



## ESSAY

# SOUTH AFRICAN DEFENCE SINCE 1994

## *The influence of non-offensive defence\**

EVERT JORDAAN AND ABEL ESTERHUYSE

### Introduction

In the early 1990s, with the Cold War at an end, South African society moved into a period of political transition, accompanied by developments towards a multiparty democracy and changes in security perceptions.<sup>1</sup> South Africa's security and defence policy subsequently underwent deep and fundamental changes.<sup>2</sup> The 1994 elections and the constitutional reform that took place immediately thereafter effected security policy and resulted in strategic defensiveness. Even prior to the 1994 democratic elections in South Africa, support for 'non-offensive defence' (NOD) was expressed from within the African National Congress (ANC).<sup>3</sup> Non-offensive defence is a conventional approach to defence aimed at creating an environment that favours defensive strategies and operations rather than offensive options.<sup>4</sup> According to this view, offensiveness can be derived from the structure of a military and defence forces should therefore have defensive structures and capabilities that are not threatening to other countries. NOD is viewed as a way to prevent the security dilemma and an arms race.<sup>5</sup> NOD thinking had a significant impact on the formulation of South African defence policy in the 1990s.

The aim of the paper is to outline the prominence of NOD in South African defence policy and to explain why it is not explicitly used in policy documents. The paper commences with a brief background on the development of NOD and common security in order to highlight the context and meaning of these ideas. The second part of the paper deals with the development of defensive ideas in South Africa. Lastly, the principles of NOD that were accepted in South Africa will be highlighted as well as the relevance of these ideas.

### The development of alternative defence and NOD ideas

During the Cold War advocates of alternative defence in Europe tried to steer policies on defence planning and acquisition away from the use of nuclear weapons and the emphasis on offensive military power.<sup>6</sup> Alternative defence involves the reconfiguring of military capabilities and forces for purely defensive missions.<sup>7</sup> One of the first explicit defensive models was suggested in 1954 by a West German officer, Bogislaw von Bonin.<sup>8</sup> In his criticism of the *Bundeswehr's* structure and doctrine, Bonin argued for the establishment of a

---

**EVERT JORDAAN** is an academic assistant at the Military Strategy Department of the Faculty of Military Science, University of Stellenbosch, SA Military Academy.

**ABEL ESTERHUYSE** is a lecturer at the Military Strategy Department of the Faculty of Military Science, University of Stellenbosch, SA Military Academy.

defensive border protection force consisting of light infantry deployed in a defensive network of minefields and anti-tank weapons.<sup>9</sup> The predominantly static defence had to be supported by local militia forces and six mobile armoured divisions.<sup>10</sup> He did not agree with the introduction of battlefield nuclear weapons and he argued for the idea of 'structural inability to attack'. Bonin's ideas established the basis for NOD models.

The Peace Movement played an important role in promoting NOD models. Since 1958, with the upsurge of opposition towards nuclear weapons, Peace Research emerged as an intellectual field.<sup>11</sup> Peace researchers such as Bert Röling and Horst Afheldt worked on defensive concepts and strategies. Afheldt,<sup>12</sup> for instance, suggested an NOD model that was based strictly on defensive land forces, but it excluded air and naval elements.<sup>13</sup> It was similar to Bonin's model, but it added a specific defensive role for precision-guided missiles against tanks and aircraft.<sup>14</sup> The term 'common security' originated through the contribution of peace researchers to the West German security debate of the 1970s and it became an important concept for further NOD ideas.<sup>15</sup>

In 1982 the Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme promoted the idea of common security in his report 'Common security: A blueprint for survival'.<sup>16</sup> Palme chaired the Independent Commission on Disarmament and Security Issues and he was also the leader of the Swedish Social Democratic Party. The commission argued that nuclear weapons were militarily useless and that there could be no nuclear victory between the two superpowers.<sup>17</sup> The superpowers had to achieve security not against one another, but together; which was a central idea of common security. Common security advocates argued that there are global threats to all humanity which cannot be overcome by individual states. It further refers to an attempt to balance realist and idealist perspectives on security by combining the aims of self-reliance, self-preservation, and the existence of anarchy with collective security and interdependence.<sup>18</sup>

Common security suggested a radical transformation in security policy away from con-

frontation and nuclear deterrence, towards community building, sustainable development and sustainable peace.<sup>19</sup> This stimulated debates on alternative defence and the 'nuclear freeze' movement.<sup>20</sup> Opposed to the offensive concepts, the Peace Movement, some Western strategic analysts and academics, wanted to reform the West's military posture to NOD during the Cold War.<sup>21</sup> Offensive strategies were criticised for aggravating the security dilemma and for being too expensive, diverting resources away from domestic social programmes. NOD theory was therefore aimed at minimising mistakes, miscalculations, misperceptions and worst-case analyses.

