



# THE BOTSWANA DEFENCE FORCE

## *Evolution of a professional African military*

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### Introduction

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The Botswana's military is all the more remarkable in that it is maintained by a government noted for moderate and conciliatory foreign policies and is drawn from a society that emphasises consultation and consensus rather than military power.<sup>2</sup> Botswana's political and economic successes have been chronicled elsewhere,<sup>3</sup> and civil-military relations in the country have been examined by capable scholars,<sup>4</sup> so those issues need not be explored here. The purpose of this article is simply to describe the evolution of Botswana's military establishment, note some of its current dimensions, and call attention to several of its key features. Whether Botswana's model can (or

should) be replicated elsewhere is not a primary interest of this study, but Botswana's experience offers lessons that may well be of concern to any student of military affairs in Africa.

### Origins of the Botswana Defence Force

At the time of independence Botswana's new leaders deliberately rejected the opportunity to establish a national army, opting instead for a small paramilitary capability in a Police Mobile Unit.<sup>5</sup> The country's modest resources reinforced the decision: there simply was no money for a larger public sector. That choice, however, was soon severely challenged by the violent decolonisation struggles in the region, a traumatic process directly involving several of Botswana's neighbours including Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), Angola, South West Africa (now Namibia) and ultimately South Africa. Military and insurgent forces in these conflicts were significantly larger and better armed than Botswana's small police force. None of the neighbours hesitated to violate Botswana's borders when it suited their purposes.

Rhodesia posed the most pressing security challenge in the early years. In 1965, in an effort to avert black majority rule, the white minority government of that colony made a unilateral declaration of independence from the United Kingdom. By the late 1960s, Rhodesia's government was engaged in an escalating conflict against two indigenous insurgent armies.<sup>6</sup> The war drove a steady flow of refugees into north-eastern Botswana. It also motivated Rhodesian insurgents to seek safe-haven and (later) lines of communication and routes of infiltration through Botswana among a population that generally was sympathetic to their struggle. Botswana's government studiously refrained from involving itself in liberation wars, but by the mid-1970s Rhodesian security forces were making regular incursions into Botswana to kidnap or kill anti-Rhodesian dissidents.<sup>7</sup> These operations did

not discriminate between insurgents and local citizens; nor did the Rhodesians make significant efforts to limit collateral damage.

The Rhodesians were not the only threat on the borders. South African agents kept tabs on anti-apartheid activists in Botswana and by the late 1970s had been responsible for a number of assassinations and kidnappings in the country.<sup>8</sup> At the same time, the conflict between the South African administration and its insurgent opponents in neighbouring South West Africa (now Namibia) increased in intensity, threatening Botswana's north and west border regions with flows of refugees and armed groups. The Botswana Police could not cope with these threats, and citizens threatened by the cross-border violence increasingly clamoured for protection from their government in Gaborone.<sup>9</sup>

As a result, in April 1977 the country reversed its earlier decision, and by Act of Parliament, established the Botswana Defence Force (BDF), an unambiguously military establishment.<sup>10</sup> The nucleus of the new military – 132 men – was drawn from the Police Mobile Unit.<sup>11</sup> The Deputy Botswana Police Commissioner, Mompoti S Merafhe, was commissioned a major general and appointed commander of the new force.<sup>12</sup> His second-in-command, holding the rank of brigadier, was Seretse Khama Ian Khama, the 24-year-old Sandhurst-trained son of Botswana's founding president.<sup>13</sup> By the end of 1977 the new Botswana Defence Force numbered some 600 men. It contained five light infantry companies, a reconnaissance company, an air arm and a variety of small support units.<sup>14</sup> It was headquartered at a military installation just north of Botswana's capital city with the Air Arm stationed at a base within Gaborone itself.<sup>15</sup>

The establishment of the BDF was clearly a reaction to the deteriorating regional security situation in the 1970s, but Botswana's options had also been fundamentally transformed by the discovery of diamonds earlier in the decade. Botswana would ultimately become the world's leading producer of gem diamonds, and the government proved very

astute in the management of its newfound mineral riches. By the late 1970s the new diamond wealth was flowing to the government's priorities, including defence, in a manner unthinkable in the years immediately after independence.<sup>16</sup>

### The early years

While the new military establishment initially was quite popular among Botswana's citizens, its capabilities were very limited.<sup>17</sup> The numbers were small and the equipment was very light. The BDF lacked the training and experience to confront the Special Forces of its belligerent neighbours. This was made painfully clear in February 1978, less than a year after its founding. Responding to reports of a Rhodesian military incursion along Botswana's north-eastern border near the village of Lesoma, a BDF-mounted patrol drove directly into a Rhodesian ambush, sustaining 15 dead.<sup>18</sup> The 'Lesoma Incident' was a tragedy and a harsh lesson for the fledgling force. But it galvanised an intention among Botswana's leaders to improve the country's military capabilities. The Lesoma tragedy is still recalled in Botswana as a key event in BDF history.<sup>19</sup>

Within a decade of its founding, the BDF had grown by a factor of ten – to approximately 6 000 personnel. By 1988 its ground forces had been organised into two infantry brigades, one based in Gaborone and the other in Francistown.<sup>20</sup> Its reconnaissance company had grown into a well-trained commando squadron of about 120 personnel. Also by this time, the BDF had acquired substantially greater firepower and mobility, with a modest inventory of US-made Cadillac-Gage V-150 light-wheeled fighting vehicles and Soviet-designed BTR-60 armoured personnel carriers. Its air arm, at the time still based in Gaborone, now included about a dozen Bell helicopters, four Casa light transport aircraft, and eleven British-made Strikemaster light attack jets.<sup>21</sup> But the numbers alone do not tell the whole story. The BDF had begun to develop productive relationships with foreign partners.

The partnerships ranged across a spectrum of training and materiel acquisition. By the mid-1980s, US and British forces were conducting small-scale annual combined exercises with the BDF in Botswana. At the same time, the country engaged in a vigorous effort to broaden its military officers, sending them *en masse* to military schools in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and India. Among these were the first BDF personnel to attend command and staff and war colleges, essential education for senior military leaders in the armies of developed countries. Along with various early equipment acquisitions in the 1980s, the government of Botswana invited the government of India to send a sizeable military team, primarily to assist in the maintenance and upkeep of the growing inventory of equipment, a bilateral relationship that has endured to the present.<sup>22</sup> The various partnerships contributed to substantial and growing professionalism, evident in the BDF by the end of the 1980s, but it was neither quickly nor easily achieved.

