THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE SA ARMY*

The Honourable Mr Joe Modise, Minister of Defence

INTRODUCTION
On this important occasion, it is fitting to reflect on the democratic changes that South Africa has experienced. In this new environment, the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) is constitutionally committed to defend and protect the sovereignty, territory and people of the country, to ensure a secure environment of peace and prosperity for all. The SANDF must therefore be an institution that the whole nation can have confidence in, and that every member can be proud of – regardless of race, gender, creed and background. Only a defence force that is broadly representative of our population at all rank levels, guided by the principles and the spirit of our democracy, can enjoy legitimacy and credibility among our people. All members of the SANDF, therefore, need to understand that achieving representivity is in their own interest. To succeed in this regard will truly be a success for everyone. In fact, the legitimacy, credibility and appreciation for the SANDF are growing among Parliamentarians, the public and the press. This is a tremendous achievement, considering the negative perceptions inherited from the past, and all members can be justly proud of this fact.

TRANSFORMATION OBJECTIVES
To succeed in the transformation of the SANDF, firm foundations have been laid during the past two-and-a-half years. The approach to transformation is guided by the following objectives:

- consolidating civil control over defence;
- attaining broad representivity that reflects the population; and
- delivering modern, effective, affordable and accountable defence.

STRUCTURAL CHANGES
In pursuit of these objectives, I announced plans for far-reaching changes in defence on 11 February 1997.

- Parliament has since unanimously passed the Defence Amendment Bill. This transfers the Head of Department role and Accounting Officer function to the Secretary for Defence, in the interests of civil accountability, and by no means reflects a lack of confidence in the military. This was what Parliament, in fact, has long been calling for and has now fully endorsed.
- The Secretary for Defence and the Chief of the National Defence Force now operate at the same hierarchical level, reporting to the Minister, but with clearly defined responsibilities. The Secretary for Defence is the department's policy advisor, and the
Chief of the SANDF, the department's military advisor. This allows for greater efficiency, by allowing the Secretary for Defence to concentrate on policy matters. This will free the Chief of the SANDF to concentrate on effective command and control and the conduct of military operations. The Chief of the SANDF will continue to have direct access to the Minister. All possible teething problems, in terms of this arrangement, will be addressed in a spirit of co-operation.

• The Department of Defence is also involved in a major reorganisation at the top command and management levels through the creation of a new integrated head office of the Ministry of Defence. Where defence functions were previously carried out at Defence Headquarters level, and duplicated in the respective services, all these separate administrations have now been amalgamated into one new top level administrative structure. This will bring to an end the multiplication of functions and expenses. There will now be twenty reorganised divisions or sections – some the primary responsibility of the Secretary for Defence and others the primary responsibility of the Chief of the SANDF, with certain divisions being a shared responsibility. In addition, a Joint Operations Centre will be established to facilitate the conduct of military operations — with the four services (Army, Air Force, Navy and Medical Services) providing and preparing the combat forces for that purpose.

• This new top administrative level will therefore integrate the management of the department and its military forces. The result will be a more effective and streamlined head office – producing a significant saving of R300 million. This dedicated structure will be called the Ministry of Defence (MoD).

• Clearly, the positions that were multiplied at many levels in the past will now be rationalised. It has therefore been undertaken that all efforts will be made to ensure a fair deal, for those taking severance packages and those who may be retrenched in future. There have been good officers who have taken, or who will take the severance package and early retirement, and I want to thank them for their contribution. Many have had a most positive attitude to transformation, and I appreciate the co-operation they have given me. I wish them well in their new careers.

• The steps I have outlined, mark the beginning of the fundamental reorganisation of the defence force – starting at the top and progressively working down – towards a leaner, more streamlined and cost-efficient force. Further work and investigation are proceeding to effect new management processes and practices in order to achieve greater efficiency and cost savings. In this regard, particular emphasis will be placed on the integration, restructuring and streamlining of territorial headquarters, groups and the Part-Time Force system. Decisions will be taken on this soon. The Defence Command Council supports these changes and I am pleased to inform you that I have their commitment to advance the pace of transformation. We are working together to create a defence force in tune with our new democratic ethos and fit for the challenges of the 21st Century.