#### *Understanding non-offensive defence*

The broad aim of NOD is to establish a security regime that will ensure peace and security between states, within regions and internationally.<sup>22</sup> NOD suggests restraint on the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity of another state. These ideas are associated with the UN's principles and its literature on defensive defence. It also involves security assurances through defensive military structures and confidence building. NOD is further aimed towards creating an environment that favours defensive operations while making offensive strategies seem outdated.<sup>23</sup> It is argued that NOD would reduce the likelihood of war and provide a better form of defence.

NOD can be assured through various avenues. States can use political constraints, constitutional prohibition (as in Japan), political structures, civil control over the military and limited military capabilities.<sup>24</sup> NOD also pays attention to confidence-building measures (CBMs). A state that abstains from the means of attacking a neighbour by choice, inspires confidence. Confidence building with NOD can also be promoted by making defence preparations transparent. This may include formal understandings, the publication of military data, exchange inspections, and bilateral and regional frameworks for dialogue.

Non-offensive defence proponents argue that offensiveness and defensiveness can be derived from the structure of a defence

force.<sup>25</sup> Butfoy defines NOD as "... a structural incapacity for engaging in strategic offensives".<sup>26</sup> Offensive structures emphasise equipment with mobility and range, which refer to power-projection capabilities and should be avoided. Defensive structures emphasise firepower, as well as limited mobility and range. NOD thinking further entails the deployment of small and dispersed military units that should rely on the advantages of local knowledge, defence in depth and concealment. These defensive principles suit the military aim of NOD, which is to deny territory to an attacker and involves territorial defence. The destruction of opposing forces is only a secondary objective. The ability to prevent an opponent from successfully occupying a country is viewed as a form of deterrence. Territorial defence can further involve militia resistance and even civilian resistance.<sup>27</sup> Although NOD is mainly concerned with structure, Möller emphasises that the intentions, plans, options and activities in preparing for the future use of force are also important.<sup>28</sup>

Instead of using punishment as deterrence, NOD proponents suggest deterrence by denying an opponent the possibility to achieve strategic objectives by having the capability to effectively defend national territory.<sup>29</sup> These proponents assume that defence is the stronger form of war and that technology favours the defender. The advantage of the defender was emphasised by Clausewitz in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and he argued that: "... the defensive is the stronger form of conducting war ... we must make use of it only as long as our weakness compels us to do so."<sup>30</sup> The emphasis with NOD is therefore on acquiring defensive weapons such as anti-tank missiles, anti-aircraft systems and anti-ship missiles instead of arming oneself with offensive systems (such as strategic bombers and massive tank armies) that could overwhelm the defensive efforts of neighbouring states.<sup>31</sup> NOD ideas also have an emphasis on the efficient use of precision-guided munitions (PGMs) in countering air and armoured attack. The successful use of AT-3 Sagger anti-tank missiles against Israeli armour during the 1973 Yom Kippur War, created some optimism for the

strength of the defensive and the role of PGMs to improve the deterrent potential of NOD models.

Non-offensive defence became the preferred term first used by Björn Möller from the Copenhagen Peace Research Institute (COPRI)<sup>32</sup>, as well as Anders Boserup.<sup>33</sup> Boserup defined NOD as a bilateral relationship in which "... both sides have forces that are stronger than those of the opponent when used to attack ..."; that is, a situation in which both sides have "... ample forces for defence and, by implication, insufficient forces for attack".<sup>34</sup> Möller prefers to use the concept NOD as a concept that explains various degrees of defensiveness.<sup>35</sup> Möller does not distinguish between concepts such as NOD and other defensive concepts such as 'non-provocative defence' (NPD), arguing that all these concepts show a preference for minimising offensive capabilities and maximising defensive strength. There is, however, a lack of conceptual clarity about defensive concepts.

Möller refers to alternative concepts for NOD which do not include models, but highlight certain aspects of the concept.<sup>36</sup> NOD for instance emphasises little or no offensive capabilities; 'structural inability to attack' (SIA) highlights that non-offensiveness is a function of the structure of the armed forces; 'defensive defence' (DD) focuses on the defensive capabilities, NPD highlights the fact that the absence of offensive capabilities means the avoidance of provoking other states; and 'confidence-building defence' emphasises that this contributes to establishing trust between states. 'Non-threatening defence' (NTD) is another defensive concept, but it does not require the eventual elimination of offensive conventional military capabilities.<sup>37</sup> Its focus is on promoting mutual reassurance between states through CBMs, arms control, greater transparency and military exchange visits<sup>38</sup>. Möller argues that NOD proponents may disagree on the terminology and configuration of defence structure but they envision the same ends, which include disarmament and arms control.<sup>39</sup>

Möller differentiates between pure and mixed models.<sup>40</sup> Pure models focus on stationary defence, some tactical mobility, linear

deployments and largely immobile firepower. Such models do not make provision for attacking targets that are deep inside enemy territory. Mixed models, on the other hand, combine stationary and mobile elements. Mobile forces are usually withdrawn from the front line in order not to present an immediate threat and their area of operations is usually restricted to own territory. One such model was developed by the Study Group on Alternative Security Policy (SAS) under the leadership of Lutz Unterseher.<sup>41</sup> The model was named 'Spider in the Web', which envisioned close co-operation between light infantry in the dispersed web and a small mobile element consisting of armour and mechanised infantry, which is located in the interior. Some mixed models even allow for operational-scale offensives to retake lost territory, as well as interdiction operations against opposing forces moving to the front.

