

RIGHTSIZING: THE CHALLENGES OF DEMOBILISATION AND SOCIAL REINTEGRATION IN SOUTH AFRICA¹

By Tsepe Motumi and Andrew Hudson

INTRODUCTION

On 12 September 1995, in a written reply to a question in the National Assembly, former Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) commander and now Defence Minister, Joe Modise, expressed confidence that disgruntled former combatants from Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) and the Azanian People's Liberation Army (APLA) posed no threat to South Africa's security and stability. According to the Minister, these former combatants had attracted limited support and Military Intelligence could not even confirm the existence of an organisation known as Mkapla. The Minister went on to dismiss the support for these factions due to the inclusiveness of the military integration process, poor organisation capabilities and limited popular and financial support.² Ten days later, under a headline 'Pretoria fiddles while KwaZulu-Natal burns', the *Mail & Guardian* reported that "... there is a band of thugs who operate in Kwa-Mashu and Umlazi near Durban, and call themselves the 'Akaplas'. They are Umkonto we Sizwe (MK) and Azanian People's Liberation Army (APLA) dissidents who last year deserted from the national army base in Wallmansthal."³ The same report alleged that a senior self-protection unit commander stated that his men were "sick and tired" of the "militant" Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) national leadership that was blocking a scheme for them to be integrated into the national defence force. All was perhaps not that well with the military integration and demobilisation process.

Demobilisation after a revolutionary conflict, as was the case in South Africa is inevitably an emotional and politically charged matter - particularly if peace and reconciliation are not yet institutionalised, such as in the South African province of KwaZulu-Natal.

This chapter aims to present first an overview of the progress with the integration of the various armed forces in South Africa, and then to provide a status report and an analysis of the prospects for the demobilisation and social reintegration process, which commenced in the third quarter of 1995. Finally, it speculates on some of the challenges which could affect the proposed rationalisation of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) which is scheduled to start in 1996. The nub of the South African challenge is a simple one. Integration, which began in 1994, could potentially swell the ranks of the SANDF to an estimated total of 135 000 soldiers and civilians, far in excess of both the budgetary constraints and the country's reasonable defence requirements. Demobilisation is intended to chop off a substantial portion of the forces that are not required, but the so-called 'right-sizing' of the SANDF will only be achieved by a careful process of rationalisation.

POLITICAL NEGOTIATIONS

During 1992 and 1993, as part of the agreement reached by the negotiations on South Africa's transition, South Africa's Multi-Party Negotiating Forum agreed on the establishment of a Transitional Executive Council (TEC), whose task it was to oversee the process of transition. Following the enactment of the TEC Act in September 1993 a number of sub-councils were established to report to the TEC, one of these being the Sub-Council on Defence, whose task it was to oversee the military transition process at the political level. Central to this task was the planning of the integration of all armed formations represented at the negotiations. The ultimate goal was to design a military for South Africa which would be affordable, effective and legitimate. The details of the integration process were hammered out by the Joint Military Co-ordinating Committee (JMCC), consisting of representatives from all the participating armed forces, both statutory and non-statutory. The so-called statutory forces consisted of those forces that had been established by the governments in place at the time, i.e. the SADF and the armed forces of the nominally independent homelands of the Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei (TBVC). The non-statutory forces consisted of MK of the ANC, and APLA of the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC). APLA, however, only joined the negotiations towards their conclusion, shortly before the April 1994 elections, whilst the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) did not form part of the military negotiations, although the IFP has argued that it has a list of 6 000 persons who should be eligible for integration into the SANDF.

The workings of the JMCC comprised a unique joint planning exercise, involving, previously implacable enemies.⁴ The JMCC elected two chairmen who took the chair in rotation, namely the Chief of the SADF General George Meiring and the Chief of Staff of MK, Mr. Sipiwe Nyanda. The JMCC also appointed two co-directors to control the activities of the planning process. For detailed planning the JMCC established six working groups, one each for personnel, intelligence, operations, logistics, finance and one for 'non-cardinal issues'. Each work group was staffed by persons from each of the seven military forces and made use of a facilitator to assist with the discussions. The operations work group provided central guidance for the other work groups while the SADF's Directorate of Strategic Management kept the overall process to a set timetable. This was no mean feat since work groups first prepared 'position papers' on a basis of consensus, which were then referred 'back to principals' (i.e. the various political parties). This was followed by a formal meeting of the JMCC during which the various position papers were presented for formal discussion. The JMCC accepted, amended, rejected or referred these documents back for further discussion or investigation. Once agreement had been reached within the JMCC the chairman of the particular session presented the findings, recommendations and decisions to the Sub-Council on Defence. Only after approval by the Sub-Council did JMCC decisions become final.

The first two stages of the process produced a national defence strategy, arm of the service and supporting strategies. A third, and final, stage planned the implementation of these strategies. The process ended a scant four days before the elections. The

new South African National Defence Force (SANDF) subsequently came into existence at midnight on 26/27 April 1994. All the personnel of the forces which, in terms of the TEC Act, had submitted a Certified Personnel Register (CPR) by midnight automatically became members of the new force. Being included on the CPR was an important consideration since it implied that the individual had to be integrated into the SANDF or had to be formally and legally demobilised.

