THE CONCEPT OF A NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY: THE CASE OF THE UNITED STATES AND SOUTH AFRICA

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ABSTRACT

During 2005 it was announced that an interdepartmental initiative to formulate a national security strategy for South Africa would be launched, with the National Intelligence Co-ordinating Committee as lead department. This had not been finalised by the latter part of 2006. Issues that arise from this are whether a national security strategy can be formulated in the absence of an integrated national security policy, and when corresponding and appropriate structures on national level are not all effectively functioning. In the United States of America, the concept of a national security strategy is well-developed, although it is not always clearly distinguished from national security policy.

1.   INTRODUCTION

It is generally accepted that policy precedes strategy, unless there is a lack of clear policy guidelines in which case strategy is based on an interpretation of certain (and often fragmented) elements of national security policy that may exist. Hence the point of departure for national security strategy should lie in the availability of sufficient guidelines on the policy level.

In the case of South Africa, although certain aspects of national security policy are present, the lack of an integrated national security policy (and national security strategy) has often been re-

1

ferred to, especially by the military establishment. Although it has also been indicated that the South African *White Paper on Defence, 1994* is to be redrafted, and which has served, together with the *White Paper on Intelligence, 1995*, as the main source for aspects of national security policy, the question still remains whether an integrated and updated national security policy is not a first priority, on which a national security strategy can then be based. In this article, the concepts of national security policy and specifically national security strategy will be discussed, followed by an overview of the current situation in the United States of America (US) where regular updates to national security documents are done. A South African case study, both in terms of the existing situation, and future intentions regarding national security policy and national security strategy, is then presented.

2.   THE CONCEPT OF NATIONAL SECURITY POLICY

Only a brief overview of the concept of a national security policy is provided, as this forms the broad framework for a national security strategy. National security policy has been defined as "(t)hat part of government policy that has the objective of creating national and international political conditions that are favourable to the protection or extension of vital national values, against existing or potential adversaries".[1]

Where Cold War thinking on national security threats and national security policy, especially in the Western interpretation, primarily tended to focus on external military threats, post-Cold War views increasingly included non-military external threats as well as domestic threats.[2] The latter was especially prominent regarding Third World national security, where threats often primarily originate internally and could even include citizens seeking protection from their own state institutions.[3] In addition to the above, the individual was increasingly emphasised as a referent object of security, although not superseding the concept of national security.[4]

National security policy provides the broad or specific objectives to be implemented and co-ordinated by national security strategy, which is the next level in the hierarchy. Both in terms of decision-

makers and decision-making, there is, however, obviously an overlap between the strategy and policy levels.

3. NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY

Classical strategists did not make a distinction between strategy and tactics and the concept of a national strategy was not established until the time of the emergence of the modern nation-state. Prior to that strategy was in fact no more than 'grand tactics'. The concept of different levels of strategy, including the tactical level, would only emerge at a later stage.[5] During the early 20th century, strategists such as Liddel-Hart, increasingly started distinguishing between military strategy and 'grand' strategy, with the latter also being concerned with maintaining peace after a military victory.[6]

In accordance with the classic view of national security and national security policy, national security strategy was largely equated with strategy within the military context. Hence, what also has been termed 'grand strategy', 'total strategy' or 'national strategy' has in this regard been defined as, for example, being "military strategy considered at the level of the movement and use of an entire nation state or empire's resources".[7] Although grand strategy overlaps with foreign policy, it is primarily the military implications of policy that are relevant in this context. Examples of this are the decision of the Allied Forces to focus on the defeat of Germany as a first priority during the Second World War, and the US policy of containment during the Cold War.[8]

In a different context, but still linked to military action, it has been stated that the "concept of grand strategy … encompasses the management of the resources of an entire nation in the conduct of warfare".[9] Diplomacy to forge alliances or to coerce another nation is also an essential part of grand strategy, as is the management of the peace following a war. Technology and strategy (as well as tactics) are closely linked, as strategy has to adapt, amongst others, to new technological innovations.[10]

The concept of the highest level of strategy (termed total strategy), being primarily military-orientated, but making provision for other fields of strategy (for example, the political, economic and diplomatic) was perhaps expounded most clearly by Beaufre in the 1960s. According to him, at the apex and under the direct control of government, is total strategy, "whose task is to define how total war

should be conducted".[11] The function of this level of strategy is to set objectives for each specialised category of strategy, and to effect co-ordination.[12] The need for a 'total strategy' on national level, was subsequently regularly emphasised, especially by the South African military establishment in the 1970s and the 1980s, as will be discussed later on.

