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BEYOND THE  
BARRACKS:  
REFLECTIONS  
ON THE ROLE  
OF THE SADF  
IN THE REGION

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This paper is based on a talk delivered by Mr du Pisani at the Summer School of the University of Cape Town, 18-21 January 1988.

It should be noted that any opinions expressed in this article are the responsibility of the author and not of the Institute.

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REFLECTIONS ON THE ROLE OF THE  
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One thought preoccupies the submerged mind of Empire: how not to end, how not to die, how to prolong its era. By day it pursues its enemies. It is cunning and ruthless, it sends its bloodhounds everywhere. By night it feeds on images of disaster: the sack of cities, the rape of populations, pyramids of bones, acres of desolation.

J M Coetzee, *Waiting for the Barbarians*

### Introduction

The study of the military in politics constitutes a burgeoning field of inquiry, characterised by growing theoretical sophistication. The scope of scholarship has also undergone redefinition, in the sense that it is no longer merely confined to the 'relationship between civil authority and the military as an institution or elite group' (Perlmutter & Bennett, 1980:199). The state itself; the socio-political conditions conducive to militarisation; the corporate culture of the military; the role of the military as an agent of change - in nation-building and as an instrument of foreign policy; to name but a few, are now all legitimate topics. Moreover, the institutional importance of the military has grown in political systems characterised by diverse political cultures and institutional arrangements. Perlmutter, a noted analyst of civil-military relations, boldly asserts:

Regardless of the nature of political culture in which he lives, the modern military officer is oriented toward maximizing his influence in politics and/or policy. (Perlmutter & Bennett, 1980:3)

The military in South Africa has also attracted the attention of local and overseas scholars, while the use of the military as an instrument of regional policy has had significant implications for South Africa's regional and international relations.

In a recently published and profoundly original review of scholarship on the military in South Africa, Annette Seegers of the University of Cape Town remarks that a 'preoccupation with post-1960 developments' characterises much of this scholarship (1986:192-200). She notes also that 'civil-military relations scholarship generally - though not exclusively - seeks to know more about the military in a non-war-making capacity' and finds that much of recent research lacks theoretical discipline.

The growing influence of the South African military in domestic and regional policy arenas and the accompanying militarisation of society are widely attributed to a series of popular challenges to white minority rule after 1960, growing international isolation, the erosion of political legitimacy of state structures, decisive shifts in regional power relationships following the collapse of Portuguese colonial rule in Angola and Mozambique, the coming to power of Mr Robert Mugabe in neighbouring Zimbabwe in 1980, and the growing domestic political challenge in the post-Soweto period (Leonard, 1983:3-4; Jaister, 1985; Grundy, 1983a; Geldenhuys & Kotzé, 1983; Vale, 1984; and Geldenhuys, 1984).

The application of military power as an instrument of regional policy, especially since 1975, has provided much material for local and foreign scholars. Following the pioneering work of O'Meara (1977), Hallett (1978), and Geldenhuys (1978, 1981, 1982, 1983 & 1984), various other analysts have drawn on these studies and deepened our understanding. Especially noteworthy is the work of Leonard (1983), Jaster (1985), Hanlon (1986a), Johnson & Martin (1986), Cawthra (1986), and Vale (1984 & 1987).

Vale (1987:176-194), for example, views South African regional policy as having undergone a shift from what he terms the 'politics of assertive incorporation' to that of the 'politics of coercive incorporation', while O'Meara (1985:183-211) concerns himself with the doctrine of 'Total Strategy' and its applications in regional policy since 1978.

The changing regional environment and its implications for South African regional policy has been systematically examined by various analysts, with perceptive contributions by Davies & O'Meara (1983), Jaster (1980), Kühne (1984), Adam & Bys (1985), and Du Pisani (1985).

With a few notable exceptions, such as the work of Frankel (1984) and Seegers (1986, 1987), the role of the military in the regional setting and its relation to the domestic political equation has not been adequately explained in theoretical terms. The majority of studies reflect a concern with post-1960 developments - ignoring, for example, the role of the South African military in the suppression of the Bondelswarts rebellion in 1922 and military action against the Ovambo people in 1932 - but emphasizing regional military aggression as a function of the application of a consistent 'national security doctrine' (Leonard, 1983; and Cawthra, 1986:23-41).

The military doctrine of Total Strategy is presented as a plan of action comprising elements such as the 'allocation of means in relations to ends; an appreciation of enemy capabilities and potential; the time factor; an evaluation of weapon systems and the art of war' (Dutton, 1977:12-13).

Fuelled by statements and writings by senior military personnel (Dutton, *ibid*; Meiring, quoted by Baynham, 1985:3 - to name but two recent articulations), it is often asserted that this 'National Security Doctrine' has been influenced by the work of Beaufré (1963) and McCuen (1966). Frankel (1984:46), for example, writes that: 'Total strategy, we would contend, is essentially Beaufré writ large in the particular counter-revolutionary context of contemporary South Africa'. He claims that 'the ideological and strategic spirit of the South African military is particularly and peculiarly Francophile in character and if there is any single figure whose writings have had a formative influence in how the current generation of Defence Force leaders interpret the world in relation to counter-insurgency, it is above all the French General, André Beaufré'.

While not denying the inspirational role of Beaufré's and McCuen's writings in the crystallization of a counter-insurgency doctrine, Frankel's hypothesis offers limited help in understanding the role of the South African Defence Force (SADF) in the region. To appreciate this would require an analysis of the sources and dynamics of domestic and regional conflict, the nature of the South African state and of the security establishment and - at the least - some understanding of theoretical perspectives on civil-military relations.

Clearly, such an undertaking is beyond the scope of this exploratory paper, which confines itself to some tentative theoretical observations on civil-military relations in South Africa and an examination of the role of the SADF in the region generally, with special emphasis on Namibia and Angola. For academic and other reasons, however, this paper does not purport to analyse the SADF's military strategic doctrine or tactics. Limiting my observations to Namibia and Angola is based on the view that South Africa's approach to Angola has been 'qualitatively and quantitatively different from its actions against any other state in the region' (Hanlon, 1986a:153). Moreover, study of the role of the SADF in these two countries may provide the first step towards the comprehension of the modus operandi and the philosophy which informs the South African military in the context of regional policy, especially in view of the scope, nature, and duration of military intervention in these two countries.

#### Civil-Military relations in South Africa: some theoretical pointers

The entire field of civil-military relations scholarship is increasingly informed by the blurring of the boundary between what is 'civil' and what is 'military'. The notion of what Seegers (1986:193) terms 'civil-military interpenetration' characterises this relationship. Recent work in this field, however, reveals little awareness of this.