Right from the start a series of problems plagued the CPR process. Most important, APLA did not submit a certified list of their members in time, and were thus technically excluded from the SANDF in terms of the TEC Act. It was only by special presidential concession that their name list was eventually accepted. This meant that the status of APLA was technically different to that of the rest of the integrating forces. In fact, the SANDF would subsequently insist that their only commitment to APLA was that APLA constituted a source of preferential recruitment. A second problem related to the process of compiling the CPR of MK. Repeatedly, administrators working on the CPR discovered duplications and mistakes on the list - no surprise since both MK and APLA were unconventional armed forces which did not keep detailed personnel records. But a particular problem was that many cadres had been included on the list under their 'battle' and not real names. Few had identity documents and even less a bank account into which salary payments could be made. As a result, the CPR would go through a series of adjustments. With each adjustment the list grew, in the case of MK from 22 000 to 26 000 and eventually to 28 800 persons. A number of important omissions were also discovered after the cut-off date with the result that a so-called 'non-formal' Certified Personnel Register was also compiled, which was a list of about one thousand of those MK members omitted from the CPR at the cut-off date, but still members of MK. Both the APLA list as well as the non-formal CPR list were to exist in a situation of quasi-legality for some months until, only in August 1995, some 14 months after the elections, Cabinet approved the inclusion of these persons as part of the CPR.

TABLE ONE: THE CONTENT OF THE CERTIFIED PERSONNEL REGISTER

STATUTORY FORCES		
Former SADF (excluding part-time forces)		90 000
Former TBVC Defence Forces		11 039
	SUB TOTAL	101 039
NON-STATUTORY FORCES		
MK Certified Personnel List		27 801
MK Non Formal CPR		1 087
APLA Name List		6 000
	SUB TOTAL	34 888
	GRAND TOTAL	135 927

THE FIRST STEPS IN THE INTEGRATION PROCESS

The first passing out parade for members of the former MK who have been integrated into the SANDF was held on 21 July 1995 at Eerste River near Cape Town, when 422 former Umkhonto we Sizwe soldiers completed their training at the 9 SA Infantry Battalion base. Following an impressive display of military drill, the soldiers were transferred to 3 SA Infantry Battalion in Kimberley for a further 2 months of training. The wheel had come a full circle with former enemies joining on parade in the new SANDF under the flag of the new South Africa.⁵ As *The Star* would comment during July 1995: "A year or so down the track, there are now black General Officers Commanding in various parts of the country, Chiefs of Staff of these commands, as well as senior ranks in every face of the army, air force and navy. And it has not been done willy-nilly."⁶ But the preceding months had not been without their difficulties and problems.

A committee of experts met for the first time on 8 September 1993, the day after the TEC Act was passed, to examine the question of assembly points as a first step towards the integration process. A crucial and very expensive mistake was to be made at this stage. Despite the private and public submissions made by organisations such as the Institute for Defence Policy (IDP)⁷, the model followed was to integrate all the armed forces into a single defence force and then to demobilise those persons who were not required, instead of first demobilising those persons who did not wish to join the military on a permanent basis or could not be accommodated in it, and integrate only what was necessary. Some months before this, in mid-1993, Cilliers warned that "We believe that South Africans should be extremely circumspect about integrating persons into the military who will inevitably have to be demobilised." This process, admittedly driven by the desire by all parties to ensure that they got as many of 'their' people into the military as possible and worry about the costs and other implications later, was to prove extremely costly to the South African taxpayer and very long and frustrating to the participants.

The physical assembly and integration of members of MK and APLA commenced shortly before the April 1994 elections, with the return to South Africa of MK and APLA members from their training and holding camps in Uganda, Tanzania, Zimbabwe and Zambia.

Once the April 1994 elections had been completed, the JMCC was disbanded and an Integration Committee under the chairmanship of Lt. Gen. Nyanda, now Chief of Defence Force Staff, was constituted. Initially the Committee had thought it possible to complete the assembly and integration process by the end of 1994 but it soon became clear that this would not be possible and would have to be spread over a period of some three years. In the meanwhile, logistic and administrative inadequacies at Wallmansthal, the major assembly point, boiled over. Mass walkouts of former MK members occurred and President Mandela had to intervene personally as MK cadres ganged up against their former commanders, Minister of Defence Joe Modise and Lt. Gen. Sipiwe Nyanda in particular. At this stage Mandela read the riot

act to the SANDF command structure, demanding that they streamline and speed up the integration process which had, thus far, been distinctly rocky and slow. This had the desired effect and by the end of 1994 most of the teething problems had been sorted out.

The process of integration was simple enough, but differed from the experience in most other countries in one important respect. The JMCC decided to plan for successive call-ups, and the detail processing of each call-up before the next. In other words, there was to be no mass encampment or assembly of combatants in designated camps as a first step. In effect, the vast majority of former MK and APLA soldiers would be called up to the assembly areas after having spent more than 12 months in South Africa, as part of the wider society. To some degree this situation simply reflected the reality of South Africa where a large proportion of MK members (estimated at some 30%) had joined the organisations since 1990. Ultimately this state of affairs would beg the question - to what extent was integration and subsequent demobilisation really necessary if former soldiers were already part and parcel of civil society in any case?

The call-ups were conducted on a regional basis. Reporting units were established at each territorial army command where the army and the regional MK commanders worked together to assemble persons for that specific intake, and who were on the CPR, as planned. From the territorial command the group were then transported to the assembly area where they went through an initial administrative process in the Personnel Maintenance Office and Reception Depot (PMORD). Once the identity of the individual was confirmed as well as his or her name on the CPR, he or she was brought on to administrative strength.

