REDEFINING DEFENCE IN THE POST-APARTHEID SECURITY IMAGINARY: THE POLITICS OF MEANING-FIXING

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1.   INTRODUCTION

All societies are faced with questions of identity. These questions are not explicitly posed and the answers given to them are not necessarily only in language, but also constituted through society's activities, its institutions and way of being. Stated differently, it is in their social *doing* that societies express their self-understanding in the form of embodied meaning.[2] But, meanings are often contested and the fixing and reproduction of one set of meanings and not another are often political, i.e. they involve political struggle. From time to time a political struggle may seem to be won on such a grand scale that the process of re-fixing meanings and reconstructing realities based on new meanings, results in what is almost a traceable ripple effect through all aspects of society's doing.

Many analysts regard the end of apartheid as such a moment in South Africa's history (see e.g. Vale 2004). With the onset of the negotiations to end apartheid, a rethink of societal identity ensued and agents came to the fore in an effort to fix new meanings. This article traces the politics of meaning-fixing with respect to the role of the defence force as apartheid declined from the mid-1980s, as it was negotiated from a current to a past organising principle of the "security imaginary" in the period 1990 to 1994 and as the post-apartheid period commenced after the 1994 elections.

The notion of a security imaginary is founded on the belief that security and insecurity (or threats) are constructed and not objective realities. Through fixing meanings to events and objects, and an identity to "the self" and others, relationships are instituted. In the collective, often diverse imagination of a society, people think about what "threaten" them and how to respond to these threats. Features of the security imaginary are substantiated by political and social discourse, which draw on negotiated understandings of circumstances, capabilities and "others". The security imaginary is thus not make-believe, and can indeed be gauged through journals, speeches, studies, conversations, reports, news broadcasts, and all kinds of accounts that draw from and reproduce a society's understanding of security (Pretorius 2008: 99-118).

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[2]   See e.g. Giddens' idea of structuration and segmental interests (Giddens 1984; Cassell 1993).

2.   DEFINING "DEFENCE IN A DEMOCRACY"

Since 1990 the construction of the post-apartheid reality is an effort to establish discourses and codes of intelligibility that would reflect a new hegemonic order of social identities and power relations distinct from that of apartheid, and to express this new order institutionally. This was especially true of the attempt to reconstruct insecurity in a way that would mark a departure from apartheid. FW de Klerk already started this process when he came to power in 1989 by instituting rapid reforms. As a consequence of these reforms the South African Defence Force (SADF) lost influence over government and suffered severe budget cuts.[3]

The political transition in South Africa was constituted as a move to power-sharing (as opposed to power transfer) and therefore military transformation first and foremost meant the integration of the different armed forces that occupied the military landscape in 1990 into a new South African National Defence Force (SANDF). These forces included:

- the SADF;
- Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), the military wing of the African National Congress (ANC);
- the Azanian People's Liberation Army (APLA), the military wing of the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC);
- the KwaZulu Self-Protection Forces (KZSPF), linked to the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP); and
- the Transkei, Boputhatswana, Venda and Ciskei (TBCV) defence forces.

The SADF did not boast a history of respect for human rights and adherence to international law. The Skweyiya Report also confirmed human rights abuses and torture of suspected infiltrators and apartheid agents in MK training camps.[4] Military transformation thus needed to go beyond reconciliation to include alignment with "defence in a democracy" (Nathan 1994:3). In defining what defence in a democracy meant, different discourses intersected, roughly polarised towards two defence models, namely a state defence model and a model of defence based on a widened notion of security.

2.1   State defence/military security and world military cultural norms

The state defence model was based on what Farrell (2005) identifies as world military cultural norms. These norms, in as much as they originate in the Anglo-Saxon world

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[3]   See Batchelor and Willett (1998: chapter 4) for a comprehensive study of the rationalisation and restructuring of the SADF from 1989 to 1993.

[4]   See Minnaar, Liebenberg & Schutte (1994) for a discussion of human rights abuses by the SADF and see the Skweyiya Report (1992) for examples of torture and abuses of suspected infiltrated and apartheid agents in MK training camps.

and diffuse through professional military networks and the global arms industry, can be viewed as cultural imperialist in nature. In the South African context, the model held that democracies have legitimate, standing, professional and technologically structured militaries. South Africa is an aspiring democracy and should therefore comply with these norms. Neither MK, nor the SADF, could on its own conform to these norms.[5] The former was a liberation movement versed in guerrilla tactics and had no experience as a conventional force, while the latter lacked legitimacy as a result of its apartheid past.