Reflecting on patterns of civil-military interaction, Perlmutter & Bennett (1980:3) outline three dominant relationships. These are the 'professional military'; 'praetorianism' (of two distinct types - those of 'arbitrator armies' and 'ruler armies'); and the 'professional revolutionary soldier'.

In the case of the first - professional military - the military recognises the institutional limits imposed by the civilian order. This relationship is based on the 'primacy of the civilian order over the military' (*ibid*). Professional militaries are characteristic of stable, well-institutionalised civilian orders such as those in the United States, the states of Western Europe, the former British dominions (Canada, Australia, New Zealand), and Japan. The professional military rarely intervenes in politics, and 'when intervention does occur, it is of short duration'.

In the second case - praetorianism - the military exercises 'independent local power' (*ibid*). Praetorianism is fostered by various social conditions, such as the following: the collapse of executive power; low levels of institutionalisation; an incapability of authority structures to deal with modernisation; the absence of a unifying ideology; and institutions based on socially fragmented class structures (Perlmutter, 1969:385; Perlmutter & Bennett, 1980:199-205; and Huntington, 1968:194-197).

In an earlier article, Perlmutter (1969:392-394) draws a distinction between two types of praetorianism. These are 'arbitrator armies', which have no political organisation of their own but which espouse a 'status quo ideology'; and 'ruler armies', which are politically organised, with a distinct ideological formation, eager to exercise political power on a semi-permanent basis.

Praetorianism manifests itself differently in Africa, the Middle East and Latin America. In central and sub-Saharan Africa, and in the Middle East, praetorianism is essentially a consequence of an unstable or weak civic order, incapable of dealing with the crises of modernisation, nation-building and domestic security. The frequently superior organisational and bureaucratic structures of the military enable it to penetrate the political process and, in some cases, it became the successor to colonial control.

In Latin America a long tradition of military intervention in politics and in wars of independence makes for a different relationship. In the earlier period, arbitrator praetorianism predominated; in the more recent period, ruler armies became dominant. Civil government, however, is not completely rejected by military intervention, if only on functional grounds.

The third pattern of interaction - the professional revolutionary soldier - denotes a relationship where the military is integrated with a revolutionary movement bent on mass mobilisation of the populace. Here the military is more ideological than in the previous two, often playing an important part in the process of nation-building. Arguably, the best example of this pattern is the Maoist Chinese People's Liberation Army. In Perlmutter's analysis (1968:606-643), the Israeli Defence Force exemplifies another type of professional revolutionary army, in the sense of its central role in nation-building, its organisational ideology, and the extent to which the relationship between the military and civic order has been formalised.

Against this limited theoretical backdrop, to understand the South African military and its role in the region, a further notion has to be introduced - that of the frontier army. Drawing on the considerable insights of Annette Seegers, the South African military, especially in its regional setting, will (at least in part) be analysed as a frontier army<sup>2</sup>. This does not, however, imply the development of what Frankel (1984:29-71) calls the 'garrison state', with a distinct counter-insurgency doctrine of Total Strategy. (The role of the military as a 'service institution' has no relevance to this paper.) The notion of a frontier army does, nevertheless, offer some useful avenues for a better understanding of the role of the South African military in a regional setting.

#### The war in Namibia: a Frontier Army in action

Following the deployment of SADF units in northern Namibia in 1971/72, especially after Operation Savannah in Angola from August 1975 to March 1976, as well as subsequent military action both within Namibia and trans-border into Angola and elsewhere in the region, the traditional role definition of the military was expanded. Faced by a changed regional environment that reflected significant shifts in power relations, the SADF began to operate increasingly as a frontier army.

In Angola the socio-political fabric disintegrated rapidly in the wake of an internecine civil war. This resulted in an erosion of power and provided the SADF and other outside forces opportunities for military intervention. In Seegers' perceptive analysis: 'the SADF in southern Angola operates in a grassroots political vacuum: there is little or no restraint of military power and no mechanisms by which a civilian can complain about military behaviour' (1987:5-6).

In Namibia a second feature of the political landscape enhanced the role of the SADF as a frontier army - failure on the part of the South African government to establish a legitimate political alternative to SWAPO. In its absence, the South West African Territory Force (SWATF) was established on 1 August 1980.<sup>3</sup> The SWATF itself has since become a key component in South Africa's policy on Namibia. Its rapid growth and regular deployment, also into neighbouring Angola, signify its importance as a coercive alternative to counter the popular appeal of SWAPO.

Consistent with frontier army tradition, the South African state and the SADF fight what Hanlon (1986b:7) graphically calls 'a curiously hidden war'. The entire notion of the 'operational area' is not only consistent with this tradition but ensures that access to the area is strictly controlled and that the SADF operates largely out of the public eye. In this particular sense, the SADF does not recognise the institutional limits posed by the civilian order.

Finally, the SADF's strategy is two-pronged: not only by an extensive military build-up in Namibia, but also by carrying the war into southern Angola using quasi-surrogates, notably UNITA, or special units such as 32 Battalion (created in 1976) under SADF command. This strategy is premised not only on preservation of SADF manpower, but also serves to ensure UNITA's military (and hence its political) credibility. In a special sense, a strong UNITA in the bush also strengthens South African demands for the withdrawal of the Cuban forces from Angola. Furthermore, if South Africa loses its ability to forward supplies to UNITA with relative ease, South Africa's bargaining position vis-à-vis Angola and Namibia will be weakened substantially. Reflecting on this dimension of the SADF as a frontier army, Leonard (1983:60) remarks that the goal is 'to restore the buffer that was lost by the collapse of Portuguese colonial rule'.

Elsewhere (Du Pisani, 1986:70), I have attempted to show the links between South African policy towards Namibia and Angola in the following way:

The two principal instruments of South Africa's regional policies - military action and diplomacy - were designed to ensure control over the process of political change in Namibia. At the same time, destabilisation was intended to be both an incentive and disincentive to SWAPO and the MPLA Government in Luanda.

As remarked earlier, the 'frontier dimension' of the SADF in Namibia and Angola should not blind the analyst to the service and civic roles of the military, especially in northern Namibia. We shall return to this important aspect later, but first a discussion of the origin and nature of the SADF in Namibia.

The role of the SADF in Namibia has to be viewed against a broader historical and regional canvas. Apart from South Africa's political and administrative presence in Namibia which dates back to 1915, the legal ambiguities deriving from the League of Nations' C Mandate were ruthlessly exploited by successive South African governments for their own selfish interests. Not only was SWA systematically incorporated into the Union of South Africa, but political control was ensured through the extension of racial, land and political policy. Contrary to the provisions of Article IV of the 'Mandate Agreement Regarding German South-West Africa' of

17 December 1920, which reads as follows:

The military training of the natives, otherwise than for purposes of internal police and the local defense of the territory, shall be prohibited. Furthermore, no military or naval bases shall be established or fortifications erected in the territory.