Integration into the SANDF is voluntary with the assembly areas situated at Wallmansthal, north of Pretoria, for MK soldiers and De Brug, outside Bloemfontein, for APLA soldiers. That this in fact, was a major career choice for many non-statutory force members who had served for political reasons in a liberation army now became obvious.

Three intakes at De Brug and four at Wallmansthal of about 1 500 each were completed in 1994. Six intakes were scheduled for 1995 with four for Wallmansthal (former MK) in May, August (which would include women), September and November and in the case of former APLA at De Brug, two intakes during September and November respectively. The process at the assembly points provided for a period of bridging training (up to 42 days in duration) to reduce the differences in training standards and military knowledge, various tests and selection boards and eventually integration into the SANDF at the level appropriate to the knowledge, potential and individual preference. Although soldiers were integrated into all four arms of service, the larger portion would enter the SA Army. And where Afrikaans had previously been the dominant language in the army, English was now almost a mandatory language of training.

The integration of the former TBVC armed forces followed a different path. On 1 September 1994 these forces came under operational command of the SA Army. These forces numbered about 4 000 former Transkei Defence Force members, 1 300 from Venda, 4 000 from Bophutatswana and about 2 000 from Ciskei. These were all serving full-time members whose formal military qualifications were roughly in line with that of the former SADF.

By 24 May 1995 a total of only 15 416 (43 percent) of the former guerrilla forces had reported to the assembly points (out of a potential total of 34 900) and a total of 10 427 letters of appointment had been accepted. A large portion of former guerrillas, therefore, still remained outside the integration process. In the interim some had, however, found other employment.

The status of the integration process as on 15 August 1995 is outlined in Table Two below and includes a number of senior appointments from the former MK and APLA, such as two lieutenant-generals, nine major-generals, fifteen brigadiers, 45 colonels, 102 lieutenant-colonels, 224 majors and 336 captains.

TABLE TWO: STATUS OF INTEGRATION, 15 AUGUST 1995^a

Force		Total reported	Total in transition	Total integrated					
				SA Army	SAAF	SA Navy	Medical	Other	Total
MK	28 888	13 881	1 897	9 571	154	247	805	61	10 338
APLA	6 000	2 569	108	2 194	7	25	70	2	2 298
Total	34 888	16 450	2 005	11 765	161	262	875	63	13 136

Speaking in the National Assembly on 12 September 1995, Minister Modise stated that 15 007 MK members still had to be called up for integration. They would be called up in six intakes: on 25 September 1995, 13 November 1995, 8 January 1996, 1 May 1996, 5 August 1996 and 19 August 1996. This implied that integration would not be completed before rationalisation began. Modise also stated that 1 900 of the 13 881 MK members who had reported had completed their basic bridging training and were busy with either advance career training or had been assigned posts in the SANDF. He also revealed that a total of 1 334 members had been lost to the SANDF due to recruitment by the police, joining the Service Corps, or death, desertions, discharges and resignations.⁹

The status of the integration process on 18 September 1995 was as follows¹⁰:

- already demobilised: 414 persons
- in the process of being demobilised: 518 persons
- receiving counselling: about 900 persons

- ❑ joined the Service Corps (see below) from Wallmansthal: about 420 persons
- ❑ joined the Service Corps from commands: about 188 persons
- ❑ waiting to join the Service Corps: 6 persons
- ❑ amount spent to date on demobilisation: R21 million (US \$5,8 million).

ENTER BMATT

In an article published in the African Defence Review during 1993, Cilliers had presented a forceful case for international military assistance in the transformation of the South African military. *“Should the onus be on the SADF to play a leading role in the provision of conversion and additional training, the international community could serve as an independent source of verification. While few ANC members would contemplate simply subscribing MK to SADF training courses, international supervision and vetting of conversion training could be an important area of assistance.”*¹¹ As events would have it, it was to their former colonial master that South Africans would turn for assistance in this regard.

The British Government had previously been involved in the integration of forces in neighbouring Namibia and Zimbabwe and its service tradition was generally compatible with that of South Africa. Following the signing of a formal agreement between the two Governments, the first commander of the British Military Advisory Training Team (BMATT), Brig. Dick Trigger, arrived in South Africa on 14 May 1994, the first of a team of 31 members. The terms of reference of BMATT were as follows:

- ❑ To assess the criteria against which individuals are to be evaluated prior to placement in the SANDF.
- ❑ To certify the agreed upon criteria before evaluation and screening starts.
- ❑ To observe and oversee the screening done by the evaluation teams made up of representatives from the constituent forces of the SANDF.
- ❑ To evaluate SANDF training in relation to international standards and to make recommendations on improvements where necessary.
- ❑ To assist in evaluating an individual's competency and qualifications.
- ❑ To advise on the type and nature of bridging and orientation training, as well as any other training assistance required.
- ❑ To adjudicate where necessary the ranking and placing of members of the constituent forces.¹²

In effect BMATT served to certify to all the parties to the integration process that the procedures and standards applied in any individual case and to the process as a whole, were fair. To achieve this BMATT's role had to extend much further, since they also had to evaluate SANDF training curricula and selection standards in relation to international standards.

As part of the process of integration, individuals are required to submit proof of educational (and or military) qualifications for eligibility as members of the SANDF.

Where this does not exist, they undergo potential assessment tests. These tests, designed in collaboration with all the integrating forces, measure potential on a scale of Categories 1 to 10. Members in Categories 1, 2 and 3 do not qualify for acceptance into the SANDF, members in categories 4, 5 and 6 are acceptable and exhibit the potential to aspire to becoming non-commissioned officers (NCOs), whilst categories 7 to 10 could be accepted as officers.