NEW APPOINTMENTS

As an integral part of transformation, and in the interest of national unity, I am determined to ensure representivity at the top management and command levels of the defence force. As part of this commitment, and in addition to the changes already referred to, I announced, on Tuesday, 11 March, 28 appointments to the top management structures of the Defence establishment. The appointments constitute a new team that will assist me in adding momentum to the transformation process. The appointments represent a good balance and range of experiences, with individuals of considerable talent and potential. This clearly has been a big step in advancing our much needed representivity. Some might feel we have gone too far, and others, not far enough. But I believe we have made a necessary and positive advance, for it is just not possible to mark time in a democratic country that expects to see movement towards equity.

I ask for the co-operation and support of every member of the Department of Defence, and I believe the general mood is in favour of change. Certainly, we have the support of the President, Cabinet, Parliament and the overwhelming majority of our people. This first step marks my intention to transform all levels in the same manner and we must strive to ensure female members achieve better representation at the more senior levels. Such a
transformation requires a total commitment from the top down. This is essential for us to succeed and I have made it clear that no-one — irrespective of background — is indispensable, and that I will not hesitate to replace anyone who fails in their commitment to transformation.

PARTICULAR DIFFICULTIES
In transformation on this impressive scale, every member, of whatever background, needs help to cope with change. I want to assure you that I regard every member of the Department of Defence having equal value, but in the integration of the various armed formations into the new SANDF, we should bear in mind that former non statutory force members have had to overcome distinct disadvantages. Many have returned after being separated from their families for years, have had to set up households from a zero earnings base — with no savings or pension scheme to speak of. They had to make the transition from service in a guerrilla army to the demands of conventional warfare, and for the past two years have been heavily involved in training programmes in order to put them on an equal level with former statutory force members.

In these circumstances, suspicions have arisen that they were simply being absorbed by the old South African Defence Force (SADF) rather than any real change taking place. This has been particularly prevalent in Parliament and sections of the press and public, and we must ensure that such impressions are corrected. We will do so by making everyone feel equally at home in the SANDF. As a microcosm of our society, we are bound to find some racial prejudices within the SANDF. The difficulty we face in cases of alleged racism is to prove it with sufficient evidence in each case. We have outlawed the practice of racism in the military, but as with any prejudice, it takes a conscious mind shift to change ingrained attitudes and individual incidents will, no doubt, still occur. It is therefore important both to expose and pursue any culprit under the law where evidence is forthcoming, and to consolidate the positive effect of Equal Opportunity and Civic Education programmes which will be addressed below.

But problems are not one-sided — we also appreciate the problems of adaptation faced by former statutory force members, who may have a perception that their careers are threatened by the challenge of transformation. I wish to assure them that I value their participation and contribution in building a SANDF that is competent and professional. What is more, I wish to assure them that this is the attitude of our President himself, our Deputy President and Government. In this difficult period of transformation, our President and Government have expressed their appreciation of the role of all members of the SANDF on numerous occasions. I have personally witnessed our President directly expressing his appreciation to the Chief of the SANDF. Let me therefore praise the dedication and professionalism of all members of the new SANDF, who have risen so admirably to the challenge we face.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITY
I have referred to the difficulties of adjustment faced by many in the SANDF. What we must realise is that our strength stems from our diversity. This is the basis of our society, and nowhere is it more relevant than in the SANDF. We come from different backgrounds, but these qualities will strengthen the SANDF and we should develop the best of these different strands to form a common identity. For this, representivity is crucial. We cannot afford any level of our armed forces to be based primarily on one group. In this regard, standards and values must not be interpreted as those of vested interests, or of any particular group or party.

Any such standards must accommodate human talent and potential, and create conditions conducive to their development. The way to correct the imbalances of the past in terms of race and gender, is through a programme of Equal Opportunities and Affirmative Action and special attention will be given to the considerable improvement of opportunities for women in the SANDF. This is the way we create a stronger and more effective defence force. Let me assure everyone that those who are committed to change — irrespective of background — have a future in the SANDF, and will be able to rise to the top on merit.