### **The limitations of NOD**

At the end of the Cold War in 1987, NOD became prominent for a short period when Gorbachev accepted it as a principle for restructuring not only the Soviet armed forces, but also for setting East – West relations in a less confrontational posture.<sup>42</sup> The prominence of NOD declined when the Soviet Union disintegrated, as NOD thinking was largely based on the threat of invasion. The success of offensive military strategies employed in the Gulf War and the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia (with its system of territorial defence) further eroded support for NOD.

Although NOD ideas have some attraction, there is much criticism and scepticism towards it. Several points of criticism will be highlighted. First, supporters of NOD assume that regimes which accept NOD rule through popular consent rather than by force, which is not always the case in developing countries.<sup>43</sup> Second, and in addition, NOD requires large-scale participation of people in the defence of a country, and weak states will not be in favour of such an option as the arming of its population could contribute to its own overthrow in a system of territorial defence.<sup>44</sup>

Third, NOD is criticised for being a Eurocentric idea that originated during the Cold War as a way to ease strategies of escalation and to restructure the defence of West Germany within the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). Fourth, developing countries, however, mostly experience intra-state, rather than inter-state conflict.<sup>45</sup> Defence considerations and the role of armed forces in developing countries are therefore focused on internal roles.

NOD is further criticised for assuming that defence is the stronger form of war and that technology favours defence, especially considering examples of successful offensive counter-strategies as employed with Blitzkrieg, the Six Day War in 1967 and the Gulf War of 1991.<sup>46</sup> These examples are also relevant in terms of the criticism about technology that favours defence. With Blitzkrieg, the Germans succeeded in bringing about the fall of France (1940), despite French superiority in tanks.<sup>47</sup> It should also be added that military technology played an important role in the successful offensive operations launched by the US-led coalition during the first Gulf War.<sup>48</sup> The success of Egyptian anti-tank missiles against Israeli armour in 1973, which created optimism for the defensive, should be studied within the context that Israeli armour counter-attacked without infantry support.<sup>49</sup> Considering the limitations of the defence and military technology within the context of NOD, the deterrence-through-denial potential of NOD can be questioned.

### **The development of defensive thought in South Africa**

Defensive thinking in South Africa emanated from strong anti-militarist sentiments from influential political and social sectors, domestic 'political sensibilities' and post-conflict fatigue amongst the public in general after 1990.<sup>50</sup> The redefinition of security in its meaning, scope and management among academics and policy planners has refocused traditional defence views towards alternative defence and non-military options. This also contributed to support for reducing the defence budget. The defensive orientation of South African defence

policy has subsequently been reflected in many policy documents and publications.

The 1993 interim constitution of the Republic of South Africa already stated that the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) would be "... primarily defensive in the exercise or performance of its power and functions".<sup>51</sup> The ANC's guidelines as the ruling party contained in *Ready to Govern*, also called for a defensive orientation, posture and strategy. The Joint Military Co-ordinating Council (JMCC) agreement between all the armed forces and their political principles signatory to the military integration process, reflected similar principles, which included strategic defensiveness. The JMCC also agreed that on the operational and tactical levels, offensive postures should exist within the context of strategic defensiveness. The JMCC agreement further stated that South Africa would promote common and mutual security in the region through mutual confidence and trust. It also stated that South Africa would adopt a 'non-threatening' force structure in relationship to the region and that arms races would be discouraged. The principle of a defensive posture also appeared in South Africa's White Paper on Defence in 1996, and various groups played a role to convince policy makers to adopt certain principles of NOD.

#### *The role of interest groups*

The ANC-aligned think-tank on defence policy, the Military Research Group (MRG), played a prominent role in defence policy process since the early 1990s.<sup>52</sup> It filled the need that existed within the ANC in terms of a defence transformation planning capacity and many of its recommendations were used (often word-for-word) in negotiations, at ANC conferences and eventually in the policy-outputs of government. The principal drafter of the White Paper on Defence, Laurie Nathan, was a member of the MRG and also the director of the non-governmental organisation (NGO), the Centre for Conflict Resolution (CCR). A few other NGOs also played a role in the policy process. The Institute for Defence Policy, now called the Institute for Security Studies (ISS), influenced the debate

through policy-orientated research. The cease-fire campaign promoted demilitarisation and some of its less radical proposals were accepted at multiparty forums. The ANC determined South African defence policy to a large extent with the advice of MRG members.

