NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

South Africa Case Study

Working Paper
(Preliminary Draft)

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1. INTRODUCTION

The 2015 Defence Review of South Africa was concluded after a consultative process with various stakeholders in the defence environment and the general public. The need for such consultative processes in part arises from the constitutional imperative of accountability, responsiveness and openness. This was however not the first consultative process followed with a defence policy in democratic South Africa. It was preceded by a 1996 White Paper on Defence entitled “Defence in Democracy” and a 1998 Defence Review. These two policy documents were instrumental in focusing the direction and emphasis of the South African military in a post-Apartheid era. As Greg Mills puts it, “South Africa’s 1994 transition to democracy meant, among other changes, adopting a new approach to defence with the creation of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF).”

South Africa has a National Security Strategy, that was adopted by Cabinet in 2013, but it has been classified top secret. Given its security classification not everybody is aware of it, and it is not in a form that could be effectively consulted by the security sector. The country has however realised the importance of such a policy guideline to ensure the protection of its national interests. Reference to both the National Security Policy and National Security Strategy, is made in the White Paper on Defence, the White Paper on Intelligence and the White Paper on South African Participation in International Peace Missions. The lack of an integrated, more inclusive and widely accessible national security policy has been criticised on a number of occasions especially by the South African National Defence Force. It was their opinion that there is an urgent need to develop a cogent, integrated security strategy from the elements that reside within the cluster departments. The latest development in this regard is the Report of the High Level Review Panel into the State Security Agency, which recommends the urgent development of a National Security Strategy and the formal re-establishment of the National Security Council.

Given that the military strategy of South Africa is derived from the Constitution, the Defence Act, the White Paper on Defence, the Defence Reviews and preferably from a National Security Strategy, there was an emphasis on ensuring that in the post-Apartheid era, the defence debate in South Africa should be an open and consultative process. Although some would argue that this was indeed the case, one observer noted that the 2015 Defence Review process was however not that transparent and refers to it as a “backroom drafting process.” While South Africa made provision for a National Security Council (NSC) in the form of a Cabinet subcommittee chaired by the President, it has not met for years. The President announced in his 2019 State of the Nation Address that the NSC will be re-established in order to ensure better coordination of the intelligence and security-related functions of the State. This paper will first look at the legislative framework for South Africa’s national security issues, followed by a discussion of relevant issues related to the 1998 and 2015 Defence Reviews, especially the public participation processes. The link between defence and national security is discussed as well as defence policy and resources. Reference will also be made to the national security strategy development issues emanating from the recently-released Report of the High Level Review Panel into the State Security Agency. The monitoring and oversight mechanisms will then be discussed and it will conclude by noting lessons learnt and its implications for national security strategy development.

2. LEGAL AND SECURITY FRAMEWORKS

2.1 The 1996 Constitution and the Defence Force

The 1996 Constitution of South Africa is the main guiding force of the country’s security framework. Given that the Apartheid government allowed the so-called “securocrats” the first call on the national fiscus to prop up the government, this was the first port of call to democratise South Africa. Section 198 unequivocally stresses that national security must reflect the resolve of South Africans...
and that it is subject to the authority of Parliament and the national executive. The Constitution further outlines that the Republic has a single defence force and that the defence force is the only lawful military force in the Republic. Section 200 (2) emphasises that the primary object of the defence force is to defend and protect the Republic, its territorial integrity and its people in accordance with the Constitution and the principles of international law regulating the use of force.\textsuperscript{16}

2.2 \textbf{Defence Act (No. 42 of 2002)}

The Defence Act of 2002 replaced the Defence Act of 1957 (No. 44 of 1957)\textsuperscript{17} and provides \textit{inter alia} for the defence of the Republic, for the composition of the Department of Defence, the composition of the SANDF, and the establishment of a Defence Secretariat.\textsuperscript{18} It further allows for the establishment of a Council of Defence, the highest defence decision-making body chaired by the Minister of Defence, and a Defence Staff Council.\textsuperscript{19} It states in Section 2: Principles, that the formulation and execution of defence policy is subject to the authority of Parliament and the National Executive.

2.3 \textbf{The 1996 White Paper on Defence}

The White Paper confirms that security is an all-encompassing condition in which individual citizens live in freedom, peace and safety. Further, that the objectives of security policy encompass the consolidation of democracy and that stability and development are regarded as inextricably linked and mutually reinforcing. The section on “Defence in a democracy,” stresses that \textquotedblleft National security shall be sought primarily through efforts to meet the political, economic, social and cultural rights and needs of South Africa’s people, and through efforts to promote and maintain regional security.\textsuperscript{20}

2.3.1 \textbf{Consultation Process}

The consultation process of the White Paper included:

- The 21 June 1995 draft published by the Minister of Defence with an invitation to Parliament and the public to comment thereon.
- The 27 October 1995 draft which incorporated comments submitted by political parties, non-governmental organisations, the defence industry, defence analysts, and members of the public and the SANDF.
- The 31 January 1996 draft which incorporated proposals from the Parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on Defence.