At the time, Smuts persuaded the Union government to reinforce the police in SWA by sending 300 members of the South African Police (SAP) to the territory and soon afterwards (in 1939) to transfer control of the SWA Police to the Union government. When World War II broke out later in the same year, the provisions of the original Defence Act of 1912 (as amended) were extended to SWA.

More important from the perspective of a frontier army was the deployment of the Union Defence Force (UDF) and Air Force to crush the Bondelswart rising of May 1922 and military action against Chief Impumbu of the Kuambi (an Ambo grouping) in 1932. Very much like their German predecessors, the South African authorities, supported by the UDF, intervened directly in traditional power structures to smash resistance.

Against the backdrop of an extended legal dispute over the locus of sovereignty with regard to Namibia's political future, black (African) political opposition entered a new phase with the formation of nationalist political movements in the period 1957-1960. Despite organisational and personal rivalry between SWAPO and SWANU, both organisations campaigned inside the country and abroad for the termination of South African control and independence for Namibia.

Regional developments, notably the independence of Zambia on 24 October 1964 and the ongoing guerrilla war in neighbouring Angola, provided SWAPO with new political and military opportunities. In 1962, SWAPO's external leadership had already embarked upon a military training programme and dispatched some 200 volunteers to Egypt for training. Assisted by OAU recognition as 'the authentic and sole representative of African opinion in South West Africa' in 1965, the first SWAPO guerrillas returned to prepare for the coming struggle (Du Pisani, 1987:91-95).

The controversial ruling of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on 18 July 1966 denying Ethiopia and Liberia any legal right or interest in the matter of the SWA Mandate, effectively gave the green light to the embryonic liberation movement to launch the armed struggle. That same day, a statement from SWAPO's external leadership in Dar-es-Salaam declared that the ICJ's 'inexcusable refusal' to act against South Africa 'would relieve Namibians once and for all from any illusions which they may have harboured about the United Nations as some kind of saviour in their plight ... We have no alternative but to rise in arms and bring about our liberation.' (SWAPO, 1981:177).

The first military engagement took place on 26 August 1966 (Namibia Day) when SWAPO guerrillas from the Ongulumbashe base camp in the Uukwaludhi district engaged SAP units in battle (Shay & Vermaak, 1971:172-173). A month later, on 27 September 1966, SWAPO guerrillas set alight an administrative complex at Oshikango.

These first guerrilla activities were countered by the SAP, who were equipped and trained for counter-insurgency warfare. In May 1967, SWAPO were to suffer a temporary military setback when its attempts to operate in Caprivi were undermined by the death of one of its most experienced area commanders, Tobias Haiyeko. By the end of 1968, SWAPO's military successes were limited. The movement lacked both a popular base of support inside Ovamboland, and also secure forward base camps with the concomitant supply dumps and infiltration routes. Moreover, SWAPO was only able to deploy some 250 trained guerrillas at that stage.

The politico-military equation, however, was soon to change significantly - partly because of events in Ovamboland and Namibia, and in neighbouring Angola. SWAPO itself changed strategy, following the important Tanga Consultative Conference in Tanzania in December 1969 - January 1970, which not only called for greater sacrifices for the liberation of Namibia, but spawned the SWAPO Youth League and prepared the groundwork for SWAPO's recognition as 'the sole and authentic representative' of the Namibian people by the UN General Assembly in 1973<sup>4</sup> (Du Pisani, 1987:96-99).

Ovamboland and the rest of Namibia experienced labour unrest (largely SWAPO instigated) in December 1971 - January 1972. Shortly after this the South African authorities responded with emergency regulations for the administration of the District of Ovamboland, gazetted in terms of Proclamation R17 and R26 of February 1972, which provided, inter alia, for detention without trial. Massive detentions followed, while church-state confrontation took a turn for the worse with the expulsion of churchmen and the destruction of the church printing works at Oniipa in Ovamboland. Amidst growing conflict and political volatility in Namibia's most strategically important homeland, the South African authorities introduced a revised constitution for Owambo (as Ovamboland became known) in April 1973<sup>5</sup> and indicated that elections would follow in August of that year. Meanwhile, in neighbouring Angola, the war turned slowly against the Portuguese, following successful guerrilla action in the Bié, Moxico, Huambo and Cuanda-Cubango provinces (Wolfers & Bergerol, 1983:4-6). At the same time, UNITA opened a new front against the Portuguese from Zaire.

Against this backdrop, the SADF took over responsibility for counter-insurgency operations. The first large contingents of national servicemen were deployed in northern Namibia at the beginning of 1973.

From the perspective of a frontier army, it is important to reiterate that the SADF was introduced into an already highly charged political arena in Owambo, whose outstanding characteristics were low levels of institutionalisation and a dubious basis of legitimacy. The disastrous elections of August 1973, which registered a poll of 2,5 percent, and the involvement of the SADF in these elections, gave rise to a widely-held perception of the SADF as an 'occupation force', bent on the destruction of a popular and legitimate opposition comprising SWAPO and the indigenous churches. This viewpoint was reinforced by international developments - notably, the earlier ICJ Advisory Opinion of 1971 reaffirming that South Africa's 'illegal occupation' of Namibia was in contravention of international law, and the special ascriptive status conferred by the UN General Assembly and the OAU on SWAPO. The actions of the SADF within Namibia, both in a military and non-military sense, and the use of Namibia as a springboard for aggression against neighbouring Angola, only served to entrench these views and to complicate even further the SADF's 'frontier role'.

Notwithstanding considerable political weakness in Namibia, the SADF followed the classical precepts of a frontier army both in a military and non-military sense. Accelerated by events in Portugal in April 1974 and the prospect of Angolan independence, the SADF not only increased force levels in northern Namibia, but announced in June 1974 that an Owambo Battalion under the control of the SADF would be formed (Du Pisani, 1985:233). This was an important development, for it was the beginning of a policy to Namibianise the war and to militarise the political process in northern Namibia in the absence of credible political alternatives to SWAPO. In a context of heightened conflict, especially between traditional power structures supported by the SADF on the one hand, and SWAPO on the other, some 2 500 people had left Owambo by October 1974 to undergo military training with SWAPO guerrillas in Zambia and Angola.

Because of the escalation in guerrilla activities in northern Namibia, the South African government extended the provisions of the Riotous Assemblies Act of 1956 to Namibia. At the same time, the Suppression of Communism Act of 1950 was renamed the State Security Act. Its provisions were applied to Namibia also.

