to 5 October 1996, the Canadian government sponsored a pro-ban meeting. This historic conference brought together 50 governments that pledged support for a total ban on anti-personnel mines, as well as 24 observer states, dozens of non-governmental organisations, the International Committee of the Red Cross and other international groups. The Ottawa Conference yielded three significant results: a final declaration recognising the need to ban anti-personnel mines by the 50 government participants; the conference chairperson’s agenda for action, an outline of steps needed for reaching a ban; and the historic announcement by Canada’s Foreign Minister at the closing session that Canada was prepared to hold a treaty-signing conference for a total ban in December 1997. The conference also featured perhaps unprecedented co-operation between governments and NGOs, which has continued to the present day.

The Ottawa process

The success of this Ottawa process has been stunning. On 10 December 1996, UN General Assembly Resolution 51/455, which urged all states to pursue vigorously an international agreement ban-
ning anti-personnel land-mines, was passed by 156-0, with ten abstentions. Austria hosted a preparatory meeting from 12 to 14 February 1997 to begin discussions of the elements of a ban treaty. In all, 111 governments participated, though many of them were not prepared to commit to a December 1997 deadline. South Africa, the first nation to speak, made a particularly strong statement in support of the Ottawa process. Austria circulated a draft ban treaty prior to the conference that served as the basis for discussion.

Belgium hosted a conference in late June 1997 in which 107 governments endorsed a declaration supporting the principles of the Austrian draft ban treaty, the negotiation of the treaty in Oslo in September 1997, and the signing of the ban treaty in Ottawa in December. Some 29 African nations endorsed the Brussels Declaration.

In all, 89 governments came to Oslo as full participants, and another 32 as observers. The negotiations, which lasted from 1 to 18 September, produced a treaty that drew high praise from NGOs. South Africa chaired the conference. The treaty prohibits the use, production, import and export of anti-personnel land-mines. It requires destruction of existing stockpiles of anti-personnel mines within four years and destruction of mines in the ground within ten years. It also requires governments to provide detailed information about anti-personnel mine stockpiles and minefields. It calls on states to provide assistance for the care and rehabilitation of mine victims. Some 25 African countries were participants, and 5 were observers.

After Oslo, Canada introduced a UN General Assembly resolution supporting the December treaty signing. This resolution was passed by 106 countries, 30 of them African. Finally, on 3-4 December in Ottawa, two thousand people from 155 nations gathered to be present at the signing ceremony. Altogether 122 countries signed the treaty. Out of Africa’s 53 states, 37 signed; all SADC countries signed except the Democratic Republic of Congo and Zambia. South Africa was the third country to sign the Ottawa treaty, in recognition of its leadership in the Ottawa process. Mauritius also made history by being one of the three countries that immediately ratified the treaty: there need to be 40 ratifications before the treaty enters into force.

**Conclusion**

On 20 February 1997, South Africa demonstrated bold leadership by announcing a comprehensive ban on the use, production and trade of anti-personnel mines, effective immediately, and its intention to destroy existing stocks, except for a very limited and verifiable number . . . solely for training specific military personnel in de mining techniques and for research into assisting the demining process .
South Africa's ban announcement was preceded by other important steps. In March 1994, South Africa announced a formal moratorium on anti-personnel mine exports. The moratorium was turned into a permanent ban in May 1996, when it was announced that all use of anti-personnel mines was suspended. South Africa has also played a prominent role in supporting the Canadian initiative.

On 26 February 1997, the Mozambique government announced an immediate ban on the production, sale, use and unauthorised transportation of anti-personnel mines. The previous day, President Chissano had told the opening session of the 4th International NGO Conference on Land-mines that Mozambique would propose a land-mine ban to the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) and the SADC. A representative of the Swaziland government said it would sign the Ottawa ban treaty in December and Malawi said it also supported a total ban and is waiting for parliament's approval. Tanzania's Foreign Minister stated in a letter to the conference that it would urge the SADC members to sign a protocol banning anti-personnel land-mines.

Although the Angolan and Zimbabwean governments have made diplomatic signals that they are interested in a ban, they are finding their militaries reluctant to deny themselves the option of using anti-personnel mines in the future, despite clear evidence that they have little utility, and that they are disliked by soldiers.

Various coalitions of non-governmental organisations and concerned people have formed campaigns to ban land-mines in southern Africa, the oldest being the Mozambique Campaign Against Land-mines. The South African Campaign to Ban Land-mines began in July 1995, followed in September 1996 by Zambia and, in October, Zimbabwe. A campaign began in Angola in November 1996. The movement has rapidly spread beyond just NGOs and has been endorsed by the ICRC, UNICEF, UNHCR, UNDHA, the United Nations Secretary-General, the most influential media sources and, increasingly, governments around the world.

The OAU has endorsed a total ban, first with a resolution of the 62nd Council of Ministers in June 1995, and again in 1996. The Organisation of American States adopted a resolution in June 1996 calling for the establishment of a hemispheric mine-free zone. The six Central American states declared themselves the first mine-free zone in September 1996 and the CARICOM (Caribbean) states followed suit in December.

A region-wide ban on the use, production, stockpiling and transfer of anti-personnel mines in southern Africa is an achievable goal. An OAU meeting held in Johannesburg in May 1997 examined a ban proposal as well as mine clearance and victim assistance issues, and drew international attention to the fact that, since 1961, when the first land-mine was laid in southern Africa, land-mines have never
been used responsibly. On the few occasions when they have, they have continued to kill and maim years after their perceived military utility has expired. The rogue use of land-mines by insurgent groups and criminal gangs is also easier to police if stockpiles are destroyed and anti-personnel mines are eradicated in the SADC.

International and regional momentum is growing rapidly. The SADC nations should follow the example of the Central American and Caribbean states to become the world’s third mine-free zone. This is what many of their citizens seek. In Mozambique, a petition campaign in 1994 obtained over 100,000 signatures for a ban, while in South Africa over 12,000 have signed a petition. Angola obtained 70,000 signatures.

SADC has committed itself to the concept of a regional ban. During its summit in September in Lilongwe the member states signed a protocol committing themselves to creating a mine-free southern Africa. The new members of the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Seychelles were also obliged to sign the SADC treaty and other legal documents which would make them formally adhere to all decisions taken by SADC, including joining the Ottawa process, and signing the treaty in December and the commitments it envisaged.

But there is much that SADC can still do. All SADC countries need to ratify the Ottawa treaty. To get all countries that signed in Ottawa to ratify the land-mine treaty could take a long time. There also needs to be pressure on the countries that hold out, the US, China, Russia, Pakistan, Egypt, Nigeria, Eritrea and the two SADC members, Democratic Republic of Congo and Zambia. Ensuring compliance among those who sign and ratify may be a problem too. There needs to be international monitoring, and civil society in southern Africa will play an important role in this.

Afonso Lumbala, a 32-year-old farmer from Caxito in Angola, has first hand-experience of land-mines: he stepped on an anti-personnel mine in April 1995. His view is: All soldiers lay these mines. They don’t care about us, the people. We suffer for them. They never warn us about mines; we find out by losing our limbs. We want them to clear the mine mess and leave us alone. The leaders and their soldiers are responsible for this. So are the people who make these evil weapons. SADC governments should listen to this advice.
South Africa’s political transition to an apartheid state in the late 1940s was accompanied by another transition, that of becoming a nuclear state. At first, it was integrated into the global nuclear conflict as a collaborator: its role was to supply uranium secretly to the Cold War bomb programmes of the United States and Britain. From the mid-1960s, South Africa consolidated its nuclear research programme, and by the late 1970s embarked on a commercial nuclear energy programme and a clandestine programme to build nuclear weapons. The bomb programme was dismantled on the eve of the demise of apartheid. It is clear that the proliferation project was wholly associated with the apartheid state.

This chapter aims to show that the South African state, in defence of the apartheid system, devoted substantial public resources to the development of a nuclear weapons capability. Such a capability was contingent on the prior development of a broader nuclear industry, covering most aspects of the nuclear fuel chain. In the climate of sanctions and state authoritarianism, South Africa’s nuclear weapons capability was widely suspected, but evidence was not decisive until President F.W. de Klerk admitted its former existence for the first time in March 1993.

During the years of proliferation, the country sacrificed considerable resources to developing its nuclear capability. In a country still struggling to meet its people’s basic needs, such resources could have been devoted to more socially useful purposes. Though the weapons programme was terminated before 1994, its costs are still being borne by the post-apartheid state.

It is difficult to accept the logic behind a programme that would deliver nuclear weapons, with their capacity for such extensive physical and cultural destruction. Although it was reassuringly admitted after the dismantling of the weapons that they were regarded as mere deterrents against any severe assault by the enemies of apartheid, it is now clear that they were not the only weapons of mass destruction.
being developed during that period. South Africa was also developing effective chemical and biological warfare capabilities. It is unlikely that all of these weapons of mass destruction were produced as deterrents. The defiant public hints made by Prime Minister Vorster and Finance Minister Horwood about the right of the apartheid state to possess a nuclear weapons capability were reminiscent of the aspirations of Dr Strangelove, Hollywood’s crazed nuclear scientist, in the classic film of the 1960s.

The official admission was that the bomb programme (seen narrowly as the manufacturing process) cost between R200 and R400 million. Critics maintained that the real costs amounted to ten times this amount. With the destruction of all the relevant documentation, as ordered by De Klerk, it is impossible to prove. It is unlikely that these estimates would have taken into account the upstream costs of developing a weapons capability. If one had to include such costs, these would encompass many elements of the budget of the Atomic Energy Corporation (AEC) and its predecessor, the Atomic Energy Board. The production costs of uranium hexafluoride and enriched uranium would have to be added. So too would the training and development costs for the relevant AEC and Armscor personnel. The total estimate for these costs would probably be at least R5 billion at 1993 prices.

To illustrate the extent of the programme, it is necessary to link it to the entire nuclear project in South Africa. Each piece of the project added extra impetus to the development of a weapons programme. The approach of this chapter will therefore be to set out the history of the weapons programme, followed by an explanation of its technological aspects, and finally to offer some background to the nuclear disarmament process.

**Historical background**

**The geopolitical context**

In April 1974, disgruntled Portuguese army officers unseated the government in Lisbon, and new revolutionary governments took power in the former colonies. By June 1975, Frelimo was ruling Mozambique, and by independence on 11 November Luanda fell under the control of the MPLA (Mailer, 1977).

South Africa tried to stop the MPLA from ruling the country. It launched an invasion of Angola, which it anticipated would attract United States support, but the loss of the war in Vietnam had been a salutary lesson and, ultimately, Washington could not commit itself decisively. South Africa was forced to withdraw in the face of growing Cuban support for the MPLA (Stockwell, 1978). Guerrilla movements in Rhodesia had also intensified their struggles since late-1972, and in the mid-1970s the Smith government appeared to be facing a
These events traumatised the apartheid regime in Pretoria. On the one hand, they precipitated a renewed rise of social struggle, typified by the events of June 1976 in Soweto, the emergence of the black consciousness movement and a stronger ANC underground. On the other hand, the state responded with intensified domestic repression and external aggression (Hirshon, 1979). Not only had the front-line moved closer, it had taken shape in the dusty streets of South Africa’s townships.

The decision to build nuclear weapons arose in this atmosphere, during the paranoia about external attack and internal subversion, and as part of a growing move to create a total strategy against the total onslaught of apartheid’s enemies.

**Uranium extraction for the United States and Britain**

South Africa would scarcely have been in a position to build bombs had it not been a key uranium producer. In 1945, the Manhattan Project resulted in the production of bombs used on Hiroshima and Nagasaki (Rhodes, 1986, 1995). In its aftermath, the United States and Britain sought stable uranium supplies for their intended nuclear weapons programmes, which aimed to assert Western military superiority in the post-war world. In a global scan for uranium, it appeared that the Witwatersrand gold-mining complex around Johannesburg produced important quantities of uranium as a by-product. South Africa’s then prime minister, Jan Smuts, was secretly approached to facilitate the uranium transfers. South Africa’s mining conglomerates were given the finances to organise the separation of the uranium and a cost-plus deal to supply the entire output to the United States and Britain for at least a decade. In fact, their bomb programmes relied almost entirely on South African uranium between 1950 and 1964 (Fig, 1993). During this period, Cold War tensions meant that, in the minds of the purchasing countries, nuclear sanctions against South Africa were unthinkable.

The secret income flows were a windfall for the South African mining industry. They helped to resolve the infrastructural bottlenecks in transport and steel production which plagued the country after the war, and the resulting boom served to stabilise and consolidate the apartheid government.

**Nuclear governance and research**

Smuts established a Uranium Research Committee answerable to himself and charged with the control of fissile material. Instead of vesting it within the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), Smuts followed the model of the United States and Britain in creating an autonomous Atomic Energy Board (AEB) as a parastatal
entity. The legislation allowed for its establishment on 1 January 1949. By this time, however, Smuts had lost office. The entire history of the AEB thus coincides with the establishment of apartheid. Throughout its history, the AEB was to employ only whites in most of its strategic tasks.

The AEB acted to regulate uranium exports, but also began to establish its own research programme by June 1958, led by its president, Dr A.J.A. Ampie Roux. The programme included research on a power reactor concept appropriate to South Africa (Newby-Fraser, 1979:40). Cabinet approval of this policy was formally announced by Senator De Klerk, then Minister of Mines, chair of the AEB, and father of the future president, on 5 September 1959.

The programme had three prongs: research on uranium and other fissile materials, research on radio-isotopes and radiation, and research on the establishment of a power reactor. To house its research, the AEB moved from its suite in a Pretoria office block to secretly purchased farmland west of Pretoria. This site became known as Pelindaba (The talking is over), and became the new home of the South African National Nuclear Research Centre. Construction began and the first buildings were occupied in 1963.

One of the buildings was designed to house a research reactor. Under the Atoms for Peace programme (Ambrose, 1984:147-51), the United States agreed to make available a reactor with a capacity of 20 megawatts (MW), running on highly enriched weapons-grade uranium. The United States was also willing to supply the enriched uranium on condition that South Africa signed a safeguards agreement allowing international inspection of the facility. This condition was accepted by South Africa. Named SAFARI-I, the South African Fundamental Atomic Research Reactor was first commissioned on 18 March 1965.1

Scientific training

The Atoms for Peace initiative included the forging of a secret treaty: the US-South African Agreement for Co-operation Concerning Civil Uses of Atomic Energy.2 This co-operation enabled a cadre of South African scientists to be trained in reactor physics in the United States. Training occurred at the Argonne National Laboratories outside Chicago, at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Tennessee, and other venues. On their return to South Africa, this group was to form the active nucleus of an increasingly powerful nuclear bureaucracy.

The early seeding by the United States of South Africa’s nuclear research facilities was crucial. By the mid-1960s, South African universities were running their own nuclear research departments. The AEB was able to recruit 75 scientists to staff Pelindaba. With the inauguration of SAFARI-I, thanks to United States collaboration,

1. The reactor vessel slipped from its rigging as it was being moved after construction. The damage took a further year to be repaired before it could be shipped to Pelindaba. Within eight hours of operation, the reactor began to release abnormal levels of radioactivity. The alarm bells sounded and the reactor team had to shut down SAFARI-I. South Africa’s first nuclear accident had occurred during the country’s first self-sustaining nuclear chain reaction.

2. Severed under President Jimmy Carter in 1976, the agreement was resumed on 25 August 1995 when President Bill Clinton’s Secretary for Energy, Hazel O’Leary, visited Pretoria.
South Africa’s nuclear research effort had reached its critical mass.

From the late 1940s onward, South African scientists were also given access to British facilities. However, by the late 1960s, it had become more difficult to sustain open nuclear collaboration. As the AEB turned its attention towards developing enrichment technologies, the relationship with its West German counterpart began to flourish. South Africa was keen to understand the jet-nozzle enrichment process pioneered by West German Professor Erwin Becker. Brokering this relationship was Franz-Josef Strauss, right-wing Bavarian politician, friend of apartheid, and minister in the West German coalition cabinet. South African scientists became interns at the Karlsruhe headquarters of the GfK, the federal Nuclear Research Centre. One of these scientists was Dr Waldo Stumpf, currently chief executive of South Africa’s Atomic Energy Corporation (successor to the AEB).

The similarities between the Becker method and the final enrichment technique adopted by South Africa led to speculation about the close levels of collaboration (Cervenka & Rogers, 1978:43, 73-8).

**Enrichment**

The United States, British and West German experience culminated in the AEB’s secret setting-up of a pilot enrichment plant at a site called Valindaba (The talking has ceased) adjacent to Pelindaba. As the construction began to take shape, it became clear that the intense secrecy around the enrichment programme could not be maintained. It was decided that an official statement would be preferable to accidental discovery of Valindaba’s purpose.

On 20 July 1970, the then prime minister, B.J. Vorster, stood up in the Houses of Parliament in Cape Town and, for the first time, revealed information about South Africa’s enrichment plans. He announced that the main motive was based on the fact that South Africa, as a major uranium exporter, could derive more foreign exchange exporting uranium in its enriched form. A further motive was the immense cost of importing enriched uranium to fuel South Africa’s nuclear power programme, envisaged as having a capacity of 20 000 MW by the year 2000 (more than 20 Koeberg-sized reactors). At no stage was there mention of a military application of uranium enrichment. Vorster emphasised the peaceful intention of the programme three times during his speech, and offered to collaborate with any non-communist countries in the exploitation of the process. Vorster also set in train the creation of a separate parastatal entity charged with uranium enrichment. Within a month of his speech, legislation had been signed creating the Uranium Enrichment Corporation of South Africa (UCOR).

UCOR attempted to draw on the West German connection to create an international partnership in which its activities would be adequately financed and its product marketed globally. The calculation
still held that such a partnership was a vital component of any commercial enrichment plant. For six years it entertained potential West German partners, embarking on discussions and negotiations with a view to securing a joint venture. The German company STEAG, which the GfK had entrusted with licensing the jet-nozzle process, signed a memorandum of understanding with UCOR in August 1973. STEAG aimed to sub-license UCOR.

However, there was no unanimity in the West German cabinet, which had to approve the deal, and STEAG withdrew its formal application for federal government approval. Although the official deal fell through, a joint feasibility study was conducted comparing the South African and German enrichment processes. Many saw this study as a smokescreen for continued collaboration.

