

**SOUTH AFRICA'S OFFICIAL EXTERNAL THREAT PERCEPTIONS:  
1994–2012**

**by**

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

ANC	African National Congress
APLA	Azanian People's Liberation Army
ASF	African Standby Force
AU	African Union
BMA	Border Management Agency
CODESA	Convention for a Democratic South Africa
CONSAS	Constellation of Southern African States
COP 17	17th Conference of the Parties
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Rehabilitation
DFA	Department of Foreign Affairs
DIRCO	Department of International Relations and Cooperation
DoD	Department of Defence
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DS	Defence Secretariat
GNU	Government of National Unity
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
IMF	International Monetary Fund
ISC	Intelligence Services Council
ISDSC	Inter-state Defence and Security Committee
JSCI	Joint Standing Committee on Intelligence
MK	Umkhonto we Sizwe
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
NESS	National External Security Strategy
NIA	National Intelligence Agency
NICOC	National Intelligence Coordinating Committee
NIS	National Intelligence Service
NP	National Party
NPT	Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty
NSC	National Security Council
NSG	Nuclear Supplies Group
NSMS	National Security Management System
OAU	Organisation of African Unity

OPDSC	Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation
PAC	Pan Africanist Congress
PCD	Portfolio Committee on Defence
POCDATARA	Protection of Constitutional Democracy against Terrorist and Related Activities
PSC	Peace and Security Council
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SACP	South African Communist Party
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SADCC	Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference
SADF	South African Defence Force
SANDF	South African National Defence Force
SAP	South African Police
SAPS	South African Police Services
SASS	South African Secret Service
SSC	State Security Council
SWAPO	South West Africa People's Organisation
TBVC	Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei
TEC	Transitional Executive Council
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UN	United Nations
UNCHS	United Nations Commission on Human Security
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNITA	National Union for the Total Independence of Angola
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction



## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1 BACKGROUND

Traditionally, the concepts of security and security threats were associated with external military threats to the state and its political regime. As such, the emphasis was on the state as referent object being threatened by the military power and offensive military actions of other states. However, during the post-Cold War period the domain of security was broadened to include non-military threats. Accordingly and with regard to South Africa's post-1994 situation, any analysis of the country's official external threat perceptions needs to be informed by the Government's<sup>1</sup> changed discernment of what a security threat is and what the main threats to its security constitute.

As a general observation, it is apparent that since 1994 the South African government focused more on emerging threats of a non-traditional or non-military nature to both human and national security than on external military threats characteristic of the former apartheid era. Considering this, it is evident that South Africa's official threat perceptions have changed dramatically since the political transition of 1994. However, questions on whether or not South Africa still faces external threats and if so, what the nature and scope of these threats are, remain unanswered. In the absence of definitive answers, South Africa's official external threat perceptions have therefore been identified as the research theme of this study.

#### 2 AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to describe and analyse the nature, scope and empirical basis of South Africa's official external threat perceptions as they emerged and evolved during the post-apartheid era from 1994 to 2012. In addition to providing an account of these threat perceptions, it is also the intention of this study – for purposes of evaluation – to identify possible shortcomings in the current national security policies on external threats, based on the alignment of external threat perceptions with the Government's Programme of Action (RSA, 2007a), and also to assess whether or not the perceived threats correspond with the actual situation and can be deemed realistic or unrealistic.

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<sup>1</sup> Government refers to the South African government

Accordingly, the specific objectives of the study are:

- to develop a conceptual framework inclusive of security, national security, security issues, risks and threats for purposes of analysis;
- to apply this framework to the post-1994 South African situation in order to understand the basis and justification of South Africa's official threat perceptions of both military and non-military threats of an external origin; and
- to assess the extent to which perceived and real threats are aligned, along with current policy responses.

### **3 RESEARCH THEME**

During the Cold War and apartheid eras the concepts of security and security threats focused on external military threats to the state and its political regime. Accordingly, security referred to the protection of the state (national security in a narrow sense) as threatened by the military power and offensive military actions of other states (Mutimer, 1997:77-78). The so-called high politics that dominated security agendas during the Cold War era included the issues of war, warfare, nuclear deterrence and arms control (Hough & Kruys, 2009:4). However, in the post-Cold War period the notion and domain of security were broadened to include non-military issues and threats.

Buzan (1991:21) nevertheless contended that external threats, whether military or not, remain the primary sources of insecurity. He also argued that “the inclusion of domestic threats as security risks created the problem that it became difficult to distinguish between the security of the government, political regime and that of the state as a political entity”. However, Ayoob (1995:8-9) believed that in the context of the Third World (currently the global South), security related to external and internal vulnerabilities of a military and a non-military nature, representing a shift away from Buzan's emphasis of external threats. In terms of the referent object of security, the concept has also been vertically deepened to include other units of analysis other than the state, such as the security of societies, groups and individuals. This ‘new’ security thinking obviously raises questions about the current relevance, nature and scope of external security threats to a country, specifically South Africa.

Within the context of the post-Cold War reconsideration and revision of security, the analysis of South Africa's official external threat perceptions is informed by the Government's definition of a security threat and what constitute the main threats to its security. As will subsequently be argued, from 1994 the South African government focused on emerging

threats to human and national security of a non-traditional and non-military nature, rather than on external military threats. In practice, this approach was influenced and compromised by the problematic conceptual distinction between external and internal threats and their relationship. It also involved perceptions of threats (i.e. perceived threats), as opposed to manifest or real threats that played a critical role in shaping the Government's policy on and responses to challenges that might jeopardise national security. Owing to this shift in emphasis towards transnational economic, societal and ecological security issues, several questions arise: When does an issue become a security issue? When does a security issue become a threat to national or human security? What types of threats are there and where do they originate or reside? How does the South African government perceive these threats? Whose security is threatened? In order to answer these questions, it is necessary at the outset to provide an overview of literature on the research theme.

#### **4. LITERATURE OVERVIEW**

The literature on and data sources relating to the proposed study focus on four key areas:

- **The traditional concept of security and national security with specific reference to South Africa**

During the Cold War era, specifically in apartheid South Africa, most scholars explored security by focusing on the so-called traditional approach. This approach prioritised the state as the referent object of security and focused on external military threats to the security of the state, hence the notion of national or nation state security in the literal or narrow sense of the word. The dominance and even theoretical hegemony of this approach was noted by scholars like Walt (1991:229-235), Ayoob (1995:5) and Job (1992:14-17). They explored the concept of security by analysing its evolution and the way it had been interpreted in international relations literature.

Based on this approach and conceptualisation, Brown (1983:4) and Louw (1978:10-11, 44-47) amongst others linked, extended and applied this traditional notion of security to the concept of national security. More specifically, Louw outlined criteria to identify national security threats and the external sources of these threats. In this respect he also distinguished between conventional and unconventional security threats. Conventional threats occur when one nation perceives that another nation has the capability of inflicting harm on it through conventional military action, whereas unconventional threats are low in scale, of an irregular (revolutionary) nature and occur mainly within the boundaries of the threatened state.

Prior to and after the end of the Cold War scholars such as CA Snyder in *Contemporary Security and Strategy* (1997); M Ayoob in *The Third World Security Predicament* (1995); BL Job in *The Insecurity Dilemma: National Security of Third World States* (1992); H Brown in *Thinking about National Security* (1983); RH Ullman in *Redefining Security* (1983); K Krause and C Williams 1996 in *Broadening the Agenda of Security Studies: Politics and Methods*; P Hough in *Understanding Global Security* (2004); K Booth in 'Security and Emancipation' (1991); D Deudney in *The Case Against Linking Environmental Degradation and Security* (1990); B Buzan, O Wæver and J de Wilde, in *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (1998); DM Snow in *National Security for a New era: Globalisation and Geopolitics* (2004); and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) *Human Security Report* (2003) increasingly criticised the exclusive focus on military issues and threats to national security and advanced a new conceptualisation of security that included non-military elements.

The South African national security situation in the pre-1994 apartheid era was outlined in the *White Paper on Defence and Armaments Supply, 1979*. Swart and Du Plessis (2004:14-15) also provided analyses of the national security concept as it was used during this period. They pointed out that the security agenda during this period focused on external threats to South Africa emanating from the perceived revolutionary onslaught allegedly coordinated by the Soviet Union who also supplied arms to Angola, Mozambique, Zambia, Botswana and Zimbabwe and to the national liberation movements (see Ngoma 2005-77). The then South African government believed that South Africa was a main target of this revolutionary offensive which had the overthrow of the political regime as an aim. Neighbouring countries were also perceived to pose a military threat by allowing training and logistical bases to be set up in their territories by liberation movements such as the African National Congress (ANC) and the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC). This culminated in an official threat perception which emphasised external dangers of a predominantly unconventional military nature that were directed at South Africa and its political regime (see Cawthra, 2007:45-49; Solomon, 2004:5-10).

- **Revision of the security concept during the post-Cold War era and the inclusion of non-military threats**

From a historical point of view, Snow (2004:97-98, 157-158) contended that although policy makers at the time were mainly concerned with military threats, the inclusion of non-military elements in national security actually began to appear during the Cold War, especially in the

domain of economic security. However, after the end of the Cold War in 1990, Buzan (1991:21-25) broadened and deepened the concept of security. He pointed out that the concept of national security in its broader sense was often used to include non-military issues and referent objects within a state, including state institutions and individuals. Wirtz (2007:343-345) similarly argued that while non-traditional threats to national security existed, the link between resource scarcity or environmental damage and national security for example, is complicated and that it was not clear how military forces could effectively respond to these threats. Peoples and Vaughan-Williams (2010:102) also discussed the broadening and deepening of the security agenda and argued that the ultimate referent object of security should be human beings.

This reconsideration and revision of security culminated in what is currently known as Critical Security Studies (CSS): an approach that has moved from a state-centric to a human-centric focus and that includes the broadening and deepening of the security agenda, as referred to by various scholars. Amongst others, Peoples and Vaughan-Williams (2010:103) argued that the critical study of security is based on three core ideas: first, what states regard as threats to security; second, how they identify these threats; and third, who or what is threatened or needs to be protected (for example the individual, a specific group or the state). They conclude that people are threatened by a multitude of issues, ranging from war and political oppression, to poverty and environmental degradation.

In extending the concept of national security, Buzan (1991:21) classified threats in terms of five sectors, namely military, economic, societal, political and environmental threats. Bernhardt (2003:72-73) also discussed this classification of threats and furthermore distinguished between real and perceived threats, questioned whether perceived threats were over- or underestimated and whether threats were of a short- or long-term nature.

At the time in South Africa, as explicitly stated in the *White Paper on Defence*, 1996 (RSA, 1996a:19-20), there were no external conventional military threats to the country. In contrast, the emphasis shifted to internal issues being the most important security threats, such as the crime rate, social instability and illegal immigration. Accordingly, there was a change of focus in South Africa's threat perception that reflected the theoretical conceptualisations associated with 'new' security thinking. This was in contrast to the pre-1994 period in which most of the security threats were seen to emerge from externally based revolutionary or national liberation movements.

- **Official South Africa's threat perceptions**

The change noted in South Africa's official threat perceptions after the end of apartheid, related to increased concerns stemming from instability and conflict in the Southern African region, including issues such as refugees, the threat of terrorism, the drug trade and transnational crime (see RSA, 1995a:3; RSA, 1996a:19-25; Hough, Du Plessis & Kruys, 2007:124-127).

The shift away from the traditional military approach to security to include non-military elements of security was outlined in the *White Paper on Intelligence*, (RSA, 1995a:3-5). After 1994, South Africa therefore had to reconceptualise security and strategy. Accordingly, Government broadened the concept of security, which, according to Buzan and Wæver (2003:235) meant that several domestic and transnational problems were approached in security terms. Hough and Du Plessis (2000:60-80) commented on the development of this changing security situation and threat perceptions in South Africa, also to the extent that this involved official views on a range of new security concerns, thus focusing on new security and threats such as population growth, the environment, competition for scarce resources, mass migration, food shortages, drug abuse, maritime piracy, diseases and AIDS, crime and small arms proliferation, terrorism, poverty and economic marginalisation (see Hough, Du Plessis & Kruys, 2008:1-3; Krahnemann, 2005:10). In addition the new South African government under the leadership of the ANC committed itself to a number of principles of human security that underpinned its new approach to security (Schoeman, 2007:166-170).

Accordingly, various scholars proposed new approaches to South Africa's national security. Hough (2006:9-11), for example, stated that "there was a need to develop a cogent integrated security strategy", a view that in principle was also advocated by Hammerstad (2004:211-216) and Koetje (1999:3-4). An integrative security approach would diffuse power throughout the security system from the individual through civil society to the South African government. In addition, the Southern African region was seen as the most appropriate extended extra-state basis for South African national security.

The current South African concept of national security is framed by the *South African Constitution, 1996* (Act 108 of 1996, Chapter 11), the *White Paper on Defence, 1996*, the *White Paper on Intelligence, 1995*, the *South African Defence Review, 1998*, the *National Strategic Intelligence Act, 1994* and the *White Paper on South African Participation in International Peace Missions, 2007*. Critical assessments of these policy documents and

official views representing threat perceptions appear in Hough and Du Plessis (2000) and Hough, Du Plessis and Kruys (2007) respectively. The concept of national security policy and strategy in South Africa and threat analysis is also discussed in detail by Hough and Du Plessis (2000:69).

- **The securitisation of issues and the concepts of threat and risk**

The process of securitisation, according to Buzan, Wæver and De Wilde (1998:23-27), arises when an issue is represented as posing an existential threat to the survival of a referent object. The question is therefore how to define what is and what is not a security issue, especially in the context of the broadening of security. Wæver (1995:46-47) for example posited that “securitisation occurs when an issue that has not previously been thought of as a security threat is spoken of as a risk by important political actors, who justify the use of exceptional political measures to deal with it”. A similar view was also supported by Mutimer (1997:89-91). Discussing the securitisation concept more specifically, Hough and Kruys (2009:4) referred to the Report of the United Nations Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change that identified six clusters of threats, two of which were representative of the securitisation of issues (UN, 2004). The latter pertained to economic and societal threats, including poverty, infectious diseases and environmental degradation; nuclear, chemical and biological weapons; terrorism; and to transnational organised crime.

What remains unresolved however is what a security issue and threat is? In this respect Louw (1998:44-47) agreed that threats and vulnerabilities could arise in many areas (also in non-military areas), but argued that to be regarded as security issues they had to meet strictly defined criteria. In response he distinguished between normal challenges and threats to national security, between security issues that were of an immediate nature and issues that did not pose an immediate threat or danger, and between security threats and security risks. Bernhardt (2003:72-75) similarly emphasised the need to contextualise the threat or potential threat in order to determine its potential security impact, as well as the vulnerabilities in the government’s security framework. He also distinguished between risks and threats and explored the concept of risk assessment.

From the aforesaid it is evident that at both a conceptual-theoretical level and an applied-practical level there is a body of literature and documents that deals with the broader ambit of the research theme under investigation. The literature and policy documents also provide insight into trends and transformations that have occurred at both theoretical and practical

levels as far as South Africa is concerned. Although the literature will be dealt with in more detail and depth in subsequent chapters that provide a theoretical framing of the topic and an exploration of the South African case study, it is also evident that the relevance, nature and scope of external threat perceptions are under-emphasised, which furthermore provides justification for this study.

## **5 RESEARCH PROBLEM**

Based on and emanating from this overview of literature and documents on security, security threats and South Africa's security, this study aims to analyse the nature, scope and basis of the country's official external threat perception from 1994 to 2012. It also considers the alignment of current national security policy with these perceptions of external security threats. Accordingly, the main research question is of an exploratory and descriptive nature, namely: *What is the nature, scope and basis of the post-1994 official external threat perception of South Africa?*

In order to answer this question the following subsidiary questions are addressed: How are the related concepts of security, national security and national security issues, risks and threats defined and understood in official South African terms? What are the main external challenges that face the South African government and shape its national security policies and strategies? To what extent are these external challenges (or issues) securitised as security threats? To what extent does South Africa's external threat perception coincide with the actual situation?

In response to the main research question, the assumption is that South Africa's official threat perceptions are indicative of a movement away from traditional military threats to non-traditional and non-military threats, and also away from external threats to transnational threats with a domestic impact on referent objects of security other than the state and the political regime. In the process, it is contended that evidence of the securitisation of non-military issues is apparent, albeit at a limited level and of a limited scope.

The research problem, and therefore the study is demarcated in conceptual, time and geographical terms. Conceptually the emphasis is on external threats to national security (in its broader sense) as officially perceived by the South African government. The time-frame of the study is the period from South Africa's political transition in 1994 to 2012. Although the main emphasis is on the post-1994 period, consideration is also given to both the transitional 1990-1994 period and the pre-1990 apartheid era. The reason for this is twofold. Firstly, these



two periods serve as a contextual background for the post-1994 period, both at a theoretical level in terms of the emergence of new, critical security thinking and at a practical level in terms of policy changes. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, they allow a brief and selective comparison of the pre- and post-1994 eras which is essential to identify trends in and transformations of South Africa's official external threat perceptions. The geographic scope of the study is limited to South Africa as the main unit of analysis. However, since the emphasis is on external security threats, the extra-national environment is incorporated. This includes the contiguous region (Southern Africa) and the more remote extra-regional environment as possible sources of external security threats.

## **6 METHODOLOGY**

In terms of its research design, this study involves a documentary overview and analysis. Essentially, it entails a description, assessment and interpretation of official South African documentation on security and threats to national security in the form of policy papers, White Papers, legislation, government declarations, and speeches by government members and officials. This document-based study uses a conceptual and theoretical framework for descriptive, analytical and explanatory purposes, derived from the review of literature on security threats and related concepts.

The approach to the study is descriptive-analytical and is theoretically embedded in analytic eclecticism. Although it includes and uses elements and principles of realism as a point of departure, it also involves commensurable aspects of critical security studies and securitisation. It thus departs from the conventional rationalism-only approach informed by realism. A non-comparative single case study of South Africa is made (albeit with an internal comparison of the pre- and post-1994 eras), based on an inductive description and analysis of official (documentary and policy) sources and viewpoints.

As far as data sources are concerned, use will be made of primary documentary and secondary literature sources. The primary sources include official South African publications, policy documents and legislation that deal with external threats to national security. Secondary sources include books and other publications that focus on conceptual and theoretical aspects pertaining to traditional and non-traditional threats to national security, with the inclusion of transnational threats. In addition, official views based on parliamentary debates and speeches supplement this interpretation and understanding of the external threat perception of the period.

As far as the post-1994 era is concerned the official sources include, amongst others, the *South African Constitution, 1996* (Act 108 of 1996); legislation and policy documents such as the *National Strategic Intelligence Act, 1994* (Act 39 of 1994), the *White Paper on Intelligence, 1995*, the *White Paper on Defence, 1996*, the *White Paper on Defence Review, 1998*, the *White Paper on Safety and Security, 1998*, the *Protection of Constitutional Democracy against Terrorist and Related Activities Act, 2004* (Act 33 of 2004); and the more recent (albeit work in progress) draft *Defence Review, 2012*. In addition to this use is also made of published collections of selected official views on security based on parliamentary debates and ministerial speeches from 1994 to 2012 (amongst others, the compendiums by Hough & Du Plessis, 2000; Hough, Du Plessis & Kruys, 2007).

## **7 STRUCTURE OF THE RESEARCH**

The research is structured in a conventional manner to the extent that it involves an introductory contextualisation, a conceptual and theoretical framework, a main empirical section comprising three chapters, and a concluding evaluation. Chapter One consists of an introduction, which identifies the research theme, outlines the aim of the study, and formulates and demarcates the research problem and objectives. It also provides a literature overview, an indication of the research methodology, and the structure of the study.

Chapter Two presents a conceptual and theoretical framework for analysis of external threat perceptions. With reference to the contemporary understanding of the concept of security, the discussion focuses on the securitisation of issues, the dissimilarity between military and non-military threats, and the distinction and relationship between internal and external threats. To the extent that they are relevant, attention is given to the concepts of risk and security risk, with reference to their nature, scope and relationship to security threats.

Chapter Three provides a historical and contextual background to South Africa's current security situation and strategic posture. It provides an overview of the current strategic environment of South Africa at global, regional and domestic levels; the current policy framework (security, defence, law and order, and emerging security issues) to which threat perspectives apply; and the institutional framework at a national level within which national security policy and strategy are developed and threat perceptions and assessments generated. By implication, this overview includes a limited comparison with the pre-1994 context and the changes and transformation that have been introduced since 1994.

Chapter Four presents a description and analysis of official perceptions of external military threats to national security. It includes a discussion of conventional and unconventional military threats of external origin, as well as related issues in the military domain such as terrorism, nuclear proliferation, the small arms trade and maritime piracy.

Based on official sources in the public domain, Chapter Five presents a description and analysis of official perceptions of external non-military threats to national security. It includes a discussion of the external origins and dimensions of current and emerging security problem areas such as the environment, water and food security, as well as issues concerning transnational crime, migration and refugees. In the context of critical security studies and securitisation, these issues have an indirect impact on national security to the extent that they concern human security issues of a mainly internal nature. Hence, the security risks emerging from these securitised non-military issues of a transnational character are assessed to determine the extent to which they are translated into perceived threats to South Africa's national security.

As a final conclusion, Chapter Six returns to the research questions posed in the first chapter and provides an evaluation of the findings of the research regarding official perceptions of external threats to national security. This also entails an assessment of the extent to which current national security policy and strategy are aligned with the perceived threats and the correlation between perceived and real threats. On the basis of this assessment, the chapter concludes with policy recommendations on external security issues and an indication of possible future research areas.

## CHAPTER 2

### SECURITY, SECURITY THREATS AND THREAT PERCEPTIONS: A FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYSIS

#### 1 INTRODUCTION

During the Cold War era the concept of security focused on the threats that the military forces of states posed to the security of another state. The dominant conception of security thus concerned the military power of, and the strategic relationships between states. Hence, and in the context of what is referred to as the security dilemma, security and threats to security were deemed to be of a predominantly military and external nature. This emphasis on the state as the referent object of security was supported by realist theorists, that is by critics and scholars who shared realism as an approach to explaining and understanding international politics. According to this approach, states were deemed to be the most important actors in an international system characterised by anarchy or lack of a central authority. Since anarchy presented a security dilemma to states – being a source of insecurity – the concepts of national and military security became inextricably linked, and military issues were deemed to constitute the predominant forms of threat to states' security.

As previously indicated and with reference to the overview of literature, it was apparent that after the end of the Cold War the notion of the state as the primary unit of interest in and referent object of security was increasingly challenged. The role of military power was questioned by anti-realists who argued that major wars had become less prevalent and that military means were fast losing their utility. In addition, most contemporary scholars and analysts agreed that there was a need to broaden the term security, thus expanding its definition to include domestic issues and non-military challenges and risks to national well-being as security threats. There was also some agreement that non-traditional and transnational issues should be prioritised on the national security agenda. The broadening of the security agenda was categorised to include five security sectors, namely the military, political, economic, societal and environmental segments.

Based on this, the aim of this chapter is to present a conceptual clarification and theoretical framework for the analysis of external threat perceptions. Using contemporary understandings of the concepts of security and national security as a point of departure, the subsequent discussion focuses on the securitisation of issues and the nature and scope of

security threats. To the extent that they are relevant, attention is given to the concepts of risk and security risks, with reference to their nature, scope and relationship to security threats.

## **2 NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE SECURITY CONCEPT**

As previously indicated and since the 1980s the concept of security has been expanded to incorporate security threats that are non-military in nature and internal and transnational in scope. To the extent that this caused ambiguity and uncertainty, and in order to address the conceptual and definition problem, it is necessary to further explore and clarify the concept of security.