The 1980s were troubled years in southern Africa, and Botswana's military struggled during this period to define itself and its role. Its continuing inability to protect the country's long and porous borders eroded public confidence, and several egregious acts of indiscipline by BDF personnel in the 1980s tarnished its image in Botswana.<sup>23</sup> Military incursions from neighbouring Rhodesia continued until that country's transition to majority rule (as independent, majority-ruled Zimbabwe) in 1980, and the border remained tense for years afterwards as competing parties in Zimbabwe struggled for ascendancy.<sup>24</sup> Meanwhile, the threat from South Africa persisted, and Botswana's military improvements could never match its neighbour's might, nor could the BDF deter attacks against suspected insurgent targets. This was illustrated most dramatically by a brazen, large-scale South African raid in June 1985 against African National Congress (ANC) targets in Gaborone that left six people wounded and twelve dead, including two Botswana citizens and a Dutch expatriate. The South Africans accomplished their objectives and withdrew

without significant casualties.<sup>25</sup> The incursion was followed by humiliating rumours – vigorously denied by the BDF leadership – that the South Africans had given advance notice of an impending raid and had warned Botswana's military not to interfere.<sup>26</sup>

In the 1980s the South Africans continued their fight against insurgents in neighbouring Namibia and regularly intervened in the civil war in Angola on the side of Jonas Savimbi's UNITA rebels.<sup>27</sup> These conflicts were waged in close proximity to Botswana's northern border, sending recurring waves of refugees into Namibia. Groups of armed men circulated through the entire region, some connected to the warring parties, others engaged in predatory criminal behaviour. By the mid-1980s the BDF was conducting sporadic patrolling of the northern border area in an effort to provide some border security, although the small size of the force in comparison to the length of ill-defined border posed considerable challenges.

One significant menace that grew throughout the 1980s was poaching of Botswana's large animals – its 'megafauna'. The game-rich northern areas of the country were particularly threatened. Well-armed gangs of poachers from neighbouring countries took advantage of the regional instability and the porous borders to attack Botswana's rhinos and elephants.<sup>28</sup> The gangs also robbed local citizens and safari companies. In 1987 the BDF assumed an explicit anti-poaching role, but the new mission was risky – at least one other country in the region had deployed its military in anti-poaching roles and had failed.<sup>29</sup> Failure in Botswana (or 'over-zealous' execution) could have significantly discredited a force only a decade old. Moreover, the new mission came at a time that the country's long borders were still threatened by an aggressive South Africa, and Botswana's 6 000-man military had neither the numbers nor the mobility and combat power to confront the South Africans. Yet, in hindsight, the gamble paid off. By hard effort and effective operations, the BDF largely ended the megafauna poaching, and it has maintained deterrent forces in the northern game areas to the present day.

The success of this mission has been a public relations bonanza for the BDF.<sup>30</sup>

A significant milestone occurred in 1989, when the founding commander of the BDF, Lieutenant General Mompoti Merafhe, retired to enter politics<sup>31</sup> and his former deputy, Seretse Khama Ian Khama, was appointed the new commander. Khama brought a different leadership style and new priorities to this role. Like his predecessor, Khama was a strict disciplinarian, bordering on the puritanical. However, he had the reputation of being a 'hands-on' leader who cared about his troops, inspected frequently, and fought successfully for troop benefits. This made him popular among the rank and file. One of Khama's first endeavours was construction of a major new military facility – Thebephatshwa Airbase – near the town of Molepolole, some 50 km north-west of the capital – a massive project begun in 1989 and completed only in the mid-1990s.<sup>32</sup> This base would ultimately house Botswana's growing inventory of military aircraft and its commando squadron. The new military commander was secretive about his base and about BDF operations in general, which generated some unease among neighbouring countries and unanswered questions in Botswana itself.<sup>33</sup>

### **New roles and missions in the 1990s**

The security situation in southern Africa changed dramatically in the 1990s. The advent of the F W de Klerk government in South Africa in 1989 accelerated a process of political reform that culminated in South Africa's transition to majority rule in 1994. During this period, after years of tortuous negotiations, the South Africans withdrew their forces from Angola and Namibia, and Namibia achieved its independence in 1990.<sup>34</sup> By the early 1990s the threat of South African military intervention in Botswana had largely dissipated, although there was still a distinct possibility that South Africa's future transition to majority rule could send waves of refugees across the border into Botswana. The border areas with Zimbabwe and Namibia also remained troubled.<sup>35</sup>

In the 1990s (and even into the new century) Botswana's relationship with newly independent Namibia was continuously beset with security-related squabbles. In 1992 a crisis erupted over ownership of a small, seasonally inundated island in the Chobe River along the northern border, initiated when a small Namibian military force occupied the island.<sup>36</sup> The conflicting border claims resulted in some military reinforcements of the area and a propaganda campaign waged in the media of both countries, though tensions subsided when both agreed to international arbitration in 1995.<sup>37</sup> However, by 1998 a low-intensity secessionist insurgency had sputtered to life in Namibia's Caprivi Strip (the narrow strip of Namibian territory bordering Botswana on the north). Namibian refugees and insurgents sought safe-haven in Botswana, requiring additional BDF attention to the security of the northern border. Since the 1970s Botswana, with a tradition of clemency for political refugees, had maintained a refugee camp at Dukwe in northern Botswana, directing asylum seekers and displaced persons to the camp. However, in 2000 Namibia's leaders accused Botswana of harbouring insurgents in the camp and demanded their repatriation, an issue that troubled relations until it was settled in 2003.<sup>38</sup>

The 1990s were significant years for the expansion of roles and missions of the BDF, particularly as it began to deploy for peace operations. The year 1992 marked the first external mission – when the BDF deployed for US-led peacekeeping operations in Somalia.<sup>39</sup> Botswana dispatched a multi-company infantry task force.<sup>40</sup> In its first several months in Somalia, the BDF troops were attached to a US Marine Battalion in Mogadishu and performed the same peacekeeping duties as the marines, earning praise for their professionalism.<sup>41</sup> By March 1993 the US-led operation had transitioned into a UN operation,<sup>42</sup> and the BDF commitment continued until the UN operation ended in August 1994. During this period the BDF rotated four separate troop contingents through Somalia, using its military transport aircraft in regular flights to resupply its

forces.<sup>43</sup> Despite the unresolved situation in Somalia when the UN departed in 1994, the experience was positive for Botswana, providing the BDF with new experience, good public relations exposure and greater confidence in its own abilities. The deployment proved popular with officers and men.<sup>44</sup>