It took until 1974 before the pilot enrichment plant began production and only in January 1978 did it begin to produce highly enriched uranium (HEU). Located in the Y-Plant at Valindaba, the pilot plant had to overcome a number of serious mechanical and chemical problems. This included a period, from August 1979 to July 1981, during which there was a complete halt in production. The plant was reopened in 1981. Since South Africa was not party to non-proliferation treaties, there was never any international inspection of the plant, which remained unsafeguarded.

Vorster had provided parliament with the rationale that the process would add value to South African uranium oxide, and that the power programme would not have to depend on foreign enrichment processes. But this was patently false with respect to the pilot plant. It was never in its lifetime in a position to manufacture the enriched uranium required to meet the anticipated needs of South Africa’s nuclear energy programme. Ostensibly it was meant to be producing some of the HEU required by SAFARI-1, because of a United States embargo on supplying further HEU to South Africa. But this was by no means the entire story.

Almost from the beginning of its existence, the Y-Plant was dedicated to enriching uranium for a weapons programme. It provided HEU for the six nuclear weapons which President De Klerk later admitted were manufactured between 1978 and 1990. It is no surprise that the Y-Plant was also decommissioned in 1990, particularly in view of South Africa’s prospective adherence to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (the NPT).

Nuclear energy programme

In the late 1950s, it was predicted in South Africa that supplies of uranium to the Anglo-American weapons programme would fall off at the end of the secret contract in 1964. The mining industry and the nuclear research establishment started to press for a local power industry to create a captive domestic outlet for some of the spare ur-

3. Waldo Stumpf, chief executive officer of the AEC, describes this as being due to a massive catalytic in process gas reaction between the UF6, and the hydrogen carrier gas, a mixture that is thermodynamically unstable and, when contaminated by certain impurities, can react to form uranium tetrafluoride (UF4) plus hydrofluoric acid. . . . the 1979 incident . . . resulted in a massive gas loss (Stumpf, 1995/6: 3-8).
nium. The Western Cape, the furthest area from South Africa’s coal mines, was earmarked for the first reactors.

A commission of enquiry had been established to look into the matter, but in its report of April 1961 it concluded that no economic advantage would result from the introduction of nuclear power in the Western Cape or elsewhere in South Africa. Nevertheless, the AEB’s nuclear research programme under Dr Roux kept the plan alive. The cadre of scientists who had been trained at Argonne returned with the idea that South Africa needed nuclear power stations.

By May 1971, the Electricity Supply Commission had put aside its long-held misgivings about going nuclear, and purchased the farm Duynefontein, 28 km north of Cape Town, a sign that it had plans for building a power station on this site. But it was not until the oil crisis broke that Eskom could justify the costs of such a plan. The Arab oil boycott of South Africa had been instituted in October 1973. Eskom argued that its coal reserves were needed to feed the existing and planned SASOL oil-from-coal complexes, as well as the local power and export markets. The escalation of energy prices made nuclear power relatively more competitive.

Tenders were invited for two identical pressurised water reactors to be located on the Duynefontein site, renamed Koeberg (Dutch for cow mountain) after a nearby landmark. Ultimately Eskom awarded the contract to a French-led consortium. The anti-apartheid movement was much weaker in France than in the United States and the Netherlands, where local politicians had questioned the rival bids.

The Koeberg contract was signed in Johannesburg and Paris in August 1976, followed by a bilateral agreement between France and South Africa in October, and a trilateral agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on safeguards for the reactors, which entered into force on 5 January 1977. South Africa felt extremely comfortable with the French deal. France offered good credit and training facilities for over a hundred reactor staff, and was sympathetic to the South African regime’s defence needs, providing submarines, Crotale missiles and Mirage jets, despite United Nations boycotts.

The two Koeberg reactors were eventually commissioned in 1984 and 1985. Their joint installed capacity is 1930 MW, but they have seldom reached the total sent-out rating of 1840 MW and were subject to severe teething troubles. Nuclear electricity output has amounted to under 6 per cent of South Africa’s total electricity output. The electricity industry has excess capacity, causing it to mothball a number of conventional plants. Nuclear electricity, which, at conservative official estimates, costs more than twice as much as coal-fired power to produce, has never been economically viable (Thomas, 1996:1-10). This has led to questions about its strategic role. The reactors provided South Africa with new nuclear know-

4. The commission’s reasoning was that existing power sources in the Cape would suffice until the end of the 1960s. It was too early to be able to estimate capital and operating costs of a South African nuclear power station, but they were thought to be at least double the cost of a new conventional station. (South Africa, 1961)

5. 5.2 cents as opposed to 1.89 cents per kilowatt-hour (Hansard, 26 March 1986). Eskom now argues that the primary energy costs of coal and nuclear are very competitive in terms of rands per megawatt hour sent out (Murray, 1995: 111).
how, justification for the extension of the enrichment enterprise, and the establishment of BEVA, a unit at Pelindaba charged with the manufacture of nuclear fuel pellets destined for the fuel rods at Koeberg.

The dilemma faced by the Western countries was their desire on the one hand to curb proliferation, but on the other hand to stimulate sales of nuclear equipment. Compromises, like guarantees of adherence to safeguards, helped ease the dilemma, and took the pressure off having to institute strong sanctions against the building of nuclear reactors. While the United States vacillated during the 1970s and 1980s about how much to engage with the South African nuclear programme, in the end its sanctions led South Africa to turn to Western Europe and China for supplies of start-up low-enriched uranium for the reactors.

The nuclear weapons programme

The decision to build nuclear weapons was taken by Prime Minister Vorster in 1974. This was the year of the fall of the Portuguese dictatorship in Lisbon. Military solutions replaced Vorster’s earlier foreign policy of dialogue and detente. At home, the creeping militarisation of the apartheid regime reflected its growing desperation. Armscor, the parastatal arms production, procurement and export corporation, began a period of consolidation. The war on the Namibian-Angolan border was intensified. In such a political climate the bomb construction programme developed according to its own bizarre logic. South African strategists argued that bombs were not for launching but for gaining political leverage. In a doomsday situation, the apartheid regime could gain time if ultimately challenged by its neighbours, the Soviet Union or even the NATO countries.

By the late 1970s, South Africa had in place the makings of a nuclear weapons industry. It had developed a cadre of locally born white nuclear scientists who were amenable to, and dependent on, the apartheid regime’s politicians. The scientists, in turn, had delivered a capability in the sphere of conversion and enrichment of uranium, including weapons-grade enrichment. The plans in place for a nuclear energy industry were a useful mask for these enrichment activities, which fell outside any regime of IAEA safeguards.

The nature of the weapons

Armscor and the Atomic Energy Board have claimed that the South African devices were of the so-called cannon type, a very old technological concept, and have refrained from any claim that the design was local, although they vigorously rejected suggestions that any technology or support was received from abroad (AEC & Armscor, 1993: para B1). The cannon- or gun-type device dates back to the earliest weapon produced by the Manhattan Project. Consisting of

6. Peter Hounam and Steve Mcquillan claim, on the basis of many interviews, that full information about the South African programme was not disclosed by De Klerk. They assert that production at the Advena plant was totally devoted to producing tactical and strategic warheads (Hounam & Mcquillan, 1995:148).
two sections, each containing a sub-critical mass of nuclear material, the design required the one section to be propelled to impact on the other, triggering a nuclear explosion.

It is likely that intensified sanctions after 1977 limited the programme to the manufacture of a small number of rather crude devices. It is unclear whether plans to develop implosion-type devices were very advanced. Armscor has claimed that no implosion tests were done up to the time that the programme was terminated and no prototypes were constructed (Albright, 1994a: 15). Whether this was due to financial, technological or skill-related constraints is difficult to ascertain.

AEC and Armscor officials have maintained that the weapons programme was completely indigenous. Only South African-born nationals were employed. However, in their efforts to develop a new generation of more sophisticated thermonuclear weapons, it subsequently came to light that they had managed to import small amounts of tritium from Israel. Although the AEC claimed that it never utilised the tritium, and allowed its shelf-life to expire, it remains an indication that at least one other nation had given deliberate assistance to South Africa’s nuclear weapons research and development efforts. The destruction of the documentation relating to the programme raises questions of other types of support, including provision of dual-use equipment.

The nuclear scientists justified their work in terms of sanctions-busting and chauvinist ideology. The camaraderie was amazing, a former technician was later to admit, We were proud that our efforts were beating the sanctions. We did something here that has amazed the world. It made us one of the top seven nations (Sunday Star, 28 March 1993).

Control over production shifts to Armscor

Once the design for the gun-type device was acquired, it was initially evaluated by AEC scientists and engineers at Pelindaba. The AEC was not only involved in testing the design of the bombs, but was also involved in the development of their fuel. From 1974, the budget of the AEC reflected a sudden massive increase. This coincided with the drive to deliver weapons-grade enriched uranium for the bombs.

The first production of highly enriched weapons-grade uranium by the pilot Y-plant took place in January 1978. The AEC’s chief executive officer at the time, Dr Wynand de Villiers, later admitted that the pilot enrichment plant had been dedicated to the production of weapons-grade uranium (AEC & Armscor, 1993: para A). Once the problems of the Y-plant had been sorted out, the weapons programme could rely on the local supply of the nuclear material required.

During 1977, the first gun-type device was completed by the AEC, and later tested in Building 5000 at Pelindaba. It did not contain the fissile component, since the Y-plant was not fully on stream to provide sufficient HEU. A second device, also not loaded with fissile material, and nicknamed Melba, was built by the AEC in 1978, and kept for the duration of the programme as a demonstration model. Thereafter, between 1982 and 1989, Armscor took over the manufacture and assembly of the devices. The AEC was expected to provide the weapons-grade uranium and to conduct research on development of more advanced weapons (Albright, 1994a: 6-9).

This shift was related to a change in strategy, which can be dated to around 1978. Until then, the devices were experimental and not linked to any delivery system. With the changing security situation, it was felt that the ability of the South African military to deliver the weapon would raise its credibility as a deterrent in the event of a severe external threat.

Over the following eight years, a further four bombs were manufactured in the small Circle factory at Advena, to the west of Pretoria (and only 4 km from the black township of Atteridgeville). By 1989, the pilot enrichment plant at Valindaba had manufactured sufficient HEU for a seventh bomb (Buys, 1993).

From the mid-1980s, Armscor embarked on a programme to build newer facilities to develop more sophisticated weapons. Located close to the Circle factory, the Advena Central Laboratories were constructed with a capability of producing implosion-type devices. According to David Albright, the design of Advena’s integration building implies that South Africa was thinking of an enhanced weapons system in the long run. The building had enough space to load a warhead onto a ballistic missile and the new storage vaults contained space suitable for one small re-entry body (Albright,
1994a:15). Known informally as Ararat, the final resting place of Noah’s ark after the great flood, the buildings were completed but never ultimately utilised in the weapons programme.

**Testing**

A nuclear test site was prepared at Vastrap base in the Kalahari, on orders issued by Prime Minister Vorster as early as 1974. The site consisted of three deep shafts evidently drilled with mining equipment. Of the three, one shaft had to be abandoned after groundwater seepage, a second was 385 metres deep and completed in 1976, while the third was 216 metres deep and built in 1977. At this time, there was insufficient production of HEU to power a weapon. One possibility might have been the intention to conduct a test without HEU—a cold test.

Despite camouflage, the site was picked up by a Soviet surveillance satellite, Cosmos 922, in orbit above the Kalahari. The Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev alerted President Jimmy Carter, who responded by pressurising Pretoria to dismantle the site. The United States may already have identified the real use for Vastrap through information received from its 56A Big Bird satellite, which was known to have overflown the site at least a month earlier.

The French government also insisted on the South Africans abandoning Vastrap, and South Africa reluctantly obliged, fearing that the Koeberg contract might otherwise be jeopardised. With the tide of international allies turning against any South African nuclear testing, the Finance Minister responded in bellicose terms at an election meeting of the ruling National Party on 30 August 1977. We’ll have the A-bomb if we want, boasted the press headline, going on to quote: If we wish to do things with our nuclear potential, we will jolly well do so according to our own decisions and our own judgement (The Star, 1 September 1977).

In an incident on 22 September 1979, the double flash characteristic of a nuclear explosion was detected by a United States Vela satellite in the Southern Ocean, off-shore of the Prince Edward Islands, a South African possession. The United States, perturbed by the implications for proliferation of weapons, responded by establishing a scientific inquiry. Chaired by Professor Jack Ruina of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the committee first claimed that the evidence pointed to a nuclear explosion, but later claimed that the double flash could have been caused by satellite malfunction or an accident resulting from a meteorite impact. In turn, the revised verdict was contradicted by further evidence gleaned from a number of sources, including radio telescopes in Puerto Rico, other satellite readings picked up at Los Alamos, and studies in Australia and New Zealand. The Vela’s detectors had previously been regarded as extremely reliable in perceiving nuclear testing. Other studies by official United States agen-
cies, including the Naval Research Laboratory and the Defense Intelligence Agency, contradicted the revised views of the Ruina committee.

The unofficial view is that South Africa, perhaps with Taiwanese support, provided the vessel to support testing of an Israeli tactical nuclear weapon. The test was conducted in an area subject to the Cape Town Anomaly, in which the ionosphere approaches the earth’s surface, normally making it difficult to detect an explosion. Weather patterns on the day of the test might have negated the effect of the anomaly. This scenario is expected to be confirmed in the memoirs of Commodore Dieter Gerhardt, former head of the Simon’s Town naval base, who was exposed as spying for the Soviet Union in 1982 and now lives in Switzerland.

The views of the Ruina committee were never revisited, and the United States refrained from challenging what must have been at least strong circumstantial evidence of South Africa’s access to and support of a third country’s nuclear weapons system. This evidence, along with that of potential testing in the Kalahari, was never mobilised to stop South Africa producing weapons.

The nuclear disarmament process

Reasons for nuclear disarmament

During 1989, the Berlin wall fell, the Soviet bloc crumbled, and years of Cold War came to an end. In September of the same year, F.W. de Klerk became President of the Republic of South Africa. Two months later, Wynand de Villiers, due for retirement as chief executive officer of the AEC, underwent a crisis of conscience about the nuclear bombs. As the world situation changed in 1989, De Villiers later revealed, I became convinced that South Africa did not need such a terrible weapon. If we had ever used it in anger, it would have been the end for this country. I knew we would never use it and many others were agreeing with me. Wynand de Villiers’s next move on 13 November 1989 was to approach the newly appointed Minister of Mineral and Energy Affairs, Dr Dawie de Villiers. Minister De Villiers was charged with conveying the AEC’s views to the President.

It is not known whether the decisive argument that was used to convince De Klerk to dismantle South Africa’s nuclear bombs was the alluring prospect of South Africa normalising its international nuclear standing, or whether the nuclear bureaucracy feared a future in which an ANC government might have access to nuclear weapons. Whichever the case, De Klerk recognised that the new political climate demanded the full dismantling of the nuclear weapons, and issued orders to have the weapons destroyed.

The first move was to close down the R210 million pilot enrichment plant the Y-plant in February 1990. Although nuclear mate-
rial for the seventh bomb had been produced, it was never built. Throughout the Gulf War, dozens of nuclear scientists and engineers worked at Armscor’s Advena warehouse to dismantle the nuclear weapons and decontaminate the buildings. Afterwards, De Klerk attended a celebration party at Advena. He was grateful, commented one scientist. In our hearts we all knew it was the right decision. These bombs are not things that can be used (Sunday Star, 28 March 1993).

In July 1991, South Africa became a signatory to the NPT. Under the treaty, there is no obligation for any nation-state to reveal details of its past proliferation. By the time the safeguards agreement came into force in September, the remaining HEU had been returned from Advena to Pelindaba. In November, IAEA inspectors were shown around Pelindaba and Valindaba, and expressed some of their suspicions about what might have occurred in Building 5000. It was only after De Klerk’s announcement in March 1993 that the IAEA insisted on inspecting the Circle and other buildings in the Advena complex.

The dismantling of the bombs and South Africa’s adherence to the NPT laid the foundation for the country’s re-entry into international nuclear politics. South Africa played a brokering role in the Review and Extension Conference of the NPT in New York in April-May 1995. It has also been a significant supporter of the African nuclear weapons-free zone, formalised as the Treaty of Pelindaba, signed in Cairo in April 1996. It is slowly beginning to resume its activities in the IAEA. The United States has renewed its treaty allowing for trade in nuclear materials and for extending nuclear co-operation. Nuclear sanctions have come to an end.

The documentation of the weapon-making process (amounting to 12 000 documents) was destroyed, according to Professor Wynand Mouton, whom De Klerk put in charge of this process. If we kept the plans people would say that although we had destroyed the bombs, we could make them again quickly . . . I did have a bit of a doubt whether it was really necessary to destroy them. The IAEA would have been happier if we had not (Hounam & Mcquillan, 1995: 48-9).

The pressure to adhere to the NPT, and the desire to keep the programme’s information out of the hands of an incoming ANC government, formed the reasons for the end of the weapons programme. Because of the destruction of the documentation, it is not possible to know the exact extent of foreign involvement in the acquisition, manufacture and final dismantling of the weapons programme.

Storage and disposal of fissile material

The fissile material from the gun-type devices (amounting to some 55 kg of HEU per device) was returned to Pelindaba for storage after
the weapons programme was dismantled. The transport was supposed to occur at night, and Citizen Force members of the military were called up to guard the route between the Circle building and Pelindaba. However, it was felt that even their knowledge of the transfer would be a security risk. Ultimately the fissile material was conveyed in the rear trunk of a civilian vehicle, in the interests of being less conspicuous. The fissile material has been stored in a high-security site at Pelindaba, subject to IAEA inspection. The amount of HEU has never been revealed publicly, on the grounds that this might constitute a security risk. However, informed speculation places the amount at around 300 kg.

**The fate of the production facilities**

The Circle factory is still intact, although now decontaminated. Set within the grounds of a military vehicle test track, it nestles against the ridge of a hill. The eerie vaults, which once contained the separate parts of the gun-type nuclear weapons, and which four senior officials needed codes to open, can still be seen. So are the ground-floor areas where the weapons were manufactured and assembled, and where triggering devices were tested. Upstairs, in the claustrophobic board room, a portrait of a Mirage overflying the Voortrekker Monument still hangs, redolent of the kind of misplaced patriotism from which the programme was born. The building has the makings of a good museum on nuclear non-proliferation.