### **2.1 Conceptual clarification**

The concept of security is contested because there is no universal definition and no single interpretation of its meaning. Buzan (1991:3-4) regarded security as ‘an underdeveloped concept’ and noted the lack of conceptual literature on the term. However, Baldwin (1997:12) contended that “one cannot use the designation of security as an essentially contested concept as an excuse for not formulating one’s own conception of security.” He encouraged scholars to explore the debate around the security concept. According to Krause and Williams (1996:229-230) the discussion of the meaning and nature of security had three roots. First, the discontent among some scholars with the neorealist foundations that characterised the security field; second, the need to respond to the challenges posed by the emergence of a post-Cold War security order; and third, the continuing desire to make the International Relations discipline (and by implication Security Studies) relevant to contemporary practical concerns.

Various scholars tried to define the concept of security, in the process adopting different approaches or emphasising different aspects. For example, Lippman and Wolfers (cited in Buzan, 1991:6) provided a basic description as a general point of departure. They viewed security as the capability of a country to protect its core values, both in terms of the notion that a state need not sacrifice core values in avoiding war, yet could maintain them by winning wars. Wolfers (in Buzan, 1991:6) argued that security was a normative term which was applied by nations in order to be expedient. He indicated the duality of the concept to the extent that in an objective sense it denoted the absence of threats to values and in a subjective sense the absence of fear that the values as such will be compromised. By elevating the concept of security to the field of Security Studies, Walt (1991:229) argued that the central concern of security was the phenomenon of war and the threat, use, and control of military

force; the conditions that made the use of force more likely; the ways the use of force affected individuals, states and societies; and the specific policies that states adopted in order to prepare for or prevent war. Ayoob (1995:5), in contrast, explored the concept of security by analysing its evolution and the way it had been interpreted in International Relations literature. Hence he concluded in a somewhat similar manner that “the application of the concept is based upon the assumptions that most threats to a state’s security arise from outside its borders and also that these threats are primarily military in nature and usually require a military response if the security of the target state is to be preserved.”

However, several authors and with Buzan forming the vanguard, criticised this narrow interpretation of the concept and proposed a holistic approach and conceptual expansion. As a result Buzan (1991:25) adopted a different approach to the traditional conceptualisation of security by posing three questions in defining the concept. First, what does security mean? Second, how is the concept transferred to people and states that must be the objects of security policy? Lastly, what is the referent object of security when one cites national security? In response, he defined security as the ability of states and societies to maintain their independent identity and their functional integrity. He then identified five areas that affect human collectivities, namely the military, political, economic, societal and environmental sectors (Buzan, 1991:25). The individual or human being was considered the primary referent object of security. Hence he encouraged a wider perspective on security than that encompassed by the traditional focus on national military policy.

In terms of Job’s analysis (1992:14-17) and in part similar to Buzan’s question-based approach, four primary dimensions of contention arise in considerations of security. The first is that security concerns perceptions of the well-being of individuals and collectives and of the assurance of the core values central to the self-definition of communities. The second dimension is the question of whose security is threatened: is it the security of the individual citizen, of the nation, of the regime or of the state? The third dimension concerns the concept’s substantive scope and content, in which security could be defined as involving all social, economic, political, military and physical concerns (including ecological and environmental ones). However, conflicting views as to whether these components of security deserved priority as opposed to political-military threats are acknowledged. The fourth dimension is the theoretical perspective in terms of which the contentions of the security interests of individuals, nations, regime, and states are resolved. In this context, national security refers to the security of nation states. Job (1992:16-17) highlighted the importance

of considering the nature of both internal and external challenges confronting developing countries and accordingly he argued that the “internal challenges faced by most developing countries included the absence of a single nation in terms of a socially cohesive society; a variety of communal groups contending for their own securities; the questionable legitimacy of the regime in power; and the predominant sense of threats to and from the regime in power as opposed to externally derived threats to the existence of the nation state.”

In discussing the security concept as applied to human beings, Jackson (cited in Job, 1992:81-85) responded to three questions. First, the question is security in respect of what? He argued that the vulnerability of all human beings is that they could be deprived of life, shelter, liberty, property and peace of mind by the negligent acts of other human beings. Second, security from what? He regarded other individuals, groups and states as the main sources of threat since security is dictated by living among others and being exposed to their actions. Last, security by what means? The goal of security in this context could be pursued by a variety of methods such as the adoption of national security policies. Similar questions were posed and addressed by Du Pisani (2007:15-20). He contends that security is people-centred and that human security takes individuals and their community as its point of reference, rather than territory, states or governments.

Acharya (1992:143) adopted a similar view of national security, responding to questions about security in terms of what and from what. His view is state-centric and externally oriented in as much as he defined security as the physical protection of the state from external threats that were predominantly military in nature. However, Acharya emphasised the importance of domestic instability as opposed to external military attack in the national security threat perceptions of Third World countries. He also stressed the need for a careful distinction to be made between the security interests of the state and those of its regime.

In analysing these views, all arguments point in the direction of extending the scope of the security concept to include non-military issues in its definition, unlike the traditional concept, which placed more emphasis on military threats, with the state being the referent object. Also, external military threats were deemed to be less prevalent in the post-Cold War era; hence, the need to focus on both military and non-military threats of an internal, transnational and external nature and origin when conceptualising security and developing national security policy.

## 2.2 The traditional approach to and the new thinking on security

In the past the traditional notion of national security implied “relationships between a population and its government, state institutions and office holders and the capacity of the state to protect its core values and interests against external threats arising in an anarchic international system” (Job, 1992:12). Since military elements posed the predominant form of threats to national security, Snow (2004: 97-98) argued that “the Cold War period was characterized by a pervasive political and military competition that dominated international politics”. He specifically made reference to the emergence of the US and the Soviet Union as the only superpowers with the capability to organize and influence international events through their possession of nuclear weapons. However, Job (1992:12-13) contended that the parameters of this national security equation were seldom satisfied in Third World countries (currently the global South) and as a result the security dilemma for these states arose in meeting internal threats rather than external ones. This position was based on the assumption that if state security was maintained, then the security of citizens would necessarily follow (see also Du Pisani, 2007:15).

Ullman (1983:133) was one of the first scholars to criticise the almost exclusive focus on military threats in conventional (realist) thinking on security. He contended that defining national security merely (or even primarily) in military terms conveys a profoundly false image of reality. He further argued that “we are of course accustomed to thinking of national security in terms of military threats arising from beyond the borders of one's own country, but that emphasis is misleading. It draws attention away from non-military threats that promise to undermine the stability of many nations during the years ahead. And it presupposes that threats arising from outside a state are somehow more dangerous to its security than threats that arose within it.” These views emphasize a broader approach to the concept of security.

Contrary to these traditional and partly modified viewpoints, the traditional state-centric approach to security has been challenged by the introduction of holistic approaches, encapsulated in so-called new security thinking. In accordance with this new thinking, and despite all the arguments against it, the range of security threats confronting states, individuals and societies has been broadened.<sup>2</sup> The concepts of broadening or widening the security agenda is used to refer to the idea of including non-traditional security issues. This

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<sup>2</sup> The concepts of ‘broadening and widening’ are used interchangeably to mean expanding the security concept to include non-military/non-traditional threats on the security agenda.



means expanding the definition to include the effect of domestic issues on the national security agenda of states (Krahmann, 2005:10). Because of the rise of the economic and environmental agenda, amongst others, those scholars who are proponents of a widened concept were dissatisfied with the intense narrowing of the field of security studies imposed by the military and nuclear obsessions of the Cold War (Buzan, Wæver & De Wilde, 1998:2-4). The argument was that non-military issues could threaten both states and individuals. However, there were concerns that broadening the concept could endanger the intellectual coherence of security by putting so much into it that its essential meaning became void (i.e. everything becomes a potential security issue). A case in point is Mutimer (1997:82-83) who argued that in the post-Cold War era the security agenda was characterised by two developments. The first was the emphasis on individual security and not only on the security of the state; and the second was the recognition of non-military threats to security.

However, traditionalists opposed extending the concept, arguing that it would endanger the intellectual coherence of security. Walt (1991:213) was one of the opponents of broadening the concept. He contended that “widening the agenda outside military domain runs the risk of expanding Security Studies excessively; by this logic, issues such as pollution, diseases, child abuse, or economic recessions could be viewed as threats to security”. However, he acknowledged that placing more emphasis on external military threats was misleading since it could draw attention away from non-military threats.

Arguing against the new approach to security thinking, Ayoob (1995:8-9, 259) used the Western concept of security in its application to Third World countries. First, he argued that in the Third World context, security related to both external and internal vulnerabilities, representing a shift away from Buzan’s emphasis on external threats. Second, he stated that in Third World countries, economic or ecological issues were to be taken into account as part of the security agenda only when their political outcomes affected and threatened state boundaries, state institutions or government entities. He noted and cautioned against an all-inclusive definition of security that ran the risk of making the concept so elastic as to detract seriously from its utility as an analytical tool.

With the end of the Cold War and in a related development, the future role and utility of military power was questioned. Indirectly this development was brought about by the post-Cold War need to re-examine the way people think about security and broaden the term (Snyder, 1997:7-8). Buzan (1991:116-18) argued that while military actions could pose a

threat to all components of the state and were conventionally viewed as external threats, political threats had implications for the stability of state organisations and could include attempts to overthrow the government. He linked societal threats closely to political threats and to certain types of military threats (e.g. insurgency and internal conflict) and related them, among others, to language, religion and culture. Economic threats were seen as complicated and he contended that determining which economic threats formed threats to national security and necessitated government intervention were in fact political questions. Lastly, he touched on ecological or environmental threats such as water pollution, which could lead to the use of military force and hence become national security issues, as well as having implications for human security. Nonetheless, Buzan (1991:105) pointed out that external coercion (whether military or not) remained a primary source of threats to national security and that the inclusion of domestic pressures as part of national security threats contributed to problems regarding the distinction between the security of the government and that of the state or nation. He conceded that the fate of the government in weak states could not be totally separated from the issue of national security.

The widespread call to redefine security according to Krause and Williams (1996:233) emerged from the claim that environmental degradation posed a threat to the ecosystem or to human well-being, which transcends particular states and individual conceptions of national security. In this context, the severe consequences of transnational environmental degradation were viewed as more urgent than external threats. Ngoma (2005:18-19) supported the move to extend the security concept and argued that the new security perspectives related security to a number of categories or groups, of which human security was part. Similar to Buzan, he also listed six dimensions of security: economic, societal, environmental, political, military and defence. However, he grouped them in three baskets: classical military threats, which imply inter-state violence or insurgence; non-military threats, which include access to energy and water, gender discrimination and ecological degradation; and threats relating to the reduced functional capacity of the state, resulting in a rise in poverty, unemployment, corruption and organised crime.

In contrast, Wirtz (2007:339-342) contended that while non-traditional threats to national security exist, the link for example between resource scarcity or environmental damage and national security is complicated. He noted that it is not clear how military forces can effectively respond to these threats and argued that state and government run the risk to securitise issues in order to gain control over a certain issue. Similarly, Deudney (1990:462-

463) asserted that “making the environment a national security issue may subvert the goal that proponents of broadening the concept seek to achieve”. He contended that environmental issues pose significant and pressing dangers, but placing them on the security agenda means subsuming them within concepts and institutions of state security that are unlikely to advance the agenda of environmental security. He argued that scholars tend to confuse the issue by wrapping social problems such as environmental degradation in a security blanket in an attempt to make global management problems part of national and international security agendas. According to Deudney’s views, if all non-military issues and events that threaten the lives, property and wellbeing of individuals on a large scale are regarded as threats to national security, this might create a problem for governments when prioritising national security threats.

When analysing the broadened concept of security Nathan (1995:3-4) argued that the new model emphasised the security of people and the non-military dimensions of security. He furthermore contended that there are two reasons for this fundamental shift in emphasis. First, the security of states is not necessarily synonymous with the security of people since the most eminent threat to citizens emanates from their own government. Second, non-military problems such as poverty, oppression and ecological degradation present grave threats to the security of people and may also lead to violent conflict and threaten the security of the state.

Discussing the main principles of the new thinking on security, Nathan (1995:4) stated that:

*Security is conceived as a holistic phenomenon which is not restricted to military matters but broadened to incorporate political, social, economic and environmental issues. The objects of security are not confined to states but extend at different levels of society to include people, geographic regions and the global community. Threats to security are not limited to military challenges to state sovereignty and territorial integrity; they include abuse of human rights, economic deprivation, social injustice and destruction of the environment. The objectives of security policy therefore go beyond achieving an absence of war to encompass the pursuit of democracy, sustainable economic development, social justice and protection of the environment. The use of military force is a legitimate means of defence against external aggression but it is not an acceptable instrument for conducting foreign policy and settling disputes. States can mitigate the security dilemma and promote regional stability by adopting a defensive military doctrine and posture. Domestic security policy should pay greater attention to the problem of violence against women and children.*

From the aforesaid, it is evident that the broadening and deepening of the scope and level of the security field beyond the traditional focus on states and military conflict produced a major theoretical and practical but inconclusive debate among scholars. These discourses nonetheless allowed a better understanding of the different positions various groups of scholars occupied in the security field and provided a more clarity of their contribution and relevance for understanding the dynamics of contemporary security.

### **2.3 Security, national security and human security**

According to the new thinking, security encompasses a range of perceived threats to humankind, an approach that has moved away from state-centric to human-centric (Peoples & Vaughan-William, 2010:120-122). Whereas national security implies that the object of security is the nation, national security is defined as the condition of freedom from external physical threat that a nation state enjoys (Louw, 1978:10-11). Physical violence is perceived as the ultimate leverage against a state. The degree of security depends on the threat perceptions of the government leaders of the threatened state. Louw therefore argued that an independent state could build its national security policy based on or owing to three conditions: First, the absence of an external threat, which might be due to the deterrent effect of an alliance system to which the state belonged; second, the existence of an international system of collective security whose policing functions and ability to enforce decisions were real enough to deter an aggressor; and, third, the state's own capability to resist aggression, depending on its national security policy.

In a similar approach, Brown (1983:86) defined national security as the ability to preserve the nation's physical integrity and territory; to maintain its economic relations with the rest of the world on reasonable terms; to protect its nature, institutions and governance from disruptions from outside; and to control its borders. Traditionally or conventionally in terms of a more conservative approach, national security was a concept with only limited application to the state as the referent object of security. In this context, national security concerned the ability of a state to be secured and to remain independent from interference by other states (Job, 1992:86).

In the 2003 UNDP report (UNDP, 2003:4), human security was defined as a means to protect the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and human fulfilment. According to this definition, emphasis is placed on protecting people from critical and pervasive threats and situations. It denoted creating political, social, environmental,

economic, military and cultural systems that collectively gave people the building blocks of survival, livelihood and dignity. In this context human security is people-centred and it should address threats to survival and safety of people from both military and non-military sources. Furthermore, the Commission's report stressed that human security complemented state security in four important respects. First, it addressed concerns for the individuals and the community rather than the state; second, people's security included threats and conditions that have not always been classified as threats to state security; third, it included a range of actors which is expanded beyond the state as the sole or dominant actor; and lastly, it emphasised that achieving human security involved not only the protection of people, but also the empowerment of people to enable them to fend for themselves.

Debating the concept of human security, Hough (2004:8) stated that deepeners of the security agenda embraced the concept of humanity, arguing that the chief referent object of security should not be the state, but the individual people. Jackson referred to Berki (in Job, 1992:83–84) when he defined human security as the absence or lack of a threat aimed at individuals by other people. He supported the view that insecurity is a problem presented by others, whether they are individuals or groups, and internal or external to their own nation. For Jackson, human beings could be deprived of life, liberty and property by the negligent acts of other human beings. The source of threats therefore included other individuals, groups and states. He added that human insecurity is dictated by living among others and being exposed to their hostile actions.

Similarly, Buzan (cited by Mutimer, 1997:79-81) contended that the security of human collectives was affected in five major sectors (as mentioned above). He rejected the view of strategic analysts who argued that the state is the referent object of security. He posited that “the security of individuals is locked into an unbreakable paradox in which it is in part dependent on and in part threatened by the state in a variety of ways”. Reference is also made to the situation in which the security of individuals could be threatened through their state's actions as a result of its interactions with other states in the international system. Subscribing to similar views, Peoples and Vaughan-Williams (2010:121-122) argue that the critical study of security, being based on three core ideas, not only identifies and verifies but also explains this assumption. These core ideas include, first, what states regard as threats to security; second, the identification of these threats; and third, who or what is threatened or needs to be protected (for example the individual, a specific group or the state).

Commenting on threats to human security, Naidoo (2001:11) argued that the human security concept compels a review of the traditional conceptualisation of state sovereignty, especially at regional level. He referred to the insecurity that arises from illegal immigration. Accordingly, illegal immigration threats have complex causes and effects, all of them relating to humanitarian issues, such as people fleeing from poverty, civil war, drought or economic decline, which must be addressed by regional mechanisms or structures. Naidoo (2001:11-12) argued that “when people face famine or war, no fence, army or government policy, will keep them from seeking even marginally better conditions”. Therefore, regional mechanisms that are created to address such threats are ultimately the building blocks for greater regional, national and individual security. As for Sachs (2003:1), human security has been suggested to express the need of individuals for safety in other areas of basic need such as access to clean food and water, environmental and energy security and freedom from economic exploitation.

Arguing in favour of human beings as referent objects of security, Booth (1991:315-319) during the early 1990s already provided a conceptualisation of security beyond the military framework. Arguing from a people’s and not from a state’s perspective, he regarded human beings and not the state as the ultimate referent object of security. His argument was based on the assumption, also common to critical security studies, that individual citizenship provided security once it was recognised that the state could fail to provide security for all its citizens and indeed actively threaten some of them. In this respect he referred to war, poverty, poor education and political oppression as some of the threats to human beings.

Buzan (1991: 44) and Mutimer (1997:82-83) also argued that individual citizens faced many threats which emanated either directly or indirectly from the state and its political regime. They grouped these threats into four categories: those arising from domestic law-making and enforcement; those arising from direct administrative or political action by the state against individuals or groups; those arising from struggle over control of state machinery; and those arising from the state’s external security policies. Similarly, Krahnemann (2005:115-116) conceded that infectious diseases such as human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS), unemployment, hunger, political repression and environmental hazards threaten human security. HIV/AIDS was also regarded as an important security issue within the framework of human security since it is one of the leading causes of death in the world.

The UNDP report (UNDP, 2003:4) also emphasised the importance of protecting people from a broad range of threats to individuals and communities. It recognises that human security addresses threats to the survival and safety of people from military and non-military sources. The above provides evidence that various scholars agree that people are threatened by a multitude of issues ranging from war and political oppression to poverty and environmental degradation. In this context human beings that constitute the state and nation are viewed as referent objects of security at sub-state and trans-state levels. The thinking on human security was soon applied to and found expression in practice.

The nature and scope of security concept in the post-Cold war period has changed dramatically from focusing exclusively on military threats emanating from other states. More emphasis is now placed on non-military threats such as environmental and human security issues. However disagreements exist among various scholars on the question of shifting from the traditional conception of security. Various scholars agree that military threats may still be prevalent in the post-Cold War era. However, they are not the only threats that face states, people and the world; hence scholars propose and encourage the debate around the expansion of the security concept.

### **3 SECURITISATION THEORY AND THE SECURISATION OF ISSUES**

Securitisation theory according to Hough's view (2004:16-17), is based on widening the security agenda by claiming security status for issues and referent objects in the economic, environmental and societal sectors, as well as the military-political ones that define traditional studies. The broadening and deepening of security introduced a phenomenon which became known as the securitisation of issues. Securitisation as discussed below is regarded as a process-oriented conception of security that examines how a certain issue is transformed by an actor into a matter of security.

#### **3.1 Securitisation**

The concept of securitisation was introduced by Buzan, Wæver and De Wilde (1998:23) in order to challenge the traditional conception of security. According to this approach, securitisation was seen as a version of issue polarisation in which any public issue could be located on the spectrum ranging from non-politicised to securitised issues.

Hough (2004:17) stated that "the exploration and development of the concept of securitisation usually occurs when a securitising actor uses the rhetoric of existential threat and thereby takes an issue out of normal conditions and securitises it". Buzan, Wæver and De

Wilde (1998:22-27) conceded that for securitisation to be successful it must have three components: existential threats, emergency action, and effects on inter-unit relations by breaking free of rules. Certain questions are addressed by securitisation: Who can do or speak security successfully, on what issues, under what conditions, and with what effect? In this respect the securitisation act involves three components: First, the securitising actor as the entity that makes the securitising move. Second, a referent object which is threatened and needs to be protected. Lastly, the audience that needs to be persuaded to accept the declaration of an issue as a security threat, as the target of the securitisation act.

Mutimer (1997:89) made reference to Ole Wæver's view when commenting on the question of 'What really makes something a security problem?' Wæver (1995:54) stated that: "In naming a certain development a security problem, the state can claim a special right, one that will always be defined by the state and its allies". He argued that power holders could always try to use the instrument of securitisation of an issue to gain control over it, and as a result something was a security problem when the elites declared it to be so – even if this is a matter of political expediency.

In discussing the securitisation criteria of issues, as well as the power of the state to securitise an issue, Wæver (1995:46-65) furthermore argued that the state plays a major role in the securitisation process. The state is privileged to securitise issues that are perceived to pose threats to national security. Thus, this according to Wæver's view (as stated above), could give rise to the abuse of power by government if proper control measures were not put in place for dealing with the securitisation of issues. Wæver warned that securitising an issue identified as a national or international security problem area tended to lead to specific ways of addressing it, such as the use of excessive force. He made reference to problem areas such as environmental security, human security and HIV/AIDS as security issues and noted that examining new security threats need not detract from the analysis of inter-state war, but rather complement it. This assumption was based on the understanding that these new threats could assist in resolving intra-state and inter-state conflicts.

Mutimer (1997:89-90) drew attention to two particular implications of Wæver's notion of securitisation. First, the invocation of security in relation to an issue allowed the state to take extraordinary measures to combat whatever threat was identified. He gave the example of the state withholding information from its citizens in the name of national security. The second



implication concerned the nature of security where emphasis is placed more on the protection of states from external threats.

Based on these analyses, the question of what constitutes a security issue comes from the political actors, and the role of analysts is to interpret their actions and determine whether they fulfil the security criteria. Analysts are therefore expected to judge whether the actor is effective in mobilising support around this security reference. It is also the role of analysts to assess the significance of an instance of securitisation and study its effect on other units (Buzan, Wæver & De Wilde, 1998:34-35).

### **3.2 Desecuritisation**

Wæver (1995:54) defined desecuritisation as the “means not to have issues phrased as threats against which countermeasures are available, but to move them out of the threat-defence sequence and into the ordinary public sphere”. In analysing the implications of securitisation theory, Peoples and Vaughan-Williams (2010:83) stressed the fact that security is not always a good thing. They concur with Wæver’s view when he argued that extending the scope of security should be avoided and the focus should be on desecuritisation. Wæver (1995:54) conceded that “such a move would involve the progressive removal of issues from the agenda of security rather than introducing new issues and objects”.

The question is how an issue becomes desecuritised? Responding to this question, Buzan, Wæver and De Wilde (1998:27) argued that researchers should return to the questions identified during the securitisation process and transpose them onto a desecuritisation scenario: Who can do or speak desecuritisation successfully? On what issues? Under what conditions? And with what effects? As discussed above, desecuritisation was likely to involve a similar institutional dimension to securitised threats, but actions and effects were replaced with desecuritised equivalents. In both scenarios, institutionalisation contributed strongly to persuasion and mobilisation among the subjects. This was done to clarify the content of the threat/non-threat, as well as what constitutes its expression and required response.

