

# THE POWERS OF THE THUNDERBIRD: THE NATURE AND LIMITS OF THE EMERGENCY STATE\*

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I try to be a man of peace, but if people tempt me,  
I can be a thunderbird.

P W Botha, August 1987

## Introduction

We cannot respond by blind defiance based on the view that the state is panic-stricken and all that is needed is a big push. Nor can we respond by saying that the state's power is unassailable - that it has no weaknesses, and that we should retreat into total inaction.

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This paper is an assessment of the strategies, structures and resources that the Emergency State has deployed to fight its battles on the "political terrain". [1] We intend demonstrating that a new set of strategies are being implemented in response to the failure in the face of mass resistance of the early "total strategy" reforms. While capital and the popular classes have pursued in their own ways a range of strategies to transform apartheid, the state (and the interests that dominate it) has been able to mobilize enormous resources and co-ordinate ambitious policies to respond to these challenges.

By 1988, the state had arrived at a point where political reform had ground to a halt and "crisis management" had become its primary strategic concern. In the process, state power and executive decision-making became concentrated in the Office of the State President (OSP) which, in turn, is increasingly dependent on the National Security Management System (NSMS). Recent analyses of state institutions have failed to note the extent to which this Office has become the epicentre of an authoritarian power structure [2] that binds together in the person of the President the complex security hierarchy, the state departments and the facade of consociational parliamentary government. [3] The Office of the State President uses as its main instruments of power the cabinet, cabinet committees, the State Security Council and the NSMS as mechanisms for ensuring that the policies of the Executive President are accepted and implemented.

State policies and actual outcomes rarely coincide. This is because the state has to do battle on a terrain of ongoing struggles, conflicts and contradictions generated both by tensions between its own institutions and by challenges and pressures emanating from without. Any assessment of the shifting nature of state strategy and the structures it has erected to implement these strategies must take cognizance of this social context. [4]

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## The Botha State and Total Strategy

The highly complex and disorganized decision-making structures of the pre-Botha state, a 1980 *White Paper on Rationalisation* argued, “makes it difficult for the central executive machinery to act swiftly and effectively to solve problems and crises”. [5] By restructuring state decision-making structures, this report argued, “a more manageable machinery of government to meet new challenges and crises” could be created. [6]

The reorganization of the state decision-making structures was one aspect of what became known during the early 1980s as the “total strategy” programme. Originating in the security establishment and the “*verligte*” wing of the NP, this programme aimed to co-ordinate and centralize reform policies and security strategies while streamlining and rationalizing the bureaucracy. The reform policies of the early 1980s were supposed to restructure four basic social arenas: the work-place, the city, the regional political economies and the constitutional order. [7]

Six components of the broadly defined executive branches of the state were reorganized between 1979 and the introduction of the new Constitution in 1983:

- 1) the Department of the Prime Minister was turned into the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) and given extended powers exercised through its various “planning branches” responsible for all key aspects of policy making [8];
- 2) the National Intelligence Service (NIS) replaced the Bureau of State Security;
- 3) cabinet committees, working groups for cabinet committees, and a cabinet secretariat were introduced [9];
- 4) the state departments were reorganized and reduced in number [10] and a new department, the Department of Constitutional Development and Planning, was created to manage the macro-planning of reform policies [11];
- 5) the Senate was abolished and a President’s Council (PC) established to work out a new constitutional dispensation [12];
- 6) the State Security Council was turned into a powerful policy-making body and the embryo of a complex national, regional and local system of committees was set up underneath the SSC - the so-called National Security Management System (NSMS) [13] - see diagram.

The reorganization of the central decision-making structures prepared the way for the highly centralized and constitutionally sanctioned authoritarianism of the Executive Presidency that was created by the 1983 Constitution. [14]

Proceeding from the assumption that the state was faced with a “total onslaught” aimed at undermining all levels of society, the new P W Botha administration moved swiftly to implement a “total strategy”, with three goals [15]:

- \* to maintain state security
- \* reform the political environment, and
- \* co-ordinate all state action.

“Total strategy” planners identified four areas of “reform”: the legalization of black trade unions through the Wiehahn Commission; the recognition of the permanence of urban blacks in line with the recommendations of the Riekert Commission; the formulation and implementation of a new constitution that brought Indians and coloureds into parliament as

junior partners; and the introduction of a new regional development policy to co-ordinate industrial development planning in accordance with depoliticized regional boundaries rather than racially determined constitutional divisions. This involved the division of South Africa into nine "development" regions for the purpose of integrated "development planning". [16]

The internal logic of "total strategy" reforms was coherent and premised on a specific perception of South Africa's social reality. The Riekert Commission's assumption was that bantustans could be retained but that, in response to the unrest of 1976-77, "urban blacks" must be recognized as permanent members of the cities and towns.

Once "urban rights" had been conceded by the Riekert Commission, then a range of other complementary rights necessarily followed: rights to form trade unions, purchase property, sell labour on a "free urban labour market" without a contract, and trade. The municipal franchise was seen as the ultimate embodiment of the new "urban identity". Blacks were given, for the first time ever, fully autonomous municipal institutions - the Black Local Authorities - with extensive urban powers (e.g. allocation of housing and trading sites).

The new urban policy created several critical problems that soon contributed to black protest. First, because it wanted to create a privileged elite of "urban insiders" divorced from the poverty of the rural masses, it required an intensification of influx control - hence the proposed Orderly Movement and Settlement of Black Persons Bill of 1982. Second, the Black Local Authorities, as a form of local political self-government, were designed to be financially self-sufficient, even though they were excluded by the Group Areas Act from access to rateable commercial and industrial property. Third, because the BLAs' only link to higher forms of representation was through the bantustans, the issue of the overall illegitimacy of state constitutional reform was exacerbated.