Although 'grand' strategy was largely associated with military means during the Cold War period, some change in emphasis was already noticeable by the end of the 1970s. Collins distinguished between national strategy, national security strategy, grand strategy and military strategy, stating that national strategy combined all the capabilities of a nation, during peace as well as war, in the achievement of national interests and objectives. National strategy would, for instance, include external and internal political strategies; a domestic and foreign economic strategy; and a national military strategy. National security strategies would then be that part of national strategy which has a direct bearing on security. The compilation of national (security) strategies is then referred to as 'grand' strategy, which involves the "art and science of employing national power under all circumstances".[13] While military strategy is based on physical violence or the threat of violence, a successful grand strategy eliminates the need for violence and also focuses on lasting peace. Grand strategy, which is the domain of statesmen, therefore directs military strategy, as one of its components.[14]

In this context, grand or 'total' strategy would include "the essential guidelines and parameters for activities in all spheres of action in a coordinated strategy directed to converge on the same final goal which would be derived from the political objectives identified as vital to ensure National Security".[15] In line with this, the general military mission would correspond to a given total strategy. This would apply to both the external and the internal roles of the military.

In the current broader context, the concept of 'grand strategy' is therefore seen to specifically include a consideration of non-military forces and refers to the "art of mobilizing and directing the total resources of a nation or community of nations, including the armed forces", to defend and promote its national interests.[16]

In this regard it is also stated that national strategy "recognizes the organic relationship between foreign and domestic interests, and coordinates political, economic and military power in pursuit of these

4

interests".[17] At this level strategic guidelines are of necessity broad and general, the detail to be added at lower levels of strategy formulation. The terms 'national strategy' and 'national security strategy' are sometimes used interchangeably, although the latter is specifically directed at achieving security objectives. This confusion also extends to national security threats, where in the case of South Africa for instance, certain socio-economic issues such as poverty tend to be viewed as automatically also being national security threats. The link between various levels of strategy can be depicted as in *Figure 1*.

Drew and Snow emphasise the importance of broad national security objectives as a prerequisite for formulating a successful plan of action. If these objectives are not clear or consistent, the formulation of strategy becomes very difficult as a result.[18] These political objectives focus specifically on security and (currently in a broadened sense) form the basis for 'grand strategy', which in turn provides guidelines to, for instance, military strategy. The terms 'grand strategy' and policy are often used synonymously, but policy is in fact a broader term at a higher (primary) level of decision-making.[19]

The 'grand' strategy level has an important function in co-ordinating the various instruments of power, and is also the primary 'interface' between the military establishment and non-military instruments of power.[20]

In the next section the concept of a national security strategy in the US is discussed, as an example of a distinctive broad national security strategy supplemented by more specific national security strategies. This is followed by an overview of the South African situation.

4.   THE CONCEPT OF A NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

During 1995, soon after the end of the Cold War, a White House document titled *A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement* was published in the US. It was stated that "(t)his national security strategy assesses America's role in the new international context and describes the Administration's strategy to advance our

FIGURE 1: LEVELS OF STRATEGY

Government Policy / National Security Policy

National Security Strategy

Interdepartmental Strategies

Security/ Military	Economic	Diplomatic/ Political	Social/ Psychological
Overall or general strategy	Overall or general strategy	Overall or general strategy	Overall or general strategy
Opera- tional strategy	Opera- tional strategy	Opera- tional strategy	Opera- tional strategy
Tactics	Techniques	Techniques	Techniques

PATTERNS OF STRATEGY

interests at home and abroad".[21] It is clearly stated that not all security risks are of a military or an immediate nature, and that the US national security strategy draws from a range of instruments, of a military, political and economic nature. It focuses on the primary objectives (then emphasised by former President Bill Clinton), namely enhancing US security; promoting prosperity at home; and promoting democracy. These were viewed as "basic objectives" of US national security strategy.[22] It could of course be argued that the above are in fact national security policy objectives, with the broad means used to achieve these objectives, and the ways in which they are used, in fact forming the substance of the national security strategy *per se*. Although on the national strategic level, there are also objectives (strategic objectives) that are on a different (and lower level) than national security policy goals. It could of course also be argued that due to the fact that both national security policy and national security strategy are primarily formulated by the National Security Council (NSC) in the US, a clear distinction between policy goals and strategic objectives and means is not always drawn.

