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Demobilisation and Reintegration : The South African Experience

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1. INTRODUCTION : CONCEPTUAL CONSIDERATIONS

Southern Africa is undergoing a wide-ranging demilitarisation process. Much of this is intentional and has been motivated by the advent of democratic governments within the region, the dire levels of underdevelopment in some of the countries (most notably Mozambique and Angola), and pressure from international aid organisations and monetary institutions to reform both the political institutions and economies of the region. Yet a substantial amount of this demilitarisation is unintentional and can best be described as "demilitarisation by default". This refers to the simple fact that South Africa requires substantial resources to address the appalling legacy of under-development bestowed on most of its people by the practice of apartheid [(1)].

South Africa, however, has also undergone a remarkable defence sector transformation process that is possibly without parallel in the world. It has integrated now fewer than eight different armies into a national Defence Force, it has conducted the most comprehensive Defence Review internationally, lasting no less than three years and involving a wide range of stakeholders, it has established a viable Ministry of Defence and

possesses possibly on of the most robust and effective parliamentary defence committees in the world (to name but a few of its many transformation processes).

Yet in the demobilisation arena its successes have been lest pronounced. This process has proceeded in a faltering manner for a variety of inter-related reasons. The two primary reasons, both eminently understandable from a political and military planning perspective, are , firstly, the need to complete the integration process prior to embarking on a demobilisation process and secondly, a preference to bring everyone into the new force prior to downsizing the force, a principle adopted during the integration process. The "lessons learned" from this process, yet to begin in all earnest, provide, at the current juncture, more of a series of examples of what "not to do" when attempting to demobilise large numbers of people than "what to do". In this sense the South African demobilisation process is probably no different from other demobilisation processes in the world where, because of the political difficulties inherent in managing these processes, there is a tendency to ignore demobilisation at worst or, at best, to initiate a few faltering steps in this direction. These "lessons" are outlined in more detail below.

In light of these observations this chapter seeks to situate the process of demobilisation within South Africa within both a broader historical content and the more recent development that have marked the South African Defence Transformation process over the past decade.

2. THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The logical geography of the concept of "militarisation" does not admit to easy conceptual or practical definition. It is often used in a highly emotive context and is thereby denuded of much of the theoretical rigour which the concept should possess. In practical terms a high level of militarisation within the state may not necessarily entail corresponding levels of militarisation within civilian society (and vice versa). Within South Africa, however, the period from the 1960s onwards witnessed high levels of militarisation within both state and society although this manifested itself in different forms in these two highly contested arenas.

South Africa's departure from the Commonwealth in 1960 and the declaration of the White Republic in 1961 saw its increasing isolation from the international community. With the advent of liberation struggles across Africa - particularly in the Southern African region - South Africa began incrementally increasing its defence expenditure and its defence profile within the region. In April 1966 P.W. Botha was appointed Minister of Defence by the then Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd - a move that signalled the seriousness with which the government was taking its military posture.

The years between the appointment of P.W. Botha as Minister of Defence in 1966 and his eventual assumption of the mantle of both leader of the National Party and the Prime Minister in 1978 was characterised by considerable infighting between the armed forces on the one hand and the

police and the civilian intelligence agencies on the other. Yet P.W. Botha used his considerable influence within both the state and the National Party to successfully argue for and obtain considerable increases in the defence budget during this period [(2)].

After his appointment as Prime Minister in 1978 P.W. Botha embarked on a massive militarisation programme that was more the product of a strategy devised by hawkish civilian elements within both government and the National Party than it was a "creeping coup" engineered by the senior echelons of the armed forces (the parallels with the current contours of civil-military relations under the Bush administration are an interesting comparison in this regard. In essence the increased levels of military influence within the state was essentially "military influence by civilian invitation".

The primary threat to the national security of South Africa was seen as the mass-based opposition that emerged against the government of the period. Individuals, local and international organisations, foreign governments and states that opposed the constitutional order of the country were considered to be threats to national security and were targeted as such by both the government in general and its security services in particular.