The following excerpt from a chapter written by the director of the Institute for Security Studies (then the Institute for Defence Policy), Jakkie Cilliers (1994: 386, 392), illustrates the gist of the discourse that grounded this defence model:

"The African National Congress (ANC), the largest political grouping in the country and the party set to play the dominant role in any future government, has been at the sharp end of the SADF's capabilities, both inside the country and beyond its borders. Yet the skills, expertise and professional military knowledge to run a reasonable modern military force are very much captive of the white leadership cadre of the present SADF - a fact that the ANC is painfully aware of. While the integration of MK cadres into the SADF will make some contribution towards the skills required within a future military, their primary contribution will be the provision of legitimacy - a political rather than a professional military contribution."

This model is modernist. It relies on a Weberian definition of the state as a community that has successfully monopolised the legitimate use of physical force and/or the instruments of organised violence for internal and external objectives. A monopoly on organised violence by a professional military was especially supported out of concern that violence had become endemic to South African society. The sources of these concerns included the idea that the resistance campaigns to apartheid had made South Africa ungovernable and resulted in a culture of violence; so called "Third Force" (covert security force) activities to instigate violence in KwaZulu-Natal; right-wing paramilitary activities; and the possibility of disgruntled elements from both the SADF and the struggle forces using their military skills in ill-disciplined ways (Seegers 1996:277; Cilliers 1994:385).

The model also draws on a Clausewitzean reading of what constitute stable civil-military relations in a democracy. It regards the military as a rational instrument of state policy and therefore proposes civilian control (supremacy) over the military (Bassford 1994:n.p.). Similar to other state institutions the military is accountable to civilian power and the public and should therefore adhere to a certain

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[5] To simplify the analysis in the rest of the article only MK and the SADF are concentrated on, the main negotiators of defence transformation. It is recognised that others, e.g. the Transkei Defence Force under General Bantu Holomisa, also participated in redefining the defence function during that period.

level of transparency imposed by law. In turn, civil authorities are not to misuse their control over the military or interfere in the everyday operational issues of the military and should provide mechanisms for senior level military officials to influence defence policy (Nathan 1994:61-64). Both MK/APLA and the SADF were in the past aligned to political parties and their experience of civil-military relations therefore did not correspond with the imagined norms of a professional military. Reconciliation would be better served and repetition of the past prevented if the military assumed an "a-political" status. In turn, politicians should not intervene in "the execution of the defence task, which is the responsibility of the military line of command" (Le Roux 2002:167).

World military cultural norms also define proper defence in technological terms, reflecting a conservative military culture of "eternal vigilance". Even in the absence of any foreseeable external threat, uncertainty demands a certain minimum of military technological capability. Defining defence in these terms adheres to what Kaldor (1981:131) calls the world military order. Accepting advanced technology as a prerequisite for effective defence implies accepting "an ordering of international military relations, conferring political influence, merely through perceptions about military power" (*Ibid*.). For South Africa to be taken seriously in international relations it will have to maintain a certain level of military technological capability. This reflects a view of the military as an arm of policy as suggested by certain readings of Clausewitz. As a status symbol, military technological prowess provides bargaining power in international relations.

The emphasis on technology in this model also harks back to a view expressed by modernisation theorists that the military is a driver of modernisation in developing countries. Lucien Pye (1966) and Samuel Huntington (1968) note that colonial rulers in their efforts to establish modern institutions in the colonies had most success in the defence realm. Militaries became industrial type organisations, able to adapt to new technology and install "responsible nationalism" in its members. The soldier is seen as "the reformer". The defence force could play the same role of being a retainer of key technologies in South Africa. This role would include transferring technology to the civilian sector, training soldiers in the use of sophisticated technologies and contributing in establishing and maintaining a technological culture in society.

2.2   Human/Widened security

Civil society groups, such as the South African Council of Churches and the Ceasefire Campaign,[6] contested the emphasis on state defence and engaged in a "butter versus guns" debate during the transition period. They espoused a human security discourse that was at the time being popularised by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), defining security as the well-being of people (Cawthra 1999:9). These actors wanted to introduce into South African security

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[6]   The Ceasefire Campaign evolved out of the anti-conscription movement.

discourse an alternative paradigm to "security as military/defence" based on a post-Cold War peace dividend. It held that South Africa has just emerged from an era of military excesses, that the Cold War has ended and South Africa has no foreseeable military threat, that socio-economic issues are the main threats to the security of the majority of South Africans and that military expenditure should therefore be sacrificed for these social imperatives (Frankel 2000:151).

The human security discourse was supported by academics and analysts, some of whom formed part of the Military Research Group. Drawn from MK Military intelligence and the anti-conscription movement, this group functioned as the ANC's unofficial policy-making body on security and defence matters (Batchelor and Willett 1998:59). They also contested the state-centric/military nature of security, but did so within the context of conceptions of Critical Security Studies developed in Copenhagen and Aberystwyth universities since the 1980s. They agreed on the widening of the security agenda to include socio-economic and environmental issues as proposed by scholars such as Barry Buzan (1991). They further argued, with Ken Booth (1994; see also Booth & Herring 1994) that human beings should be the ultimate referents of security, although this did not necessarily preclude state security completely (rather "fewer guns, more butter", in stead of "no guns, only butter").