The constitutional reforms were premised on the consociational theory that "group identities" in multi-cultural societies must be protected but that structures for "co-determination" and "joint decision-making" must also be created. The result for whites, coloureds and Indians was the creation of a new "consociational contract".

As far as the majority African population was concerned, the new regional development policy rested on the principle of "economic interdependence and political independence", or what the Buthelezi Commission called the "soft-borders approach". Bantustans would proceed to independence and then enter into a supra-state agreement to form a "confederation of Southern African states".

In summary, "total strategy" may have left many fundamentals of apartheid intact (e.g. bantustans, influx control and constitutional exclusion of Africans from central government), but it did introduce significant modifications to some basic institutions of political society. These institutions regulated access to three social arenas: the city, the factory and government. In reality, however, the maximum the white minority was prepared to concede in the early 1980s fell far short of the minimum the black majority was prepared to accept.

In the end, "total strategy" failed because its idealistic intentions were thwarted by a sustained period of black resistance. This resistance exacerbated, highlighted and brought to the fore the key structural contradictions that original "total strategy" reforms failed to address.

As far as urban policy was concerned, the attempt to drive a wedge between "urban insiders" and "rural outsiders" by intensifying influx control was challenged and made unviable by two social movements. The first and most important was the squatter struggles. Displaying desperate and relentless determination to escape grinding rural poverty and live in urban areas, squatter communities broke through the urban wall and illegally invaded land to secure their right to urban existence.

The labour movement also helped undo the "rural-urban" divide. By organizing migrant workers and urban proletarians into single industrial trade union organizations committed to joint wage demands, the intention to create two entirely separate labour markets - one urban and privileged and the other rural and cheap - was severely undercut.

The local government system that was supposed to bind the new urban system together was soon in ruins. Because the state insisted that councils should raise their own finance for development, councillors were forced to increase rent and service charges. Their low levels of legitimacy meant that neglecting development altogether was simply not an option. They needed to demonstrate the benefits of participation. The increases, however, triggered a nation-wide popular rebellion that began in the Vaal townships in September 1984 and spread across the country. By mid-1985 most Black Local Authorities had collapsed because of mass resignations or because councillors had been killed by residents.

Fiscal unviability was not the only problem. The root cause of the depth of popular protest was the fact that the local franchise was not tied to a programme for granting full political rights to blacks. This facilitated the emergence through the local community organizations of a national political organization - the United Democratic Front - committed to the total dismantling of Apartheid and the creation of a non-racial democracy. [17]

The new labour dispensation failed to achieve its objectives. When the unions threatened to oppose the legislation because migrants were excluded from the right to join unions, the state backed down and extended the definition of "employee" to include migrant workers.

The consociational contract foundered on the rocks of popular resistance expressed through the election boycotts of 1984. The confederal schema also began to come apart at the seams. The steady political and fiscal decline of model bantustans like Ciskei, Transkei and Bophutatswana made it abundantly clear that separate development and the grand vision of a Confederation of States was turning into a nightmare.

In short, "total strategy" inadvertently created spaces for the initiation and deepening of mass democratic mobilization and organization. By granting industrial rights, unions were spawned that challenged relations in the factories, cities and political society. Opening up the urban system generated urban movements that politicized civil society and destroyed the cornerstones of the Riekert policy framework. And constitutional reform provided the focus for national organization and resistance on a scale not seen since the 1950s. All these manifestations of resistance and opposition short-circuited key state strategies and prepared the way for new ones.

Intense struggles were fought within the state during the 1985-86 period over what was to replace the failed policies of "total strategy". In some ways these struggles reflected the influence of big business on state policies. These interests responded to the failure of reform, township unrest, the politicization of the work-place, and economic recession by pressurizing government in both public and private ways to move beyond the original parameters of the "total strategy" programme. The campaign against influx control spearheaded by the Urban Federation is the best example. The public tone of business politics in 1985-86 reflected the urgently felt need in these quarters for policies that would deracialize the capitalist system. [18]

In other ways, these struggles also reflected competing intra-state conceptions of how to protest the generalized interests of the white minority.

### **Struggles within the State**

The failure of the "total strategy" reforms immediately created the need amongst state planners for the formulation of alternatives. The formulation of alternative policies,

however, did not take place in a vacuum. It is now generally accepted that the state is not a unified monolith. [19] Different branches of the state were interfacing with the black communities on different levels and interpreting the challenges from below in different ways. To understand state responses to the contradictory consequences of their own strategies, a picture of the balance of institutional interests within the state is required.

At this point the three most important institutional forces within the state that had a say in the formulation of alternatives to "total strategy" were the OSP, the Department of Constitutional Development and Planning (DCDP), and the security establishment. The DCDP was, until early 1986, the flagship of reformist policy-making. It was this department that formulated both the early "total strategy" reform programmes and the 1985-86 extended reform policies that moved the state well beyond its initial reform goals. However, the security establishment was also emerging with strategies of its own to defuse the crisis. In the end, as we will show, it was when the OSP came down decisively in favour of the security establishment's proposal that the state defend itself by means of "counter-revolutionary warfare" methods, that the balance of institutional forces within the state shifted decisively against the DCDP.