In the 1995 US national security strategy document, a number of means to achieve each of the basic three objectives referred to above, are identified. Under the basic aim of 'enhancing security', the maintenance of a strong defence capability, arms control and peace support operations are, for instance, discussed. The latter would seem to lie more on the level of national security strategy, while the primary objectives seem to be components of national security policy.[23]

The 2002 and 2006 versions of the US national security strategy largely follow the same process as contained in the 1995 version, although with different objectives and means. In the *Introduction* to the 2006 document it is, for instance, stated that the US is "at war" and that the 2006 document is a "wartime national security strategy" required by the increase in terrorism. The national security strategy is said to be based on two pillars, namely the promotion of freedom, justice and human dignity, and providing leadership to an increasing community of democracies. Again, the above 'pillars' could be equated to broad national security objectives. Specific national strategic objectives and means to, for instance, "work with others to defuse regional conflicts" and "preventing threats from weapons of mass destruction", are then listed.[24]

In the US national military strategy document of 2004 it is stated that the national military strategy supports the aims of the national security strategy and implements the national defence strategy. The latter supports the national security strategy by establishing a range of overall defence objectives that guide the security activities of the US Department of Defense. The national security strategy and the national defence strategy provide the broader strategic context for the national military strategy, in terms of objectives, missions and capability requirements.[25]

The broader national security strategy in the US does, however, not only provide a point of departure for departmental strategies such as that of the Department of Defense, but also leads, in some instances, to more specific national security strategies derived from the broader national security strategies. Examples of these are the *National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction* (2002), and the *National Security Strategy for Victory in Iraq* (2005).[26] The former document was supplemented in 2006 by a document termed the *National Military Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction*.[27] Although none of these documents refer to the 2002 *US National Security Strategy*, it is assumed that they are broadly based on the principles formulated in the broader 2002 document. The more specific national strategy documents referred to above, appeared prior to the broader 2006 *National Security Strategy* document, and therefore obviously do not contain any explicit reference to the 2006 document either. It is also interesting to note that the more specific documents refer to national strategies, and not to national security strategies, as is the case with the broader documents. Although it could be argued that a national strategy is wider in application than a national security strategy, in the sense of the former also including, for instance, aspects of socio-economic development not directly linked to security, both of the specific national strategy documents referred to above (relating to Iraq and weapons of mass destruction) are in fact directly security-related.

As far as the function of formulating national security policy and national security strategy in the US is concerned, the broader national security strategy documents (2002 and 2006) are published in the name of the President as White House documents, while the more specific *National Strategy for Victory in Iraq* is, for instance,

issued in the name of the National Security Council (NSC). The NSC is the main forum for the President for consideration of national security policy. It also serves as the main co-ordinating body for these policies among various government agencies. Similarly, it is assumed that the NSC would be the principal body for the formulation of both the broader and more specific national security strategies. In the broader sense of policy formulation, institutions such as Congress also obviously play an important role.[28]

The fact that national security strategies are articulated and documented, does of course not in itself imply that the strategies are integrated or clear and coherent or the only source for policy or strategy, as it is a continuous process. Biddle, for instance, argued in 2005 with reference to the US that "the grand strategic response to 9/11 has combined ambitious public statements with vague particulars as to the scope of the threat and the end state to be sought"., and that the result is an "incoherent — or at best, incomplete — strategy".[29]

5.   THE SOUTH AFRICAN SITUATION

A brief historical overview is provided of the concept of a 'total strategy' as it developed in South Africa in the 1970s and 1980s, followed by a description and analysis of the current structure and substantive dimensions of South African national security policy and national security strategy.