ANC politicians were highly receptive to inputs on defence issues from NGOs such as the CCR, the ISS and COPRI.<sup>53</sup> NGOs saw the period after 1994 as a 'window of opportunity' to share their views on how to change military affairs in South Africa. Much funding was made available from donor countries that wanted to help create a peaceful Southern African region. Donors were looking in particular for local NGOs to manage projects in South Africa. The most prominent donor countries were Denmark and Norway. Both these countries also supported the ANC prior to 1994. Donor money was further aimed at establishing democratic values and transition in South Africa. International and local NGOs with funding from mostly Nordic countries played a significant role in providing input to politicians on defence issues.

Nathan's views on defence policy in his book *The Changing of the Guard* (1994) had a significant impact on South African defence policy and on the White Paper on Defence (1996) in particular. Nathan's suggestions in this book were largely based on the views shared by ANC members of Parliament.<sup>54</sup> As the principal drafter of the White Paper on Defence, Nathan had a direct influence on the policy process. Nathan was a well-known anti-militarist during the apartheid era and he had close links with the ANC defence policy makers.

Nathan spoke in favour of common security and NOD as alternatives to the 'offensive defence approach of the SADF (South African Defence Force) during the Cold War'.<sup>55</sup> He argued that "... South Africa will undermine its own security if its doctrine and posture invoke insecurity in the states around it".<sup>56</sup> He argued for the acceptance of NOD in South African defence policy, but added that "... non-offensive defence in South Africa need not be as complex as that suggested for countries in heavily armed regions". In the absence of a clear military threat in Southern Africa, Nathan argued for the downscaling of South

Africa's offensive capabilities and made the following suggestions based on NOD:

- The reduction of armed forces to levels commensurate to neighbouring states.
- A volunteer reserve that should be the bulk of the fighting force and can only be mobilised over a long period, ruling out its use for surprise attack.
- Limiting the number of predominantly offensive weapons such as tanks, heavy and medium infantry fighting vehicles, long range bombers, ground-attack aircraft and ballistic missiles.
- Neighbouring states should be given adequate notice of major training manoeuvres and could be invited to send observers to these exercises.
- Undertaking confidence- and security-building measures, which provide for greater transparency.

All these principles were later accepted in the White Paper on Defence,<sup>57</sup> although suggestions for disarmament in the legislation did not make specific reference to downscaling certain weapon systems. These suggestions seemingly contributed to downsizing the military and promoting ideas such as the 'core-force approach'.<sup>58</sup>

#### *The role of the SANDF*

While policy makers supported principles of NOD, the SANDF supported a realist view of security.<sup>59</sup> SANDF Chief, Genl Georg Meiring, maintained the traditional approach towards the defence of South Africa. Although Meiring acknowledged the non-military security problems in Southern Africa such as poverty, illiteracy, disease, overpopulation and drought, he still argued for the maintenance of a strong military.<sup>60</sup> In a 1994/1995 annual report, Meiring argued that as South Africa entered into a new phase of relations with neighbouring states, new security challenges could only be addressed by establishing a strong military balance of power.<sup>61</sup> Although the SANDF accepted the fact that it had to perform secondary roles, it emphasised its primary role within the constitution. According to the South African Constitution, defence entails the protection of the country's territorial

integrity and its people, which is also the primary object of the SANDF.<sup>62</sup>

Non-offensive defence did not receive support from within the SANDF as it posed a major challenge to its force structures and operational doctrine.<sup>63</sup> As the SANDF's traditional doctrine was challenged, it took the offensive during defence debates and the Defence Review process in particular. The SANDF made an attempt to identify threats that would require military preparedness. The most likely threat scenario identified was the overflow of regional conflict and it was considered to be the most likely threat to national security. The SANDF argued that South Africa could be pulled into a regional conflict as a result of refugees and illegal immigrants fleeing to the Republic.

The opposing views within the defence debate were made possible by the broad view of security within the South African Constitution. The constitution focuses on both the security of the individual and the nation as a whole.<sup>64</sup> Some compromise had to be reached between these extreme views in order to achieve consensus. Although the leaders in the SANDF had a realist view of the international system,<sup>65</sup> the Minister of Defence at that time (Joe Modise) decided to allow idealist views in the White Paper on Defence for the sake of an undisputed and accepted defence policy document.<sup>66</sup> According to Bachelor:

... the contradictions between the traditional and new approaches to security which exist side by side in the White Paper have come about as a result of a process of compromise between the old and new, which is an essential feature of the 'negotiated revolution'.<sup>67</sup>

#### **The South African defensive posture and the concept of NOD**

The White Paper on Defence underlined the already strong support for a defensive posture.<sup>68</sup> Although the White Paper re-emphasised the concept 'defensive posture', it did not explain how it should be implemented.<sup>69</sup> The White Paper merely highlighted that operations should be conducted within the guidelines of

international law and that the adoption of a defensive and non-threatening military posture would contribute to promoting confidence and positive relationships in Southern Africa. The legislators of the White Paper left the strategic and technical implications of the constitutional provision of the SANDF's primarily defensive posture for the Defence Review process.