Whilst pursuing the practice of apartheid domestically South Africa also ruled Namibia (the latter known at the time as South West Africa) through a series of discredited administrations. The constitutional order that was erected within Namibia was based on the South African policy of separate development and the national security objectives, which were pursued in Namibia, were virtually akin to those, which the South African government practiced against its own domestic opponents. Namibia also provided the government with considerable strategic depth into the sub-continent - a depth that was extensively utilised by the former South African Defence Force (SADF) to destabilise key adversaries in the Southern African region (most notably Angola but also including Zambia. Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Mozambique and, to a lesser extent, Botswana).

Up until 1975, countries like Mozambique and Angola and, until 1980, Rhodesia were still ruled by colonial administrations that pursued policies that were essentially variations of the apartheid and separate development policies practiced by the South African government. These administrations also implemented national security policies that targeted domestic resistance movements - movements engaged in similar political struggles to those being conducted within both South Africa and Namibia. As a result of these struggles these various governments and administrations increasingly found common cause with one another in both the political and the military spheres. This was formalised by a range of de facto and de jure agreements, which included joint training of security, force personnel, exchanges of military personnel and provision of financial support and equipment to one another when so required.

The liberation movements, in turn, increasingly began co-operating with one another and were to find extensive political, moral and material support from the socialist countries of the world. This support was interpreted, by both the South African government and the administrations

in the afore-mentioned countries, as being evidence of a communist conspiracy and the desire of those socialist countries to export their ideologies to other parts of the world. The fight to preserve colonialism in the region and apartheid within Rhodesia, South Africa and South West Africa, therefore, was justified as a broader strategy designed to repel the spread of communism in the region in general and in South Africa in particular. Once the countries referred to above attained their freedom, they continued their opposition to South Africa's constitutional dispensation through the provision of various forms of support to the South African liberation movements.

They also attempted to institute within their own countries policies, which were, initially at least, strongly socialist in character and ideological orientation. Given their professed socialist leanings these countries were also deemed to be threats to South Africa's national security and were to become victims of varying degrees of South African pressure ranging from direct military confrontation (Angola), indirect military support to dissident groupings (Unita in Angola and Renamo in Mozambique) and economic blockades (Zimbabwe and Lesotho for instance).

In an attempt to create alternative administrations and governments to those existing in these countries, South Africa armed and trained tens of thousands of rebel insurgents within such political formations as the Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA), the National Resistance Movement of Mozambique (RENAMO), the Lesotho Liberation Army and "Super-Zapu" in Zimbabwe. Within South Africa similar allies were sought - the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), for instance, received support from the Intelligence Division in the form of intelligence briefings, provision of military equipment and the provision of military training. Similarly there were also plans to create a Xhosa Resistance Movement, more akin to the IFP [(3)].

The form of the state that ensured that these policies were implemented was, thus, highly centralised, autocratic by nature, and placed a strong emphasis on coercive measures to ensure its survival (hence the resources allocated to its security agencies). Various references during the 1980s referred to South Africa as a "police state" (an incorrect reference given the influence of the armed forces within the government during the time - hence the influence of the "hearts and minds" strategy within overall government policy). In reality the South African state would best have been described as a "covert state" where government departments within and without the security community possessed covert budgets of which literally hundreds of billions of dollars were utilised to ensure the survival of the regime.

The effects of these measures on military force levels within the region were alarming. South Africa moved from a ballot system of conscription during the 1950s and the early 1960s to phased and increasingly lengthier periods of conscription for able-bodied white males during the late 1960s (9 months service), the 1970s (1 year service), the late 1970s (2 years service) and the 1980s (an attempt to conscript whether on a part-time or full-time basis virtually every white male within the country).

