

**ARMS ACQUISITION AND PROCUREMENT IN  
SOUTH AFRICA: THE SOCIO-HISTORY OF ARMS  
DEALS WITH REFERENCE TO ATTITUDES,  
STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS IN DECISION-  
MAKING (1935 - 2004) (II)**

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*This article follows on an earlier contribution that appeared in the previous edition of this journal (2005). The previous delivery discussed the secretive mindset of arms acquisition and procurement that marked the apartheid era. References were made to the pre-1948 approach under the Union of South Africa's leadership and the apartheid authoritarian and secrecy-driven approaches. The article also referred to the role of influential political leaders in the process.*

*The article addresses in more detail the historical differences between arms acquisition before 1948 (especially during the Second World War) and the role of political leaders such as Genl. Smuts at the time. These approaches are contrasted with the secretive, centralised and one-sided decision-making process of the apartheid government. Lastly the impact of past approaches on the current context of arms procurement deserves attention.*

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## 1. ARMS ACQUISITION BEFORE APARTHEID

Before and after the Union was established, Britain was the main supplier of arms for South Africa. Strong personalities in the Union cabinet such as Louis Botha and Jan Christiaan Smuts affected arms imports before and during World War I (WW I). Geldenhuys remarks: "Returning to the Union's subordinate status to Britain, a particularly important implication was that South Africa, like other British dominions, enjoyed no international status whatsoever. The British government handled their foreign relations. In practice this meant that that the British Foreign Office, via the Department of the Union Prime Minister and the Governor-General, served as the channel for South Africa's diplomatic activity" (Geldenhuys 1984:2). This implied that "(t)he Union merely possessed delegated powers directly

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to conclude administrative arrangements and agreements with other countries" (Geldenhuis 1984:2). Britain was more or less the prime supplier of whatever arms South Africa needed.

During the Second World War (WW II) personalities such as Genl J C Smuts and Piet van der Bijl again played a prominent role. Smuts decreed that the Directorate of War Supplies was directly accountable to him and not to the Chief of Staff, Lt. Gen. Sir Pierre van Ryneveld. It implied that the Directorate could bypass army regulations and act independently in producing munitions and other products (Mackenzie 1995:40).

With the advent of WW II South Africa was to be propelled into an "industrial take-off stage". The British Empire could not provide in its own defence needs as well as those of its dominions. South Africa had to look after itself for the campaigns in Abessinia and Somaliland and also had to provide arms for the war effort. In order to co-ordinate efforts for arms production, General Smuts appointed Dr HJ van der Bijl as Director-General of War Supplies. "Under his direction the peacetime industrial machine switched to war production" (Klein 1946:13). Armour-plating for fighting vehicles, gun shields and parts for ship repairs were produced. Small arms components, mortars, shells and gun spares were to follow.

Blankets, boots, socks, steel helmets and tinned foods were produced, though these formed only part of the "home-production capacity". Howitzer guns, artillery pieces, armoured cars of different variants (Mk 1 and Mk 2, and later others) were also produced (Kruger 1953:214). By May 1940 orders for South African produced armoured cars reached a 1 000. At least 50 per week had to be delivered. Names like the Mk 1 (4 x 2), the Mk 2 Marmon Herrington 4 X 4, the MK 4, Marmon Herrington Mk 6 (8 x 8) may ring a bell here (Klapwijk 1996:10-1). More than 2 000 Mk 4's were eventually built. "For a country that practically had to start from scratch in the development and production of fighting vehicles, South Africa did well..." (Klapwijk 1996:13). As Mackenzie puts it, South Africa moved from "importer to exporter" (Mackenzie 1995:40). By the end of the war South Africa had produced nearly 6 000 armoured cars, 11 000 3-inch mortars, 5 000 000 grenades and 12 000 000 rounds of small arms munitions. Half a million 25 pounder gun shells and about as many anti-tank mines were produced. Other equipment included floating barges, bridges and many more commodities (Mackenzie 1995:40). Through war production South Africa entered its "industrial take-off" stage.