The DCDP was created in 1982 under Minister Heunis. Its institutional foundations were the "planning branches" that had been created in the Office of the Prime Minister in 1980. Each "branch" dealt with a specific field of state action: physical planning, economic policy, constitutional development, security planning, social planning and scientific planning. The transfer of these branches to the newly created DCDP in 1982 (except for the security planning branch, which became the secretariat for the SSC) turned it into the engine-room of government policy-making and strategic thinking. It was here that overall macro-coordination of all the major state reform actions during the 1982-85 period took place, e.g. the new constitution, the restructuring of local government, the new regional development policies, the population development plan, and the urbanization strategy. [20]

Proceeding from the assumption that more concessions would satisfy black demands and legitimize state strategies, the political reformers in the DCDP responded to black rejection of reform by extending the reform programme. There were five critical moments in the extension of this programme:

- \* in November 1984, Minister Heunis announced that Black Local Authorities were to be included into the proposed Regional Services Councils
- \* in May 1985 Stoffel van der Merwe published his National Party pamphlet, entitled "... and what about the Blacks?", which argued that homelands were a failure;
- \* in September 1985 P W Botha announced that citizenship would be restored to all Africans residing permanently in "South Africa";
- \* in late 1985 P W Botha conceded that the tri-cameral parliament was not the final solution, merely a step in a process;
- \* in September 1985 the President's Council published its report on urbanization, which culminated in the December 1985 statement by Heunis that blacks would be given freehold property rights and in the 1986 Abolition of Influx Control Act.

All these extensions of the reform programme were *ad hoc* responses to popular pressure from political movements, business organizations, the international community, trade unions, squatters and township organizations, and the deepening sense of crisis. These shifts unintentionally undid existing policy positions without being coupled to a coherent set of

alternatives. [21]

The extension of the reform programme during this period met with the strategic requirements of the "counter-insurgency" framework that was still dominant at the time. In an address to the Institute of Strategic Studies in 1981, ex-police commissioner General Johann Coetzee isolated five key elements of the "counter-insurgency" position [22]:

- \* "a dynamic policy of change" to "make the RSA a difficult target to pin down for assault";
- \* "a clear political objective ... to ensure a free, independent and united country";
- \* "propaganda ... directed at the counterinsurgents, the population and the insurgent";
- \* the avoidance of conflict and defusing of "explosive situations"; and
- \* "an effective information organization and spy network".

"Counter-insurgency", he said, "is based on the cornerstone of information or intelligence." Yet, by mid-1986, it seemed to many in the security establishment - and elsewhere in the state - that the "dynamic policy of change" embodied in the reformist policies pursued in the 1978 to 1986 period had failed to defuse conflict. Decimation of the spy network through attacks on informers, moreover, had undone the very cornerstone of "counter-insurgency". To increasingly assertive security hard liners, the democratic opening which reform previously provided had to be closed and "counter-insurgency", with its bias toward political solutions based on good intelligence, replaced with a far more thoroughgoing and co-ordinated programme that would crush the democratic opposition, "counter-organize" the communities and upgrade socio-economic conditions.

The National Security Management System (NSMS) is the structure of unified command which has been activated to co-ordinate the implementation of this new strategy. Although established silently in the wings right at the outset of the post-1978 period [23], the NSMS was not initially fully activated or turned into the nerve centre of state action that it has now become. Instead, it was created as a fall-back in case the formal civilian structure collapsed or proved unable to govern the country on its own. During the heyday of "total strategy" in the early 1980s the officials who staffed the NSMS, to quote one former state official, "were just keeping the seats warm". [24] The turning point came in May 1986 when P W Botha and the generals decided to scuttle the EPG Mission's proposals by bombing three capitals of the front-line states. Instead of negotiating with the black opposition (as Chris Heunis's department was beginning to do at the local level), the state moved to smash it by declaring a National State of Emergency and activating the NSMS at all levels. In the words of one ex-security policeman, "when the moment came, all we needed to do was to hit the switch". [25]

"Hitting the switch" meant turning the NSMS shell into a crisis management machine. As will be shown below, the pre-1986 organization of the NSMS was, in the words of a reliable pro-government intelligence source, "found to be lacking as far as proper communication and control channels were concerned, apart from the fact that it was designed for a totally different function and was not geared for the day-to-day running of the Emergency". [26] The NSMS was "structured as a separate arm of government" [27], under the auspices, direction and effective control of the OSP. Before discussing the specific operation of and strategies implemented by the NSMS, an analysis of the structure of the OSP is required.

## Office of the State President

The OSP has become the epicentre of state power. [28] No major macro-policy decision is taken without the President's personal approval or direct involvement in its formulation. US political scientist Samuel Huntington's 1981 proposition in *Politikon*, that the "route from a limited uni-racial democracy to a broader multi-racial democracy could run through some form of autocracy" [29], has become an accurate reflection of how centralized executive power has become. The OSP has managed to achieve this by subordinating key executive structures to itself, taking direct control of some executive powers and then rooting itself in the "crisis management" functions of the NSMS. This is the best method, Deputy Minister Leon Wessels argued, of dealing with "the question of political power" because "one of the most important principles of counter-revolutionary action is that unity of purpose within the framework of a co-ordinated plan is essential". [30] This view was echoed in a Department of Military Intelligence booklet which concluded its analysis of "counter-revolution" with a quote from one-time commanding officer of British forces in Malaya:

Any idea that the business of normal government and the business of the Emergency are two separate entities must be killed for good and all. The two activities are completely and utterly inter-related. [31]

The OSP consists of a number of committees, advisers, secretariats and Ministries that deal with public administration, public expenditure priorities, constitutional affairs, economic policy, socio-economic development ("welfare"), propaganda and national security. The most important of these are the President's immediate advisers, the National Priorities Committee, Commission for Administration, Information Ministry, National Intelligence Service (NIS), Welfare Secretariat, Economic Advisory Council (EAC), and the National Joint Management Centre (NJMC).

The Director-General of the OSP, Jannie Roux, and other close advisers employed by the OSP are significant because access to the President is channelled through them. They have a say on who reaches the President and on what information he acts.

