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CHAIRPERSON: Good morning. Advocate Mphaga or Ms Ramagaga.

MS RAMAGAGA: Thank you Chair. I'll be leading Lieutenant General Hechter who is now retired. He is ready to proceed.

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CHAIRPERSON: Can the witness take the oath?

(Witness is sworn in.)

MS RAMAGAGA: Thank you Chair. The witness will be presenting evidence and in order to bring more clarity relating to the adoption of the three-tier system. The bundle that will be used is just one bundle, it's bundle O, that is the only bundle that I believe has been placed before the commissioners and I will thus proceed to present the evidence of the lieutenant general.

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SOUTH AFRICAN AIR FORCE

WITNESS NUMBER 7 : LIEUTENANT GENERAL (RETIRED)
WILLEM HECHTER (Hereinafter referred to as "LT GENL
5 (RET) HECHTER"), GIVES EVIDENCE UNDER OATH

EXAMINATION IN CHIEF:

MS RAMAGAGA: Lieutenant General, you are a retired
lieutenant general formerly employed by the South African
National Defence Force.

10 LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: I am.

MS RAMAGAGA: You joined the South African Air Force in
1965?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: No, I joined the South African Air
Force in January 1960.

15 MS RAMAGAGA: Thank you. And you were involved in the
SDPP acquisition process then in your capacity as the then
Chief of the South African Air Force?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: That is correct.

20 MS RAMAGAGA: And you became the Chief of the South
African Air Force in 1998?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: No, 1st of May 1996.

MS RAMAGAGA: I beg your pardon Chair. From May 1996,
thank you Sir. You have made a statement that will assist the
Commission in its inquiry about the acquisition of the arms in
25 terms of the SDPP.

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LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: I have.

MS RAMAGAGA: And to that written statement that you have made you have also attached copy of your *Curriculum Vitae*?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: That's correct.

5 MS RAMAGAGA: And the *Curriculum Vitae* is marked as "WHH1" in your pack and that appears in page 12 of bundle O. Do you have it in front of you?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Are you talking about the CV?

MS RAMAGAGA: Yes.

10 LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Yes.

MS RAMAGAGA: Yes Sir, I'm talking about your *Curriculum Vitae*, your CV.

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Yes, I have it.

MS RAMAGAGA: Chairperson and Commissioner Musi I'd like to direct your attention to page 12, pages 12 and 13 which deal with the *Curriculum Vitae* of the witness. As you have stated Sir you joined the South African Air Force in January 1960 and you received your wings in December 1960 at the Central Flying School, CFS Dunnottar, is it correct?

20 LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: That's correct.

MS RAMAGAGA: And you qualified as an air traffic control officer AFB, Waterkloof, Pretoria?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: That's correct.

MS RAMAGAGA: And you also qualified as a flying instructor at the Central Flying School, Dunnottar.

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LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: That's correct.

MS RAMAGAGA: Now I then proceed to deal with your postings within the Air Force or within the South African Defence Force then which was later called the South African National Defence Force. Now you were a flying instructor at the Central Flying School Dunnottar, is it correct?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: That's correct.

MS RAMAGAGA: You were also later posted to be a flying instructor of the 8 Squadron, AFB, Bloemspruit, Bloemfontein.

10 LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: That's correct.

MS RAMAGAGA: And then you were also posted to be a flying instructor 4 Squadron, AFB, Swartkop, Pretoria?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: That's correct.

15 MS RAMAGAGA: Now can you just explain to the Commission as to which equipment you were appointed to be a flying instructor at the three institutions or squadrons as indicated in your *Curriculum Vitae*?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: I was a flying instructor at Dunnottar, Bloemspruit and Swartkops on Harvard aircraft.

20 MS RAMAGAGA: Now you were also appointed as the pilot attack instructor, do you confirm?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: That's correct.

MS RAMAGAGA: Will you explain to the Commission as to which equipment you were a pilot attack instructor in respect of?

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LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: I was a pilot attack instructor on Vampire MK1 and MK2 aircraft at 85 Advanced Flying School, Langebaanweg.