The process of placement implied that an individual be assigned to an arm of the service (such as the SA Army), to a corps (such as the artillery), to a mustering (such as a technical assistant) and receive a rank (such as that of sergeant). This is done on grounds of education, military training, experience, age, evaluation reports and from a pre-screening interview which is done by a placement board. The Board included representatives from both the former guerrilla army, the former SADF as well as BMATT. Following the recommendation of the Board, a formal and written offer is made to the candidate who has a month to decide to accept the offer or to decline. On acceptance the individual is posted for bridging training or employment, normally to the corps school such as the School of Artillery near Potchefstroom.

In general the integration process has succeeded in identifying former non-statutory force members who qualify for acceptance into the SANDF and those who do not, from the pool of persons who reported at the assembly area.

But the integration process has been less impressive in catering adequately for the needs of those who do not meet the requirements for entry into the military, nor has it catered, in terms of demobilisation, for those who are acceptable to the SANDF but who refused the offer of employment made by the SANDF. Finally, the so-called categories 1, 2 and 3 members (see below) who refuse to demobilise and take their gratuities were cooped up in the assembly areas for up to 18 months, drilling in the sun, daily sweeping the dust and often taking unofficial 'leave'. Had there been sufficient planning prior to or during integration, this may not have occurred. They could, for example, have been much more productively employed in Adult Basic Education programmes.

DEMOBILISATION

In contrast to the integration process, which was driven by the imperative of the larger settlement process, the demobilisation process appears to have bogged down in cabinet to the extent that a cabinet memorandum detailing demobilisation guidelines stood over from the end of 1994 awaiting political approval. Even at this stage a great degree of uncertainty remains regarding demobilisation.

For many months the military, and the Ministry of Defence, toyed with the idea of making a financial demobilisation offer to all members of the former non-statutory forces, i.e. both MK and APLA, irrespective of whether the individual had been integrated into the SANDF yet or not. This idea, enticing as it was as a shortcut to reduce the size of the SANDF, would clearly have been illegal and caused a great

degree of resentment among serving former statutory force members. As a result the idea was dropped.

Eventually, after a delay of several months, the demobilisation of former non-statutory force members was announced by the Minister of Defence, Joe Modise, on 21 August 1995. The process of demobilisation involves, amongst other things, the provision of a demobilisation gratuity to the member when she/he is demobilised. The size of the gratuity depends on years of service in MK or APLA, and is divided into five groups as follows:

- ❑ Group One covers the period 1 January 1961 to 31 December 1972 - to receive a gratuity of R42 058 (US \$11 491)
- ❑ Group Two covers the period 1 January 1973 to 31 December 1976 - to receive a gratuity of R34 313 (US \$9 375)
- ❑ Group Three covers the period 1 January 1977 to 31 December 1982 - to receive a gratuity of R28 721 (US \$7 847)
- ❑ Group Four covers the period 1 January 1983 to 31 December 1989 - to receive a gratuity of R20 201 (US \$5 519)
- ❑ Group Five covers the period 1 January 1990 to 26 March 1994 - to receive a gratuity of R12 734 (US \$3 479)¹³

The projected demobilisation budget amounts to R225 million (US \$61,5 m¹⁴), for an estimated 10 000 soldiers who are expected to volunteer to be demobilised.

Within a matter of weeks after the announcement, the demobilisation of former members of MK and APLA who could not be integrated into the SANDF (veterans, vulnerables and category 1, 2 and 3 members in the assembly areas), and those who have not as yet been called up to the assembly area or have not reported for integration when called up, was underway.

But this belated decision to try and reduce the number of persons that had to be integrated presents the Department of Defence with a potential future problem, since it was announced at a point mid-way during the integration process. In fact, the goal posts were shifted midway in the game. Clearly, those persons of MK and APLA who had already been integrated into the SANDF could not qualify for demobilisation and therefore for the gratuity. But since they were now part of the SANDF, they could be rationalised. In practical terms it is quite feasible that a person who was integrated in 1994 (as opposed to a person who accepted a demobilisation pay-out in 1995), may be rationalised in 1996, and then possibly without anything approaching the pay-out of his counterpart who did not integrate but chose to 'wait and see'. As a solution, the Department would probably have to devise a rationalisation package comparable to the demobilisation pay-out.

It needs to be emphasised that demobilisation is potentially much cheaper than integration and that the potential savings for the fiscus are considerable. On average, if one were to assume that the annual salary of a soldier would be about R25 000, and

that his other costs such as uniform, training, etc. would account for another R25 000 per annum, the average annual integration cost per soldier would be about R50 000. For 1 000 soldiers this amounts to R50 million. On the other hand, to demobilise say 1 000 persons who joined MK in 1987 would cost R20,2 million. A saving, therefore, in excess of 50%.

The political and other sensitivities related to the provision of gratuities, as well as the institution of 'special pensions', is a sensitive issue, especially with regard to members who do not qualify for demobilisation gratuities, irrespective of force of origin. To their dismay, those non-statutory force members serving as elected representatives at national and regional government structures did not qualify for either gratuities or pensions.¹⁵

According to the announcement by the Minister the so-called veterans, vulnerables and some members of categories 1, 2 and 3 would qualify for both a once-off gratuity pay-out as well as a pension in terms of the Special Pensions Act. This Act was passed in terms of Section 189 of South Africa's Interim Constitution, which states that "*Provision shall be made by an Act of Parliament for the payment of special pensions by the national government to:*

- a) *persons who made sacrifices or who have served the public interest in the establishment of a democratic constitutional order, including members of any armed or military force not established by or under any law and which is under the authority and control of, or associated with and promotes the objectives of, a political organisation; or*
- b) *dependants of such persons"*¹⁶.