The Advena Central Laboratories no longer function. For a time, after the programme ceased, Armscor tried to market the skills which the bomb makers collectively embodied for purposes other than the manufacture of weapons. However, the scheme failed to bear fruit, and Armscor was unable to commercialise the operation. Visitors are cautioned about the dangerous snakes lurking in some of the vacant facilities.

As for Building 5000, it too is no longer in use, other than for storage of old equipment and waste drums. After South Africa adhered to the NPT, there was no obligation for the AEC to reveal the building or its contents to the IAEA inspectors. However, the IAEA had been alerted to the history of the building and, on request, was given full access.

**The fate of the weapons scientists and engineers**

Of the thousand people who knew about the programme through the entirety of its course, it is estimated that Armscor employed about 300 staff at the Circle factory, less than half of whom worked directly on the weapons. In addition, a number of AEC employees knew of or had contributed to the weapons programme.

By the end of the programme, less than a third of the Armscor employees remained, and all have been redepolyed. Similarly, overall
employment at the AEC has dropped drastically, particularly with the end of the conventional enrichment and other
programmes. The commercial failure of Advena Central has also made redundant many of those knowledgeable about
the weapons programme. Some scientists have found work in an explosives plant in Namibia.

The risk of maverick nuclear scientists selling their services in the interests of further proliferation is not insignificant.
In March 1994, 16 former employees of the weapons programme announced that, unless they were paid substantial
retrenchment packages (amounting to over US$1 million), they would reveal information about the programme to the
highest bidder. In turn, Armscor took legal action to silence the group, on the grounds that they would be jailed for
treason under secrecy laws to which they had all been bound by oath. Subsequently, little was heard from the group.

Costs and benefits of ending the weapons programme

The advantages of ending the weapons programme have been overwhelming. First, it underscored a sincere
commitment to regional peacemaking in southern Africa, which had become an imperative since the start of the
political transition in 1989. It indicated that an era of paranoid Cold War politics was almost over.

Second, dismantling the weapons was the key to South Africa’s adherence to the NPT. Accession to the Treaty
(which occurred on 10 July 1991) required detailed opening of facilities to the IAEA for routine verification and other
inspections, and for ensuring that plants were fully safeguarded against potential proliferation (Schriefer, 1995). In
turn, the signing of the NPT allowed for South Africa’s readmission to the IAEA after a long period of exclusion.
South Africa has replaced Egypt on the IAEA Board of Governors and the Zangger Committee,8 being the African
continent’s most advanced nuclear state. South Africa not only plays a role in international nuclear governance, but
has been readmitted to the Nuclear Suppliers Group, a cartel of nuclear states controlling the trade in nuclear
technology. Another spin-off from South Africa’s adherence to the NPT was the new possibility for declaring the
whole of Africa a nuclear weapons-free zone. This came to fruition with the formal negotiation and signing of the
Treaty of Pelindaba (site of one of the last negotiation sessions) in Cairo in April 1996. A third bonus was the ability,
which the ratification of the NPT provided for South Africa, to participate in the Review and Extension Conference of
the Treaty after 25 years of implementation.

At the conference, South African diplomats chose not to galvanise the opposition to indefinite extension of the treaty,
but to help deliver the whole conference to a commitment to indefinite extension. The carrot offered to disgruntled
non-aligned countries was an informal declaration of principles to which the official nuclear powers agreed

8. The Zangger Committee, named after its first chairperson, Swiss Professor Claude Zangger, consists of
representatives of countries who regard themselves as exporters of nuclear equipment or material which might lead to
proliferation of nuclear weapons. The aim of the committee is to place export controls on such equipment or material
to adhere. In these principles, the nuclear powers undertook to end weapons testing and to make progress towards nuclear disarmament. This declaration was brokered by South Africa, which received extensive media praise, except at home, where some questioned the role the diplomats had played in the process (Fig, 1995:8ff; Masiza & Landsberg, 1996). Within two weeks of the conference, both France and China announced their intention to carry out further nuclear tests, flouting their commitment to the South African principles. These tests have now come to an end with both countries adherence to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, signed in September 1996.

A third advantage of the end of the weapons programme is that it marks the beginning of the end of the South African state’s privileging the nuclear industry with immense amounts of state subsidy. The nuclear item (including running costs and debts incurred by the AEC) continues as an overwhelmingly large part of the budget of the Department of Mineral and Energy Affairs. However, to date, cost overruns have caused the closure of the conventional enrichment plants (both Y and Z) and an end to the manufacture of fuel rods. After being mothballed for three years, the technology for cladding the fuel rods with zirconium has been sold to the People’s Republic of China.9

The AEC is currently promoting non-fuel-cycle products, testing their viability and commercial potential. It has, since 1994, tried to develop a process for molecular laser isotope separation (MUS) of uranium, which it regarded as a commercially viable system of enrichment. For a while MUS attracted investments from the French company COGEMA. However, COGEMA has withdrawn from the project, favouring another technology, and by late 1997 the AEC had to abandon further costly research into MUS.10 According to the director of the Energy for Development Research Centre at the University of Cape Town, Dr Anton Eberhard, the AEC has been unable to produce a competitive, commercially viable nuclear fuels industry despite massive, almost unrestricted, investments. Considering also the uncertainties of future demand, a prudent decision would be to cut losses now (Eberhard, 1994). Whether the MUS gamble can unseat this verdict is a matter for speculation.


The 1995 Energy Summit, a multi-stakeholder consultative conference on South Africa’s energy policy, called for an independent review of the future of the AEC with a view to assessing its continued economic viability. A cabinet reshuffle in mid-1996 placed an ANC politician as Minister of Minerals and Energy for the first time. But the new incumbent failed to appoint an independent review panel. Instead, the call for a less extensive review was formally contained in the White Paper on Science and Technology published in September 1996 (Republic of South Africa, 1996:35). The Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology (DACST) has, as part of a review of all the science councils, established this independent review panel.
which has assessed the role of the AEC and reported to DACST and the AEC Board.

In the 1997/8 budget, the AEC was allocated R473 772 000 (over US$100 million), a rise of over R117 million from the previous year. The largest increase is the contribution to the redemption of strategic loans, set at R178 million (up from R24 million the previous year). The AEC now consumes 58 per cent of the budget of the Department of Minerals and Energy, while the regulatory authority, the Council for Nuclear Safety, consumes R5.4 million (or 1 per cent of the departmental budget). It is not disclosed whether the strategic loans were contracted for the weapons or the enrichment programmes. Public money is nevertheless still being utilised to payoff defunct nuclear projects.

A fourth advantage is the end to the conspiracy of silence on nuclear matters in South Africa. This has given the regulatory body, the Council for Nuclear Safety, increased legitimacy and authority to exercise its capacity to regulate. For example, the mining industry, which previously had escaped the net of strict nuclear regulation, has come more squarely under the scrutiny of the council. The level of public debate and information, while still objectively low, has fewer impediments against open discussion and dissemination of ideas. Environmental, peace and other non-governmental watchdog organisations have had some space to intervene where necessary.

The costs of ending the weapons programme are, by comparison, fewer. Much of the technological capital invested in the careers of the bomb makers could have been converted to other socially productive uses. However, neither Armscor nor the AEC has sought to do this and, as a result, much expertise has leaked away due to the downsizing of these operations. South Africa lost an opportunity to rebuild this expertise to serve basic human development needs.

A further cost could be that no fundamental reform of the nuclear sector has occurred. To date, the state has not acted on the recommendation raised at the Energy Summit to set up an independent inquiry into the future of the nuclear industry. In the policy vacuum, the unreconstructed AEC proceeds with its plans, albeit under a newly constituted but inexperienced board. Those AEC and Armscor (or Denel) personnel involved with the weapons programme have never been called to account for their involvement in the development of weapons of mass destruction. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission, designed to deal with the crimes of apartheid against human rights, is not planning to deal with uncovering the full story of how the state developed nuclear weapons. Many of the AEC and Armscor officials are still in position, without any review having taken place of their roles in proliferation.

The costs of the weapons programme have never been verified. The loss of the documentation, and the secrecy surrounding sanctions

11. I am indebted to Peter van Heusden of the University of the Western Cape for researching these aspects of the 1996/7 budget (personal communications, 26 April 1997).
busting and the programme itself, have all served to obscure this information from the South African public. Even if the true costs of the programme were determined, it is unlikely that the benefits of its demise have been invested directly in the task of meeting basic human needs. It appears too, that the South African taxpayer continues to repay debts incurred by the programme, although neither the previous nor the present government fully acknowledges the real reason for the debt. The ultimate benefit is that the entire African continent can now breathe free of the risk of a nuclear war caused by one of its own nations.

**Conclusion**

The massive public resources tied up in the entire nuclear project, in terms of weapons development and the broader fuel chain, have never been sanctioned by the people of South Africa. Although democratic institutions have been in place for some time, the state has only recently and tentatively begun to undertake a low-key review of the industry and of the public resources it has consumed.

What is the reason for this irresolute approach? Has there been a forging of common interests between the former nuclear bureaucracy and key elements of the new political elite? Clearly there are those in the new political elite who felt cheated by De Klerk’s decision to dismantle the country’s weapons capability. Among many of those who opposed proliferation, there is nevertheless support for the notion that useful commercial nuclear technologies should be retained and made available to potential consumers in the rest of the continent.

If anything, South Africa ought to allow an open debate on the future of the industry, and not retain it simply for reasons of prestige. Nuclear scientists need to be directed towards socially useful research and product development, and not allowed to continue milking public resources for projects of limited potential. Much of the industry has been downscaled; it is time to examine what is left and create opportunities for successful technological conversion. Only then will the industry be cleansed of its tarnished reputation and be able to make a real contribution to socio-economic development.
AFTER THE WAR
Demobilisation in South Africa

Tsepe Motumi and Penny Mckenzie

Five million soldiers across the world have lost their jobs since 1990: the end of the Cold War resulted in defence budget cuts and the downsizing of defence forces. Internationally, personnel in armed forces have been reduced from 29 million in 1987, to 24.1 million in 1994 (BICC, 1996:144). The southern African region is no exception. Zimbabwe, Namibia and Mozambique have demobilised thousands of soldiers, and South Africa and Angola are in the process of demobilisation.

Properly planned and managed demobilisation is important for rebuilding post-conflict societies. Demobilisation is an opportunity to bolster development. It can reduce defence expenditure and free resources for development, thereby contributing to the process of demilitarisation. Demobilisation which fails to provide for the social integration of ex-combatants poses a potential threat to society through increased political and social instability. If ex-combatants cannot find work there is a danger that they will fall back on what is often the only skill they have - the use of weapons - resulting in increased crime and possible insurrection. In post-conflict societies, the availability of weapons makes this a more acute danger. Demobilised ex-combatants in Namibia, Mozambique, Angola and Zimbabwe have already been a source of instability (Cock, 1993).

The key argument of this chapter is that South Africa's demobilisation process, which was aimed solely at soldiers from the liberation armies, has not effectively provided for the reintegration of ex-combatants into society. In view of the relatively small numbers of people demobilised, it is unlikely that there will be any major social or political ramifications, but if the problems with demobilisation are repeated in the rationalisation process, which may involve ten times the number of people, the consequences may be dire. Demobilisation has been poorly planned, badly executed and wholly inadequate in meeting the needs of ex-combatants. It has failed to take into account some of the lessons learnt from demobilisation processes in other developments.

It's the story of every war, soldiers are forgotten, that's what happens after war, society carries on and people get left behind. It's a problem which cuts across armies.

Interview with defence expert, 1996
Demobilisation is the significant reduction of people employed by the military and their reintegration into civilian life. It includes the reduction of the size of regular military and paramilitary forces, as well as the number of civilian personnel employed by the armed forces (BICC, 1996:144-6). Demobilisation occurs for a range of reasons: the end of a conflict, disarmament agreements, shortage of funds, development imperatives, and changing military technologies or strategies (BICC, 1996:153). The process often involves the physical demobilisation of the soldier from the military with some short-term assistance, and a longer-term social reintegration process.
Homer’s Odyssey or Ulysses is a classic description of how societies treat their war veterans... Too often nations send their best sons to battle at Troy. Just as frequently, as soon as peace succeeds the clangour of strife, two attitudes develop in the homeland. Suitors discard rapidly (if they ever held them) feelings of obligation and gratitude to veterans. Penelope, however, remains loyal. When the veteran Ulysses returns, feelings of mutual animosity spring up between him and the suitors. The clash generates bad feelings that persist long after the veterans wreak their vengeance; full tranquillity can come only long after the initial return (Ross, 1969:2).

The real conversion challenge lies in the area of long-term social reintegration. Ex-combatants who have spent most of their lives in the military have to find employment and reintegrate into civilian life. This is a complex process involving social, material and psychological aspects. The nature of demobilisation packages is dependent on the socio-economic conditions of a particular country and the needs of the people to be demobilised. Demobilisation packages may include financial assistance, educational assistance, psychological counselling, skills training, human resource conversion, career counselling and job placement, and assistance in securing accommodation.

The need for demobilisation

Why should ex-combatants be targeted for social assistance? This is a particularly pertinent question in countries where there are millions of other people in social need and demobilisation benefits may be seen as divisive. In a letter to a Zimbabwean newspaper, a reader asked if, in terms of Maoist theory, guerrillas were meant to be fish swimming in the waters of the people, whether it was now acceptable for the fish to jump out of the water? (Ranger, cited in Cock, 1993:50). Does privileging ex-combatants reinforce the privileged position of the military, which is antithetical to a demilitarisation agenda?

There are strong arguments, from a demilitarisation perspective, for comprehensive demobilisation packages which provide for effective reintegration. Successful demobilisation which is linked to a broader programme of reconstruction and peace building can facilitate development at both the individual and the macro level. From a more negative viewpoint, there are risks and security concerns in not providing for the effective reintegration of soldiers into civilian life.
Since 1992, there has been a resurgence of mercenary activity in civil wars in Africa. One of the most prominent mercenary groups is Executive Outcomes, a South African company which reportedly employs 2,000 former soldiers. It has been active in reclaiming the Soyo oil field in Angola for Heritage Oil and Gas, and in supporting the governments of Angola and Sierra Leone against rebel groups.

Executive Outcomes has generated much local and international controversy. In its defence, the organisation argues that it only works for legitimate governments and has made an important contribution to peace and stability in Angola and Sierra Leone. This argument ignores completely the deadly problem associated with mercenaries.

Mercenaries can be defined as soldiers who are hired by a foreign government or rebel movement to contribute to the prosecution of armed conflict—whether engaging directly in hostilities, or indirectly through training, logistics, intelligence or advisory services—and who do so outside the authority of the government and defence force of their own country.

As the managers of organised violence, a defence force has tremendous power. This power is intended to protect a state against external aggression, but it can also be misused to topple a government or repress political parties and citizens. In democratic societies, armed forces are subject to a range of constitutional, legal, parliamentary and executive controls. Mercenary groups are not subject to any of these controls. They may claim to respect human rights and to refrain from crime and terrorism, but these claims cannot be checked by a proper authority and therefore inspire no confidence. They amount to this: Trust me, I’m a mercenary.

Who determines whether soldiers have committed a crime? Who investigates allegations of criminal conduct? Who prosecutes if the allegations are justified? And what action is taken following a conviction? If the soldiers belong to a legitimate defence force, the answers to these questions are defined in law. The only law that applies to mercenaries is the law of the jungle.

Moreover, citizens who volunteer for military service in democratic states are generally motivated by a desire to serve their country, and to do so with honour. Mercenaries, in contrast, are typically motivated by profit and are therefore driven mainly by self-interest. Given the absence of adequate control, the political reliability and military discipline of mercenaries are inherently suspect. Machiavelli emphasised this problem in 1513: Mercenary captains either are or are not skilful soldiers. If they are, you cannot trust them, for they will always seek to gain power for themselves, either by oppressing you, their master, or by oppressing others against your wishes. If, on the other hand, they are not skilful soldiers, they will still be your ruin in most cases.

Acts of terror, looting, pillage, theft, mutiny and desertion by mercenaries in Africa have been well documented (Thomas, 1984). In the 1970s and early 1980s, mercenary strike forces were involved in coups or coup attempts in Guinea, Benin, Togo, the Comoros and the Seychelles (Thomas, 1984). More recently, mercenaries were reported to have propped up the dictatorial regime in former
Zaire and to be fighting on both sides of the civil war in Sudan.

For the reasons outlined above, mercenary activity has been condemned internationally:

- the 1977 Geneva Protocol stripped mercenaries of combatant and prisoner-of-war status in armed conflict;
- in 1977, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) adopted the Convention for the Elimination of Mercenarism in Africa;
- in 1989, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the International Convention Against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries. This makes mercenary activity an international crime. It prohibits states from recruiting, using, financing and training mercenaries, and obliges them to extradite or prosecute mercenaries found on their territory.

Those who favour the privatisation of security in Africa insist that mercenaries fill a critical need where governments and armed forces are unable to meet the basic security needs of citizens. Mercenaries may not be the ideal solution, but what other solution is there?

There are, in fact, a number of solutions. Countries can formally invite other governments to provide advice in reconstituting and training their armed forces. British military advisory and training teams have played this role in every southern African state except Angola. The teams remain subject to the authority of the British army, government and law.

In crisis situations the role of security companies could be fulfilled by a United Nations Rapid Reaction Force. Planning for such a force is in an advanced stage. There is support within the OAU for the formation of an African peace force although there is not yet consensus on the different proposals in this regard.

If private companies like Executive Outcomes were incorporated into the structures of the SANDF or the United Nations Office for Peacekeeping, and operated formally under their auspices, the objections raised above would fall away.

The OAU and the United Nations have to take preventative action, which is not reliant on the use of force, before conflict situations degenerate into crises. These bodies tend to wait too long before acting, and this contributes to situations in which desperate governments believe they have no option but to call in mercenaries.

A domestic analogy is appropriate in considering the issue. In the Western Cape, vigilantes claim that they have been forced to go to war with criminal gangs because, for years, the police have ignored the problem of gangsterism. However, vigilantes who operate beyond the law will not be tolerated, no matter how righteous their cause. If this is not tolerated in our communities, how can it be tolerated beyond the country’s borders?
(Photo by Jasper Strudsholm)
At the individual level, many soldiers face problems in making the transition from military to civilian life and may not have the skills or experience needed for civilian work. Militaries operate in a hierarchical manner with little regard for the creative and lateral thinking required in many sectors of civilian life. In poor countries, ex-combatants are competing with millions of others for jobs and to meet basic needs. Demobilisation programmes with a strong human resource conversion element can facilitate retraining and skills acquisition, and increase the chances of ex-combatants finding employment in the civilian sector.