MS RAMAGAGA: Thank you. And then you were a member
5 of the Silver Falcons Aerobatic Team?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: That's correct.

MS RAMAGAGA: Will you explain to the Commission as to what it is that you do as the member of the aerobatic team?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Chair, the Silver Falcons Aerobatic
10 Team is renowned throughout South Africa, it's a four ship aircraft, it's a formation of four aircraft doing formation aerobatics used primarily to promote the South African Air Force throughout the country.

MS RAMAGAGA: Right, thank you. And now let us proceed
15 to deal with your appointments within the Force. You were appointed a flight commander at the Air Force Base Pietersburg, is it correct?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: That's correct.

MS RAMAGAGA: Can you explain to the Commission as to
20 what that appointment involved?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: We were flying Vampire MK1 and
MK2 and it was the basic weapons training of the pilots that have received their wings on their way to the frontline fighters, so we did basic weapons training at 85 Advanced Flying
25 School.

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MS RAMAGAGA: Thank you. And then you were a pilot 1 Squadron, the Air Force Base in Pietersburg, can you explain as to what that involved Sir?

5 LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Sir it was a new aircraft, for me a new aircraft, 1 Squadron was flying Sabre's, Sabre K6 at that stage again and I was an ordinary pilot on the squadron.

MS RAMAGAGA: And then you were appointed as the flight commander 2 Squadron Air Force Base Waterkloof in Pretoria. Will you explain to the Commission as to what that entailed?

10 LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: A flight commander at 2 Squadron, we were flying a Mirage 3E and 3D and we were training new pilots coming through the system onto the Mirage aircraft.

MS RAMAGAGA: And then you were also appointed a flight commander Advanced Flying School in Pietersburg, can you just inform the Commission as to what the Advanced Flying School would be involved in, in terms of training?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Chair that is where we trained the pilots coming from the basic flying training aircraft at Langebaanweg which was the ASTRA, and at some stage again 20 the Impala MK1 and MK2, we were training them on Impala MK1 and 2's, on Sabre's and Mirage 3 aircraft to do basic and advanced weapons training.

MS RAMAGAGA: Thank you. And then you were appointed as the officer commanding 1 Squadron, the Air Force Base 25 Waterkloof, Pretoria. Will you inform the Commission as to

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what post, what that post entailed?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: As officer commanding of the Advanced Flying School it was my duty at the time to make sure that syllabi that Air Force Headquarters provided for the training of pilots had to be complied with in the times and dates set down by Air Force Headquarters.

MS RAMAGAGA: Right, and then you were appointed the staff officer Fighters at the Air Force Headquarters in Pretoria, will you please inform the Commission as to what that job or that appointment entailed?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Chair I think you skipped one, officer commanding 1 Squadron at Air Force Base, Waterkloof.

MS RAMAGAGA: I beg your pardon, will you then first deal with this, the one that I had skipped, is it officer commanding 1 Squadron? Yes, please go ahead and explain to the Commissioner what it entails.

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: 1 Squadron was based at Air Force Base Waterkloof, flying Mirage F1-AZ's at that time, the AZ is the ground attack version of the F1 aircraft and I was the officer commanding preparing the squadron for its mandate.

MS RAMAGAGA: Shall you then proceed to explain about the staff officer Fighters position that you held in Pretoria?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: The staff officer Fighters at Air Force Headquarters, he controls the flying programmes of all the fighter squadrons in the Air Force and he makes sure that

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the different fighter squadrons comply to what the syllabi lays out for them.

MS RAMAGAGA: Now when you say you have to control or deal with the flying progress of all the squadrons for what
5 purpose would that information be required, the progress report?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: It was to make sure that the pilots that you send to the squadron qualified and they were kept up to date with the progress that they made and that they are fully
10 qualified, that they could be utilised wherever necessary at any time.

MS RAMAGAGA: Would that then include the readiness of members of the Force for employment or for progressing to the next level of training?

15 LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: It would be both Chair, progressing to the next higher level and preparing as you said.

