

Global Insight covers areas of topical interest and is meant to provide the reader with an initiation to the subject and its policy implications. The analysis is meant to be simple yet elegant, and without sacrificing depth, useful to a broad policy community. We welcome and encourage comments and suggestions.

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South Africa's Defence Policy and an Updated Defence White Paper

by
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Introduction - The Need to Refocus Defence Policy

The South African National Defence Force (SANDF) has completed a large-scale integration of the country's pre-1994 military formations, while at the same time implementing a comprehensive transformation process. A new military structure and force design has emerged as a consequence of the Defence White Paper (1996) and the Defence Review (1998). However, the SANDF now faces new roles and challenges, largely unforeseen six years ago when the Defence White Paper and Defence Review were drafted. In the context of South Africa's post-1994 military evolution, there are numerous positive developments for which the SANDF should be applauded. However, the short-comings of defence policy in a wide range of areas, especially human resource planning, force preparation and design, likely future missions and long-term budgeting for new weapons purchases are now obvious. The focus on territorial defence and consequent military preparations for this role, largely identified as conventional war-fighting, has become less important as a consequence of increased continental and regional security co-operation and the urgent need for South Africa to play a more active and effective role in African peacekeeping. While the SANDF continues to play a critical role as ultimate guarantor of South Africa's new democracy, altered domestic, regional and continental circumstances require an updating and refocusing of defence policy.

Democratic Governance and Defence Policy

Given a military's inherent tendency to increase its budget and expand its influence, the relationship between the military leadership and the civilian authorities is invariably characterised by continual bargaining, negotiation, disagreement, antagonism and co-operation.

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