Although exact figures are even unclear today, during the mid 1980s with the former SADF extended on innumerable fronts (Angola, Namibia, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and within South Africa, SADF force levels were roughly pegged in the region of 110 000 regular force personnel, approximately 120 000 conscripts on a full-time two year basis and possibly an equal amount of part-time conscripted personnel providing the manpower for the country's conventional forces outside the country (most notably in Angola) and the territorial forces (the locally-based militias) within the country. The potential pool of manpower which the SADF could, theoretically at least, prevail on was estimated by SADF planners at the time to be in the region of 500 000 men and women! [(4).]

In addition to these forces the former SADF trained and conscripted in excess of 20 000 Namibians as part of the so-called South West African Territorial Force and trained an indeterminate number of Renamo and Unita fighters (possibly in excess of 50 000 in all). In response to this military build up the Angolan armed forces, supported by the Cubans, bolstered their forces considerably as did virtually all of the countries within the former Frontline State region (now known as the Southern African Development Community) [(5)].

The scope and the vast number of personnel trained by the former South African government during the 1970s and the 1980s renders a debate on demobilisation immensely difficult. As with Vietnam the effect of conscription on the white youth was traumatic and its manifestations are still evident today in the 21st century. Hundreds of thousands of white South Africans received training on either a continuous or non-continuous basis part-time soldiers in either a conventional or territorial capacity, more than a hundred thousand were in the SADF as regular force personnel, and the former SADF should ideally possess a responsibility to cater for the needs of those Angolan and SWATF regular forces which they trained during the late 1970s and 1980s.

The problem with the demobilisation debate within South Africa today is, quite literally, "where do we start?". The South African Government and the Ministry of Defence has chosen, as do most governments, to take as its point of departure the demobilisation of military personnel who, since the creation of the South African National Defence Force in 1994, have chosen to attest for service within this organisation as regular force personnel. A broader perspective on potential demobilisation is also offered, however, with the promulgation of the Military Veterans Act in 1999 which defines anyone as a veteran who has served in any military organisation, whether statutory or non-statutory, since the First World War (although the number of personnel in the latter category is, understandably, somewhat minimal!). Towards this end the MOD has initiated the process of compiling a data base of any person with military experience who falls into the categories referred to by the act - a process that will invariably be uneven and lengthy by its very nature.

An understanding of the demobilisation process in South Africa, to the extent that it is proceeding in an integrated and systematic manner, requires an understanding of the dynamics referred to above as well as the

logical geography of a concept of which demobilisation is inseparably a component - defence conversion.

The concept, of which the process of demobilisation is inseparably a part, is that of conversion. Conversion is defined as here as having two facets. The first facet is the actual process of converting military resources to non-military and primarily civilian uses. This is defined as a process whereby the diverse human and material resources of defence are purposefully converted towards civilian and non-military use with the specific intention of ensuring that such a process of conversion is supportive of both development and peace and stability itself.

The process of defence conversion is never undertaken for its own sake - it is invariably supportive of a broader political, economic and social project of either a national or regional character:

> Conversion …….forms part of the implementation of defence and foreign policy decision aimed at reducing the levels of military force. This reduction might be considered as appropriate by policy-makers as a result of the changes in the international situation, allowing the achievement of acceptable levels of security with lower levels of military force-in-being, or political-economic pressures determining the reallocation of resources between sectors of the national economy, or by a mix of these factors [(6)]

The nature of this project invariably bestows the conversion process in question with its own unique variables and peculiarities. If a conversion process is to be successful and is to be supportive of a broader political project, then a strategy capable of attaining these goals must be present from the outset - hence the need for an national, integrated demobilisation strategy in South Africa.

Six major areas of conversion have been identified in the current South African demilitarisation process that correlate to the processes identified above (with the exception of a reallocation of financial resources which has not occurred in a systematic and planned manner). These include industry conversion, demobilisation, excess arms disposal, base closure, land redistribution (this being of particular political significance in the South African transition) and R + D reorientation. All of these processes relate directly to attempts (both successful and unsuccessful) to redirect military resources for primarily non-military uses.