The Welfare Secretariat, that is now directly controlled by the staff of the OSP, emerged out of changes to the cabinet committee system. The three cabinet committees for constitutional, social and economic matters initially comprised the relevant Ministers and senior state officials. Each committee had a working group comprising the officials on the cabinet committees. Since 1986, the officials have been squeezed out of the cabinet committees and a welfare secretariat controlled directly by Jannie Roux has been created to administer the functioning of the "welfare" cabinet committees. This has placed the macro-coordination of non-security policy in the hands of a secretariat that is directly controlled by the OSP. The cabinet is merely the political structure that is supposed to legitimize this decision-making process.

Up until 1986, the OSP co-ordinated the activities of the welfare departments and the security establishment via the National Coordinating Committee (NCC). After the declaration of the State of Emergency, this overall co-ordinating function was transferred to the newly activated NJMC that fell directly within the NSMS. When the NCC co-ordinated welfare and security functions, the OSP was probably using it simply to facilitate liaison between the two arms of the state. However, when the NJMC took over this role, co-ordinating these two arms became a critical component of the "crisis management" system. It also meant that the OSP became more directly involved in the day-to-day management of the Emergency state and it did so by routing itself to the NSMS.

The National Priorities Committee, originally established in 1984 to oversee the design of the Budget, has taken over economic policy-making functions that were previously the responsibility of the Department of Finance, EAC, and the Central Economic Advisory

Service. The National Priorities Committee makes all the key decisions about how the state spends public money in the context of sanctions and deepening recession. In particular, it is this committee that balances the competing but complementary demands of defence and socio-economic upgrading.

The Commission for Administration (CFA) is an extremely powerful tool, answerable to the President. Its 1000 employees design organizational plans to ensure the effective implementation of executive decisions. The CFA is entitled to issue orders that Ministers and Directors-General are obliged to carry out. Although it handled 211 investigations into bureaucratic restructuring in 1987 alone, its major task at the moment is to execute the privatization programme. The CFA falls under the Minister in the OSP entrusted with Administration and Privatization.

The NIS, with its 5000 employees under Director-General Neil Barnard, is responsible for intelligence interpretation and evaluation. The OSP relies heavily on the NIS for assessments and analysis of security-related issues and for the formulation of counter-strategies.

The Ministry for Information in the OSP under Minister Stoffel van der Merwe regulates and controls the communication activities of all government departments. The Bureau for Information is involved at all levels in what one official called the "war of words" - an essential component of the "counter-revolutionary" strategy. The Bureau's involvement in the Communication Committees of the JMCs links the OSP directly to grassroots propaganda efforts. The Bureau claims that its publications, including 45 township newspapers, have a readership of 2.5 million people.

Although the OSP has always been central to the new constitutional system, during 1987-88 its power and significance became more pronounced. This was particularly apparent in the way the President unilaterally reconstituted the EAC in mid-1986. Prior to 1986, the EAC was the most important institutional link between organized business interests and the state. It included representatives of business organizations, academics, top officials and cabinet ministers, and it was chaired by Dr Simon Brand of the Development Bank. In mid-1986 P W Botha announced that most of the officials and academics were to be excluded from the EAC and that from then on he would personally appoint the business representatives. Those who have been appointed are the leading lights of monopoly capital.

In business circles, there are different interpretations of the changes in the EAC. While some see it as evidence of a deepening alliance between big business and the state, a more widely held view is that the changes have resulted in a downgrading of the influence of organized capitalist interests. As far as the state is concerned, the EAC is one of a number of forums where it would like to consolidate an alliance with monopoly capital around common interests in deregulation, privatization, sanctions busting, urban development and economic reform in general. (The other forums include, for example, the Joint Liaison Forums, the Panel of Business Leaders attached to the CFA, the Secretariat for Unconventional Trade, Defence Manpower Liaison Committees, and occasional business summits.) This is part of the state's view that business has a responsibility to play a leading role in the economic and welfare components of the "counter-revolutionary" effort while leaving security and constitutional matters to the state.

In short, the OSP has emerged as the lynchpin of key strategic thinking and action. The co-ordination of all the policy functions outlined above falls directly under its control and purview. By 1988 this office and its incumbent had become the most decisive decision-maker in the state - a level of power centralization not uncommon in societies going through a violent interregnum.

## “Counter-Revolutionary Warfare”

The implementation of the “counter-revolutionary warfare” strategies through the NSMS has involved four significant changes:

- (a) the establishment of a new structure of centralized command under the direct purview of the OSP, i.e. the NJMC;
- (b) the deployment of new security personnel in key positions in the system (*Africa Confidential*, 10.11.1986, 8.7.1987, 10.6.1987, 17.6.1988).
- (c) a vast increase in the numbers of people drawn into the system at JMC, sub-JMC and mini-JMC level [32]; and
- (d) the imposition of a new theory of state action, i.e. “counter-revolutionary warfare” in order to “win-hearts-and-minds” (“WHAM”). [33]

The “counter-revolutionary warfare” position replaced the “counter-insurgency” (“COIN”) perspective that former security police chief General Johan Coetzee propounded in the early 1980s. “Counter-insurgency” was seen to have no answer to the unprecedented scale of the 1984 to 1986 uprising, or to the powerful local and international pressures for fundamental change. By mid-1986, the hard liners’ advocacy of an alternative strategy designed to break the opposition and rebuild support bases for the state enabled them to force the scuttling of the EPG Mission in May 1986 and the declaration of a permanent national state of emergency.