After the deployment to Somalia, Botswana began to dispatch military personnel as peace operations observers elsewhere in Africa. These included a 14-member BDF observer team in Rwanda in 1993<sup>45</sup> and two military officers to the National Peacekeeping Force deployed in South Africa to facilitate that country's first democratic multi-party elections in 1994.<sup>46</sup> Perhaps as a consequence of the positive BDF experience in Somalia, Botswana volunteered in 1993 to participate in a UN peacekeeping mission in Mozambique.<sup>47</sup> In a year-long commitment, it furnished the UN Command with a battalion-sized infantry contingent whose primary role was to provide security along northern Mozambique's troubled Tete transportation corridor. The BDF also engaged in various desperately needed humanitarian relief projects in Mozambique. These operations, too, were regarded as a considerable success by both the BDF participants and external observers.<sup>48</sup>

The year 1994 was significant in southern Africa. South Africa transitioned to majority rule in April of that year and an Africa National Congress (ANC) government came to power under the leadership of Nelson Mandela. Relations between South Africa and Botswana improved immediately. These events coincided with a political crisis in the small southern African kingdom of Lesotho, resulting in instability and violence. Reacting to the crisis in Lesotho, several southern African countries (including South Africa and Botswana) consulted on military intervention to re-establish order. The crisis ebbed without external intervention, though the situation remained unstable. Then, in 1998, order again broke down in Lesotho and elements of Lesotho's small army mutinied. A Southern African Development Community (SADC) task force intervened in September 1998, with

forces from South Africa and Botswana (some 600 troops from South Africa and 380 from Botswana).<sup>49</sup> This intervention began as a messy peace enforcement operation, although order in Lesotho was ultimately restored and the SADC Task Force withdrawn by May 1999.<sup>50</sup> Botswana subsequently contributed to a combined military training programme in Lesotho (with South Africa and Zimbabwe), which lasted until May 2000,<sup>51</sup> followed by a small advisory presence within the Lesotho Ministry of Defence.<sup>52</sup> Since 1998 the Botswana Defence Force has not participated in external operations other than exercises and the small military assistance presence in Lesotho. Senior BDF leaders have characterised this a temporary respite to facilitate 'transformation'<sup>53</sup> and have suggested to local diplomats that they intend to participate in future peace operations in Africa once their reorganisation is complete.<sup>54</sup>

The 1998 intervention in Lesotho reflected a significant new dimension in the evolution of southern African security affairs. Majority rule in South Africa in 1994 led quickly to a redefinition of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), an organisation originally founded to reduce the regional impact of South African hegemony.<sup>55</sup> South Africa joined that community almost immediately after majority rule. The organisation's redefined interests included greater regional commitment to collective security, providing a new structure and forum for consultation on security issues.<sup>56</sup> The inclusion of South Africa seemed to energise an interest in cooperation among regional military establishments, evident in a series of regional joint military exercises begun in 1997. The BDF participated in these regional events.<sup>57</sup>

By the 1990s Botswana's government had committed its military to a recurring series of operations within Botswana itself. In addition to the anti-poaching operations, these included two separate programmes to assist the national police in anti-crime activities,<sup>58</sup> flood relief during years of particularly heavy rain,<sup>59</sup> and participation in national efforts to control livestock diseases (under the purview of the Ministry of Agriculture).<sup>60</sup> In every case, the

BDF displayed good planning and competent execution, a performance that it was able to exploit in the local media. Its participation in anti-crime patrols in Botswana's cities has (in the public mind) reduced the level of violent crime. The BDF leadership apparently accepted these tasks with equanimity, and the government of Botswana appears to be very satisfied with the BDF performance. BDF officers stressed to the author in mid-2004 that these were appropriate operations 'in support of civil authority' and indicated that these are roles that the BDF will probably perform again in future situations of national emergency.<sup>61</sup>

### Expansion and modernisation in the 1990s

Despite the attenuation of external threats, the 1990s were a period of substantial growth for the Botswana Defence Force. By the end of the decade, the force had surpassed a size of 10 000 personnel. It had also seen substantial increases in its firepower and mobility. Ian Khama, whose nine-year tenure as BDF commander ended in 1998, oversaw much of this expansion and seems to have been a prime mover behind the military growth.<sup>62</sup> Some detail is illustrative.

The BDF Air Arm was significantly upgraded in 1996 by the acquisition from Canada of thirteen CF-5A/D Freedom Fighters, Botswana's first modern combat aircraft.<sup>63</sup> This was followed the next year by the addition of three surplus US Air Force C-130B transport aircraft.<sup>64</sup> These two systems represented a quantum increase in Botswana's air combat and airlift capability. Botswana also acquired new ground force equipment in the mid-1990s, including a twelve-gun battery of new 105 mm howitzers and twenty Alvis Scorpion light tanks from the United Kingdom, along with fifty Steyr-Daimler-Puch SK 105 light tanks from Austria.<sup>65</sup> At about the same time Botswana tried to purchase 54 surplus (German-made) Leopard-1 main battle tanks from the Netherlands, but this failed when Germany blocked the sale.<sup>66</sup> The negotiations nonetheless indicated a continuing BDF

interest in a credible armoured force.

By the late 1990s the BDF leadership had begun to describe an interest in 'transformation' - a topic much in vogue in the military establishments of the developed West. This process in the Botswana Defence Force appears to have at least two dimensions. Part of it involves the expansion of the size of the force, the deployment of more modern equipment and the creation of new structure. The second, perhaps more significant, change is a clearer definition of roles and missions. This redefinition may relate to a broad, government-wide initiative to define Botswana's social and economic development (*Vision 2016*).<sup>67</sup> However, they also seem to stem from the personal initiative of the third BDF Commander, Matshenyego-Louis Fisher, elevated to the position in 1998. Fisher, a graduate of the US Army Command and General Staff College and US Army War College, has had long exposure to the US emphasis on national military strategy.<sup>68</sup> His tenure has coincided with continuing dramatic expansion of the BDF, and more specifically with an ongoing emphasis on redefined roles and missions, issues typically anchored in a military strategy.<sup>69</sup> Fisher had indicated an intention to retire from the military in late 2004,<sup>70</sup> but seems to have been persuaded by the country's senior political leaders to delay his retirement.

### The Botswana Defence Force in 2004

By 2004 the BDF had grown to just over 12 000 personnel (heading towards a planned ultimate level of about 15 000). Its ground forces were being reorganised into three infantry brigades and an armoured brigade. One of the infantry brigades is headquartered near Gaborone, another near Francistown in the north. The headquarters of the third is being organised at Ghanzi in the west of the country. Each of the infantry brigades is responsible for the security of a significant area of the country.<sup>71</sup> The armoured brigade is stationed near Gaborone.

The Botswana Defence Force Air Arm, a force of about 500 personnel organised into

five squadrons, is based at Thebephatshwa Air Base near Molepolole (about 50 km north-west of Gaborone). It maintains significant alternate air bases at Francistown and Maun and has access to smaller airfields around the country.<sup>72</sup> It has an inventory of about 45 operational aircraft.<sup>73</sup> Since the mid-1990s, Air Arm upgrading has given it the ability to lift significant numbers of ground force troops throughout the country (and throughout the region). It is able to provide significant aerial reconnaissance and logistic support to ground forces. Its ability to provide air defence or close air support is less clear.