To emphasise the importance attached to and the historical context of public consultation, the relevant section in the White Paper is concluded with this statement: \textit{“It is therefore no exaggeration to say that this White Paper is a historic document. For the first time in our history, defence policy has been shaped by substantial inputs from Parliament, members of the public, non-governmental organisations and, of course, the Department of Defence. For the first time in our history, a White Paper on Defence reflects the interests of our people and represents a national consensus on this critical function of government.”} \textsuperscript{21}

This view is underscored when the White Paper refers to its principal purpose being to inform citizens and other states, particularly those in Africa, of South Africa's new defence policy. It must serve as a confidence- and security-building measure in Southern Africa.\textsuperscript{22} It also pointed out that the SANDF is a national institution which relies on public support and public funds to fulfil its mandate. Further, that the functions and orientation of the SANDF are necessarily matters of great public interest.”\textsuperscript{23}
In South Africa, Government’s priorities have centered around the reduction of poverty and the creation of conditions for economic growth, social development and education. From the 1990s, when the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) was launched, through to current priorities identified in the Medium-Term Strategic Framework (MTSF), Government policy has emphasised the role of the State in meeting development needs. One of the latest policy guidelines in this regard, is the National Development Plan 2030.

2.4 National Development Plan 2030

The National Development Plan (NDP) has as its main aim the elimination of poverty and reduction of inequality by 2030.24 The Plan follows a holistic approach to achieve its main goal and importantly, cuts across the various government departments. Every government department has a role to play as the country moves towards 2030. The goals of the NDP are operationalised through a typical five-year plan – at present the 2014 – 2019 MTSF. While a country’s military has definitive roles to play in terms of socio-economic development, these are marginal compared to those of many other departments. As such, the NDP’s pronouncements on defence-related matters are limited.25

An example of the link between the NDP and the MTSF is when the NDP recommends that cross-border smuggling of counterfeit goods should be increasingly focused on and that enforcement must be strengthened. The MTSF is aligned with this through Outcome 3 namely that South Africa’s borders must be effectively defended, protected, secured and well-managed. This outcome includes targets related to the development of border safeguarding strategies and sub-strategies.26 The SANDF plays a crucial role in guarding national landline borders with 15 sub-units. Another example focuses on positioning South Africa in the world and this is aligned to Outcome 11 which is to ensure political cohesion within Southern Africa to ensure a peaceful, secure and stable Southern African region. The SANDF’s involvement in Peacekeeping Missions on the Continent is well documented, with a current deployment more than 1 000 South African peacekeepers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.27

The NDP is however not without critique.28 One critic argues that it is more of a political expression than really dealing with the issues at hand.29 Another believes that the NDP “is not even ‘policy, but just a document dusted off now and again so ruling party politicians can show they mean ‘business’ tackling South Africa’s ills.”30

3. THE SOUTH AFRICAN DEFENCE REVIEWS

3.1 The 1998 Defence Review

The 1998 Defence Review was a widely-debated process with the government sponsoring public consultative discussions countrywide.31 It outlined the Process of Conducting the Defence Review, its scope and logic and the Key Concepts Underpinning the Defence Review. Some of the issues covered in the Review include the Defence Posture and Doctrine, Self-defence and the Peace Time Force, Regional Security Co-operation, International Peace Support Operations, Co-operation with the South African Police Service, Force Design Options, Force Structure and Human Resources.32 Greg Mills points out that the period between the 1998 and the current Review had been a period of major change internationally and also for South Africa and Africa.33

3.1.1 Consultation Process

In the interests of achieving a national consensus on defence matters, the Minister decided at the outset that the 1998 Review should be subject to a process of consultation with defence stakeholders and interest groups. To this end, national consultative conferences were held on 12-13 February 1996,
12-13 August 1996 and 16 May 1997. Two rounds of regional workshops were held in Gauteng, KwaZulu/Natal, Western Cape, Free State, Eastern Cape, Mpumalanga, North West, Northern Cape and Northern Province in both July 1996 and May 1997. The conferences and workshops were open to the public. They were attended by national and provincial parliamentarians, members of political parties and government departments, and a broad cross-section of the defence establishment and civil society. Several briefings were presented to the parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on Defence. The White Paper emphasises that public awareness and parliamentary debate on the complexities and different types of peace support operations are equally important.

3.2 The 2015 Defence Review

The 2015 Defence Review endeavours to establish the direction of South Africa’s defence and foreign policy for the next 15 years. The Defence Review Committee (DRC) was established in 2011 and mandated to look critically at South Africa’s defence policy, given the rapid and fundamental changes that have occurred in the strategic environment over the last number of years. The objective of the review is to create a balanced, flexible and modern force, which uses advanced technology in response to the changing nature of the defence function globally. It was also intended, in the short-term, to provide a robust platform for the Minister to argue the defence case.

The 2015 Defence Review is however not without its detractors. One critic is of the opinion that the “review doesn’t provide an honest outline of the threats and vulnerabilities facing the country, defence capabilities needed, military organisation or the cost to taxpayers.”