5.1   The concept of a total strategy

The concept of a 'total' national strategy to counter threats to South Africa was often used in the 1970s and the 1980s. The 1979 *White Paper on Defence and Armaments Supply* stated in this regard that:

> At national level the Cabinet is assisted by the State Security Council (SSC) and its executive agencies to fulfil duties concerning the national security of the RSA. The Department of the Prime Minister is responsible for management at this level by issuing guidelines, total national strategy directives, and total national strategies concerning national security.[30]

The State Security Council also conducted the national strategic planning process, through its Work Committee and Secretariat, as well as 15 interdepartmental committees. Co-ordination of the executive function was carried out by a National Joint Planning Centre.[31]

During 1980, the then South African Minister of Defence, General Malan, stated that it is essential that national interests, objectives and policies be clearly defined and understood prior to the formulation of any total strategy. He again emphasised the importance of a total strategy to counter the threats against South Africa.[32]

The concept of a national security strategy (total strategy) as well as the need for a national security policy and corresponding organisational structures responsible for these, were thus clearly recognised at the time.

5.2   Current national security strategy

Aspects of current South African national security policy are primarily included in the *Constitution;* the *White Paper on Defence*; the *White Paper on Intelligence* and the *White Paper on South African Participation in International Peace Missions*.[33] However, the lack of an integrated and more inclusive national security policy has been criticised on a number of occasions, especially by the South African National Defence Force (SANDF). The pending revision of the *White Paper on Defence*, to the extent that certain sections of it reflect national security policy, will most likely also include some adaptations in this regard, but probably contain few, if any, references to national security strategy.

Following the combined military intervention by South Africa and Botswana in Lesotho during 1998 to prevent an alleged military *coup*, the SANDF stated that the national security policy was not fully defined and that the necessity to perform a military intervention "came as somewhat of a surprise" to the SANDF.[34] In the 1998/99 SANDF annual report it was stated that the Directorate Operations Policy of the SANDF "sought to initiate with other government departments the beginnings of a national security policy".[35]

As far as a national security strategy is concerned, it has also been stated that "(a)n urgent need to develop a cogent integrated security strategy from its several elements that currently reside with the cluster departments was recognised. Related to this is the need

to improve the functioning of the national security management system".[36]

There is currently no known integrated South African national security strategy, and any substance in this regard is in fact far more lacking than what is the case with a national security policy, as referred to above. In this regard, the Department of Defence (DoD) has stated that:

> The Military Strategy of South Africa is derived from the Constitution, the Defence Act, the White Paper on Defence, the Defence Review and the National Security Strategy of South Africa. The need to actively promote peace and security in the region is a key tenet of the National Security Strategy, which directs the Defence Strategy.[37]
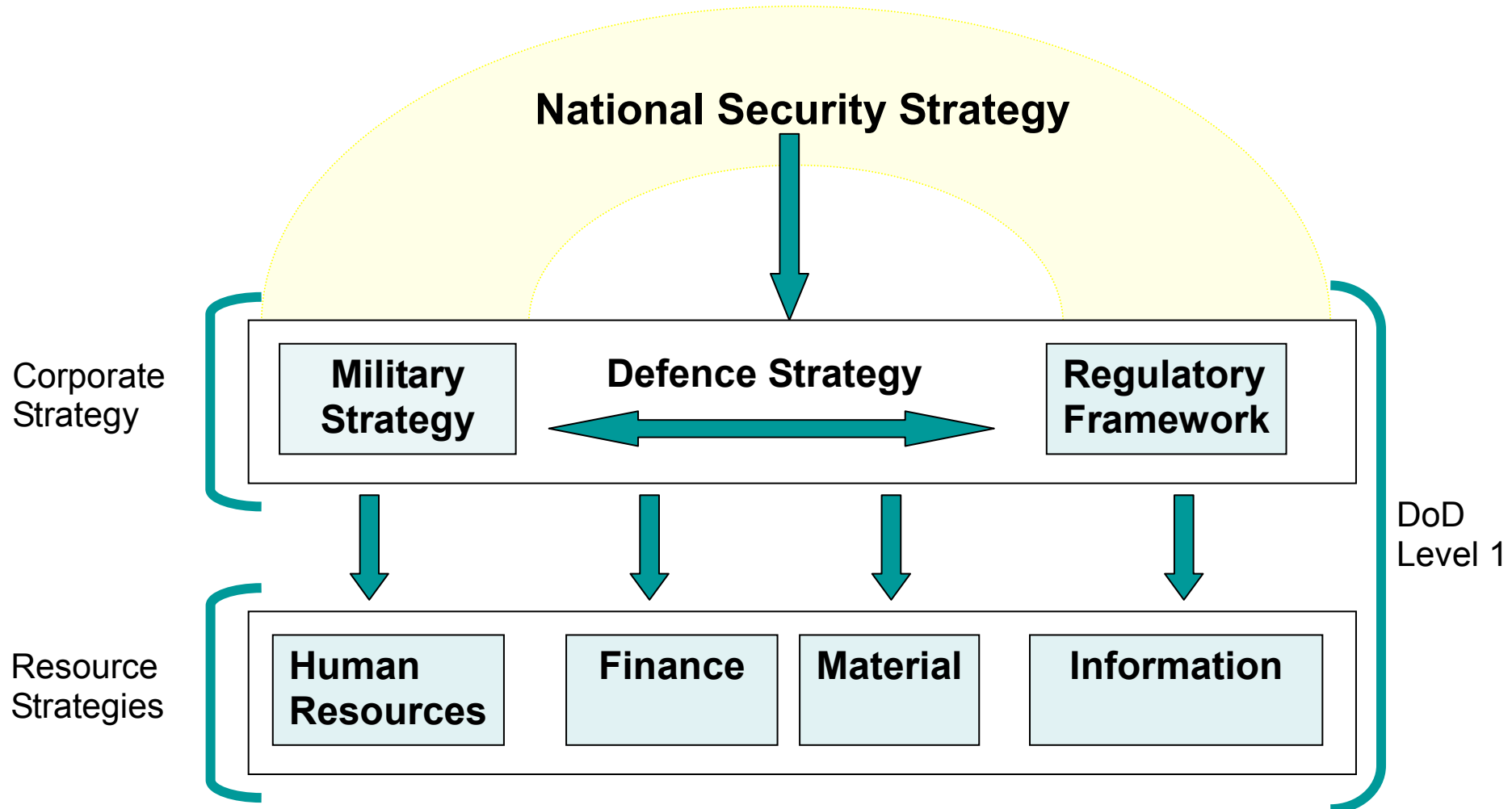
The above implies that there is an integrated national security strategy, although the DoD had stated a year previously that the national security strategy is in fact "derived" from implied national interests and the objectives of clusters.[38]