In all these arenas, the progress towards the conversion of these capabilities towards civilian-centred developmental goals has been uneven and asymmetrical -itself a product of the different institutional responsibilities for such conversion within the state, the relative inexperience of the new government and, as stated above, the absence of a unifying, integrated and implementable strategy capable of operationalising the new thinking in security which underpins much of South African policy. The demobilisation strategy, its strengths and weaknesses, and suggested strategies for the future, are analysed in further detail below.

3. HUMAN RESOURCE CONVERSION : STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS

For any human resource conversion process to occur it is vital that certain minimum strategic factors are either largely or partially present in the country concerned. These include the following:

a. Stable civil-military relations with a high level of trust existing between the civil authorities and the military elite. The preparedness of the armed forces to accept cuts to their budget, and their willingness to support a demobilisation process is critical in this regard.

b. The existence of a stable and resilient political culture with robust and legitimate political and civil institutions in the country concerned. Without this precondition, the ability for demobilisation to take place in an ordered and stable environment will be greatly reduced. It will further be bedevilled unless a mutual recognition of the importance of demobilisation within the broader security equation exists amongst all parties involved.

c. A relatively high level of interaction exists between the state, political society and civil society over the formulation and implementation of defence policy. Without these internal Confidence and Security Building Measures, the ability of the state to ensure effective "buy in" and legitimacy for its endeavours will be severely limited. Civil society, for its part, is one of the critical actors in the demobilisation debate without whose involvement the possibility of meaningful reintegration is severely bedevilled.

d. The prospects for regional stability, peace and development are reasonably good. Where such short-term prospects are ill-defined, the existence of enduring Confidence and Security Building Mechanisms to ensure the effective management of conflict within a region can constitute the framework within which the eventual development of the region can take place and where a failed demobilisation process does not bedevil the entire region.

e. The existence of a relatively high level of political and institutional will within both the state and political society to ensure that development, and not simply the economic empowerment of certain social classes to the detriment of the demobilised, is implemented.

f. The magnitude of the military cuts themselves and the question as to whether they will be able to assist and/or retard a proposed demobilisation strategy. This is largely dependent on the percentage of both the GDP and state expenditure which defence spending constituted.

g The extent to which a coherent and integrated human security policy exists which proves capable of integrating the diverse

elements of security (political, economic, social, military and technological). This will aid and abet the success of the proposed demobilisation strategy.

What is vital about the management of a national demobilisation strategy is that this is not primarily a military responsibility. The primary responsibility for managing the medium to long term aspects of demobilisation lies with the civilian authorities themselves. It is they who possess the requisite skills, resources and empathy to reintegrate demobilised personnel into civilian society. Equally importantly, demobilised soldiers are unlikely to trust an organisation that has severed them from service for their post-military career planning!

Civil society too is a critical actor in this regard given the fact that it is at the grassroots that the impact of reintegration, both positive and negative, is most profoundly manifest. It is precisely for this reason that some countries (Mozambique for example) have created a Ministry of demobilisation to bestow the appropriate political leverage and central co-ordination on the demobilisation process.

The role of the armed forces in a demobilisation process is essentially threefold. Firstly it must identify - hopefully on the basis of an "ideal" age/skills/rank profile - the appropriate persons for demobilisation (such a strategy also mitigates the tendency of forces to "downsize" - which merely refers to force reductions - rather than to "rightsize" which entails have the right person in the right post within the force).

The second responsibility is to prepare these persons for demobilisation through appropriate preparatory training, career counselling, psychological profiling and civilian employment exposure. The third responsibility is to ensure that once persons have lefty the force their remuneration packages - gratuities, pensions and medical aid are in place.