With that having been said, the securitisation approach serves to underline the responsibility of talking security, as well as the responsibilities of the actors and the analysts who choose to frame an issue as a security problem. However, there seems to be disagreements among scholars (Peoples & Vaughan-Williams, 2010:83; Mutimer, 1997:97; Wæver, 1995:54) on the question as to whether certain issues should be desecuritised. Mutimer argued that “such

a decision would abandon the entire field of security to the military issues”. When an issue is no longer relevant to be classified as the security issues as Wæver points out, it is critical that it becomes desecuritized so that resources could be transferred to other emerging security issues.

## **4 THE NATURE AND SCOPE OF SECURITY THREATS**

The nature and scope of security threats and the vulnerabilities of the objects towards which they are directed when dealing with national security (including state and human security) are sub-topics that provide understanding of what a threat is and what constitute threats to national security. This has less to do with a typology and inventory of threats and more with the question: When does a security concern or issue (of an intrinsic security nature or having been securitized, irrespective of whether it is military or non-military and internal or external) become a security threat? In other words, it has to do with the evolution of a security issue, concern or challenge into a security risk and finally into a perceived or real security threat.

### **4.1 The distinction between security issues, security risks and security threats**

With the widening of the security agenda, the security concept has also been applied to a series of new emerging issues. With the end of Cold War, the concept of security was replaced by reference to new security issues, security risks and security threats which will be reviewed and analysed below.

#### **4.1.1 Security issues**

There are traditional issues that are intrinsically of a security nature. However, non-traditional/non-military issues become security issues when in terms of the assumptions of and process explained by securitisation theory (see Section 3), they have been securitized. In terms of the securitisation process as discussed above, Buzan (1991:113) referred to Wæver’s view (1995:54), stressing that when government labels an issue a security problem, this automatically legitimises the use of exceptional means. However, Buzan (1991:113) stressed the fact that since security has to be defined within the context of a competitive environment, the easy route of defining all issues as national security threats is not advisable. A distinction needs to be made between security issues that are of a more immediate nature and require immediate attention and issues that are not of immediate danger, although they may be serious in terms of their implications.

### **4.1.2 Security risks**

With regard to security risks, Bernhardt (2004:64) defined the concept of risk “as an undesirable and potential harm or danger to anyone that results from behaviour and action or from a particular event, situation or issue” (see also Tulloch and Lupton 2003:18; see also Hough, Du Plessis & Kruys, 2008:10). A further distinction is made between real risk, perceived risk and acceptable risk. In line with this distinction, “real risk, irrespective of whether decision-makers are aware of it or not, is the actual or objective risk resulting from behaviour or a situation; perceived risk is the socially constructed and differently experienced level of risk subjectively attributed to a situation or behaviour by decision-makers; and acceptable risk is the level of sustainable risk borne by decision-makers in pursuit of their goals” (Vertzberger, 1998:19-20). According to Bailes’ analysis (2007:8-9; see Hough, Du Plessis & Kruys, 2008:7), the broadening and deepening of the concept of security led to the spread of the concept of risk to the security field. The argument is that security risks are not limited to a single state, but tend to be transnational; are responded to by individuals and by international society; and are arrived at through the regional or global mapping equivalent of national risk mapping.

### **4.1.3 Security threats**

In order to understand the changing nature of threats in contemporary global security, Krahnemann (2005:4-5) contended that it is necessary to define what is understood as a security threat. In response, he defined a security threat as an “event with potential negative consequences for the survival of a state, a society, or an individual”. Similarly, Ullman (1983:133) defined a threat to national security as an “action or sequence of events that threatens drastically and over a relatively brief span of time to degrade the quality of life of the inhabitants of a state and threatens significantly to narrow the range of policy choices available to the government of a state or to private, nongovernmental entities (persons, groups, corporations) within the state”. According to Hough, Du Plessis and Kruys (2008:1-2) security threats “are capabilities multiplied by intentions, probability, consequences and time-span and argue that if either one is lacking; there is no real threat”. Thus security threat implies a perceived sense of imminence with negative security implications.

Contributing to the debate of security threats, Bernhardt (2004:72-75) stressed that more immediate threats are sometimes referred to as security threats, and the less urgent are regarded as security risks. He argues that “at times security risks are viewed as being strategic in nature, while security threats are of a more immediate nature, hence lie at least in part at

tactical level”. Accordingly, measuring risk can be done through identifying and monitoring preconditions for a specific risk to occur. As such, both concepts – risks and threats – are assigned to intelligence risk assessment and intelligence threat assessment. According to Bernhardt’s views, intelligence risk assessment deals with probability and impact specifically, while intelligence threat assessment deals with those risks with the highest probability of occurrence and adverse impact, as well as with risks already manifesting. In debating the concept of security threats, writers such as Hough, Du Plessis and Kruys (2008:1-3) and Louw (1978:10-11) shared similar views that there is a difference between normal challenges and threats to national security which occur on a spectrum of threats that ranges from trivial and routine, through serious but routine, to drastic and unprecedented. This point to the importance of outlining and distinguishing challenges from threats to national security through threat assessment.

## **4.2 Security threats: A Conceptual clarification**

Emanating from the aforesaid distinction between security issues, risks and threats, conceptual clarification is required of the concept security threat(s). This clarification is structured around the nature and scope of security threats.

### **4.2.1 The nature of security threats**

As the nature of security threats during the post-Cold War era continued to evolve beyond state and military security, there is a need to address new challenges to international peace and security. Various analysts outline certain criteria that are offered as a basis for identifying national security threats. This relate to the types of threats and the intensity of a threat (proximity, probability of occurrence, specificity, consequences and historical setting) as factors to take into account (Hough, Du Plessis & Kruys, 2008:1). Louw (1978:44-47) emphasised the need for each nation to develop its own systems and procedures in classification and analysis of threats, which should provide early warning of the existence of threats, evaluations of their significance and a measure of the nature of a threat in terms of times and places in which the danger will occur. He classifies threats as conventional, and unconventional. Conventional threats stem from disparities between the national objectives of two or more nations which cause an opponent government to deduce that another nation is preparing military force to achieve its political aims. Each nation will have its own set of circumstances and factors to consider in arriving at a perception of a threat.

Unconventional threats are regarded as being lower on the scale than conventional threats. In addition, unconventional threats normally arise within the political boundaries of the threatened nation and this relates to socio-economic threats and internal political instability. In addition, national security implies official political action designed to preserve conditions considered to be the most conducive to the optimisation of national interests in the face of hostile action. These national interests, according to Louw's analysis (1978:102-103), are defined and implied by government policy. This in turn postulates the existence of actual or potential threats or threats to the identified national interests. Hence he argued that threats must be perceived to exist before effective measures can be taken to counter them. This perception ought to identify the nature of the threat, its source and the relevant time and space factors.

#### **4.2.2 The scope of security threats**

The end of the Cold War led to a fundamental reassessment of key security threats, and the question as to what constituted a security threat in the twenty-first century changed considerably. Krahmhann (2005:5) (above) pointed to a multitude of new security threats such as terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, civil war and ethnic conflict. Buzan (1991:112-115) stressed the importance of examining the character of threats in military, political, economic, societal and ecological sectors where threats may arise domestically or externally in order to get a general sense of the legitimate national security agenda. The scope of security threats post-Cold War era is widened to incorporate emerging security issues. Greater clarity on this is possible by considering the classification of security threats.

#### **4.3 The classification of security threats**

Considering the previous discussions of traditional and new security thinking, the securitisation of issues and the generic nature and scope of security threats, it suffices to limit the classification of security threats for purposes of this study to the distinction between military and non-military security threats and the distinction between internal and external security threats.

##### **4.3.1 The distinction between military and non-military security threats**

At a most basic level of complexity, a distinction is made between military and non-military threats. Military threats occupy the traditional heart of national security and are accorded the highest priority because they involve the use of force, whereas in the post-Cold War period,

contemporary thinking views the concept of national security more broadly by incorporating non-military issues. As previously discussed, with the end of the Cold War came a consensus among scholars about the effects of the Cold War on security studies. First, Snyder (1997:7-8) argued that the role of military power was increasingly debated, meaning that military threats declined in relevance, while for others military tools were seen as less useful. Second, the way people thought about security had to be examined. Third, the term ‘security’ had to be broadened to include the effects of domestic issues on national security agendas by treating non-military threats to national well-being as impending security risks.

Hence a distinction is made between military and non-military threats to the survival and safety of people. Military threats pertain to issues of an intrinsic military-security nature and include international, intra-state and civil war; insurgency and internal ethnic or community based violence; issues relating to Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD); small arms proliferation; and internal, transnational and international terrorism. Non-military threats relate to the securitisation of intrinsically non-military issues and include human rights violations; transnational crime, illicit drug trafficking and trafficking in endangered species or their products; climate change and environmental degradation; famine; refugees; and infectious diseases and natural disasters (see, amongst others, Du Pisani, 2007:20).

#### **4.3.2 The distinction between internal and external security threats and issues**

When considering internal and external circumstances of contemporary states of the global South in particular, note can be taken of Job’s (1992:17-18) identification of four security dilemmas. The first, within the borders of the state, occurs when a variety of communal groups are contending for their own securities and for supremacy over their competitors. The second occurs when the regime in power is not supported by a significant component of the population because it represents the interests of a particular ethnic or social sector or of economic or military elite that has taken control. The third occurs when the state lacks effective institutional capacity to provide peace and order as well as the conditions for the satisfactory physical existence of the population. The fourth dilemma concerns the way in which the violation takes place, that is when the sense of threat that prevails in the previously Third World states or states of the South is one of internal threats to and from the regime, rather than an externally motivated threat to the existence of the nation state.

Accordingly, Ayoob (1995:9, 165, 189) defined security-insecurity in relation to both internal and external vulnerabilities that threaten or could bring down state structures, and to

territorial, institutional and government regimes. This represented a shift away from Buzan's emphasis of external threats. Ayoob contended that in the Third World the internal dimensions included the transfer of arms, nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles, which achieved prominence after the end of the Cold War. He posited that the internal vulnerabilities of Third World states were primarily responsible for the high level of conflict in many parts of the Third World. If the internal sources of conflict had been absent, Third World states would have been less vulnerable to external involvement by regional and global powers. In relation to external threats, Wirtz (2007:343-345) discussed issues that transcended international boundaries. He argued that most low politics problems could be classified as common issues. He referred to air pollution and global warming as common problems, in which it would be impossible for a single state to slow down the destruction of the ozone layer. He noted that global or regional environmental problems could sometimes have acute local consequences. According to contemporary thinking on security, internal and external threats are viewed broadly as incorporating military, political, social, economic, and environmental issues. Obviously, the referent objects of national security now include the state, people, geographical regions and the global community.

To assess the aforesaid, it is currently extremely difficult to make, maintain and sustain a distinction between internal and external security threats. The reason for this is the fact that especially due to the impact of globalisation, domestic or internal threats are internationalised and international or external threats are domesticised. What is being experienced is a 'boundary problem' that exists at the interstices and that involves the interface between internal and external security threats. Hence, although in terms of immediate sources or origins a principled distinction can be made between internal and external security threats, their scope transcends these domains and assumes an integration of the internal and external in the form of transnational manifestations. This problematic nature of the distinction between the domains will be taken into account in the South African case study.

## **5 CONCLUSION**

The aim of this chapter was to provide a general overview of the security concept in order to provide perspectives for assessing its relevance for threats to national security facing states in the post-Cold War period as opposed to the Cold War era. The debate around the security concept was between the realist school of international relations, which approached security in terms of power, and the idealists and later critical theorists who viewed security from a more holistic approach. Realists argued that states should remain the referent object of

security and, even if these new sectors were to be secured, states would still use military force to maintain peace and security.

Critical theorists favoured the inclusion of non-military security issues and the extension of the referent object of security beyond the state as a unit of analysis. Various scholars therefore proposed the broadening and deepening the security concept to include other non-traditional security threats. They emphasised the fact that states should focus more on non-military threats that included economic, social, environmental and political threats, as opposed to the traditional approach to security that focused only on military threats to the state. With regard to broadening and deepening the security agenda, emphasis was placed on human and environmental issues that had a negative impact on individual security. However, it was noted that human security complements state security in the sense that the state is a means of providing security for people.

The securitisation theory is being questioned, some scholars arguing that states might abuse their power by securitising issues that are not posing a serious threat to national security. In the post-Cold War period most threats occur within state boundaries. However, there are transnational security threats such as drug trafficking, human trafficking, terrorism, AIDS, immigration, maritime piracy and the problem of pollution and other environmental issues. These problems are predominantly external in nature, but they cut across state borders and require regional, international and global cooperation. Based on the conceptual and theoretical framework provided by this chapter, the next chapter contextualises and provides a background to the South African case study by covering South Africa's security policy and institutional frameworks at both national and regional level, in terms of which threats are identified and responded to.



## CHAPTER 3

# THE INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT AND POLICY FRAMEWORK OF SOUTH AFRICA'S SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

## 1 INTRODUCTION

South Africa's security situation pre-1994 was characterised by wars of liberation, the apartheid system and regional destabilisation campaigns. The country's overriding foreign policy objectives were "to protect the country from external threats, which were perceived to emanate from three sources: the liberation movements, conventional military forces, and economic pressure" (Swart & Du Plessis, 2004:21). Liberation wars, being intra-state in nature, were fought within political entities pursuing independence against colonialism and, in the case of South Africa, against apartheid policies. These wars had a spill-over effect, since conflict and instability in one entity affected the stability of another.

The destabilisation policies originating from South Africa affected most majority-ruled states in what is currently known as the Southern African Development Community (SADC). These neighbouring states, such as Angola, Zambia and Mozambique condemned the South African apartheid system. As a result they sought the international isolation of the South African regime and supported the liberation movements, namely the African National Congress (ANC) and Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) in their fight against apartheid. The then South African government, under the leadership of the National Party (NP), perceived the existence of an alliance between the liberation movements and the majority-ruled states as an onslaught against it and reacted with a militaristic approach that was referred to as a 'Destabilisation Doctrine' (Omari & Macaringue, 2007:47; see also Swart & Du Plessis, 2004:21-22). Thus the main security threats during this period were deemed to be military in nature and predominantly of external origin.

South Africa's orientation to external national security in the post-1994 democratic system changed from an explicit offensive strategy, characterised by the 'Total Strategy' approach of the 1970s to a defensive approach. In this respect the *White Paper on Defence* (RSA, 1996a) and the *White Paper on Intelligence* (RSA, 1995a) state "that although conventional military threats to South Africa diminished in the post-Cold War and post-apartheid eras, the spill-over effects of intra-regional disparities continued to create problems for the country".

As a historical and contextual background, this chapter provides an overview of South Africa's security situation and strategic position in the current strategic environment at

global, regional and domestic level; of the current policy framework pertaining to security, defence, law and order, and emerging security issues that threat perspectives apply to; and of the institutional framework at national level within which national security policy and strategy are developed and threat perceptions and assessments are generated. By implication this overview includes a limited comparison of the pre-1994 context of South Africa's external threats with the changes and transformation that have been introduced since 1994.

## **2 SOUTH AFRICA'S PRE-1994 SECURITY ENVIRONMENT**

Historically, what were considered the primary sources of insecurity that confronted the Southern African region during the Cold War period were the aggressive foreign policy projections of the apartheid system, decolonisation and the termination of the white-dominated minority regime in pursuit of national self-determination (Swart & Du Plessis, 2004:20–21; Ngoma, 2005:77). Apartheid served as the primary domestic source of the country's foreign policy. As a result the system became the vehicle for projecting much of the country's domestic instability onto neighbouring states in response to increasing international pressure. In this respect analysts such as Solomon (2004:5) and Omari and Macaringue (2007:45) argued that the South African government was convinced that internal dissent by the ANC and PAC were related to the external support provided by neighbouring states to the liberation movements. Among others, independent states such as Zambia, Mozambique and Angola condemned the apartheid state and hence supported the fight against apartheid.

### **2.1 Pre-1990 security context**

The main objective of apartheid-based security policy in the pre-1990 period was to maintain minority rule and prevent the realisation of full democracy (*White Paper on Defence*, 1977). Nathan (1992:2-3) examined the security concept and events as they unfolded during the apartheid era. One of his main findings was that “subjects whose security was sought were (confined) largely to the racially exclusive state and the white community. The targets of state repression included large sections of the black community and the civilian populations of Namibia, Angola and Mozambique.” Security during this period was pursued both internally and externally, primarily through military and para-military means. To protect minority rule against this challenge, Nathan (1992:3) argued that the state relied heavily on coercion. This consisted of the adoption of repressive laws, unchecked executive power and a vast security establishment that included the South African Defence Force (SADF), the South African Police (SAP), the armaments industry, and a range of intelligence, civil defence and

support agencies. The SADF and the SAP in particular applied excessive and extra-legal force against anti-apartheid demonstrations, organisations and activists.

In addition, the successes of national liberation movements against colonial regimes in the former Portuguese territories of Angola and Mozambique and in Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) eventually forced the South African government to adopt an externally directed offensive approach (Glickman, 1990:33, 36). The South African military (in the form of the SADF) in particular proposed a more comprehensive and sophisticated response to the deepening crisis facing apartheid, obviously supplemented by a political and foreign policy response directed at the Southern African region.

### **2.1.1 Policy initiatives**

The formulation of a regional strategy by the South African government in the 1970s was the result of the worsening situation of the apartheid regime. According to Swart and Du Plessis (2004:23-25) the strategy included the expansion of South Africa's military capacity. Accordingly, these changes led to the adoption of 'détente', a diplomatic-political initiative that was launched in 1979. This included the proposed Constellation of Southern African States (CONSAS), consisting of Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Swaziland, Lesotho, Botswana, Zambia, Zaire, Angola and Namibia. It was also to include South African homelands that had achieved independence, such as the Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei (the TBVC states).

CONSAS was aimed at drawing the states of Southern Africa together to create a formal regionally integrated framework for cooperation. It was also intended to lure regional states into non-aggression pacts with South Africa in order to promote the concept of mutual defence against a common enemy. This anticipated arrangement, although it never materialised, did precipitate the signing of the *Agreement on Non-Aggression and Good Neighbourliness*, known as the *Nkomati Accord*, between South Africa and Mozambique in 1984. This bilateral agreement was in fact preceded by a similar secret *Non-aggression Pact* between South Africa and Swaziland in 1982. In each bilateral treaty the parties to the agreements undertook to fight and eliminate terrorism and subversion on or planned and executed from their territories (see also Omari & Macaringue, 2007:49; Davies, 1991:10-11).

The deteriorating security situation in South Africa also led to the adoption of the Total National Strategy by the South African government, which was intended to mobilise economic, political and military resources to defend and advance the interests of the apartheid

state at internal and regional level. According to this strategy “South Africa projected its domestic instability throughout the region in a kind of forward defence of its own domestic political arrangement” (Buzan & Waever, 2003:234). O’Brien (2011:47-48) characterises the threat of ‘total onslaught’ as deriving from armed elements of banned political organisations accommodated in neighbouring states:

*South Africa believed that the threat to the RSA was within the ambit of the communist international battle for world domination. It was also related to the increase and establishment of communist influence in Southern Africa. The internal dimension of the strategy was a response to an upsurge in civil disobedience and increasing political instability and violence, which culminated in the Soweto uprising of 1976, whereas the external dimension was a reaction to the worsening regional security situation characterised by the fall of Portuguese colonialism. The South African government perceived it as total onslaught, which was believed to be ‘communist-inspired and orchestrated from Moscow’ (see also *White Paper on Defence, 1977*; and Ngoma, 2005:90).*

Davies (1991:11-12) and Isaacs (1990:38-39) outlined South Africa’s regional objectives in its Total Strategy as follows: Firstly, it was an instruction that regional states should refuse to permit liberation movements to operate from their territories and take steps to prevent these movements from operating clandestinely; secondly, that regional states do not develop strong economic or military ties with socialist countries; thirdly, that regional states maintain and deepen their economic links with South Africa, and refrain from supporting calls for sanctions against South Africa; and lastly that regional states should moderate their criticisms of apartheid. Pottinger and Pettman (cited by Ngoma, 2005:91) viewed this cooperation mechanism as South Africa’s way of drawing states in the sub-region into a security alliance in which South Africa considered itself a regional superpower. According to this arrangement the entire region would ensure the integrity of South Africa’s borders, the safety of the domestic population and the penetration of white and nationalist rule. According to these analyses, the main purpose of South Africa’s policy initiatives at the time was to distract attention away from Southern Africa and to reduce any justification for external interest and intervention by the United States (US) and other European countries, among others the United Kingdom (UK).

### 2.1.2 Regional destabilisation

In response to the external threats posed by the liberation movements, the NP government reacted by embarking upon a policy of regional destabilisation to frustrate the task of national reconstruction in those countries that acceded to independence after years of armed struggle (Isaacs, 1990:40). Destabilisation was defined “as a hegemonic attempt to promote fundamental change in a target state’s policies without the hegemony resorting to overt armed intervention” (Hough & Du Plessis, 2000:16). This strategy involved the use of military, diplomatic, economic, social and ideological instruments of foreign policy in a coercive and punitive manner in the absence of war (Swart & Du Plessis, 2004:21-22).

Thus, the main aim of the destabilisation policy was to secure changes in an opponent’s stance or bring about regime change. It was adopted as a result of the perception of the ruling NP government that the region posed a serious threat to the country (Schoeman, 2007:155). Isaacs (1990:40) outlined four areas of the destabilisation policy: The first was direct military incursions and commando raids into Mozambique, Lesotho, Angola, Botswana, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The second was the training of and support to dissident groups such as the Lesotho Liberation Army (LLA) and Renamo in the African Frontline States. The third was economic pressure, including the withdrawal of railway locomotives on loan to Zimbabwe. The last area related to covert actions that included the kidnapping and assassination of ANC personnel and other South African refugees and exiles in Angola, Zambia and Mozambique.

Commenting on the effects of the destabilisation campaign, Ngubane (2004:45-46) argued that it led to two main security responses in the sub-region. First, a sub-regional mechanism was created, known as the Frontline States (FLS), which was founded mainly to oppose military intervention by the government of South Africa, while simultaneously providing support to the liberation movements in the sub-region. Second, the FLS was created at a difficult time when the post-colonial states in Southern Africa were still new, and most of them were facing internal challenges of state building and consolidation. The creation of the FSL posed a security threat to South Africa since its members maintained a firm commitment to the armed struggle, rather than a dialogue with or a negotiated political settlement in South Africa. Also examining the effects and implications of destabilisation Swart and Du Plessis (2004:26) argued that “destabilisation verified and enhanced South Africa’s regional hegemony and its ability to control the regional environment.” They further argued that the campaign succeeded to a significant extent in forcing the removal of members of the national liberation movements from the territories of Lesotho, Swaziland and Mozambique and

preventing these countries from providing base facilities. It also left a trail of destruction and instability that became a major source of insecurity in the post-1990 era. Lastly, destabilisation provided momentum to a counter-strategy that led to the formation of a counter-alliance that paved the way for the security architecture of Southern Africa. For Schoeman (2007:155-156), the destabilisation campaign caused a great deal of damage and loss of lives to the states and peoples of Southern Africa. It also resulted in insecurity and a lack of trust in South Africa's economic dominance of the region.