South Africa imported aircraft since the South African Air Force (SAAF) was created in February 1920. It is interesting to note that according to official documentation (in a supplement to the Union of South Africa Government Gazette) the civilian South

African Airways (SAA) (which was to play a crucial role in WW II) was officially established on 1 February 1923.

The basis on which the SAAF was later to be founded was an imperial gift of 100 aeroplanes, made up of 48 De Havilland DH 9's, 30 Avro 504 k's and 22 scout type SE SA's plus 13 aircraft from, inter alia, the City of Birmingham, overseas clubs of London and Major Miller Tour (Becker s.a.: 25). The main supplier was Britain. Some upgrading of imported aircraft took place inside South Africa. As early as 1928 British DH-9's were upgraded with Jupiter engines to produce a "home-grown" variant known as the Mpala (Maxwell and Smith 1970:30). In 1928 South Africa bought Avro Avian trainer aircraft and Westland Wapiti's. Thirty-two Wapiti's were manufactured in South Africa under license. By 1935 decisions were taken to buy Walker Hart aircraft while 65 Hartbeeste were produced under licence. Two hundred more - obsolete then by WW II standards - were ordered. (Maxwell and Smith 1970:33). Eventually 26 Wapiti's, 65 Walker Hartbeeste and 52 Avro Tutors were built (Veg 2005:50). Some Hawker Hurricanes were also imported starting with a modest amount of four. The bomber fleet was modest by all standards - roughly seven bombers of British origin. A stop-gap was needed: German Junkers aircraft ordered for the SAA served as transport aircraft (11) and some were converted into bombers (18) for the West African campaigns (Maxwell and Smith 1970:36). During WW II thus, South Africa had to rely on imports of mainly British aircraft. On 31 March 1939, after a complete inventory, the SAAF consisted out of 221 aircraft (Becker:49).

Following the end of WW II South Africa returned to a peacetime army and arms production virtually ceased. The end of the World War however allowed South Africa to import surplus equipment to equip its peacetime army. US produced Sherman tanks and Stuarts (M 3's or "Honeys") and British Comet and Centurion tanks and Sexton self-propelled artillery (SPA) pieces found their way to South Africa. Sixty-three Lynx II light armoured cars were shipped from Italy to Durban. A few Lynxes were deployed for training until the British Ferret replaced them. The purchase of 200 Centurion MBT's was about the only major purchase for the Army until the 1960s (Klapwijk 1996:13). British jet aircraft of postworld war variants such as the Vampire was also acquired.

## **2. ARMS ACQUISITION AND PROCUREMENT UNDER APARTHEID**

After the National Party with its unpopular apartheid policy had come to power South Africa could until well into the 1960s rely on its previous Allied friends to import arms. British-made Saracen armoured cars, Ferret scout cars, Bedford trucks, German Unimogs, French Panhard armoured cars bolstered the South African Defence Force (previously the Union Defence Force). The French Panhard armoured car was

modified and manufactured under licence in South Africa by Sandock Austral and named the Eland. The latter remained in active service until 1996 during operations in KwaZulu-Natal. By 2000 the army council decided to put the Eland out of service in the year 2006.

The SAAF received more or less 50 Vampires from Britain and bought 34 Canadian Sabre Mark 6 fighters from Canada.

However, "times were a'changing", as the Bob Dylan song goes. By 1977 the United States imposed a mandatory arms boycott against apartheid South Africa. In future it would no more be possible to legally import aircraft such as the Canberra bombers, British Buccaneer and Shackleton maritime patrol aircraft or French Mirage jet fighters - or any other hardware. Obtaining a licence from Italy to build the Aeromacchi B 326 as trainer aircraft helped to stave off the crises as it could also act as ground attack aircraft. Here it became known as the Impala Mk I and Mk 2 and was built by the Atlas Aircraft Corporation (designation for Impala Mk I: MB 326M; Impala Mk II: MB326M/KC).<sup>1</sup>