NEW CULTURE AND ETHOS
Similarly, we must also ensure that the ethos of the defence establishment, and not just the structure, changes to reflect the fundamental principles and values of our democracy. Just as we need new equipment for the defence force of the 21st Century, so too do we need values appropriate to our new democracy. In as much as I am committed to modernising the *matériel* for defence, so too am I determined to modernise our mindset. This new culture will be achieved by creating the right spirit among all members of the Defence Secretariat and the SANDF. It must be done through the inculcation of these new values and appropriate training including:

- civic education curricula;
- affirmative action and equal opportunity programmes;
- development of gender consciousness;
- banishment of all forms of racial discrimination; together with
- asserting the most positive principles of our democratic society.

The Army, as the major force, must lead the way in this respect. Everyone must feel at home in the Army — it must be a true army of national unity. I look to all senior officers to lead by example and I look to my generals and admirals to set that example, and to motivate all others to follow suit.

**THE PART-TIME FORCE**

The Part-Time Force must also be imbued with the values of our democracy. Creating genuine part-time units, representative of our people, is the best way to safeguard democracy in our country. An energetic programme must be launched to recruit people from all sectors of the population into these units, in both the towns and countryside. Indeed, the President has called for enthusiastic national support for such a recruitment campaign. Progress has been made in this regard, particularly in the Eastern Cape, where new units have been formed in the former Transkei and Ciskei, and in the East London and Port Elizabeth areas, through the energetic leadership of the Commanding Officer, Eastern Cape Command. Several thousand young men and women have received training and are now members of the Part-Time Force. Such new units will be formed into regiments and the names of these regiments will reflect the spirit of national pride. We also want the already existing regiments and commando units to receive fresh recruits from previously deprived communities — so that they become properly representative of our population. The creation of new units, and the revitalising of existing regiments, is the key to transformation, and I intend stepping up the pace in this regard.

The importance of the Part-Time Force is shown in the appointment of Brigadier Ian Deetlefs to his new post as part of the new integrated management structure. I must also issue a stern warning to any unit failing to transform. Negative attitudes will not be tolerated. We have recently had a very serious situation in Mpumalanga, where some members of the Wakkerstroom Commando have had serious charges laid against them for allegedly engaging in brutality against local farm labourers. I view such incidents in the most serious light. There can be no room in our new SANDF for people who bring discredit and dishonour to it. I am, therefore, instituting a full inquiry into this occurrence.

**DEFENCE FUNDING**

On the subject of defence funding, I want to commend the Minister of Finance, the Honourable Mr Trevor Manuel, on his positive statements and commitment to defence requirements in his budget address. He praised the Department of Defence for its substantial restructuring and the seriousness with which we have approached Government's efforts to reprioritise spending in favour of social development. This praise has had a very positive impact on the morale of the SANDF. Defence spending in 1997/98 will only account for 1,6 per cent of GDP, in keeping with peacetime conditions and socio-economic priorities. Defence, therefore, can clearly no longer be seen as an unacceptable drain on resources. I have no doubt that this will ensure that Government is sympathetic to our priorities in future. Government awaits the results of the Defence Review to provide the guidelines for the assessment of defence priorities and their funding.

**CONCLUSION**
The transformation of defence is a vital task in our new democracy. The SANDF is rising admirably to the challenge and will continue to do so, thereby securing a position of pride in the eyes of all our citizens.

PREPARING THE SOUTH AFRICAN ARMY FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY*

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Chief of the South African Army

INTRODUCTION

The South African Army (SA Army) that we know today is a dynamic organisation with a rich history. If we can forget past politics and concentrate on the factual realities, we will all agree that the SA Army is a formidable organisation with a proud reputation of professionalism. The world today widely respects the SA Army, not only for what is currently happening, but also because of what it has achieved in the past.