The ANC's views, through the Military Research Group, were infused by these discourses as illustrated by the following excerpts that also serve to give the gist of the human/widened security model:[7]

"National security shall be sought primarily through efforts to meet the social, political, economic and cultural rights and needs of the South African people."[8]

"The ANC believes that national and regional security should not be restricted to military, police and intelligence matters, but as having political, economic, social and environmental dimensions.

"Underdevelopment, poverty, lack of democratic participation and the abuse of human rights are regarded as grave threats to the security of people. Since they invariably give rise to conflict between individuals, communities and countries, they threaten the security of states as well."[9]

The widened/human security discourses did not provide one coherent defence model. The ideas proffered included radical changes, such as disbanding the defence force and arms industry entirely or reducing the military to a gendarmerie force (Batchelor and Willett 1998:3). This can be seen as both an attempt to rid regional relations of the instruments and attitudes on which South Africa's past destabilising,

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[7]   See also Vreÿ (2004:97) for a discussion of how these discourses came to influence ANC views.

[8]   The first "democratic principle of defence" proposed by Laurie Nathan in his book *Changing of the Guard* that was written as a reference guide on defence matters in 1994. Nathan went on to draft the South African White Paper on Defence (1996).

[9]   From the ANC policy framework *Ready to Govern* (1992).

coercive and undemocratic regional policies were founded, as well as reaping a perceived post-apartheid peace dividend. The reduced threat environment for both South Africa and the rest of the region, it was argued, should manifest in a redirection of military expenditure to civilian programmes.

This notion draws on a purported link between demilitarisation, disarmament and development that had particular resonance in Third World contexts. It holds that the experience of militarism in Third World countries and especially in Africa had generally not been a driving force of modernisation. Military governments had shown to be no less corrupt or less prone to atrocities than civilian governments (Nordlinger 1977; Finer 1991). And, military-related development, if any, led to a particular type of industrialisation that is capital, import, skills and energy-intensive (Kaldor 1981:160). The International Monetary Fund (IMF), in making loans to developing countries conditional on decreased military spending, based its policies on this link between demilitarisation and development (Van Aardt 1998:n.p.).

Others in the widened security camp subsequently argued that this model is a reflection of Northern liberal economic views that stigmatised military security in developing countries. In the quest for widened security this amounted to "[throwing] the baby out with the bath water" (Van Aardt 1998:n.p.). Instead, a shift in the focus of the referents of security from the state to people does not mean that the military is not an important agent in the provision of (human) security in a developing country context. In fact, southern African military institutions often provide human security by default, because of the weakness or non-existence of civilian counterparts in government.

In this light, Maxi Schoeman (then Van Aardt) (1998:n.p.) gives several reasons why widened security should not necessarily mean decreased military spending. Firstly, coastal defence in protection of maritime resources against poachers requires naval resources. South Africa could play a role in providing maritime resource protection for its neighbours. Secondly, military security provides knowledge, expertise and experience for contingencies such as disasters, which could be crucial to environmental and human security. Thirdly, decreased military spending would counteract the international ethos that has been championing peace support operations since the end of the Cold War. Fourthly, she links the increase in peace operations to an increase in intrastate conflict, confirming the logic of rethinking an internal role for defence forces in the maintenance of stability.

This is also a view that Williams (1998:27) arrives at, but for different reasons. He notes that the military has always been used in internal roles and that there is nothing strange or inherently undemocratic about this use. In fact, he attributes any notion of an exclusively external role for the military in a democracy to a distortion of the duality of the military's historic role. Whereas Schoeman argues against a hypocritical liberal pacifism that is suggested by the conditionality of decreased

military spending flowing from the Washington consensus, Williams argues against the reluctance of the military to play a role other than protecting state sovereignty and territorial integrity (an external role), based on a distorted view of what counts as world military cultural norms.

The discourses grouped together in this section and labelled world military cultural norms and human/widened security respectively, articulated a range of meanings associated with defence and security in a democracy. They suggested the parameters within which the post-apartheid South African defence function might be re-imagined.

3.   NEGOTIATING A COMPROMISE: THE UPTAKE OF SUBJECT-POSITIONS

The SADF espoused a world military cultural norms discourse and promoted a state defence model. Modernism had permeated the SADF's thinking since its inception as the Union Defence Force in 1912. Modernist thinking in the SADF drew on military ties with Europe and North America, including the SADF's participation in the World Wars and the Korean War as well as ideological links with the United Kingdom and the United States during the Cold War. In fact, one of the main organising themes of the apartheid security imaginary was that South Africa had been an outpost of the West, looking to become part of a Western collective security alliance to which end it even courted NATO (Cawthra 1986).