Consistent with frontier army traditions, new measures to improve border security between Owambo and Angola were introduced in May 1976. Provision was made for a 'depopulated zone' of 1 000 km along the border with Angola. Population relocation followed, and entry from Angola was only permitted through Ruacana and Calueque. Certain provisions of Proclamation R17 of 1972 were invoked, supplementing the decisions to depopulate a strip one kilometre wide along the border with Angola (Du Pisani, 1985:239).

Villagers relocated from the border area were resettled in 'protected villages' under SADF control.<sup>6</sup> White residential areas of towns in Owambo, Caprivi and Kavango were fenced off and surrounded by watchtowers. At the same time, the policy of ethnic fragmentation was given further import in Kavango and Caprivi, following the designation of these areas as 'self-governing' in 1973 and 1976 respectively. By mid-1976 development assistance to Owambo, Kavango and Caprivi was co-ordinated and extended with the establishment of area-based development corporations. Significantly, further land allocations were made to these northern ethnic sub-systems in an attempt to strengthen the position of traditional power structures along the lines of indirect rule in the face of increased SWAPO guerrilla activity.<sup>7</sup>

Against the background of developments in neighbouring Angola and attempts by the western powers to secure the independence of Namibia through diplomatic means, the South African government continued with its policy of 'controlled change' in Namibia, encouraged the Turnhalle Constitutional Conference to reach agreement on a constitution premised on the exclusion of nationalist political forces such as SWAPO and SWANU, and announced in May 1977 that the period of national service for white South African and Namibian conscripts would be extended from one to two years.

The war in northern Namibia took a new turn after the involvement of the SADF in the Angolan theatre following Operation Savannah during September 1975-February 1976. This led to the development of a special relationship between UNITA and 32 Battalion, who both fulfil the role of surrogates. The war was further 'Namibianised' with the establishment of 201 Battalion, (made up of San Bushmen), 102 Battalion in Kaokoland, 202 Battalion in the Kavango, and 203 Battalion in Bushmanland (Udd, 1980:291-300). Specific

Civic Action programmes, first introduced in 1974, were significantly extended to encompass medical services, teaching, technical training, veterinary services and agricultural assistance. By June 1983, the SADF and SWATF provided forty-nine of the fifty-eight medical doctors in Kaokoland and Owambo; five of the eight pharmacists in Owambo; manned twenty-six clinics in Owambo and Kaokoland; provided twelve tons of medical supplies per month to the clinics; had treated 248 246 patients at these clinics during 1982; and provided the bulk of all dental services in northern Namibia (Paratus, vol 34, no 6, June 1983:9-10).

Areas regarded as militarily sensitive were targetted for civic action programmes in the hope that these would enhance the legitimacy of ethnic power structures. In some cases, the implementation of specific civic action programmes coincided with trans-border military operations against SWAPO. It is a moot point whether such programmes have not been undermined by the 'alienating effects of military brutality' (Cawthra, 1986:205). The reality, however, was that a growing number of Namibians - perhaps as many as 400 000 - became structurally dependent on the military for jobs, cash and security.<sup>8</sup> The socio-economic and political implications of this, especially in the event of withdrawal by the SADF, will be far-reaching in a post-independent Namibia.

The position of the San is especially vulnerable. In 1979 a group of Vasekela San from Angola were brought to Luhebu in Bushmanland to form the nucleus of a military unit. Earlier, the SADF had established Alpha Base at Rundu in the Kavango, where Baraqwena and !Kung San were trained and deployed as trackers in SADF counter-insurgency operations. The Alpha unit took part in Operation Savannah in 1975-76 and during the course of action met with the Vasekela San and their families, who were engulfed by the civil war in southern Angola. The Vasekela San were first resettled at Rundu and then moved to Omega Base where 201 Battalion was established.

The SADF is engaged in a programme of civic action based on the teaching of farming skills and animal husbandry, and provides medical care, education (Sub A to Standard Two) and housing (Paratus, vol 34, no 2, February 1983:28-31). Military bases have already been established at M'kata, Kanun, Nhoma, Luhebu, Luhebu North and South, Khandu, Omataku, Tsunkwe and Vicks Rus.

The San face the real risk of total social disintegration as a consequence of militarisation and westernisation by the SADF.

A development with major political overtones has been the establishment of the South West African Territory Force (SWATF) on 1 August 1980. Despite the fact that the SWATF had its own uniforms, rank structures and pay scales, its command structure remains integrated with the SADF. The operational competence of the SWATF remains limited to Namibian units outside the Operational Area and specifically excludes trans-border actions into Angola.

Marketed as 'part of the SWA independence process' and as forming 'the basis of the defence force of the new state' (Major-General Charles Lloyd, former OC, SWATF, quoted in Cawthra, 1986:201), the SWATF, in the absence of a viable political alternative to SWAPO, provides a 'military counterweight' to the popular appeal of SWAPO (Seegers, 1987:6).

Since its formation in 1980, the SWATF has grown rapidly to a force level in excess of 21 000, and has been involved in numerous trans-border actions against SWAPO in southern Angola (The SADF: A Survey, supplement to Financial Mail, 10 July 1987:22).

In addition to the SWATF, a SWA Police Force (SWAPOL) was formally inaugurated in 1981. SWAPOL now falls under the political control of the Transitional Government of National Unity (TGNU), established in June 1985. The Security Police units and 'Koevoet' (renamed COIN in 1986) remain under the operational control of the SADF and SAP. More recently, the SWATF has established Special Units, which have been successfully deployed against SWAPO inside Namibia and in southern Angola.

The political and military importance of the SWATF has been augmented by two further developments. First, the introduction of a system of area defence that involves both SWATF and local commando units and, secondly, the introduction of compulsory military service in 1982 for the different ethnic groups in Namibia. Notwithstanding resistance from SWAPO and the black churches, the SWATF has grown apace, especially for economic reasons in the light of widespread unemployment and economic stagnation in some sectors of the local economy. The political allegiance of some elements of 101 and 201 Battalions in particular seems at best tenuous, as has been dramatically illustrated by incidents bordering on the mutinous during recent operations in support of UNITA in southern Angola.

#### Pax Pretorians: Namibia and the Angolan Factor

In the case of Angola, the SADF's frontier army features can best be illustrated with reference to two related (yet distinct) dimensions. These are: cross-border operations against SWAPO and the development of a special surrogate relationship with UNITA. While these two dimensions have been empirically linked at times (for example, in the SADF's ongoing operations in southern Angola), they have to be separated for analytical purposes because they highlight distinct aspects of the SADF's frontier role.

As far as the cross-border operations against SWAPO are concerned, these have been and are still justified in terms of a counter-insurgency doctrine that views SWAPO as a 'revolutionary' organisation. This implies that SWAPO is seen as bent on the destruction of the prevailing socio-political order in Namibia (Psaratus, vol 30, no 6, June 1979:3).