The SA Army developed out of a historical process which blended European military science and the realities of Africa into one organisation. It is not only the primarily British colonial influence, the pioneer spirit of the Trekkers, or the basic riding and musketry skills of the cunning Boer forces that built the historical backbone of the South African Army. We are a good mixture of the rugged Boer guerrillas, rigid discipline of the impis of Tshaka Zulu and others, the effective though highly bureaucratic British colonialists and a rich blend of former guerrilla fighters of the Liberation Movements, thrown into the melting pot of the twentieth century in which two world wars, a protracted insurgency war and an ever lingering internal unrest situation have made us what we are today. Consequently, the SA Army is a custom-designed, seasoned army for South Africa and its environment. It consists of well-trained men and women with equipment designed for and proven in South African conditions, and soldiers bound by doctrine and tactics, devised and tested for combat on the battlefields of Southern Africa. In short, the modern-day SA Army is ready to do what is expected of it.

The rapidly changing world of the twenty-first century however, impacts on every aspect of life. Therefore, the pressure of change, even for the SA Army, is unavoidable. The general election in 1994 brought about not only a change in government, but also a complete metamorphosis in political thinking and doing. The SA Army could not remain unchanged – change was inevitable.

However, the pre-1994 South African Defence Force (SADF) was already seriously rethinking the future. Talks with Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) had been going on for about two years before the election, and an agreement was signed on 5 May 1994, seven days after the election, positioning the SADF for transformation in its crudest form long before any other public service department. It is also noteworthy that the SADF, because of the cessation of hostilities in Namibia and the subsequent withdrawal of forces, had to restructure to meet the budgetary guidelines of the times. In this regard, I recall the retrenchments of 1992, the severe cuts in South African Air Force (SAAF) and South African Navy (SAN) force structures and the budget overall. On the other hand, MK and Azanian Peoples Liberation Army (APLA) forces also prepared for the possibility of a new dispensation. Their forces were concentrated, among others, in Uganda and Tanzania, updating records, administration and training.

BURNING ISSUES

Although the SA Army is currently required to transform to stay in line with current and future realities, we have been busy with preparations over a wide front for a considerable time now. To save the South African Army from being put on the shelf and labelled the luxurious dinosaur that could not survive, we have had to address a number of issues.

Budgetary Restraints

As the government of the day identified budgetary priorities vastly different from the previous, in a lukewarm economic climate after recent economic recessions, re allocation of funds
would clearly be imperative. This was to be expected, in order to broaden the concept of common security to include, along with law and order and military stabilisation, social upliftment, housing and education, in the equation of normalising the community. The SA Army, as part of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF), had been exposed to serious budgetary restrictions and cutbacks over the past few years, the most intensive of which was during the latter part of 1996.

A new Force Structure
In line with the White Paper on Defence and the Defence Review, the SANDF is currently in a process of restructuring. The SA Army, following the top-down approach, has to follow suit, apart from the fact that it has already been forced into preliminary restructuring to make the budget fit.

Government initiative
The Government and its approach to security provided a primary consideration for change. The Constitution, in determining future foreign and security policy, arms control, and global and regional approaches, has forced the SANDF into a total review of itself. In order to structure this review, the White Paper on Defence and the Defence Review are utilised as the spinal cord for the review process.

Integration
The unique situation of the South African armed forces necessitated a process to mesh seven armies into one (the SA Army, the non-statutory forces (NSF) and the armies of the Transkei Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei). The process to blend these forces, utilising a mixture of administrative and training processes – simultaneously providing the guarantee of transparency, equal opportunities, fairness, justice and the maintenance of high military standards – has been a challenge that tapped the resources of the SA Army heavily. At the same time, the SA Army still has a day-to-day task to perform. The internal situation, including the tasks of border protection, upholding law and order, and area protection, requires the constant deployment of between 55 and 60 companies of troops (7 000 - 8 000 people), not including the support and command and control infrastructure. While former NSF members are being trained, the rest of the SA Army deploys continually, leaving no or little time for retraining and rest. The inevitable result is the threat to standards, morale and efficiency.

Integration now reaches completion. After a thorough process lasting more than two years, the inflow of manpower from the former NSF is dwindling (the planned force levels were not reached). Bridging training in general is in the second phase, all the former NSF members are placed in posts and career development is in process. The SA Army is now in the position to return to normality, concentrating on training, deployment, and maintenance.

Rationalisation
Reality dictates that the SANDF has to downsize and rightsize in order to meet the budget and the new force structure. The integration process has over-expanded the force levels extensively and it is clear that a reduction has to take place. The parliamentary decision to reduce the public service with, among others, voluntary severance packages and a rationalisation programme, became a reality in time for the SA Army to participate.