Military expenditure in Botswana has risen steady in the past two decades from US\$34,3 million in 1985 to US\$228 million in 2003. In the 1990s it averaged 3,8 per cent of the gross domestic product.<sup>74</sup> The BDF is much more generously funded than the national police and (particularly since the 1990s) has been able to realise many of its infrastructural and equipment priorities. The weapons acquisitions programmes in the 1990s resulted in significant increases in the BDF equipment inventory. These acquisitions are widely believed in Botswana to be the personal passion of Ian Khama, the BDF commander from 1989 to 1998.

Botswana's military spending since the early 1990s has raised questions in the region and has sparked some political controversy in the country itself, but Botswana's Executive Branch has not formally explained its rationale to Parliament or the public. However, it is not difficult to identify several likely motivations. Memories of the 1970s and 1980s still rankle, when bellicose neighbours violated Botswana's sovereignty with casual impunity. Despite the growing regional cooperation in the 1990s, Botswana has unresolved issues with all proximate states. Also, with the exception of Zambia and Namibia, virtually all the nearby states have much larger military establishments than Botswana. Botswana's leaders do not seem to consider any regional actor an immediate military threat, but they seem interested in a military capability that provides credibility in any security initiative. The BDF is manifestly not large enough at this

point to pose a significant offensive threat to any neighbouring state, but it is much more capable of rapid deployment to defend Botswana's borders and airspace than it was a mere decade ago.

### Organisational culture

Several features of its organisational culture have enhanced BDF capabilities. These include high standards of discipline, emphasis on education, and competent leadership at all levels.<sup>75</sup> The Botswana Defence Force starts with good human material. It is very selective in recruitment of its personnel<sup>76</sup> and education plays a key role in personnel selection and career progression.<sup>77</sup> The BDF sends many of its officers to courses elsewhere in Africa and overseas. Canada, France, India, the United Kingdom and the United States are frequent destinations.<sup>78</sup> One knowledgeable source estimated in 2004 that 75 per cent of BDF officers above the rank of major are graduates of US military schools.<sup>79</sup>

Its operations since the early 1990s have brought the BDF an almost unqualified stream of good publicity. Military service in Botswana now carries substantial prestige, providing notable benefits and interesting employment to its members. Military positions are highly sought after. The BDF sees itself – and citizens see it – as the most capable of the country's 'disciplined services'.<sup>80</sup> Its members believe they are faithful stewards of resources entrusted by the nation to their care. Its professional orientation spills over into resource management. The BDF maintains extensive repair facilities that foreign military observers have found to be well equipped and well staffed. It stresses preventive maintenance in its training programmes. It keeps its weapons, ground vehicles and aircraft in good repair.

The professional behaviour of BDF personnel is encouraged by a generous scale of pay and allowances, correlated since about 2002 with the pay of other civil servants in the country.<sup>81</sup> BDF personnel are well and reliably paid, affording a middle-class standard of living for officers and relative comfort for other ranks. BDF personnel can retire at the

end of twenty years of service with a reasonable pension. The regularity and adequacy of remuneration significantly reduces the incentive for graft that has afflicted many other African militaries.<sup>82</sup> The BDF commitment to high standards of professional behaviour is reinforced by a national aversion to corruption enshrined in a long-standing government anti-corruption ethic. This has kept Botswana's public sector remarkably free of that problem, a circumstance that is also true of the country's military establishment.<sup>83</sup>

### Issues and concerns

While Botswana can take justifiable pride in the quality and accomplishments of its small defence force, several features of Botswana's civil-military relations, and several characteristics of the BDF itself should provoke concern.

Botswana's progressive economic policies and regular multiparty elections tend to mask the dominance of the ruling party and an executive so strong that one scholar characterises the government as a 'quasi-elected "soft" autocracy' and the governing style as 'authoritarian liberalism'.<sup>84</sup> Considerable power is concentrated in the office of the President. This has very specific ramifications for the military. In the military's founding legislation, the president was designated 'commander in chief', with the prerogative of selecting the Defence Force commander and promoting all officers above the rank of major.<sup>85</sup> The president was also authorised to deploy the military in whole or in part without further consultation. The Act did not create a Ministry of Defence, delegating that role instead to the Office of the President. Nor did the legislation specify any particular role for the National Assembly in the oversight of the military. No mention was made of a legislative role in allocating funding or employment of the force.<sup>86</sup> At least one legislative entity – the Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs, Trade and Security – has a constitutional responsibility to oversee military affairs. However, there is little indication that this committee plays much of a role in military oversight. Legislators presumptive enough to

question security-related allocations are rather peremptorily silenced in parliamentary debate.<sup>87</sup> Scholars and media correspondents have criticised this concentration of power in the executive branch.<sup>88</sup>

The concentration of power is more worrisome in view of a peculiar obsession for secrecy on the part of both the executive branch and the military itself. This not only applies to the large issues of operations and equipment acquisition but also extends to very mundane and seemingly innocuous issues, including the exact size of the force and the levels of pay and allowances for personnel. It has the force of law: a National Security Act enacted by the National Assembly in 1986 prohibits the disclosure of any information the government considers privileged, with penalties of up to 25 years' imprisonment.<sup>89</sup> Not surprisingly, local scholars have criticised the obsession.<sup>90</sup> The quest for secrecy made some sense in the 1980s when Botswana's sovereignty was regularly violated by external forces. It makes much less sense in this era of regional cooperation, when countries increasingly are seeking to engage their attentive publics and their neighbours in productive consultations on issues of regional security.

The powerful position of the executive branch in relationship to the Defence Force raises another key question relating to civil-military relations in Botswana: how are decisions made on substantive issues of national security policy? The most perceptive observers of national politics in Botswana believe that essential security-related decisions are made by a small group of senior officials that are close confidantes of the president, with limited consultation outside this circle, a feature difficult to reconcile with liberal democratic norms of accountability and transparency.<sup>91</sup> Significantly, this inner circle includes the past and present commanders of the BDF.<sup>92</sup> Clearly, the senior military leadership is well represented in the councils of state.

