

BRIEFING PAPER TWO: THE NATIONAL SECURITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM.

The aim of the government's state of emergency in June 1986 was to try and bring the country under control through the use of force. Tens of thousands of people were detained, and many were killed.

At the same time, the government has been building a National Security Management System (NSMS). This is a series of structures throughout South Africa, designed to defend apartheid. The main type of structure is called a Joint Management Centre (JMC). Before we explain what a JMC is and what it does, it is useful to know where the idea for a National Security Management System comes from.

The theory of the National Security Management System.

The South African security officials refer to their strategies in the townships as "WHAM", or "winning hearts and minds". The strategies come from theories developed by American military forces in South-East Asia and South America (eg. Phillipines, Vietnam, Chile, Brazil, El Salvador) when they were trying to bring those countries under American control.

These are called Low Intensity Conflict (LIC) theories. LIC is a military strategy to defeat national liberation movements without a full-scale military war. Military strategists in America (and Britain, France and South Africa) argue that the battle for the "hearts and minds" of the people makes up 80% of the war; only 20% of the battle is won through military might. Magnus Malan has stated this on many occasions in South Africa.

According to the military strategists, what is needed is a "total strategy" or a "total war at a grassroots level", using political, economic and propaganda warfare, as well as military methods. As P W Botha said in April 1986: "I believe you can't control violence only with violence and force - you also need socio-economic and other measures to stop the onslaught against South Africa."

For the past 15 years, the government has been reorganising its structures to try and achieve this "total strategy". This has been done in a number of different ways, all within the structure of the National Security Management System:

1.) All the South African security forces have been organised in a more centralised way to try and make them more effective. The security forces have also bought various civil defence units, private security firms and municipal police under their control.

2.) All government departments have been organised so that they work in a more co-ordinated way. There are security force committees at each level of government (central, regional, local) to provide the link between "security" strategies and political, economic and welfare policies.

3.) Business leaders have been encouraged to sit on government committees, and to support government political and economic policies.

4.) Various university institutions have been used to do strategic research for the government (eg. Institute for Strategic Studies, University of Pretoria).

5.) The government has trained and supported the growth of "anti-communist" groupings outside South Africa (Unita, Renamo, South West Africa Territorial Force), and "counter-revolutionary" groups inside South Africa (witdoeke, AmaAfrika, vigilantes).

6.) The government has also tried to gain strict control of all the media in the country (television, newspapers, radio, foreign journalists). This is so the government can give the only picture of what is happening in South Africa.

Government structures are complex and difficult to describe in detail in a short briefing paper. A diagram at the end of this paper gives some idea of the various government committees, and how they are connected to each other. The rest of this paper will concentrate on the most important aspect of government strategies - the system of Joint Management Centres.

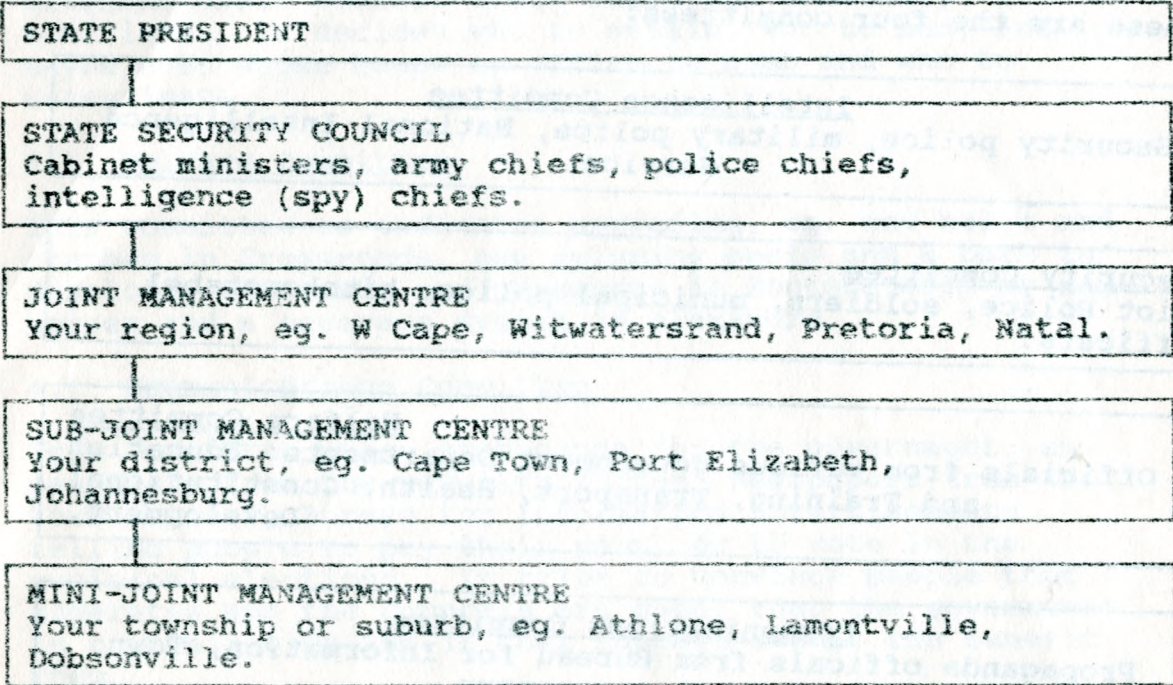
What is a Joint Management Centre?

