

**MINISTRY OF DEFENCE & MILITARY VETERANS**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**2987. Mr S J F Marais (DA) to ask the Minister of Defence and Military Veterans:**

Whether the Cabinet considered any other options for the long-term Defence Policy and Defence Strategic Trajectory of the country prior to adopting the 2015 Defence Review; if so, (a) why did the Cabinet approve the 2015 Defence Review, (b) on what bases were the other options excluded and (c) what are the summaries of the details of the other options? NW3301E

**REPLY:**

1. The Cabinet considered three (3) separate policy options in the development of the Defence Review 2015. Quoting directly from Paragraphs 103 – 110 of Chapter 9 of the Defence Review 2015, these were:
   1. **Strategic Policy Option 1: Maintain the Status Quo**.
      1. Should, for whatever reason, the Defence Strategic Trajectory not be achieved, the Defence Force would have to enter into an urgent redesign process to counter its current state of critical decline and attempt to establish a healthy, though significantly reduced defence capability, that would be focussed primarily on domestic matters. Its primarily domestic orientation and reduced capabilities would provide a very limited capability to: defend territorial integrity, ensure national sovereignty and support South Africa’s continental leadership role.
      2. The significantly reduced force design would have to arrest the critical decline in the Defence Force and establish limited capabilities that:
         1. are lighter and cheaper with a greater tooth-to-tail ratio;
         2. reduce the overhead costs of headquarters and command structures to single command corps;
         3. establish balance within a lighter force;
         4. reside within relatively unsophisticated main operating systems;
         5. meet a significantly reduced level of standing domestic and international defence commitments; and
         6. promote a spatially dispersed footprint.
      3. This significantly redesigned force would have to be modelled according to the following concepts for it to develop utility:
         1. A lighter, infantry-based landward capability focussed primarily on internal operations.
         2. An air defence capability focussed primarily on light, tactical mobility.
         3. A littoral maritime defence capability focussed primarily on the protection of territorial waters.
         4. A Special Force capability focussed on a limited spectrum of Special Force operations.
   2. **Strategic Policy Option 2: Implement the Defence Strategic Trajectory Independently**
      1. The pursuit of the Defence Strategic Trajectory will, over time, develop a defence capability capable of conducting major combat operations in the defence and protection of South Africa, its national sovereignty and territorial integrity.
      2. The capability created would be commensurate with South Africa’s continental leadership responsibilities, establishing the gravitas required in support of Africa’s peace and security architecture. The ability to project forces over long distances and sustain them for protracted periods of time will further bolster South Africa’s continental leadership responsibilities and influence, as well as making a significant contribution to the security of South Africa’s vital national interests.
      3. Should Government wish to pursue the Defence Strategic Trajectory on a solely national basis, it would take significant time to establish all the necessary competence and capabilities to achieve the degree of defence capability set out in Milestone 4.
   3. **Strategic Policy Option 3: Implement the Defence Strategic Trajectory in Partnership**
      1. Government may consider a course of action that would shorten the duration of the Defence Strategic Trajectory. In essence, the main point of leverage would be the extent to which Government might decide to pursue the Defence Strategic Trajectory with the assistance of either a strategic partner or a number of strategic partners.
      2. Partnering, either with a single strategic partner or with multiple strategic partners in specific capability areas, would accelerate the overall implementation of the Defence Review and the Defence Strategic Trajectory, as well as leverage a number of funding options for the trajectory.