No discussion of politics or military affairs in Botswana can avoid a discussion of Seretse Khama Ian Khama. He is the most eminent member of what might be called the 'first family' of Botswana. His father, Sir Seretse

Khama, was a national hero, prominent in the struggle for full national independence, and founder of the party that has governed the country since independence, serving as the country's president from its founding in 1966 until his death in office in 1980.<sup>93</sup> When the Defence Force was created in 1977, Ian Khama was appointed its deputy commander with the rank of brigadier. Twelve years later, in 1989, he acceded to the command of the BDF with the rank of lieutenant general, a post he subsequently held for nine years. Khama's service spanned the formative period of the Defence Force's evolution, and despite his retirement in 1998 to enter politics, he continues to have a close connection with Botswana's military. Khama's current positions of vice-president and party chair of the ruling party are widely believed in Botswana to guarantee his accession to the presidency when the incumbent, Festus Mogae, steps down. However, Khama's activities over the course of his military and political career have provoked controversy and he is accused of having very authoritarian tendencies.<sup>94</sup> Many among Botswana's educated elite view a future Khama presidency with some trepidation.

While the attributes of BDF generally conform to norms of Western military establishments, and would elicit the commendation of Western analysts, a couple may pose problems for future civil-military relations, and could undermine BDF effectiveness. These include elitist tendencies and the possibility of some political factionalism in the force. Each warrants a brief comment.

The benefits and prestige that accrue to the BDF as an organisation, and to its individual members, are responsible for a certain amount of elitism. This is particularly true in comparison to the national police force, which has struggled over the years to recruit and retain the same quality of personnel as the military. The BDF is much more lavishly equipped with high-technology modern equipment than the police, and its role is more prestigious. Botswana's citizens in general, including members of the military, are somewhat contemptuous of police capabilities.<sup>95</sup> The continuing use of the military in internal security roles

probably retards the development of police capabilities and may ultimately involve the military in domestic security controversies that undermine its rapport with the citizenry.<sup>96</sup>

The contemporary roles of the Defence Force are broad for a conventional military, suggesting that the government of Botswana and the BDF subscribe to a wide view of 'security' and consider the Defence Force an appropriate agency for attaining much of it, an issue that has been discussed even in the BDF's own internal media.<sup>97</sup> A clear norm in the BDF is that soldiers should be apolitical servants of the state and have no business involving themselves in partisan political squabbles,<sup>98</sup> but there are unverifiable rumours in the BDF that some of its senior leaders are unenthusiastic about the broad roles, preferring a greater focus on maintaining conventional war fighting skills, but such views (if they exist) certainly are not made public.

There were also rumours in the mid-1990s of some factionalism in the Defence Force, arrayed along the lines of the ruling BDP party's internal politics.<sup>99</sup> The military leaders, of course, vociferously denied these allegations at the time.<sup>100</sup> Officially the Defence Force strongly discourages political activity within the force, and whatever political differences may exist, they are not readily visible to outsiders.

### Concluding assessment

Over the course of a quarter of a century Botswana has created and developed a small but highly professional military establishment. The original incentive for creating the force was the desire for protection from external threat, an aspiration ultimately realised more by regional political evolution than by military power. Ironically, the capability of the Botswana Defence Force increased even as the external threat decreased, and it continues to grow. Today, Botswana still fields a military significantly smaller than that of neighbours such as South Africa, Zimbabwe and Angola, and does not seem to have any intention of matching the

military power of these regional actors. It does, however, appear to be seeking a military capability to 'play outside its league' – developing a force capable of fulfilling a range of modern roles from protection of national sovereignty to peace enforcement.

Unlike many African military establishments, the Botswana Defence Force enjoys generally good relations with the Botswana public. It appears to be much more highly regarded than it was in the mid-1980s. This has been due in part to its demonstrated competence, and a certain sophistication in its connections with the national media. Since the late 1980s it has been able to portray itself as a highly disciplined force that refrains from abusing the rights of citizens. This is an enviable reputation, but one that could be easily compromised by a few well-publicised incidents. The government's tendency to use the BDF in internal security roles thus holds some danger.

The current BDF commander, Lieutenant General Matshwenyego-Louis Fisher, has made a considerable effort to define the roles and missions of the force, and is overseeing a continuing expansion of its capabilities. However, Botswana's rather secretive processes of executive branch security decision-making has precluded the kind of healthy national debate (such as occurred in neighbouring South Africa in the late 1990s) that could make the public an engaged 'stakeholder' in establishing the structures and dimensions of national security. Security sector reform elsewhere in Africa has emphasised just such consultation and debate.

Despite the potential problems and dangers, Botswana deserves considerable credit for fielding a capable military with high standards of professional expertise and professional behaviour. The country has demonstrated consistency and perseverance in developing this public sector institution, and has avoided the mistake of attempting to construct a capability that it could not afford. The Botswana Defence Force is a credit to its country and has the potential to play very productive roles in the region as a whole.