A JMC is the instrument of the National Security Management System (NSMS) in your area. The government has set up JMCs in hundreds of communities around the country. It has done this to co-ordinate its campaign against the people's organisations and the national liberation struggle.

JMCs co-ordinate repression (detentions, vigilantes, attacks on individuals, restriction orders, trials) and co-option (SADF youth camps), as well as "reform" (upgrading). By doing this they hope to weaken the organisations and isolate them from the people.

How does the JMC in your area fit into the NSMS?

This diagram shows how:



The JMC in your area reports up the ladder, right to the State Security Council chaired by P W Botha. It also receives instructions down the ladder from the State Security Council on how to fight the "revolutionary onslaught" in your area.

The state fights the "revolutionary onslaught" by repressing democratic organisations, detaining or killing activists, then creating their own puppet organisations and at the same time upgrading some communities. They kill some of our people, but give others better houses, electricity or roads. Their aim is to divide and confuse the people.

How many JMCs are there?

There are 11 regional JMCs, about 50 sub-JMCs and about 400 mini-JMCs. There is a mini-JMC for almost every one of our communities and townships. From now on, to be short, we will call mini-JMCs just "JMC".

What does a JMC look like?

A JMC has an executive and four sub-committees. The chairperson of a JMC is usually a policeman or a soldier.

These are the four committees:

Intelligence Committee

Security police, military police, National Intelligence Service.

Security Committee

Riot Police, soldiers, municipal police, kitskonstabel officers.

Welfare Committee

Officials from various government Departments: Education and Training, Transport, Health, Constitutional Development.

Communications Committee

Propaganda officials from Bureau for Information, Town Council newspapers.

What does a JMC do?

We can know what a JMC does if we look at what each one of its four committees does.

1.) Intelligence Committee.

This committee is for spying on the people. It looks for two kinds of information:

Information on organisations, activists, shop-stewards, underground work, military struggle, trade union committees, churches, etc. This information goes to the security committee. It is used to co-ordinate repression.

Information on the people's day to day grievances, eg. bucket system, bad roads, no sports facilities, broken down schools, no electricity, etc. This information goes to the welfare committee. It is used to co-ordinate upgrading.

2.) Security Committee.

This committee is for repression. It co-ordinates action by police, soldiers, greenbeans, vigilantes and kitskonstabels against trade union and community activists. It decides who to detain, who to ban, and maybe even whose house or office to bomb and who to assassinate.

3.) Welfare Committee.

This committee co-ordinates upgrading, eg. new halls and creches in Crossroads, new swimming pools and a park in Mamelodi, new roads and pavements in Bonteheuwel, or new houses and a sewerage system in Alexandra.

4.) Communications Committee.

This committee makes propaganda for the government, eg. pamphlets from the security forces, newspapers from the town council, Bureau for Information advertisements telling people to pay their rent, or to vote in the municipal elections. It tries to convince people that moderates and the councils are good, that the government is on their side and if they support it, it can benefit them.

It supports puppet organisations to attract our people away from liberation and to divide our communities and factories, eg. UWUSA, United Christian Conciliation Party, Ama-Afrika, youth camps, conservative religious groups, evangelical groups, and many choirs.

The communications committee organises the activities of these organisations to be shown on television. For example, Mr Linda, a councillor in Port Elizabeth, picked up unemployed people, gave them placards, and paid them to go and stand at the airport to demonstrate against Archbishop Tutu. This was shown on TV as a "pretest against sanctions".

The communications committee also produces disinformation about organisations, eg. disinformation pamphlets, anti-UDF, anti-Cosatu, anti-Tutu graffiti in the townships.

Why do the JMCs use repression and upgrading at the same time?

The government thinks there are two reasons for the struggle in South Africa.

1.) They think that people are unhappy because their living conditions are bad. They can see that people have real grievances, eg. too few houses, too few sports facilities, too few jobs. They learned this lesson very clearly during 1984 to 1986 when people expressed their anger at high rents and poor living conditions. In 1986,

the government was worried that these poor conditions were going to lead to a revolution.

2.) They think that "communist revolutionaries" who want to overthrow the state exploit these grievances for their own ends.

This explains why the government has reacted to our struggle by starting JMCs. They think that they can win if they take away the grievances and also the "revolutionaries" (activists, trade unionists, and our organisations).