4. HUMAN RESOURCE CONVERSION : THE SOUTH AFRICAN DILEMMA

As stated above, the SANDF like all other armed forces in the Southern African region is undergoing and is anticipating a substantial reduction in its force levels. It has decided to initiate this process, as referred to previously, within the regular component of the present SANDF although it ideally seeks to extend reintegration assistance to any military person who having previously served in any South African military formation requires assistance in this regard.

At the time of the creation of the SANDF in 1994 it was anticipated that some 138 000 personnel would be integrated into the country's new Defence Force. The envisaged force levels consisted of some 90 000 former South African Defence Force (SADF) members, 32 000 former African National Congress Umkhonto We Sizwe (MK) members, 6 000 former Pan-African Congress Azanian Peoples Liberation Army (APLA) members and 10 000 members from the former homeland armies

(Transkei, Venda, Bophuhatswana and Ciskei). Later in 1996 some 2 000 paramilitary fighters from the Kwa-Zulu Natal based Inkhatha Freedom Party's militia were also included in the integration process

At present, however, the force levels of the SANDF have been substantially reduced having declined from 101 000 at their height (although initially it was anticipated that 138 000 personnel would attest for service) to their present force levels of 73 000. The reasons for the shortfall from the initial figure of 138 000 have been various. Firstly, an informal demobilisation process occurred in the country during the post-1990 period as many guerrilla fighters returned home owing to the fact that the integration process was only to occur some four years later. Many of these were "lost" to the system and were, as a result, not placed on the Certified Personnel Register - the register where the names of the personnel from all eight integrating armies were placed.

Secondly only 15 000 of the registered 38 000 guerrilla fighters were finally attested for service within the new National Defence Force. Most opted for employment elsewhere - either in the private or the emerging public sector - whilst some 6 000 former guerrilla fighters were demobilised due to ill-health, age or aptitude. Thirdly, the number of former SADF members declined as a result of either having opted for voluntary severance, termination of service as a result of contract expiration or sheer political reluctance, and fear, to serve under an ANC government. Yet none of these processes attested to a formal demobilisation process! [(7)]

Faced with spiralling personnel costs and declining capital and operational costs the South African Department of Defence further anticipates that the force levels of the SANDF will have to be reduced from the present levels of 73 000 (Rocky - did you mean for another zero to appear here?) to 65 000 so as to ensure that the envisaged force design will be aligned with both future national defence requirements and budgetary realities. To compound this problem a large number of part of the country's Reserve Forces (the rural-based Commando militia service) are meant to be phased out by 2009 so that the police can assume their responsibilities. These number some 54 000 persons (20 000 of whom are black part-time soldiers) who are entirely dependent on their nominal stipend for their monthly income. They too, despite their part-time nature, will also have to be considered during the initial stages of the country's demobilisation process - not least of which is the fact that they live in some of the most economically impoverished parts of the country where employment opportunities are exceedingly scarce.

What is significant about the current and planned downsizing process within the SANDF is the lack of a long-term reintegration strategy for the personnel being demobilised during this process. Personnel being demobilised from the former guerrilla forces are released into civil society with paltry amounts of money ranging from 12 000 South African Rands (SAR) to 42 000 SAR depending on their years of service. Former SADF personnel fare substantially better and are entitled, upon severance and depending on years of service, to receive both a gratuity and their pensions backdated to their attestation in the armed forces.

A partial attempt has been made to remedy this situation via the creation of a Special Pensions Fund whereby people involved in the struggle are remunerated for their years of service. Yet this constitutes a paltry sum in comparison to the pensions which former SADF persons are receiving at present. Parliament is attempting to remedy this situation via the institution of a more equitable pension scheme for former guerrilla commanders but this will take time to accomplish if and when the requisite resources are available [(8)]

An attempt to remedy this situation has been sought with the creation of the Service Corps, whose purpose is to:

> Assist with the reintegration of ex-service members into civil society by upgrading the standard of education, vocational and life skills to enable members to find employment or start their own enterprise in the private sector, provide career guidance on a continuous basis and assist with the social reintegration of members where possible [(9)].