## Notes

- 1 The roots of the institution are found in the Bechuanaland Mounted Police founded by the British colonial administration at the outset of the Bechuanaland Protectorate in the mid-1880s. It evolved into a fairly conventional colonial constabulary as the Bechuanaland Border Police, then the Bechuanaland Protectorate Police, before becoming the Botswana Police Force at independence in 1966 and, ultimately, the Botswana Police Service.
- 2 This preference is well expressed in a Tswana proverb, *Ntwa kgolo ke ya molomo* ('the best way to resolve conflict is through the mouth' [for example through dialogue]).
- 3 See, for instance, Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson and James A Robinson, *An African success story: Botswana*, Unpublished text, 11 July 2001, available at <[http://econ.www.mit.edu/faculty/download\\_pdf.php?id=610](http://econ.www.mit.edu/faculty/download_pdf.php?id=610)>; Kenneth Good, Interpreting the exceptionality of Botswana, *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 30(1) March 1992, pp 69-95.
- 4 See, *inter alia*, Mpho G Molomo, Civil-military relations in Botswana's developmental state, *African Studies Quarterly*, online journal available at <[www.web.africa.ufl.edu](http://www.web.africa.ufl.edu)>; Lekoko Kenosi, The Botswana Defence Force and public trust: the military dilemma in a democracy, in R Williams, G Cawthra and D Abrahams (eds), *Ourselves to know*, Pretoria, Institute for Security Studies, 2003; Tendekani E Malebeswa, Civil control of the military in Botswana, in Williams, Cawthra and Abrahams (eds), *Ourselves to know*.
- 5 Richard Dale, The politics of national security in Botswana, 1900-1990, *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 12(1) 1993, pp 42-55; Kenosi, The Botswana Defence Force and public trust, p 190.
- 6 One was the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA), the armed wing of the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) political party, the other was the Zimbabwe Independent People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA), the armed wing of the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU).
- 7 H Ellert, *The Rhodesian Front War*, Gweru, Zimbabwe, Mambo Press, 1993, pp 114, 136.
- 8 Molomo, Civil-military relations, p 5.
- 9 The demand for additional security became part of the political party competition in Botswana when the opposition Botswana People's Party led by Philip Matante began to advocate the creation of an army. See Molomo, Civil-military relations, p 5.
- 10 BDF Act Chapter 21:05, 1977.
- 11 The Police Mobile Unit had received training from British Army instructors as early as 1967, a programme formalised in a bilateral agreement with the United Kingdom in 1968. Dale, The politics of national security in Botswana, p 44.
- 12 Merafhe had held the position of Deputy Police Commissioner since 1971. Botswana Defence Force briefing publication provided to the author by Brigadier E B Rakgole, BDF Assistant Chief of Staff Operations in March 2004/
- 13 Khama entered Sandhurst in 1972, the first citizen of Botswana to attend that institution. On his return to Botswana he was posted to the Police Mobile Unit. *Botswana Defence Force, 25th Anniversary Commemorative Brochure* (distributed by the Botswana Defence Force), Gaborone, Front Page Publications, 2002, pp 12-13.
- 14 Ibid.
- 15 The original air order of battle consisted of twelve BNG BN2A-21 Defender transport aircraft, supplemented in the mid-1980s with six BAC Strikemaster light attack jets. See <[www4.janes.com/K2/doc](http://www4.janes.com/K2/doc)>.
- 16 See, for instance, Michael Niemann, Diamonds are a state's best friend: Botswana's foreign policy in southern Africa, *Africa Today*, 1st Quarter 1993, pp 27-47.
- 17 Kenosi, The Botswana Defence Force, p 190; Molomo, Civil-military relations, p 5.
- 18 *Botswana Defence Force, 25th Anniversary Commemorative Brochure*, pp 21-23; Botswana DailyNews Online, 17 April 2000, <<http://www.gov.bw/cgi-bin/news.cgi?id=20000417>>; 10 September 2002, <[www.gov.bw/cgi-bin/news.cgi?id=20020910](http://www.gov.bw/cgi-bin/news.cgi?id=20020910)>.
- 19 A well-tended monument on the site of the ambush and an annual ceremony commemorate the BDF officers and men who died in this action.
- 20 Botswana Defence Force briefing publication provided to the author by Brigadier E B Rakgole, BDF Assistant Chief of Staff Operations, in March 2004.
- 21 For details, see <[www.worldairforces.com/Countries/botswana/bot.html](http://www.worldairforces.com/Countries/botswana/bot.html)>.
- 22 The BDF is secretive about this relationship and the size of Indian military assistance contingent has never been publicly announced. Estimates range from several dozen to several hundred personnel.
- 23 Dale, The politics of national security in Botswana, pp 44-45; Kenosi, The Botswana Defence Force, pp 190-192.
- 24 See, *inter alia*, Richard Dale, Not always so placid a place, *African Affairs*, 86(342) January 1987, pp 73-74.
- 25 For a detailed analysis of this event, see Dale, Not always so placid a place, pp 73-91. See also Kenosi, The Botswana Defence Force, pp 191-192; Molomo, Civil-military relations, p 6.
- 26 This issue has arisen in a number of conversations between the author and informants in Botswana since 1992 and had at least the status of a powerful urban legend by the late 1980s.
- 27 See, *inter alia*, J Hanlon, *Apartheid's second front: South Africa's war against its neighbours*, London, Penguin, 1986; Helmoed-Roemer Heitman, *War in Angola*, Gibraltar, Ashanti Publishing, 1990;

- and William Minter, *Apartheid's Contras: an inquiry into the roots of war in Angola and Mozambique*, Johannesburg, Witwatersrand University Press, 1994.
- 28 Author's interviews with Brigadier E B Rakgole, BDF Assistant Chief of Staff Operations, 4 March 2004; Lieutenant General Matshwenyego-Louis Fisher, BDF Commander, 4 March 2004; and Brigadier Otisitswe B Tiroyamodimo, BDF Assistant Chief of Staff Logistics, 8 March 2004. Tiroyamodimo was the commander of the Commando Squadron when the BDF initiated anti-poaching operations in 1987.
- 29 For details on the unsuccessful Zambian experience, see Clark Gibson, *Politicians and poachers: the political economy of wildlife policy in Africa*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 1999, pp 57, 59, 62. Botswana's commitment of its military to anti-poaching was almost certainly an initiative of Ian Khama, at the time the Deputy Defence Force Commander (and later, Commander). Author's interview with Dr Larry Patterson, wildlife biologist with extensive, long-term experience in Botswana, including work with Botswana Department and currently an independent wildlife consultant in Gaborone. Tiroyamodimo interview, 6 March 2004.
- 30 Interviews with Major Max Ngkapha and Major Mogorosi Baatweng, BDF Office of Public Relations and Protocol, June 2003, March 2004, June 2004.
- 31 As this is written in mid-2004, Merafhe serves in the Cabinet as Botswana's foreign minister.
- 32 Molomo speculates that the name of the base is derived from the Tswana proverb *goo-rra motho go thebephatsbwa* ('the best security one can get is from his/her fatherland'), Civil-military relations, p 6.
- 33 Although rumours circulated throughout the region that the base was being built for use by the US military, Khama prohibited access to all foreign diplomats, including Americans. Personal experience of the author, US Army attaché accredited to Botswana from 1992 to 1994.
- 34 For detail, see Scott Thompson, South Africa and the 1988 Agreements, in O Kahn (ed), *Disengagement from Southwest Africa: the prospects for peace in Angola and Namibia*, New Brunswick, Maine, Transaction Publishers, 1991, pp 117-130.
- 35 Botswana's relatively vibrant economy and stability have been magnets to refugees and illegal immigrants from Namibia and Zimbabwe. See <[www.iss.co.za/AF/profiles/Botswana/SecInfo.html](http://www.iss.co.za/AF/profiles/Botswana/SecInfo.html)>. Local cultural prejudices, particularly against Zimbabweans, complicate the relationships.
- 36 The island, called Kasikili by the Namibians and Sedudu in Botswana, is seasonally inundated and uninhabited. The Namibian motivation for occupying it seems to have had more to do with political competition in Namibia than any grand design to acquire territory. Based on author's discussion with US, Botswana and Namibian officials, 1992-1998.
- 37 The International Court of Justice awarded the island to Botswana in 1999. See <[www.iss.co.za/AF/profiles/Botswana/SecInfo.html](http://www.iss.co.za/AF/profiles/Botswana/SecInfo.html)>.
- 38 The Caprivi dissidence had its roots in the Mafwe people of eastern Caprivi, led by Mishak Muyongo, a former member of Namibia's ruling SWAPO party, but expelled from the party for his secessionist inclinations. His followers claimed to be the Caprivi Liberation Army, a motley group of indeterminate size, probably numbering no more than several hundred combatants, whose most significant activity was a nuisance attack in August 1999 on the Namibian border town of Katima Mulilo, leaving twelve people dead. Muyongo himself fled Namibia for Botswana in 1998 and ultimately was granted asylum in Denmark. Between 1998 and 1999, several thousand Namibians associated with this dissidence fled to Botswana and were settled at the Dukwe camp, of whom about 1 200 remained in mid-2003. See 'Namibia: focus on repatriation fears of Caprivians', IRIN, 5 March 2003, and 'Namibia: focus on the Caprivi killings', IRIN, 13 November 2002, available at <http://www.irinnews.org>.
- 39 For a review of the relevant literature, see Walter S Clarke, *Humanitarian intervention in Somalia: bibliography*, Carlisle, Penn, US Army War College Center for Strategic Leadership, 1995.
- 40 Interview with Colonel Dan Pike, US Army, 15 September 2004. Pike was serving as the senior defence representative in the US Embassy in Gaborone at the time. He subsequently played a key role in preparing the Botswana Defence Force for deployment to Somalia.
- 41 As US Army attaché accredited to Botswana, the author visited the BDF contingent in Somalia in March 1993 some three months after their arrival, and interviewed their US marine counterparts at length. From the battalion commander to the individual rifleman, the marines consistently praised the performance of the BDF troops.
- 42 United Nations Operation Somalia, generally known by the acronym UNOSOM.
- 43 On several occasions, BDF Commander Ian Khama, a rated pilot, flew a BDF CASA transport aircraft to and from Somalia. On one of these occasions, in January 1993, he stopped in Harare to assure his Zimbabwean military counterparts of the value of the Somalia mission. (The Zimbabweans subsequently dispatched a reinforced company to Somalia.) From the experience of the author, resident in Harare at the time.
- 44 Tendekani E Malebeswa, 'Civil control of the military in Botswana', in Williams, Cawthra and Abrahams (eds), *Ourselves to know*, p 73.
- 45 Rakgole interview, 4 March 2004. For interesting insights on this UN mission, see Scott R Feil, *Preventing genocide: how the early use of force might have succeeded in Rwanda*, New York: Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict,