The Defence Review explained the defensive posture in much more detail.<sup>70</sup> During the Defence Review process attempts to explain the practical meaning of a primarily defensive posture entailed an examination of the concept non-offensive defence.<sup>71</sup> Many principles of NOD were 'borrowed' in order to broaden this concept.<sup>72</sup> The terminology used in South African defence policy documents did not refer explicitly to NOD and the content of policy documents often serve as a better indication. There is no clear reference to the term 'non-offensive defence'.

Direct reference to non-offensive defence was deliberately avoided during the Defence Review process due to its unpopularity among the more senior generals on the Defence Command Council.<sup>73</sup> These senior ex-SADF officers were sceptical about NOD and its ideas were regarded as philosophies of the 'anti-militarists'. The understanding of NOD principles by most of the SANDF representatives taking part in the Defence Review process was also limited and based on misperceptions.<sup>74</sup> The principles of NOD were, however, incorporated into defence policy within the concepts of 'confidence-building defence' and 'a primarily defensive posture'. This assisted in avoiding 'resistance in principle' to these NOD principles that were essential as the basis for developing the concept of a primarily defensive orientation and posture.

### **NOD principles in SA defence policy**

South Africa has accepted several principles of NOD in its defence policy, which was facilitated by the adoption of civil control over the military, accepting a defensive posture and predominantly defensive military structures. South Africa's defensive orientation is reinforced through executive and parliamentary control over the employment of the SANDF.<sup>75</sup>

According to Möller<sup>76</sup>, South Africa has accepted significant elements of NOD, which also appear in the Defence Review document, namely:

- being strategically defensive;
- having no weapons of mass destruction (WMD);
- having no manifestly offensive weapon systems;
- a commitment to use force only within the context of international law;
- having limited power projection capabilities;
- support for the principle of territorial defence; and
- having a small professional force and a large reserve that will take long to mobilise.

The South African Constitution and White Paper on Defence committed South Africa to its obligations under international laws and treaties.<sup>77</sup> The SANDF is therefore compelled not to contravene the law relating to aggression and situations of armed conflict. South Africa is bound to adhere to the UN Charter, which states that members shall refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state.

South Africa has stated that strategically it will have a defensive posture and that its military structures will only be sufficient to protect "... military and economic assets against offensive actions by an aggressor".<sup>78</sup> This also suggests that South Africa is not interested in power projection capabilities for offensive strategic action. Other NOD principles that were accepted in South African defence policy entail transparency and confidence-building measures. South Africa has openly stated in its published defence policy that it does not have aggressive intentions towards other states.<sup>79</sup> This policy also states that South Africa will pursue a "... common security regime, regional defence co-operation and confidence- and security-building measures in Southern Africa".<sup>80</sup>

Manifestly offensive weapons have been excluded from the force design of the SANDF.<sup>81</sup> The absence of WMD and overtly offensive weapons such as long-range missiles in the force structure of the SANDF, are an indication of this. South Africa has signed most of the treaties on WMD, including the Chemical

Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological and Toxins Weapons Convention.<sup>82</sup> South Africa stated that it abolished its nuclear weapons programme and signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1992. It also became an active sponsor of the African Nuclear Free Zone Treaty.

South Africa has accepted the principle of deterrence through a 'credible defence capability' to prevent future conflict.<sup>83</sup> It is argued that conventional deterrence can prevent armed conflict and will deter potential aggressors. This is similar to the NOD principle of deterrence through denial. The Defence Review also states that the defence capabilities of the SANDF should be strong enough to reverse the effects of foreign offensive action and to be able to drive an opponent from own territory.<sup>84</sup> It also set guidelines for operational doctrine, which state that the SANDF should be able to "... halt, contain and roll back such actions ...",<sup>85</sup> which requires the appropriate offensive capabilities at the operational level such as deep interdiction. This may be viewed as deviating from pure NOD models. The SANDF will follow a counter-force approach, which entails deterrence that threatens to destroy enemy forces and capabilities rather than civilian institutions and populations.<sup>86</sup> According to Williams, the SANDF's operational strategy reflects a synthesis of defensive and offensive components.<sup>87</sup>

The non-threatening deployment of forces is underlined by South African defence policy, which states that the force design of the SANDF must allow for the dispersion of forces, which will contribute towards confidence building in the region.<sup>88</sup> NOD entails that deployment should not be threatening in manner or location. Where practically and financially possible, mobile and offensive forces of the SANDF will be drawn from border areas to deeper internal bases. The location of South Africa's network of light infantry battalions across the country and mobile forces more towards the interior, demonstrates similarities with the 'Spider in the Web' model of NOD.<sup>89</sup> The SANDF is an infantry-based defence force and the dispersion of its infantry units is an effective way to promote non-threatening deployment in terms of location, and shares similarities with

territorial defence in this regard. It can therefore be concluded that South Africa's defence is largely based on a mixed model of NOD. This is clearly reflected in the SANDF's operational doctrine, which makes provision for interdiction capabilities, as well as territorial and mobile defence elements.