After FW de Klerk's 2 February 1990 speech in which he signified a redefinition of the state based on legitimacy (and not apartheid), the SADF responded by stressing their professional nature, a-political stance and dependence on a citizen force. They thought that these attributes set them apart from MK, a revolutionary army that would be more prone to political intervention (lack professionalism) and not used to operating sophisticated equipment or planning and fighting conventional wars (Seegers 1996:271). It was in this frame of mind that the SADF approached the negotiations.

A three-way split characterised the SADF even before De Klerk took over from PW Botha, consisting of a group of liberals concentrated in the Air Force, a larger group of managerial-technocrats mostly from the Army and a hardliner element from across the military, but linked to defence intelligence (Frankel 2000:ix). It was by and large the conservative managerial-technical group who forged an internal coalition of interests within the SADF and defined its position politically once the decision was taken to negotiate with the ANC. Meeting with MK in 1993 for formal discussions about the structuring of future defence, the SADF prepared a high-level team for each issue to be discussed. They presented arguments in a specialist and technical way. Seegers (1996:278) maintains that this was a negotiating tactic to

intimidate the MK negotiators by exploiting their technical weakness. In return, MK used trade union tactics framing their arguments and positions in non-military terms, such as equality, democracy, justice and rights.[10]

These tactics have much to tell about the uptake and enactment of subject positions of the world military cultural norms discourse during the negotiations. The discourse created subject positions that attributed to white leadership in the SADF the position of vanguard of effectiveness in terms of "skills knowledge and organization, that is, virtually every meaningful professional activity" (Cilliers 1994:393). MK, on the other hand, was the people's army that fought the people's war of liberation (ANC 1992). Frankel (2000:8) describes the attitudes of the two parties during the initial negotiations as follows: "Since one side had not defeated the other, the self-satisfaction of the SADF, rooted in its superior numbers and technology, was more than matched by the arrogance of MK in the atmosphere of political victory."

However, a curious "compromise" was struck between the state defence model and widened security notions as manifested initially in the Interim Constitution (Act 200 of 1993). It stated: "The National Defence Force shall be established in such a manner that it will provide a balanced, modern and technologically advanced military force" (world military cultural norms), "be primarily defensive in the exercise or performance of its powers and functions" (widened security), "for service in support of any department of state for the purpose of socio-economic upliftment" (human security), and "all members of the National Defence Force shall be properly trained in order to comply with international standards of competency" (world military cultural norms).

In the Defence White Paper (1996) entitled *Defence in a democracy* the compromise is even more awkward. It acknowledges that "the greatest threats to the South African people are socio-economic problems like poverty, unemployment, poor education, the lack of housing and the absence of adequate social services, as well as the high level of crime and violence". It places security within the context of the Government's Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), a socio-economic policy framework to address poverty, inequality and human rights issues. On the other hand, the White Paper states that the primary task of the SANDF is to defend the sovereignty and territorial integrity of South Africa.

The introduction of the idea of primary and secondary tasks unmasked a polarisation of the discourses supporting the two models. This was an outflow of what Cawthra (1999:9) refers to as a conceptual conundrum for the widened security model in the South African context. The widening of the security agenda (to human security) had the potential to securitise economic, social and environmental issues and militarise society. This was oddly reminiscent of Botha's policy of Total Strategy

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10   This view is confirmed in Solly Mollo's Master's thesis (2000). Mollo was an ANC member of the
      Army subworkgroup during the negotiations.

and therefore politically sensitive. Ironically, the pacifist lobby and the "purist military professionals" agreed on this point (Gutteridge 1997:18). The "solution" was to prioritise the external defence function: "The SANDF may be employed in a range of secondary roles as prescribed by law, but its primary and essential function is service in defence of South Africa, for protection of its sovereignty and territorial integrity" (South African White Paper on Defence 1996:6). As was the case in point from its inception in 1912 and perpetuated by Apartheid, the primary way for the defence force to "protect the people" was thus still to protect the state. Protection of the people as human security was relegated to a secondary role.

With acquisition requests already tabled by the SANDF to replace and upgrade aging equipment, the Defence Review (1998) dealt among other issues with defence posture, functions, force design and capabilities. The pre-eminence of a state defence model was engrained by the Review's focus on the SANDF's "primary function" when it came to force design. Deterrence, it was argued cannot be "turned on and off like a tap" and therefore a certain capability level would have to be maintained. As a result, of the four options put forward for a force design, the one chosen made provision for a core force that could meet a whole range of contingencies (except invasions by major powers). To meet this objective, it was argued that force levels should be kept at just over 100 000 personnel and a variety of conventional weaponry should be provided.