Many soldiers are traumatised by war and suffer psycho-social problems. Sandler describes how The psychological complex of war trauma (post-traumatic stress disorder or PTSD) seems to centre specifically around the following features: severe survival guilt and self punishment; episodes of severe rage and violent impulses toward what may be indiscriminate targets; psychic numbing; alienation from one’s own feelings; doubts about whether one can ever love or trust someone else again; and pessimism about the very nature of love and life itself (Sandler, cited in Cock, 1993). The reintegration of ex-combatants into society has to address these psychological needs as soldiers suffering from PTSD are a potential threat to their families and to society.1

At a macro level, reductions in force levels are linked to reductions in military expenditure since personnel is the largest cost in most armed forces. Spending less on personnel potentially frees resources for development purposes. However, demobilisation does not automatically lead to greater peace and human development. In some countries, reducing personnel is seen as a way of freeing resources to buy more sophisticated and expensive weaponry. In other countries, including South Africa, the savings from reductions in the defence budget have been channelled into other security areas, such as the police service.

1. PTSD is sometimes known as the Vietnam Syndrome. More soldiers died from suicide, vehicle accidents and drug abuse within the first year of their return to the US than were killed in fighting in the Vietnam War (Cock, 1993:54).

Although there are direct costs of demobilisation packages and indirect costs, such as having to pay for the care of elderly or sick soldiers, these must be weighed against the longer-term gains in peace, development and increased security if ex-combatants are effectively reintegrated into society and can use their skills productively.

Demobilisation which is well managed and effectively implemented potentially reduces the security risk which disaffected combatants may pose. Being able to provide ex-combatants with sustainable and meaningful employment means that they are less likely to fall back on the use of weapons to survive or to enrich themselves. Failure to demobilise and reintegrate can have grave long-term consequences for peace and stability. As Kingma and Sayers argue, it should be considered . . . that the long-term costs for society are even larger if they are not able to reintegrate into civilian life. Failure to support the reintegration process effectively may lead to increasing unemploy-
ment and social deprivation, which could lead to increasing crime rates and political instability (Kingma & Sayers, 1995:12).

The importance of a demobilisation programme which supports social reintegration was highlighted by reports of disaffected ex-combatants in South Africa involved in crime and violence. In 1995, there were reports of a group of ex-uMkhonto weSizwe (MK) and APLA combatants, calling themselves Akaplas, wreaking havoc in the KwaZulu-Natal townships of KwaMashu and Umlazi (Mail & Guardian, 22-28 September 1995). In November 1995, disgruntled former APLA combatants threatened to embark on a crime spree unless irregularities regarding the integration of APLA members were addressed (Business Day, 9 November 1995).

Although it is difficult to generalise, given the diverse contexts and experiences of demobilisation, international experience points to some key lessons which ought to inform successful programmes. These lessons are drawn from experiences in Uganda, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Angola, Zimbabwe and Nicaragua:

- In post-conflict societies, demobilisation needs to be part of a broader process of demilitarisation and peace building.
- The formulation of demobilisation policy and planning must be transparent and inclusive of all role-players.
- Pre-planning is critical and includes obtaining financial support before the programme is implemented.
- Detailed surveys of the combatants, including age, gender, educational level, training needs, career aspirations and family details, need to inform the programme's design.
- The reintegration support measures must be framed to meet the economic and development requirements of the country, and take into account job opportunities in the formal and informal sector.
- The programme design needs to take into account the fact that demobilised soldiers are not a homogeneous group and that different categories will have particular needs shaped by their social status and position in society. Special attention needs to be given to the disabled, women and child soldiers.
- Education and training programmes which allow for the conversion of military skills to civilian purposes should be an integral part of any programme.
- Packages should not consist solely of one-off cash payments. Cash payments need to be supplemented with other reintegration programmes, or at least accompanied by mechanisms to encourage their expenditure on education and productive investments.
- Psychological counselling should be offered as part of the programme.
- Planning, implementation and evaluation should be seen as a partnership among all role-players.

2. Although this chapter focuses on soldiers from the non-statutory forces, the controversy about South African mercenaries from the former SADF in private and official armies in Papua New Guinea, Sierra Leone and Zaire underlies the importance of providing civilian alternatives for soldiers (The Sunday Independent, 23 March 1997).

3. It is difficult to determine the extent to which ex-combatants were involved in criminal activities, given the clandestine SADF project called Operation Echo aimed at discrediting the ANC. Part of this strategy included linking MK combatants to criminal activities (Submission by the ANC to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 19 August 1996).
• The co-ordinating mechanism should be legitimate, neutral and effective.
• There needs to be ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the programme to measure whether its objectives are being achieved (World Bank, 1993; Cock, 1993; BICC, 1995; Williams, 1996).

These factors can serve as criteria with which to evaluate demobilisation in South Africa.

South Africa’s process is very different from that of other post-conflict countries, where demobilisation was linked to the ending of war and often included the cessation of hostilities formalised in a ceasefire agreement, a declaration of forces and weaponry, the encampment of soldiers and their subsequent demobilisation. In South Africa, demobilisation was linked to the process of integration of eight armed forces into the SANDF and aimed solely at ex-combatants from the liberation armies. In the South African context, demobilisation refers narrowly to soldiers from the former guerrilla forces of MK and APLA who did not meet the standards for integration into the SANDF or who did not wish to integrate. The process of demobilising those already in the SANDF is referred to as rationalisation. For the purpose of this chapter, demobilisation is understood in terms of its narrow definition.

**The integration process to form the SANDF**

It is not surprising, given the history of conflict and polarisation in South Africa, that the integration process was contested. Many guerrilla soldiers regarded it as an unfair process which disadvantaged them. This has coloured many ex-combatants’ views of demobilisation as the two processes are integrally linked.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department of Defence composition by former force of origin, including civilians, as at 15 Feb. 1997</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

![Department of Defence composition by former force of origin, including civilians, as at 15 Feb. 1997](image)

*Source: Ministry of Defence (1997;14)*
The integration process was determined by the Joint Military Co-ordinating Committee of the Sub-council on Defence of the Transitional Executive Council (TEC). In terms of the agreements reached at the TEC, six armed forces — the South African Defence Force (SADF), the armies of the so-called independent bantustans and MK — were to integrate to create the SANDF. The Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) did not participate in the negotiations but combatants from APLA were later included in the integration process by a cabinet decision and an amendment to the Interim Constitution (Annexure D amendment to Section 224(2)). In 1996, it was decided to include Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) members in the SANDF. Approximately 2 000 people, primarily from the IFP’s Self-Protection Units (SPUs), entered the SANDF not as part of the integration process, but as new recruits.

It was intended that the integration process would be completed by the end of 1994, but because of difficulties it was decided to extend it over three years. The Joint Military Co-ordinating Committee determined that the statutory forces (SADF and the TBVC states) had the necessary training and qualifications for the new defence force, and that only the non-statutory forces would have to be processed so as to accredit and standardise training.

Prior to the 1994 elections, all armed forces had to submit a list of their personnel to the Certified Personnel Register (CPR), which formed the basis of the integration and demobilisation process.

---

### The Certified Personnel Register

<table>
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<tr>
<td>Former SADF (excluding part-time forces but including civilians)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Former TBVC defence forces</td>
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**Source:** Motumi & Hudson (1995: 114)

However, there were difficulties in constructing the CPR since APLA and MK guerrilla armies did not have detailed personnel records and the use of struggle pseudonyms by members was common practice. A further difficulty was determining who qualified for the CPR. For example, MK consisted of people with varied training who did different types of work. An MK official described four categories of MK people: those who left the country, were trained exter-
A non-formal CPR was created to accommodate approximately a thousand people and, in August 1995, these names were incorporated into the formal CPR. There was, however, still dissatisfaction among many MK members with the revised CPR and concern among those formerly opposed to MK. Given its use as the basis for integration, it was argued that the liberation armies deliberately boosted their numbers to strengthen their hands in the negotiating process. For example, while the size of MK was never known, some academics estimated it at 12 000 (Barrell, 1990:64). Yet the ANC submitted 28000 names to the CPR. There were allegations that people with peripheral connections to MK, such as those who had participated in Self-Defence Units, were added to the CPR. Proponents of this view pointed as supportive evidence to the fact that less than half of the number of ex-combatants from MK and APLA reported for integration.

Once the CPR was compiled, the process of integration could begin. There were four stages to the process:

- Non-statutory personnel were regionally mustered under the auspices of MK and APLA.
- Non-statutory personnel were brought together at areas such as Wallmansthal and De Brug, and were included in the personnel and financial systems of the SANDF.
- The placement process included appearing before a placement board comprising representatives from all the forces and the British Military Advisory and Training Team (BMATT). Combatants who did not have formal military or education qualifications were tested and graded in categories from 1 to 10. Those in categories 1 to 3 were not integrated, categories 4 to 6 were accepted as non-commissioned officers, and categories 7 to 10 were eligible to become officers. The placement process was followed by bridging training to orient ex-guerrillas to a conventional defence force, and specific training for the unit to which they had been allocated.
- Soldiers were placed into units (BMATT input to IDP conference, 15 October 1996).

**Problems with integration**

Many of the decisions on integration taken at the TEC were not discussed with rank and file soldiers in the liberation armies, and many disagreed with the compromises and decisions of the Sub-council on Defence. Integration was a bit lopsided, a bit one-sided because

4. There was reluctance on the part of some informants to place these concerns on record, perhaps for fear of being seen as biased against the integration process or the liberation armies.

5. There are, of course, a range of reasons why the expected number of ex-combatants did not report for integration. The problems which beset the integration process could have been a disincentive for many to join the SANDF. Others had already found employment and some may not have been interested in a military career.
only MK and APLA had to go before the panel and answer questions and undergo tests before they could be accepted for integration and given status. Those from the SADF remained as they were. It looked more like MK and APLA were joining the SADF and not forces being integrated as such . . . I personally felt it was not a very fair exercise (interview with MK veteran, 1996).  

Ex-combatants initially complained about the slowness of the process, administrative difficulties, the language medium for instruction, the lack of respect for cultural differences, and the placement of people in ranks which were deemed lower than deserved.

Whatever years of experience you had didn’t matter. I was senior to people who joined MK in the 1960s. I joined MK in 1983, yet I was senior to people who fought in Wankie because I was better qualified and I can articulate myself in English. Can you believe it, people who are non-commissioned officers have to salute me, and they joined MK when I was one or two years old? Half the time I want to cry; this is what a nation does to people who gave up their lives. It’s SADF criteria; they don’t understand any other language. I can’t live with that, I just can’t live with that (interview with MK soldier, 1996).  

Another MK veteran echoed this sentiment:

Some of the comrades are still very bitter, especially on the question of ranking. The people ranking us didn’t know us. In the Soviet Union we got serious, good training. Some were very brilliant, military cadres who had forsaken their education and careers; what was more important and urgent for them was the liberation of our people, yet they got low rankings. The ANC involvement in ranking seemed minimal, hence there was grumbling (interview with MK veteran, 1996).

The initial discontent was demonstrated by the fact that 2 500 ex-combatants walked out of Wallmansthal base in September 1994, and 265 never returned. At the beginning of 1995, about 200 former MK combatants in Durban smashed car windows, threw bricks through office windows and overturned rubbish bins, demanding incorporation into the SANDF. There were also protests in Cape Town in 1995.

There were press reports of at least five structures set up by disgruntled MK and APLA ex-combatants. These included:

- the MK Elected Committee, which had vowed to oppose violently the Government of National Unity;
- the South African Total Liberation Force, established by 46 former MK members in Springs;

6. The informant was an ANC veteran who could not be integrated into the SANDF because of age.

7. The informant successfully integrated into the SANDF.
SANDF composition by rank, race and gender as at 15 Feb. 1997

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Source: Ministry of Defence (1997:13)

- the MK-APLA group, whose exact membership was unknown;
- the Concerned Citizens on Integration and Rehabilitation, established by ANC and PAC members to address the disillusion of MK and APLA members with the integration process; and
- the Commanding Structure and Committee of Four established by about 30 KwaZulu-Natal MK members (Citizen, 13 September 1995).8

BMATT, which oversaw the process, admitted that there were problems with the process, but were satisfied that it had been fair (BMATT input at IDP conference, 15 October 1996). Although many of the initial integration difficulties were sorted out, there is still widespread feeling among many former guerrilla soldiers that the integration process amounted to the effective absorption of MK and APLA into the SADF. Complaints have persisted, particularly about the composition of the force, racism, language, the slowness of cultural change and inappropriate training. Those who have integrated are resigning in

8. The Minister of Defence, Joe Modise, indicated that these groupings had limited support and that their continued existence could not be confirmed by Military Intelligence (Citizen, 13 September 1995).
droves. They don’t feel at home, they don’t get good treatment and there is no neutral complaint system. Some feel like they are being victimised and pushed out (interview with a parliamentarian, 1996).

There is still dissatisfaction among former non-statutory force members that the top echelons of the military are dominated by white men. At placement, only 1 375 men and 158 women from the non-statutory forces were placed at officer level. The majority of combatants, 11 575 men and 1 830 women, were placed in non-officer ranks (BMATT input at IDP conference, 15 October 1996). In the air force, for example, out of 150 non-statutory force members, the highest ranking officer was one colonel and only two pilots were allowed to fly, despite the fact that some had extensive flight experience (*The Star*, 6 October 1995).

<table>
<thead>
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<tr>
<td>Chaplain</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WO1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WO2</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sgt</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sgt</td>
<td>561</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>631</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cpl</td>
<td>962</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>1180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L Cpl</td>
<td>529</td>
<td>924</td>
<td>1453</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pte</td>
<td>4574</td>
<td>5846</td>
<td>10420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>7607</td>
<td>7798</td>
<td>15405</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Ministry of Defence (1997:15)*

The SANDF has attempted to rectify this by promoting a number of former non-statutory officers. For example, former non-statutory force members have been appointed Deputy Chief of the SANDF, Deputy Chaplain General, Chief of Defence Liaison Services, Chief of Foreign Relations, Deputy Chief of the Army, Deputy Chief of Defence Intelligence, Surgeon General and Deputy Chief of Joint Operations (SANDF, 1997).

There have been complaints about alleged racism and harassment of black soldiers. For example, black soldiers in the Western Cape complained about racism and harsh measures which were taken against them on the grounds of maintaining standards. A soldier
commented, It means black soldiers are ridiculed and ostracised by some of their white counterparts. What it is ultimately geared at is lowering the morale of former members of MK and APLA in an attempt to force us out . . . Already many people have left the army because of racism and harassment, and there are many more who are thinking of leaving right now  *(Mail & Guardian, 10-16 January 1997).* Other serious allegations included the charge that white officers had deliberately driven a truck into a group of MK and APLA combatants in retaliation for the fact that a white soldier was hit on the head with a stone *(The Star, 28 February 1995).*

There are concerns that the organisational culture has not changed and that the SANDF lacks respect for cultural differences and diversity. For example, white officers ordered a former MK combatant who was wearing a black button on his sleeve, to show he was in mourning, to remove the nonsense *(The Star, 6 October 1995).* A former MK combatant commented, The fact that there are blacks in the defence force should impact on the fundamentals. The whole system should align to a new reality and reflect on that reality. You can t just continue to have koeksister parties every month *(interview with MK soldier, 1996).*

The fact that training has remained largely unchanged is a source of discontent. The training is the same thing as the SADF. What does it mean for society? This is an opportunity which shouldn t be missed. Things are unfrozen; once they are frozen things are solid and they can t change. If training is as usual and it is the same old people who trained people in Angola and who have the worst views about blacks, then that s scary *(interview with MK soldier, 1996).*

**The demobilisation process**

Sixteen months into integration, the demobilisation process was announced by the Minister of Defence, Joe Modise. He defined demobilisation as the voluntary release of former non-statutory members, who are constitutionally part of the SANDF, but who do not wish to serve in the full-time force or who are unable to do so *(media briefing, 21 August 1995).*

Since all personnel who were on the CPR were automatically eligible to become members of the new SANDF, which came into existence at midnight on 26 April 1994, they had to be integrated or demobilised. Demobilisation was not so much an attempt to reduce the force numbers, as a way to deal with ex-combatants from the liberation forces who did not qualify for integration, or chose not to integrate. There were suspicions that demobilisation was an attempt to obstruct integration, since it was cheaper to offer people packages than to integrate them *(interview with defence expert, 1996).* The average integration cost per soldier was estimated at R50 000, and this
was higher than the largest demobilisation gratuity (Motumi & Hudson, 1995:120).

Demobilisation only applied to those who were not eligible for integration on the basis of age, education level or health; eligible but chose to not integrate into the SANDF; and not satisfied with their rank or package after placement.

The demobilisation package had three components: one-off gratuities; limited counselling over a two-week period on personal matters, careers, social services and finance; and the opportunity of joining the military’s Service Corps (SC) for 18 months and receiving training in basic skills, life skills and adult literacy. It was not compulsory to join the SC and many non-statutory force members took their packages and left, sometimes without the limited counselling. There was no further training or social reintegration assistance offered.

### Categories and commensurate gratuities in respect of demobilisation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Period in service</th>
<th>Years of former service</th>
<th>Amount paid when demobilised</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Jan 1961 to Dec 1972</td>
<td>22-23 years</td>
<td>R40 657</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Jan 1973 to Dec 1976</td>
<td>18-21 years</td>
<td>R34 276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Jan 1977 to Dec 1982</td>
<td>12-17 years</td>
<td>R28 721</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Jan 1983 to Dec 1989</td>
<td>5-11 years</td>
<td>R20 201</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Jan 1990 to Apr 1994</td>
<td>0-4 years</td>
<td>R12 734</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Ministry of Defence (1997:17)*

The first group of 371 soldiers were demobilised in September 1995, consisting primarily of veterans, the medically unfit and those who did not qualify for integration on the basis of educational level. By February 1997, 3 770 people had been demobilised.

### Amounts involved and the number of persons who have benefited from demobilisation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of persons demobilised</th>
<th>Gratuities paid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>R7 191 918</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>R4 941 072</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>779</td>
<td>R22 373 659</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>1378</td>
<td>R27 836 978</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>2150</td>
<td>R27 887 460</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z*</td>
<td>728</td>
<td>R26 840 316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5390</td>
<td>R117 671 405</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Reflects pay-out made as a result of deductions for tax or departmental debt.