The SANDF military strategy is based on the hierarchy as depicted in *Figure 2*, although again it implies interpretation of aspects of national security policy and national security strategy to the extent that these are not articulated.

During 1995 a *Draft National External Security Strategy* was published by the Department of Foreign Affairs, but never followed up in a final version. Four 'focal areas' of the strategy were identified, namely protecting and promoting South Africa's national interests in a competitive world; contributing towards international peace, stability and security; promoting regional security in Southern Africa; and projecting a defensive and non-threatening military posture. A number of instruments were identified in this regard, for instance, diplomatic, defence, economic and intelligence. The draft document was generally formulated and contained no reference to the internal dimension of a national security strategy.[39] The *National Crime Prevention Strategy* published in 1996 does address both domestic and cross-border crime, but it is primarily a specific national strategy aimed at combating crime, and not a broader national security strategy.[40]

As far as the organisational structure for a national security

FIGURE 2: DOD STRATEGY FRAMEWORK

National Security Strategy

Corporate Strategy

Defence Strategy

Military Strategy

Regulatory Framework

DoD Level 1

Resource Strategies

Human Resources

Finance

Material

Information

Source: Republic of South Africa, Department of Defence, *Strategic Business Plan FY 2005/06 to FY 2007/08*, p 14.

strategy (and policy) is concerned, the National Security Council (NSC) is the primary body in addition to Cabinet and Parliament. The NSC, which is a cabinet committee and not a statutory body, and at the apex of six interdepartmental 'clusters', was established during 2000. The clusters include two which are specifically focused on security, namely the International Relations and Peace and Security (IRPS) Cluster, and the Justice, Crime Prevention and Security (JCPS) Cluster.[41]

The NSC is convened by the President to ensure a rapid, co-ordinated and effective response to issues and events having a particularly urgent and severe impact on the security of South Africa and its people. The Deputy President is a permanent member. The core members of the NSC are the following ministries/departments: Safety and Security; Defence; Intelligence; Foreign Affairs; Home Affairs; Finance; and Justice. Ministries/departments that should be co-opted members of the NSC from time to time whenever necessary are: Trade and Industry; Welfare; Correctional Services; and Provincial and Local Government.[42]

The functions of the NSC, *inter alia*, are to:[43]

— develop national security policy in general and with regard to specific issues which cannot be dealt with by the JCPS or IRPS Cabinet Committees;

— prioritise national and foreign security issues for the attention of Cabinet;

— exercise an early warning function with respect to potential threats to national interests and security;

— provide policy guidelines for planning to meet urgent and/or severe threats to security;

— approve plans and programs of action regarding such threats;

— direct, monitor and evaluate the execution of such plans;

— develop appropriate responses to crises;

— co-ordinate assistance to other governments in crisis situations; and

— liaise with the Cabinet Cluster Committees in relation to co-ordination or their activities regarding security issues.