This force design option acknowledged that the SANDF would for the fore-seeable future have secondary roles, such as support of the South African Police, border control, maritime patrol and participation in peace-keeping operations. However, it was argued that secondary tasks have the potential of undermining the combat readiness of troops and would therefore only be executed with the "collateral utility" of preparing for the primary function (Williams 2002:213). For Williams (1998:24) the focus on the primary function epitomises a view of modern, interstate relations that defines threat as "a conventional external aggressor" and a bias towards traditional (interstate) defence contingencies.

The compromise as reached in the Interim Constitution reflects the peculiar circumstances in which policy was made at the time. The "negotiated" nature of the South African transition and the notion that the SADF had to be appeased to ensure a peaceful transition allowed the SADF to "ring-fence" issues such as force design and threat analysis (Cawthra 1999:3).[11] Rocky Williams (2004:15), himself a former MK officer and participant in the negotiations, describes how uneven the process was. MK's ability to participate was inhibited "by a range of very practical and personal problems not least of which was the fact that most did not enjoy the benefits of a fixed income, very few possessed their own transport, material resources to support them in the preparation of position papers were virtually non-existent, and they

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[11]   See Mollo (2000).

lacked, quite simply, the advantages of an organisational infrastructure to empower them in what was an immensely detailed, complex and, for some, alienating force planning process".

It is thus tempting to see this compromise as a victory of the SADF's views over the ANC's and MK's during the negotiation and that the "white leadership cadre" of the former SADF continued to exercise dominance over defence thinking in the post-apartheid security imaginary. This biased the writing of new meaning into the post-apartheid defence function towards the *status quo*: state defence along the lines of world military norms.

The "white leadership cadre" for historical and cultural reasons takes its cue from the modern defence establishments of the Global North. Espousing world military cultural norms was a means of SADF self-preservation since SADF personnel were versed in these norms and therefore indispensable. The ANC and former MK leadership went along, because a balanced, modern and technologically advanced force represents a form of international recognition. International recognition was crucial to the ANC in its first years of government to gain the confidence of sceptics inside and outside the country (not least investors) about a new governing élite.

There is merit in this account, not least to explain how continued organisational frames and routines of the SADF predispose the SANDF to advanced military technologies and concepts. However, to argue that SADF views dominated those of the ANC and MK members in the end would be an oversimplification of defence perception and practice. This interpretation neglects the role of agency and the "up-take" and enactment of roles scripted, as well as the dialectic between old and new organising principles in the post-apartheid security imaginary. What started out as arguably a forced compromise between incommensurable defence models as a result of SADF obstinacy has in the meanwhile been turned into synthesised discourses in support of the ANC's foreign policy objectives. The next section will explain a more nuanced version of what can be regarded as the new organising principles of the South African security imaginary.

4.   SYNTHESISING STATE DEFENCE AND WIDENED SECURITY: NEW AND OLD MYTHS

One way to explain how the compromise between the state defence model and widened security discourses was forged is in terms of the making of new myths, firstly within and about the post-apartheid defence force and secondly about South Africa's place and role in the world (manifesting in foreign policy). Trubshaw (2003:1) traces the earliest uses of the Greek origin of the word "myth" to describe "a powerful male giving orders or making boasts. *Mythos* are performed at length, in public, by a male in a position of authority". In this usage myths are not associated

with untruths, symbolism or religion. Rather, it takes on the meaning of ideology, that which provides structure in the form of dichotomies (us/them; male/female; black/white, etc.) to how societies think about the world. These structures are embedded in narratives or stories that evolve over time and reflect a society's self-understanding (Castoriadis 1987:147).

The process of myth-making in and about the SANDF since 1993 is structured around the following factors:[12]

Newly found "brothers (and sisters) in arms": The transition to democracy occurred within the boundaries of what Durheim (1997:31) calls "peace talk" – a productive discourse that characterised the period between 1990 and 1994. The content of peace in this discourse was defined as cooperation and unity and its antithesis was violence and poverty that either harked back to Afrikaner nationalism or to examples of civil conflict in post-colonial Africa, both associated with violence and despair. Individual South Africans were called upon (almost pressured) to commit to a peaceful solution to apartheid. The only other options were after all continued civil war and destabilisation. Reconciliation between SADF and MK occurred within the framework of "peace talk".