*Source: Ministry of Defence (1997:17)*

### Evaluating demobilisation

Two questions need to be answered to evaluate the demobilisation process in South Africa. To what extent did it meet the needs and

9. Demobilisation has cost R69 million compared to the R250 million initially envisaged.
wishes articulated by ex-combatants? And, to what extent did the process contribute to successful reintegration of
ex-combatants into society? The answers to both questions suggest that the demobilisation process has been flawed.

Ex-combatants have educational, employment, psychological and social needs which have not been adequately
addressed. Cock, in a survey of 180 MK combatants in 1993, before the demobilisation process began, found that
although they were not a homogeneous group in terms of age, gender and educational level, they shared similar
difficulties. For example, the majority of Cock’s sample were unemployed, living in poverty, and relying on their
families for food and accommodation. An informant commented, I am sick and tired of being a burden to my family.
I am totally dependent on my parents. They suffered emotionally when I left for exile, and now they must suffer
financially (Cock, 1993:11).

Many had personal problems of either an emotional, social or physical nature. For example, an ex-combatant
described himself as an emotional wreck. I have twice come close to committing suicide. I stopped because of my
children but I am useless to them and myself, while another commented, I get seriously depressed to the point of
illness. I have bad headaches which the doctor says are from stress (Cock, 1993:13). According to Cock, although
informants did not use the term, it was clear that many were suffering from PTSD. Very few psychological services
offer support specifically geared to people suffering from PTSD. In Cock’s survey, only 11 per cent of the
respondents reported receiving help for psycho-social problems (Cock, 1993:14).

Many felt disoriented on their return to South Africa, and had found reintegration into society stressful. When I
returned I felt utterly disoriented and had no one to explain basic things such as how one finds a telephone number in
a telephone book or how one opens an account (Cock, 1993:16). Some required assistance in dealing with a complex
cash economy. In exile, combatants generally handled small amounts of money and many of their day-to-day needs
were met by the organisation. An MK official explained, Life in MK did little to equip men and women to face the
responsibilities of family, managing money, work, and a routine existence . . . In exile everything was provided;
everything was taken care of; you didn’t even see money (Cock, 1993:17).

Many MK combatants had been soldiers for long periods of time, had missed out on education and training
opportunities, and lacked capital and access to support networks in the community. An MK combatant commented, I
have tried to find a job but I have failed because I have low education, no skills and no experience of any job in
civilian life, while another said, I want education because I dedicated my youth to the struggle. I do not want to be
a nuisance in the
There was very little assistance offered to ex-combatants on their return, apart from grants, counselling, paralegal assistance and job placement offered by the National Co-ordinating Committee for the Repatriation of South African Exiles (NCCR). An ex-combatants organisation attended to some of the immediate problems, including the provision of loans and training advice.

While Cock’s findings relate to the informal process of demobilisation prior to 1994, it is arguable that the later, formal demobilisation process has not dealt adequately with educational, employment and psychological needs either. This is because there have been problems in the planning, content and implementation of demobilisation.

**Problems with planning**

The key problem of the demobilisation process was that it was not adequately conceptualised and planned for. Planning only began in earnest when there was a crisis over what to do with the elderly and infirm combatants who had failed to meet the standards set for integration.

Demobilisation planning was essentially inadequate and unsystematic. Evidence of this is reflected in the absence of any attempt to win political support for demobilisation. The process was decided on in a top-down manner, without much ex-combatant involvement in planning or implementing the programmes. It was also largely exclusive of civil society. Evidence from other countries, such as Uganda, indicates that organisations in civil society are valuable partners in the demobilisation process (World Bank, 1993).

The planning process was not informed by detailed research and analysis of the needs of ex-combatants. Data should have included socio-economic profile, education and training levels, skills and career aspirations. Motumi and Hudson argue that information was also lacking about the families of ex-combatants, circumstances in the areas where they would live after demobilisation, criteria to evaluate reintegration into society, mechanisms for continuing support, employment opportunities, etc. The possible effects of neglect here could negate all the other components of the process, and highlight a lack of foresight relating to the overall management of the process (Motumi & Hudson, 1995:122).

These surveys would have allowed the development of a differentiated approach that took into account gender, age, experience and skills differences. For example, in other countries female ex-combatants faced particular problems reintegrating into society. During war women often take on new roles but are expected to return to traditional roles after fighting. Reintegration can therefore create new social tensions.

Policy was not informed by an analysis of the economic and devel-
Opment needs of the economy. Employment opportunities in the formal and informal sector should have been assessed to match the retraining offered.

The late announcement of demobilisation also led to several problems. Those combatants who reported early but were not accepted for integration, had to spend months waiting at the Wallmansthal base for the process to be agreed upon. Some spent up to 18 months drilling in the sun and sweeping their tents. It also meant that soldiers who had successfully integrated were not eligible for demobilisation packages (but could be rationalised). As the rationalisation packages had not yet been defined, these soldiers could have been financially penalised for integrating.

**Problems with the demobilisation packages**

Demobilisation packages consisted of one-off cash payments, limited counselling and the opportunity to join the SC. The packages were inadequate to meet the needs of ex-combatants, but many took them and chose not to join the SC.

Evidence from other demobilisation programmes points to the pitfalls of one-off gratuities. Cash payments are a short-term solution and do not encourage long-term productive activity. A World Bank study of seven countries demobilisation programmes established that cash payments need to be supplemented by other reintegration programmes, or at least accompanied by mechanisms to encourage their expenditure on education and productive investments. If this does not happen, a significant proportion of former combatants have difficulties using the payments to increase their long-term income (World Bank, 1993).

The demobilisation package was standard and inflexible. For example, some of the older people were reluctant to join the SC since they would be separated for long periods from their families and would not be paid enough to support their dependants (interview with MK veteran, 1996). There should have been more intensive counselling or alternative retraining opportunities offered to these people.

Some ex-combatants are also eligible for pensions in terms of the Special Pensions Act. This Act aims at helping those who were unable to provide for their pensions because they suffered a permanent and total disability as a result of full-time service to a political organisation which helped establish the democratic South Africa; or they were banned, detained, prohibited or imprisoned for a total or combined period of five years while in the full-time service of such a political organisation. However, former non-statutory force members under 35 years are not eligible. Some have argued that this is discriminatory since many joined the armed struggle at an early age.
Ex-combatants have also pointed to the need for access to the struggle pension funds, particularly if there is to be equity between their benefits and the pensions and benefits, such as housing subsidies and medical aid, available to former SADF soldiers.\textsuperscript{10}

There has been debate about who would be eligible for gratuities. Legally, all combatants named on the CPR had to be integrated or offered demobilisation packages. Some have argued that this should have taken into account the process of informal demobilisation which had taken place since 1990. Many ex-combatants chose self-demobilisation as they found jobs in the civilian sector or returned to studies. Critics of the process suggest that the CPR should have consisted only of those people who wanted to integrate. Demobilisation would have applied only to those who failed to meet the standards of integration rather than including those who had no intention of integrating. They argue that it was unnecessary to demobilise people who were not mobilised (interview with defence expert, 1996).

There was concern that resources were not going to those most in need. For example, some ex-combatants received gratuities despite the fact that they were working in high-paying jobs. One ex-combatant remarked how he would use his R28 000 as a deposit for a house in an exclusive Johannesburg suburb (interview with MK soldier, 1996). Initially, elected representatives at national and provincial level were not eligible for demobilisation benefits, but this was later revised.

Views on this issue are coloured by the extent to which packages are seen as reward for past contributions to the struggle. Need is thus an irrelevant criterion because all combatants suffered and did not have the opportunity to accumulate pensions like their counterparts in the SADF. The SANDF argued that it would have been too complex administratively to take need into account, since the devil is in the detail, and the process of determining need might have become a source of tension (interview with SANDF officer, 1996).

Problems with implementation

The implementation of demobilisation has been beset by bureaucratic bungling and legal problems. For example, APLA did not submit names to the CPR before the April 1994 deadline. This meant, technically, that its members were not part of the SANDF and not eligible for demobilisation. The President had to make a concession to add APLA names to the CPR. Also, demobilisation began without the necessary legislation in place. This led to the process being halted at the end of 1995 and the Demobilisation Bill only being tabled in parliament in October 1996. Those eligible for demobilisation could not claim their benefits until the Bill was passed.

\textsuperscript{10} The retrenchment packages for permanent force personnel are based on a sliding scale. It includes a gratuity based on years of service, assistance with housing costs, medical aid and a pension based on rank and years of service (Cock, 1993:33-4).
Reintegration into society: The Service Corps

The SANDF provided for social reintegration through the Service Corps (SC), which caters particularly for soldiers who do not have the necessary skills required in civilian society.

The idea of the SC was first mooted during the time of the TEC. Options were investigated to accommodate the personnel who would be rationalised following integration. The SC was launched on 31 January 1995, ostensibly to help ex-combatants to integrate into civilian life and contribute to rebuilding the country. It was described by the Minister of Defence as one of the largest contributions the military could make to the RDP (The Star, 1 February 1995). Initially targeted at demobilised soldiers, it aimed to extend its services to training the unemployed and the youth. Its objectives are:

- to help prepare people for civilian life through assessment and career profiling;
- to help trainees investigate career path options;
- to assist trainees to reflect and gain more self-knowledge;
- to provide information about career options inside and outside the SC; and
- to sensitise trainees about issues in the broader environment that have an impact on the decisions they make (SANDF, 1995:11).

The SC consists of a headquarters, a vocational training centre and a service corps unit in each region. It falls under the ambit of the army although its headquarters are located at defence force headquarters. It is a military structure in that its members wear the uniform of the old Venda Defence Force, it is staffed entirely by seconded SANDF personnel, and its culture and ethos are military-dominated (Williams, 1996:17).

The SC provides 18 months of training, comprising 3 months literacy and adult life-skills training, 3 months of vocational training, and 12 months of practical experience. Introductory training covers issues such as career development, leadership, outdoor activities, social initiatives, technological issues, personal and organisational behaviour, personal and functional discipline, physical training and sport, and routine. Life skills taught in this phase include communication, conflict handling, life-planning, problem solving, social interaction, self-esteem, decision making, personal stock-taking and work ethos.

Vocational training is linked to the Department of Labour’s national training centres and includes building, catering, transport and engineering. The SC has established its own vocational training centre in Gauteng. Practical training occurs through contributions to SANDF, RDP and the national public works programme projects. These include the building and repairing of houses and schools, the provi-
sion of sanitation and other urban services, and rural development programmes (SANDF, n.d.: 12-14).

By the end of April 1997, 788 demobilised soldiers of which 44 were women had received training through the sc.

**Problems with the Service Corps**

The SC has been hampered in supporting the reintegration of ex-combatants into civil society by its location in the military and its narrow focus. These problems need to be considered when determining the role of the SC in the rationalisation process.

There are compelling arguments why the military is not the most appropriate vehicle for reintegrating soldiers into civilian life. The demobilisation programme needs many components, including psychological counselling, career counselling, life skills and employment advice, and military people are often not equipped for these tasks. Also, the military ethos of command, discipline and hierarchy is not conducive to encouraging people to think critically and take responsibility for their lives, which is essential for successful social reintegration. People tend to have an approach which is militaristic; there is a military culture and discipline, but these people in the Service Corps are not in the army they have been demobbed and are re-entering society (interview with Service Corps officer, 1996). This view has motivated the military to transform the SC into a civilian body.

Non-military organisations may be seen as more legitimate than a military structure by soldiers whose relationship with the military may be strained. People who go to the Service Corps are people who failed the potential tests, the disabled; the system designs who goes there and basically it is people who feel let down. There is bitterness, anger and hurt, and people feel worthless. And in that situation, they are moved from one section of the defence force to another (interview with MK soldier, 1996).

Role-players in civil society may also relate more easily to a civilian structure that shares similar organisational cultures and practices. Non-military organisations have consultation experience and are more flexible in their operations than the military.

The location of the SC in the military also limits funding possibilities. The military is unlikely to be able to increase funding, given reduced defence budgets, and there would be public opposition to using other development resources for example, from education on a military structure.

For these reasons, it is preferable that a non-military structure, which has the support and co-operation of the military, be charged with the task of social reintegration. In practice, this may mean retaining the SC structure but locating it in another government department or making it a quasi-government body.
A major weakness of the SC is that it focuses primarily on non-statutory force soldiers and only offers basic-level skills training. There is concern that it does not provide quality training, experience and employment opportunities, and perceptions exist that it is the dumping ground for ex-MK and APLA soldiers.

There are questions about the SC in the rationalisation process. Future education and training programmes need to take into account the varied levels of skills and training in the defence force, as soldiers from all ranks will be rationalised. In particular, there are opportunities to retrain officers with a range of managerial, technical and organisational skills which may be useful in the private and public sector. The SC may need to re-orientate itself to deal with rationalisation.

It would be unwise to consider extending the SC as it is currently structured to the unemployed and youth. At a public seminar, the Chief of the Service Corps, General Moloi, argued that the SADF had played an important role in instilling discipline in white youth under apartheid, and that the SANDF was the only institution able to do this (presentation to an Institute for Defence Policy seminar, 3 February 1995). Others countered that, given the extent to which civil society was militarised, the challenge was to demilitarise rather than remilitarise youth. In establishing the National Youth Service Initiative in 1994, there was discussion about whether the military should be involved in a service corps for the youth. This was unanimously rejected (interview with ANCYL leader, 1995). Extending the programme to the youth and the unemployed would require extra capacity and resources which are unavailable.

The rationalisation process

Despite its flaws, the demobilisation process is complete and many soldiers anxiously await the rationalisation process. Demobilisation was limited to 3 770 people, but the rationalisation process may involve upwards of 30 000 people. It is likely to be a more complex and difficult process. The rationalisation process needs to build on the experience and lessons learnt from demobilisation.

Critical to the success of rationalisation are the following: defining policy, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, in a participatory and transparent manner, involving all major stakeholders. The range of interested and affected parties includes parliamentarians, Departments of Defence, Labour, Social Welfare and Education, unions, religious bodies and non-governmental organisations. It is important that the soldiers who are directly affected by rationalisation, and veteran’s organisations, are consulted. Consultation is important to build political support for the process, which is bound to be politically contentious and potentially divisive.
Conclusion

Politicians and defence force officials should not be lulled into the false belief that the process of demobilisation is over and that they are rid of the problem. Although the small number of people demobilised means that they are unlikely to constitute a major political threat, the rationalisation process will see that number increase ten-fold. If the rationalisation process does not address the problems of demobilisation, there is bound to be increased social conflict and tension.

The formulation of the rationalisation policy and its planning must be transparent and inclusive of all role-players. There needs to be extensive pre-planning, including surveys of the soldiers’ biographical details, training needs and career aspirations. Rationalisation programmes should take into account the differing needs of soldiers. There should be emphasis on education and training programmes which allow for the conversion of military skills to civilian purposes, and packages should not consist solely of one-off cash payments. Psychological counselling should be offered. The military needs to monitor whether its objectives are being achieved.

Rationalisation is a challenge requiring resources, but it also presents a significant opportunity to free human and financial resources, for productive, civilian use. Investment in the process will payoff in increased security, peace and development.
On 28 April 1944, Harry Lawrence announced in the House of Assembly the government’s demobilisation plans amounting to a soldiers charter. Besides monetary benefits such as war gratuities and civilian clothing grants, the government plans include provisions for post-discharge employment for all classes of ex-soldier; financial assistance to re-establish the soldier in civilian life, such as by sending him to a university or a technical college for professional, vocational or technical training; training for the disabled soldier; the provision of temporary housing . . . and the cost of transporting families and effects (Lawrence, 1944).

Demobilisation was a massive task. Between 1939 and the end of 1945, a total of 334 224 people had volunteered for full-time service in the South African land, air and naval forces (Martin & Orpen, 1979:346). Of these, 197 875 were white males (Gibbs, 1990:13). At the end of the war, some 245 668 ex-volunteers passed through the dispersal depots and 155 330 had been placed in employment by the Directorate of Demobilisation (Martin & Orpen, 1979:356).

The programme was characterised by the following:

1. An extensive administrative infrastructure was set up which included some degree of participation from those most affected. In 1944, a Directorate of Demobilisation was established. An Advisory Council on Demobilisation was also established to advise the Directorate. This was composed of representatives of serving men and women, representatives of the coloured and native forces, of commerce and industry, and of the trade unions. A country-wide network of 325 demobilisation committees was established and some five thousand voluntary workers sat on these committees.

2. Benefits were differentiated according to length of service, race and gender not according to military rank or type of military activity, or exposure to danger. The ex-volunteer soldier was entitled to:

   • **Gratuities.** The government was aware of the honourable tradition of paying a war gratuity as a token recognition of the nation’s appreciation to the volunteers who have served it faithfully in time of war (Lawrence, 1944). The gratuity amounted to £1/10s for each completed month of service in the case of European male volunteers; 15s for each completed month of service for European female volunteers; 10s for coloured volunteers; and 5s for native volunteers. According to Gibbs, the white volunteer who had been away for several years was paid about £18 per year of service, while a black volunteer was paid a mere £3 per year of service, which is a sixth of that paid to his white compatriot (Gibbs, 1990:25).

   • **Civilian clothing and cash allowances.** Of £15 to Europeans; £9 to coloureds; and each native will receive specified articles of civilian clothing and a cash allowance of £2 .

   • **A preferential employment policy.** The right to employment was considered a corner-stone of the whole demobilisation scheme (Gibbs, 1990:26). Most volunteers returned to the jobs they held before the war. Others were kept on military strength , and paid at the appropriate
scale until they found suitable employment. The government aimed to set an example to other employers. It safeguarded the interests of public and railways workers and the public service kept open clerical, professional and technical posts for some 2 000 to 3 000 ex-volunteer soldiers not previously in the public service. Generally, the government policy was to employ ex-volunteers.