Unlike “counter-insurgency”, which concentrated on intelligence gathering while leaving politics to the civilians, “counter-revolutionary war” involved the security establishment in countering the revolutionary strategy at every point. It relegated the politics of reform to a matter of, at best, secondary importance, to be dealt with at some point in the future. The immediate task was to secure the security of the state; or, as the DMI booklet put it, “To defeat the revolutionaries and ... regain the initiative”. [34]

The new “counter-revolutionary” strategists - the so-called “securocrats” - proceeded from three basic points of departure [35]:

- \* first, law and order must be restored before reforms can be introduced;
- \* second, socio-economic development, or what P W Botha called “social reform”, must precede political reform [36];
- \* third, constitutional development must begin at local level and proceed upwards to higher levels.

“Re-establishing law and order” involved the declaration of what has effectively become a permanent State of Emergency and the detention of around 30,000 people, the banning of 34 organizations, widespread vigilantism, and the silencing of leaders and alternative newspapers. [37]

A large-scale socio-economic upgrading programme has been launched in the most troublesome black townships. Thirty-four of the most volatile townships - the so-called “oilspots” - have been earmarked for special attention. [38] About 1,800 urban renewal projects are currently in progress [39] in approximately 200 townships countrywide. R300 million will be spent by the thirteen TVL RSCs. [40] Official sources have claimed that R34 billion will have to be spent on housing development over the next twenty years. [41] P W Botha criticized sanctions on the grounds that it would deprive black townships of R9.5

billion for socio-economic upgrading over the next ten to fifteen years. [42] The Department of Development Planning spent R59 million on upgrading during 1986/87 and R57 million was budgeted for 1987/88. The Development Bank spent R2.4 billion on services and housing during 1984-87. Budgets for the three model "oilspots" are: Crossroads - R90 million; Alexandra - R95 million; Mamelodi - R 410 million (including housing). [43] Unfortunately, no precise total expenditure figures for the upgrading programme as a whole have been given by the authorities.

The sources of funding for this urban development programme include the Development Bank, Regional Services Councils, Department of Constitutional Development and Planning, Provincial Administrations, South African Development Trust, South African Housing Trust, Urban Foundation, private sector companies, Department of Finance, and local authorities. Reliable sources have confirmed that special funding for upgrading is also being channelled through South African Defence Force budgets. The Deputy Governor of the Reserve Bank, Jan Lombard, estimated in 1988 that R4.5 billion per annum is needed until the year 2000 to finance a large-scale "settlement programme" for blacks. This, he argued, was R3.3 billion more than the R1.2 billion currently invested in this area by the public and private sectors. [44]

As far as political reform is concerned, the logic of the "counter-revolutionary warfare" strategy implies that only when security actions have run their course, grievances addressed, and municipal government restored, will political reform again become an issue on the agenda.

The "counter-revolutionists" argued that, to be successful, the security upgrade strategy had to fall under centralized command and be tightly co-ordinated. Their chosen instrument was the NSMS. The most decisive institutional expression of their new ascendancy in the state was the establishment and activation of the National Joint Management Centre (NJMC) in the heart of the NSMS (see diagram). Through the NJMC, the security establishment was entrusted for the first time with the co-ordination of both security and welfare decision-making functions.

The NJMC is chaired by Deputy Minister of Law and Order Leon Wessels, and is responsible for the daily management of the State of Emergency. Its headquarters are located in Tuynhuis. Under the direct guidance of the OSP, the NJMC co-ordinates state action at all levels. The NJMC has a "Nationale Staatkundige, Ekonomiese en Maatskaplike Komitee" ("SEMKOM") to co-ordinate welfare policy and a "Gesamentlike Sekuriteits Komitee" to co-ordinate security strategies.

The State Security Council (SSC) is at the apex of the NSMS. It brings together the most important of the cabinet ministers and the country's security chiefs. Its regular members are the state president (the chairman); the minister of defence; the ministers and directors-general of the departments of Law and Order, Foreign Affairs, Finance, Constitutional Development, and Justice; and a few politically important cabinet ministers such as F W De Klerk. The SSC is a macro-policy making body and not in direct daily control of Emergency management. As the previous section suggested, the OSP is more important than the SSC when it comes to the running of the NSMS.

The security officials on the SSC are the chief of the SADF (General Jannie Geldenhuys) and the chiefs of the army (Lt-General Kat Liebenberg), navy (Vice-Admiral Glyn Syndercombe), air-force (Lt-General Jan van Loggerenberg), and medical services (Lt-General Daniel Knobel); the directors of the National Intelligence Service and of military intelligence (Neil Barnard and Lt-General C J van Tonder); the commissioner of police, Major-General Hennie de Witt, and the chief of the security police, Major-General Johann van der Merwe; the director of security legislation, Andre Bosch, and the director-general of the state president's office, Dr Jannie Roux (*Africa Confidential*, 8.7.87). Of the 23 permanent members of the SSC other than the state president, twelve are security

officials. The SSC is also able to co-opt on to itself for the purpose of specific discussions any other cabinet minister, senior civil servant, or even industrialists such as the chairman of Armscor. It meets fortnightly, on a Monday night, the night before cabinet, which meets on a Tuesday. It assesses, from a security perspective, all executive decisions of state and decides on matters as fundamental as the Angola-Namibia peace settlement and the "invasion" of Bophuthatswana - a "foreign country" - to rescue its president from a coup bid.