In the months preceding the April 1994 elections, planning for the integration of the different military forces and other defence matters occurred within the Joint Military Coordinating Council (JMCC), a subcommittee of the transitional executive authority. All major political factions were represented in the JMCC's working groups, but the SANDF and MK members dominated the proceedings (Williams 2004:14). The working groups had to reach and report a consensus view on the issues that were delegated to them. This process provided an opportunity for senior officers to develop a common military identity and in turn, a soldiers' pact to be forged. Williams (1999b:56) asserts that the common identity was predicated on "the somewhat predictable militaristic premise of 'We are soldiers and we understand each other. Leave politics to the politicians to sort out'. The common ingredients of this emerging culture consisted of a belief in the inherent pragmatism of the military profession; common loyalty to the values of soldiering; a benign disregard for the vagaries of party-politics; and a common belief that the armed forces were being underfunded by the state fiscus".

The reconciliation of soldiers and the development of a new corporate identity thus involved the creation of new myths. These myths included the common belief

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12   One of the "myths" that helped to shape the post-apartheid security imaginary, which is not discussed here, involves the meanings that were fixed to the South African arms industry. The arms industry was sketched as a reservoir of science and technology capacity and a valuable earner of foreign exchange for the country through arms exports. The military-industrial complex played a big role in construing the arms industry as indispensable in the making of a modern South Africa. The strategic acquisition package (arms deal) was designed to ensure the survival of the domestic arms industry through international partnerships (so called "defence industrial participation" requirements). For a more comprehensive discussion of this issue, see Pretorius (2006: 111-125).

that soldiers of all camps were only obeying orders during the apartheid period; that there is a common military culture among soldiers irrespective of their ideological background; that the military is better at getting things done than civilians; that the behaviour of a few rogue elements brought dishonour to the military profession during apartheid, but that in general all the armed forces behaved honourably (Williams 1999:56).

Instrumental in the making of new myths was the appointment of Joe Modise, the former Chief of MK as Minister of Defence, and Ronnie Kasrils as his deputy. In accord with Nelson Mandela, both of them argued that South Africa should be a respectable military power. This was the basis for the soldiers' pact and for the survival and re-emergence of the defence industry (Wrigley 2003:n.p.).

Whether ordinary troops accepted this pact is another matter. The former Chief of the Army, Gen. Gilbert Ramano, admitted that this was not the case when he said: "When I say 'we', who do I include? I am sure that most, if not all, of the generals in the Army understand the concept of integration and identify with it. It is patently clear that … this sentiment is not as universally accepted as the ranks descend" (Ramano 1998:n.p.). The high rate of soldiers leaving the SANDF after 1994 and incidences of racism and violence, such as the Tempe shooting, suggest deep disillusionment with the integration and transformation process. In this incident a black soldier (formerly an APLA member) shot and killed eight white SANDF members at the Tempe military base before killing himself (SAPA 1999:n.p.). The Setai Commission that was established to investigate "transformational discontinuities" in the wake of this incident confirmed widespread disillusionment with the integration process as a result of continued racism, abuse of power, ill-discipline, delays in issuance of medals and other qualifications and the disappearance of salaries owed to soldiers (Engelbrecht 2000:n.p.).

Organisational restructuring: General George Meiring retired as Chief of the Defence Force in 1998 following the publication of the discredited *Meiring Report,* which warned of an imminent coup from within the ANC. His resignation unravelled a conservative clique of former SADF members, which exercised significant power in the post-1994 SANDF. A new generation of officers from both the SADF and MK who were transformational in outlook and sought to restructure and align the SANDF to government policy took over (Williams 1999b:54). Since then there has been a greater measure of internalisation of the widened/human security discourses by the SANDF's leadership cadre. It is, for example, not uncommon to hear senior officers talk about concepts such as human security and post-modern militaries or to see army force design documents include references to human security.[13] In fact, "a distinctive feature of the South African debate about new thinking on security is the

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13   Interview with Brig. Gen. JD Malan, Assistant Director of Force Preparation, SA Army, Pretoria, 4 November 2003.

number of new security concepts which are being tried and tested there while they remain at a high level of theoretical debate within the academic and policy circles of the North" (Batchelor and Willett 1998:20).

Democratic civil-military relations: The SANDF has engaged in political work ("winning hearts and minds") to create a new image for itself in the eyes of Parliament and the public. The Joint Standing Committee on Defence is a parliamentary "fast track" committee that consists of members of both houses of Parliament and all major parties are represented. It is briefed by the SANDF on issues of defence policy. During the Defence Review process, the higher echelons of the SANDF experienced the new democratic civil-military procedures and had to converse with the JSCD over issues traditionally their own prerogative. The JSCD was unwilling to rubber stamp the SANDF's choice of force design. The SANDF high commanders realised that they would have to win over Parliament and did so by inviting the JSCD members to units and bases in order to "create a better understanding of the military" (Le Roux 2002:162).