South Africa's war strategy evolved during the period 1978-82, mainly in response to growing SWAPO guerrilla capabilities, the introduction of sophisticated military hardware in southern Angola, political developments inside Namibia and in the region, and the change of administration in Washington. It became, in the view of one analyst, 'increasingly a preemptive and aggressive strategy, not a reactive one' (Jaster, 1985:45-46).

The need for a preemptive strategy became patently obvious in 1978, when SWAPO demonstrated a capability to deploy in excess of 100 guerrillas in the white commercial farming districts of Grootfontein, Tsumeb, Otavi and Otjiwarongo. Reacting to this development, the SADF launched a

cross-border attack against SWAPO training and transit facilities in the Cunene province in May 1978. Codenamed 'Moscow' and 'Vietnam', two important SWAPO training and transit bases were destroyed. Despite this operation, SWAPO guerrilla activity in northern Namibia and in Caprivi and Kavango showed an increase. On the night of 23 August 1978 SWAPO launched a successful rocket attack on the Katimo Mulilo military base, killing ten South African soldiers.

Against the background of increased SWAPO guerrilla activity and their improved training and equipment (SWAPO received training on SAM 6 & 7 missiles for the first time in 1978), the SADF responded with mechanised infantry and air attacks on SWAPO bases in southern Angola. Operation Smokeshell in May 1978 set the tone for future operations. This operation was of special military importance, not only for the vast quantity of equipment that was captured (some 350 tons), but it also revealed the extent of Soviet involvement in the Angolan theatre and the type of equipment made available to SWAPO, as well as the extent of the operational integration that existed between SWAPO and the Angolan military.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, Operation Smokeshell was the first of its kind to involve the newly established SWA Specialist Unit, formed in January 1978.

The South African cross-border operations against SWAPO were carried out with surprising flexibility and were adapted to changing political and military conditions. For example, soon after June 1980, following the announcement that South Africa had developed its own 127mm rocket system to counter the threat posed by the Soviet 'Red Eye' or 'Stalin Organ', this system was successfully deployed against SWAPO in subsequent operations. Anti-SWAPO propaganda such as leaflets that read 'Join SWAPO and die' were used after when Maj-Gen Charles Lloyd took over from Lt-Gen Jannie Geldenhuys in October 1980 as OC of SWA Command, when the latter was appointed Chief of the SA Army. The first South African marines were also trained in the Operational Area in April 1981, to be deployed later in operations against SWAPO in southern Angola (Paratus, vol 32, no 5, May 1981:10-12).

The second major operation against SWAPO facilities in southern Angola - codenamed Operation Protea - took place in August 1981. This operation was carried out jointly by SADF and SWATF units, made use of aircover, relying heavily on the battle experience and special skills of 32 Battalion and the firepower and mobility of 61 Mechanised Battalion Group. In the context of cross-border operations against SWAPO, Operation Protea was important for four reasons. First, four Soviets - including two Lt-Colonels - were killed in the SADF/SWATF attack on the towns of Xangongo and Ongiva in the Cunene Province. This was seen as 'direct proof of Soviet involvement in the SWAPO campaign' (Paratus, vol 32, no 10, October 1981:68-71). Secondly, this operation revealed for the first time the extent and nature of anti-aircraft defence systems installed in southern Angola (including a new 20mm triple-barrelled anti-aircraft gun made in Yugoslavia, and advanced radar). Thirdly, South Africa increased its military support to UNITA; and finally, it paved the way for semi-permanent SADF occupation of large parts of the Cunene province that only ceased in April 1985, following the tripartite Lusaka Accord reached between South Africa, the United States and the MPLA government in Lusaka in February 1984.

Over 4 000 tons of military hardware, including vintage T-34 and PT-76 Soviet tanks, over 100 SAM-7 missile launchers and large quantities of 122mm rockets and other ammunition were captured. Again, the bulk of this captured equipment was recycled to UNITA, emphasising the link between action against SWAPO and the need to ensure the continued viability of UNITA as a credible military force in southern Angola - and also the two-track politico-military strategy. Militarily, it provides for territorial competition between UNITA and SWAPO, thereby assisting the SADF in its strategy to confine the war to southern Angola. Politically, a strong UNITA in the bush strengthens South African demands for the withdrawal of Cuban forces from Angola as a condition for an internationally validated settlement in Namibia. In this particular sense, UNITA performs a most useful surrogate function, supporting South African regional interests and designs on Angola and Namibia.

Faced with more aggressive and expanding trans-border operations, SWAPO was forced to shift some of its operational and transit bases westwards to inhospitable mountain terrain south of the port of Namibé, to enable it to infiltrate the western part of Owambo and northern Kaokoland. On 13 March 1982 the SADF launched a successful helicopter attack on a SWAPO base twenty-two kilometres north of the Kaokoland border. Operation Super, as this was called, effectively disrupted SWAPO attempts to infiltrate Kaokoland for almost four years. SWAPO only reactivated its 'western front' in 1986. Operation Phoenix, in April 1983, and Operation Askari, from 6 December 1983 until 13 January 1984 in particular, continued to thwart SWAPO attempts to infiltrate western Owambo and Kaokoland.

Operation Askari was significant for other reasons also. Not only did the SADF lose twenty-one men, but the Air Force encountered effective anti-aircraft defence from sophisticated radar and SAM 8 & 9 missile systems. Near Cuvelai and Cahama the SADF for the first time encountered the considerable firepower of the Soviet-made 30mm AGS-17 grenade launcher - its first use outside the Afghanistan theatre. Although SWAPO suffered heavily in this operation - losing some 400 to 500 men, especially at the Greenwell Matambo Training Centre, at their defence headquarters near the heavily guarded Lubango airfield and at their western front headquarters near Cahama - Operation Askari underlined that the SADF's air superiority in the Angolan theatre was vulnerable. One SAAF Impala MK II aircraft was actually hit and badly damaged by a SAM-9 missile.

#### The Lusaka Accord

For reasons which remain conjectural, South Africa changed course in 1984. In February, in terms of the Lusaka Accord, South Africa agreed to withdraw its troops from Angola if Angola restrained the activities of SWAPO guerrillas in what was called 'the area in question', on condition that South Africa would also proceed towards Namibian independence in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 435 of 1978. As these developments ran almost concurrently with the Nkomati Accord between South Africa and Mozambique, they engendered considerable confidence in certain diplomatic circles.

The Lusaka Accord culminated in the Mulungushi Minute, which embodied the principles for the disengagement of South African forces, made provision for the exclusion of Cubans and SWAPO guerrillas from southern Angola and

for the establishment of a Joint Monitoring Commission (JMC) to oversee the implementation of the agreement. Nevertheless, the agreement fell apart soon after it was signed.