At the last moment before the curtain of the arms embargo fell, South Africa succeeded in importing three French Daphne diesel-powered submarines and Mirage F 1 fighters. Mirage Mk III CZ's had already been ordered in 1962. Another 16 Mk III EZ's were ordered in 1965 (Veg 2005:34). Sixteen Mirage F1 aircraft followed in the early 1970s, which brought the total number of Mirage Mk III's to 57.<sup>2</sup> The Mirage Mark III's were later upgraded during the Atlas Aircraft Corporation's Cheetah program, called Operation Brakman. Some observers insisted that the Cheetahs were little more than the Israeli version of the Mk III called *Kfir* by the Israeli Defence Force (IDF), although many differences were easily recognisable.

But things were to become much more difficult. In 1963 the UN adopted Resolution 181 calling on member states to voluntarily impose sanctions on South Africa - implicitly on economic levels but explicitly regarding arms exports. By 1977 this voluntary resolution became mandatory as Resolution 418 (Steyn et al. 2003:50). As some participants in the armaments program remarked: "There was a sense of terrible isolation, a sense of having to stand up to the whole world. This feeling of being alone and left in the lurch (by perceived Western allies) soon turned into pervasive determination" (Steyn et al. 2003:50).

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<sup>1</sup> The ageing Impala Mk I and Mk II are to be withdrawn in favour of the new Bae Systems Hawk Mk 120 which forms part of the new arms deal.

<sup>2</sup> It is well-known that Israel and South Africa closely cooperated on security matters, inclusive of arms production at that stage.

South Africa now had to venture into the area of (semi-) covert arms acquisition and procurement.

Some examples will suffice: During WW I the Royal Navy carried the responsibility for safeguarding the South African coast. In 1939, however, the South African government took responsibility for its own defence, though some would call the then fleet a rag-tag outfit. Basically it was but a small ocean-going navy (Potgieter 2000:159).

Immediately after WW II's termination South Africa was able to import various British vessels under the Simonstown agreement. Between 1955 and 1963 South Africa obtained four frigates, five seaward defence boats and ten minesweepers (Potgieter 2000:163).

But the tide was changing. In Britain a Labour Party victory undermined possibilities for future deals. A corvette deal with Portugal lapsed because of delays (some because South Africa kept changing specifications) and increasing international pressure terminated the project (Potgieter 2000:176, 180).

As project *Taurus* floundered, PW Botha opened negotiations with Israel on the acquisition of six missile strike craft, named *Reshef* (Flame). He consequently informed the President of the Armaments Corporation (Armascor/Krygkor) of the decision in April 1974 - an example of centralised and secretive decision-making: Cabinet was only notified of these developments by June 1974 (Potgieter 2000:181).

If a fleet upgrade was to become possible under these circumstances non-conventional routes were to be followed. "Both South Africa and Israel to some extent became pariah states. Many countries were not prepared to sell weapons to South Africa ... it became clear that both countries had to gain from military co-operation ... South Africa had a growing armaments industry, it lacked know-how in various fields, which made Israeli assistance valuable" (Potgieter 2004:131).

The project was dubbed *Japonica*. The project team in Israel was established covertly because the project was highly classified (Potgieter 2004:134).<sup>3</sup> Others projects, though smaller, were also executed. One would assume that other projects included the development of an infantry assault weapon (here to become the R-4 and R-5), exchange of ideas on armour and (limited?) nuclear co-operation. The similarities between the upgrading of the Centurion tank (upgraded versions in Israel were

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<sup>3</sup> This was not the only arms deal with Israel, but it was one of the largest deals as shown by communication between the President of the Armaments Board and the Secretary of Foreign Affairs (Potgieter 2004: 134).

sometimes called *Ben Gurion*), in South Africa called the *Olifant*<sup>4</sup> and the upgrading of Mirage Mk III's to something similar to the *Kfir* (in SA referred to as the *Cheetah*) come to mind. Obviously there were some differences between the outcomes of the programs, but the similarities were striking.