3.2.1 Consultation Process

The process of developing the 2015 Defence Review spanned over 5 years and involved an extensive consultation process. These include meetings, presentations and discussions with contributors and public consultation meetings with stakeholders such as the Minister, Chief of the Defence Force, the Secretary for Defence, Chiefs of Arms of Services Divisions and provincial stakeholders. In all it lists around 435 such engagements, both internally and externally. Specifically, it conducted a pre-study of 44 international defence reviews and a detailed study of 10 reviews done in the last 4 years. It also conducted a diagnostic of the defence organisation and consulted with the African Union, Southern African Development Community (SADC) and other international organisations. The more than 400 inputs of the formal engagements were considered to assist with the 148 formal consultations with stakeholders. It also held a series of 10 ‘Imbizos’ in each Province at grassroots level, and consolidated the content of more than 76 written submissions. It also lists six meeting it had with the Parliamentary Defence Committees. Due consideration was given to the outcome of the public consultation process through evaluating the merits of all submissions received. Despite critique of the initial consultative process followed, it can be generally accepted that there was a fair amount of public engagements.
3.2.2 The Milestones

The approach followed by the DRC was to develop a future trajectory to achieve a sustainable defence capability appropriate to South Africa’s international status, strategic posture and its inescapable continental leadership role. As first order guidelines, the following critical milestones were proposed to assist in such planning, namely:

- **Planning Milestone 1**: Arrest the decline in critical capabilities through immediate and directed interventions.
- **Planning Milestone 2**: Reorganise and rebalance the Defence Force as the foundation for future growth.
- **Planning Milestone 3**: Create the sustainable Defence Force that can meet ordered defence commitments (interim end-state of the Defence Review).
- **Planning Milestone 4**: Enhance the Defence Force’s capacity to respond to emerging threats (final end-state of the Defence Review).
- **Planning Milestone 5**: Defend the Republic against an imminent or dire threat.

While these planning milestones outline the preferred future trajectory, this is not always accepted without a counter proposal. As Cilliers indicates, the 15 chapters include considerable background material and the result is a mixture of issues that relate to internal administration, policy, strategy, military doctrine, discipline and human resources. It does not set out alternative force design options but does present the costs of its preferred option. Another critic is of the opinion that the problem is not the size of the budget, but how the budget is divided. “Almost every problem in the SANDF is personnel related.” Another comments that the defence force’s funding and the attempts by the DOD and National Treasury to fund especially Milestone 1, shows that all was not well with the new defence policy. “It has a defect that was undetected during birth. The plan to arrest the decline, declined itself.”

These and similar arguments should however not just be accepted at face value as counter-arguments are also offered. One in particular relates to the much vaunted 40% for personnel expenditure, 30% for operational expenditure and 30% for capital expenditure ratio, where the SANDF currently spends more than 50% on personnel expenditure. Given South Africa’s historic developments, the risks of releasing 5 000 trained soldiers on the street, as well as the increasing tasks the military is asked to execute, this is not the typical zero-sum game that should be considered. The latest budget projection states that due to the labour-intensive nature of the department’s work, compensation of employees is its largest spending item, accounting for 59 per cent (R94 billion) of its total budget over the MTEF period.

The inability of the government and defence force to budget for the turnaround strategy is yet to be fully explained to the public but it is clear that the reduced defence capacity and capability impacts negatively on the country’s security and stability and government’s foreign policy ambitions. In fact, the design of a new, more modest defence policy is now unavoidable, an argument which is also supported by Jackie Cilliers and Greg Mills.

4. DEFENCE AND NATIONAL SECURITY

The Constitution outlines clearly the link between national security and the role of the defence force as articulated in Sections 198 and 200, and as outlined above. The 1996 White Paper goes further and states that in respect of defence posture, it will seek national security primarily through efforts to meet the political, economic, social and cultural rights and needs of South Africa’s people, and through efforts to promote and maintain regional security. It stresses that the determination of the manner in which the SANDF will fulfil its tasks will be based on the national policy and foreign policy of government. The NDP and subsequently the MTSF, emphasises the role of the defence
force in *inter alia* the safeguarding of South Africa’s borders and its peacekeeping responsibilities. The 1998 and 2015 Defence Reviews both stress the importance of the defence force in pursuing South Africa’s national security objectives through the advancement of its international, regional and national interests. In particular, the 2015 Defence Review emphasises that:

- Security objectives include the defence of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of the South African state, and the promotion of regional and continental security in Southern Africa.
- The struggle for a better life in South Africa is intertwined with the pursuit of a better Africa in a better world. Regional and continental integration is the foundation for Africa’s socio-economic development and political unity, and essential for South Africa’s prosperity and security.
- Africa is at the centre of South Africa’s foreign and security policy. South Africa must therefore 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.\(^{63}\)

It further points out that the Defence Force is a unique instrument and an important lever of power at the disposal of the State to pursue its national security and foreign policy priorities and is consequently at the core of South Africa’s national security. The deployment of the Defence Force\(^ {64}\) must thus be coordinated with the full range of instruments which Government can bring to bear both domestically and regionally. However, the Defence Force provides the means of last resort when other instruments of state are unable to protect or defend South Africa.\(^ {65}\) The White Paper on Intelligence similarly expresses these sentiments, especially as it relate to the international, continental, regional and internal dimensions and its impact on defining the country’s interests,\(^ {66}\) similar to those of the High Level Review Panel.\(^ {67}\)

5. **DEFENCE POLICY AND RESOURCES**

The defence-related policy documents underline the importance of sufficient resources in order to execute the mandate of the defence force. These range from human resources regarding skills, training, education and others; logistical resources regarding supply chain management, procurement and others; and especially financial resources to fund the various defence activities.\(^ {68}\) These confirm the symbiotic link between policy and resources. It is especially the level of financial resources available to the defence force that has been a contested issue.