However, the Service Corps has been stymied by a number of inter-related factors. The first is the fact that it only concentrates on rationalised and demobilised personnel from the lower end of the military hierarchy and, as such, its focus on skills provision lies predominantly in the private and junior non-commissioned officer range.

Secondly, the perception exists, and this is partially confirmed by the membership of the Service Corps, that the Corps has become a "dumping ground" for former guerrilla fighters. The legitimacy of the Corps to a broader range of demobilised personnel and, indeed, its capacity to provide conversion and accreditation skills for both the officer and non-commissioned officer corps are, therefore, limited.

Whilst the services of the Service Corps need to be retained, and its focus should continue to be on the reintegration of more junior members of the armed forces into civil society, a more ambitious programme needs to be instituted within the SANDF that will extend beyond the cash payments of the demobilisation process and the basic skills training provided by the Service Corps.

In reality, therefore, it can be said that the demobilisation process in South Africa has occurred not as the result of a nationally driven and centrally co-ordinated process with an over-arching strategy but more as a result of a series of intentional and unintentional piece-meal interventions. These have ranged, as stated above, from informal demobilisation, employer initiated retrenchment programmes, voluntary severance packages, resignations, exclusion from the force on the basis of ill-health and aptitude, natural attrition and the nominal numbers of persons who have passed through the Service Corps.

More attention needs to focus on national demobilisation strategies such as alternative certification programmes whereby the substantial

organisational, managerial and technical skills of the armed forces can be converted to use within the civilian sector. In the western literature Alternative Certification is best described as follows:

> "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" (10)

Whilst the focus of alternative certification in countries such as the USA, Germany and the UK has focused exclusively on converting the skills and the capabilities of former officers and senior non-commissioned officers into classroom-based and local government competencies, the concept is used in a wider sense in this chapter. Here, it refers to the possible conversion of the skills and capabilities of all former soldiers into a wide range of competencies including managerial and administrative capabilities within both the private, public and informal sector, possible conversion into teaching and instructor based competencies, as well as conversion of technically-related skills into similar areas.

Alternative certification programmes (ACP) within the USA, for instance, take place within the broader context of defence downsizing. This downsizing has had profound effects on force levels within all Arms of Service within the US Armed Forces. To prepare military personnel for a second career upon severance, a variety of Military Career Transition Programmes (MTCP) have been instituted. Although many former military officers and non-commissioned officers find direct employment within the private sector upon severance from the organisation, a large number want to go to university or college whilst many desire retraining in a new skill (11).

Skills, which could be developed and converted within an ACP programme, could include leadership and management skills, effective written and oral communication skills, team building, strategic capabilities, and an ability to work with large groups of people. It must also include an element of normative reorientation to prepare soldiers for the more discursive and less hierarchical nature of civilian life. Most senior and middle ranking officers from all integrating forces in South Africa possess graduate or diploma qualifications from civilian tertiary institutions, as well as having completed a variety of staff courses at the different Arms of Service Staff Colleges (the latter providing extensive background in managerial, strategic, financial and administrative techniques). Junior officers and senior non-commissioned officers have, for their part, completed a range of military courses in areas of functional specialisation, leadership and basic management skills.

The advantages of alternative career certification programmes as the dominant human resource conversion strategy within South Africa are, therefore, various:

a. They would allow military personnel who are about to be demobilised the opportunity to convert their skills to gainful use within the civilian sector. This contributes substantially to a reduction in the levels of uncertainty and insecurity amongst personnel about to be demobilised.

b. Given the fact that ACP are not full-time courses, military personnel can complete their certification whilst still in uniform. Given their part-time nature, demobilised personnel are not faced with the problem of sustaining themselves and their families through 3 - 4 years of full time study once demobilised. The SANDF can, at little cost, contribute towards their education and in this arena by allowing them "time-off" to study and prepare themselves for their impending demobilisation

c. ACP provides for the utilisation of the extensive skills which military personnel have acquired within the armed forces for the benefit of both the public and private sector. More particularly it ensures that former soldiers are guaranteed relatively stable employment in the future (unlike the insecurities rife within the informal sector).