MS RAMAGAGA: Right, thank you. Then you were appointed the senior staff officer Fighters Air Force Headquarters in Pretoria. Will you explain as to what that
20 entails Sir?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: That was just a next higher level and this primarily had to do with the update of the syllabi that we used to fly, making sure that we stayed abreast of developments throughout the world like for instance air
25 combatting maneuvering or whatever the case might be, that

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was the primary job of the senior staff officer Fighters.

MS RAMAGAGA: Right, thank you. Then you were appointed the military advisor Department of Foreign Affairs in Pretoria. Will you explain to the Commission as to what that post entailed?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: I was appointed a military advisor Department of Foreign Affairs and posted to Israel where we did the job of a military attaché, so it means having connections with the Israeli Air Force and the South African Air Force as a go-between between the two air forces.

MS RAMAGAGA: Can you also perhaps develop to some extent on what your responsibilities and duties entailed? You have told us about going to Israel but what was your responsibility, especially with regard to advising that department, the Foreign Affairs Department?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: It had to do with, once again with flying training syllabi as well as possible modifications to aircraft and updates, that was the primary job.

MS RAMAGAGA: Why is it that this advice position [sic] had to be for or for the Department of Foreign Affairs and not the Department of Defence?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: That was a political decision Sir, I cannot say any more, I don't know why.

MS RAMAGAGA: Thank you. Now shall we proceed to the next position that you were appointed to or the other position,

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the officer commanding Air Force Base Pietersburg, can you explain as to what that position entailed?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Air Force Base Pietersburg at that stage of the game had 85 Advanced Flying School, consisting
5 of three flights, Mirages, Sabre's and Impala's, so the job of the officer commanding was to make sure that the Air Force base as such could support the flying squadrons so that they could maximise the flying effort, they were also making sure that the spares arrived on time, that the admin was right, that
10 people got their pay, that the air traffic control officers were doing their duty, so it was, that was more or less, it was all-encompassing.

MS RAMAGAGA: Right, thank you. Then the ... You were also appointed as the officer commanding Western Air
15 Command Windhoek, South West Africa, can you explain as to what that position entailed?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: The job as an officer commanding Western Air Command entailed supporting the air forces or the air force elements that came into South West Africa and went
20 to the border, that was the job of the officer commanding Western Air Command.

MS RAMAGAGA: Then you were appointed the director Force Preparation Air Force Headquarters in Pretoria, can you please give us information on what that job entailed, what you
25 were responsible for?

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LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: The director Force Preparation was in charge of all the forces, Transport, Helicopter as well as Fighters and with him on his staff he had senior staff officer Fighter, senior staff officer Transport and senior staff officer Helicopters, and the duty of this director Force Preparation was to make sure that the forces were combat ready. The different squadrons whether they're Transport or Helicopter or Fighter, that they were combat ready to be utilised as and when needed.

MS RAMAGAGA: Thank you. And then you were appointed the deputy chief of Staff Operations at, and you were stationed at the headquarters Pretoria, can you explain as to what that position entailed?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Within the Defence Force an arm of the service, either the Air Force or the Navy or the Army or the Medical Core, they do not do operations on their own, forces are delegated to, staff or chief of Staff Operations at Defence Headquarters and operations are monitored and controlled from there. So, this was my job to support the chief of Staff Operations in the conduct of operations decided on by whoever made the decision.

MS RAMAGAGA: Thank you. And then you were appointed the chief of Air Staff Operations, the Air Force Headquarters, Pretoria. Can you please explain?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: That was, the job entailed to make sure that all the elements that combined to make up the Air

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Force was combat ready at any time.

MS RAMAGAGA: And then you were appointed the chief of Air Staff, Air Force Headquarters Pretoria, am I correct to say this position is actually the equivalent of the deputy chief of the Air Force?
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LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Chair although it's not said, I mean it's not in the papers like that but it's accepted within the Air Force that the chief of staff, chief of Air Staff is the deputy, is the *de facto* deputy command role in the Air Force and this job entailed not only the operational side, checking on the chief of Air Staff Operations but also on the administrative side of things, the Air Force as a whole to make sure that the Air Force as a whole, operations, administration, personnel, stores, whatever, operated as a single unit.
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MS RAMAGAGA: Right, thank you. And then you were appointed the Chief of the Air Force from the first day of May 1996. Can you explain to the Commission as to what were you, what your responsibilities were?
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LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: The responsibility of the Chief of the Air Force is to make sure that the Air Force as such is combat ready at all times. He is also a member of the Military Command Council and that's it. And ... Sorry yes, that's it.
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MS RAMAGAGA: And you served in that position until you retired?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: That's correct, 29th of
25

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February 2000.