### **The relevance of NOD for South Africa**

According to Williams,<sup>90</sup> NOD has relevance for the Southern African context but the application of NOD in totality is not possible for political, geo-strategic, operational and financial reasons. The protection of South Africa's extensive borders, coastline and Economic Exclusion Zone requires mobile and some power projection capabilities. On the financial side NOD postures tend to be cheaper only if a military structure already consists of NOD-type systems, as opposed to dual-purpose armed forces capable of both offence and defence roles.<sup>91</sup> Le Roux<sup>92</sup> agrees with Williams's view and argues that South African defence policy is not based on a pure model of NOD and that a pure model would not suit South Africa's defence needs.

In Southern Africa, NOD-type restructuring has played an important role in enabling South Africa to take a leading political role in the region, without posing a threat to other states.<sup>93</sup> NOD principles were influential in creating the basic policy framework of South African defence policy in the mid 1990s and it corresponded with the South African Constitution.

As a new approach towards defence, NOD principles brought South Africa more in line with political aims to promote regional security co-operation and confidence building. After the Cold War, South Africa placed a high priority on defence co-operation with other Southern African states by strengthening the security and defence forums of the Southern African Development Community (SADC).<sup>94</sup> South Africa encourages a common security approach in Southern Africa and co-operation among SADC members to formulate political, security and defence policies. Common security arrangements that became highlighted were: negotiating security

agreements and treaties; confidence- and security-building measures; early warning of potential crisis; joint problem-solving; and the sharing of information, intelligence and resources. SADC's security agendas overlap with the initiatives of Africa, in which confidence building is also of importance.<sup>95</sup>

Common security and NOD ideas inherent to South Africa's security and defence policies further suit the country's objectives and principles as part of the African Union (AU) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). One of NEPAD's broad goals is the establishment of peace and security in Africa.<sup>96</sup> The Minister of Defence recently remarked that African states should deal with the continent's security problems:

... collectively and regional collectives like the SADC become more important. It is in this context that we are looking at a collective approach to defence on the Continent under the auspices of the African Union.<sup>97</sup>

One of the AU objectives in its Protocol for the establishment of the Peace and Security Council is the formulation of a common defence policy for the AU.<sup>98</sup> This 'common defence policy' for the AU is not a single policy for Africa, but a policy on how to respond collectively to threats.<sup>99</sup> The core value of this common policy is that the security of every African country is connected to the security of countries in Africa as a whole. Some of the AU's principles are the peaceful settlement of disputes, respect for international law, state sovereignty and territorial integrity. South Africa is part of the emerging debate about how Africa's peace and security structures can be strengthened and co-ordinated towards the establishment of a security community.<sup>100</sup> It is clear that NOD principles are relevant to the vision and objectives of South Africa as part of the AU and NEPAD, especially in terms of common security ideas.

## Conclusions

South Africa's defensive orientation in terms of defence policy came forth as result of anti-militarist sentiments and post-conflict fatigue in society, as well as a broader definition of security. Since the early 1990s, the proposals

for a defensive strategy and posture for the SANDF have received support from within the ANC and defence forums such as the JMCC. A defensive posture became one of South Africa's fundamental defence principles in the interim constitution and subsequent policy documents. In the White Paper on Defence and the Defence Review, several principles of NOD were accepted. Some of these principles included strategic defensiveness and having no WMD capabilities, overtly offensive weapons or major power projection capabilities. Other NOD principles that South Africa accepted include a commitment to the use of force according to international law, supporting territorial defence and having a small professional force with a large reserve. South Africa's defence principles and defence system is similar to a mixed model of NOD with dispersed light-infantry forces and mobile forces located towards the interior.

Although significant principles of NOD appear in South African defence policy, the term is not used in policy documents. NOD was unpopular among the senior generals of the Defence Command Council, who had a realist view of international relations and who were sceptical about NOD ideas and its advocates. The SANDF's representatives during the Defence Review Process had misperceptions about NOD and a limited understanding of its principles. NOD principles were, however, incorporated into defence policy within the concepts of 'confidence-building defence' and 'a primarily defensive posture', which helped to avoid 'resistance in principle' to NOD ideas, which were essential for developing the concept of a primarily defensive orientation and posture.

South Africa's support for principles of common security and NOD suits the country's objectives within SADC, the AU and NEPAD. Collective approaches to defence are encouraged among African countries and South Africa plays an active part in the emerging defence debates about common responses among African countries.

\*This article is based on a paper delivered at the 4th War and Society in Africa Conference, Faculty of Military Science, 4-6 September 2003.