5.1 **Budget-driven or mandate-driven**

One of the issues that have been consistently raised is whether the Department of Defence should be budget-driven or mandate-driven. The argument is that it should be decided whether the budget dictates what the SANDF can be asked to do or whether the SANDF should be funded according its mandate. The Minister of Defence and Military Veterans in her 2018 Budget Speech, expressed herself as follows “Defence should remain mandate driven, and not budget driven as is currently the case.”\(^ {69}\)

She further outlined that not only is the defence force expected to defend and protect South Africa, it is expected to rapidly intervene during crises on the continent. It must sustain peace support operations and continuously secure the land borders, the full maritime zone and the airspace. Also the defence force is expected to be a key role player in the cyber-defence of South Africa and to support other departments, when required. The defence force is further expected to execute the many international obligations. This, the Minister said, was a level of ambition not sustainable at current levels of funding. “South Africa has now reached the point where it must make a decision on the kind of Defence Force it wants and what it can afford.”\(^ {70}\) One critic is of the opinion that the SANDF is
lazy in their thinking in that if they “Blame it on a lack of money and no thinking is required; no innovation; no initiative; no dynamism; no drive. All one has to do is drift along.” Further according to this critic, the defence force is apparently overstaffed, top heavy and does not want to make the decision to get rid of soldiers.71

This contestation underlines there is no consensus on the funding levels of the defence force. South Africa has a robust media which drives the ‘guns-vs-butter’72 debate in the direction that makes it difficult for government to prioritise defence in the face of health, education and social security issues. Added to this is the so-called “Arms Deal”73 and the subsequent huge escalation in costs,74 the peace dividend argument, as well as no discernible military threat. These and other factors combine to complicate the defence funding debate in South Africa. In addition, the relationship between the media and the defence force has often been antagonistic, but military leaders have sometimes ordered their public relations offices to support the media. The then Chief of the Navy for instance stated that “The media can be an effective force multiplier and we should see and use it as such.”75 Scholtz makes a strong case why the military should view the media as an ally especially when it requires public support for their activities, as it can play a decisive role to sway public opinion.76

5.2 Funding levels of the South African military

One of the main issues besetting the South Africa’s national defence force, is its annual funding levels. The Defence Review Committee points out that South Africa was spending less than 1.2% of GDP77 on defence, translating to less than 5 cents out of every rand of total budget being expended on defence, at that stage. The Defence Force was effectively underfunded (in respect of its current size and shape) by 24%. The balance of expenditure between personnel, operating and capital was both severely disjointed and institutionally crippling. It warns that “Left unchecked, and at present funding levels, this decline will severely compromise and further fragment the defence capability. It is clear that certain defence capabilities, if not addressed now, will be lost in the very near future. The longer this prevails, the greater the effort, time and cost will be to restore the Defence Force.”78 The total allocation for the DOD for the financial year 2018/19 was R47.949 billion,79 which was lower than the R48.999 billion allocation for the financial year 2017/18.80 The allocation for 2018/19 represented, as a percentage of GDP (R5.025 trillion) is 0.95 per cent.81

The lack of proper funding is bemoaned by various observers such as the Institute for Security Studies (ISS). The ISS refers to the importance of the acknowledgement that South Africa is underspending on defence for at least a decade. It quotes a report from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) which confirms that fast-growing Angola, long considered South Africa’s only potential rival in the southern African power stakes, already spends about 50 per cent more on its military than South Africa in absolute terms – and Algeria almost three times that of South Africa.83

As part of the implementation of the 2015 Defence Review and in response to a Ministerial Directive, a process to develop a ‘funding model’ for the DOD was started. The ‘funding model’ exercise was intended to explore non-traditional revenue streams to supplement the Defence funding allocation from National Treasury so as to enable the implementation of the Defence Review. The investigation was completed in August 2017. In addition, in October 2016, an Interdepartmental DOD/National Treasury Budget Task Team was established on the instruction of the Directors-General of both National Treasury and the DOD to explore funding trajectory options to ‘Arrest the Decline’ in the DOD. The conclusion was that given South Africa’s fiscal constraints, the Defence Review cannot be funded as required.84
The funding levels of the SANDF should not be viewed in isolation as there are various factors that impact on this issue. It is especially the historical developments in the country that should be considered. In particular, the high unemployment rate in the country and the fact that mostly blacks are unemployed. To exit thousands of trained soldiers from the defence force without alternative employment or skills, is not only short-sighted but also risky given the already high levels of crime in the country.87

6. THE HIGH LEVEL PANEL INTO STATE SECURITY AGENCY

The focus of this paper is primarily on the Defence policy of South Africa, especially the latest Defence Review and how it was developed. A recent security-related development is the release of The Report of the High-Level Review Panel into the State Security Agency, which made several recommendations that are pertinent to South Africa’s National Security Strategy Development. The Panel was established by President Cyril Ramaphosa in June 2018, began its work in July 2018 and was given six months to submit its report. The key objective was to “enable the reconstruction of a professional national intelligence capability for South Africa that will respect and uphold the Constitution, and the relevant legislative prescripts.”88 The Panel made detailed findings and recommendations, but most importantly, it recommended an overarching overhaul of the intelligence and security architecture of the country, the implementation of which will require extensive consultation and a good dose of determination.89

The following recommendations of the High Level Review Panel has relevance to national security strategy development:

6.1 National Security Strategy (NSS)

The Panel recommends the urgent development of a NSS as an overriding basis for redefining and refining the concepts, values, policies, practices and architecture involved in South Africa’s approach to security. Such a strategy should be widely consulted with the public and Parliament before formal approval. The Panel was made aware of efforts to develop a NSS that would serve as an overarching policy to guide the country’s understanding of and approach to national security. It had sight of two versions of such a strategy, both prepared by the National Intelligence Coordinating Committee (NICOC):90

- National Security Strategy – 2013

The first went as far as the then National Security Council’s (NSC) Directors-General in June 2007 where, apparently, it stalled. The second was approved by Cabinet on the 4th December 2013. The 2007 draft NSS involved an extensive process of governmental and public consultation in the drafting process and recommends an open process of public and parliamentary consultation on the Strategy. It includes a proposal for the establishment of a National Security Advisory Council that would include public sector, private sector and civil society representatives. The 2013 NSS is classified Top Secret and, although it mentions the possibility of wider consultation, the Panel is not aware of any such consultation taking place. Furthermore, the Strategy is not in a form that could be effectively consulted outside of government and the security sector in particular.91 It further found the 2013 NSS as a being business plan, and that it was too time-bound to the period in which it was written. Further, it is very non-committal and unambitious in its proposals on the national security architecture.92
One of the important findings of the High Level Panel, in the context of this paper, is that:

- **A credible NSS is a crucial policy tool that sets the broad context in which the security sector functions on behalf of the nation. It is a document on which the white papers and other policy documents of the security departments and other relevant organs of state should be based.**

### 6.2 Architectural Review

The Panel recommends that, on the basis of the above National Security Strategy and other considerations, there is a comprehensive review of the architecture of the South African security community which considers, *inter alia*:

- Formally re-establishing the National Security Council.
- Refining the mandates of the intelligence departments, including defence intelligence and crime intelligence, to ensure minimum duplication and maximum coordination.

Regarding the Detailed Recommendations, it states the following:

**Policy and Prescripts**

a) Urgently draft a NSS, guided by the recommendations of this Panel, for consultation in Parliament and with the public as a basis for the further development of policy and prescript for the intelligence community.

b) On the basis of the revised NSS, bring the current White Paper up to date, retaining the basic vision, values and principles of the current Paper.

c) On the basis of the approved recommendations of this Review Report and a revised NSS and White Paper, establish a high-level task team to review all relevant legislation, regulation and directives.

**On Mandate and Capacity**

a) As part of the community-wide architectural and legislative review recommended above, serious attention be given to clearer and more focused definitions of the mandate/s of any resulting service/s as well as other sections of the broader intelligence community.

b) As a matter of urgency, the leadership of the SSA take measures to address the capacity gaps in terms of people, financial and other resources in its provincial and foreign offices. The Report bemoans under-resourcing in terms of quality and quantity of personnel, as well as in terms of financial and other resources.

**On Oversight**

a) Urgently process and promulgate the regulations governing the functioning of the Inspector-General of Intelligence.

d) Propose a review of the functioning of the Joint Standing Committee on Intelligence (JSCI).

e) Given the demands of intelligence oversight, the idea of a dedicated capacity for the JSCI needs to be explored further.
7. MONITORING AND OVERSIGHT MECHANISMS

The hierarchy of authority between the Executive, Parliament and the Defence Force is prescribed in the South African Constitution of 1996. This is emphasised in its Overarching Defence Principles namely that “The Defence Force will be subject to sound civil control by Cabinet and robust civil oversight by Parliament. Due cognisance will be given to the unique nature of the Defence Force relative to the wider public service.” Civil control and oversight in South Africa are enforced by the following principles:

- The supremacy of the Constitution and the rule of law.
- Adherence to domestic and international law, including International Humanitarian Law.

There are various oversight mechanisms over the South African military, both internally through the Defence Secretariat and externally mostly through the Parliamentary Committees.

7.1 Oversight through the Defence Secretariat

The Defence Secretariat, headed by a civilian entitled the Secretary for Defence, assists the Minister with oversight over the Department of Defence. Specifically, it is utilised as the primary tool and resource for the Minister to exercise civilian control. The Secretary for Defence also performs such functions as may be entrusted by the Minister, in particular those necessary or expedient to enhance civil control and civil oversight by the Minister over Defence; Parliament over Defence, and Parliamentary committees having oversight over Defence. She/he also exercises powers vested through the Constitution and other statutes, subject to and in accordance with any direction of the Minister without fear, favour or prejudice.

7.2 Civil Oversight

The Parliament of South Africa has a relatively strong oversight system that includes approval of defence budgets. Civil oversight refers to the oversight role of Parliament. Parliament consists two houses, namely the National Assembly and the National Council of Provinces, who participate in the legislative process in the manner set out in the Constitution. Parliamentary committees, established from the body of elected public representatives, play an important oversight role with regard to the security services. This is reflected in Parliament’s responsibility to approve:

- The finances for the security forces.
- The legislation governing activities of the security forces.
- The policy framework within which the security forces will function.

7.2.1 Parliamentary Oversight

Section 199(8) of the Constitution gives effect to the principles of transparency and accountability by providing for multi-party parliamentary committees which have oversight of the security services in a manner determined by national legislation or the rules and orders of Parliament. Three parliamentary committees manage the oversight over the Department of Defence: the Portfolio Committee on Defence and Military Veterans (PCODMV), the Joint Standing Committee on Defence (JSCD) and the Select Committee on Security and Justice (SCOSJ).