A working relationship between Parliament and the SANDF seems to have been forged as a result. Since the Defence Review process, defence is not an issue that the major political parties have mobilised for electoral support. In fact, despite an outcry over the rising costs of the strategic acquisition packages in the media and the concern over the slow delivery of benefits promised in the off-set agreements that accompanied these acquisitions, opposition parties did not exploit the issue to gain votes in the last election (Esterhuyse 2004:1).

The SANDF has also engaged in significant political work to create a public image of a transparent and open defence force. The 1998 Defence Review process, for example, included consultative conferences with stakeholders on a national and provincial level, the participation of NGO representatives in the Defence Review Work Group, as well as public hearings conducted by the JSCD (Le Roux 2002: 159). Opinion polls indicate that the SANDF has generally been successful in discarding the image of an "apartheid war machine" (Liebenberg *et al*. 1996; Washington Post/ Kaiser Family Trust/ Harvard University 2004).

The African Renaissance: The synthesising of the discourses that underlined the state defence and widened security models has also occurred as a result of foreign policy myths. These myths feed off general domestic and international perceptions that post-apartheid South Africa is destined to play a leadership role in Africa. The ANC leadership has pursued a modernist African agenda since it came to power. The "African" part of the agenda is linked to a greater connection between the ANC government and the continent than pre-1994 governments. This is due to the shared experience of political oppression and liberation struggle and the subsequent

solidarity shown by African countries in the fight against white supremacy and support for the ANC.[14]

The "modernist" nature of the agenda is more difficult to attribute and arguably provides a basis for South African exceptionalism. Williams (1998) proffers a historical-cultural explanation. Industrialisation, urbanisation and the emergence of a modern South African state in the early 20th century brought a substantial section of South African society into contact with modernity. It was in these circumstances that the ANC was founded. Jordan (quoted in Williams 1998:15) asserts: "The black leadership that grew within these circumstances accepted the modern world because they recognized its liberatory potential for opening up new vistas for themselves and their people. They were modernists." The Freedom Charter and subsequent policy documents reflect modernist narratives of rationality, humanism and emancipation.

Drawing on a quintessentially European analogy, former President Mbeki's vision of an African Renaissance confirms this modernist agenda for Africa. In a speech at the United Nations University in 1998, Mbeki engaged in creating the myth of the African Renaissance. He employed the image of the royal court of Timbuktu in the sixteenth century where "doctors, judges, priests, and other learned men … [were] bountifully maintained at the king's cost and charges" to exorcise the contemporary African image of "machete-wielding Hutu militiamen". He further employed the image of an African slave carrying a ton of lead "producing in her and the rest a condition which, in itself, contests any assertion that she is capable of initiative, creativity, individuality, and entrepreneurship" – a subtle explanation of why Timbuktu-like Africa has given way to the current violent and impoverished state of the continent (Mbeki 1998). By doing so he presented the basis for African rebirth: liberating Africa from externally imposed or internally harboured bonds of subjugation whether that means unfair trade or authoritarian governments.[15] The African Renaissance is then sold as an African driven project in search for peace and prosperity through African-wide cooperation to establish peace, economic growth and good governance. But, it is also a worldwide project that would see Africa as the principal development challenge on the conscience of the world, thus encouraging debt relief, favourable trade policies and development assistance.

The role of South Africa in this project is based on its distinctiveness from the rest of the continent. It is perceived as wealthier, more stable, technologically more advanced and having greater leverage in relations with the developed world. South

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14   Acts of solidarity included permitting MK bases in Front Line States and political pressure in multilateral forums, such as the Organisation of African Unity. This is not to say that African governments severed all links with apartheid South Africa. For a discussion of ties between the apartheid regime and African governments, see Pfister (2005).

15   Mbeki's narrative is not original. Nkrumah, Du Bois, Nyerere and even African spokespeople of the late 1800s, early 1900s, e.g. Pixley ka Isaka Seme, made the same points. Their narrative differed, however, in that they did not make these points in a modernist way. Ka Isaka Seme, for one, precisely argued against comparison with Europe. See e.g. Ramose (2000:50).

Africa would be the continent's engine of social, political and economic renewal. It would also be the bridge (or gateway) between the developing world (and Africa in particular) and the West (Gumede 2005). Former President Mbeki was careful for South Africa not to be seen as the "big brother" in Africa, but to enrol other African leaders, such as Nigeria's Olusegun Obasanjo and Senegalese president, Abdoulaye Wade, in support of this project.