- 1998; Alan J Kuperman, *The limits of humanitarian intervention: genocide in Rwanda*, Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2001.
- 46 Rakgole interview, 4 March 2004.
- 47 United Nations Operation Mozambique, generally known by its acronym, UNOMOZ.
- 48 Based on author's personal experience during his assignment in southern Africa, 1992-1994. Based also on conversations at the time, *inter alia*, with US Army Lieutenant Colonel 'Blue' Keller, US Army attaché accredited to Mozambique, and US Army Colonel Dan Pike, senior US Defence representative in Botswana. See also Tendekani E Malebeswa, 'Civil control of the military in Botswana', p 73.
- 49 The operation was commanded by a South African military officer, the deputy commander was a colonel in the Botswana Defence Force. Rakgole interview, 4 March 2004.
- 50 For analysis of this intervention – and the political crisis that provoked it – see, *inter alia*, Theo Neethling, 'Military intervention in Lesotho: perspectives on Operation Boleas and beyond', *The Online Journal of Peace and Conflict Resolution*, Issue 2.2, May 1999, available at: <www.trinstitute.org/ojpcr/22\_2neethling.htm>; and 'Combined Task Force Boleas', available at <www.mil.za/C SANDF/CJOps/Operations/General/Boleas/Boleas-1.htm>.
- 51 This was termed 'Operation Maluti'.
- 52 This consisted of two BDF brigadiers, a significant commitment. Rakgole interview, 4 March 2004. Botswana's involvement in Lesotho has an important cultural dimension. The Tswana and Sotho peoples share a common heritage and similar cultures. Their languages are closely related. These relationships presumably facilitate cooperation.
- 53 Fisher interview, 4 March 2004
- 54 Author's interviews of diplomats accredited to Gaborone, March 2004.
- 55 SADC is headquartered in Gaborone, and Botswana has always been a key SADC actor.
- 56 See, for instance, Jakkie Cilliers, *Building security in southern Africa*, ISS Monograph Number 43, Pretoria, Institute for Security Studies, November 1999.
- 57 The first, Blue Hungwe, was held in Zimbabwe in 1997 and the second, Blue Crane, in South Africa in 1999. Both exercises emphasised themes of collective military intervention to address a complex humanitarian emergency. See Lieutenant Colonel A W Tapfumaneyi, 'View on regional peacekeeping' Toward a SADC peacekeeping force', SARDC, 1999, available at <www.sardc.net/Editorial/sadctoday/v2-6-04-1999/v2-6-04-1999-10.htm>; and Mark Malan, Resolute partners, building peacekeeping capacity in southern Africa, Institute for Security Studies Monograph 21, February 1998, available at <www.iss.co.za/Pubs>.
- 58 The first, called *Kalola Matlho*, consists of joint military-police night patrols in the cities of Gaborone, Francistown, Selibe Phikwe and Molepolole to target armed robbery, murder, vandalism, drug trafficking and similar crimes. The second programme, called 'Provide Comfort', is conducted by Military Police and consists of random spot-checks of individuals and vehicles for fugitives, arms and illegal merchandise. Rakgole interview, 4 March 2004.
- 59 In 1993, 1995, 1996 and 2000.
- 60 In 1996, 1997 and 2001.
- 61 Several BDF officers observed to the author in interviews in March 2004 that these operations were appropriate because the BDF alone had the human and materiel resources for the roles. They also called attention to the BDF Act of 1977 that specified conditions under which the BDF could provide assistance to civil authorities.
- 62 Rakgole interview, 4 March 2004. See also <www.iss.co.za/AF/profiles/Botswana/SecInfo.html>.
- 63 This was a \$50 million purchase of refurbished aircraft from Canada's Bristol Aerospace. See <http://mylima.com/airforce/b3.htm>. The F-5A is a multi-role combat aircraft, the three F-5D aircraft are trainers.
- 64 See <www.iss.co.za/AF/profiles/Botswana/SecInfo.html> and <stetmylima.com/airforce/b3.htm>.
- 65 Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment - Southern Africa, available at <http://www4.janes.com/K2/doc>.
- 66 The Germans claimed that they did not want to promote regional tensions, though protests from Namibia (with its historical ties to Germany) probably played a key role in the German decision. See <www4.janes.com/K2/doc>.
- 67 See <www.gov.bw> for details.
- 68 Fisher interview, 4 March 2004. Developing a national military strategy in Botswana was no simple process. In the absence of a national security strategy, Fisher was obliged to consult with a wide range of policymakers and study a large number of policy documents. Interestingly, he also consulted the leaders and policy documents of opposition parties in his efforts to define BDF roles and missions.
- 69 It would, of course, be misleading to attribute all of this to Fisher. Much of the force improvement was under way when he assumed the position of commander.
- 70 Fisher interview, 4 March 2004.
- 71 Brigade is responsible for most of the southern part of the country, including most of the border with South Africa; 2 Brigade is responsible for the eastern part of the country, including the entire border with Zimbabwe; 3 Brigade is responsible for the western part of the country, including most of the border with Namibia.
- 72 Rakgole interview, 4 March 2004.
- 73 Among its other assets are Casa 212-300 transports, AS 350BA utility helicopters, PC-7 trainers and 0-2A Skymasters. See <www4.janes.com/K2/doc> for details.