This analysis of the main sources of national security threats pre-1994 shows that South Africa's apartheid policy paved the way for and produced as a legacy the main security challenges, in the country as well as in the SADC region, of the post-1994 period. Most of the independent states in the region were led by black majority governments and were against white minority rule and against the apartheid system; hence they supported the South African liberation movements by providing military bases and training to fight the apartheid regime. However, the South African government perceived the external support of the liberation movements by neighbouring countries and the Soviet Union as an onslaught to overthrow it; hence it adopted high-risk and offensive policy initiatives that included CONSAS, the Total Strategy and regional destabilisation to counter internal and external security threats.

## 2.2 Pre-1990 security threat perceptions

As previously indicated (see Chapter 2) the concept of threat perception plays a critical role in the formulation of a country's national security policy and strategy to counter any perceived threats. In the pre-1990 period in South Africa, security threats (internal and external, as discussed in Section 2) were perceived to emanate from liberation movements that had the support of the Soviet Union and from the neighbouring countries with the purpose of overthrowing the NP-led apartheid government. As a result it became critical for the Government to develop counter-measures to address real and perceived threats faced by the country.

The official views on security threat perception during the apartheid era were expressed in Government speeches as well as in the *White Papers on Defence and Armaments Supply*, 1975, 1977 and 1979.

**(a) Official views:** As early as 1976, in the House of Assembly, Prime Minister John Vorster discussed South Africa's perception of the threat the country and its government faced. He stated "the threat is perceived to form part of global Soviet strategy for world domination in

which the main aim is to overthrow the present South African political, economic and social dispensation” (RSA, 1976). Vorster further expressed his concerns regarding the Soviet Union’s role in the provision of arms and logistical support, military training, planning, the establishment of base facilities and financial support to liberation movements in helping to create terror directed at the South African government. South Africa’s neighbouring countries were also perceived to pose an indirect threat by granting training bases in their territories to so-called liberation movements such as the ANC.

Outlining the objectives of the *White Paper on Defence, 1977*, the Minister of Defence, P.W. Botha, argued that “military strategy was a component of a broader national strategy to secure the survival of the principle of the right to self-determination”. Hence the *White Paper* placed more emphasis on the role of government departments and the entire population in maintaining the sovereignty of South Africa. With this approach Government encouraged coordinated mechanisms in the areas of military, psychological, economic, technological, diplomatic, political and other sectors. In the House of Assembly in 1978 (RSA, 1978) Botha contended that “it is a psychological struggle as well as an economic one; it is a diplomatic and military struggle – hence it is called a total struggle”.

The *White Paper on Defence and Armaments Supply, 1979* also outlined the national security situation of South Africa. According to this policy viewpoint, major powers, through the United Nations, campaigned against South Africa in the so-called Anti-Apartheid Year in 1979 and were identified as posing political threats to national security in the country. Military threats against South Africa intensified and terrorism was singled out in the *White Paper* as the primary threat against the Government (in Hough & Van der Merwe, 1987:46-66). Based on the analysis of these official threat perceptions, the main security threats were indeed perceived to be of an external origin with the aim of overthrowing the apartheid government. Recognising that neighbouring states and the role played by the Soviet Union posed security threats, the apartheid government, through its Total Strategy, became involved in a destabilisation campaign, terrorising the whole region in order to minimise those perceived threats.

(b) **Unofficial views:** Reflecting on the sources of insecurity during the apartheid era, Solomon (2004:5) as noted above points to decolonisation and the apartheid policy in South Africa as the major sources of intra-regional and international conflict in the Southern African region. In this context apartheid was regarded as the primary domestic source of

instability. The escalation of violence in South Africa that later spread to the SADC region motivated the NP government to react with harsh policy initiatives to counter both internal and external security threats.

Holding a similar view and referring to security threats in the same period, Van Aardt (1993:84) argues that the security of the state, which the South African government sought to protect, was not the security of everyone living in South Africa. Additionally, in terms of South Africa's Total Strategy, its security was maintained at the expense of the security of other Southern African countries. Van Aardt (1993: 84) comments that “the primary source of insecurity has often been a country's own government, through its military apparatus, and not the armed forces of a neighbouring country”. South Africa's security policy in particular, which was based on military responses to perceived external aggression from neighbouring states, fostered instability and insecurity in the region. Ngoma (2004:45-46) similarly argues that “liberation wars and destabilisation campaigns caused a spill-over effect, as conflict and instability in one country affected the stability of its neighbours”. This in itself contributed to external security problems in the post-1994 era. However, these wars encouraged cooperation between these neighbouring states, which resulted in increased cross-border interactions.

### **2.3 Transitional period, 1990–1994**

The transitional period to a democratic system began in the late 1980s with discussions between the ANC in exile and the South African government, facilitated amongst others by the National Intelligence Service (NIS). In examining factors that led to the transition to a democratic system in South Africa, Schoeman (2007:158-159) refers to internal and external factors that contributed to the end of apartheid, but not automatically to democratisation. Schoeman (2007:158) argues that “(i)nternal factors such as the influx of blacks into supposedly white cities, blacks outnumbering whites, the economic recession of the 1980s, together with the lack of direct foreign investment, resistance to apartheid and to the National Party government gaining strength after the Soweto riots of 1976 played a crucial role in the ending of apartheid”. Externally, as Schoeman points out, international sanctions campaigns played an important role as the state of the domestic economy was influenced directly by economic sanctions and became an important driver for change.

O'Brien (2011:169-177) similarly reflects on South Africa's political dynamics during the transitional period. He contends that because of destructive covert attacks during the pre-1990 period, directed at ANC and South African Communist Party (SACP) leaders, the



ANC/SACP 'revolutionary onslaught' was brought to a virtual halt. The negotiation process to some extent was a result of the failure of the counter-revolutionary forces to achieve their goals. Consequently the ANC and the SACP were forced to consider a negotiated settlement with the apartheid government. The benefits to be derived from negotiation far outweighed the disadvantage of a stalemate, and both sides began to consider it. Alexander (2002:48-49) stresses the fact that the apartheid state was not overthrown by revolutionary means, and this had a determining effect on the character of the post-apartheid state.

The other factor that contributed to a transitional period, as emphasised by Swart and Du Plessis (2004:29), was F.W. de Klerk's accession to the presidency in September 1989. According to these authors, De Klerk was thoroughly aware that entrenched white privilege at the expense of black South Africans could no longer be sustained. However, De Klerk was convinced that all political changes must be 'constitutional' and therefore be accepted and carried out by the existing parliament. New political changes, such as the discussions regarding the formation of Government of National Unity, led to the events of 2 February 1990 when President De Klerk announced that the ANC, the PAC and other political parties would be unbanned and all political prisoners, including Nelson Mandela, would be released to pave the way for a negotiated settlement and a new political dispensation in South Africa.

Furthermore Swart and Du Plessis (2004:29-30) argued that negotiations were carried out under the auspices of the Convention for Democratic South Africa (CODESA), which was a negotiating forum that was set up in 1991 after the National Peace Accord was signed by the Government and eighteen other political organisations. A declaration of intent, outlining the principles of the proposed new democratic South Africa, was signed, and five working groups were appointed to look into issues such as the principles of a new constitution, arrangements for an interim government, and the future of the homelands. The Convention led to the creation of the Transitional Executive Council (TEC) with a view to promoting the preparation for and transition to a democratic order in South Africa.

The main features of the merging security policy framework promoted during the transition were the following:

- the establishment of joint operational control over security forces through the TEC;
- the integration of the armed forces and the establishment of a new South African National Defence Force (SANDF);

- demilitarisation of government and the dismantling of the National Security Management System;
- the allocation of resources from defence to human security and development objectives; and
- the reorientation of defence policy towards a defensive doctrine and collaborative security in Southern Africa within an international collective security system and in terms of international law (Cawthra, 2003:37).

With the end of the apartheid system in the 1990s, the transitional regime created opportunities for regional security collaboration. However, a number of questions as to what the new security regime would look like were raised. Did the end of colonial conflict signify the end of all conflict? Did the end of apartheid mean the beginning of a new regional security regime? Would the region be able to tame post-apartheid South Africa? What type of security did SADC want to achieve? (Omari & Macaringue, 2007:53). These questions are discussed in the next section, which deals with the new South Africa's security environment after 1990.

### **3 SOUTH AFRICA'S POST-1994 SECURITY ENVIRONMENT**

The end of the apartheid era precipitated a new framework for national security, which was put in place during the transition period to democracy by the ANC and the outgoing apartheid regime. In terms of the new approach, security was conceived as a holistic phenomenon, which was not restricted to military matters, but was broadened to incorporate political, social, economic and environmental issues. The subjects whose security were sought were not confined to states but extended to different levels of society to include people, geographic regions and the global community. Threats to security were not seen as arising solely from armed forces and limited to challenges to state sovereignty and territorial integrity; they also included poverty, oppression, injustice and a host of ecological problems. The overriding objective of security policy therefore went beyond achieving an absence of war to encompass the pursuit of democracy, sustainable economic development, social justice and a safe environment (RSA, 1995a and RSA, 1996a).

Furthermore, Nathan (1992:4) contends that "formulation of security policy was not confined to executive and administrative officials; it required greater accountability, open debate and the active participation of elected representatives and the public". With regard to regional security, government policy sought to overcome adversarial relations and to advance the

principles of “common security”, cooperation, non-aggression, non-interference in domestic affairs, and peaceful settlement of disputes (RSA, 1996a). Military force was viewed as a legitimate means of defence against external aggression, but an unacceptable instrument for conducting foreign policy and resolving inter-state conflict. The post-democratic national policy and institutional framework is discussed in the following sections.

### **3.1 Legal and policy framework**

The overarching legal framework for the management of security affairs in South Africa’s post-apartheid system is enshrined in the new Constitution (Act 108 of 1996). The Constitution redefines the national security concept to reflect “the resolve of all South Africans as individuals and as nation to live as equals, to live in peace and to be free from fear and want, and to seek a better life” (section 198 of the Constitution). The Constitution provides for the powers and functions of the security agencies in the Republic and the responsibility to operate within the legislative framework. With regard to policy framework, the 1995 *White Paper on Intelligence* outlines South Africa’s national security concept by stating that:

*The intermingling and transnational character of modern-day security issues indicates that solutions to the problems of insecurity are beyond the direct control of any single country and cannot be rectified by pure means. The international security agenda is shifting to the full range of political, economic, military, social, religious, technological and ethnic factors that shape security issues around the world. As such, the main threat to the well-being of individuals and the interests of the nation across the world does not primarily come from a neighbouring army, but from other internal and external challenges such as economic collapse, overpopulation, mass-migration, ethnic rivalry, political oppression, terrorism, crime and diseases (RSA, 1995a:3-5).*

According to the *White Paper*, South Africa’s national security policy was aimed at advancing the principles of collective security, non-aggression and peaceful settlement of disputes. It expanded on the issue of national security and stated that “national security should be understood in comprehensive terms to include the military, political, economic, social, technological and environmental dimensions” (see also O’Brien, 2011:200-201).

The 1996 *White Paper on Defence*, however, reflected a narrower approach and stated that “the objectives of the security policy included the defence of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of the South African and the promotion of regional

security in Southern Africa”. Nevertheless, national and regional security was defined in broad terms and was not restricted to military, police and intelligence matters, but had political, economic, social and environmental dimensions. While the *White Paper* adopted a wide definition of security, it maintained the traditional security approach when describing the primary role of the Defence Force with its mandate of protecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of South Africa (RSA, 1996a:69).

With this policy framework in place, the Department of Defence (DoD) embarked on a *Defence Review* (RSA, 1998a), which set out structures for implementing the policies of the *White Paper*. It reiterated South Africa’s commitment to building a common security regime in Southern Africa. The review also bound the SANDF to regional and international peace support operations. It spelled out the conditions under which the SANDF would carry out secondary tasks, including support to the police and essential services and marine tasks (see also Cawthra, 2003:46).

South Africa’s foreign policy was outlined in the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) Annual Report, 1999-2000, now renamed the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) (RSA, 2000a). It was based on the following:

*Principles of promoting human rights and democracy, upholding the principles of justice and international law in the conduct of relations between nations, supporting international peace and international agreed-upon mechanisms for conflict resolution, promoting the interests of Africa in world affairs and pursuing economic development through international cooperation. In addition, South Africa’s foreign policy was aimed at promoting security and enhancing the quality of life of all South Africans. South Africa is actively engaged in efforts to secure international peace and security, promote disarmament, prevent genocide, restrict the proliferation of arms, and secure a new world security compact through the UN (as the primary global security body), the AU, SADC and other multilateral fora (RSA, 2000a).*

Commenting on these principles, Cawthra (2003:47) states that it is difficult to determine how these commitments are manifested in key foreign policy decisions in which South Africa’s trade and political interests appear to be the key factors in decision-making. Thus it becomes a challenge when other states in the region fail to implement some of the security initiatives to improve living conditions, such as ensuring peace, security, stability and

promoting human rights in their countries. These challenges have a negative impact on South Africa's relations with some of these states.

The *White Paper on Safety and Security* (RSA, 1998b) was subsequently adopted in 1998. The main objective of this policy document was to re-align all police functions in order to ensure that they were placed under democratic supervision and control. Other issues discussed at the policy drafting process included demilitarisation and transformation, in order to bring about a more representative force. The *White Paper* focused on four issues: law enforcement, social crime prevention, institutional reform at national and regional level, and policing at provincial and local level. Supporting policy documents included the *SAPS Act*, 1995 (Act 68 of 1995) and the 1996 *National Crime Prevention Strategy*. The SAPS Strategic Plan (2010 to 2014a) laid down key operational priorities for the medium term, namely crime prevention, effective investigation of crime, supporting the investigation of crime, and crime intelligence. Based on the increase of external threats to South Africa's national security post-1994, Government embarked on the process of developing these new legislations and policies to address and monitor the scourge of perceived security threats facing the country.

### **3.2 Institutional framework**

South Africa's institutional security framework provides an indication of the most prominent structures responsible for national security in the country. At a legislative level (see Figure 1) Parliament is the highest authority and provides policy direction on security matters, legislation, the deployment of the SANDF, and the approval of the defence budget. The Joint Standing Committee on Intelligence (JSCI) is an oversight Parliamentary committee which was established post-1994. According to the *Intelligence Services Oversight Act*, 1994 (Act 40 of 1994) the Committee's main mandate in terms of Section 2 is to:

- receive reports of the services from the auditors and other evaluators of the services;
- make recommendations on both legislation related to the services and the activities of the services themselves;
- order investigations and hold hearings on matters relating to intelligence and national security; and
- monitor the activities of the services with regard to human rights and other rights entrenched in the Constitution.

Furthermore, the *Intelligence Services Oversight Act*, section 7 (RSA, 1994) also created the position of the Inspector General, whose functions are to review the activities of the

intelligence services and to monitor their compliance with policy guidelines and other established mandates and principles (O'Brien, 2011:212). Schoeman (2007:166) drew a distinction between national security at domestic level, which is the responsibility of the SAPS, and regional (external) security, which is mainly the task of the SANDF. The SANDF concentrates more on operational issues whereas the Defence Secretariat (DS) focuses on strategic and defence policy issues. The main mandate of the DS is to provide civilian oversight of the military and policy advice to the Minister of Defence. The Joint Standing Committee on Defence (JSCD) and the Portfolio Committee on Defence (PCD) are the Parliamentary committees charged with providing oversight over defence functions. According to the Rules of the National Assembly, (Rule 201), the PCD is mandated, among others, to do the following:

*Monitor, investigate, enquire into and make recommendations concerning any such executive organ of state, constitutional institution or other body or institution, including the legislative programme, budget, rationalisation, restructuring, functioning, organisation, structure, staff and policies of such organ of state, institution or other body or institution (O'Brien, 2011:113).*

With the SANDF becoming more involved in peace support operations in Africa, both the JSCI and the JSCD co-operate more closely with the intelligence structures of the SADC region in identifying threats to regional security. The main emphasis is on producing intelligence in support of operations in the region.

Another important intelligence structure established in the post-democratic system is the National Intelligence Coordinating Committee (NICOC) within the State Security Agency (SSA). It is responsible to advise the Government on threats or potential threats to the security of the country and its citizens. NICOC is also responsible to coordinate all intelligence functions and for periodic intelligence assessments, including the National Intelligence Estimate and the National Intelligence Priorities (RSA, 1994).

### **3.3 National security environment**

The post-1994 period in South Africa introduced a shift away from dealing with security threats in a narrow and almost exclusive military-strategic manner. The new ANC-dominated government placed emphasis on non-military elements of security, the complex nature of threats to stability, development priorities and the reality of international interdependence (RSA, 1995a:3-5). At domestic level, security dynamics that impacted on socio-economic

development included personal insecurity, social instability, endemic crime, and public and political violence. According to the *Defence Review*, (RSA, 1998a: 4-5) “Government does not currently and will not in future have aggressive intentions towards any state”. It regarded the use or threat of military force as a measure of last resort. The emphasis was placed on preventing conflict through cooperation with other states. In the 2010 Budget speech (RSA, 2010b), the State Security Agency Minister outlined the following intelligence priorities: ensuring that all people in South Africa were safe and felt safe, reducing crime levels in the country, establishing operations against domestic and transnational crime syndicates, developing a comprehensive counter-terrorism strategy that would guide counter-terrorism operations, and monitoring and assessing the manifestation of xenophobia across country, in order to avert violent outbreaks against foreign nationals.

The draft *Defence Review* (RSA, 2012a:74) also recognises the fact that South Africa’s domestic security environment has improved significantly since the inception of a democratic government. However, domestic stability is characterised by high levels of crime and some incidents of civil unrest. These include cross-border crime, illegal fishing, poaching, labour action (including violent action) and aggression towards foreign citizens, service delivery unrest and disruption of services. The most serious potential security problems according to Hough and Du Plessis (2000:72) arose from the South African internal situation. Accordingly, “the main risk is found in the unstable situation that has resulted from the high levels of violent crime, crime syndicate activity, unemployment and other socio-economic conditions”. This is based on the fact that South Africa is regarded as an economic giant in the region and that these risk factors puts further strain on an economy that is already struggling to cope with the needs and expectation of the country.

#### **4 REGIONAL SECURITY**

The end of the Cold War was characterised by an increase in political collaboration, economic cooperation and integration, and security cooperation at regional levels. Globalisation was perceived as the main factor that paved the way for regional integration to move beyond the economic realm of inter-state cooperation towards political and security cooperation (Cawthra, Matlosa & van Nieuwkerk, 2007:237).

The main question currently is how states should best protect and ensure their security in the new world order. The next section examines regional security arrangements by comparing the

pre- and post-1994 period and by emphasising the major structures in the areas of cooperation and conflict management in Southern Africa.

#### **4.1 Regional security structures and policies**

The establishment of regional structures and common security policies as Omari and Macaringue (2007:49-50) point out, were initiated in Southern Africa prior to the democratisation of South Africa (see Section 2 above). Independent Southern African countries<sup>3</sup>, united under the banner of the FLS formed in 1975, came together to address political issues such as the liberation of South Africa and military cooperation in response to apartheid destabilisation policies. Authors such as Swart and Du Plessis (2004:26-28), Ngubane (2004: 45-47) and Nkiwane (2003:57-61) pointed out that the FLS was an informal forum founded by the heads of state of Botswana, Tanzania, Zambia and Mozambique. Accordingly, these states shared a commitment to end apartheid, to secure majority rule in the region, and to free themselves from all forms of dependency. The functional arm of the summit was the Defence Staff Committee, which later became the Inter-state Defence and Security Committee (ISDSC). The ISDSC was responsible for regional security matters, providing advice to the summit and coordinating liberation development and the defence and security of the members of the FLS. Ngoma (2005:97-98) contended that the ISDSC played a critical role in the overall FLS strategy, because of its impact on regional security and its role in the creation of an environment conducive to economic integration.

The Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC) was also established in 1980 (see Chapter 2). Its main objective was to promote economic and transport integration between its members and to reduce their independence on South Africa. This signalled what Ngoma (2005:118) called “the new collective security era”. To enhance regional cooperation, the SADCC was transformed in 1992 to the Southern African Development Community (SADC) by the *Declaration and Treaty of SADC* (SADC, 1995). The SADC was established to achieve development and economic growth, to evolve common political values, systems and institutions and to promote self-sustaining development. The SADC Treaty also called for a framework for cooperation to strengthen regional solidarity, peace and security. Negotiations within SADC member states resulted in the formation of the

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<sup>3</sup> Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Swaziland, Tanzania and Zambia



SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security (OPDS) in 1996. The Organ was charged with the responsibilities of protecting people and safeguarding the development of the region against instability arising from the breakdown of law and order, interstate conflict and external aggression. It was also responsible for promoting political cooperation among members, enhancing democratic institutions, using preventive diplomacy to pre-empt conflict between and within states and promoting the political, economic, social and environmental dimensions of security (SADC OPDS, Article 2 of 1996).

In exploring regional security cooperation and interdependence within the SADC framework (see Figure 2), the then Minister of Defence, Joe Modise (RSA, 1995b) outlined the SANDF programme for cooperation as follows:

- to apply resources to stem border crime and to stop the illegal flow of arms between Southern African countries;
- to undertake joint intelligence exercises and develop a regional threat analysis that could usefully serve as an early warning system;
- to conduct operational preparation for peace operations, on land, in the air and at sea;
- to continue to engage in confidence and security building measures;
- to help emerging democracies in building civil-military relations consistent with democracy through regional workshops, educational programmes, practical support; and
- to promote naval cooperation and protection of the region's marine resources.

Other security arrangements included the *Mutual Defence and Non-aggression Pact* and the SADC Standby Brigade for Peace Support Operations in 2003 (Cawthra, 2008:3; Swart & Du Plessis, 2004:34-35). These arrangements provide a framework for dealing cooperatively with the complex threats facing the region. These measures amounted to what Buzan and Wæver (2003:235; see also Ngoma, 2005:185-186) called a security community, with the potential not only for joint action and collective security against outside threats, but also for intra-regional cooperation on policing, human rights and democratisation. Hammerstad (2004:219) contended that the hostilities between the liberated states of SADC and the apartheid government were the main reasons for the development of a security community. In other words, the apartheid system was regarded as the main push factor behind security cooperation in the SADC region. Thus, Government's initiatives to enhance and support regional security cooperation post-1994 signified the importance of promoting the

development of a security community within the SADC region where all security related dynamics could be shared and addressed by the relevant structures within the SADC (see Figure 2).

#### **4.2 Regional security environment**

The end of the colonial and apartheid period in Southern Africa brought major security challenges. According to Ngoma and Le Roux (2008:811-818), instability in the SADC region had three dimensions: first, significant inter- and intra-state violence, notably in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC); second, post-conflict challenges such as disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR); and, third, political differences arising from deficiencies in democracy and governance. Other security challenges included migration, environmental degradation, water scarcity and the scourge of HIV/AIDS. Similarly, Cawthra (2008:2-5) analysed interconnected issues that could be identified as causes of insecurity or factors that contributed to insecurity in the region. The first was the high level of poverty, marginalisation and inequality within and between states, exacerbated in many cases by globalisation. Second, there was the issue of governance in which former liberation movements were electorally dominant to the extent that it was difficult to envisage any other party coming to power. The third aspect was the challenge of crime, terror activities and resource scarcity. This, as Cawthra argues, could lead to nepotism, corruption as checks and balances were weak.