Members of categories 1, 2 and 3, who do not qualify for integration into the SANDF, are among the first group of people to be demobilised. Among those allocated to these three categories are the so-called 'vulnerables' and 'veterans'. Vulnerables is the collective term used to describe those who are medically unfit for integration into the SANDF. Veterans refers to those who, due to their length of service in MK and APLA and age, were due for retirement. Both categories of persons are generally older (between 50 and 65 years of age) than the average MK soldier. Until very recently, these members were not constructively employed by the SANDF after having reported at Wallmansthal at an early stage in the integration process and had, in many cases, been patiently waiting the outcome of political decisions on the demobilisation process.

Some in these groups joined the Service Corps, which is discussed below. Others chose to return to civilian life. No further social reintegration or training assistance is planned for this group. Since demobilisation is voluntary, some ex-combatants could theoretically have refused to take the gratuity package, or to join the Service Corps, or both.

Recently the SANDF, arguably somewhat belatedly, announced that those to be demobilised had an option to undergo counselling for a period of two weeks should

they so wish. Most members of the first group of 371 who were demobilised on 6/7 September 1995 rejected the offer of counselling. The counselling service attempted to advise the soldier to be demobilised on how to re-enter the formal and informal employment sector. It consisted of counselling on : a) Personal Matters - which may include the adaptation to civilian society, learning communication skills, as well as stress and conflict management; b) Careers, especially in occupational options; c) Social services such as legal advice, labour relations, health care, etc.; and d) Financial advice.¹⁷

From interviews with the Department of Defence it is evident that the body of knowledge relating to the needs of those to be demobilised is insufficient. Some of the aspects upon which information is lacking relate to the families of those to be demobilised, circumstances in the areas where former combatants will reside after demobilisation, the attitude of the people in these areas, criteria according to which successful reintegration into civil society could be judged, mechanisms whereby a demobilised soldier could obtain ongoing assistance and advice, the social effects of demobilisation on the demobilised soldier and on society at large, employment opportunities, training needs of, and training opportunities for, those to be demobilised, 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 wider process.

SOCIAL REINTEGRATION AND THE SERVICE CORPS

The idea of a Service Corps (initially a Service Brigade) was first publicly mentioned by the Chief of the then SA Defence Force, General Meiring at an IDP conference in Pretoria on 15 November 1993. " ... there are a large number of individuals who have received military training of some sort and who will not be accommodated in the South African Army. To leave these individuals jobless in the streets is to invite trouble. An idea is to establish a Services Brigade to accommodate and train them. This Brigade could be used on non-military tasks, like building projects. After a period of service in the Brigade they can leave the Brigade and make a decent living for themselves in the private sector." ¹⁸ For some time after this proposal the idea persisted that the military would, through such a scheme, be able to "... train large numbers of people every year in this way ..." and "... be used to help eradicate the vast backlog in the building of houses, schools, roads, etc. ... on a regional, national or even international level in addressing the socio-economic problems of the Southern African region." ¹⁹

Subsequently the Sub-Council on Defence agreed to the establishment of the Service Corps which was formally launched on 31 January 1995 on the East Rand. The idea is to provide 18 months of vocational training to persons wishing to demobilise and who wish to participate voluntarily in such a training scheme. Once off the ground this will enable recruits to return to civilian life, while at the same time providing an ongoing service to the broader community. In effect, the Service Corps is the mechanism through which social reintegration is to occur.

Entry into the Corps is, of course, voluntary. After 18 months the Service Corps member will be obliged to leave the Corps but may also leave at any time during the period. The 18 months is divided into 3 months literacy training and adult life skills training; 3 months vocational training essentially conducted by the Department of Labour and 12 months of practical experience. Persons in the Corps receive R28-00 per day. While the SANDF has given the Corps a corporate budget for its head office, etc., the Corps is looking at the Governments' Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) for further funding. By mid-1995 the Corps was planning a total 1995 intake of 1 800 personnel, as opposed to a capacity for 5 500 persons. The annual intake thereafter is planned at 6 900 persons with a total capacity of 10 000 persons. Of the potential 1 800 persons, only 318 trainees were in the Corps during September 1995, with an estimated additional 800 at Wallmansthal.

At an IDP seminar during March 1995, the Chief of the Service Corps defined the role of the Corps as "... to train volunteers (ex-service men as well as youth) in a variety of practical skills in order to equip them for civilian life or to provide selected members with a career in the Service Corps."²⁰ The Service Corps envisaged a "... system of national service [which will] encompass: intakes of South African men and women over the age of sixteen years; a six months induction of professional discipline and training in economically-relevant skills (e.g. basic carpentry, bricklaying, plumbing, tiling, guttering, metalwork, motor mechanics, welding, stock/pasture or crop management) in those youths lacking such skills; a 12 month deployment of these semi-trained trainees in development programmes (provision and repair of housing, schools, sanitation and other urban services, basic agricultural extension and rural development)"²¹ The aim of the programme was defined as follows:

- ❑ "to instil in its members appropriate norms and values, capable of promoting the unification of culturally diverse society and helping to build a South African nation which draws strength from its cultural diversity;
- ❑ to provide basic remedial education and technical, social and life-skills training to its members to equip them with the necessary knowledge, skills and appropriate attitudes, both to provide an acceptable level of service to the communities in which they will work while in service, and to enable them to assume a responsible, productive role in society thereafter, whether through further study or training, or in employment or self-employment; and
- ❑ to address the development challenges facing South Africa in helping, inter alia, to combat illiteracy and improve public health throughout the country, provide housing, clean water and municipal services in unplanned urban and peri-urban areas, and improve farming skills and marketing possibilities in rural areas."²²

The Service Corps established a Vocational Training Centre at Marievale in Gauteng, and is in the process of establishing nine Service Corps units countrywide, one in each province. The Army would provide host structures for these units until 1998. The Corps has also decided to piggy-back on the national training centres of the Department of Labour and is in the process of establishing a civilian organisation, a board of trustees and of structuring itself to operate as a non-profit trust outside the

SANDF. Needless to say, the Service Corps plans to work and liaise very closely with the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP). As is evident from the announcement by Lt. Gen. Moloi which is quoted above, initially only those skills found in the building industry would be taught, as well as instruction in training subjects such as fire prevention, basic medical training, law aspects, hygiene, personal and organisational behaviour, etc.²³

A major bureaucratic hurdle with which the Corps has been wrestling for some time is national accreditation for the education and training that it will render. Progress on this issue has been complicated and delayed by the transformation of the national educational system and a national qualification framework which has, itself, run into serious delays.

Thus far the Corps has announced that it will be an active participant in the National Plan of Action for the children of South Africa; that it will form a joint venture with many government as well as non-government organisations; that it will be involved with the UK Airborne Initiative in a number of specific projects such as water supply, and that it will deliver a service to the National Organisation of the Blind²⁴ But whilst these attempts are laudable, there is little to indicate real movement and action in the more urgent areas of marketable skills as opposed to 'do-good' community service actions.

Other questions relate to the source of funding for the Service Corps. At its launch, it was reported that the Government of the Republic of China (Taiwan), had pledged R141 million (US \$38,52 million) for the establishment of a vocational training centre at the Dunottar military base, as well as for training instructors/trainers. Besides these funds there is no budget for the Corps, at least until the new fiscal year starts in 1996. At present (October 1995) the Corps is funded from the SANDF integration budget, although the Corps itself talks of international partners which include Israel, France, the United Kingdom and the Republic of China, and of joint projects with a number of government departments such as labour, finance, public works, education and water affairs, as well as a range of private sector and non-government organisations.²⁵

A second problem, already listed earlier, is that the Service Corps does not appear to have done any research to identify the individual needs and aspirations of the demobilised. Although this may prove more time consuming than the general blanket approach, it would assist in providing individual treatment for each demobilised soldier.²⁶

From the start, the Service Corps also committed itself to cater eventually for the needs of the unemployed and 'marginalised' youth as well as to provide "*specified aid and assistance in foreign countries such as hunger relief*". Some of the areas of employment of the Corps also appear to be unrealistic such as involvement in "*low cost vehicle manufacture*" and "*civil aerospace manufacture*", while others indicate that the Corps could end up doing the dirty work for the SANDF, in the literal sense of the word, with tasks such as the maintenance of SANDF buildings, offices, military

bases, property and vehicles.²⁷ It is unclear, however, given the insufficient staff and funds to cater for former combatants, how the Corps will be able to cater for the unemployed and 'marginalised' youth. The funding problem raised earlier also impacts on these decisions. The National Public Works Programme (NPWP), established as part of the RDP, also aims to implement programmes similar to those planned by the Corps. As a result there could be a conflict of interests, as well as budgetary competition.²⁸

In fact, given the tardiness with which the RDP job-creation projects are getting off the ground, the Government may well have missed an important opportunity by not deciding to utilise the military for this task in a sustained and expansive manner. On the other hand, considerable resistance can be expected with any programme which implies, even in part only, the remilitarisation of the South African society and it could well be argued that the RDP should 'sort itself out'.

Questions also remain as to what happens after completion of the 18 month spell in the Service Corps, should the individual remain unemployed, which is highly likely. There is no guarantee of employment upon completion of training, and this in itself could generate considerable political tensions, although the Corps has had continuing discussions with employer organisations to try and identify employment opportunities. In fact, ongoing counselling services are required to meet this need and it is to be expected that provision would be made for this in due course.

Possibly most disturbing is that the Corps, a military organisation, wishes to run a totally civilian task, the reintegration of former combatants into civilian society, on its own, or at best, on its own terms. Comparative research indicates, as do some of the other chapters in this book, that the reverse is required.

The SANDF appear well prepared to deal with the demobilisation component of the process, but what then? Once the soldier has left the employ of the military, even with a lump sum gratuity, she/he is left to fend for him/herself. Whilst the lump sum gratuities may provide the combatants for demobilisation with immediate compensation, they do not help in the medium to long term, as the recipients would probably return after the money is exhausted. This may be due to low levels of skills in financial and investment management, or it may be too little too late to cater even for immediate needs. In fact, extreme caution needs to be exercised over the provision of the lump sum gratuities as it is presently practiced. These payments need to be supplemented by other or by in-kind benefits, such as provision of vocational or educational training, prior to or as part of the process of finally being 'thrown into civvy street'.