Although the trilateral agreement made provision for participation by the United States, the Angolan government subsequently denied participation to the US in the JMC while it operated on Angolan soil. The US accordingly opened a liaison office in Windhoek to serve as a contact between the US government and the JMC. This was closed in February 1985, when it became apparent that only limited progress was being made. The JMC itself did not start to function effectively until 18 March 1984. By May 1985 some 125 violations of the agreement were recorded - South Africa admitting to four such violations.

Despite the Lusaka Accord, South Africa did not withdraw its forces from southern Angola until the last week of April 1985. In the following month a unit of its special Recce forces was captured while engaged in operations against oil installations in Cabinda. Cross-border operations against SWAPO were resumed in late June 1985 (Operation Boswilger) and further actions occurred in 1986 and early 1987. In June 1986 South African marines launched a naval attack on the southern Angolan port of Namibé, sinking a cargo vessel and destroying two fuel storage tanks. This incident and others that followed in 1987 and more recently, coincided with a renewed FAPLA offensive against UNITA (Young, 1987:224).

In typical frontier army fashion, South Africa's trans-border operations against SWAPO are informed by some of the following politico-military objectives:

- to destroy SWAPO as a credible military force - which would undermine SWAPO's political appeal and legitimacy in Namibia, as well as its international position, especially in maintaining continued military support;
- to demonstrate the South African government's resolve in the face of armed insurgency and its determination not to be forced into making political concessions on account of military weakness. This partly explains why the SADF's actions in Namibia and Angola are invariably presented as those of an 'heroic' and 'invincible' army;
- to keep the military situation in Namibia under control by containing the war beyond the distant Angolan frontier, while seeking to strengthen 'moderate' political forces in the Territory; and
- to bring military pressure to bear on the Angolan government as a means of forcing it to revise its policy towards SWAPO - specifically to discourage the Angolan armed forces from playing a more direct role in support of SWAPO (Jaster, 1985:46-47).

Among the military components of the war strategy, special emphasis was placed on the prevention of SWAPO offensive capability in southern Angola, and the establishment of an SADF-controlled buffer strip along Angola's southern border with Namibia. Both these components were directed toward reducing Namibia's political vulnerabilities in the absence of a legitimate alternative to SWAPO and to providing the SADF with access to UNITA.

The resurgence of UNITA - the 'frontier dimension'

The second dimension of the SADF's role in the region - its surrogate relationship with UNITA - is of special importance to its 'frontier role'.

With a total land area of 1 246 700 sq km (481 354 sq miles), Angola is a massive country, second in size after Zaire of the countries south of the Sahara. Angola is an underpopulated country, with a total population of some nine million in 1986. It is overwhelmingly rural and tribal, with an estimated 20% of the population living in urban areas of over 2 000 people. Angola is a country characterised by considerable ethnic diversity. The main ethnic divisions are Ovimbundu, Mbundu, Kongo, Lunda-Chokwe, Nganguela, Nyaneka, Humbe, and Ambo. A principal feature of the population is its youth, with 42% under fifteen years old and only 4% over sixty. The average life expectancy is about forty-one years (Pélissier, 1987:219).

Following Angola's independence on 11 November 1975, the country experienced a massive outflow of skills and expertise. It is estimated that over 300 000 people (mostly white) left the country. Since the collapse of the fragile Alvor Agreement between the MPLA, UNITA and the FNLA in 1975, and the subsequent internecine civil war, the administrative and settler segments of the economy were worst hit, causing major disruptions in the modern sector. As a consequence of the civil war and the military involvement of outside forces, including the South African military, some significant structural changes - some with long-term implications - have taken place. These changes include an ethnic regrouping of African populations - the Ovimbundu in particular fell back to the central and southern plateau; large-scale population movements in the northwest - some Kongo refugees in Zaire returned to Angola; a general migration from cities to rural areas; the death of over 150 000 people, victims of strife, famine and disease; a reconcentration of the Ovimbundu in fortified villages, especially in the southeast and eastern provinces; massive population dislocation in southern Angola as a consequence of South African military activity and UNITA operations; and the formation of a refugee population in excess of 600 000, fleeing combat on the central plateau and the drought of the last few years.

In this climate of socio-economic and political disintegration, South African forces, acting on the mistaken belief that the United States government would support them, overtly intervened on behalf of the anti-MPLA forces. South Africa initially intervened in Angola on the pretext of safeguarding its interests in the Ruacana and Calueque hydro-electric schemes, but it was soon apparent that the SADF's intervention was linked to broader regional designs, as became clear in September 1975 when the SADF became directly involved in the power struggle within Angola.

In the second week of August 1975 South African forces took control of the Ruacana hydro-electric installation. Two days later an armoured car column entered Angola and captured the MPLA-held town of Ngiva. By mid-September 1975 South African military advisors and instructors were assisting a small UNITA force to repulse an MPLA offensive on Nova Lisboa. Early in October 1975 a combined UNITA/FNLA force of some 1 000 men was put under the command of a senior South African military officer. Accompanied by other commissioned and non-commissioned officers, the Zulu combat group came into

being, with the specific objective of recapturing as many towns in southern Angola as possible.

The Zulu combat group, by then supported by ground forces, had systematically recaptured Serpa Pinto, Arthur da Paiva, the southern district capital of Pereira d'Eca, Rocadas, Joao de Almeida, Sa'da Bandeira and Mocamedes by the end of October 1975. A modicum of UNITA/FNLA administration was installed, while the Zulu combat group, joined by trained FNLA troops, established itself at the strategically-located town of Sa'da Bandeira to reorganise in preparation for an attack on the important towns of Benguela and Lobito.

With important parts of the Cunene province again under joint UNITA/FNLA control, Zulu continued its advance. In the battle for Benguela, the South African forces encountered fierce resistance from the 122mm rocket launchers which far exceeded the SADF's 81mm mortars in effective range. Further artillery support was urgently requested from South Africa, which arrived on 11 November 1975, enabling the South African/UNITA forces to capture Benguela and Lobito (Paratus, vol 28, no 3, March 1977:3-10).

With the western front reasonably secure, Zulu and Foxbat (a South African-trained battalion with an armoured car squadron and artillery) advanced northwards and captured the towns of Cangamba, Menongue, Kuito and the important railway town of Luso. By December 1975, South Africa had deployed 2 000 men in Angola over an 800 km front.