Contributing to the debate on regional security dynamics within the SADC region, Ngubane (2004:52-62) emphasises the importance of classifying these threats and argues that there was a need to separate these sources of threat. Accordingly, Ngubane classifies these threats into military, political and environmental sectors. Firstly, with regard to military sources of insecurity, Ngubane (2004:53-55) states that “unlike the traditional sense of security which entailed a full-scale war between two or more states, military sources of insecurity in Southern Africa do not derive from an all-out war between different states”. Reference was made to challenges and instability faced by the DRC. As such the DRC has created a challenge to the security of the region to the extent that SADC has to develop a common approach and mutual response in order to assist in stabilising the country. Secondly, political sources of insecurity derive from the fact that in most countries of the region the state is perceived as the only centre of power and therefore political actors compete for control of the state as the only way of safeguarding their interests. Reference was made to the availability of arms which are still being used to ferment conflict and to undertake criminal activities in a

number of countries in the sub-region. Thirdly there are environmental sources of insecurity, which a result of human-made disasters such as air or water pollution. These threats also result from challenges such as global warming and deforestation which lead to land degradation and decreased food production. Fourthly, at the societal level there is the scourge of HIV/AIDS that is facing the region. The Southern African region is perceived to have some of the worst infection rates in the World and the crisis poses a security threat. This is due to the fact that the disease is exacerbated by other pressing issues such as malnutrition and poverty.

The inter-state security dynamics in Africa, as Buzan and Wæver (2003:229) point out, are often a spill-over of domestic dynamics, particularly refugee flows, expulsions of foreigners and civil wars. There are some concerns that “the region lacks an appropriate regional institution to handle security issues, notwithstanding SADC’s role and its regional economic and development priorities to the emerging needs in security” (Ngoma, 2005:109). The distinctive aspect of many of the non-military threats in Southern Africa as Nkiwane (2003: 60) contends, is the fact that they transcend borders. He furthermore argues that “economic instability, environmental problems and social movements respect no boundaries and as such often demand a regional response”.

In conclusion, security issues facing the southern African region are no longer primarily military in nature, but largely political, social, and economic in nature. Regional comprehensive security frameworks, such as among others the establishment of the OPDS and the signing of the *Mutual Defence Pact* have been put in place by SADC member states since 1994 to address regional security dynamics. However, these have not been fully implemented by SADC structures and this ineffectiveness requires political will from all states as well as sufficient resources to implement these initiatives.

## **5. THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT’S POST-1994 VIEWS ON SECURITY ISSUES**

In South Africa’s post-democratic system, official threat perceptions are to be found in the Government’s views on internal and external threats as articulated and expressed in public speeches, national intelligence estimates and government national priorities, whereas unofficial views of South Africa’s threat perceptions are to be found in the opinions of scholars and analysis of threats to national and regional security.

## 5.1 Official views

As early as 1995 the *White Paper on Intelligence* (RSA, 1995a:10-11) outlined internal and external realities faced by South Africa. It stated “that internal issues of socio-economic degradation, poverty, hunger, homelessness and unemployment would render political changes meaningless if they were not accompanied by a significant improvement in the quality of people’s lives” – thus a shift to human security and development aspects thereof. External national security is based on advancing the principles of collective security, non-aggression and peaceful settlement of disputes, while transnational issues include the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, international terrorism and extremism, organised crime and narcotics trafficking, and issues related to environmental degradation.

This emerging trend in the conceptualisation of security issues was reiterated in the Department of Foreign Affairs draft document on South Africa’s *National External Security Strategy (NESS)* (RSA, 1995c). The *NESS* posited that “the emphasis should be on the security and long-term economic and political stability of the entire sub-continent; since South Africa’s national security cannot be sustained in an unstable region”. The South African government outlined key areas of focus as embedded in the *NESS*, such as protecting and promoting national interest in a competitive world, contributing towards international peace, stability and security, promoting regional security in Southern Africa, and projecting a defensive and non-threatening military posture (see also Hough, 2006:9-11).

The *White Paper on Defence* (RSA, 1996a:21-24) similarly identified a number of issues and challenges that were related to the economic, political, and societal dimensions of security such as the spread of disease, the burden of refugees, civil war in some SADC member countries, regional instability and chronic underdevelopment. These issues as perceived by Government could result in inter-state disputes, tensions and conflict in the region, with the possibility of extra-regional interference and intervention that might make it necessary to deploy the SANDF in multi-national peace support operations. The *White Paper* stated that “inter-state disputes could arise in relation to trade, foreign investment, natural resources and previously suppressed territorial claims”. It highlighted that South Africa has a common destiny with Southern Africa in that domestic peace and instability would not be achieved in a context of regional instability and poverty. Therefore it is in South Africa’s long-term security interests to pursue mutually beneficial relations with other SADC states and to promote reconstruction and development throughout the region.

These policy positions and pronouncements by Government placed more emphasis on the greater need for cooperation and commitment among SADC member states in order to address transnational security issues.

## **5.2 Unofficial views**

The unofficial assessment of regional security dynamics by various scholars points in the same direction as the official views. Scholars such as Ngubane (2004:52), Nkiwane (2003:60) and the Africa Strategic Alternatives (2004:117-118) expressed their views on the issue of external dynamics and their impact on South Africa's national security. Ngubane, (2004:52) as previously indicated, argued that political sources of insecurity in the region derived from the perception of the state as the only centre of power. Therefore political actors competed for control of the state as the only way of safeguarding their interests.

Subscribing to a similar view, Nkiwane (2003:60) stated that "economic instability, environmental problems and social movements respect no boundaries and as such often demand a regional response". These issues, if not adequately addressed, could have a negative impact on South Africa's national security in terms of a large number of illegal migrations. The same views were expressed by the Africa Strategic Alternatives (2004:117-118) stating that internal instability in the country is linked to criminal activities that are regarded as posing challenges to South African society in general and more specifically to the democratic constitutional order.

Interstate security dynamics in Africa are often a spill-over of domestic dynamics, particularly refugee flows, expulsions of foreigners and civil wars. As a result there are concerns that "the region lacks an appropriate regional institution to handle security issues, notwithstanding SADC's role and its regional economic and development priorities to the emerging needs in security" (Buzan and Wæver, 2003:229). The aforesaid analyses of the perceived regional dynamics indicate that none of these crises was likely to change in a positive direction in the future owing to the spill-over effects of intra-regional disparities. There was a need to implement security arrangements in Southern Africa to address domestic threats of individual states that had a negative impact on the stability of neighbouring countries.

## 6 CONCLUSION

This chapter provided a contextual overview of South Africa's security environment during the pre- and post-democratic eras and the role played by the SADC and its member states. Key areas of discussion focused on the main policy and institutional framework of security both at national and regional level. This was based on the fact that most regional states opposed the apartheid system; hence they supported security initiatives such as the establishment of security structures to fight apartheid security forces. These initiatives encouraged the post-1990 development of regional security cooperation amongst member states; hence the SADC region is now partially regarded as an emerging security community.

The discussion also noted some security dynamics that emanate from other SADC member states, such as the continuous political violence in the DRC that could have negative security implications for South Africa's national security. It has been noted that problems faced by the Southern African states cannot be resolved by a single state acting individually. A transnational approach founded on cooperation and a coordinated strategy is required to respond to military, economic, political and social challenges. South Africa needs to focus on how military forces should respond to a number of threats in the economic, political and societal dimensions, which include the spread of disease, the burden of refugees, transnational crimes, and political instability in some SADC countries, regional instability, and underdevelopment in the region.

## CHAPTER 4

### MILITARY THREATS TO SOUTH AFRICA'S NATIONAL SECURITY

#### 1 INTRODUCTION

South Africa's external security posture within the military domain has changed dramatically from an explicit offensive position, which characterised the apartheid eras, to a defensive approach. Ultimately, the primary objectives of South Africa's external security policy include defence of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of the South African state and the promotion of regional security in Southern Africa. During the post-apartheid period, the Southern African region and Africa form an important focus of South Africa's national security. In this regard South Africa's external security is based on advancing the principles of collective security, non-aggression and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

The official viewpoint on external military threats, as will forthwith be indicated and explained, is that South Africa is not confronted with an immediate conventional military threat, and does not anticipate external military aggression to its national security in the short-medium term that will compromise its sovereignty and territorial integrity. However, as will be argued, this does not imply the absence of insecurity. There are some perceived external and transnational threats directed at the Republic, such as the proliferation of WMD and international terrorism.

In the context of and against this background, the aim of this chapter is to examine and analyse the military dimension of South African security policy in the post-1994 era, in order to determine official perceptions of the nature and scope of external military threats to South Africa's national security. As such it includes a discussion of conventional and unconventional military threats of external origin, as well as related issues in the military domain, such as terrorism, nuclear proliferation, the small arms trade and maritime piracy. In order to indicate changing views over time, and as a point of departure, consideration is first given to military threats to South Africa's during the Cold War era.

#### 2 PRE-1994 MILITARY THREATS TO SOUTH AFRICA

As previously indicated (see Chapter 2) the traditional concept of security predominantly emphasised the security of the state as threatened by the military power of other states and the defence of the state itself by means of military power. South Africa's security policy during the pre-1994 period was based primarily on the defence of the country against the alleged

threat from the Soviet Union and the preservation of apartheid. Owing to the perceived threat of and the increasing instability in Southern Africa, the SADF strategy was directed at ensuring the security of the people of South Africa by taking offensive proactive steps (*White Paper on Defence*, 1977 as amended). Therefore the role and functions of the SADF (as set out in Section 3 of the *Defence Act*, 1957) were to provide defence services; first, in the prevention or suppression of terrorism; second, to prevent or suppress internal disorder and preserve life, health or property; and third, to maintain essential services. The South African Army was responsible for conducting the land battle and internal security operations in support of the South African Police (SAP). The South African Air Force was responsible for air battles and internal security operations in support of the Army and the SAP; and the South African Navy was responsible for seaward defence.

Violent and non-violent components of the revolutionary strategy of the ANC and other liberation movements were pursued in the country in the 1970s and 1980s. In a submission presented by a former SADF member to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), Major General Mortimer (Mortimer, 1996) reflected on activities between 1960 and 1993 in South Africa. Mortimer contended that the attacks were carried out by both revolutionary and Government forces. He further stated that the incidents of sabotage, which were aimed mainly at railway property, police stations, government buildings and electricity supply infrastructure, were carried out by the revolutionary movements. The South African Army also carried out external operations against ANC (MK) and PAC (APLA) bases and facilities. For example, on 3 January 1981 attacks were carried out on the ANC Headquarters in the Matola area of Mozambique. On 9 December 1982 the ANC facilities in Maseru, Lesotho, were attacked. On 17 October 1983 an attack took place at the ANC planning facility close to the official residence of the president of Mozambique in Maputo.

It was evident that the SADF was organised along the lines of a conventional and counter-insurgency force. It was responsible for external operations and operated extensively in Namibia and Angola. The SADF was also involved in operations against the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) and in support of the Movement for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) (Visser, 2004:66). This was based on the fundamental principle that all threats had to be met outside South African territory by highly mobile forces.



## **2.1 Military threat perceptions**

South Africa's pre-1994 perception of threats was characterised by the multidimensional character of these threats. As previously stated (see Chapter 3), these threats were deemed to form part of a global Soviet strategy for world domination in which South Africa was the main target, with the aim of overthrowing the apartheid government (Hough & Van der Merwe, 1987:45-46).

In its threat perception, the South African government stressed the prevailing Western view that the Soviet Union, in pursuing its aim of world domination, supported and exploited liberation struggles across the globe in order to expand its influence, gain a foothold and strangle the Western powers. The Government therefore portrayed the internal liberation struggle and hostility towards the country by newly independent or self-governing African states as local manifestations of the global communist onslaught against the West (RSA, 1975). The Soviet Union, according to South Africa's threat perception, also provided increasing military support to Angola and Mozambique to ensure their continued support of 'terrorism' in Namibia and South Africa. In response to these military threats as perceived by the South African decision and policy makers, Government formulated specific policies and strategic doctrines of a military and non-military nature.

## **2.2 National Defence Policy**

On examining national defence policy, Cawthra (2003:33-34) contended that "the policy-making process during the apartheid era was significantly militarised through the National Security Management System (NSMS)". According to the NSMS, a militaristic 'Total Strategy' became the organising principle of state policy where all activities of state and society had to be orchestrated through a counter-revolutionary security agenda aimed at preventing a communist takeover of the country. The main aim of the 'Total Strategy' as has been pointed out, was to mobilise economic, political and military resources to defend and advance the interests of the ruling Government at both the national and regional levels and to maintain a commanding military balance relative to Southern Africa.

Accordingly, the South African government was deemed to be threatened by the expansion of the Marxist influence to bring about revolution in Southern Africa with an aim of overthrowing the Government. During this period military threats against South Africa intensified at an alarming rate (RSA, 1979).

Similarly Mortimer (1996) stated that national security policy defined the following aims and objectives:

- the establishment of the National Security Management System (NSMS), decentralised to regional level, based on the doctrine of Total Strategy – the need for co-ordinated action between all departments – to address the multidimensional (total) threat; and
- the maintenance of a conventional military capability to ensure national security through pro-active steps and self-sufficiency in the development of armaments (Mortimer, 1996).

Acts of terrorism were deemed to be the primary threat against South Africa and the growing interference by the major powers such as the Soviet Union and Cuba was a concern for the Government. In this regard the conventional threat against South Africa was influenced by the extent and intensity of the Soviet Union's arms supplies and training provided to the ANC and Cuba's military involvement in Africa.

### **2.3 National Security Strategy**

The development of South Africa's National Security Strategy pre-1994, according to Le Roux (2005:240), was a result of the direct influence of the ANC's strategy of revolutionary warfare. In his opinion "the armed struggle was orchestrated by the MK against the apartheid regime and South Africa's security forces, within and outside South Africa". South African security forces were expected to maintain law and order and create a stable environment in which the Government could bring about evolutionary political change in the country. The main players were the ANC (MK) and the PAC (APLA). On the opposing side was the South African government with its security apparatus, the SAP and SADF. The State Security Council (SSC) also played a major role in formulating national security policy and providing policy advice regarding intelligence priorities. Thus it can be argued that liberation movements created instability in the country which was due to the hostile Government policies towards black people; hence it was critical for the Government to develop National Security Strategy.

The strategy against the ANC according Mortimer's TRC submission (Mortimer, 1996) included the following tasks of the SADF:

- the development of the required military infrastructure for effective counter-insurgency operations;
- the prevention and suppression of terrorism against the RSA, including military actions against bases and training facilities in neighbouring states;
- the disruption and immobilisation of ANC operational command structures and centres;
- the neutralisation of the propaganda and espionage threat of the ANC to military personnel and installations;
- the protection of the borders of the Republic of South Africa and coastal areas against terrorist infiltration; and
- the protection of national key points against sabotage (Mortimer, 1996).

When Government and the opposition forces realised in the 1990s that further conflict would not result in a victory for any party, and that an inclusive negotiated settlement was possible, a compromise was reached. This led to the integration of the military forces of the SADF and the non-statutory forces of MK and APLA with the forces of Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei (TBVC states) to form the new SANDF (Stott, 2002:3-4).

### **3 THE POST-1994 DEFENCE POLICY FRAMEWORK**

There is consensus between Government and various scholars that military sources of insecurity are no longer prevalent in Southern Africa. As a result South Africa's orientation to external national security has changed from an explicitly offensive strategy to a defensive approach. External-oriented national security is currently based on the principles of collective security, non-aggression and the peaceful settlement of disputes (RSA, 1996a). In this context the Southern African region forms an important focus of South Africa's national security doctrine, policy and thinking. This is based on the assumption that South Africa's national security cannot be sustained in an unstable and insecure region (Hough & Du Plessis, 2000:69; Schoeman, 2007:166-167).

Therefore South Africa, being regarded as a major power in the region, is expected by the other SADC member states to play a leading role in solving regional security issues and challenges. In this regard South Africa's defence policy outlines the defence or military scope of national security: the strategic posture, defence capabilities, defence alliances and security institutions and mechanisms (national and international) that govern the utilisation of a country's Defence Force; the possible threats to the country's national security and to its

society, economy, territory and environment; and the provision of options to Government on how the Defence Force should deal with such security threats (RSA, 2012a). Since in a democratic system all institutions are expected to operate within constitutional law, South Africa's defence policy complies with the provisions of the Constitution in ensuring that there is peace and stability in the region as well as human security. The next sub-sections analyse South Africa's national military security framework and the role of various structures in the security sector.

### **3.1 National military framework**

In the South African context it is the responsibility of the South African Department of Defence (DoD), in accordance with the Constitution (RSA, 1996:78), to “ensure effective defence for a democratic South Africa, and enhancing national, regional and global security through balanced, modern, affordable and technologically advanced defence capabilities”. In this regard the main aim of the Department of Defence is to defend and protect South Africa, its territorial integrity and its people in accordance with the Constitution and the principles of international law that regulate the use of force (see also Africa Strategic Alternatives, 2004:117–120). The SANDF Military Strategy (RSA, 2002a) provides an overview of the military challenges expected by South Africa in the next decade. This military strategy, framed by the *Constitution*, 1996 and the *Defence Act*, 2002 (Act 42 of 2002), is informed by the *White Paper on Defence*, 1996, the *Defence Review*, 1998 and the *Defence Review*, 2012 respectively.

### **3.2 Legal framework**

The interim Constitution (Act 200 of 1993) initially provided the legal framework for the establishment of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) during the transition period (1994-1996). The Constitution stipulated that “the SANDF was to be a balanced, modern and technologically advanced military force”. It also made provision for the integration of statutory and non-statutory forces into SANDF.

The 1993 Constitution was then followed by the 1996 Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) and the *Defence Act*, 2002 (Act 42 of 2002). The 1996 Constitution gives the SANDF the power to perform military functions, as well as to defend and protect the country, its territorial integrity and its people in accordance with the Constitution and the principles of international law regulating the use of force. According to the *Defence Act* (RSA, 2002), there are four arms of service within the SANDF. These include the South African Army, the South African Air

Force, the South African Navy and the South African Military Health Service. The SANDF had a defensive non-threatening posture that best accommodated the international and domestic legal imperatives of defence. In this context, this posture allowed for the involvement of the SANDF in collective security structures, bi- and multilateral mechanisms and the promotion of regional and continental security through participation in peace missions. Based on the above, the Constitution (RSA, 1996) is therefore the main legislation governing security aspects in the country; hence it is critical for all government departments to comply with its provisions when developing any national legislation.

### **3.3 Policy framework**

In 1994 South Africa developed an entirely new policy framework to handle relations with its neighbours. The defence policy is concerned with countering military threats; with the orientation, preparation, maintenance and employment of armed forces and with the procurement of weaponry and military equipment. This is aligned with South African foreign policy which seeks to promote human rights and democracy, justice, rule of law and international peace, and the multilateral peaceful resolution of conflict.

#### **3.3.1 *White Paper on Defence, 1996***

The inauguration of South Africa's GNU changed the policy environment and this resulted in the development of a new policy framework for defence in the form of the *White Paper on Defence* (RSA, 1996a). The purpose of this *White Paper* was to inform citizens and other states, particularly those in Africa, of South Africa's new defence policy. The *White Paper* also intended to serve as a confidence- and security-building measure in Southern Africa.

As previously stated (see Chapter 3), the *White Paper* further states that “the objectives of security policy included the defence of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of the South African state and the promotion of regional security in Southern Africa” (Chapter 2 of the *White Paper*). According to this new security framework, emphasis is placed on the security and long-term economic and political stability of the sub-continent.

Chapter 4 of the *White Paper* spells out South Africa's strategy for the protection of the state and its people through the hierarchy of the following:

- political, economic and military cooperation with other states;
- the prevention, management and resolution of conflict through nonviolent means;
- and

- the use or threat of force as a measure of last resort.

South Africa will therefore turn to military means only when deterrence and non-violent strategies have failed. Furthermore the *White Paper* states that “external national security is based on advancing the principles of collective security, non-aggression and the peaceful settlement of disputes, while some of the transnational threats identified are the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, international terrorism and extremism” (RSA, 1996a:19-25).

In conclusion, it is critical that the military emphasis is not delinked from non-traditional/non-military aspects (to be discussed in Chapter 5). With this being said, as Hough and Du Plessis (2000:79-80) pointed out; it is in “South Africa’s long-term security interests to pursue mutually beneficial relations with other SADC states and to promote reconstruction and development throughout the region”. Some of the transnational threats could result in inter-state disputes, tensions and conflict in the region, with the possibility of extra-regional interference and intervention that might make it necessary to deploy the SANDF.

### **3.3.2 Defence Review, 1998**

The main aim of the *Defence Review*, 1998 was to elaborate on the 1996 *White Paper on Defence*’s, policy framework through comprehensive long-range planning on matters such as posture, doctrine, force design, force levels, logistic support, armaments, equipment, human resources and funding. The *Review* outlined the main responsibilities of the DoD, which included, among others, firstly, the provision of core defence capabilities to protect South Africa against external military threats and to execute military operations in defence of the country, its interests and its citizens; secondly, the provision of defence capabilities against internal threats to the constitutional order, and the execution of such operations in a state of emergency when so ordered by the president; thirdly, the promotion of regional security through defence cooperation within the SADC framework; fourthly, the promotion of international security through military cooperation in support of South Africa’s foreign policy; and fifthly, the provision of a military capability for participation in regional and international peace support operations (RSA, 1998a: 5).

In addition the DOD is expected to provide military support for the preservation of life, health and property in emergency situations when the scale of the emergency temporarily exceeds the capacity of the civil authorities. The 1998 *Defence Review* stressed that SADC is a region of allies and South Africa as a member of SADC should participate in common security arrangement under the auspices of this organisation and its organs and committees.

Even though the 1998 *Defence Review* is outdated in terms of the SANDF responsibilities, some of the provisions have been updated and captured in the draft *Defence Review*, 2012. The main reason of updating the 1998 *Defence Review* as stated earlier was the changing nature of security threats facing South Africa as compared to more than fifteen years earlier.

### **3.3.3 South African National Defence Force Military Strategy**

The *South African National Defence Force Military Strategy* (RSA, 2002a) provided an overview of the military challenges expected throughout the next decade. Accordingly, military strategic objectives are indicated as goals and aims that are to be achieved by the SANDF. These objectives are directed at the full range of military and other ordered commitments. They are based on three objectives: firstly, to enhance and maintain comprehensive defence capabilities with specific reference to the provision of self-defence against any external aggression that endangers the stability of South Africa; secondly, to promote peace, security and stability in the region and the continent with specific reference to the provision of external deployment or support to enhance security in support of decisions by the executives; and thirdly, to support the population of South Africa by means of operations other than war, during periods when the responsible state departments do not have the capacity to do so (see Hough, Du Plessis & Kruys, 2007:60-61).

South Africa's approach to conventional and unconventional threats is described in the 1999/2000 SANDF Annual Report Regarding the Joint Concept of Operation. According to this report, in the event of a conventional military threat against South Africa, the overall Joint Concept of Operations will be the following:

- landward operations: the SANDF will conduct offensive, proactive and reactive landward operations that are directed at stopping and destroying the enemy before it can penetrate into South Africa territory;
- air operations: enemy power will be neutralised through offensive counter air operations assisted by air mobile land operations aimed at destroying the enemy air force on the ground; and
- maritime operations: enemy maritime forces will be attacked at large while the defence of own and friendly shipping will be enhanced by defensive patrols and escorting (RSA, 2000b).

The report outlines broad non-conventional concepts of operation:

- Restoration of law and order: In its peacetime internal roles the SANDF subscribes to the employment of its conventional capabilities in focused high-density military operations in the event of the need to restore law and order;
- support to the South African Police Services (SAPS) in the maintenance of law and order; and
- border control, which will be exercised on land, sea and air borders.

The SANDF strategy addresses most military security issues nationally and regionally coupled with a broad operational plan that could be implemented when South Africa and the region are faced with external military threats. This shows in itself a sign of military readiness from the SANDF side.