d. It would provide a visible demonstration by both government and the armed forces that the welfare of former soldiers is being considered. Furthermore, it ensures that the ongoing resources invested in defence will, ultimately, have a developmental "spin-off". Conversion and accreditation of military experience and qualifications represents a practical use of skills acquired that would not, in the normal course of events, have a social utility.

e. South Africa already possesses growing expertise in this arena most notably the various accreditation initiatives that have been forwarded to the National Qualifications Board for consideration as well as the different courses being offered at certain Business Schools within the country. These institutions, and their not inconsiderable resources, need to be more effectively harnessed to endeavours in future.

The institution of an Alternative Certification Programme, or an amalgam of any other human resource conversion strategies for demobilised officers and non-commissioned officers, would require the following planning stages to prove successful:

a. Popularisation of the concept of alternative certification amongst major stakeholders and conducting a thorough audit of whose "in" and whose "out" of the force.

b. Securing agreement amongst major stakeholders as to the veracity of such a programme in future and ascertaining whether

such a programme would contribute to meeting their employment needs.

c. Identifying those areas of the economy that could most meaningfully benefit from the introduction of and alternative certification programme (certain managerial levels of the civil service at a provincial and local government level for instance).

d. Investigating which institution/institutions could be used for the introduction of a pilot programme

e. Identifying those individuals who are either eligible for or interested in alternative certification.

f. Initiating a national programme with appropriate endorsement over a five to ten year period - the anticipated time within which demobilisation of most personnel will be realistically achieved. Thereafter the programme could become a standard component of the military career transition programmes of the SANDF whereby medium contract personnel are prepared for their second careers.

The South African Government has established a series of Skills and Educational Training Authorities (SETAS) for different areas of the economy into whose coffers business is compelled to provide annual contributions. Although wracked by allegations of mismanagement in certain sectors and an inability to spend in other sectors, a SETA exists for the Defence, Intelligence and Diplomatic community which aims to use the monies in its possession for the retraining of demobilised and rationalise personnel. Plans are already afoot to release some SAR 40 million for a veterans training project although the details of this project has yet to be established.

It is also important, however, to stress that ACP are but one aspect of a national demobilisation programme - albeit the most critical. It is highly dependent on job availability and, in the long-term, job sustainability. Psychological counselling, access to medical facilities, recognition for years of service, a more viable veterans pension scheme and a roll of honour are additional mechanisms which at both a practical and symbolic level will contribute to the development of a more comprehensive demobilisation strategy.

CONCLUSION

To date a few faltering programmes aimed at reintegrating former SANDF personnel into society have been attempted bar the activities of the service corps. Some of the universities and technikons have also initiated small programmes towards this end, draft demobilisation strategies exist within the DoD and public policy commitments have been made by the MoD committing themselves towards such programmes.

The consequences of not developing a systematic and clear human resource conversion strategy are self-evident and include the following:

a. The ability of former soldiers to use their not inconsiderable skills towards other ends has been amply documented. The real and alleged involvement of former soldiers (both statutory and non-statutory forces) in ongoing crime in recent years, even during the early stages of demobilisation, should provide South African defence planners with food for thought.

b. The failure to demobilise military personnel is leading to the ageing of the SANDF - a phenomenon that profoundly affects the ability of the SANDF to provide a wide variety of operational commitments. The average age of a private in both the Regular and the Reserve Forces currently stands at 32 - 33 years of age - hardly the ideal combat-ready infantry required for deployment in a peace support operation for example [(12)].

c. Failure to demobilise is both undermining morale within the SANDF and also exacerbating subliminal tensions within the force - racism, lack of discipline, insubordination and familial violence.