- **Transport expenses of family and effects.** Rail warrants were provided for travel to the place of employment.
- **Access to vocational and technical training at technical colleges and universities.** The agricultural colleges at Cedara in Natal and at Potchefstroom in the Transvaal were reserved exclusively for training returned volunteers.
- **A financial assistance scheme** provided for special measures to enable an ex-volunteer to adjust to civilian life in the form of loans of £1 250 which were interest-free for 5 years or grants of up to £250. Ex-volunteer students at university were eligible for a total grant of £250. The money could only be used to pay for specific items, such as university or technical training fees, to purchase a house or farm, for tools or machinery, furniture and motor vehicles, and each application had to be passed by the executive of the directorate, before being granted.
- **Housing.** According to the then Minister of Welfare and Demobilisation, When our men return from their war service, it is essential to arrange that they and their families will not be harassed by housing needs and that suitable accommodation is available for them. Government therefore embarked on a national house building programme. Priority was given to ex-volunteers in the allocation of houses or flats built by public bodies or utility companies. Applications from ex-volunteers for assistance in building their own houses fell within the scope of the scheme.
- Some military camps were converted into temporary villages housing ex-volunteers and their families. Residents were able to hire furniture for these dwellings from the Department of Defence.
- **Agricultural land.** The Lands Department has schemes for those who wish to farm but who have not the necessary capital and need state assistance to buy. There are established Land Settlement Acts under which land will be allotted to returned soldiers. There were 1 500 to 2 000 holdings available as settlements and 1 000 individual farms available in all parts of the Union.
- **War pensions were paid to a volunteer who is disabled or to his dependants if he is killed or dies.** The 1944 War Pensions Act was described as one of the most liberal in the world (Army Education Section, UDF Repatriation Unit, 1945:86).

3. The benefits were rationalised by government appeals to notions of honour and patriotism. We have set out to provide, as far as it is humanly possible, a policy of social insurance for those men and women who have been willing to serve South Africa in her need. For many the help we shall be able to offer may be incommensurate with their sacrifices. There are some things incapable of compensation. And patriotism is above nicely calculated monetary evaluation. The prime minister said that demobilisation would be a very costly business indeed, but he went on to say, There is no doubt we are in honour bound and in duty bound to do everything that we can for the men who volunteered to support the honour of this country and the cause of freedom for which we are fighting (Lawrence, 1944).

4. The United Party government pursued what it saw to be its political interests. One Minister said in parliament, If I gauge public opinion correctly in this country, then it may well be said that the manner in which the government tackles this task will be the
acid test of its ability to retain public support (Hansard, 28 April 1944).

5. The demobilisation policy must be located within the wider context of social transformation. In seeking to solve the problems of demobilisation, the government and its critics repeatedly stressed the importance of addressing the housing crisis, unemployment and poverty in general (Gibbs, 1990:11).

6. Overall, the policy privileged a special social category. The outcome was that white South African males enjoyed a system of social security and range of opportunities which did not exist for other social groups. As Gibbs has argued, the demobilisation scheme was neither neutral nor fair in its conception and application (Gibbs, 1990:19). Furthermore, there was an exceptionally high number of discharges among members of the Native Military Corps, to purge the non-European army services of unsatisfactory elements which inevitably forced such individuals to resort to crime in order to survive, rather than assisting them to rehabilitate themselves (Gibbs, 1990:24).

The discrimination against women and against coloured and African volunteer soldiers was dramatic. Bertha Solomon pointed out in parliament that the gratuity payments indicated that the country is only half as grateful to the women volunteers as it is to the men.

7. The policy was based on extensive social investigation. Questionnaires were sent both to volunteers and employers and completed by a total of 119,355 men and 13,883 women (Gibbs, 1990:27).

8. The policy was not well administered and took 5 years to implement. Some individuals spent more than six months waiting in dispersal depots, either for employment or for financial assistance (The Star, 26 October 1945, cited by Gibbs, 1990:31). According to one informant, it was badly applied, chaotic; the implementation was shoddy (interview with military historian).

The benefits and procedures were too complicated and cumbersome. They created confusion and disappointment. Had it [the demobilisation scheme] treated everyone equally, and paid out lump sum grants instead of attempting to assess the individual merits of each application, the scheme would have stood a greater chance of success. Instead of making demobilisation simple and efficient, the scheme adopted in 1944 was complicated by too much bureaucratic red tape and too many possibilities for misunderstanding and disappointment. Most of the time there was confusion over what soldiers were entitled to, and what procedures should be followed. The result of this was disillusionment and frustration, the very sentiments the government had hoped to avoid (Gibbs, 1990:62).

9. The policy was extremely expensive. The cost was in the order of £60 500 000 (Gibbs, 1990:40). According to one informant, it would have been simpler if the money had been divided among volunteers (interview with military historian).

10. It was claimed that the policy was a success. The promise has been carried out: there have been no forgotten men. South Africa’s demobilisation scheme, probably the best in the world, has reinstated nearly 300,000 ex-volunteers in civilian life (Sunday Times, 2 January 1949). According to two historians, gradually thousands of servicemen, some of whom had never before earned a living except in uniform, were placed in a position to support themselves in useful occupations in peacetime commerce and industry, as farmers or in the civil service, or in any capacity suited to their individual talents (Martin & Orpen, 1979:356).

The programme was favourably compared with that after the First World War. The present comprehensive and scientific approach to demobilisation is in marked contrast to the position during and after the
Great War of 1914-18. In relation to the Great War, demobilisation had its bare dictionary meaning – the disbanding of troops. Such plans as were made for the returned soldier were haphazard, uncoordinated and completely inadequate. In the final result, demobilisation as a process for promoting the effective return of the soldier to civilian life failed completely. History has not repeated itself (Directorate of Demobilisation, 1945: 1155).

At that time, Unemployment, together with a lack of housing and an economic depression, led many ex-servicemen to feel that they had been let down by the government. This disillusionment contributed significantly to the defeat of Smuts's South African Party in 1924 (Gibbs, 1990:20).

11. The 1944 policy also caused disillusion, dissatisfaction and social tensions. For instance, there were tensions between those who volunteered and those who did not. In the public service there was a considerable amount of ill-feeling between returned soldiers and their fellow employees who had not joined up (Gibbs, 1990:58). Some non-volunteers who were employed in key areas and responded to an appeal by General Smuts to remain in their jobs were especially disgruntled. We feel we are getting a raw deal from the government by just being cast side and treated in the same category as people who opposed our entry into the war (cited by Gibbs, 1990:58). The resentment of those displaced or economically disadvantaged by the return of ex-volunteers was not easily dissipated (Gibbs, 1990: 60). In fact, the policy contributed in some measure to the defeat of the United Party in 1948. The United Party had made a calculated investment in the white ex-serviceman and woman through its demobilisation scheme. Compared to the benefits offered by the other Allied nations, the scheme was generous and comprehensive. However, the hoped-for political dividends at the election polls were negligible in comparison to the other liabilities which brought about its downfall. In the re-fashioned post-war world, ex-soldiers and their votes were not a major concern (Gibbs, 1990:61).

12. Demobilisation was part of the process of demilitarisation of the economy and society. Commenting on the total involvement of the nation in the war, J.H. Hofmeyr said, This war is a people's war if ever there has been one. Never has the civilian had to bear so large a share of the burden of war as members of the various women's and men's units, as war workers, as civilians. The plain ordinary citizen should have an overwhelming predominant claim to whatever fruits of peace there may be (cited by Gibbs, 1990: 1).

Much can be learned from this policy at this point in South African history. Phillip van Niekerk has posed the question, How will the new South Africa remember those who died in Angola and Namibia, fighting to win wars that history will proclaim to have been unjust? Perhaps the SADF has realised its only hope is a neutral commemoration where courage in battle alone will be recognised where those South Africans who drowned on board the Mendi will be honoured alongside those who perished at Cuito Cuanavale. By finding a way to honour the long-forgotten Mendi, they are finding a way to honour their own wars

(Weekly Mail, 19 February 1993).
Virtually all countries in the southern African region are undergoing or have undergone phased demobilisation programmes. Declining economies, negotiated political settlements and developmental imperatives have impelled governments to re-examine military establishments and the finances required for their maintenance.

A range of creative strategies has been suggested on how southern African countries can demilitarise their respective states, societies and military establishments. These include the downsizing, or even elimination, of some armed forces; the reduction of military expenditure; the conversion of military facilities and inventories to civilian use; and the reintegration of demobilised soldiers into civilian life. Historically, it has been the human resource component of demilitarisation that has received considerable attention from political and defence planners. The reasons behind this strategy are self-evident: without a peaceful and sustainable reintegration of soldiers into society, the prospects of political, economic and social stability will be bedevilled.

Inherent contradictions lie at the heart of southern African demobilisation programmes, making their implementation a potentially Janus-faced process. Along with a host of political and social problems most southern African demobilisation programmes take place within economies that are incapable of absorbing all personnel. Often the financial and employment packages provided to demobilised soldiers do not match the salaries and perks received in the employ of the military. Post-demobilisation training is often incomplete or does not accurately reflect the skills requirements of the economic sector into which soldiers are directed.

Fundamental to the success of any demobilisation programme, therefore, is the effective preparation of former military personnel. The key factors are sound planning and management of the process; career counselling; thorough skills and personnel audits; research into employment prospects; and ongoing monitoring and evaluation.

Critical to the reintegration process is the extent to which an effec-
tive human resources development and conversion programme can be instituted and prove capable of gainfully deploying demobilised personnel in the economy. More so than any other aspect of demobilisation, unemployment contributes to disaffection and frustration among former soldiers.

The aim of this chapter is to examine the potential role which human resources development and conversion can play within the context of an envisaged demobilisation programme. While acknowledging that a range of programmes can be instituted, it focuses on the role that alternative certification programmes can play. Although the emphasis is on the institution of alternative certification programmes for officers and senior non-commissioned officers, the principles can be applied to similar programmes for all ranks within the South African armed forces.

Towards a human resources conversion strategy

The terms human resources conversion and human resources development are used extensively in this chapter. Human resources conversion refers to the practical and normative conversion of specific skills possessed by military personnel into capabilities that can be
used in a non-military environment. This can be achieved by accreditation of these skills by governmental and business sectors, or through their recognition and integration into broader educational and training courses. Human resources development refers to the provision of education and training for people lacking particular competencies, or supplementing existing capabilities with market-related skills.

The importance of human resources conversion and development cannot be underestimated. A successful demobilisation programme can contribute to socio-economic development and has the indirect potential to release funds previously earmarked for defence spending for developmental needs. This reality lies at the heart of any proposed demilitarisation agenda. The benefits of such a programme are measurable way beyond the fiscal outlay.

Money spent on a demobilisation programme facilitates human development . . .

Effective human resources development provides employment . . .

Effective and durable employment reduces the sources of social and political conflict, both internally and regionally . . .

Reduced conflict diminishes the prospect of war . . .

Decreasing prospects of war contribute to reductions in defence spending (Kingma, 1995).

For the institution of an effective human resources conversion programme, it is important that the following factors are considered prior to initiating the planning process:

- Extensive stakeholder identification and consultation. This will range from major stakeholders, such as the state, the private sector, and international agencies, to smaller, more locally based organisations. This partnership should involve practical and transparent interfaces: joint involvement in programmes, joint representation on key demobilisation committees, secondment of expertise to the demobilisation programme, etc. While major stakeholders are important players in the demobilisation programme, it should be remembered that it is local communities, the smaller stakeholders, who will either benefit from or bear the brunt of demobilisation programmes.
- Institution of a public awareness campaign. This is important in broadening the base of popular support for the programme and addressing misconceptions about demobilised personnel (allegations of preferential treatment, fears regarding their likely behaviour, etc.).
- Mobilisation of resources required for the proposed programme (financial, material, organisational and intellectual).
Institution of a comprehensive needs analysis. A needs analysis is necessary to determine the following:

- job prospects and employment patterns in the different sectors: (rural, urban, industry, agriculture, etc.);
- regional possibilities and variations in employment;
- skills deficits;
- identification of appropriate training and educational institutions.

- Securing donor pledges prior to the demobilisation programme.

The following should be taken into consideration during the planning phases:

- Feasibility studies on a region-by-region basis. These should take into account:
  - tertiary, technical and vocational training capacity;
  - existing and potential funding for such institutions;
  - equipment availability at educational and training institutions;
  - availability and condition of buildings;
  - availability and competency of instructors;
  - the capacity of NGOs to provide training.

- Market demand and training prioritisation.
- Key indicators of success.

By considering these factors during the planning phase, it is possible to discern a number of generic strategies required for a human resources conversion programme. These are outlined below.

**The first-line response strategy**

The International Labour Organisation (ILO), which has amassed considerable expertise in the sphere of human resources conversion, identifies a number of strategies that can be adopted in the context of a demobilisation programme. The first is referred to as a “first-line response strategy”, in which an immediate operational response is provided over an eight- to twelve-month period. This approach is skill-specific in terms of scope, relies extensively on NGO and community expertise and assistance in its implementation, and is usually targeted at specific categories of military personnel (those in the lower ranks, those possessing limited skills, and those without extensive managerial or academic training).

Features of a typical first-line response strategy include:

- The design of self-contained modules aimed at imparting a specific skill that can be taught by a range of institutions and instructors. Examples include auto-engineering, building and construction, electrical engineering, mechanical engineering, plumbing, pipe-fitting.
- The creation of module training banks at national and regional
levels that can be accessed by locally based demobilisation projects.

- Surveying and utilising locally based NGOs, churches and private-sector bodies in implementing training programmes to ensure community participation and determine an appropriate skills profile for a region.

A first-line strategy works most effectively in the informal rural sector and the informal urban sector where specific skills are developed, minimum business skills are imparted, and polyvalent training is extended to the skill group as a whole. These strategies presuppose the existence of an economy that has a relatively developed informal-sector network.

The Tigrayan experience from the Ethiopian demobilisation process is an example of the first-line response strategy in action. Some 3000 demobilised personnel were identified for the programme, all of whom possessed no more than basic literacy and military training. The programme identified income-generating activities in the Tigrayan region and designed appropriate training modules for each skill required. Trainers were trained and employment resource packages were designed to facilitate the programme’s implementation. Regular follow-ups were conducted after the institution of the programmes.

**The short-term approach**

The adoption of the classic institutional and the formal apprenticeship strategies for human resource conversion is more typical of developed countries in which there is a high degree of literacy, numeracy and formal education. This approach seeks to utilise the services of existing tertiary institutions (universities, technical colleges, specialised training institutes, academies, etc.) to educate, train and convert the skills of former soldiers into particular employment directions. Typical examples include the post-Second World War GI Bill in the United States, the Montgomery GI Bill currently in existence in the United States, and the military career transition programmes used by the British, German, United States, Canadian and Australian armed forces to prepare officers completing medium-term contracts for a second career.

While these approaches have recorded high levels of success in many countries (particularly the United States) there are factors which should be considered before adopting this approach:

- The capacity of institutions to accommodate demobilised personnel.
- The importance of securing an early agreement between the Ministry of Defence, government and educational institutions on the proposed implementation of programmes. This applies particularly to the accreditation of military training and experience in a non-military environment.
A realistic appraisal of the constraints of formal institutions and their involvement in such a programme, for example:

- the limited experience of teachers and instructors in understanding the needs of demobilised personnel;
- rigid entry requirements that may prove resistant to the accreditation of military experience and qualifications;
- rigid, inflexible and outdated curricula that prove incapable of adapting to the challenges of a human resources conversion programme;
- the use of outdated methodologies (e.g. non-participative, teacher-centred methodologies);
- the inability of many institutions to understand the changing demands of the labour market.

Short-term response strategies (1-5 years duration) tend to focus on more conventional training approaches, including formal apprenticeships, self-employment programmes and the use of classic institutional approaches. These strategies are most effective in the urban formal sector and the rural formal sector, although self-employment programmes have relevance in the formal and the informal sectors.

Short-term alternative certification programmes have been successful in the United States. These programmes have been applied exclusively to officers and, to a lesser extent, to senior non-commissioned officers, and build on the instruction skills of the military, management background, planning skills and the predisposition to work in teams. Successful examples have included soldier-to-teacher programmes and provide possible parallels with the institution of similar human resource conversion programmes in South Africa.

**Alternative certification: The US experience**

Simply put, alternative certification refers to programs designed to facilitate the entry of college graduates with appropriate subject matter expertise into classroom teaching or administrative positions in the schools . . . Alternative certification programs allow arts and sciences graduates to participate in intensified programs which do not require the typical accumulation of credit hours, to demonstrate competency requirements, and or to gain the necessary expertise through field-based experiences while holding a teaching position (MacDonald et al. . , 1994:20).

While alternative certification in the United States has focused exclusively on converting the skills and capabilities of former officers and senior non-commissioned officers into classroom-based competencies, the concept is used in a wider sense in this chapter. Here, it refers to the conversion of the skills and capabilities of all former soldiers into a range of competencies, including managerial and
administrative capabilities in the private and the public sector, possible conversion into teaching- and instructor-based competencies, and the conversion of technically related skills in similar areas.

Alternative certification programmes in the United States take place within the broader context of defence downsizing. To prepare military personnel for a second career upon severance, a variety of Military Career Transition Programmes (MCTPs) has been instituted. Although many former military officers and non-commissioned officers find direct employment in the private sector, many want to go to university or college, or desire training in a new skill (Military Career Transition Program, 1994).

A survey of 5 000 military members attending an MCTP at Fort Benning, Georgia, found that approximately 50 per cent wanted to go directly into a private sector job, about 20 per cent wanted to go to university, and 30 per cent wanted training in a new skill (Army Times, 3 May 1993). Traditionally, MCTPs concentrated on providing military personnel with the skills they would require for a job search (interview techniques, curriculum vitae compilation, etc.). Within the context of large-scale downsizing, emphasis was increasingly placed by the Clinton administration on job placement for former military members and resulted in some $519 million being allocated to MCTPs in 1994 (Army Times, 3 May 1993).

The reasons behind the institution of alternative certification programmes, for example, in education, have included the following: to increase the pool of mathematics, science, special education and minority teachers; increase the numbers of teachers in rural and urban areas; attract a more diverse group of candidates . . . and provide opportunities for bright college graduates to begin careers in teaching without completing extended teacher certification programmes (MacDonald et al., 1994:20). Successful programmes have been introduced for other areas of employment, including local government, business and technical trades.

*Why focus on former military personnel for alternative certification?*

Alternative certification programmes (ACPs) involving military personnel have invariably drawn criticism. Is it desirable to convert the skills of former military personnel and bring them into the civilian sector? And what qualities do the military possess that better equip them for alternative certification? Old Dominion University (ODU), which runs the largest ACP in the United States, concentrating mainly on military personnel from Virginia, has identified a number of beneficial traits, including maturity, a sense of responsibility, an understanding of team work, a sense of community, relative youth, communication skills, training skills and experience, and a level of technical competence (Military Career Transition Program, 1994).