## Notes

1. L du Plessis, A perspective on perspectives: The expanding focus of South African thinking on security, *Strategic Review for Southern Africa* 17(2), November 1995, p 27.
2. G Cawthra, From 'total strategy' to 'human security': The making of South Africa's defence policy 1990–1998, Copenhagen Peace Research Institute, 1999, <[www.copri.dk/publications/workingpapers.htm](http://www.copri.dk/publications/workingpapers.htm)> (November 2002), p 1; also published in University of Zimbabwe, *Journal of Peace, Conflict and Military Studies* 1(1), March 2000.
3. According to Björn Möller, the ANC's MPs supported the promotion of NOD as suggested in the publication *The changing of the guard, armed forces and defence policy in a democratic South Africa*, HSRC Publishers, Pretoria, 1994, which was written by Laurie Nathan, who was a member of the ANC's think-tank on security and the drafter of the White Paper on Defence (Source: Interview with B Möller, Saldanha, 15 April, 2003). Len le Roux indicated that principles of NOD were reflected in the interim constitution in 1993 (LN Le Roux, electronic correspondence on non-offensive defence, 3 December 2002, p 1).
4. A Butfoy, *Common security and strategic reform: A critical analysis*, St Martin's Press, New York, 1997, pp 39–40.
5. JS Goldstein, *International relations*, HarperCollins College Publishers, New York, 1994, p 218.
6. Butfoy, , op cit, p 38.
7. Goldstein, op cit, p 218.
8. G Wiseman, *Concepts of non-provocative defence, ideas and practices in international security*, Palgrave and St Anthony's College, New York, 2002, p 39.
9. D Gates, *Non-offensive defence, a strategic contradiction?*, Occasional Paper no 29, Institute for European Defence and Strategic Studies, Alliance Publishers, London, p 12.
10. Wiseman, op cit, p 40.
11. Wiseman, op cit, p 43.
12. B Dankbaar, Alternative defense policies and the peace movement, *Journal of Peace Research* 2 (1), p 150, with reference to the publication: H Afheldt, *Verteidigung und Frieden, politik mit militärischen mitteln*, Carl Hanser, Munchen.
13. L Unterseher, Confidence building defence for South Africa?, Study Group on Alternative Security Policy, January 1993, p 3.
14. Dankbaar, op cit, p 150.
15. R Wyn Jones, *Security, strategy and critical theory*, Lynne Rienner, London, 1999, p 157.
16. Ibid.
17. B Möller, The concept of security: Should it be redefined?, *The Journal of Strategic Studies* 24 (2), June 2001, p 22.
18. R Mandel, *The changing face of national security: A conceptual analysis*, Greenwood Press, Westport, 1994, p 57.
19. R Collins, Alternative defence: Transforming global security, Peace and Environment News, July–August 2002, <<http://perc.ca/PEN/2002-07-08/s-collins2.html>> (November 2002), p 1.
20. Möller, The concept of security: Should it be redefined?, op cit, p 22.
21. Butfoy, op cit, pp 38–40.
22. P Bachelor and S Willett, *Disarmament and defence, industrial adjustment in South Africa*, Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1998, p 134.
23. Butfoy, op cit, p 40.
24. B Möller, Non-offensive defence: A brief introduction, Copenhagen Peace Research Institute, <<http://www.copri.dk/copri/researchers/moeller/NOD-introduction.doc>> (November 2002), p 2.
25. Butfoy, op cit, p 39.
26. Ibid.
27. B Buzan, *An introduction to strategic studies, military technology and international relations*, International Institute for Strategic Studies, Macmillan Press, London, 1987, p 281.
28. Möller, Non-offensive defence: A brief introduction, op cit, p 2.
29. Butfoy, op cit, p 38.
30. K von Clausewitz, *On war*, translated by OJ Matthijs Jolles, The Modern Library, New York, 1943, p 318.
31. Butfoy, op cit, pp 38–46.
32. Wiseman, op cit, p 76.
33. Interview with B Möller, Saldanha, 15 April 2003.
34. A Shahi, Defense, disarmament, and collective security, in UNIDIR, *Non offensive defense, a global perspective*, Taylor and Francis, New York, 1990, p 172.
35. Interview B Möller, Saldanha, 15 April 2003.
36. Möller, Non-offensive defence: A brief introduction, op cit, p 1.
37. Butfoy, op cit, p 55.
38. Wiseman, op cit, p 76.
39. Möller, Non-offensive defence: A brief introduction, op cit, p 1.
40. Wiseman, op cit, p 77, with reference to Möller's views on models and blueprints in B Möller, *Common security and non offensive defence. A neorealist perspective*, Lynne Rienner, Boulder, 1992.
41. Unterseher, op cit, pp 4–5.
42. B Buzan, Does NOD have a future in the post-cold war world? in B Möller and H Wiberg (eds), *Non-offensive defence for the twenty-first century*, Westview Press, Boulder, 1994, pp 12–13.
43. CA Snyder, Regional security structures, in CA Snyder (ed), *Contemporary security and strategy*, Routledge, New York, 1999, p 112.
44. Butfoy, op cit, pp 45–49.
45. R Williams, Confidence-building defence and Southern Africa: The implications of non-offensive defence for South Africa's defence posture, *Strategic Review for Southern Africa*, 1997, p 46.
46. Ibid.
47. J Williams, *France, Summer 1940*, Purnell's History of the Second World War campaign, 6, Macdonald & Co, London, 1969, p 6.
48. Butfoy, op cit, p 47.