Portfolio Committee on Defence and Military Veterans (PCODMV): The PCODMV in the National Assembly is responsible for monitoring, scrutinising and investigating defence business. It consequently makes recommendations on the functions, budgetary allocations, rationalisation and restructuring of the defence organisational structure, policy formulation and any other relevant
matters. It is also empowered to deal with legislation tabled in Parliament. The functioning of Portfolio Committees is regulated by the Rules of the National Assembly.

**Joint Standing Committee on Defence:** The JSCD consisting of Members of both Houses, has been established with broad powers of oversight that can be used to investigate and make recommendations regarding the budget, functioning of defence, acquisition and procurement policy, and the state of readiness of defence. It may perform other functions relating to Parliamentary supervision of the armed forces as prescribed by law. The functioning of Joint Committees is regulated by the Joint Rules of Parliament.

**Select Committee on Security and Justice (SCOSJ).** The SCOSJ in the National Council of Provinces has an oversight role on all defence-related legislation and policy. This oversight role largely focuses on the implications for the nine provinces of South Africa. The functioning of Select Committees is regulated by the Rules of National Council of Provinces of Parliament.

Other Committees include the:

- **Joint Standing Committee on Intelligence (JSCI).** The JSCI is established by the Intelligence Services Oversight Act, 1994, exercises oversight functions in relation to the intelligence and counter-intelligence functions of the Security Services, and reports thereon to Parliament. The function of the JSCI is, *inter alia*, to review and make recommendations regarding interdepartmental cooperation and the rationalisation and demarcation of functions relating to intelligence and counter-intelligence between the State Security Agency, the Defence Force and the Police Service.

- **Standing Committee on Public Accounts (SCOPA).** SCOPA exercises oversight over all executive structures and constitutional institutions of the State on behalf of the Legislature to ensure accountability for resources and financial management in accordance with the requirements of the Public Finance Management Act, 1999, as amended.

Parliamentary oversight is however not without complications as there are critical voices on how parliament actually conducts its oversight function. Despite annual “new initiatives” to improve parliament’s oversight, the Corder Report indicates that it is influenced by both internal and external factors. Internally, resource issues such as sufficient meeting rooms, adequate content, research and secretarial support, have been mooted as challenges. On the side of Members, issues such as sufficient knowledge and experience of a specific portfolio, interests of members, as well as the seniority of Committee chairpersons, have influenced the scope and extent of oversight being conducted over a department. Externally issues such as the political system that allows political party leaders who to deploy, plays a role in the kind and quality of oversight being conducted. Similar views have been expressed in an internal document entitled the Oversight and Accountability Model.

### 7.3 Transparency of budget process

A related issue to the monitoring and oversight mechanisms, is the transparency of the budget process. This is linked to two of Parliament’s strategic priorities, namely the strengthening oversight and accountability, and the enhancement of public involvement.

The budget process in South Africa is fairly transparent, from its drafting stage to the legislative process which starts with the delivery of the actual Budget Speech in Parliament. This is followed by the implementation phase and the subsequent auditing and assessment phases. The processes followed in the committees to approve the budgets of the relevant departments, allow for public
participation where members of the public can request to address the Committee on any issue in the Budget. Citizens can also write letters to Committees on issues which they feel should be addressed in the respective budgets. The Committees’ meetings are open to the media and public and are widely reported on through especially the Parliamentary Monitor Group, which covers all meetings except those that are closed.\textsuperscript{110} defenceWeb, an online journal also reports consistently on defence matters in general, and also defence funding and its challenges throughout the year.\textsuperscript{111} Besides Parliament having an annual brochure called the \textit{Guide to the Budget}, the Department of Finance also annually distribute such pamphlets. The Minister of Finance also invites any citizen to give him “tips” on how to distribute or improve the budget on its website.\textsuperscript{112} In addition, all budget related documents are published on the National Treasury’s website within hours of the Budget having been read by the Minister.\textsuperscript{113}

Given the strategic nature of the defence force, some information will tend to be classified and not be accessible to the general public. The White Paper on Defence addresses the issue as follows: “Parliamentary and public scrutiny and debate will only be meaningful if there is sufficient transparency on military matters. A measure of secrecy will undoubtedly be necessary in order to safeguard national security interests, the lives of military personnel and the integrity of military operations. However, the governing constitutional principle is ‘freedom of information’. Exceptions to this principle will be limited, specific and justifiable in a democratic society, and will be dealt with in legislation.”\textsuperscript{114}

8. LESSONS LEARNT AND IMPLICATIONS FOR NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

8.1 Possible Lessons

- South Africa has a 2013 National Security Strategy which is classified and not generally accessible. The National Security Council is inactive, but plans are being made to re-establish it as a matter of urgency. This complicates the development of sectoral strategies for relevant departments such as the police, intelligence and defence as they have to rely on implicit deductions from the Constitution and other legislative directives to assist them with drafting their sectoral policies. A clear, unambiguous national security policy is essential to demarcate responsibilities and allocate functions in the security environment.

- The Funding of the Defence Force in general and the funding of especially Milestone 1, has been a challenge. The establishment of the inter-ministerial task team did not make any substantive progress due to various factors. The oversight and monitoring of the functioning of such task teams, should preferably be managed by the political principals to ensure that desired outcomes are achieved. The High Level Panel’s Report similarly emphasises the effective and appropriate oversight of the intelligence structures to facilitate accountability and transparency within the confines of the laws and regulations.