Transformation Process
The SA Army has to participate in the transformation of the Department of Defence. The Minister of Defence earlier committed himself to the transformation of the department and announced the process. Transformation work teams have already been doing ground-work for this mammoth task for more than a year. This process, an all-encompassing, top-down radical change of the entire defence function, and not only a mere restructuring of forces, will address the following critical issues:

- civil control over the SANDF:
- representivity;
- affirmative action and equal opportunities;
- gender equality;
integration and rationalisation;
• down-sizing;
• implementation of Government planning and financial management reform;
• meeting the new requirements for defence in a changing security environment;
• meeting the budgetary constraints with more efficiency; and
• implementation by April 1998.

Currently the process has progressed considerably. The new second level management appointments were announced a few weeks ago. This team will now head the planning and implementation of the transformation of the DoD. The SA Army will not escape this process. Following the top-down approach, Army Headquarters (HQ) as it is known now, will eventually disappear and be taken up in the integrated, co-located Ministry of Defence (MoD) head office. Third level transformation will commence after that. However, the sharp end of the SA Army will be kept intact and prepared. The emphasis of reduction will be on the support structures.

Operations
The internal situation as stated above requires a major effort from the SA Army. In the same breath pressure is put on the MoD for military support in the region, in accordance with Southern African Development Community (SADC) agreements. While the re-engineering process is taking place, the SA Army has to continue performing its task.

Changed mission of the SA Army
The SA Army, taken up in the defence process, will not be tasked with the classic mission of winning the land battle. The SA Army, together with the SAAF and SAN, will be responsible for the provision of forces to the CSANDF, for employment by a Joint Operations Organisation. The mission of the SA Army in future will be: To provide battle(mission)-ready, supported troops to the CSANDF.
• Flowing forth from this, the following implications are apparent:
• A reduced HQ with its own training, personnel, logistics and planning staff;
• Chief of the Army (C Army) will be responsible for force preparation of land forces;
• C Army will provide troops for employment by Joint Operations (J OPS); and
• the provided troops will be fully trained and supported: this means that recruiting, training and supporting within the force provision function are obvious.

THE FUTURE
In order to meet the challenge of the future, transformation must be visible and discernible. In the information age, change is continuous and rapid. It is therefore imperative that future projections are done on a continuous basis in order to adapt. In the global sense, a change in the balance of power came about after the collapse of the USSR. At the same time, rapid destruction of state structures, especially in Eastern Europe, led to internal strife and civil war. Currently, the global trend to security is the organisation of crisis reaction forces to operate under the auspices of the United Nations (UN) and other organisations, such as North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), to maintain international security.

The African continent follows the same trends as Eastern Europe, the Middle East and other regions with incipient state collapse, corruption, mass uprisings and general civil disobedience. The medium to long term projection in Africa is bleak, with famine, drought, poverty, ethnic violence and economic, as well as state collapse, as the drivers for total instability. The Organisation of African Unity (OAU), as the continental umbrella organisation, will strive towards collective security. This will necessitate contributions by all member states, but will be seriously hampered by incompetency. Regionally, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) will strive towards the same goals, probably under the auspices of the OAU and UN and will expect South Africa to take the lead. (This will however undoubtedly mean that South Africa will be the main provider of matériel.)

Internally, the South African population will have to deal with high crime levels and violence in the medium to long term. The tendency of pressure groups to revert to violent collective action will exist until law and order is forced down by the South African Police Service (SAPS). The presence of illegal weapons, emanating from the arsenals of many neighbouring states, will have an intensifying effect on crime. The same argument applies to drugs. Full-
Time, Territorial and Part-Time Forces Components are involved in the combat of crime and crime-related activities.

The above impacts directly on our preparations for the future in terms of techniques, equipment, force levels and technology. The SA Army will have to focus on the preparation for its main task, namely the protection of the territorial integrity of South Africa against external threat. As no clear and imminent threat exists, preparations will have to take place in a universal fashion, taking a threat-independent approach. The design, structure and preparation of a well-balanced, supported force that can react rapidly in the region will have to be the main yardstick. In this regard, the importance of the Part-Time Forces component cannot be stressed enough.