The African Renaissance myth has to an extent fizzled out in mainstream discourse. However, its basic tenets, such as a partnership among African countries as well as between them and developed countries to address underdevelopment on the continent, have been institutionalised in the New Partnership for Africa's Development (Nepad). Nepad is the economic programme of the African Union and the brainchild of Mbeki. Nepad accepts globalisation as an economic given that Africa needs to contend with. Acknowledging that globalisation has not benefited Africa, Mbeki argues that the solution is not to wish it away, but to interact with it in such a manner as to bring about a fairer state of affairs for Africans: "What this calls for is our conscious and deliberate intervention in the process of globalisation, as Africans, to produce these results of ethics, equity, inclusion, human security, sustainability and development" (Mbeki 1999).

The SANDF is seen as an important instrument to put Mbeki's vision into practice. In African Renaissance discourse stability and security are inextricably linked to (and even preconditions for) development in Africa. Nepad emphasises that there can be no development unless there is peace and security (Shelton 2004:4). This view is put succinctly in a Clingendael Institute document on defence sector reform in Africa: "The poor are disproportionately affected by insecurity – both poor people and poor nations. The poor see insecurity as a central source of ill-being and poor countries often lack the capacity to address security issues, thereby creating a poverty–insecurity trap" (Ball *et al.* 2003:9). This view is aligned with the view that the ANC already espoused in the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), which lists peace and security as principles of reconstruction and development. Peacekeeping and regional security arrangements are seen as two ways to reverse the poverty-insecurity trap.

In terms of peacekeeping, the SANDF faced a steep learning curve as it sought to put policy into practice. The 1998 intervention in Lesotho, on invitation of the government to "prevent a military coup", saw a number of troops from the South African and Botswana military killed. The operation was widely condemned by the media and analysts who saw this as a return to apartheid style SADF operations. Moreover, the military execution of the operation left much to be desired in terms of military intelligence, discipline, planning and efficiency. The experience tempered the eagerness with which politicians thought of peacekeeping and clearly illustrated the difference between peacekeeping and regional policing of other states'

populations. The SANDF was quite reluctant to engage in similar operations and as recently as 2001 the Minister of Defence noted that South Africa would rather send technology in support of peacekeeping than troops (Joubert 2001:4). As South Africa under Mbeki played an increasingly important role in establishing the AU and Nepad, more troops have been deployed in support of UN and AU peacekeeping operations.

Regional security arrangements include a mutual defence pact with other southern African countries, the SADC Organ on Peace, Security and Stability, and the Peace and Security Council of the AU, which makes provision for a Common African Defence and Security Policy and an African Standby Force. Whereas peacekeeping is aimed at improving existing conflict situations (stabilisation), these arrangements should be seen as a long-term response to the poverty-insecurity trap.[16] Military arrangements are thus seen as pro-active in that they have the added purpose of reinforcing so-called "security sector reform" and in that sense also play a preventative role. African governments are not oblivious to the perceived troubled history of military coups and the impact of military expenditure on development in Africa. Although the concept "security sector reform" is Eurocentric in origin and employed by donor countries with the aim of rectifying perceived defects of security sectors in developing countries, the concept implies reforms that are not dissimilar to some ideas emanating from African leaders that support Nepad (Williams 2000:n.p.).[17] Military arrangements would further the implementation of these ideas on a peer basis by developing common security and foreign policies within the framework of the AU's Calabash for Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation (CSSDC) and several subregional security structures. It is argued that common objectives developed in these institutions might eventually impact on the organisation and structure of the security sectors in individual African countries (Schümer 2004).

5.   CONCLUSION

The aim of this article was to explore how South Africa's post-apartheid understanding of security and defence was shaped. Through the notion of a security imaginary and the deconstruction of constitutive stories (or myths) it explains how the discourses of world military norms and widened security were synthesised within an African Renaissance context. The meanings that were fixed to "defence in a democracy"

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[16]   Interview with Maj. Gen. Len le Roux, Head of the Defence Sector Programme at the Institute for Security Studies, Pretoria, 15 October 2003.

[17]   These defects include unwillingness/inability to exercise civilian control over security sector actors or military expenditure and procurement, the use of repressive security measures for narrow political gain and defence strategy based on inflated/"unreal" threat estimates (UK Department of International Development 1999:8).

through this synthesis allowed policy makers to justify a pursuit of a modern military for quite different reasons than in the West. For some, such as Vale, the outcome of this process lacks imagination and represents a lost opportunity to the region to apply human security in ways that discard the ordering of the region (and the world for that matter) in terms of military power. Others, such as Vreÿ (2005:42) see it as a way to break out of a conceptual straightjacket that makes no distinction between military coercion and illegitimate military force. He notes that this changed security paradigm is "bound to ameliorate the biased and destructive slant of the military interventionist debate…" [and subsequently] to provide conceptual space to devise and introduce the constructive use of military coercion as alluded by the AU. Acknowledging the culturally different evolution path of the post-apartheid understanding of defence and its African context may, over time, inspire divergence from world military norms as defined by the North to the establishment of an alternative African (military) modernity.

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