- Due to the lack of sufficient funding, there is a distinct possibility of a loss of defence capabilities. While alternative methods of raising revenues are being investigated, to date no progress has been made in this regard, increasing the risk of losing the capabilities. The loss of such defence capabilities often take years to replace and it is therefore being viewed as incumbent that such potential losses should be prioritised should funds become available.

- As the Minister of Defence has, on the occasion of her Budget Speech in Parliament, expressed the view that the country needs to decide whether the defence force should be mandate or budget-driven, and fund it accordingly. The policy uncertainty impacts on the roll-out of the 2015 Defence Review, especially as it relates to Milestone 1 – Arrest the Decline. Policy uncertainty not only creates a situation where departments interpret and implement decisions to benefit themselves, but can also lead to duplication and departments possibly usurping functions of other departments.
• SANDF is a national institution which relies on public support and public funds and as such it should have a constructive relationship with the public and especially the media, given that it can be a formidable ally who can support it when national interests are at stake.

8.2 Implications for National Security Strategy Development

• The re-establishment of the National Security Council will hopefully give guidance to South Africa’s National Security Policy and its National Security Strategy, and thus the Defence Policy, as well as guiding the intelligence community. This is essential as it will assist in guiding the relevant departments and especially the department of defence to draft their respective policies and strategies. It would also bring policy certainty and diminish the possibility of duplication between cluster departments.
• Given the establishment of the Inter-ministerial task team and its mandate, and especially the NSC, it is foreseen that clarity will be offered on whether the Defence Force is budget-driven or mandate-driven in order to ensure a cohesive, coordinated effort to achieve the goals of the Defence Review. The department of defence should however still pursue this issue to ensure that a timely decision is made in this regard.
• The possibility exists that alternative streams of revenue will come online to assist with the budgetary restrictions in the Defence Force. If this is realised, it would be incumbent on the department to ensure that those defence capabilities that have been neglected or lost, should either be repaired or revived. In this sense, the defence decision-makers should vigorously pursue this option given the dire results if alternative revenue is not realised.
• The level of ambition required from the political principals should be in line with the funding of the defence force or the commitments ordered should be decreased. Whether this is always possible in practice, given the mandate and orientation of defence forces - for example assist during emergencies and disasters- seems unlikely. The High Level Panel Report also calls for clarity on planning and budgeting processes as the integrity of these processes have been called into question.

9. CONCLUSION

The discussion on South Africa’s defence policy and in particular the 1998 and 2015 Defence Reviews, is challenging due to various factors that impact on its roll-out. From being accused of “backroom drafting,” to funding challenges and struggling to find the right balance between personnel, operational and capital expenditure, the South African Department of Defence has its work cut out. One of the main challenges to roll-out the 2015 Defence Review and in particular Milestone 1 – Arrest the decline, revolves around funding, even though an Inter-Ministerial Task team has been appointed to address this issue. It therefore behoves the Department of Defence to ensure that funding be realised to implement Milestone 1. A failure to do so would mean that the Department will have to return to the drawing board; will have to reprioritise its spending patterns and priorities; and review the Defence Review as soon as possible.

In the context of the development of a National Security Strategy, a recent positive development in South Africa, is the announcement that the National Security Council will be re-established. This Cabinet structure will hopefully clarify and formalise South Africa’s strategic and security interests in a policy format. The lack of a clearly defined, integrated and accessible National Security Policy to guide the national security strategy, causes a reliance on the Constitution and related laws to guide the activities of the police, defence force and the intelligence community. This may not only lead to duplication between the security departments, but also unnecessary contestation and concomitant unintended consequences. The Report of the High Level Panel recommends the urgent development of the National Security Strategy as an overriding basis for redefining and refining the concepts, values, policies, practices and architecture involved in South Africa’s approach to security. Such a strategy should be widely consulted with the public and Parliament before formal approval.
This intention clearly underlines the importance of leadership, planning, resources, consultation and accessibility; issues central to the effective development of a coherent, integrated National Security Strategy.

END NOTES

1 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996. Section 1 (d). Also see Section 55 (2) which states that (a) the National Assembly must ensure that all executive organs of state in the national sphere of government are accountable to it; and (b) maintain oversight of (i) the exercise of national executive authority, including the implementation of legislation and (ii) any organ of state. Also see Section 199 (8) in this regard. The White Paper on Defence, 1996 on page 5 also refers to this issue.


8 Mike Hough, 2006. p.10


12 The NSC is convened to ensure a rapid, coordinated and effective response to issues and events having an impact on the security of South Africa and its people.

13 Mike Hough, 2006. p.13

14 State of the Nation Address by the President of South Africa, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa at a Joint Sitting of Parliament in Cape Town on 7 February 2019. Also see High-Level Review Panel into the State Security Agency. South Africa, December 2018.

15 Referred to as “officials located in the security establishment – the police, intelligence services or the military – that have the power to influence government policy in their favour.” Jane Duncan, 2014. Advance Information. The Rise of the Securocrats. Accessed at http://www.jacana.co.za/downloads/submaterial/0.%202014/SUB_3_1_JULY_2014/PDFS/H1_Securocrats%20AI.pdf


17 As recently as 2017, the Act was amended with the Defence Amendment Bill B18 – 2017, which dealt mainly with vetting of contractors and service providers, access to military institutions regulating the Council on Defence’s meetings, display of military decorations, etc.