The SSC is backed up by the four legs of the NSMS. The Work Committee, which provides expert back-up to the SSC, consists of the heads of government departments represented on the SSC and the heads of the other three cabinet committees (the committees for social, economic and constitutional affairs, now subsumed under the welfare secretariat). Support to the Work Committee and the SSC is given by the secretariat of the SSC. The personnel of the secretariat are drawn from the following departments: SADF - 70 per cent; NIS - 20 per cent; and Foreign Affairs - 10 per cent. [45] It is responsible for intelligence interpretation, strategic communication, strategy formulation and administration of the security management system. In addition, there are thirteen inter-departmental committees that have been created to ensure the co-ordination of departmental resources and activities. As the definition of security has broadened to include the management of most conceivable problems and processes, so the official designation of the system itself is beginning to change to simply the National Management System. [46] This suggests that the NSMS is no longer regarded as simply a temporary measure but that this "structure could become a permanent feature of government". [47]

The real life-blood of the NSMS is its fourth leg - the network of over 500 regional, district and local Joint Management Centres (JMCs). The NJMC co-ordinates the activities of both the welfare and security secretariats above it, while attempting to ensure the smooth functioning of the hundreds of committees below it. The latter include:

- \* eleven JMCs which divide the country into management regions corresponding to SADF area commands and, roughly, to the nine economic development regions;
- \* sixty odd sub-JMCs, with some having borders that correspond to the Regional Services Councils; and
- \* at the local level somewhere between 250 and 500 mini-JMCs and Local Management Centres which co-ordinate state action in almost every settled community in the country.

These co-ordinating structures bring together military, police and civilian officials, usually under the chairmanship of a senior military or police officer. The functions of a JMC and the essence of the "counter-revolutionary warfare" strategy are apparent in each JMC's committee structure. Although there are frequently local variations in their precise make-up, most, whether they are the NJMC, regional JMCs or local mini-JMCs, have four functional committees and a co-ordinating executive with representatives of each on it. These four committees are the intelligence committee, the security committee, the welfare committee, and the communications committee. In many ways, the functions of these committees mirror the concentration of power at the highest level in the OSP, which centralizes a similar set of functions: co-ordination, intelligence, security, welfare, and communications (see diagram 2).

Each intelligence committee gathers and interprets the intelligence on which co-ordinated state activities are based. Staffed by representatives of military intelligence, the security police and the National Intelligence Service, it seeks to promote unity of effort between these traditionally competing intelligence agencies. The security committee, the repressive arm of the NSMS, acts on the intelligence provided by the intelligence committee. Staffed by a combination of riot police officers, military officers, security branch officers and officers of

the municipal police, of the kitskonstabels, and of commando and civil defence units, it co-ordinates the implementation of security strategies laid down by the SSC.

The welfare committee, on the other hand, takes responsibility for co-ordinating the functions of the civilian administration. Though at the national level this includes the co-ordination of, for example, constitutional and labour issues, at most levels welfare implies a particular concern with local upgrade programmes. Its membership consists of officials of the various non-security state departments, e.g. roads, education, welfare, health, constitutional development, transport services, the Provinces' community services offices, etc. More than anything else, the welfare committee tries to prioritize development projects, cut red tape, unblock bottlenecks, and generally ensure that things get done.

The functions of the security committee and the welfare committee - the two essential arms of the system - encapsulate the overall intentions of state security strategists. These are, to use the words of Law and Order Minister Adriaan Vlok, to "take out", "eliminate" or "annihilate" activists, on the one hand, while, on the other, "addressing grievances". [48]

The overall national security management strategy is sold to the public via the fourth of the JMC's committees, the communication committee (Komkom). The KomKoms are run by the Bureau for Information, though SADF communications operations (comops) personnel and public relations personnel from other government departments do play some role. There is sometimes a clear overlap of personnel between SADF and Bureau officials. The Bureau's national head of planning and research, for example, is a senior military intelligence officer, Major-General P J Groenewald (*Africa Confidential*, 8.7.1987).

Komkom attempts to do three things. Firstly, through the co-ordination of lectures, television programmes, pamphlets, newspaper articles and the publication of local newspapers, it aims to explain and justify action taken against activists and opposition organizations. Secondly, Komkom aims to ensure the maximum publicity for welfare-type projects and government-supporting "counter-organizations". Wherever possible, credit for JMC co-ordinated programmes will be taken by "civil bodies" such as Black Local Authorities. At the same time the sincerity of state reforms is widely publicized both inside and outside the country. The third apparent function of the Komkoms is the co-ordination of disinformation via a variety of media forms, pamphlets and township graffiti. [49]

The JMC system has contact with the public informally through talks and lectures on the nature of the counter-revolutionary war given by JMC officials. The head of the strategic communication branch of the SSC secretariat once claimed to have given "about a thousand lectures" on the system in a six-year period (Worsnip, 1988: 98). A more formal relationship between the public, the business community and the security system is being formed through a network of Joint Liaison Forums, Joint Liaison Committees, and Defence Manpower Liaison Committees (Demalcoms). These allow the security establishment to market their strategies to influential members of the public and to broaden their informal sources of information and support. [50]

The secretariat of the SSC is the only part of the NSMS which employs full-time staff. This, in fact, is one of the major strengths of the system. At all other levels it relies exclusively on officials co-opted from the various state departments themselves. This means that decisions and recommendations of the NSMS at all levels are the decisions and recommendations of senior officials of these departments, rather than being policy imposed from the outside. Just as it is highly unlikely that the cabinet will override the carefully considered and security assessed decisions of the SSC, so it is equally difficult for any single government department to ignore plans formulated in the JMCs.

## Conclusion

This paper has tried to trace the evolution of the structures and strategies of what we have called the Emergency state. Its responses to pressures within the white power bloc and challenges from below in the black communities have been twofold: firstly, it has changed strategic tack in search of new solutions; and, secondly, it has adapted its power structures to manage and co-ordinate resources under emergency conditions. In the process, an authoritarian decision-making structure emerged, with the State President at its epicentre and the security system operating as its most important executive arm.