The qualitative difference between its activities and those of Cabinet and the Cabinet clusters requires that it operates in parallel with Cabinet and the subordinate clusters, with the President as both head of Cabinet and Chairperson of the NSC. The NSC is not, however, a parallel bureaucracy to existing government departments and the functioning of its substructures should enhance line functional effectiveness of government departments. The NSC will, as required, liaise with Cabinet and with specific clusters and could both refer issues to Cabinet and/or its substructures when routine management can be resumed, and receive notification from Cabinet and/or the clusters regarding emerging crises, requiring NSC attention.[44]

In addition to the invitation by the President to relevant Directors-Generals (DGs) to participate in the NSC whenever deemed necessary, the NSC is supported by a National Security Directors-Generals' (NS DGs) Committee. The NS DGs Committee provides a forum for co-ordination between DGs as required, and serves as an essential link to the operational structures that will execute the decisions of the NSC. The convening of the NS DGs Committee will be determined by the President.[45] It is, however, understood that the NSC has only occasionally convened since its establishment.

5.3   Envisaged developments

In addition to the revision of, for instance, the *White Paper on Defence*, it was announced in 2005 that a national security strategy would be developed. In the same announcement it was, however, also stated that "the review of the national security policy comes after ten years of democracy", adding to the confusion between national security policy and national security strategy.[46]

In the Government's *Programme of Action, 4-12 July 2006*, for the Justice, Crime Prevention and Security Cluster, two 'actions' that are relevant here, are referred to. Firstly, it is stated that the national security strategy has to be finalised and proposals developed regarding an appropriate national security management system.[47] The National Intelligence Co-ordinating Committee (NICOC) is indicated as the lead department in this case, which of course immediately raises the question whether an intelligence body should play a lead role in the formulation of a policy or strategy, or only provide inputs

regarding threats to national security. Other departments involved in the process include *inter alia* the Department of Defence and the South African Police Service (SAPS).

No specific reference to national security policy is made, but it is secondly indicated that the NSC should be urgently reactivated. It is further stated that it is functional and has met a few times, both at the level of officials and at the level of the executive.[48]

6.   CONCLUSION

Although the concepts of national security and national security policy have been relatively extensively discussed and analysed, especially in the broader post-Cold War context, less attention has been given to the concept of a national security strategy. In the contemporary context, national security strategy would include, but not be limited to, defence and military strategies.

National security policy objectives logically precede national security strategy objectives. In the case of the US, official national security strategy documents do, however, not explicitly refer to national security policy (although 'primary' objectives are identified), and it does in fact also seem as if the concepts of policy and strategy are used interchangeably or as synonyms in some of these documents. National security strategy in the US is formulated in both the broader sense and to address more specific security issues. An example of the latter is the *National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction*.

As far as South Africa is concerned, the concept of a 'total strategy' and corresponding organisational structures were well developed in the 1970s and the 1980s. In the post-1994 period, national security perceptions were primarily contained in the 1996 *Constitution* and the *White Paper on Defence* (1994), as well as the *White Paper on Intelligence*. However, there are no explicit references to a national security strategy. The process of revision of the *White Paper on Defence* is already underway and will obviously also include some revision of the underlying principles of national security policy. Simultaneously, a process to formulate a national security strategy is also underway, but in a different forum. The basic question of course is whether a national security strategy can be formulated in the absence of an integrated, clear national security policy

(an issue that has frequently been raised by the SANDF), and whether the two processes are synchronised to the extent that a national security strategy is able to derive its guidelines from national security policy and not be formulated in isolation.

To the extent that South Africa is increasingly involved in security co-operation under the auspices of the African Union (AU) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), national security policy and national security strategy should of course also reflect this. However, the primary purpose is still the safeguarding of South Africa's own national security interests.

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