18 Interestingly, Section 83A states that the Chief of Defence Force and Secretary for Defence are to be on same hierarchical level in Department of Defence.

19 In the context of especially recent terrorism activities on the Continent, it is interesting to note that Chapter X is entitled “Provisions applicable in time of war or in connection with the combating of terrorism or in connection with an armed conflict outside the republic or in connection with internal disorder or other emergency.”


25 See for instance Research Unit, 2017. Tracking Parliamentary oversight of the implementation of the National Development Plan. Parliament of the RSA.

26 Research Unit, 2017.


33 Greg Mills, 2011


39 In Parliament for instance, the Portfolio Committee on Defence and Military Veterans have been accused of delaying the passage of the Defence Review, but once the Committee passed the Review the Department dragged its feet to action some of the non-financial deliverables.


41 See Annexure B of the South Africa Defence Review 2015.

42 Jackie Cilliers. 2014. p.2

43 Although Greg Mills (2011:5) expresses cynicism for the Consultative process followed stating that “government is undertaking a Defence Review virtually in secret, with a four-person committee comprising unusual political bedfellows,” it is clear that the DRC did attempt to be as inclusive as possible given its mandate, resource and time limits.

44 An Imbizo is a kind of meeting or gathering that is being called. Derived from the traditional Imbizo’s for the Zulu people by the king or a traditional leader. Accessed at https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/imbizo

45 South Africa has nine provinces: Gauteng, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, North West, Free State, Western Cape, Eastern Cape, Northern Cape and the KwaZulu-Natal.


49 For additional brief information on the Milestones also see Jackie Cilliers. 2014. p.3


52 Jackie Cilliers. 2014

53 Jackie Cilliers. 2014


55 Antho ni van Nieuwk. 2019.


58 Antho ni van Nieuwk. 2019.


64 The deployment of the Defence Force is provided for by both the Constitution (section 201(2)(c)) and the 2002 Defence Act (Section 18) and each has its own requirements to fulfill before the Defence Force can be deployed.


66 High-Level Review Panel into the State Security Agency. South Africa, December 2018


68 The White Paper on Intelligence states that sufficient resources must be invested in it by the policy and decision-makers, including finances, training and development.


73 South Africa bought 24 Hawk 100 lead-in fighter trainers and 26 Jas 39 Gripen advanced light fighters, three Class 209 Type 1400 MOD diesel-electric submarines, 30 light utility helicopters, the 109 LHU model and four Meko A200SAN corvettes.

74 Formally known as the Strategic Defence Package, the arms deal, to use its notorious nickname, was a multi-billion-rand military acquisition project finalised in 1999 by the South African government. The biggest contentious issues associated with the deal are those of corruption, excessive public spending and affordability. The total amount of public money involved was USS4.8-billion, or R30-billion at the exchange rate of the day. However, this figure does not take into account the costs of financing the deal, which, when added in, bring the total to around R70-billion. Corruption Watch 17 January 2015. Accessed at https://www.corruptionwatch.org.za/what-can-you-get-for-70-billion/


77 A general rule of thumb is that developing countries should spend around 2 per cent of GDP on defence – but as a middle-income regional leader, South Africa’s defence expenditure should be compared to that of regional leaders elsewhere. Jackie Cilliers. 2014.p.5


79 The exchange rate of the US dollar to the South African rand was $1 equals R13.95 on 28 February 2019. Access at https://www.x-rates.com/calculator/?from=USD&to=ZAR&amount=1

80 The budget for FY2018/19 decreased by 2.14 per cent in nominal terms and 7.24 per cent in real terms from 2017/18 to 2018/19.


The 2015 Defence Review emphasises a dignified, attractive exit mechanism for severance with members at specified career gateways.


The White Paper on Intelligence refers to its as an interdepartmental intelligence coordinating mechanism to coordinate the activities of the intelligence community and to act as a key link between the intelligence community and policy-makers.


High-Level Review Panel, p. 24

High-Level Review Panel, p. 46

High-Level Review Panel, p. 45

High-Level Review Panel, p. 97


South Africa Defence Review 2015. Glossary of Terms. p. xxxiii defines it as Adherence of the Defence Force to elected authority as may be primarily expressed through the Commander-in-Chief, the Executive and the Legislature.


102 The Rules of the National Assembly, National Council of Provinces and the Joint Rules of Parliament, set out the powers and functions of the respective committees.


105 In South Africa, the National Assembly is elected by closed-list proportional representation. For voters, voting is simple: they are given a ballot, which lists all the parties (with a picture of their logo) and they vote for the party list of their choice who in turn chooses the candidates. Accessed at https://welections.wordpress.com/guide-to-the-2014-south-african-election/south-africas-political-system/


108 Parliament’s Strategic Plan 2014 to 2019 identified the following strategic priorities for the Fifth Parliament, namely Strengthening oversight and accountability; Enhancing public involvement; Deepening engagement in international fora; Strengthening co-operative government; and Strengthening legislative capacity.

109 As a rule, the meetings of the Joint Standing Committee on Intelligence and the Joint Committee on Ethics and Members' Interest Committee. See for instance Joint Rules 120 and especially Schedule B and Joint Rule 125 respectively.

110 See their website at https://www.politicweb.co.za/