The "total strategy" package was adopted in the early 1980s because it was both a set of means and a coherent conception of ends. The ends comprised a grand reformist vision of a stable multi-ethnic society coupled to a set of means that believed that reform could be managed from above by carefully deploying the finely honed instruments of state power. In the end, "total strategy" failed because the state proceeded from the assumption that it was neutral and above social conflict and could, therefore, define solutions as if the apartheid state form itself was not the cause of the problem.

The explosion of mass resistance from 1984 onwards not only led to the collapse of the pre-1984 reform policies, but directly challenged the apartheid state form itself. It was in direct response to this threat that the State of Emergency was declared and the "counter-revolutionary warfare" strategies implemented. The point is, however, that these strategies are largely reactive means designed to defend state power. It is now openly admitted by the state that, short of "surrender", it has no coherent conception of a blueprint or vision of how the fundamental political conflict can be resolved. Despite Law and Order Minister Vlok's claim at the Natal NP Congress in 1988 that the state has a coherent "masterplan" for resolving this conflict (*The Star*, 19.9.1988), the Emergency state and its structures are involved in little more than the business of long-term "crisis management".

Although the strategies of the Emergency state are having profound social and political effects, the outcomes of state actions do not correspond to the intentions of policy-makers. Vlok's "masterplan" will more than likely founder on the rocks of racial oppression, limited resources and ongoing resistance.

The official position of the National Party government remains the insistence that, in P W Botha's words, "as far as I am concerned, I am not considering even to discuss the possibility of black majority government in South Africa". [51] Preventing this outcome remains, in essence, the purpose of "counter-revolution" in South Africa. Yet, in at least three instances elsewhere in the world where "counter-revolutionary warfare" strategies have been used to counter essentially national struggles (i.e. Vietnam, Algeria, and Malaya), in the end the basic demands of nationalism had to be met. In South Africa, the complete absence of any constitutional resolution to the "national question" will guarantee continued mass resistance to white minority rule.

Furthermore, at a time when the Emergency state needs to finance rising security expenditure and the expensive "winning-hearts-and-minds" programme, there are increasing constraints on the national resource base. Sanctions, economic recession, political unrest and declining investment will exacerbate this structural limitation on the scope of state action. There is no evidence that the economy will achieve the 5-7 per cent growth rate that Reserve Bank Deputy Governor Jan Lombard recently argued is required to finance the socio-economic upgrading programmes. [52]

Finally, the survival of mass opposition in the communities, schools and work places during the Emergency era calls into question the confident claims by security officials that the State of Emergency has succeeded in "eliminating the revolutionaries". Even they concede that there is "still a revolutionary climate".

## Notes

- 1 This term is taken from S Nolutshungu, *Changing South Africa: Political Considerations* (Manchester, 1982). We are not concerned with the relationship between state and capital or with the structural question of the relations between capitalism and apartheid. Our concern is more descriptive and focussed on specific state strategies that have emerged out of its attempts to resolve the fundamental political conflict between the white minority and the oppressed majority. Nolutshungu uses the concept of "political terrain" to refer to those actions by the state that are not directly reducible to class interests. The interests of the white minority are reflected in their purest and most concentrated form in the racially exclusive practices of the state. This has been the underlying determinant of state action during a decade of unprecedented challenges from below by the black majority.
- 2 For a state to be legitimate, the right of its apparatuses to regulate society as a whole needs to be broadly accepted at the level of civil society. Only then will the struggle for public power in political society reflect general aspirations, grievances and interests. This condition of "hegemony" occurs when, in Gramsci's words, "spontaneous consent [is] given by the great masses of the population to the general direction imposed on social life by the dominant fundamental group". However, in authoritarian societies, this hegemony is absent and therefore compliance is obtained by "the apparatus of state coercive power which 'legally' enforces discipline on those groups who do not 'consent' either actively or passively". In what Lowy and Sader call "predominantly coercive states", with reference to the Latin American context, the non-coercive institutions "have found themselves displaced by or absorbed within the repressive apparatuses, in particular the armed forces".
- 3 See D Swilling and M Phillips, "The Politics of State Power in the 1980s", unpublished mimeo, Centre for Policy Studies, 1988; M Morris and V Padayachee, "State Reform Policy in South Africa", *Transformation*, 7, 1988, 1-26; D Geldenhuys and H Kotze, "Aspects of Political Decision-Making in South Africa", *Politikon* (10), 1, 1983; K Grundy, *The Militarisation of South African Politics* (Oxford, 1988).
- 4 See A Boraine, "Wham, Sham or Scam? Security Management, Upgrading and Resistance in a South African Township", paper presented to Centre for African Studies seminar, University of Cape Town, August 1988, 2.
- 5 Republic of South Africa, "White Paper on the Rationalisation of the Public Service and Related Institutions", *Journal of Public Administration* (15), 2, June 1980, 49.
- 6 White Paper 1980, 63.
- 7 For a comprehensive discussion, see Swilling and Phillips, *op. cit.*
- 8 See F Cloete, "Die Bedryf van Staatkundige Hervorming", *Politeia* (7), 1, 1988.
- 9 See J du Plessis, "Administratiewe Vernuwung: Beleidsvereistes", *Journal of Public Administration* (15), 3, September 1980.
- 10 See White Paper, 1980.