Eventually South Africa had six strike aircraft of which three were built in Israel. The remainder were built in Durban. Further imports such as an intended frigate program never got off the ground due to international pressures and the arms embargo (Potgieter 2004:150-1).

The arms embargo resulted in the South African army being forced to rely on "home-grown" capabilities (obviously with the technical input of sympathetic stakeholders). The 1975/76 Angolan excursion named Operation Savannah proved that South Africa's ageing artillery, the 88mm G-1 Gun and the 140mm G-2, could not stand up to Soviet supplied artillery as well as expected.<sup>5</sup> South Africa also had no answer to the area weapon, a multiple rocket launcher (MRL) of Soviet origin used by the Cuban and FAPLA forces. The BM-21 MRL or *Katyusha* proved effective in area bombardment as opposed to precision bombardment and was found to have a demoralising effect on ground forces.<sup>6</sup>

On the SAAF side the most prominent addition to their fleet was the Oryx helicopter (from 1998). The South African public for the first time took notice of Project Gamble when the first photograph of the Oryx was published towards the end of 1991 in *Ad Astra*, a SAAF journal (Barnard 1999:159).

Another very interesting example was Project Rodent that resulted in the buying of five Boeing 707, 320C aircraft in 1986. For the first time ever, South Africa could do in-flight refuelling (Barnard 1999:188)

Armcor was tasked to develop artillery systems to counter the opposition in Angola. Thus the G-3 proto-type was developed and eventually evolved into the G-5 (155mm) artillery system. A motorised version (SPA), the G-6, was later developed. To counter the BM-21 Armcor developed the 127mm MRL named the *Valkiri*.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> English: Elephant. The centurion tank underwent several 'upgradings' during its service with the SA Army (*Veg* Vol. 2:16-20; and Vol. 3:20-3. The journal *Veg* refers explicitly to Israel/South African co-operation in this regard.

<sup>5</sup> The G-1's World War II version was called the 25-pounder and the 140mm G-2 was basically the 5.5inch gun from WW II origin.

<sup>6</sup> During World War II the *Katyusha* was nicknamed 'Stalin Organ'. During Operation Savannah some South African soldiers referred to it as *Rooi Oë* or *Rooi Ogies* (English: Red Eyes) due to the tell flame sighted when rockets were in flight.

<sup>7</sup> The current MRL system in use with the SANDF, evolved from the *Valkiri*, is named the *Bataleur*.

As armoured fighting vehicle (AFV), the Ratel series, capable of carrying 20mm and 90mm guns or 120mm mortars, were developed.<sup>8</sup>

### 3. FROM A SECRETIVE STATE TO PARTIAL OVERSIGHT - AND MISTAKES CREEP IN

After the unbanning of the liberation movements South Africa experienced a transition-through-negotiation from an authoritarian state to a fledgling democracy. An interim constitution negotiated by the internal and external stakeholders (the banned movements) resulted in the new Constitution of 1996 (Act 108 of 1996).

But tracking (or *trekking*, for that matter) your way into a new dispensation - especially with regard to security issues - is no easy call. Some observers and South African citizens remark (a notion that has gained public and foreign status, whether we as South Africans like it or not) that apartheid's centralised and leader-oriented system then and the new system tend to be similar. That is apart from the fact that the extremely restricted (white-only) democracy was for the most part one-party dominated and élite-dictated such as the current political-economic system.