- 74 Botswana military expenditure drawn from the SIPRI military expenditure database, provided in a private communication, 4 November 2004.
- 75 The founding commander, Mompoti Merafhe, himself a deputy police commissioner when charged with overseeing the formation of a new army, seems to have concluded from the outset in 1977 that indiscipline was a principal defect in other regional militaries. His administration – and legacy to the BDF – was marked by an emphasis on professional standards of behaviour. See *Botswana Defence Force, 25th Anniversary Commemorative Brochure*, pp 7-9.
- 76 It recruits by advertising for candidates in advance of a yearly ‘intake’ – one each for officer and enlisted candidates. In 2004 the BDF sought 80-100 new officers and received some 3 000 applications. It sought 500 enlisted recruits and received over 15 000 applications for these positions. This level of recruitment and popular response has been consistent over the past decade. Author’s interview with Lieutenant Colonel P T F Sharp, Botswana Defence Force Director of Career Development and Training, 17 June 2004.
- 77 Ibid. The minimum educational qualification for an officer candidate is a Cambridge A-level ‘first class pass’. This itself is impressive but does not tell the whole story: over the past decade, about half of the officer candidates selected for BDF service have had university degrees. Enlisted recruits must at a minimum possess a Cambridge O-level certification. Many of the successful enlisted applicants have additional trade school or apprenticeship training as well.
- 78 Ibid. Multiple interviews with Major Max Ngkapha, Director of Public Relations and Protocol, Botswana Defence Force, March 2004.
- 79 Estimate provided by Major Andrew Oldenfield, Chief of the Office of Defence Cooperation in the US Embassy in Gaborone, 14 June 2004.
- 80 The others are the national police and the prison services.
- 81 For 2004 budget detail, see B Gaolathe, Republic of Botswana Budget Speech, 2004, delivered to the National Assembly on 9 February 2004, paragraph 80, available at <www.finance.gov.bw>.
- 82 Herb Howe, *Ambiguous order: military forces in African states*, Boulder, Colo, Lynne Rienner, 2001, pp 43-44.
- 83 Significantly, Transparency International has consistently rated Botswana the least corrupt country in Africa.
- 84 Kenneth Good, Authoritarian liberalism: a defining characteristic of Botswana, *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 14(1) 1996, pp 29-48. See also J Zaffiro, The press and political opposition in an African democracy, *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, XVII(1) 1989.
- 85 BDF Act Chapter 21:05, 1977.
- 86 Interview with Professor Kenneth Good, University of Botswana, 18 June 2004; see also Molomo, Civil-military relations, pp 12-13.
- 87 Members of Parliament displayed unprecedented concern in 1998 when they complained they had not been consulted in the government decision to intervene in Lesotho as part of a regional peace operation, but the executive branch gave no indication at the time that it intended in the future to conduct such consultation. Author’s interview with Dr Judy Buttermann, US Embassy Gaborone, 6 March 2004 and 12 June 2004; author’s interview with Dr Ian Taylor, University of Botswana, 5 March 2004; Good interview, 18 June 2004; see also Malebeswa, Civil control of the military in Botswana, p 73.
- 88 See, *inter alia*, Good, Authoritarian liberalism, pp 29-33.
- 89 Good, Authoritarian liberalism, pp 36-37; see also *Mmegi*, 17 January 92, 4 September 92 and 8 November 91 for related examples in agencies other than Defence.
- 90 Malebeswa, Civil control of the military in Botswana, pp 68-71; Molomo, Civil-military relations, p 12.
- 91 Ibid.
- 92 In 2004 these consisted of the first BDF commander, Mompoti Merafhe (now foreign minister), the second commander, Ian Khama (now vice-president) and the incumbent, Lieutenant General L M Fisher.
- 93 Both Sir Seretse and his eldest son, Ian, inherited the office of *kgosi* (paramount chief) of the BamaNgwato, the largest Tswana subgroup in the country. For details about Sir Seretse’s political role, see Jeffrey Ramsay and Neil Parsons, ‘The emergence of political parties in Botswana’, in W Edge and M Lekorwe (eds), *Botswana: politics and society*, Pretoria, Van Schaik, 1998.
- 94 In 2003 he even publicly admonished his (no doubt shocked) fellow parliamentarians to put aside self-aggrandizement and seek only the public interest in selfless service. Buttermann interview, 6 March 2004 and 12 June 2004; Taylor interview, 5 March 2004; Good interview, 18 June 2004.
- 95 Even Botswana’s senior police officials acknowledge this reputation. See Norman S Moleboge (Commissioner of Botswana Police), ‘Public sector reforms, challenges and opportunities: the case of Botswana Police Service’ a paper presented to the Commonwealth Advance Seminar, Wellington, NZ, 24 February - 8 March 2003, p 2. Police in Africa typically are less respected than the military. Police establishments typically are significantly underfunded in comparison to military establishments. See Alice Hills, *Policing Africa: internal security and the limits of liberalization*, Boulder, Colo, Lynne Rienner, 2000, pp 3-4. For Botswana’s example, in 2004 the 12 000-man BDF was provided a development budget of P391 million (US\$83 million) compared to the 20 000-person Botswana Police with a budget of P120 million (US\$25,5 million). B Gaolathe, Republic of Botswana Budget Speech, 2004, delivered to

- the National Assembly on 9 February 2004, paragraph 80, available at <[www.finance.gov.bw](http://www.finance.gov.bw)> .
- 96 Kenosi, The Botswana Defence Force, pp 200-201, expresses some concern for the broadened missions, urging limits and more consultation but does not overtly challenge their propriety.
- 97 Otisitswe B Tiroyamodimo, Why is security a contested concept? *Sethamo* (Botswana Defence Force Newsletter), 37, December 2001, pp 9-11.
- 98 The author has encountered no evidence that factionalism has compromised the capabilities or performance of the Defence Force, or that any significant group of BDF officers is politically disaffected.
- 99 See, for instance, Titus Mbuya, The BDP split shakes army, *Mmegi*, 29 July 1994
- 100 Molomo, Civil-military relations, pp 12-13.