This is why they detain, kill and put on trial activists and trade unionists, and yet at the same time try and make things better in some communities.

By using JMCs to do these two things at the same time, the government hopes that it will divide our people by benefitting some of them and repressing others. They hope that in this way they can turn back the struggle, isolate democratic organisations from the masses, and make people accept something less than liberation.

Do the JMCs work in the same way everywhere?

No. In some townships, the JMCs run the day to day affairs of that township. In others, they play more of a helping and co-ordinating role.

1.) Oilspot Townships.

These are townships which the government is paying special attention to because of the amount of people's grievances and the strength of organisation, eg. Soweto, Alexandra, Mamelodi, New Brighton, Crossroads, Bonteheuvel. In all these townships we have seen much repression, many detentions, many killings but also lots of money spent on upgrading. The aim of the government is to show that even in very well organised communities, it can smash organisation and win people over by providing them with better living conditions.

2.) Other Communities.

In some communities, JMCs concentrate only on repression and helping puppet organisations operate. The JMCs can't afford to upgrade all communities.

In white areas which do not need upgrading, JMCs concentrate on repressing democratic organisation, eg. NUSAS, ECC, progressive youth organisations, and providing whites with propaganda about what is happening in the townships.

The JMCs also try to get white civilians to co-operate with the JMC system, through involving organisations such

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as Red Cross, Neighbourhood Watch systems, businessmen, security firms, civil defence units, etc.

There are JMCs in the city centres and in most industrial areas. These JMCs are there to provide businessmen with information about unions, strikes and stayaways.

How successful are the JMCs?

1.) Can the JMC strategy win the people's hearts and minds and make them support the apartheid state?

No. The JMC strategy will cost many billions of rands to work properly. Forty years of apartheid have produced terrible conditions in most townships. Even to upgrade one small township, eg. Alexandra, costs more than R500 million. To upgrade all the townships the government needs international support. But apartheid is hated by the whole world. Not even the Reagans and the Thatchers can give much support.

The upgrading programme could only work if the economy was booming. But ~~apartheid~~ policies and the international campaign to isolate the apartheid government and apply sanctions against it make rapid economic growth impossible. For these reasons, it is not possible for the government to take away all the grievances.

Even if the state could upgrade everywhere, this would not necessarily stop the demand for change. The government cannot take away all the "revolutionaries" either. In fact, apartheid is producing "revolutionaries" all the time.

The government ignores the importance of national political demands. Magnus Malan says that "for the masses in South Africa, democracy is not a relevant factor." This shows that they misunderstand how important national liberation is to our people.

The government is trying to preserve a system that is undemocratic, and which defends white privilege and relies on force to stay in place. The councillors they co-opt into the system become like the system itself: corrupt and greedy. The majority of South Africans know that councillors have become gangsters and money-grabbers. But the government thinks that the people cannot see this.

The people of South Africa have an understanding of their struggle for democracy and justice. They have the Freedom Charter as a guide. The government has nothing with which they can convince South Africans that they provide hope for the future. They have only crooks and toy telephones to rely on.

2.) JMCs cannot win the struggle. But what effect are they going to have?

Repression has done terrible damage to our organisations across the country. It has harmed tens of thousands of our activists. Under the JMC system we can expect continued repression in the future.

The mix of repression and upgrading will tend to create big differences within communities, between those who are benefitting and those who are not. It will also increase differences between communities, especially between people living in formal townships and those living in shacks in informal settlements.

We will see more and more "counter-organisations", puppet organisations set up by the JMCs or supported by them to win people away from the democratic movement and divide them.

But the JMCs cannot stop sanctions from isolating apartheid more and more, and they cannot stop the economic crisis that is sweeping across our country. However hard they try, they are unable to stop our organisations. Even in an emergency, we can still organise the biggest and longest stayaway in our history. Community organisations remain, even if they must work more quietly than before.

The JMCs are not winning the struggle for the government. They have made it more difficult and complicated for the democratic movement. However, it is important that we do not see the JMCs as all-powerful.

The work of the JMCs has set two main challenges to the democratic movement:

1.) Avoid divisions. The fact that there are differences in our communities should not be allowed to mean that there are divisions. We must do all in our power to organise across the lines of division which the JMCs are exploiting - unemployed, working class, middle class; housed and unhoused; township and squatter settlement, etc. Above all, we must ensure that we have strong organisation in the growing squatter settlements around the cities.

2.) Stay with the People. The fact that the state is addressing some grievances and encouraging counter-organisations should not mean that organisations become isolated from the people. Organisations must ensure that they are part of the people. We must carry democratic organisation into every community, and to every member of every community. Organisations must be part of the people's day to day lives. People must be drawn into the democratic movement in large numbers. The democratic movement needs to be genuinely in the hearts and minds of the people.