The information scandal rocked the National Party (NP) leadership and their loyal followers/electorate. Much more recently the arms scandal rocked South Africa. The apartheid government had to send ministers, such as the Du Plessis brothers to jail for corruption, while the then Premier, BJ Vorster, as a higher profile member of the Broederbond/NP<sup>9</sup> élite had to be elevated (literally 'promoted') to State President following 'Infogate'.<sup>10</sup>

The new South African National Defence Force (SANDF) entered the 1990s with obsolete and ageing equipment and replacements were called for. Eventually an arms deal was concluded to acquire four corvettes from a German consortium; three submarines of the Class 209 MOD (Germany); four maritime helicopters (UK); 40 light utility Augusta helicopters (Italy); 28 light fighter aircraft (SAAB, Sweden) and 24 Hawk fighter trainer aircraft (UK). The cost without later escalation was roughly

<sup>8</sup> Some observers saw similarities between the Ratel, the Belgian SIBMAS as well as the Brazilian Urutu. To what extent arms manufacturers of these countries exchanged 'notes' - if any - during the development of these vehicles, is unclear.

<sup>9</sup> Following transition to democracy the Afrikaner Broederbond (AB) changed its name to the Afrikanerbond (AB).

<sup>10</sup> During the Truth and Reconciliation hearings it was speculated that some persons that had known about and had differed from the ruling NP/Broederbond élite about 'Infogate' had been "removed from society" because of their objections. The case of the civilian aircraft, the Rietbok, that had fallen into the sea in the whereabouts of the Eastern Cape and the murder of Robert Smith and his wife came under discussion.

R29 billion. Offset and counter-trade arrangements were included in the multiple-layered deal.

It was not long before some (alleged) information leaked about white-collar corruption. A debate ensued that led to various investigations. (For more detail see Liebenberg and Ferreira 2004:192f f.) The end result was that Schabir Shaik was found guilty in 2005 of a "generally corrupt relation with the Vice-President (J Zuma)" and various charges of corruption. The President, Mr Thabo Mbeki, in order to avoid international embarrassment, had little choice but to relieve the Vice-President from his duties.

The Armsgate scandal was by far not the first corruption scandal in post-apartheid South Africa/the new democracy.<sup>11</sup> But it was far-reaching and perhaps equivalent to the Infogate scandal that had rocked the NP. It was also the major test (though not the only) of the ability of the new leadership of the emerging democracy to deal with large-scale corruption.

The ANC government subsequently declared a clampdown on corruption that since 1996 has become widespread like crime that since 1994 has been a national scourge. The government, under internal pressure - and perhaps to placate the tourist market and international investors - decided to act stricter. Whether the intention to do so will be enacted, remains a question for later discussion.

#### **4. FUTURE ARMS PROCUREMENT DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES: POSSIBLE RECOMMENDATIONS?**

##### **4.1 Leadership upgrading**

The much needed upgrading or capacity building for political leadership, public sector, arms and armament production and procurement stakeholders and military staff that Dror and Hodgkinson (1983) identified and actively propagate, deserves attention here. Has South Africa made a good start?

The Defence Review Process that attempted to involve the civilian sector in defence policy debates - and perhaps the making of defence policy<sup>12</sup> - started in 1995 and was a useful initiative. But such a process needs to be repeated and optimised. More stress

<sup>11</sup> Frimpong and Jaques (1999) point out that corruption in Africa needed drastic new approaches to accountability and ethical behaviour to turn the tide. See various contributions to their edited work.

<sup>12</sup> The Defence Review Process though lacked civilian input in arms acquisition options. Rather it searched for broad 'blanket' approval on defence matters. Apart from the German delegation and some UK observers none of the arms deal contending tenderers such as the Spanish and Russians were present. As such civilians could not meet with, nor engage in, discussions with other potential stakeholders/arms providers.



should in future be placed on structures and procedures to 'open up' the arms procurement policy process and structures flowing out of it. In the past the process was unfortunately tarnished by the fact that some political entrepreneurs in cahoots with European-based defence companies misused it. Eventually, under the guise of the process, a controversial arms deal, much more expensive than anticipated, was facilitated. It led to the new democracy being blemished by the abuse of the new space opened by transition (Liebenberg and Ferreira 2004:185ff, 191ff).

The experience throughout the trials and tribulations of the arms deal has shown that there are dangers in terms of the manipulation of parliamentary committees such as the Standing Committee on Public Accounts (Scopa) by the dominant party. Measures to prevent such irregularities deserve urgent attention.