But, above all, demobilisation is also politically sensitive and therefore open to political debate and point scoring. PAC secretary-general Maxwell Nmadzivhanani, for example, issued a provocative statement during August 1995 that the SANDF harboured more than 20 000 foreign mercenaries from former 31 and 32 battalions in Angola, Koevoet in former South West Africa and the Selous Scouts and 'other bandit

forces' from Mozambique and that these mercenaries should be demobilised first.²⁹

Social reintegration requires resources, and the long term effect for society could be serious if former soldiers are unable to find their livelihoods outside the armed forces and reintegrate into civilian life. The process could also lead to increased unemployment and social deprivation, all of which are already prevalent in South Africa, and political and social instability, especially given the easy availability of weapons.

An examination of the experiences with regard to social reintegration in countries such as Uganda, Mozambique, Namibia, and Zimbabwe contained elsewhere in this book indicates that external agencies potentially play a very important role. These include research organisations at educational institutions who identify the exact requirements of the demobilised, capacity-building organisations, funding agencies, etc. These organisations complemented but did not replace the role of government nor ease government's burden in terms of resource allocation. Nowhere did the military try and go it alone, as appears to be the intention in South Africa.

International donors who are prepared to offer grant assistance are generally averse to channeling these into any government department or agency directly related to the military. This, however, does not preclude a co-operative relationship with the Department of Defence. Few, if any, appear willing to allow money to flow to or through the Department of Defence, but tend to use NGO's for such projects. In fact, the leverage effect of NGO's could significantly ease the implementation and financial burden on the State.

Although the social reintegration of former combatants into civilian society is only commencing in South Africa, there is cause for concern that the programme thus far does not effectively cater for the full spectrum of services that are required.

THE RATIONALISATION PHASE

The rationalisation of the South African military has been on the cards for a number of years following the end of regional hostilities in 1990. In the blunt words of the former Chief of the SA Army *"The country can only afford a certain size army, and the integrated army is way beyond that size."*³⁰ Lt. Gen. Pretorius went on to list three crucial challenges for rationalisation: *"The loss of expertise if former SA Army members [from the SADF] are rationalised. ... The loss of legitimacy if former non-statutory forces are rationalised. ... The problems of internal cohesion which would be created if rationalisation is not managed correctly - an 'us and them' scenario ..."*³¹

Rationalisation is, of course, the end result of a long and involved process which should commence with a formal defence review similar to the bottom-up or front-line first type of investigations recently completed in the USA and Britain. The process of a defence review which will provide the basis for the rationalisation programme was recently announced in the *Draft White Paper on Defence* on 21 June 1995.³²

Rationalisation potentially could affect any SANDF employee, irrespective of force of origin. A number of options are available for this purpose, over and above that of natural attrition which is, in turn, a sum of normal retirements, resignations, discharges, etc. These could include the freezing of posts, the closure of certain facilities utilised by the defence force, and early retirements. Those to be rationalised would, of course, receive whatever contributions they have made towards their retirement. Retrenchment is an expensive exercise and will inevitably place an even greater burden on the defence budget. During the third quarter of 1994, the Chief of Staff Personnel estimated that the costs of rationalisation and integration to the State could be as high as R3,2 billion (US \$888 million) over a period of four years.³³

Rationalisation will, in essence, potentially cast employees into the very large ranks of the South African unemployed. It will not be popular, and could prove disruptive especially when recently integrated members of the former non-statutory and statutory forces, who could not benefit from the demobilisation process, are rationalised without the benefit of a gratuity.

The legal intricacies involved in rationalisation and the virtual guarantee of industrial/labour actions in response to rationalisation is yet another quandary facing the SANDF. There has already been action by soldiers whose short term service contracts were not renewed and these actions will increase and intensify as pressure mounts.

CONCLUSION

Remarkably, and contrary to domestic and international expectations, the integration of the former South African Defence Force (SADF), the two former guerrilla armies (that of the African National Congress and the Pan-Africanist Congress) and the four armed forces of the so-called 'homelands' (Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei) is proceeding well. For a variety of reasons a large number of guerrilla fighters have either been found unsuitable or have decided not to report for integration. Even so, the newly established South African National Defence Force will have to shed up to 35 000 soldiers from its expected post-integration total of about 125 000 men and women to reduce itself to an affordable, balanced core force. Many new members of the SANDF may therefore soon find themselves out on the street again. In contrast to integration, little appears to be happening to prepare for social reintegration of these combatants. Without the necessary assistance and support programmes, these people may further contribute to the already high levels of crime and violence in the country.

To some degree, however, the successes of the past have been attained by putting off difficult decisions on demobilisation and downsizing - problems that cannot be ignored for much longer and that imply solutions which are bound to lead to dissatisfaction among important sections of the electorate.

In the social reintegration area the Department of Defence could competently play a regulatory and facilitatory role rather than a controlling one. But the wider

implications of the social reintegration process outside the direct influence of the SANDF have, to date, been largely ignored. There is an urgent need for a flexible and broad policy framework within which this can operate to add value to the process. The following aspects should be considered in this regard:

- ❑ Outline a framework within which NGOs can operate in order to assist with the overall process.
- ❑ Decide on the body accountable for the overall management of the process.
- ❑ Execute the required social research support activities.

Arguably the need exists either for a specific organisation to manage the overall process during, and especially after, the soldier has left the SANDF, or for an organisation (such as the Service Corps) to perform this function. But then a considerable investment would have to be made in the managerial and financial capacity of that organisation and it must be fitted into the broader South African environment where development is an urgent requirement.