### **3.3.4 *Defence Review, 2012***

The main purpose of the draft *Defence Review* policy and strategy was informed by an objective assessment of what South Africa wants to achieve through its foreign policy, the potential threats facing the country and socio-economic interests in what is a very uncertain era of growing competition among emerging major powers (RSA, 2012a:33; 38). During the 2010 Budget speech (RSA, 2010c) the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans gave specific direction concerning the development of a future defence policy framework. The Minister noted that “there are major changes, both dramatic and evolutionary which have taken place in the defence environment over the past 15 years”. The Minister stated that “this global shift in focus on threats and sources of insecurity necessitated a review of defence and security policies” (RSA, 2010c). The point of departure is that it is critical for South Africa to contextualise the defence contribution to national security clearly with particular emphasis on achieving national goals and defending vital interests from military to non-military threats. Accordingly, the new environment requires new thinking and new approaches to national security. However, the drafting process is still incomplete and is currently subjected to public debate and the participation of the interest groups.

Within this framework and because South Africa’s political and economic situation is integrated into SADC and AU structures, Government is expected to continue to play a leading role in conflict prevention, peace-enforcement, peace building and post-conflict reconstruction through the provision of military support operations. More emphasis is placed on international, non-traditional security threats, non-state actors and non-conventional



manifestations of insecurity and instability that characterise the contemporary environment with greater propensity for international intervention in conflict areas.

#### **4 POST-1994 EXTERNAL MILITARY THREATS**

South Africa's official position on external military threats is that the country does not face any direct military threat to its national security, compromising its sovereignty and territorial integrity (RSA, 2012a:79). However, this does not imply that South Africa is immune from military threats arising from the global, regional and domestic levels.

##### **4.1 Global threats**

With the fall of the Berlin Wall and the ending of the Cold War, the primary national and international security threats such as nuclear and revolutionary war were replaced by a multitude of new security threats, such as terrorism, transnational crime, the proliferation of WMD, civil war, HIV/AIDS and ethnic conflict (Krahmann 2005:7). In relation to South Africa, the draft *Defence Review* (RSA, 2012a:61) provides that "South Africa and its people are part of an international system of states that has become highly interconnected and is rapidly evolving". In this regard, the *Review* states the following:

*The current international strategic environment is characterised by a range of traditional and non-traditional threats to security as is evident in competition between powerful states for strategic resources; persistent regional and local conflicts; violent political, ethnic and religious extremism; acts of terrorism; proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD); the involvement of non-state actors in conflict; and high levels of international crime. These international dynamics have been exacerbated by the global economic downturn, vast demographic changes and the long-term impact of climate change.*

Terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 on the US led to a re-evaluation of the threat of international proliferation of WMD. The possibility of WMD (chemical, biological and nuclear weapons), falling into the hands of terrorist groups such as Al Qaeda has received particular attention. The critical challenge and effect of these contemporary security threats is that they do not target states, but societies, individuals, and are transnational and long-term in nature. The following clusters of military threats were identified by the UN report of the Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change in 2004: interstate conflict; internal conflict; including civil war, genocide and other large atrocities; nuclear, radiological, chemical and

biological weapons; terrorism and transnational organised crime (UN, 2004). Most of these clusters are recognised by the South African government.

Global security threats have no boundaries and they pose greater challenges to the developing countries as compared to the developed states due to their inequalities or lack of resources in addressing these threats. To the extent that they form part of South Africa's threat perception, the relevance of global threats are discussed and analysed to determine their impact.

#### **4.1.1 Terrorism**

The post-1994 Government gave its support to initiatives that sought to strengthen international cooperation with the aim of eliminating terrorism. Accordingly, Government recognises that it was only with the full and committed support of all members of the international community that terrorism could be eradicated. To this end the South African government actively participates in a variety of international forums and organisations, in particular the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), the African Union (AU) and the United Nations (UN) to find ways of combating terrorism.

On the African continent acts of terror by militant extremist groups remain a threat, mainly in North and East Africa. These include acts of terror by diverse extremist groups, including Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), al-Shabaab in Somalia and to a lesser extent the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta. In terms of the Government's views related to acts of terror, it is anticipated that this threat will grow on the basis of perceived racial, ethnic or religious grievances. Extremism is expected to last decades and will require a consistent focus by states with an interest in the preservation of the established international system. Continued strife in the Middle East and Africa will continue to exacerbate the conditions that cause instability and acts of terror (RSA, 2012a:65).

According to the *Defence Review* (RSA, 2012a:79) there are some concerns about the scourge of terrorism in South Africa. In this regard acts of terror have also affected the domestic security environment and there is a continued threat to national security and instability of South Africa by both foreign and domestic extremist and terrorist groups. The *Defence Review* further states that "threat posed to domestic stability and security by terrorism is influenced by developments outside South Africa's borders and the possible use of SA's soil by terrorist groups is also a concern. As such, SA's advanced communications, financial and transport infrastructure create an environment and opportunities for individuals linked to terrorist groups to exploit South African soil for logistic and support purposes"

(RSA, 2012a:79-80). With respect to measures to eliminate terrorism, the former Director-General of Justice and Constitutional Development, Menzi Simelane, in 2007 discussed the legal framework to counter terrorism in South Africa (RSA, 2007d). Simelane argued that “South Africa has good relations with the counter-terrorism bodies of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and is fully compliant with its reporting obligations in terms of the various Security Council Resolutions as well as the OAU Convention on the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism”. In fulfilling its international obligations to counter terrorism the South African government adopted legislation to criminalise acts of terrorism. These pronouncements, adoption of anti- terrorism legislation and cooperation with other international bodies indicate the major commitment of the South African government in combating terrorist activities.

In particular the *Protection of Constitutional Democracy against Terrorist and Related Activities Act*, (POCDATARA) 2004 (Act 33 of 2004) provides measures to:

- prevent and combat terrorist and related activities;
- give effect to international instruments dealing with terrorist and related activities;
- provide a mechanism to comply with United Nations Security Council Resolutions, which are binding on member states, in respect of terrorist and related activities; and
- prevent and combat the financing of terrorist and related activities.

The Act also makes provision for freezing terrorist property and specific offences in accordance with UNSC Resolution and the *International Convention on the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism* (UNSC, 2004:16).

In the Strategic Imperatives for South Africa, as set out in the 2006 State of the Nation Address (RSA, 2006), the President noted the growing threat of terrorism and stated that “South Africa would remain alert to averting the possibility of a terrorist attack or the use of its territory by subversive elements. The country is neither a primary target of, nor a safe haven for terrorists; however, this assessment does not mean the country is immune to the threat of terrorism”. Similarly, during a dialogue hosted by the Brenthurst Foundation on 25 January 2007 (RSA, 2007e), former Minister of Intelligence, Ronnie Kasrils, gave an overview of the scourge of terrorism in the African context. He emphasised that “Africa has witnessed the ferocity of international terrorism such as the bombings in Dar es Salaam, Nairobi, Mombasa, Morocco and Egypt”.

The Minister outlined issues to be looked at when dealing with terrorism threats. First, there was the need to continue to strengthen the capacities of intelligence and law enforcement bodies. Second, terrorism cannot be tackled from an intelligence and law enforcement perspective, but requires a holistic counter-terrorism approach, which includes technical and logistical cooperation. Third, in some African countries terrorist acts are a feature of local conflicts, even if they have wider consequences (such as in Darfur and Somalia). Fourth, there was the need to avoid destroying the rule of law or eroding international conventions. The Minister commented that SADC had already established an impressive track record, together with the rest of Africa and international partners, in containing the activities of domestic and international terrorists.

Despite having relevant legislation and other commitments to combat terrorism in South Africa, there are concerns pertaining to Government's readiness when faced with terrorist threat in the absence of counter terrorism strategy. Hence it is critical for Government to develop national Counter Terrorism Strategy to address terrorist threats.

#### **4.1.2 Nuclear non-proliferation**

According to the South African Council for the Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (see Figure 3), the South African government's approach to the issue of nuclear non-proliferation is part of a holistic approach to and the product of policy, legislation and control mechanisms in the areas of the following:

- conventional Arms and Services;
- the non-Proliferation of WMD and Dual-use Goods;
- firearms, ammunition, explosive and pyrotechnics, and riot-control; and
- foreign military assistance and activities in support of terrorism.

This was done in pursuance of the country's national interest and best international non-proliferation arms control and disarmaments practices (RSA, 1993).

The Control Committee (CC) consists of representatives from the Non-Proliferation Secretariat (NPS); the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA); the Directorate Conventional Arms Control (DCAC); the Safeguards Division of the South African Nuclear Energy Corporation (NECSA); the South African Secret Service (SASS); the National Intelligence Agency (NIA); Defence Intelligence (DI); the Department of Minerals and Energy (DME) and the South African Military Health Services of the Department of Defence (RSA, 1993).

With regard to activities relating to WMD, the *Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction Act*, 1993 (Act No 87 of 1993) prohibits:

- the conduct of explosions and tests in South Africa;
- any person, whether for offensive or defensive purposes, to be or become involved in any activity or with goods that contribute to Weapons of Mass Destruction programmes; and
- any person to be or become involved in any dual-use goods or activities that could contribute to WMD: with countries, individuals, groups, undertakings and entities subject to restrictions imposed by the United Nations Security Council acting under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter; and with countries, individuals, groups, undertakings and entities involved in international terrorism, including non-state actors.

Commenting on the challenges posed to the stability and security of Africa by the proliferation of nuclear weapons, especially small arms and light weapons, former President Thabo Mbeki (RSA, 2003) stressed the fact that these weapons and their use sustain conflict, exacerbate violence and fuel crime, terrorism, poaching and human trafficking. He urged African leaders to make effective contributions towards eliminating these weapons. All African states are parties to the NPT and also to the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention, as well as the African Nuclear Weapon Free Zone Treaty, known as the Treaty of Pelindaba, 1995.

At the launch of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) in 2007, former Minister of Foreign Affairs Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma (RSA, 2007f) outlined South Africa's position on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. The Minister stated that "Government adopted a policy whereby South Africa would be an active participant in the non-proliferation regimes and suppliers groups; adopt positions publicly supporting the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, with the goal of promoting international peace and security". Referring to ownership of these weapons, the Minister argued that ownership of advanced capabilities that could be used for peaceful and non-peaceful purposes places special responsibility on the states concerned to build confidence with the international community, which would remove concerns about potential nuclear weapon proliferation.

In summary, the South African government has committed itself to a policy of non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control, which covers all WMD and extends to concerns relating to the proliferation of conventional weapons.

#### **4.1.3 Small arms proliferation**

The increase in violent crimes in South Africa is linked to the proliferation of small arms. It is perceived as one of the major current threats to the security of South Africa. The increased availability of small arms is threatening South African society and affecting the daily lives of people. As a result a culture of violence is emerging in the region that threatens democracy and development (Institute of Security Studies, 2009).

The *White Paper on Small Arms and Light Weapons Proliferation* was released in 1998 by the then DFA (RSA, 1998c), outlining steps to be taken in order to stem the proliferation of these weapons. It suggested the need for a holistic approach with concurrent action at national, regional and international levels, focusing on both licit and illicit small arms and light weapons; and a regional initiative for the control of weapons proliferation in Africa. The White Paper further emphasises the fact that the proliferation of small arms and light weapons must be viewed from an inclusive perspective of arms control and disarmament, post-conflict peace building, conflict prevention and socio-economic development. It proposes practical measures for co-ordination and co-operation at national, regional and international levels. These include the following at the national level:

- the enhancement of legislation and regulation;
- the reduction of the current number of existing weapons at the regional level;
- confidence-building and transparency measures;
- steps to prevent the inflow of weapons to affected regions; and
- co-operative partnerships between governments, international, regional and non-governmental organisations.

The South African government has also embarked upon a variety of measures to curb the tide of light weapons proliferation. These efforts include the policy as stated in the *White Paper on Defence* of 1996, namely that “each arms export application is to be assessed by considering the recipient’s record on human rights and fundamental freedom, its security needs, and its record of compliance with international arms treaties”. It also stipulates that South Africa will not transfer arms to countries that violate human rights. The *National Conventional Arms Control Act*, 2002 (Act 41 of 2002) also stipulates that traders in

conventional arms must take cognizance of the fact that in terms of section 4(1) of the Act, the following shall be taken into account when deciding on whether or not they may trade in conventional arms with a client in a particular country:

*South Africa's national interest and its international obligations and commitments, particularly as these relate to arms control, non-proliferation, disarmament and the implementation of international humanitarian law; and national policy decisions not to trade in conventional arms and military equipment and/or material, equipment or technologies that could be used for the development or production of weapons of mass destruction, with countries involved in the systematic violation or suppression of humanitarian rights and fundamental freedoms and countries of proliferation concern.*

At the domestic level, the *Firearms Control Act*, 2000 (Act 60 of 2000) significantly strengthens existing regulations on the possession and use of firearms by stipulating criteria for obtaining a firearm licence. These include a competency certificate along with training in knowledge of the law and use of a firearm; and a demonstrated lack of substance dependence. Increased administrative controls have also been adopted, such as limits on the number of firearms that any individual can own, regular licence renewals, and the revoking of a licence if an owner is posing a threat to him/herself or to his/her community.

The proliferation of light weapons and illicit arms trafficking pose a major threat to peace, security and development in the country and the region at large. However, South Africa has a comprehensive system in place that includes counter-measures such as legislation in relation to arms control and management. These are aimed at controlling the supply, possession, safe storage, transfer and use of firearms and detecting the criminal or negligent use of such weapons. In addition there have been joint operations between the SANDF and SAPS to combat rising crime and small arms proliferation.

#### **4.1.4 Maritime piracy and South Africa's maritime space**

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Seas (UNCLOS, 1982:60-61) defines piracy as an “act that can only be committed on the *high seas* and for which universal jurisdiction applies” (that is to say, any state can apprehend a pirate vessel, regardless of its flag state). Maritime security is one of the SANDF priorities that have been identified by the Minister of Defence (MOD) and will continue to be a key component of SADC collective security. According to the SANDF Annual Performance Plan, 2012 maritime security,

particularly off the east coast of Africa with similar trends emerging off the west coast of Africa, is currently a major concern. The SANDF's mandate is to conduct anti-piracy patrols in this area.

Examining threats of maritime piracy, Siko (1996:1-2) described South Africa as a maritime nation, meaning that the nation is endowed with a double geo-political identity, based on the land and the sea. He notes that Southern Africa is economically dependent upon world commerce and access to – and between – the South Atlantic and South Indian Oceans. The growing activity of piracy off the coast of Somalia has led to intensified international efforts to combat such acts in an effort to safeguard shipping lanes and protect international waters (Lewis, 2012:1). Lewis argued that piracy does not currently present a problem within South African territorial waters, although the country has become increasingly concerned about such acts since December 2010 when Somali pirates launched their southernmost successful attack, hijacking a Spanish fishing trawler, the Vega 5, and her 24 crew in Mozambique waters (Lewis, 2012:1-2). This shift in activity southwards led to a recognition by South Africa of the need to act to curtail the threat.

The problem of piracy was specifically emphasised in an address by Lindiwe Sisulu, Minister of Defence and Military Veterans at the 2011 SADC Extraordinary Meeting on Regional Anti-Piracy Strategy (RSA, 2011a). She noted that piracy had been a recurring feature on the agenda since 1995 and expressed the desire to move it from the discussion agenda to the operational agenda, although she expressed gratitude for current levels of cooperation. The Minister argued that one reason why speculations point towards pirates moving in the Southern region is the recent discovery of oil and gas off the Tanzanian coastline. She stated that six million tons of oil per year is transported around South Africa's western coastline, which makes this a prime target for pirates (RSA, 2011a). It is therefore clear that South Africa's involvement as an anti-piracy actor is increasing due to the Government having identified maritime piracy as a security threat to the region and also having recognised the need to protect its self-interests. This includes preventing the spread of piracy before it becomes a serious problem in South African waters.

Underpinning South African rhetoric on piracy, the Minister emphasised the importance of cooperation and drew attention to the impact of piracy on not just South Africa, but the Southern African region and its development. Sisulu also noted that South Africa's interest is ultimately compromised by the movement of piracy into the waters of Southern Africa,



although not to that of South Africa specifically. The region is becoming increasingly vulnerable and is seen as “an alternative to Somali pirates as they try and avoid the clamp-down of various maritime task forces around the Horn of Africa and the Gulf of Aden – purely by moving into largely unprotected parts of the Indian Ocean” (RSA, 2011a). Former Minister of Defence, Mosiuoa Lekota (RSA, 2007c), as early as 2007 commented on the escalation of piracy and the poaching of marine resources. The Minister stressed the importance of marine security cooperation in the SADC region and the international expectation that South Africa is required to provide a response to maritime threats. As such it was assumed that the DoD would play a key role to help combat piracy, especially considering the piracy incidents that have occurred along the SADC coastline.

Accordingly, piracy poses a serious challenge to the development and stability of SADC member states. Given the importance of the region’s international seaborne trade and its vital contribution to regional food stocks and economic development, member states therefore have international and regional responsibilities to combat the scourge of piracy. This could be done through regional security cooperation and by addressing the root causes of insecurity in countries such as Somalia. Maritime security is essential to SADC’s continued economic and political stability, hence South Africa’s emphasis of the threat of maritime piracy.

#### **4.2 Continental threats**

The end of the Cold War meant that Africa had to focus on emerging security challenges. The AU, the successor to the former OAU, is now at the centre of Africa’s ongoing engagement with issues pertaining to security on the continent. The AU *Constitutive Act* (AU, 2000: Article 3) notes that “the scourge of conflicts in Africa constitutes a major impediment to the socio-economic development of the continent and of the need to promote peace, security and instability”. The Act furthermore emphasises the need to promote peace, security and stability; enabling Africa to play a more important role in the global economy, to foster economic, social, and cultural development and to integrate African economies. In enhancing the activities of the AU, the Protocol Relating to the establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the AU (PSC) was adopted. According to the AU PSC Protocol, 2002 (Article 2 & 3 of AU 2002), the PSC has the responsibility of maintaining international peace and security, and preventing, managing and resolving conflict.

Abdellaoui (2010:21-30) commented that traditional security threats in Africa are the results of conflict and serious political violence caused by numerous factors. He placed emphasis on

issues concomitant with conflict such as the proliferation of arms, the need for reform of the security sector and illegal exploitation of the continent's natural resources. However, in recent years African leaders have gained a better appreciation of the so-called new threats to security in Africa. Thus Abdellaoui also argued that the AU was involved in preventing, managing and resolving conflicts in countries such as Burundi, the DRC, Darfur, Sudan, Comoros and Somalia to assist in implementing various cease-fire agreements.

Hough (1999:228-232) identified three sources of threats to African security. Firstly, there are internal threats involving violent conflict and the armed forces revolving around tribal, religious and ethnic disputes. Secondly, there are threats that originated from other African states. These are related to boundary disputes, territorial claims and ideological differences. Thirdly, there are extra-continental threats, which include subversive penetration, economic pressure and limited direct military intervention. Nonetheless, Hough concludes that the threat of a direct full-scale external military invasion of sub-Saharan African countries is unlikely. In responding to these perceived threats, the draft *Defence Review* (RSA, 2012a: 39) states the following:

*Regional and continental socio-economic integration is the foundation for Africa's socio-economic development and political unity, and essential for South Africa's own prosperity and security. Africa is at the centre of South Africa's foreign policy. Therefore, South Africa must continue to support regional and continental processes to respond to and resolve crises, strengthen regional integration, significantly increase intra-African trade and champion sustainable development and opportunities in Africa. Peace, stability and security are essential preconditions for development.*

Thus South Africa is expected to play a leading role in conflict prevention, peace-enforcement, peacekeeping, peace building and post-conflict reconstruction.

### **4.3 Regional and domestic threats**

Regional conflicts generate potential military threats that may spill-over to or have an impact on South Africa. The draft *Defence Review* (RSA, 2012a) outlines regional security threats that have a negative impact on South Africa's national security. First, SADC is faced with armed conflicts that occur mostly within states and have a negative effect on inter-state relations. The consequences of such conflicts in terms of trafficking of small arms and the disruption of trade have profound spill-over effects on neighbouring states and could give rise to regional disputes. Second, the region faces the challenge of ensuring maritime security.

Most states in the region lack the capacity to monitor maritime traffic and this affects South Africa in terms of resource allocation in addressing threats posed by acts of piracy.

In examining the SADC security situation, Van Schalkwyk (2005:1, 6) noted that conflict and instability continued to characterise Southern African states in the post-Cold War period. As a result there is a demand for conflict management from the UN at regional and sub-regional level. This poses a significant challenge to sub-regional security arrangements such as the SADC OPDSC and the AU PSC. Expressing similar views, Nathan (1995:2) argued that the “high level of instability and conflict, coupled with the general state of underdevelopment on the continent, has created a vast potential breeding ground for polarisation, the rise of warlords, rogue regimes, terrorism and crime”. This state of affairs could also create favourable locations from which international terrorists could operate against other parts of the world. If this were not contained, the potential for unilateral external interventions would become real.

More than a decade ago Gamba (1997:100-03) contended that “the main threat, against which South Africa must guard, while reinforcing regional capacities for collective action, is the weakening and overstretching of its own capabilities, particularly in the military field”. She therefore emphasised South Africa’s military role in the foreseeable future in terms of assisting other African countries in the prevention and removal of existing insecurities, deterring new insecurities from emerging and preventing existing security in South Africa from turning into insecurity. South Africa already has a series of commitments with regard to ensuring the defence of its assets and assisting continental and regional groupings in bringing security to their territories and peoples. Therefore the need exists to propose exactly how the South African military should prepare for the management and resolution of conflict as well as preventing and/or deterring future conflicts. The draft *Defence Review*, 2012 attempts to address the role of military forces in dealing with military threats.

## **5 CONCLUSION**

This chapter examined and analysed external military threats faced by South Africa. In dealing with external military threats, Government has acknowledged and committed itself to addressing challenges such as the resolution of regional conflicts through peacekeeping missions. However, there are growing military threats of international terrorism, proliferation of small arms and weapons of mass destruction and maritime piracy. Government has made an effort to address these security threats and to prevent the proliferation of conventional and

unconventional weapons through policy development and regional security cooperation initiatives. South Africa's security perception post-1994 is not shaped only by external dynamics. Internal dynamics have an important role too. Emphasis should be placed on non-military issues (discussed in the next chapter) that might contribute to military threats. This relates to the spill-over effect of environmental degradation as a result of climate change (that is, water and air pollution), transnational organised crime such as drug and human trafficking, and the influx of illegal immigrants as a result of regional conflicts and economic crises.

## CHAPTER 5

### NON-MILITARY THREATS TO SOUTH AFRICA'S NATIONAL SECURITY

#### 1 INTRODUCTION

During the post-Cold War period, as previously indicated (see Chapter 2), the concept of non-traditional threats to security and the perception of what constitutes threats to national security have resulted in a greater focus on non-military issues. The debate is based on the awareness that in the post-Cold War and post-1994 era in South Africa, military threats have declined in relevance and that military tools are seen as less useful. Emphasis is placed on a need to re-examine and broaden the term 'security' owing to the fundamental changes to the post-Cold War environment.

There is consensus that expanding the definition should include the effect of domestic issues on the national security agenda of states and should also treat non-military threats to national wellbeing as security risks. Security threats can come from various sources and the object of security is shifting from the state to the individual. Emphasis is placed on the question of how individuals can threaten the state or how the state can threaten the security of individuals.