In summary, my vision of the future is a relatively poor, unstable Southern African region with relative stability and progressing wealth in South Africa. The SA Army as part of the Joint Operations Organisation will take part in the continuous enforcing of law and order in conjunction with the SAPS, as well as probably participating in peacekeeping operations in Africa. Constant readiness of the conventional force levels will have to be maintained.

CURRENT REALITIES
The SA Army faces the following current realities:

• a dwindling supply of experienced officers and Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs);
• ageing equipment, losing the cutting edge technology that gave the SA Army the winning edge in the past;
• prolonged, continuous operational deployment of troops at higher force levels than during the Namibian conflict;
• a drastically reduced budget, resulting in reduced maintenance and training, with a myriad of negative effects on morale, equipment and standards;
• the reality of rationalisation, downsizing and rightsizing; and
• mounting internal and external expectations to see the SA Army involved in the regional military environment.

On the upside, the SA Army remains the dedicated, well-led and prepared organisation of the past, willing to perform any mission, and prepared to defend the Constitution.

EXPECTATIONS
The SA Army will have to take cognisance of expectations about itself from different environments. Expectations will emanate globally, regionally, from government, community (population) and from the security community at large. The SA Army will have to position itself carefully within these expectations, ensuring at all times the preparedness to execute its primary task as the highest priority.

CAPABILITIES
The SA Army is still the formidable fighting machine it used to be. The influx of new soldiers, the effect of continuous deployment, and ageing equipment could have an effect on the levels of preparedness. However, the SA Army is now able to, on short notice, mobilise a full-time Rapid Deployment Force, consisting of airborne and landward elements. In addition to this, various full-time Motorised Infantry battalions are available to support such a force, while a brigade of Part-Time Forces troops can be mobilised over a longer period.

• The SA Army has the additional capability to simultaneously deploy full-time and Territorial component (Commando) troops continuously in the area protection role, ensuring the safety of the community at large.
• The training capability of the Army is a parallel, though conjunctive function.
• As a result of its primary capability, the SA Army is able to render support in the form of certain collateral capabilities, primarily in the military engineering field and logistic support, if required.

SA ARMY: QUO VADIS
The process of and preparations for transforming the SA Army for the future do not constitute a quick-fix solution. The status quo will have to be maintained for the short/medium term, until
the SANDF transformation allows the Joint Operations Organisation to be realised and to function. The SA Army will have to transform within the model currently under investigation. The following will have to be seriously considered:

• new mandate (Mission: Force Provision): this process consists of the sub-processes of structuring, preparing, supporting and maintaining the force. To achieve this, adequate personnel, facilities and equipment are required;
• force structure: by this is meant training institutions, support structures and command and control structures, as well as lines of command;
• capital development of equipment and facilities;
• budget and running costs;
• doctrine and tactics in co-operation with J OPS;
• Part-Time Forces component to be merged into the FTF (one force concept);
• the Commando concept to be clearly defined; command and control in terms of training and employment must be structured;
• functional clarity with respect to force employment versus force preparation to be defined;
• the conventional Land Forces capability to win the land battle has to be identified, cleared and maintained in conjunction with J OPS, in terms of force levels, equipment, training and support.

CLOSING THOUGHTS
Transformation is an ongoing process. The SA Army should be a true learning organisation, in touch with its environment and changing to meet the challenges of the time. The undeniable bottom line, if the SA Army is to survive, is the following:

• the maintenance of military discipline;
• the development and maintenance of a common military culture;
• the maintenance of high military standards;
• the procurement, upgrading and maintenance of capital equipment, suitable for Africa, affordable and on the cutting edge of technology – we will have to concentrate on more efficient maintenance to lengthen the lifetime of equipment.

In order to maintain the leading edge of technology, it remains important to support the local defence industry. Priorities for the medium and long term will have to be:

• anti-aircraft capability;
• intelligence gathering capability;
• anti-armour capability;
• replacement and standardisation of the vehicle fleet;
• maintenance and upgrading of the artillery capability; and
• engineering capability.

In closing, it remains to be said that it is not the big armies that win wars, but the smart ones.

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