The observations of ODU have been reinforced by surveys conduct-
ed among principals in Virginia who cite the following qualities exhibited by former military personnel certificated as teachers: maturity and life experience, strong content knowledge, an ability to work with younger people, responsibility, clear goals, strong work ethic, good planning abilities, motivation, conceptual ability, strong leadership skills, and a high level of professionalism (MacDonald et al., 1994:21).

The people involved in the programme tend to confirm these observations:

- The organisational and training skills I had to use in the army transferred over. The objectives and planning are the same, though they are called by a different name. You have to prepare lesson plans and long-range semester plans instead of weekly training schedules and quarterly training plans (Soldiers Newspaper, March 1993).

- He brings order, sensitivity, and the kind of stick-to-it-ness you want teachers to have, but usually don’t have until they have been in the system for a while. I would like to see 30 people like him in this building. He brings new dimensions with an old idea — strong management, firmness and sensitivity (Soldiers Newspaper March 1993).

- The programme just made good sense. Throughout the military profession, personnel are exposed to a considerable amount of experience involving planning, instruction, human relations and technology. Their backgrounds in the military coincide with the skills needed to become good teachers (The Flagship, 10 June 1993).

However, using military personnel for ACP — particularly in education — has its drawbacks:

- Underlying the bureaucratic hassles are differences between the military and public school classroom environments. Some former military people have difficulty bringing their vocabularies down to student level. Others have trouble figuring out how to administer discipline without the advantages of military rank . . . Indeed another problem is the changes in the schools over the past three decades. Dr Robert MacDonald, a professor of curriculum and instruction at Old Dominion, said of the new teacher, They say the school they would have liked to have taught in existed in 1959. (New York Times, 8 April 1992) One of the features of the ACP for teachers is the institution of a normative component to the programme that stresses the class-
room management and behaviour management techniques required for operation within the more liberal and interactive educational environment of the 1990s (Educational Week, 20 May 1992).

The experience of Old Dominion University

The MCTP began as a collaborative effort between the armed forces and their education offices, university departments, school districts, the Virginia State Department of Education and the community. Stakeholder consultation and participation centred around administrative planning, curriculum development, key faculty participation, programme implementation and quality evaluation. Such interaction ensures that major stakeholders are involved in curriculum design and implementation.

Prospective teachers have to complete more than 60 hours of tutorial and group work, and individualised instruction, before entering their compulsory six-week practical teaching experience module (22-45 credit hours and 27-30 hours for certification). Military personnel have the choice of certification only, certification and a Masters degree, or certification and a certificate of advanced study. The course takes an average of 18 months to 2 years, is part-time, and is completed in uniform. Considerable follow-up is provided once military personnel are placed in jobs.

Military personnel on the MCTP can work towards certification in the following teaching areas: early childhood, middle school, secondary school, special education, vocational technical training, or specialised training for disadvantaged children. The acquisition of a certificate in one of these areas allows MCTP graduates to pursue postgraduate studies.

The ODU programme provides candidates with experience in teaching methodology, classroom management, lesson preparation and related pedagogic skills. It also focuses on normative skills, interactive and participative teaching, multi-cultural training, and sensitising candidates to the more democratic and non-hierarchical nature of the modern school.

Attempts to replicate the experience of such an MCTP in South Africa should take cognisance of the following:

- The importance of regular interaction among the identified stakeholders: the armed forces, the community, the institution providing the training, and the sector where military personnel will be employed.
- The university or college offering the MCTP should be actively involved in its presentation, implementation and ongoing evaluation.
- Extensive counselling assists candidates to choose an appropriate vocation.
Extensive support needs to be provided to aspirant alternative certification members in the spheres of learning and interviewing skills, preparing curricula vitae, applying for positions and presentation.

The concept of alternative certification as applied at ODU could prove a useful tool for a South African demobilisation programme.

**Employment and training in South Africa**

The institution of an alternative certification programme for military personnel about to be demobilised in South Africa requires acceptance by major stakeholders, the capacity and willingness of training institutions to participate in such a programme, the identification of areas of the economy where alternative certification programmes would be of benefit, and funding.

Predictions about the future of the South African economy vary from cautious to optimistic. The country is recording a 3 per cent growth rate but finds itself unable to absorb the large numbers of school-leavers completing matric every year. It is estimated that a 6 per cent growth rate will be necessary to ensure all school-leavers are gainfully absorbed into the economy. Unemployment is estimated at approximately 43 per cent (*Mail & Guardian*, 5 January 1996).

While the informal sector has been trumpeted as an arena where people can find employment, it is plagued by problems. Inhibiting factors include near saturation in certain areas (for example, Gauteng), the high level of insecurity experienced by people employed there, and a host of cultural, national, gender and ethnic factors which make entrance into this sector problematic.

Although the formal sector is limited in its capacity to absorb new job applicants, certain niches appear to exist. Some organisations specialising in skills provision record high employment statistics for people entering the formal sector. Several Johannesburg-based groups confirm this tendency. The St Anthony’s Skills Training Programme in Johannesburg has trained an average of 2 600 people in a range of vocational skills courses since the beginning of 1994. Courses generally last for eight weeks and focus on skills required in the formal and the informal sector (welding, plumbing, construction, dress-making, etc.). At present, the programme records a 70 per cent employment rate for people completing the course. The Bertrams Brigade provides training in construction-related skills and records an 82 per cent employment rate for people completing the course. A similar organisation, Keyboards, provides computer training for people from disadvantaged backgrounds and records a 100 per cent employment rate for people completing the course (*Homeless Talk*, February 1996).

While the percentages are impressive, they do not indicate the duration of employment, or the follow-up involved in the programmes.
Temporary employment can be of initial value in a demobilisation programme, but may not guarantee lasting prospects of employment.

At junior, middle-management and senior-management levels, many private-sector companies are scouring the market to find affirmative action and equal opportunity candidates for long-term employment. Those possessing either a degree or appropriate management background and experience are sought after. The increasing attrition rate of officers from the SANDF also indicates that scores are carving out niches (in some cases, lucrative) in the burgeoning consultancy sector.

The public sector remains a fertile area of employment. Although central government is being rationalised according to the proposals outlined by the Department of Public Administration, employment potential exists within provincial, regional and particularly local government where there are experience, skill and qualification deficits at middle- and senior-management levels. For instance, the majority of middle and senior managers in the public service are not trained to the level of the posts which they occupy. This has been acknowledged by a joint initiative based at South Africa’s business and development schools, known as the University-Based Management Development Programme for Implementing the RDP. The programme aims at producing personnel for the middle- and senior-management echelons required to manage the RDP. Six universities participate in the programme: School of Government (Western Cape); School of Public and Development Management (Stellenbosch); School of Public Policy and Development Management (Durban-Westville); School of Public Management (Pretoria); Institute of Government (Fort Hare); and the Graduate School of Public and Development Management (Witwatersrand). The following observation highlights the urgent need for skilled managers in the civil service: Between 18 000 and 30 000 newly trained professionals are required annually for the public service. This exceeds the output capacity of existing training institutions by over 10 000.

The group envisions:

- An increase in total output of trained managers at postgraduate level from 340 per annum in 1994, to 1 015 per annum in 1999.
- An increase in the total output of graduates from certified programmes from 732 per annum in 1994, to 2 270 in 1999.
- Within the overall increase in output of 199 per cent for degree programmes over 5 years, and 210 per cent for certificate programmes for the same period, an increase of graduates drawn from disadvantaged racial and gender backgrounds by 221 per cent and 152 per cent respectively for the degree programmes, and 297 per cent and 339 per cent for certificate programmes (University-Based Management Development Programme, 1995:3).
With appropriate consultation and mutually agreed certification, it may be possible to place alternatively certified SANDF personnel in these sectors.

**Human resources conversion programmes in SA**

It is clear that a large number of military personnel will be rationalised from the SANDF. Estimates range from 30 000 to 50 000. Increasing pressure on the budget, the need to reduce high operating costs, the massive reductions in force levels taking place in the southern African region, and the structural reorganisation of the SANDF are all indicators in this regard. However, unlike many other African armed forces, SANDF personnel have a wide skills base and a diverse and heterogeneous economy into which they can be incorporated.

These skills include leadership and management, effective written and oral communication, team building, strategic capabilities, and an ability to work with large groups of people. Most senior- and middle-ranking officers possess graduate qualifications from civilian tertiary institutions and staff colleges (the latter providing extensive background in managerial, strategic, financial and administrative techniques). Junior officers and senior non-commissioned officers have completed a range of military courses in areas of functional specialisation in addition to basic management skills.

The advantages of alternative career certification programmes (ACPs) can be summarised as follows:

- They allow military personnel who are about to be demobilised the opportunity to convert their skills to gainful use in the civilian sector. This contributes to a reduction in the levels of uncertainty and insecurity among personnel about to be demobilised.
- Since ACPs are not full-time courses, military personnel can complete their certification while in uniform. Given their part-time nature, demobilised personnel are not faced with the problem of sustaining themselves and their families during 3-4 years of fulltime study. The SANDF can, at minimal cost, contribute towards their education and allow them time-off to study and prepare for their impending demobilisation.
- ACPs utilise the extensive skills of military personnel for the benefit of the public and the private sector. Former soldiers are guaranteed relatively stable employment (unlike the insecurities rife in the informal sector).
- ACPs ensure that the ongoing resources invested in defence will, ultimately, have a developmental spin-off. Conversion and accreditation of military experience and qualifications represent a practical use of skills that would not normally have a social utility.
- South Africa already possesses growing expertise in this arena.
most notably the various accreditation initiatives that have been forwarded to the National Qualifications Board, and the different courses offered at business schools.

- The institution of the Service Corps—a structure designed specifically to accommodate and prepare former military personnel for reintegration into civilian society—provides a practical basis for initiating aspects of a human resources conversion programme. Although the Services Corps is limited by finance, by a perceived lack of legitimacy in certain quarters (particularly among some former non-statutory force members), and by the focus of its activities (confined largely to the demobilisation of lower-level personnel), it can play a facilitating role in ensuring the institution of a broader human resources conversion programme.

The institution of a South African ACP for demobilised officers and non-commissioned officers will require the following planning stages to prove successful:

- Popularising the concept of alternative certification among major stakeholders.
- Securing agreement among major stakeholders on the viability of such a programme and ascertaining whether it would meet their employment needs.
- Identifying areas of the economy which could meaningfully benefit from the introduction of an ACP (for example, certain managerial levels of the civil service in provincial and local government).
- Investigating institutions which could be used for a pilot programme.
- Identifying individuals who are either eligible for or interested in alternative certification.
- Initiating a national programme with appropriate endorsement over a five- to ten-year period (the anticipated time in which demobilisation might be realistically achieved). Thereafter it could become a standard component of the SANDF’s military career transition programme, preparing medium-term contract personnel for second careers.

The scope for the introduction of an ACP programme appears to be considerable given the managerial shortages identified in the private and public sector. Interested parties consulted on the initiation of an ACP in South Africa (including the Service Corps, the private sector, and the public sector) have expressed support and enthusiasm for the concept. A certain latitude exists to investigate and introduce such a programme and it would be foolish to squander this valuable human resource opportunity.¹

¹ Discussions have included people from the private sector, the public sector, the University of the Witwatersrand Business School, the Service Corps, and the SANDF’s Chief of Staff Personnel.
Conclusion

The success of a demobilisation programme will be judged by its relative ability to reintegrate former military personnel into civilian society. Empowerment is critical. Human resource conversion and development should receive more attention in the challenging years that lie ahead. Notwithstanding the progress that has been made by certain defence personnel planners to date, a much wider range of creative options needs to be examined and instituted.
The militarisation of South African society in the 1980s was not confined to formal state security structures and their personnel. The potent combination of state repression and the consequent insurrectionary struggle resulted in high levels of militarisation in civil society. The process of militarisation affected South Africa's youth who, in the 1980s, actively participated in revolutionary struggle and consequently became the target of state violence. The youth perceived themselves as key agents of social and political change, and as defenders of their communities against repressive security forces. During this period, the police were unwilling and unable to work in black communities and ensure their safety. Alternative forms of policing arose and youth were central to these structures. Many received some form of paramilitary training by armed formations such as uMkhonto weSizwe.

Despite the election of a democratic government in 1994, youth continue to be involved in a variety of defence structures, some of which are highly organised. Many of the defence structures lack political leadership and guidance, and some have been infiltrated by criminal elements (Raditapole & Gillespie, 1994:11). They continue to perceive themselves as protecting their communities from outside threats. But despite their historic and current role they have been marginalised from political and social processes. Political parties which initially took responsibility for defence structures of this kind have distanced themselves from them, and the Minister of Safety and Security has indicated that paramilitary groups will be banned (Business Day, 6 August 1996).

Militarised youth are a neglected social group who need to be targeted for reintegration into society. This is critical to South Africa, which has emerged from a period of low-intensity conflict into one of reconstruction and development. Stability and security are necessary for development to succeed. But the process of change is potentially threatened by youth in defence structures who are armed and unac-

1. This chapter focuses on youth who were members of or perceived themselves to be part of the social movement aligned to the politics of the ANC, both while it was banned and when it was unbanned. Interviews were conducted in 1995 with leaders of SDUs in Soweto, Alexandra, East Rand, North East Rand, Pretoria, West Rand and the Vaal. Interviews were also conducted with key informants in non-governmental organisations who were working with militarised youth, and key informants in police and military intelligence.

2. While most public attention has been focused on structures of defence, it is crucial to recognise that there are large numbers of youth who continue to perceive themselves as defenders, but are not organised into these seemingly aboveground struc-
tures. Individual youths in the townships continue to be armed and participate in a range of violent activities, some of which are criminal. In areas such as Alexandra and Pretoria, there are no formal, identifiable defence structures. This does not mean that a large proportion of youth in these areas are neither armed nor participate in what they believe to be the defence of their communities.

Countable. Militarised youth pose a potential threat to security unless demilitarisation programmes are developed to address their needs. These would include assisting them to devise alternative methods to deal with conflict and to reformulate their identities by offering alternative experiences and skills to those of defenders of the community. Such programmes would include job creation, education and training, and psychological services aimed at providing youth with skills and opportunities to contribute positively to society.

This chapter provides an overview of the involvement of youth in defence structures in the 1980s and 1990s, explores their aspirations and goals, and examines the prospects of demilitarisation.

**Defence structures in the 1980s**

The 1980s were a critical turning point in South Africa’s political history. There was massive intensification of the struggle against the apartheid state, and the urban terrain was a key site of struggle. By 1984, there was an upsurge of resistance in most urban townships. From 1985 to 1989, the state attempted to crush resistance through states of emergency, banning organisations, censoring the media, and detaining and killing activists. It was the youth who were most active during this period and primarily targeted by the state.

Both the state and civil society became increasingly militarised. Violence was seen as an effective means of achieving change (on the part of state opponents) or crushing resistance (on the part of the state). Mann defines the mindset which accompanies the process of militarisation as a set of attitudes and social practices which regards war and the preparation for war as a normal and desirable social activity (Mann, 1987:71).

Militarism became rooted in black and white communities, albeit in differing ways. The repressive actions of the state gave rise to confrontational politics and political violence. The African National Congress (ANC), as the leading organisation of the liberation movement, called for a strategy of ungovernability and people’s power at its Kabwe Conference in 1985. The aim of the campaign was to render organs of government inoperable through mass action or violent opposition. Revolutionary militarism became part of the discourse and practice of political organisations engaged in war with the state. Oliver Tambo, then president of the ANC, stated in a well-distributed speech in South Africa that:

> Pretoria has carried out its murderous plans to extreme. We must now respond to the reactionary violence of the enemy with our own revolutionary violence. The weapons are there in white houses. Each white house has a gun or two hidden inside to use against us. Our mothers work in their kitchens. We work in their
gardens. We must deliberately go out to look for these weapons in these houses. It is a matter of life and death to find these weapons to use against the enemy . . . The lone policeman must be made a target. He must be destroyed so that we can get his weapon . . . We must learn to lay ambushes for the armoured personnel carriers and the police cars that patrol the locations.³

Township youth in particular heeded Tambo’s call and spearheaded the intensification of the revolutionary struggle. They identified themselves as energetic, flexible people who were the country’s future. As a result, they saw it as their responsibility to use any means possible to ensure a democratic dispensation. While making use of confrontational politics in legal political organisations like the UDF, they were simultaneously engaged in organised political violence in more elusive underground formations.

It is within this context that defence structures arose, as a response to state harassment by the security forces, to inadequate, partisan policing and to the perceived illegitimacy of the justice system. Local communities became active in alternative forms of policing and structures of justice. Most of these activities were co-ordinated by local civic structures which comprised street, zonal and area committees, whose members were responsible for patrolling the streets and areas in which they were situated. These structures were simultaneously responsible for the organisation of insurrection and for identifying

³ This quote is taken from a tape that was widely distributed among youth activists in the 1980s and early 1990s. It is part of an opening address given by Oliver Tambo at the ANC’s Kabwe Conference in 1985.
and punishing individuals or groupings believed to have committed crimes such as theft, murder and rape. Crimes committed against fellow members of the community were seen as dividing the community, and were regarded as unacceptable in a period when solidarity and unity were the keys to fighting the apartheid state.

Initially, methods of defence were simple and rudimentary. Resistance was given mainly by setting up barricades and foot patrols, as well as digging trenches to slow down or prohibit the movement of Security Force vehicles. Their weaponry was rudimentary and unsophisticated, what today are commonly referred to as traditional weapons (Motumi, 1994:7).

Youth played a critical role in these defence activities and participated in forms of collective violence which can broadly be termed political. Objects of political violence could include anyone or anything regarded as hindering the goal of liberation and the quest for unity. Gangsters, criminals and counter-revolutionary forces, such as Inkatha, became targets of collective action. Youth involvement in all this served to deepen their identity as defenders of the community, both physically and morally. This identity has prevailed subsequent to the negotiation process and the democratic elections in April 1994.

**Shifts in the 1990s**

The 1990s witnessed the decline of the youth movement, largely owing to the commencement of negotiations. These were conducted by national representatives of political parties, with almost no input from activists at a local level.