#### **4.2 Reprofessionalisation of the military**

The 'reprofessionalisation' of the military is a contentious subject - especially in South Africa. The South African military, unlike in Latin America, did not intervene in politics and kept up their role as a constitutional army, albeit within a restricted democracy. But, the SADF were called (if not cajoled) into its political profile by politicians. The SADF became involved in national politics and in oppressive action by default. In many instances it retained some characteristics of a constitutional defence force (front companies, covert operations inside South Africa and organisations such as the Civil Co-operation Bureau or CCB excluded from the argument).

Likewise the armed wings of the liberation movements adhered to the directives of the political leadership and did not gyrate into rogue forces. For this reason 'reprofessionalisation' of the South African military is a contentious subject.

There is little doubt that even a highly disciplined, well-equipped and well-trained armed force after transition to democracy from authoritarian rule is in need of re-defining its role, its relationship to the public, civil-military relations and its constitutional position - a process that had already begun in 1994. While South Africa reflected a judicious mix between a severely restricted democracy and a militarised society (bunkerstate), some remnants of parliamentary rule remained. Yet South Africa reflected a "praetorianism of a special type", namely military brought to centre stage politics, not by their own design, but by the politicians of their time. This is the type of legacy that our emerging democracy is faced with.

In their reflections on Latin America theorists like Dix and Zagorski argue that reprofessionalisation of the military is a needed imperative in new democracies. Somewhat optimistically they contend that in countries such as Argentina, the process

has brought some successes. The line between reprofessionalisation of the military and 'strategic repositioning' of the military is, however, always a fine line and not all changes result in long-term civil-military successes where political oversight over security policy is a lasting result.

"Regardless of the nature of the political culture in which he lives, the modern military officer (*and one may wish to add, the arms producer or procurer*), is orientated towards maximising his (or her) influence in politics and/or policy" (Perlmutter and Bennet 1997:103).

This argument is made about so-called established democracies. It applies more so to emerging, yet unconsolidated democracies such as South Africa. Perlmutter and Bennet cautions: "In the twentieth century, a developing country is considered to be ripe for praetorianism (read: regression to authoritarianism and non-civilian rule - our addition) when a civilian government comes to a standstill in its efforts to achieve such goals as unification, modernisation, and urbanisation" (Perlmutter and Bennet 1997:109).<sup>13</sup>

What Galbraith argued about the US military rings true. "The goal is not to make military power more efficient or (only) more righteously honest. It is to get it (and arms procurers - our insertion) under control" (Galbraith 1969:74). In the United States it did not happen. However, for an emerging democracy such as ours that got some things right and some things wrong, this is not an impossible challenge.

As much as the military are to be brought under control of a legitimate constitution, so should the instruments and processes pertaining arms procurement (decision-making) be brought under civilian scrutiny. Some progress has been made in South Africa with the relative 'opening up' of the budget process or what Van Zyl Slabbert (1992) calls "democratisation of the budget". The establishment of the Commission for Arms Control is another example. This is an important beginning, but both structures and interactive processes in this area should be strengthened. Important variables are democratic processes, where such processes refer to inputs from civil society, mechanisms of oversight (multiparty parliamentary committees - Defence and Budget, etc) that can influence the 'objective' conditions that will bear positive outcomes on an arms procurement decision-making process and structures.

<sup>13</sup> Needless to say that if no job-creation takes place, crime increases and when elite enrich themselves vis-à-vis those experiencing relative or real deprivation, the same applies; perhaps more so when self-defined minorities like "coloured" and Indian people are beginning to feel the pressures of discrimination. For the moment the current government woos the 'Afrikaners'. Seemingly self-proclaimed spokespeople for the Afrikaner regularly advise or consult with Mbeki (compare the recent 'delegation' led by Stellenbosch academic, Willie Esterhuyse to Mbeki to meet on 'Afrikaner concerns'). However, other minority groups and linguistic communities seem to be overlooked or regarded as less important.