Despite further reinforcements, the South African forces - hampered by poor communications, long lines of supply, hostility between UNITA and the FNLA for control over territory, and plagued by general banditry - concentrated on consolidating their control over the Benguela railway and installing UNITA and FNLA administrations in captured towns. UNITA and FNLA troops carried out a reign of terror against those suspected of supporting the MPLA. A new UNITA 'republic' was declared in Huambo in the South African occupied area, but the administration was in disarray.

FAPLA began a successful counter-offensive in the north. With the assistance of a growing number of Cubans and the introduction of Soviet military hardware into the Angolan theatre, the tide was turning against UNITA and the FNLA by the middle of February 1976.

Operation Savannah, as this South African intervention in Angola was called, was not only politically misguided, but the SADF made a number of serious tactical and strategic errors. Despite attempts to integrate and consolidate the UNITA/FNLA alliance, this never materialised. By the beginning of 1976, the FNLA had virtually disintegrated, while UNITA's actions in southern Angola were characterised by banditry. The social fabric of southern Angola fell apart. Jonas Savimbi was evacuated to Namibia, where the SADF was desperately attempting to reconstitute UNITA. A new front line was established about eighty kilometres from the Namibian border, where South African forces remained until their final withdrawal at the end of March 1976.

Bruised by their Angolan experience, and faced with a new regional and international environment, the SADF entered into a special surrogate relationship with UNITA to further its regional designs in Namibia and Angola.

After the withdrawal from Angola, the SADF established various new bases along the Namibian-Angolan border - some twenty in total - and began to re-equip and train the remnants of the UNITA and FNLA groups who had retreated with it. The bulk of the FNLA members were incorporated directly into the SADF, principally in 32 'Buffalo' Battalion near Rundu in the Kavango, along with Portuguese and other mercenaries. UNITA was essentially retained as an 'independent' force, and efforts were made to reintegrate UNITA bands roving the bush in southern and central Angola.

UNITA groups, often assisted by special SADF units such as the Recces and 32 Battalion, were soon engaged in the systematic destruction of infrastructure in southern Angola, notably the Benguela railway. To enhance UNITA's domestic and international prestige, the SADF carried out several sabotage attacks which were claimed by UNITA. For example, just before Savimbi's visit to Washington at the beginning of December 1981, a South African commando unit carried out a sabotage attack on the oil refinery on the outskirts of Luanda.

At the beginning of 1982, the SADF enabled UNITA to establish a headquarters at Jamba, in the Cuando Cubango province in the southeastern part of Angola close to the Namibian border. UNITA operations were soon extended north of Cuando Cubango and into the Moxico province, while persistent sabotage of the Benguela railway continued.

Throughout 1982 the SADF, in typical frontier army fashion, attempted to extend the 50 000 sq km area under its occupation to facilitate UNITA's northward thrust and to enable it to consolidate itself as a viable political force. The 1983 dry season provided the SADF with further opportunities to resupply UNITA. The extent of this became clear when UNITA made some important inroads into the provinces of Bié, Huambo and Benguela. Various smaller transit and supply bases were established. During December 1983 and January 1984 the SADF/SWATF launched Operation Askari, which, as previously indicated, had as one its objectives the further consolidation and strengthening of UNITA's military capabilities. With the assistance of the joint SADF/SWATF forces, UNITA was able to temporarily recapture the towns of Kassinga and Cuvelai in the Cunene province. Following the withdrawal of South African forces, prompted by the realisation that South African air superiority was under threat and the unanimous vote in the UN Security Council on a motion demanding an immediate withdrawal of South African forces from Angola, FAPLA regained control of Kassinga and Cuvelai.

Punctuated by the signing of the Lusaka Accord in February 1984, the South African government, ably assisted by the position of the Reagan Administration on the Cuban linkage issue, directed some of its energy toward strengthening UNITA's international position by emphasising its pro-western stance. Various international press conferences were held at Jamba, while foreign politicians and diplomats visited the 'liberated zone' under UNITA control. Savimbi was presented as a 'legitimate liberation leader' fighting to save his country from Soviet imperialism.

The military stalemate persisted throughout 1984, with UNITA making some headway along the Zambian border and north of Lunda, the diamond-producing region, and FAPLA - supported by its foreign backers - controlling the central (Bié, Malanje, Cuanzo-Sul), eastern and northeastern (Lunda-Sul and Lunda-Norte) and northern provinces (Cuanza Norte, Uige and Zaire).

In 1985 the military fortunes of all the parties changed. UNITA unsuccessfully started a campaign around the capital city of Luanda and announced in March - in the presence of Afghan moudjahidin and representatives from other liberation movements - that it would engage the FAPLA forces and the Cubans in a 'decisive campaign' later that year (Fourie, 1987:78).

In August the United States Congress repealed the Clark Amendment of 1975 that had until then effectively prohibited US support for UNITA. In October 1985, on a visit to Paris, Savimbi confirmed the arrival of US Stinger missiles. President Reagan indicated in November that he favoured additional covert support for UNITA.

Angolan forces launched a major offensive against UNITA positions in the east and southeast in July 1985, recapturing the town of Cazombo in Moxico province, and advanced on UNITA positions close to Mavinga, south of the strategically-important Lomba river in the Cuando Cubango province. For the first time in the war, the main UNITA base at Jamba further south was threatened.

Realising that the fall of Jamba would mean an irreversible setback for UNITA and therefore diminish South Africa's bargaining position on Angola and Namibia, the SADF deployed a mechanised unit backed by heavy artillery in support of UNITA at Mavinga and carried out two devastating air attacks on Angolan forward positions, halting the FAPLA/Cuban advance.

Shortly after this, the South African Minister of Defence, General Magnus Malan, publically disclosed South African military support for UNITA. Speaking on 20 September 1985, General Malan advanced several reasons for South African support, including: a common opposition to communism (adding that Angola was 'Moscow's springboard to Southern Africa'); that his government would 'not yield to opportunistic Western political pressure which uses South Africa as a handy distraction from their own problems'; and emphasising UNITA's utility in keeping SWAPO forces at bay (Paratus, vol 36, no 10, October 1985:22-23). At pains to point out that UNITA was 'not a creation of the South African Government', General Malan concluded by saying that 'should Dr Savimbi be unsuccessful in Angola, then the West will be to blame because they permitted Eastern Bloc countries to act undeterred against Western interests. South Africa, supporting Western interests, will then have a clear conscience'.

In 1986 the SADF cemented its relationship with UNITA by assisting the movement to develop a semi-conventional capability and by training large numbers of UNITA forces. South African direct military assistance to UNITA amounted to close on R400 million in that year.

The most recent SADF and SWATF military involvement in support of UNITA started around 18 September 1987, maintaining the 1985 trend, when the SADF intervened to stop FAPLA re-establishing the important air base at Mavinga south of the Lomba river. A base there would enable the Angolan Air Force to control airspace right up to the Namibian border, thereby denying South Africa air superiority.