49. C Herzog, *The Arab-Israeli wars, war and peace in the Middle East*, Arms and Armour Press, London, 1982, p 317, with reference to the absence of a cautious and combined arms approach.
50. R Williams, op cit, p 32.
51. Ibid, p 49.
52. Cawthra, op cit, pp 4–7.
53. Interview with B Möller, Saldanha, 15 April, 2003.
54. Ibid.
55. L Nathan, *The changing of the guard, armed forces and defence policy in a democratic South Africa*, HSRC Publishers, Pretoria, 1994, p 74.
56. Ibid, p 78.
57. Defence in democracy, *White Paper on national defence for the Republic of South Africa*, as approved by Parliament on 14 May, 1996, suggestions a (p 6); b (p 33) ; c (p 6); d-e (p 23).
58. L Nathan, op cit, p 78.
59. ES Cochran, The pivotal state: post-apartheid South Africa, *Parameters, US Army War College Quarterly*, Winter 2000/2001, <<http://Carlisle-www.army.mil/usawc/parameters/00winter/Cochran.htm>> (July 2001), p 9.
60. Bachelor and Willett, op cit, p 131.
61. Ibid, with reference to *The National Defence Force in Transition: Annual Report, Financial Year 1994/1995*, South African Department of Defence, p 1.
62. The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996, Chapter 11, p 113.
63. Bachelor and Willett, op cit, p 135.
64. The Constitution, op cit, p 112.
65. Cochran, op cit, p. 9.
66. Tape recording of interview with Prof. D Fourie (Emeritus Professor, University of South Africa), 15 August 2001.
67. Bachelor and Willett, op cit, p 132.
68. *White Paper*, op cit, p 6.
69. L le Roux, Electronic interview on non-offensive defence, 3 December 2002, p 1.
70. Ibid.
71. G Cawthra, *Securing South Africa's democracy, defence, development and security in transition*, Macmillan press, London, 1997, p 157.
72. L le Roux, Electronic interview on non-offensive defence, op cit.
73. Ibid.
74. Ibid.
75. Defence Review of South Africa, *Department of Defence*, 1 Military Printing Regiment, Pretoria, 1998, p 9.
76. Interview with B Möller, Saldanha, 15 April 2003.
77. *White Paper*, op cit, p 8.
78. Defence Review, op cit, p 9.
79. Ibid, p 7.
80. Ibid.
81. Ibid, p 9.
82. T Motumi, South Africa and the nuclear non-proliferation treaty – diplomatic coup or pyrrhic victory? *African Security Review* 4(2), 1995, p 50.
83. Defence Review, op cit, p 7.
84. Ibid, p 16.
85. Ibid, p 9.
86. Ibid, p 5.
87. R Williams, op cit, p 51.
88. Defence Review, op cit, p 9.
89. R Williams, op cit, p 51.
90. Ibid, p 31.
91. Buzan, Does NOD have a future in the post-cold war world? op cit, p 14.
92. L le Roux, telephonic interview on South African defence policy, 4 December 2002.
93. Möller, Non-offensive defence: A brief introduction, op cit, p 2.
94. *White Paper*, op cit, p. 21.
95. A de Waal, What's new in the New Partnership for Africa's Development?, *International Affairs*, 78 (3), July 2002, p 473.
96. NEPAD, A summary of NEPAD action plans, <[www.avmedia.at/cgi-script/csNews/news\\_upload/NEPAD\\_2dCORE\\_2dDOCUMENTS\\_2edb.ASummaryofNEPADActionPlans.pdf](http://www.avmedia.at/cgi-script/csNews/news_upload/NEPAD_2dCORE_2dDOCUMENTS_2edb.ASummaryofNEPADActionPlans.pdf)> (August 2003), p 72.
97. M Lekota, Address by the Minister of Defence, the Hon Mosiuoa Lekota, MP, on the occasion of the defence budget vote, National Assembly, Cape Town, 13 June 2003, <[www.gov.za/gol/gcis\\_profile.jsp?id=1034](http://www.gov.za/gol/gcis_profile.jsp?id=1034)> (August 2003).
98. African Union, Protocol relating to the establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, Durban, South Africa, 10 July 2002, <[http://www.africa-union.org/Official\\_documents/Treaties\\_%20Conventions\\_%20Protocols/Protocol\\_peace%20and%20security.pdf](http://www.africa-union.org/Official_documents/Treaties_%20Conventions_%20Protocols/Protocol_peace%20and%20security.pdf)> (August 2003), p 5.
99. M Lekota, op cit.
100. De Waal, op cit, p 473.