### 4.3 The role of a vibrant civil society

Theorists over a wide spectrum have shown that a vibrant civil society can strengthen a democracy - be it emerging, 'young' or 'established'. Seldom a strong civil society allowed a state to regress to authoritarianism or *praetorianism*. Strong civil societies in an indirect and direct manner also act as guarantors for transparency and accountability. South Africa scores high on the issue of a politically educated and involved civil society. Arguably a large percentage of the stronger, competent and vocal leadership of civil society was scooped up by the new democratic state, while some others were netted by the private sector or international NGO's whose interests do not necessary dovetail with the national and regional interests of South Africa. The remainder of civil actors and citizens remained vocal enough to augur well for future civil-military relations provided that they continuously insist on their role as overseers.

Having this in mind, and cautioning that also here capacity-building and leadership-building should be an imperative, at least a sound foundation for civil-military interaction and civil impact on policy-making (also pertaining arms procurement) was laid that can be flexed and strengthened. Civil society can especially make a valuable contribution to policy-making by:

- **adding** to the agenda in respect of arms procurement decision-making;
- **criticising** set agendas and/or structures in respect of arms procurement decision-making;
- **altering** the agendas (by underplaying or overplaying certain pre-identified issues);
- and lastly, **redefining** the arms procurement or defence agenda.

This can be done through lobbying, media activity, pressure groups and concrete political activities to strengthen objective aspects of civilian-military relations or intervene in policy processes such as design, conceptualisation, implementation and execution. Moreover, the value of regular policy evaluation should not be underestimated.

### 4.4 The role of academia and NGO's

Structures and congruence between elements of the state, democratic institutions and the civil community/the citizenry/public, civilian oversight/supervision/control (even veto) can be enhanced. Perhaps the current and future role of 'home-grown' research and advocacy institutions with a strong track record should not be underestimated here. Examples are the leadership upgrading, confidence building and skill/capacity enhancement undertaken by initiatives such as the Wits Programme on Defence Management and the broad range of security issues researched and dissemination of information by the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) in South Africa. The role that

the policy and planning segments within the SA Defence Secretariat are playing provides an important impetus towards reconstruction of the policy environment. The role of universities, think tanks and critical research bodies should also not be disregarded.

#### **4.5 The media as a watchdog over policy-making structures and procedures**

From an era of imposed censorship and extreme self-censorship the South African media (printed, electronic, and visual) have been presented with new opportunities and challenges. The media as part of, or even distinct from civil society - where civil society has been absorbed by the state or institutions of mere production and profit - can play an important role in education, agenda rescheduling, changing or challenging pertaining policy processes. Institutions such as the Freedom of Expression Institute have grasped this opportunity.

While the media is currently historically well entrenched and constitutionally protected, these freedoms gained have to be retained and where necessary expanded, also with regard to critical (radical?) questioning of policy processes as to whether they are defence or arms procurement related or anything else. Part of a broader interactivity between state and civil society and the opportunities presented by an emerging democracy in the process of consolidating itself, asks for intervention and advocacy by an activist media that carves out a role for itself in the marketplace of national concerns and human progress.

### **5. CONCLUSION**

The Dutch theorist on democracy, Rolf Schwendter (1974), once said that the moral imperative of the citizen and/or individual in a state should be "to move beyond democracy as an impossibility".

Very much the same applies to defence and arms procurement.

To move beyond "the attainment of (regional and national) security as an impossibility" is at the very least a probability; yet in all cases in a democracy - 'young' or 'established' - it should be lived by citizens as a collective moral possibility aimed at reality. Few people would question the need for a disciplined, well-organised and efficient army under civilian control. Yet very few would want security institutions, an army or arms-buying managers to step outside their mandate as servants of a nation of self-chosen democrats. And to keep people elected or appointed (or 'fired') to fulfil these roles, accountability and transparency reside with the public in our democracy.

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**Veg**, No. 3, 2005