d. Failure to demobilise has provided the military trades unions - a rather unique feature of the African military landscape - with considerable ammunition to pursue their own partisan agendas. This has fed on the factors referred to in *c* above and has also contributed to the undermining of the morale within the force

The preceding pages have highlighted the ongoing and diverse strategies being adopted towards downsizing (not to be confused with the right-sizing of the force) within the South African environment. The MOD, the DOD and the SANDF appear, understandably, to tackle the issue of demobilisation. It makes Ministers unpopular with their constituents as well as creating resentment against the senior civilian and military officials in the DoD. With regard to Human Resource conversion it is evident that considerably more attention needs to be given to the development of long-term reintegration strategies with a particular premium being afforded to alternative accreditation and skills development.

The lessons of Zimbabwe should constitute an instructive and cautionary warning in this regard. Although many of the problems associated with failed demobilisation programmes - disaffection, substance abuse, demoralisation etc - manifest themselves in the short to medium term (five to ten years) after demobilisation, the real problems (land invasions, increases in the levels of crime, severe psychological problems etc) occur over a longer period. The reasons behind this are relatively self-evident. As people become older (witness the Zimbabwean land invasions) their employment potential and the physical capabilities diminish and it is here that desperation becomes manifest. It is interesting to note that the former Prime Minister of South Africa, Field Marshall Jan Smuts, who was much admired by South African troops during the Second World War and who upon the cessation of the War even appointed a Minister of Demobilisation, was voted out of power in 1948, a bare three years later,

by discontented troops who felt betrayed by the demobilisation packages they had been offered. Whether South Africa will be able to identify, locate and assist all those persons trained by the former government during the past two decades is questionable but at least some faltering steps have been initiated in this direction.

What this article has attempted to illustrate is that because these various initiatives are uneven, asymmetrical and, in some cases, incomplete, what is urgently required is a higher level of co-ordination within a broader policy, strategic and organisational matrix. In essence all the strategic approaches outlined above require a practical "operationalisation" which will ensure the success of what the international literature refers to as the Demobilisation, Disarmament and Reintegration process. This will ensure more effective co-ordination of these initiatives and prevent the uncontrolled fragmentation, and ultimately dissipation, of many eminently sensible strategies.

FOOTNOTES

1.) Luckham, R. "Dilemmas of Military Disarmament and Disengagement in Africa", Institute for Development Studies Bulletin, Vol 26, No 2, University of Sussex, April 1995.

2.) Williams, R. Back to the Barracks : The Changing Nature of Civil-military Relations under the P.W. Botha and F.W. De Klerk Administrations, unpublished PhD, University of Essex, UK, 1994.

3.) The author's personnel experience both as a former member of the SADF and as an intelligence officer in Umkhonto We Sizwe, 1978 - 1994.

4.) Discussions with former SADF personnel officers between 1994 - 2004.

5.) Cawthra, G. Brutal Force, IDAF, London, 1985.

6) Abriani, A. "Conversion and Environmental Conflict" in Conversion : Opportunities for Development and Environment, Springer-Verlag, Berlin, 1992, page 2.

7.) Author's own experience as a senior member of the Army Sub-Workgroup of the Joint Military co-ordinating Council established in November 2003 to oversee the plans and preparation for the integration and creation of the new South African Army after the elections in April 1994.

8.) See the south African Government's website for information on all policies and legislation passed since 1994, (www.sagov.co.za).

9.) South African Defence Review, page 136, Pretoria, 1996.

10.) MacDonald, R. ; Manning, L. ;Gable, R. "An Alternative Certification Programme : Career Transition" in "Action in Teacher Education", Summer 1994, Vol XVI, No 2, USA.

11)Military Career Transition Program, Old Dominion University, Virginia (ODU), 1994.

12.) Briefing to the South African Parliament by the Department of Defence, 4 November, Cape Town, 2004.