The unbanning of the ANC and its approach to armed struggle and the lack of consultation, alienated old activists. Activists became demoralised. These people had been committed to a seizure of power. The transition to the ANC had an effect on activists trained in a particular climate.4

Youth centrally engaged in the activities of people’s war and ungovernability were not convinced by the ANC’s new stance on negotiations and the suspension of armed struggle. As the 1990s proceeded, youth found themselves less and less central to the processes of transformation. In the early 1990s, very few political opportunities existed for youth to play a meaningful role in transition. In addition, key leaders of the 1980s left local youth organisations, their departure creating a leadership vacuum. New, less politically astute and disciplined youth constituted the social base of youth structures, and it proved difficult to organise and to instil the sense of discipline held by youth activists of the 1980s. The comtsotsi phenomenon (criminal elements who operated under the name of political organisations for their own personal gain) surged during this period. Collective action, including collective violence, became increasingly disorganised and unaccountable.

4. Interview with Mogamotsi Mogadire, a key youth activist in Soweto in the 1980s and early 1990s. Mogadire was a member of the National Executive Committee of the ANCYL at the time of the interview in 1993 (Marks, 1993).
The negotiation process itself was not uncomplicated or peaceful. In fact, the period 1990-4 was characterised by high levels of violence, particularly in KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng. Much of this violence was inter-community, particularly between members of the IFP and the ANC. There were also numerous attacks on local communities by groupings of unknown, armed men. These became known as the ‘third force’ and were allegedly organised and trained by the security forces intent on derailing the negotiation process allegations that Truth Commission investigations have proved to have substance.

The severity and frequency of attacks, combined with the continued repressive role played by the security forces and inter-community violence, forced local communities to develop their own self-defence initiatives. Again, it was youth who were at the forefront. Self-Defence Units (SDUs) were meant to have a special command and control system, and paramilitary configuration, and members were to be trained by the military wing of the ANC, uMkhonto weSizwe (MK). During this period [early 1990s], the role of the SDUs seemed clearly defined to defend the communities against the hostel dwellers, mainly seen to be IFP-controlled, and the Security Forces, especially the Internal Stability Unit (Motumi, 1994:8).

IFP supporters formed their own defence structures called Self-Protection Units (SPUs). There were also smaller groups of youth who were members of similar formations organised by AZAPO and the PAC. SDUs and SPUs mushroomed throughout South Africa, particularly in KwaZulu-Natal, the Western Cape and Gauteng. In the period following their formation, these units were, for the most part, accountable to local political structures. However, as the negotiation

Residents fleeing civil unrest in Thokoza, 1990 (Photo by Avigail Uzi)
process proceeded, and with the consequent formation of the Government of National Unity, political parties began to reassess the role and function of such structures. The ANC Youth League (ANCYL) in Gauteng, for example, publicly stated in early 1994 that defence units should be completely disbanded. The ANC argued that members of defence units should, as far as possible, become police reservists or form recognised and legitimate neighbourhood watches. For the most part, the inclusion of defence unit members into police reservist programmes has proved unsuccessful, both because of the lack of SAPS initiatives and capacity, and the desire by many defence unit members for payment for police-related activities.

**Defence structures after April 1994**

Despite the election of a democratic, ANC-led government, dramatic decreases in political violence (except in KwaZulu-Natal), and the stated intention of the SAP to become more accountable and community-oriented, youth defence structures continued to operate.

Peace, or at least the long-term guarantee thereof, is not only the curbing of violence or the absence of war, it is the availability and provision of food, health facilities, education, water, housing, electricity, transportation, security, and the promotion and adherence of fundamental human rights. These strengthen democracy, particularly at the grassroots level. The April election did not bring complete peace, nor end conflict (Rakgoadi, 1995:8).

Inequality and deprivation are still experienced by youth at a local level. The RDP, while facing the mammoth task of redistribution, has moved relatively slowly in addressing the problems confronted by the majority of black South Africans. For many young people, the only way of achieving any real change, or receiving attention from the state, is through acts of collective violence. These were often conducted in the name of defence structures. For example, Soweto SDU members from Diepkloof marched to the Orlando police station on 23 July 1995, and demanded integration into the SAPS. Representatives stated: If it means turning to violence and wreaking havoc in order for our grievances to be addressed, then we will do just that. We have done it before, and we got listened to. Nothing can stop us from doing it again (The Star, 24 July 1995).

The much-needed change process within the SAPS has also been slow. The partisan and repressive nature of policing in the past, combined with current inefficiencies in dealing with crime, means that some youth continue to play the role of an alternative police service. This is problematic since they are not formally trained as police personnel; their training is mostly paramilitary. In some instances they
In 1984, a group of young schoolboys from Bonteheuwel in the Western Cape decided to form a self-defence unit to protect themselves and their community against the security police. The average age of the boys was 15. Thirteen years later, many former members of the Bonteheuwel Military Wing (BMW) are jobless and without educational qualifications. Some are homeless or addicted to drugs, and others have turned to gangsterism to survive.

Yet, a number of former BMW members are gaining strength by coming to terms with their past and restructuring their lives through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Breakthrough Course. According to facilitator Peter Griffiths, the course is designed to help people discover and reach for what is really important in their lives. It encourages participants to wipe the slate clean and start thinking in a new, more personally inspired way.

According to ex-BMW member, Faried Ferhelst, . . . each and every person [in BMW] had many tragic experiences under the apartheid regime. He says, since 1990, when BMW disbanded, surviving members have been struggling to deal with the trauma of spending their teenage years battling for ourselves, our families, our communities and our nation.

Our lives were so profoundly affected, that we still find it difficult to integrate ourselves in the new society. For many of us the scars of torture and imprisonment are not only physical. For most of us, it is difficult to create and sustain fulfilling and satisfying lives.

Ferhelst, who has suffered nightmares since 1982, has found a way through the Breakthrough Course. You re-experience things from your past things you’re trying to bury. It teaches you how to deal and come to terms with your past.

Before he joined BMW at 14, Ferhelst was enrolled at a school for gifted children. On joining BMW, he went on the run from the police. He lived on the streets and often slept outside without cover. His mother left food and clothing for him at safe houses.

Ferhelst was a founder member of the Bonteheuwel Veterans Association (BVA) whose purpose is to empower and rebuild the members of the BMW, our families and the community. The BVA’s vision includes finding practical ways to provide homes, employment, education and support to ex-BMW members.

Ferhelst says minimal support has been offered to Bonteheuwel’s veterans by the current leadership and government. The concluding sentiment of a document he co-wrote about the background of the BVA is expressed thus: It would indeed be a continued injustice and crime against humanity for these courageous persons to be neglected and overlooked, given the committed lives they have led.

(Edited version of an article by Daisy Jones in *The Star*, 14 March 1997)
are the perpetrators of crime and are part of gang formations. Nonetheless, the youth derive a sense of identity and purpose through their policing activities.

There are several problems associated with the defence structures. These include the infiltration of criminal elements, the proliferation of sophisticated weaponry, violent clashes within and between SDUs, their ambivalent relationship with the SAPS, and their potential to disrupt developmental processes in broader society.

The infiltration of criminals is a major problem facing defence structures: at least half of the youth currently involved in SDUs were on the fringes of criminal activity prior to joining the SDU, and may continue such activity outside the jurisdiction of the particular township they protect. This indicates the emergence of a new dominance of criminal, and often gang-related, activity under the aegis of community protection (Raditapole & Gillespie, 1994:11).

Several cases of tensions within and between defence structures have been reported, some of which have resulted in violent conflict. For example, in Doornkop, Soweto, there was a power struggle for control over the SDU unit. It was alleged that members had joined the National Party and were being used to destabilise the community. On the East Rand there were numerous incidents of in-fighting between SDU members, some of which resulted in deaths.

There were also tensions between the police and the defence structures. For example, in Katorus, clashes took place between SDU members from Mandela section in Tokoza and Twala section in Katlehong, which led to the death of two SDU members (The Star, 1 May 1995). Some of these youth were paid reservists of the SAPS. They had firearms from the police service, which several kept in their personal possession while off duty. A number followed lines of police authority while on duty, yet followed SDU commands while off duty. At times, the two lines of command conflicted. As a result, in many townships people have recognised the need to include defence structures as important community groupings in the newly established community policing forums, as a way of regulating the relationship between the two bodies.

These problems mean that defence structures have the potential to destabilise society and undermine the RDP. An informant who works with militarised youth asserts that disillusioned youth are the greatest threat to safety and security in our country. This is a known fact but has not been made a priority by the government to date. This problem needs to be firmly placed on the national agenda.

Critical to developing appropriate programmes for militarised youth is an understanding of their hopes for the future.

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5. Interview with Crooks Mhlopo, a member of the executive committee of the Soweto sub-region of the ANCYL.

6. Interview with Jabu Dlamini in March 1995. At the time of the interview, Dlamini was a field worker at Peace Action. Her work was mainly centred on the East Rand. Dlamini is currently working closely with defence units for the Central Methodist Mission.

7. Katorus is a section of the East Rand consisting of the townships of Tokoza, Katlehong and Vosloorus.

8. As part of the Presidential Lead Project in Katorus, youth from defence structures have been integrated into the SAPS as reservists. They are the only paid reservists in the country.

9. In some areas the two structures work harmoniously on the assumption that both are necessary to ensure safety and security. For example, SDU members in Ivory Park on the East Rand work closely with the police.

10. Interview with Eldred de Klerk from the Centre for Conflict Resolution in the Western Cape, March 1995.
Goals and aspirations of militarised youth

During 1995, a central theme which emerged in interviews with members of youth defence structures in Gauteng was that they feel disregarded by the new government. As Rakgoadi has stated, the liberators of yesterday have become today’s rejects or social outcasts (Rakgoadi 1991:7). The Rev. H. Dandala of the Central Methodist Mission, who has worked extensively with SDU and SPU structures in the Katorus area, noted the following in a memorandum sent to the MEC for Safety and Security, Jessie Duarte, in February 1995: The cry for someone to care for them is critical. I believe that if such a person were from the government structures it would help them not to feel that the status they enjoyed and the contribution they made are being ignored as worthless . . . the crisis of having no immediate income is making itself severely felt in their predicament.

The youth interviewed expressed similar concerns. The key issues raised were:

While the majority of members of these structures wanted to become members of the police service, their main concern was for some form of employment which would generate income. As Kiba Kekane stated about youth in defence structures in his area:

The armed forces seem to be the only place for these youth. Since these youth have played such a key role in defence activities (whether defined in military or policing terms), their participation in reservist programmes should be explored where possible. However, youth themselves do not necessarily want to enter into the security forces but are unaware of other opportunities. Many do not necessarily want to become part of the security forces. However, no alternative was given. People are not able to think beyond their limits. The same relates to ex-MK members. Many do not want to be in the military, but there were no alternatives. Most youth want marriage and cars, they want to develop as young adults.11

The dire need for employment was directly linked to the need for education and training programmes for youths. We want skills that at some point will lead to employment. Members want to further their vocational opportunities in some way or another. Any course they do should have a certificate which is of value in terms of job seeking. 12

While many members of defence units felt that they were too old to go back to school, several wanted an opportunity to pursue formal education. We want to be educated and have the opportunity to go back to school. People want to further their studies.13

12. Interview with Tsepho Molla in February 1995. At the time of the interview, Molla was the chief commander of the SDUs in the Vaal area.
13. Interview with Thandi Mhobo and Boyce Maneli in March 1995. Mhobo was the treasurer, and Maneli the deputy chairperson of the Lusaka branch of the ANC on the West Rand, near Krugersdorp. Both Mhobo and Maneli were active participants in SDUs.
need for basic adult education was strongly conveyed. It would seem that, for those youth who are illiterate, basic adult education would be the most appropriate starting point. 14

Most of the young people interviewed had a poor track record in formal schooling. Most had some level of secondary education, but only a very small minority had matric certification. While many people lack formal educational experience, they possess a number of important skills which need to be recognised in developing programmes. These include negotiating, communication and organisational skills, and often insightful understanding of power relations and community needs and problems.

Many youth were both perpetrators and victims of violence. Consequently, they experienced severe trauma and were in need of psychological counselling. Dandala expressed strong views on this:

Clearly a process aimed at helping communities to reach appropriate closure on the past (as opposed to the denial that we currently see) will need to operate at both a macro and a micro level. In communities where violence has been particularly protracted and intense, we can perhaps look at individualised solutions, such as the establishment of individual and group counselling programmes. At a community level, it is my strong contention that community leaders should go through a programme aimed at providing basic counselling skills as well as information about the available social services and resources to which people can be referred.15

It has been suggested that youth from defence units be trained in peer counselling and assisted in setting up their own advice centres to help the community.

In undertaking any work with these young people, attention needs to be given to both the historical role they have played in their communities and their self-identities as defenders of the community. As an ANCYL executive member in Soweto stated: The only reason why SDU members want to become part of the police is because they believe they have been doing police work for many years. Part of their identity is as defence workers. 16 This identity was important and was central to their daily lives. They had given up their time, energy and even schooling opportunities for what they believed to be in the best interest of the broader community. Consequently, there was reluctance from the youth to relinquish this identity:

Commanders are reluctant to give up the roles they have played within their communities. The requirement that they project themselves into a future in which they are not commanders

14. Interview with Musi Ziqubu, a member of the defence committee of the ANC in Alexandra, in February 1995.
16. Interview with Crooks Mhlopo in February 1995
implied the loss of this identity (and all that comes with it) with no clear sense of what might replace it. It seemed to me that this prospective loss also resonated with the multitude of losses that these men have already experienced. What emerged was a sense that the contribution that they had made to the past (and the losses and sacrifices that this had required) was not recognised and that in the quest for a new future there was no opportunity to come to grips with and mourn the losses of the past.17

These expressed hopes need to be viewed in the context of a society in the midst of demilitarisation, which includes the rightsizing of the SANDF and restructuring the SAPS.18 This means it is unlikely that these youth will be incorporated into security structures and they therefore need to be encouraged to consider alternative employment.

The future of defence structures

Paramilitary formations will be banned, yet this is unlikely to lead to the cessation of such formations. This chapter has identified some of the key reasons why defence structures persist. What will hasten their demise is the creation of a legitimate and representative police service, the provision of effective and accountable policing, and a decrease in inter-community violence.

The most effective mechanism for disbanding defence structures is the provision of comprehensive programmes which address the needs of youth. These programmes should take as their starting point the aims and aspirations of young people. Educational, psychological and employment opportunities must be integrated into the programmes. Cognisance needs to be taken of the role that youths have played in defending their communities and their resistance to giving up deeply entrenched identities. However, these programmes should aim to demilitarise the youth by assisting them to develop alternative ways of dealing with conflict and reshaping their identities.

There are many thousands of young people who actively engage in collective violence, which they deem to be defensive. While the youth were once portrayed as key social and political agents, they are not given enough attention by those involved in development programmes. Once mobilised by key political organisations, defence structures are now being disowned. This is not surprising given their potential to undermine peace processes and development. This is why providing programmes must be a central part of any demilitarisation agenda in South Africa.


18. As noted in greater detail in chapter 8, in April 1996 the SANDF agreed to integrate 5 000 former SPU members by the end of 1997. Informal interview with Stability Ngema, commander of KwaZulu-Natal SPUs. This inclusion is an anomaly and arises out of a political compromise between the SANDF and the IFP. Similar initiatives are unlikely to occur again.
I was really disappointed at not getting a gun when I first joined the Peace Corps," said Desmond Radebe, a community peace worker in Daveyton on the East Rand. Desmond was one of the first 100 recruits from Daveyton who were trained as community peace workers in January 1994, by the Wits Vaal Peace Secretariat. Three years later, he is still with the Peace Corps, serving the community as an unarmed community peace worker.

There were high levels of violence and political conflict in the period prior to the 1994 general elections. One solution mooted by the Wits Vaal Peace Secretariat was to train community-based peace monitors whose primary function was violence reduction. Daveyton became the pilot project to test this idea.

In 1994, the Peace Corps was established to facilitate community-based, non-violent conflict resolution. The Peace Corps is based in Gauteng, with projects in Bekkersdal, Daveyton and Sebokeng. The projects are funded by USAID and the Danish government. Trainees are recruited from political organisations and from local structures such as churches, civics, youth organisations and peace structures. They have to be under the age of 35, resident in the community and unemployed.

Over a period of four weeks, they are trained in mediation, crisis intervention and management, crowd control, first aid, radio communication, personal development and self-discipline. In-service training continues during the year of service. Trainees are encouraged to identify where their interest lies and the skills they would like to develop. A range of choices is available, such as computer training, driving classes, carpentry and bricklaying, forklifting, lay counselling, gardening, welding and child care. Training is contracted out to various service providers in the private and non-governmental sectors. One of the aims of training is to facilitate dialogue between political groups and to give young people an opportunity to work and live together.

Community peace workers are the eyes and ears of the community. They monitor, manage and intervene in a range of conflict situations, such as political violence, family and domestic violence, school disputes and taxi violence. It is hoped that they promote a culture of peace through encouraging political tolerance and encouraging people to resolve conflict through non-violent means. An important aspect of their work is facilitating access to social workers, priests, emergency services and the police. The relationship between the community and the police is improving and strengthening as a result.

Community peace workers also provide services like first aid and traffic control outside schools. A particularly valuable service is the monitoring of pension pay points and escorting pensioners home. Sometimes the community peace workers will get involved in community development projects such as clean-up campaigns. They played a critical role in monitoring the 1994 general elections and the 1995 local elections.

During the consultation to establish the Peace Corps in Daveyton, many people questioned the wisdom of having unarmed community peace workers. Desmond recalls the long battles and the constant refrain, "Surely the Peace Corps is there to defend our communities against violence from unknown forces from the third"
force?  Although Desmond had decided to try out the Peace Corps, he did not give up asking, during his training and in the early days of service, Why are we not armed?  Now he is happy to be unarmed. What had changed?  After a while I realised that I did not need a gun  I now know that the community needs us and values us.

A survey conducted by the Community Agency for Social Enquiry in late 1994 revealed that many of the Daveyton residents had made use of the Peace Corps to provide security, to ensure crowd control and to mediate in times of crisis and conflict. There is a widespread awareness in the community of the Peace Corps and their daily patrolling. Daveyton residents now consider their community peace workers an indispensable part of their lives.

The Peace Corps has given militarised youth the opportunity to redefine their identities and acquire new skills. As Desmond commented, The initial four weeks training really helped me to get to know people from the other side other people’s political parties; but what was most important was how some of the course taught me self-esteem. I remained an active SDU member for about three months after joining the Peace Corps and then it was no longer necessary. I still feel that I am defending my community, but in a positive way people come to us and ask us for help. I could not live at home, because I had been fighting. Now I can go home and stay with my mother.
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