As before, the SADF deployed 32 Battalion in support of UNITA. Initially this seemed to suffice; however, it soon became necessary to augment this with a further 2 000 SADF and SWATF troops. Significantly, members of 101 and 201 Battalions (Ovambo and Kavango units respectively) refused to be

integrated with UNITA forces, as mentioned earlier. The implications of this action have yet to be digested but must inevitably pose major problems for the SADF, not least in its 'Namibianisation' policy.

Another important development occurred when an Angolan Mig fighter shot down a South African Mirage jet in a dogfight. For the first time, South Africa lost an aircraft in Angola other than on account of a missile or mechanical failure. It was also the first occasion since 1975 that the Angolan Air Force, admittedly strengthened by Cuban pilots, demonstrated a capacity to exercise control over significant parts of its own airspace. As frequently predicted, the stakes in the conflict have once again been raised, as witnessed by the increasing technological sophistication of weaponry (largely of Soviet origin) employed by the Angolans.

### Conclusion

South African military involvement in Namibia and Angola constitutes an important element in the Republic's regional political policy, determined by the following interests: first, the ultimate security of the Republic of South Africa in relation to regional security; secondly, South Africa's own domestic political considerations; and finally, the political situation in Namibia itself. In terms of regional policy, all three are closely intertwined. For example, the South African government's perception of threat is shaped by its estimation of how Namibia is ranked as a domestic political issue by both the white and black inhabitants of South Africa. Similarly, political developments inside Namibia influence the government's security assessment, especially in so far as they could be assumed to have a negative influence on domestic South African politics, i.e. if a unitary vote system were to prevail over the RSA-preferred, and virtually imposed, divisive multiple-tier ethnic groupings.

While pressures from the international community and, more recently, the escalating costs of the war, have also influenced South African attitudes, security and domestic political considerations have remained of paramount importance to decision-makers. In the context of Angolan politics, the role of the SADF and its surrogate relationship with UNITA have had significant influence and may well have long-term negative implications for that country. While the full extent of South African aggression against Angola is not known, an International Commission of Inquiry, headed by the late Sean McBride, former Irish foreign minister and United Nations Commissioner for Namibia, calculated that SADF-sourced damage to Angola's infrastructure in the period 1975-1980 amounted to some US\$7 billion (Leonard, 1983:81).

At the beginning of 1986, an EEC mission to Angola estimated the war damage caused by the SADF and UNITA to exceed US\$10 billion. The actual cost to the Angolan economy would be considerably higher than this, especially if one considers indirect costs such as the loss in agricultural production and the necessity to develop alternative transport routes. Cost of rehabilitation of the Benguela railway itself is conservatively calculated in excess of US\$300 million.

The widening pattern of conflict in Angola and northern Namibia has significantly undermined what limited social cohesion there is. In Angola at large, more than 300 000 people have been displaced as a direct consequence of the civil war, while the total refugee population in southern Angola, northern Namibia and neighbouring Zaire totals between

80 000 and 100 000 people. In the case of Namibia, close to 11 000 SWAPO guerrillas, civilians and members of the SADF and SWATF have lost their lives since the start of the war in 1966. War casualties in Angola are estimated at between 20 000 and 25 000.

The socio-political consequences of South Africa's war strategy in Namibia and Angola may, in all probability, further undermine the social cohesion of these two countries and retard the processes of nation-building. Politically it has been a high-risk strategy - widening the conflict in Angola and legitimising the involvement of foreign actors in the regional theatre. Thus, far from underpinning foreign policy initiatives in the region, the role of the SADF has actually undermined diplomacy and hardened attitudes on all sides.

In Namibia, the SADF as a frontier army has contributed to the polarisation of society, especially in the north. This is apparent in the growing structural dependence of a growing number of Namibians on the SADF for jobs and security. The extension of military service to all Namibians in 1982 contributed significantly to further social polarisation, especially since this move was widely opposed inside the country.

In the case of Angola, the surrogate relationship between the SADF and UNITA is unlikely to produce the political results desired by Pretoria. Jonas Malheiro Savimbi of UNITA is committed to socialism, and even if UNITA were to govern in Luanda, they will face serious problems such as a poorly institutionalised socio-political order, administrative weakness and the formidable task of socio-economic reconstruction and nation-building. A UNITA government, or even a coalition including UNITA, will remain heavily dependent upon foreign assistance and expertise, and this would not necessarily imply cordial ties with a white minority government in Pretoria.

The SADF's counter-insurgency doctrine is informed by both military and civic elements. Militarily, the following objectives are of central importance - locating the 'enemy' guerrilla force; inflicting heavy casualties on the 'enemy'; gaining detailed knowledge of the terrain; restricting SWAPO's freedom of action and movement; and forcing SWAPO to consolidate or cease its insurgency operations. UNITA is especially useful in this context because it provides for territorial competition against SWAPO.

The civic component comprises some of the following aspects: providing adequate incentives to support the second-tier ethnic authorities in northern Namibia; using indigenous forces on projects useful to the populace in various fields such as training, agriculture, education, health, transportation and economic development; and stabilising socio-political conditions in Owambo, Kavango and Caprivi.

Finally, this paper has shown some of the contradictions inherent in the frontier role of the SADF both in Namibia and Angola, in particular the failure of South Africa's political strategy in Namibia.

ENDNOTES

1. The term praetorian is borrowed from the Roman guard that made and unmade emperors.
2. The role of the military in the 19th century in the United States offers many examples of the 'frontier' application of military power.
3. The South West African Territory Force (SWATF) was established in terms of Proclamation No AG 105 (1980), Establishment of South West African Territory Force, Official Gazette of SWA, 1 August 1980, No 4237.
4. SWAPO was recognised by the UN General Assembly Resolution 3111 (XXVIII) of December 1973 as 'the sole and authentic representative of the people of Namibia'.
5. In terms of Proclamation R104 of 27 April 1973, Owambo was declared a self-governing area within Namibia. The Proclamation made provision for a Legislative Council of fifty-six members.
6. The system of 'protected villages' was also used by the Portuguese in neighbouring Angola and by the Rhodesians against ZAPU and ZANU guerrillas.
7. The Bantu Laws Amendment Act, No 7 of 1973, provided for further land to be vested in the South African Bantu Trust, to be reserved for the different ethnic sub-systems. Part of the land envisaged was in the western part of the Caprivi strip.
8. Contrary to military belief, this dependence is unlikely to translate into political allegiance, for the reasons outlined earlier.
9. Since May 1978 SWAPO was increasingly forced to integrate its training and command structure with that of FAPLA. One consequence of this has been that SWAPO had to commit some of its own manpower to the fight against UNITA.

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