The sum government policy with regard to demobilisation and social reintegration is probably best summarised by the comment that as far as the military is concerned "... we would like to get them out as soon as possible." While, on the other hand, the former combatants simply ask "After the R12 000 is gone, what happens?"³⁴

The question which will remain in South Africa is "do old soldiers just die, or is it hoped that they will merely fade away?" The veterans of World War Two of fifty years ago are still with us. So will be the veterans of South Africa's much more recent period of political conflict.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Information in this article is a result of numerous interviews, seminars and workshops run by the Institute for Defence Policy, as well as official documents of the SANDF and Ministry of Defence (MoD). Interpretation and the views herein remain entirely the responsibility of the authors.
- 2 The organisations included the MK Elected Committee; the South African Total Liberation Force (SATLF), established by 46 former MK members during November 1994; the MKAPLA, an acronym for a group of former MK and APLA members whose exact membership was not known; the Concerned Citizens on Integration and Rehabilitation (CCIR); the Commanding Structure and Committee of Four, established by about 30 disgruntled KwaZulu/Natal MK members. Anon. 'Disgruntled MKs are no threat' Modise, in *The Citizen*, 13 September 1995.
- 3 E. Koch, P. Stober & M. Edmonds, 'Pretoria fiddles while KwaZulu-Natal burns', in *Mail & Guardian*, 22-28 September 1995.
- 4 See Anon., 'Integration - 1 year later', in *Salut*, vol. 2, no. 6, June 1995.
- 5 J. Craig, 'Former MK soldiers show class at SANDF parade', in *The Saturday Star*, 22 July 1995.
- 6 N. Chandler, 'Long march to integration', in *The Star*, 26 July 1995.
- 7 See, for example, J. Cilliers, *Demobilisation and Integration of Armed Forces*, submission to the Technical Committee on the TEC, 2 August 1993; J. Cilliers, *Demobilisation, Integration and the Sub-Council on Defence*, submission to the Technical Committee on Violence and the Technical Committee on the TEC, 27 June 1993; and J. Cilliers, *Demobilisation and Integration of Armed Forces*, Submission to the Goldstone Commission, 10 August 1993.
- 8 SANDF Internal Communication Bulletin, *Take Note*, 29 August 1995: No 86/95: discussions with members of the SANDF.

- 9 Anon., '15 000 MKs still to be called up', in *The Citizen*, 13 September 1995.
- 10 SANDF Internal Communication Bulletin, *Take Note*, no. 95/95, 20 September 1995.
- 11 J. Cilliers, 'The South African armed forces, the Future and the potential role of the International Community', in *African Defence Review*, no. 11, 1994, p. 20
- 12 SANDF Internal Communication Bulletin, *Deployment of the British Military Advisory and Training Team in South Africa (BMATT in SA)*, no. 6, 15 May 1994.
- 13 *Media Briefing by the Minister of Defence, Joe Modise, concerning Demobilisation* on 21 August 1995, Defence Headquarters, Pretoria. Originally there were five groups who would have been payed smaller gratuities (ranging from R8 158 to R29 678), but this was changed by Cabinet. The first R30 000 of this amount is not taxed.
- 14 The exchange rate stated (of US \$1= R3,66) is as of September 1995 and is therefore subject to fluctuation.
- 15 SANDF Internal Communication Bulletin, *Demobilisation of SANDF Members*, no. 83, 21 August 1995.
- 16 Special Pensions Section 189, *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, Act 200 of 1993 as amended.
- 17 SANDF Internal Communication Bulletin, *Demobilisation Programme*, no. 87, 4 September 1995
- 18 G.L. Meiring, 'Taking the SA Army into the Future', in *African Defence Review*, vol. 3, no. 14, January 1994, p. 6.
- 19 Ibid.
- 20 Lt. Gen. L. Moloi, 'In Service of the Nation', briefing at an IDP seminar *The South African Service Corps - any lessons from Zimbabwe*, Halfway House, 2 March 1995.
- 21 Ibid.
- 22 Ibid.
- 23 SANDF Internal Communication Bulletin, *Service Corps of the SANDF*, no. 68, 7 December 1994.
- 24 L. Moloi, op. cit.
- 25 Ibid.
- 26 Ibid. J. Cock, 'The Social Integration of Demobilised Soldiers in Contemporary South Africa', in *African Defence Review*, vol. 2, no 12, 1993.
- 27 L. Moloi, op. cit.
- 28 The main objectives of the National Public Works Programme is to: reduce unemployment by creating productive jobs and opportunities for local contractors - using labour intensive approaches; educate and train people involved in the Programme as a means of economic empowerment; rehabilitate and maintain physical assets such as clinics, schools, crèches and roads; to build the capacity of communities to manage their own affairs; strengthen local government and other institutions. Anon., 'Development Information', in *Prodder Newsletter*, Vol. 7, No. 2, Braamfontein, Second Quarter, 1995.
- 29 Anon., 'Demob mercenary force - PAC', in *Sowetan*, 31 August 1995.
- 30 J. Pretorius, 'Integration, Rationalisation and Restructuring of the SA Army', paper presented at an IDP conference on *The SA Army - Futures and Forecasts*, 8 November 1994, Pretoria, p. 13
- 31 Ibid., p. 14
- 32 *Defence in a Democracy, Draft White Paper on National Defence for the Republic of South Africa*, 21 June 1995, p. 3
- 33 P. van Z. Loedolff, 'Manpower and Industrial Relations: Integration and Equal Opportunities in the SANDF', paper presented at an AIC conference, *Defence Industry*, 11-12 October 1994, Midrand, p. 17.
- 34 C. Stucky, 'Marching orders for 'unprocessable' former guerrillas', in *The Star*, 26 August 1995.