- 11 See Cloete, *loc. cit.*
- 12 D Worrall, "The Constitutional Committee of the President's Council", *Politikon* (8), 2, December 1981.
- 13 See J Selfe, "The Total Onslaught and the Total Strategy", unpublished MA dissertation, University of Cape Town, 1987; and Geldenhuys and Kotze, *loc. cit.*
- 14 See R Schrire, "The New Constitution and Decision-Making", paper presented to the Human Sciences Research Council, 1984.
- 15 M Malan, "Die Aanslag Teen Suid-Afrika", *Strategic Review* (Pretoria, 1980).
- 16 This discussion of "total strategy" summarizes arguments in Swilling and Phillips, *loc. cit.*
- 17 See W Cobbett and R Cohen, *Popular Struggles in South Africa* (London, 1988).
- 18 See R Lee and F Buntman, "The Business Sector and Policy Involvement", unpublished mimeo, Centre for Policy Studies, 1989; M Mann, "The Giant Stirs: South African business in the age of reform", and P Frankel *et al.*, *State, Resistance and Change in South Africa* (Johannesburg, 1988), 52-86.
- 19 See K Helliker, "South african Marxist State Theory - a critical overview", *Politikon* (15), 1, 1988.
- 20 Cloete, *loc. cit.*
- 21 This contrasts with the capital logic interpretations provided by Morris and Padayachee, *loc. cit.*; and W Cobbett *et al.*, "A Critical Analysis of the South African State's Reform Strategies in the 1980s" in Frankel *et al.*, *op. cit.*
- 22 See J Coetzee, "Rewolusionere Oorlog en Teeninsurgensie", in M Hough, *Nasionale Veiligheid en Strategie met Spesifieke Verwysing na die RSA* (Pretoria: August 1981), (translated by Centre for Policy Studies staff).
- 23 See Selfe, *op. cit.*
- 24 Interview with ex-official of the Department of Constitutional Development and Planning, August 1986.
- 25 Quoted in *Newsweek*, June 1988.
- 26 Africa International Communications, *New Emergency Management* (Cape Town, 1986), 13.
- 27 *Ibid.*
- 28 The argument in this section is based on an extensive research project conducted by researchers at the Centre for Policy Studies during 1988/89. The findings will be published in the forthcoming annual policy review publication of the Centre. The references to primary documents and the approximately fifty interviews that were conducted are contained in unpublished drafts produced by M Swilling and M Phillips. See also B Pottinger, *The Imperial Presidency* (Johannesburg, 1989).
- 29 S Huntington, "Reform and Stability in a Modernising Multi-Ethnic Society", *Politikon* (8), 2, December 1981, 20.

- 30 W Ebersohn, "The Headmen", *Leadership SA* (7), 5, 1988, 21.
- 31 Department of Military Intelligence, "The Art of Counter-Revolutionary War", unpublished mimeo, 1987, 23.
- 32 See Boraine, *op. cit.*; Swilling and Phillips, *op. cit.*; and A Seegers, "Extending the Security Network to the Local Level", in C Heymans and G Totemeyer, *Government by the People?* (Johannesburg, 1988).
- 33 See Department of Military Intelligence, *op. cit.*; Swilling and Phillips, *op. cit.*; S Baynham, "Interview with Major-General G L Meiring", *Southern Africa Record* (Johannesburg, 1985); A Vlok in *White Paper on the Organisation and Functions of the South African Police* (Pretoria, 1988).
- 34 Department of Military Intelligence, *op. cit.*, 7.
- 35 See the speech A Vlok made to the Natal NP congress, quoted in *The Star*, 18.9.1988; and Africa International Communications, *op. cit.*; *White Paper*, 1988; and also Swilling and Phillips, *op. cit.*; H Giliomee, "In Gesprek met Generaal Magnus Malan", *Die Suid-Afrikaan*, Winter 1986.
- 36 P W Botha, "Toespraak Deur Staatspresident P W Botha by Geleentheid van die 1988 Natalse Kongres Van Die Nasionale Party, Durban, 18 Augustus", State President's Office; and P W Botha, "Constitutional Future", in Department of Development Planning, *Reform and the Future* (Department of Development Planning, November 1988).
- 37 See Catholic Institute for International Relations, *Now Everyone is Afraid: the Changing Face of Policing in South Africa* (London, August 1988)
- 38 L Schuster, "Pretoria's Bid for Hearts and Minds", *Christian Science Monitor*, 11.5.1988.
- 39 South African Broadcasting Corporation, "Comment", 17.6.1988.
- 40 Research notes provided by Richard Humphries, Centre for Policy Studies.
- 41 South African Broadcasting Corporation, 1988.
- 42 Speech by P W Botha to the Free State Congress of the National Party.
- 43 Figures drawn from various editions of South African Institute of Race Relations, *Socio-Economic Update*, 1988.
- 44 J Lombard, "Housing Finance and the National Economic Scenario", keynote address to conference on "Finance, the Pathway to Housing", CSIR, 2nd June 1988.
- 45 G Sheldon, "Theoretical Perspectives on South African Foreign Policy Making", *Politikon* (13), 1, June 1986, 17; see also *Africa Confidential*, 8.7.1987, and Grundy, *op. cit.*, 15.
- 46 Ebersohn, *loc. cit.*, and White Paper, 1988, 58.
- 47 Africa International Communications, *op. cit.*, 13.
- 48 M Schneider, "Interview: Adrian Vlok", *Leadership SA* (6), 1, 1987.

- 49 See proceedings of *End Conscription Committee vs Minister of Defence*, case number 88/2870 CPD; also *Africa Confidential*, 8.7.1988; G Siyotula, "The Tembisa Rent Boycott", unpublished BA Honours dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand, 1989, 70-94; A Harber, "The Uniformed Web that Sprawls Across the Country", *Weekly Mail*, 3.10.1986.
- 50 See contribution by Kate Philip to J Cock and L Nathan, *The Militarisation of South African Society* (Cape Town, 1989).
- 51 Speech by P W Botha to the Natal Congress of the National Party, August 1988.
- 52 Lombard, *op. cit.*