The aim of this chapter is to present a description and analysis of official perceptions of external non-military threats to South Africa's national security. It includes a discussion of the external origins and dimensions of current and emerging issues such as the environment, water and food security, as well as issues concerning transnational crime, migration and refugees. In the context of critical security and securitisation, these issues have an indirect impact on national security to the extent that they concern human security issues mainly of an internal nature. Hence, the main purpose is to identify and analyse the security risks posed in these securitised non-military issues in order to determine the extent to which these risks through the process of securitisation are translated into perceived threats to national security, especially to human security.

#### 2 PRE-1994 NON-MILITARY THREATS TO SOUTH AFRICA'S NATIONAL SECURITY

The nature, scope and sources of insecurity during the pre-1994 era (see Chapter 3) focused mainly on decolonisation and apartheid policies of South Africa, which caused intra-regional and international conflict in the Southern African region. Thus, apartheid was regarded as the primary domestic source of instability and most threats to national security were military in nature. However, non-military threats in the form of international pressure to end the

apartheid policy came in the form of economic sanctions, expulsions from international organisations, and disinvestment from foreign companies. In this process it was evident that the international community played a significant role to end apartheid (Solomon 2004:7-8). The *Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid* 1976 declared that “apartheid was a crime against humanity and that inhuman acts resulting from the policies and practices of apartheid and similar policies and practices of racial segregation and discrimination are international crimes” (UN, 1976: Article 1).

The United Nations in particular passed various punitive resolutions, including the UN Security Council mandatory arms embargo of 1977. The individual states also played a role, for example in 1985 the US passed the *Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1985*. Barnes (2008:35-36) analysed some of the international initiatives, including economic and cultural isolation, which were implemented to dismantle apartheid. The first of these were economic sanctions which were aimed at harming South Africa’s economy. A number of initiatives were used, from imposing an oil embargo to trade sanctions and finally a series of disinvestment initiatives. Second was the effort to isolate South Africa socially and culturally. These measures were instigated by civil society activists and then incorporated into the policies of sympathetic governments. The most influential initiative was the ‘sports boycott’, imposed initially because of the Government’s rigid adherence to apartheid in sport.

Examining the impact of international isolation, Solomon (2004:7-8) argues that sanctions had a negative impact on the South Africa’s oil industry. Accordingly, “sanctions and disinvestments were perceived by senior Government officials to be hurting the economy, and they were a powerful motivational force for the apartheid state to adopt reform at home and foreign policy towards its neighbours” (Solomon, 2004:7). In a contrary view Barnes (2008:36) argues that “despite the range of initiatives designed to pressure or encourage the South African government to abandon apartheid, they were not decisive. Instead, a combination of internal and external factors created conditions that led both the NP and the ANC towards the realisation that their aims might be best met through political negotiations”. Ultimately, it was evident that the will and leadership shown by pre-negotiation elements of all the parties were primarily responsible for South Africa’s successful transition.

### **3 POST-1994 POLICY ON NON-MILITARY THREATS**

Although the post- Cold War perception of what constitutes a threat to security has resulted in an emphasis of non-military threats, they are often described as new threats because they

were not perceived as real or serious threats to security (Hough & Kruys, 2009:1-2). The range of security risks and threats has thus been broadened with the increasing recognition of non-military threats to security. With reference to South Africa, there has been a re-orientation of thinking on ‘security’ and threats to security in the post-democratic dispensation. South Africa views national security in a holistic way to incorporate political, economic, social and environmental issues. Referent objects of security now reflect the change in emphasis to state as the main object of security. The new approach to national security embraces the concept of human security and non-military dimensions of security (RSA, 1996a).

### **3.1 Non-military threat framework**

In outlining the non-military threat framework of the post-1994 period, former Minister of defence, Joe Modise, as early as 1995 argued as follows:

*In the new South Africa national security is no longer viewed as predominantly military environmental matters. At the heart of this new approach is a paramount concern with the security of people. Security is an all-encompassing condition in which the individual citizens live in freedom, peace and safety; participate fully in the process of governance; enjoy the protection of fundamental rights; have access to resources and the basic necessities of life; and inhabit an environment which is not detrimental to their health and well-being (RSA, 1995b).*

Thus, this statement indicates and emphasises the major shift in South Africa’s national security policy from a military approach to non-military threats.

In analysing post-1994 determinants of national security Koetje (1999:3-4) asserted that the manifestations of Southern African regional problems – such as large numbers of illegal immigrants, ever-shrinking resources, socio-economic problems and pressure on the environment – have a negative effect on South Africa’s national security and interests. These factors constitute all the sectors of the country’s power base, and are indicative of the threats and opportunities that reside in all of them. Accordingly, these threats and opportunities are linked to the following strategic issues that affect the national security of South Africa and that of the region: good governance; effective combating of crime; effective management of water resources; adequate and appropriate education and training; the fulfilment of South Africa’s regional role and sustainable economic growth.

Internal threats to security in sub-Saharan Africa are fundamentally non-military in nature, although their manifestation is so broad that they can easily turn into military threats. In this respect Gamba (1997:96-97) is of the opinion that “not all non-military threats to African security will be interpreted as threats to the national security of the country, but all will impact on the obligations, commitments and aspirations of South Africa in relation to Southern Africa, sub-Saharan Africa and the world at large”. Understanding these dynamics can help to foresee emerging tension and potential conflict. South Africa’s perspectives on security and security threats are thus embedded in a constructive approach. Similarly Hough, Du Plessis and Kruys (2007:125) argued that the constructive approach provides a basic indication of perceived or potential security threats that elicit an official policy response from the South African government.

### **3.2 Legal framework**

As previously noted (see Chapter 3 and 4) the South Africa’s Constitution 1996 is the principal basis for South Africa’s national security. With respect to non-military threats, the Constitution states the following:

- national security must reflect the resolve of South Africans, as individuals and as a nation, to live as equals, to live in peace and harmony, to be free from fear and want and to seek a better life;
- any South African citizen is prohibited from participating in armed conflict, national or internationally, except as provided for in terms of the constitution or national legislation;
- national security must be pursued in compliance with the law, including international law. This also relates to human rights as enshrined in the Constitution; and
- national security with the inclusion of human security is subject to the authority of Parliament and the national executive (RSA, 1996:77).

In this context South Africa views national security in a holistic way as incorporating non-military threats to national security with emphasis placed on emerging issues such as human security.

### **3.3 Policy framework**

The acceptance by the South African government of the new concept of security has revealed a strong case for human security and non-military dimensions of security (RSA, 1996a:9). Accordingly, emphasis is placed on the causes and consequences of conflict at national,



regional and global level in order to establish an environment that is conducive to human security.

### **3.3.1 *White Paper on Intelligence, 1995***

The *White Paper on Intelligence* 1995 (RSA, 1995a:3) embraces the importance of non-military elements of security, the complex nature of threats to stability and development, and the reality of international interdependence. It declares that “the main threat to the wellbeing of individuals and the interests of nations across the world does not come primarily from a neighbouring army, but from internal and external challenges such as economic collapse, overpopulation, mass-migration, ethnic rivalry, political oppression, terrorism, crime and disease”. The *White Paper* further stipulates that “the maintenance and promotion of national security (that is, peace, stability, development and progress) should be a primary objective of any government”. Thus, the new thinking on security has these key features, which should also form an integral part of the philosophical outlook on intelligence:

- security is conceived as a holistic phenomenon and incorporates political, social, economic and environmental issues;
- the objectives of security policy go beyond achieving an absence of war to encompass the pursuit of democracy, sustainable economic development and social justice; and
- regional security policy seeks to advance the principles of collective security, non-aggression and peaceful settlement of disputes (RSA, 1995a:3-5).

National security objectives should therefore encompass the basic principles and core values associated with a better quality of life, freedom, social justice, prosperity and development. When applied to the South African context, the new approach to security holds that the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) is integral to and forms the core of the country's emerging national security doctrine. Thus, some of the security threats identified by the *White Paper* are the activities of international extremists groups using South Africa as the safe haven for terrorist activities, international drug cartels, using SA both as a transit route for their trade and as a market, thus corrupting South Africa's social system and the increase in foreign intelligence activities in the economic, technological and scientific fields (RSA, 1995a:10).

### **3.3.2 *White Paper on Defence, 1996***

According to the *White Paper on Defence* (RSA, 1996a:9) “security is now regarded as an all-encompassing condition in which individual citizens live in freedom, peace and safety;

participate fully in the process of governance; enjoy the protection of fundamental rights; have access to resources and the basic necessities of life and inhabit an environment that is not detrimental to their health and wellbeing”. At national level the objectives of the security policy therefore encompass the consolidation of democracy; the achievement of social justice, economic development and a safe environment, and a substantial reduction in the levels of crime, violence and political instability. In terms of the *White Paper* (RSA, 1996a:23-24), South Africa does not face any real military threat. However, the *White Paper* does state 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.

### **3.3.3 Defence Review, 2012**

National security is viewed in a broader context as an all-encompassing condition, which includes the safeguarding of South Africa and its people against a wide range of threats, many of which are non-military in nature (RSA, 2012a:80). Security is no longer viewed within its traditional interpretation; however, it must also entail the eradication of poverty and the pursuit of sustainable economic development, social justice and democratic governance. Non-military factors of insecurity such as organised crimes and the influx of illegal migrants that emanate at the global, continental and regional levels are the main concern to South Africa’s national security. Thus, these insecurities contribute to issues of poverty, underdevelopment, corruption, deteriorating health status and inadequate/weak governance. Socio-economic factors that shape the environment within which government provides basic services to people will continue to generate tensions, protest action and contribute to high levels of crime.

## **4 POST-1994 NON-MILITARY THREAT PERCEPTIONS**

Globalisation and interdependence according to Ayoob (1995:8-9) make countries more vulnerable to non-traditional threats. He argues that “economic and ecological issues should be taken into account as part of the security agenda when they threaten to have political outcomes that affect state boundaries, state institutions or governing elites”. These developments also relate to other issues that transcend international boundaries and cannot be addressed by a single state (Hough & Kruys, 2009:4). Similarly, Ripsman and Paul (2005:200) argue that “since these new challenges are global in nature and require collective action, traditional state-centred approaches to security planning are ill suited to dealing with such pressures”. Therefore Davis (2003:1-2) contends that these threats have become global

in scope and more serious in their effects as a result of the dissemination of knowledge, the spread of advanced technologies, and the movements of people.

Since the Government recognises and acknowledges that South Africa does not face any current external military threats, it is essential to analyse the nature and scope of non-military threats to develop a sense of their threat potential. This will also assist in determining how military forces can re-align their mandate to respond and to deal with non-military threats. Perceived insecurities, vulnerabilities and risks may have an impact on future threats to national security. Considering the above, this includes challenges, issues, emergencies, vulnerabilities and risks that range from globalisation through the spectrum of human security and reflects the broadening and deepening of the security concept and the inclusion of non-military dimensions (Hough, Du Plessis & Kruys, 2007:124-125).

As previously indicated, what is considered to constitute security in contemporary South Africa has been expanded from interstate relations to a near all-encompassing phenomenon in which everything can be part of the ‘security’ arena. In this respect, former President Nelson Mandela argued in a speech at the Freedom Day celebrations (RSA, 1999), “that the single largest threat to peace and stability in South Africa is poverty and social inequality, i.e. internal sources, as opposed to external sources of threat to society. The result is that domestic social development and the government’s economic development programmes, the RDP and later the more liberal Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR), have become central elements in South African security thinking”.

The *White Paper on Defence* (RSA, 1996a:22-23) also identified a number of threats, namely the spread of diseases, the burden of refugees, civil war in some SADC countries, regional instability and chronic underdevelopment. The South African government has stressed the view that South Africa cannot be an island of peace in the midst of war. Continued instability, insecurity and conflict in Africa, and Southern Africa in particular, will affect South Africa directly or indirectly. The *DoD Draft Defence Update Report, 2005* (RSA, 2005) states that “factors contributing to insecurity such as poverty, underdevelopment, the spread of killer diseases, environmental degradation, the rise of international terrorism, the possession and proliferation of WMD and the growth of transnational crime are of a global nature but have implications for national security”. The strategic environment is therefore moulded by a multitude of political, socio-economic, environmental and military trends that have a significant impact on South Africa's defence and security policy.

Non-military threats that put human security at risk in South Africa include, among others, “violent crime, rape, racially motivated violence, politically motivated violence, farm attacks and land conflict, illicit arms and drug deals, illegal migration, xenophobia-related violence, poverty and inequality, and regional instability” (Mlambo, 2005:231). These threats may emanate from outside a particular state, may have internal or intra-state causes or may be caused by the state itself and can be grouped together in some clusters of threats, namely economic and social threats, including poverty, infectious diseases, and environmental degradation (UN, 2004).

The next section discusses views on real and perceived non-traditional threats to national security since 1994 and how they have become securitised. These real or perceived transnational threats relate to organised crime, migration, environmental degradation and other threats.

#### **4.1. Organised crime**

Transnational organised crime has become a new threat to international security. External crime threats have arisen through illicit international economic activities, among others, in mining, textile and tobacco industries (RSA, 2012a:77-78). Factors that have allowed for the illicit economy to thrive in the region in terms of the draft *Defence Review* are mainly illegal migration, inadequate border control, a lack of capacity to enforce existing legislation, corruption among border officials, criminal networks operating across South Africa’s borders to facilitate illicit economic activity, and a misalignment of regulatory frameworks.

Referring to the threat of crime in the State of the Nation address in 2001 (RSA, 2001), former President Thabo Mbeki identified priority areas in crime prevention. These relate to high crime areas, organised crime, including urban terrorism, crimes against women and children, corruption, cross-border crime and social crime prevention. At the State Security Budget Vote 2010, Minister of State Security Siyabonga Cwele indicated that “Government has declared war on crime and has set an objective to reduce crime levels in the country, particularly those that are violent in nature ... It is intelligence’s role to determine the scope of the extent and impact of syndicated violent crimes and annual assessment of strategic crime trends in the national intelligence estimate” (RSA, 2010b). The Minister stated that operations would be established against domestic and transnational crime syndicates and the intelligence agency would provide actionable intelligence to assist in the prosecution or disruption of activities of the syndicates. The Minister noted that “illegal mining had emerged

as a multifaceted national security threat, costing the economy billions of rand in revenue. Among others, illicit mining is taking place in the gold, platinum and diamond sectors”. As such it presents a range of social challenges, such as corrupting communities, and encouraging forced child labour, and related criminal activity, including tax evasion, human trafficking, prostitution and gangsterism.

Other illicit activities range from drugs and arms trafficking to the use of large scale violence against innocent civilians (Williams, 2007:194-195). Thus drugs can be interpreted as security threats. In order to address these new security threats one needs to comprehend the extent and nature of the problem thoroughly. The impact of this threat on societies is considerable, since illegal trafficking means the movement of illegal goods and contributes to human insecurity.

One of the newest disturbing developments in organised crime in South Africa is the escalation of illegal rhino horn trade. Water and Environmental Affairs Minister Edna Molewa (News24, 2013/02/06) noted with concern the increase in rhino poaching and was confident that the South African National Parks are on the verge of turnaround, given the present initiatives implemented against poaching. Molewa mentioned that rhino poaching was being fought at various levels. The Minister indicated that her department is planning to talk to regional groups about the matter at the Convention on International Trade and Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). The Minister also welcomed the recent signing of a declaration by the Socialist Republic of Vietnam banning the import of all white and black rhino specimens. She further indicated that there is a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between South Africa and Vietnam to curb the scourge of rhino poaching and to promote co-operation in law enforcement and compliance with CITES. However, there are some concerns regarding the increased discussion favouring legalised rhino horn trade emanating from groups in South Africa, such as Wildlife Ranching SA.

Internal instability linked to criminal activities poses a serious threat to South African society in general and more specifically to the democratic constitutional order. South Africa faces a major challenge from the illicit economy, which has the potential to compromise Government’s New Development Plan seriously and concomitantly its ability to deliver the required services to the people. It is estimated that South Africa's economy is losing ten percent of its GDP to illicit trade activities (RSA, 2010b). The security situation is further influenced by organised gangs responsible for armed robberies, car high jacking and other

serious crimes. A particular problem linked to external threats of crime is the proliferation and the availability of firearms. South Africa's responses to the threat of transnational organised crime and corruption are seen against the background of Government's wider social and economic transformation agenda.

#### **4.2 Migration and insecurity**

Migration, according to Koser (2006:10), encompasses security issues along a number of axes that include people who move both within and across national boundaries, namely internal and international migrants respectively. As such, migration refers to people moving out of choice and those who are forced to move, and people moving for political, economic, social and environmental reasons. Migration is increasingly viewed through security lenses. According to a Dutch study (Netherlands, 2007:37), Myron Weiner was one of the first scholars who linked international migration and security. Viewing security as a social construct, Weiner identified five types of situation in which receiving states may consider migrants security threats. First, migrants may strain relations between sending and receiving countries, a situation that may arise when refugees and migrants oppose themselves to the regime of their home country. Second, migrants may be seen as a political threat or security risk to the regime of the receiving country. Third, immigrants may be perceived as a threat to the culture of the receiving country. Fourth, migrants may be viewed as a social or economic problem in the host country. Fifth, the receiving country may use migrants as an instrument of threat against the country of origin.

According to the draft *Defence Review*, 2012 (RSA, 2012a:75) South Africa remains a destination of choice for foreign migrants because of the perceived opportunities and stability in contrast with instability and deprivation in some areas of the continent. Thus the draft *Defence Review* noted that "high levels of illegal migration into Southern Africa pose a serious threat to South Africa's national security and stability". Migration, however, is not a new security issue; since 1994 the debate about immigration has been characterised by discourse on xenophobia. As far as the number of undocumented immigrants is concerned, Brunk (1996) stated that estimates range from about two million to as high as eight million. However, there are concerns about little knowledge to justify any precise estimates. The situation is exacerbated by poor data and a questionable monitoring system. According to the organisation named 'Visa South Africa' (2011) South Africa is estimated to be harbouring five million illegal immigrants and it is believed that three million of those people are from Zimbabwe, because Zimbabwe is an adjacent neighbour of South Africa. It should be noted,

therefore, that obtaining accurate statistics regarding migration in South Africa is very difficult because people do not like to admit that they are in a country illegally.

The Parliamentary report (RSA, 2008:10) probing violence and attacks on foreign nationals, Government noted that “xenophobic attitudes do exist among some South African citizens and could have been exploited to initiate the violence and attacks on foreign nationals”. Xenophobic attitudes and xenophobia generally could be seen as a reflection of changing migration streams and the perceived threat to citizens’ rights and interests. In the 2010 Budget Vote, Minister Siyabonga Cwele (RSA, 2010b) singled out xenophobic attacks against foreign nationals as a security concern. He urged the intelligence community to continue to monitor and assess the manifestation of xenophobia across the country, with the aim of averting violent outbreaks against foreign nationals. He conceded that assessment revealed on-going tension between local communities and foreign nationals in hotspots across the country. He assured the nation that military intelligence would continue to work with local and émigré communities to prevent the commission of these inhuman acts.

In the 2012 Budget Vote, Minister Cwele (RSA, 2012b) stated that “as part of the SADC region, South Africa continues being confronted by the problems of illegal migration and other transnational organised crime, including human smuggling”. The Minister argued that South Africa will continue to work within the SADC framework together with neighbouring countries collectively to address this global challenge in a region. In this context the business case for the establishment of the Border Management Agency (BMA) by 2014 will have been processed. The Minister cited President Zuma when he observed that “radical transformation occurring globally has narrowed the distinction between foreign and domestic threats. World borders are now softer than ever”. The President argued that whether it is transnational crime, terrorism or the global political situation, the international security situation requires all states to remain vigilant and to cooperate in protecting respective national security interests and their citizens.

Commenting on external threats posed by the flow of migrants Mlambo (2005:237) argued that South Africans believe that migrants, especially from African states such as Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Nigeria are responsible for the high rate of crime in South Africa, take jobs meant for South Africans, and bring diseases to the country. As a result a number of high-profile violent assaults on migrants have been carried out by citizens, and a number of foreigners have lost their lives. Responding to insecurity or murderous campaigns

directed at foreign nationals in 2008, Landau (2008:5-6) commented that “the attacks were in part the result of an extended series of actions that generated a segment of the population, that is institutional and socially exclusion from legal protection”. Thus, Landau raised concerns about the failure of law enforcement agents to protect non-nationals and argued that they normally fall outside South Africa’s legal system.

Analysing various arguments it is predicted that in the future South Africa will face increasing border security problems. Economic deterioration of neighbouring states and political collapse of countries to the north of South Africa have led to illegal immigration and cross-border crime. The spill-over effects of intra-regional disparities will continue to create problems for South Africa. The control and management of the country’s borders remains one of the biggest security challenges. Thus migrants in the post-Cold War era are more easily construed as a potential national enemy and the subsequent securitisation of the migrant and migration in general has had enormous consequences for both individuals and states security.

### **4.3 Environmental degradation**

Non-military issues such as environmental degradation in the post-Cold War period have been placed at the top of national security agendas. The question as to whether environmental damage or a scarcity of resources should be considered a national security issue has raised huge debate, especially from those who are concerned with the development of military strategy. There is an argument that environmental scarcity poses a threat to security because it can give rise to violence. This argument takes people as the referent object of environmental security threatened by environmental change (Mutimer, 1997:87-88). Similarly Wirtz (2007:343-345) argued that “air pollution and coal-fired electric plants, the destruction of the ozone layer and global warming produced by greenhouse gases are all common problems and it will be impossible for a single state to slow the destruction of the ozone layer”. However, there are complications when dealing with the environmental sector. This relates to issues such as disruption of the ecosystem, energy problems, population growth, food problems, economic problems and civil wars (Buzan, Wæver & De Wilde, 1998:74-75).

The threat to security in this context is the cause of environmental degradation and the response must therefore be to alter the practices that lead to environmental damage. Contributing to a debate on environmental security, Hough (2004:146) argued that



environmental change can become an issue of security owing to the potential threat posed by global warming. The central cause is considered to be an exacerbation of the greenhouse effect caused by increased industrial emissions. Global warming is regarded as a global problem in both cause and effect, but the scale of human security threat is not equal across the globe. Arguing against pursuing environment in terms of security, Levy (cited by Mutimer, 1997:83), when addressing a question as to whether the environment is a national security issue, responded as follows:

*The assertion that many environmental problems constitute security risks is correct, and is of very little importance. The purely rhetorical line of argumentation that urges us to consider environmental problems and security problems as by their very nature inseparable is probably destined to disappear. Whatever needs for attention-getting may have been present in the late 1980s, they are past now. If the problems these writers point to are really as serious as they say, then the more pressing need is not for more 'new thinking' but for effective solutions.*

Also arguing against the inclusion of environment issues in the remit of security politics, Deudney (1990:461-465) asserted that:

*It is analytically misleading to think of environmental degradation as a national security threat, because the traditional focus of national security – interstate violence has little in common with either environmental problems or solutions. The effort to harness the emotive power of nationalism to help mobilise environmental awareness and action may prove counter-productive by undermining globalist political stability. Environmental degradation is not very likely to cause interstate wars (see also Hough 2004:148).*

Deudney therefore commented that some environmentalists seek to securitise environmental issues in the hope of mobilising the levels of attention and resources that are usually reserved by states solely for military security issues. According to the draft *Defence Review, 2012* (RSA, 2012a:66) the consequences of climate change poses some of the most serious threats to humanity at present. In this context Government is concerned about the prolonged droughts and rising desertification as a result of climate change which might cripple food production and in turn exacerbate the levels of famine. Government further predicts that climate change will result in a rising sea levels posing a risk to low-lying areas and certain island states. In preparing for the 17th Conference of the Parties (COP 17) of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Minister of agriculture, forestry

and fisheries, Joemat-Pettersson, argued that food security threat posed by climate change is one of the greatest challenges facing the African continent (RSA, 2011b).

Within the African context climate change is regarded as one of many environmental and developmental challenges facing the continent. Brown and Crawford (2010:88-89) identified four main climate links that could lead to conflict in Africa. First, reduced water supply and growing demand in some places would lead to increasing competition between sectors of society. Second, reductions in crop yields and increasing unpredictable weather patterns around the world might lead to higher prices for food and cause greater food insecurity. Third, changes in sea levels, leading to increased natural disasters, might cause large-scale and destabilising population movements. Finally, the impact of all these challenges on the prevalence of poverty and the ability of government to provide services could be a factor in socio-economic and political collapse.

In addressing threats posed by environmental degradation, countries are urged to act collectively in implementing the UN principles of sustainable development and the reduction targets of greenhouse gases as stipulated in the Kyoto Protocol by member states. Thus, South Africa has made commitment to comply with the Kyoto Protocol and other initiatives to address climate change. The post-Cold War security framework includes a variety of other non-military threats, not discussed above, to the survival and welfare of individuals and societies such as diseases, hunger and unemployment (Krahmann, 2005:115). Emphasis is placed on the security of people to live safe, healthy and productive lives.

**a) Food and water security**

The right of access to sufficient food is enshrined in Section 27 of the South African Constitution (Act 108 of 1996). It obliges the state to provide legislation and other measures to ensure that all citizens are enabled to meet their basic food needs. The *Integrated Food Security Strategy for South Africa* (RSA, 2002b) defines food security as “physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food by all South Africans at all times to meet their dietary and food preferences for an active and healthy life”. The strategy states that South Africa faces key food security challenges: first, to ensure that enough food is available to all, now and in the future; second, to match incomes of people to prices in order to ensure access to sufficient food for every citizen; third, to empower citizens to make optimal choices for nutritious and safe food; and last, to possess adequate information to ensure analysis, communication, monitoring, evaluating and reporting on the impact of food

security programmes. Poverty is regarded as a major direct threat to life, as a cause of famine and hunger and a major indirect threat to life since it heightens vulnerability to other threats.

Usage and scarcity of water in the region is regarded as a complex issue because most rivers are transnational in nature and this could lead to water disputes and confrontations among states. At the Climate Change Summit in 2007 the Minister of Environmental Affairs and tourism, Martinus van Schalkwyk (RSA, 2007g) stated that “the key challenge and opportunity in Africa is to use-trans-boundary water resource management to reduce conflict potential, to enhance peace-making by opening new avenues for dialogue and to promote regional integration”. The Minister argued that climate impacts on water resources might not be the primary or sole source of future conflict, but could ignite conflict where other political, ethnic or military tensions existed. It is therefore critical to address challenges in increased water scarcity. In the SADC context environmental insecurity relates directly to health, energy and food security. Environmental sources of insecurity that results from challenges such as global warming and deforestation can lead to land degradation and decreased food production. This places the issue of poverty as a threat at the centre of security debates in the region (Ngubane, 2004:58-60).

#### **b) Infectious diseases**

Within the national security framework, Government has identified epidemic diseases that have an impact on the social wellbeing of the South African community, including the military community. These are the pandemic of HIV/AIDS, outbreaks of communicable diseases including re-emerging diseases (such as tuberculosis, diarrhea and pneumonia, which interact in vicious negative feedback loops with malnutrition and HIV) (RSA, 2012a:74). The disease patterns and increasing high burden of disease have a negative impact on the health status of the general population, the social stability of the community and also on the military role in maintaining stability and support to the population. However, Government has undertaken programmes to provide treatment to people affected by these diseases. The Southern African region is perceived to have some of the worst HIV/AIDS infection rates in the world. Ngubane (2004:61) is of the view that this crisis in the sub-region poses a security threat that goes beyond locating it in the societal levels of security. Discussions on securitising health and diseases in Africa have focused almost exclusively on HIV/AIDS, although some analysts have broadened this focus to include diseases such as malaria and tuberculosis. Concerns about the security implications tend to fall into the economic, political and military sectors. Based on the analysis of the impact of infectious

diseases in a society, the conclusion is that diseases such as HIV/AIDS put more strain on various sectors of government, especially military and police forces that are entrusted with the responsibility of protecting the state against internal and external security threats.

## **5 CONCLUSION**

The aim of this chapter was to present a description and analysis of official perceptions of external non-military threats to South Africa's national security. The chapter further aimed at analysing security risks posed in these securitised non-military issues in order to determine the extent to which these risks through the process of securitisation are translated into perceived threats to national security, especially to human security. Since 1994 Government has acknowledged the emergence of a multitude of new security threats, ranging from transnational crimes, international migration to environmental degradation, infectious diseases and socio-economic issues. These new threats are much more pervasive and probable compared with interstate war and civil conflicts, are more diverse in terms of scope and intensity, and thus appear difficult to assess. Another common feature of contemporary security threats is that they do not target states, but societies and individuals, and they are transnational in nature. Non-military and transnational issues such international organised crime; migration and environmental degradation have become securitised in most countries including South Africa. Countries are therefore urged to consider national security implications of these security threats and adapt their military and non-military strategies.

## CHAPTER 6

### EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The main aim of this study as indicated in Chapter 1 was to describe and critically analyse the nature, scope and basis of South Africa's official external threat perceptions as they emerged and evolved in the post-apartheid era from 1994 to 2012. The study also aimed to identify shortcomings in the current national security policies on external threats, based on the alignment of external threat perceptions with the South African government's programme of action. This has been done to determine whether the perceived threats correspond with the actual situation and could be deemed (un)realistic.

Accordingly, the aim of the study emanated from the basic research question: *What are the nature, scope and basis of the post-1994 official external threat perceptions of South Africa?* In order to answer this question the following subsidiary questions have been addressed: How are the related concepts of security, national security and national security issues, risks and threats defined and understood in official South African terms? What are the main external security challenges or issues that face the South African government and shape its national security policies and strategies? To what extent are these external challenges (or issues) securitised as security threats? To what extent does South Africa's external threat perception coincide with the actual situation?

In response to the main research question, the assumption was that South Africa's official threat perceptions are indicative of a movement away from traditional military threats to non-traditional and non-military threats, and also away from external threats to transnational threats with a domestic impact on a range of referent objects of security other than the state and the political regime. As has been indicated, the process and evidence of the securitisation of non-military issues are apparent, albeit at a limited level and of a limited scope.

As a point of departure, scholars explored the security concept by focusing on the so-called both traditional approach and the new thinking on security. The traditional approach prioritised the state as the referent object of security and focused on external military threats to the security of the state. In a state-centric manner, the so-called traditional approach concentrated on threats to national interests narrowly defined. However, during the post-Cold War period, the new thinking on security shifted the debate towards the recognition of non-military threats, in the process focusing on the concept of human security as a counterbalance to mere state or regime security. Human security places the individual at the centre of

security and emphasises not only freedom from threats, but also the need for the economic, social and political security of the individual.

More recently influential scholars of Security Studies have placed more emphasis on non-military issues other than deterrence and military force, giving way to the multifaceted extension of the concept of security. Emphasis is placed on problems such as environmental pollution, depletion of the ozone layer, global warming, transnational organised crime and massive migrations of refugees. It was also recognised that these emerging threats could easily produce conflicts, economic decline and political instability. Since these security threats are of a transnational nature and therefore have no respect for national frontiers, policy makers globally have come to acknowledge that transnational security threats require transnational responses. Hence the development of international and regional security groupings such as the AU Peace and Security Council and SADC OPDSC to deal, among others, with these issues, risks and threats they pose.

In South Africa's case before 1994, threats to national security were perceived to originate externally from liberation movements and neighbouring countries, with the support of the Soviet Union. However, during the post-1994 period, coupled with the effects of globalisation, the perception of security threats have changed. The end of the Cold War and apartheid generated debate on the future of national and international security that had a significant impact on the security environment of South and Southern Africa. In the perceived absence of an immediate conventional military threat to South Africa and its people, Government has become concerned about non-military factors of insecurity that have their origins at the global, continental and regional level. Of these poverty, underdevelopment, deteriorating health status and weak governance constitute the core issues that contribute to insecurity in Africa. The study has analysed and evaluated official and unofficial perceptions and assessments of external threats to South Africa's security. It has also considered the role of various analyses of traditional and emerging security threats in the post-Cold-War period in which emphasis is placed on human security.

Furthermore, a distinction has been made between security issues, risks and threats and this is also related to the construction of security problems by certain actors through speech acts and the practices of security professionals. In this process of securitisation an existential threat is designated, which requires immediate action or special measures to combat or prevent it. In addition the broadening and deepening of the security agenda has complemented Government

policy by incorporating the global shift from military to non-military issues and threats. By extending the scope of the security concept, issues other than military threats have become critical in terms of addressing the reality of other referent objects of security than the state. By subscribing to these ideas, South Africa has adopted a new approach to national security, emphasising on non-military security threats and the concept of human security.

As a background, the study has also examined the institutional context and policy framework of South Africa's security environment during the post-Cold War period. This has been done, among others, to determine whether or not existing security arrangements and other measures are sufficiently effective to respond to external threats faced by the country and region. Emphasis has been placed on South Africa's security posture at national, regional and global level. This includes references to the importance of security arrangements such as the UNSC, AU PSC, and SADC OPDSC that have an impact on South Africa. These bodies play a major role in addressing global and regional security issues through peace-keeping missions, conflict prevention and by providing peace and stability in conflict-ridden countries. Some of these bodies also provide technical support in implementing the resolutions of the UNSC and other regional security organisations.

The question remains whether SADC can be classified as a security community or security regime for the purposes of responding to the external security threats faced by the region. The current regional security arrangements do point towards a security community direction. However, there is a lack of commitment and common agreement by member states in dealing with human security issues and the implementation of peace agreements (e.g. in Zimbabwe and in the DRC). The critical issue is that insecurities emanating from the neighbouring countries of the Southern African region, such as political instability and socio-economic underdevelopment, will continue to have a spill-over effect by negatively affecting other states if not addressed.

With regard to military threats to South Africa's national security, Government policy states categorically that South Africa does not face direct military threats to its national security that compromise its sovereignty and territorial integrity. However, there is an acute awareness and perception of transnational threats of externally origin, directed at the Republic. These include the proliferation of WMD, international terrorism and maritime piracy. During the post-1994 period emphasis has also been placed on non-traditional threats. These threats, also

of transnational nature, concern organised crime, the impact of international migration and environmental degradation linked to food and water security.

Based on the dynamics of globalisation that are prevalent in economics, business technology and security business, there is a trend to regard all transnational threats as international in character, since a civil war in one country can influence neighbouring states. This has forced the international community to assume responsibility at regional and global levels to secure human security, to restore order in failed states and to manage post-conflict reconstruction.

According to the study's findings, the nature, scope and basis of the post-1994 official external threat perceptions of South Africa have changed dramatically. There is a shift in South Africa's official threat perceptions from traditional military threats to non-traditional and non-military ones. The focus has moved from external to transnational threats with a domestic impact on referent objects of security other than the state and the political regime. Security is no longer viewed as a purely military problem, but as a much wider political, economic, social and environmental concern with the real threats viewed as internal or transnational and predominantly non-military in nature. These official views are endorsed by the South African *White Paper on Intelligence* (1995), the *White Paper on Defence* (1996) and the current draft *Defence Review* (2012). Based on the research findings, the assumption that there has been a shift away from traditional to non-traditional threats to South Africa's national security in the post-democratic period has thus been confirmed.

With regard to the questions as to how the concepts of security, national security and national security issues, risks and threats are defined and understood in official South African terms the, South African government has adopted a new approach on national security. In this respect there has been a shift away from a narrow and almost exclusive military-strategic approach to security. Security is currently understood in more comprehensive terms to correspond with new realities since the end of the Cold War era. These realities include the importance of non-military elements of security, the complex nature of threats to stability and development, and the reality of international interdependence. Thus, South Africa's views on the above-mentioned concepts are in accordance with the global understanding of the nature of security concepts. The main challenge is that some of the emerging issues (such as food, water and climate change) are being securitised through public speeches without conducting proper risk and threat assessment to determine if an issue deserves to be classified as a security issue or not. The question is whether existing security policies post-1994 respond to



these threats. Analysing these policies, South Africa has shown commitment and plays a major role at various levels (domestic, regional and global level) in developing these policies for the purposes of addressing new security threats; however, there is lack of implementation. At a domestic level, Government has acknowledged that there is a shift regarding the types of threats facing the country from military to non-military threats.

In conclusion, South Africa's concept of security has indeed changed, with Government acknowledging that there are new security issues, risks and threats directed not at the state but at individuals – hence the concept of human security is emphasised. Some of the new security threats are internal in origin but some are transnational in nature; hence global effort is also required to combat transnational threats.

For the purpose of concluding the research study, it is crucial to provide feasible recommendations both at the practical or policy, and academic level respectively.

**a) Practical or policy level**

- Considering that most current security threats are non-military in nature, it is recommended that Government should lead a process of developing South Africa's National Integrated Security Strategy. This strategy should map out and address security threats (such as terrorism, organised crime migration and security threats posed by climate change) that are critical in ensuring that South Africa's national security is achieved.
- Government (together with various stakeholders) needs to ensure that security risk and threat assessment is conducted regularly through the development of an External Threat Perception Framework. This should be done in order to avoid unnecessary securitisation of issues. In doing so, it will also contribute to desecuritisation of non-military issues that should be dealt with by Government departments beyond the ambit of security affairs.
- Most current threats are transnational, the challenge lies in aligning national and regional efforts; hence it is crucial to channel threat perceptions through regional organisations.
- The role of security agencies (such as military) should be properly defined in terms of how to handle non-military threats and a broader national security review is required (e.g. draft *Defence Review*) which is a step in the right direction.

- There is also an urgent need to fast-track the establishment of South Africa's Border Management Agency in order to curb transnational crimes.
- Human capacity development of scarce skills in the area of WMD, terrorism, climate change and maritime piracy is critical.

**b) Academic level**

- At the academic level, as far as a future research agenda is concerned and also considering the limitations of current research, attention should be given to expanding on non-military threats and ways in which military forces can respond to such threats.
- Alternative studies should be conducted in order to address regional security dynamics that have a negative impact on South Africa's national security. These studies should focus on the root causes of insecurity at the regional level and propose measures to avoid the spill-over effect of such insecurities to neighbouring countries.

Based on the above-mentioned research findings, it is crucial to conduct further research that will focus on an integrated security framework that can address both military and non-military threats to South Africa's national security. Future research will assist to analyse how non-military security threats are reshaping the global institutional architecture.

**CONCLUSION**

It suffices to conclude that indeed the study provided an exploration and analysis of South Africa's national security threat perceptions post-1994 with emphasis being placed on a broader approach to the security concept. These perceptions of emerging global, continental and regional security challenges identify major threats to South Africa's national security. Hence it is crucial for Government to continue play a major role at all levels in addressing security issues and threats to national security. There is also a need for Government to further elevate some of these new security challenges (through securitisation approach) to the status of national security through policy development or the implementation of existing policies. However, this requires a cautious and circumspective approach in order to avoid the unnecessary or unjustified securitisation of issues.

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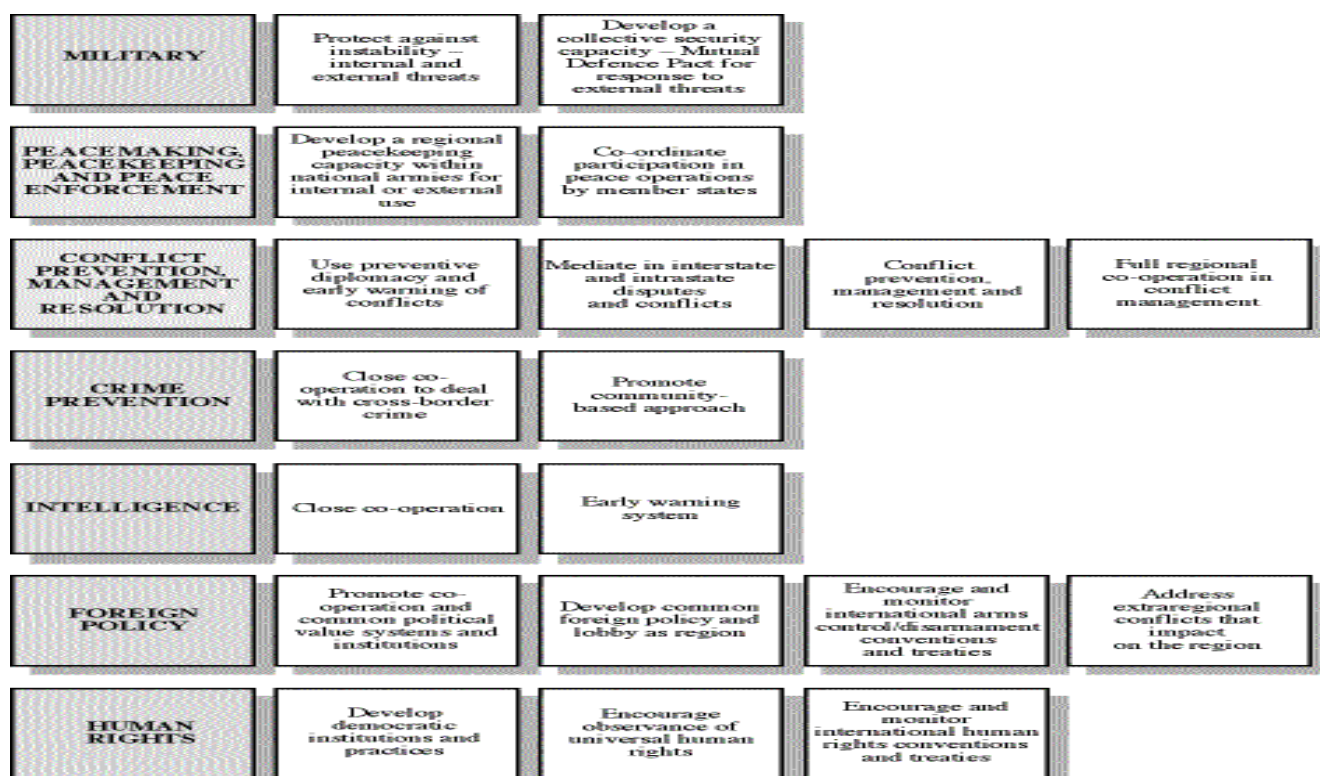
## FIGURES

**Figure 1: South Africa's Oversight Security Committees**



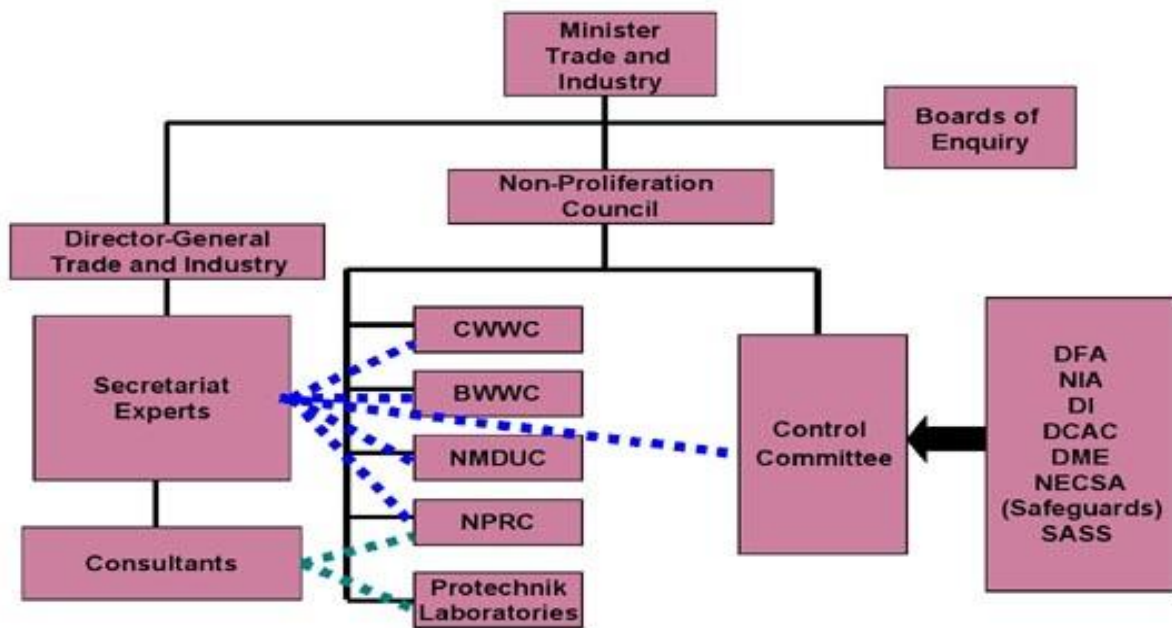
Source: RSA State Security Agency 2009

**Figure 2: The SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security (OPDS)**



Source: ISS 1999

**Figure 3: Diagrammatic representation of relationship between various structures  
 (Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction)**



Source: Department of Trade and Industry 2010

## SUMMARY

### SOUTH AFRICA'S OFFICIAL EXTERNAL THREAT PERCEPTIONS: 1994–2012

by

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DEGREE : MASTER OF SECURITY STUDIES

The aim of this study is to analyse and critically assess the nature, scope and basis of South Africa's official external threat perception as it developed during the period from 1994 to 2012. Accordingly, the assessment allows for the identification of shortcomings in the current national security policy on external security threats, based on the alignment of external threat perceptions with the Government Programme of Action. Essentially what had to be determined is whether perceived official threats correspond with the actual situation. Accordingly, the main research question of the study is: *What is the nature, scope and basis of the post-1994 official external threat perception of South Africa?* The research problem generated four subsidiary questions: When does a security issue become a national threat? What types of threat are there? How does the South African government perceive these threats? And whose security is threatened?

In responding to the main research questions, the study's findings note a change in perceptions during the post-Cold War era as to what constituted threats to security. The focus shifted from traditional to non-traditional threats to national security, because most current threats are non-military and transnational in nature. The analysis of South Africa's official external threat perception is informed by the changed views of Government towards what are considered the main threats to national security. The study concludes with key findings in response to the stated problem and with specific recommendations. The study confirmed that the nature of threats and security debates post-1994 have changed constantly with the expansion of the security agenda beyond state and military security. The official viewpoint is that South Africa at present is not faced with any military threats. Emphasis is currently placed on human beings as the main object of security. Most identified threats are transnational in nature and these relate to the illegal flow of immigrants, terrorism, organised



crime, climate change (linked to food and water security), regional instability and other socio-economic threats. These threats are being perceived and articulated by Government through policy announcements and public speeches, also validated in the critical analysis of various scholars.

The concept of non-traditional threats still lacks a commonly accepted definition; hence the study proposes the need for South Africa to define and outline non-military security threats in a comprehensive manner, preferably through the development of a South African External Threat Perception Framework. Developing such a framework will assist security agencies (such as analysts) and other stakeholders in providing advice and guidance to Government in identifying external security threats. This initiative could eliminate the abuse of power by various stakeholders in securitising any issue as a threat to national security, and instead divert those resources to other Government services. Provision should also be made in the form of policy initiatives on the role of military force and other agencies in addressing non-military security threats. Thus, the development of key elements of an integrated national security strategy in order to address external security issues and threats is essential.

#### **KEY WORDS**

- South Africa
- Security
- National security
- Human security
- Security issues
- Security risks
- Threat perceptions
- Traditional military threats
- Non-traditional, non-military threats
- Securitisation