MS RAMAGAGA: Thank you. Now General, will you please inform the Commission as to which approval forums were you appointed to or would you serve on by virtue of your position as the Chief of the Air Force?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: As Chief of the Air Force I was automatically the chairperson for the Air Force Command Council, sorry as Chief of the Air Force for the, I was appointed, I was automatically the chairperson for the Air Force Command Council which later became the Air Force Board and I was also a member of the Military Command Council with the other arms of the service and the Chief of the South African National Defence Force.

MS RAMAGAGA: Now can you please inform the Commission as to the relevance of the position of the chairperson of the Arms Force Command Council?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Air Force Command.

MS RAMAGAGA: Air Force Command Council, I'm sorry, in relation to the acquirement of armaments, irrespective of whether that is during the SDPP era or prior to that?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: The Chief of the Air Force has to lead the Air Force Command Council, give directions and instructions and make sure that those instructions and directions are carried out, that's the primary job of the Chief of the Air Force, to lead and direct.

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MS RAMAGAGA: The, in relation to the acquisition of armament equipment did the Air Force Council or Command Council have the power to make any approvals or did it only have the power to make certain recommendations, and if its powers were restricted to recommendations to which level would the recommendations be presented?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: The Air Force Command Council had the authority within themselves, but to the next higher level which was the Military Command Council it only made proposals.

MS RAMAGAGA: And can you then inform the Commission about the powers of the Military Command Council with specific reference to acquisition of armaments prior to the SDPP as well as during the SDPP or procurement era?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: As far as I know Chair the Military Command Council made decisions and their decisions was sent through or was proposed to the next higher level which included the Minister, the Deputy Minister, the Secretary for Defence and the Chief of the South African National Defence Force, so those were the steps.

MS RAMAGAGA: Now will you then turn to page 13 of the bundle? Please, page 13, 1-3 Chair, the next page. Thank you. Firstly let us deal with your qualifications within the South African Air Force or relating to the South African Air Force aircraft, will you give us information relating to your

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qualifications in relation to the Harvard, Vampire, Impala and the rest, as to what type of experience that gave you.

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: The Harvard aircraft was used for basic, for basic flying training initially, it was also used on the
5 citizen force squadrons for the citizen force pilots to fly doing normal general flying and weapons training. The Vampire's which was an old British jet aircraft was flown at 85 Advanced Flying School doing basic weapons training in preparation for going on to the next step. The Vampire was replaced by the
10 Impala, the Aermacchi Impala MK2 and 2 doing the same job, basic weapons training and preparing young pilots for the next step.

The Sabre was a single seat aircraft, there was no dual involved and it was a fighter used during the Korean War,
15 so it was also an old aircraft and it was used for advanced training before going on to the Mirage's. Then you had the Mirage 3E and D, the E was a solo and the D was the dual aircraft, then the Mirage F1 was the ground attack version, the F1-AZ, and then the Dakota was an old transport aircraft that's
20 been on the SAF inventory since 1945.

MS RAMAGAGA: Thank you General, and I notice from your CV that the total hours that you had flown at the time of retirement either from flying or even from the Air Force was about 3 873 hours, is that correct?

25 LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: That's correct Chair.

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MS RAMAGAGA: Now we have been informed by other witnesses that testified before you that the highest accolade or medal that would be awarded to a person that has flown for the ..., for about 2 500 hours would be gold wings and you had
5 flown 3 873 hours, is it correct that you were awarded the gold wings after flying 2 500 hours?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: (No audible answer).

MS RAMAGAGA: Now shall we proceed to deal with your qualifications. You have already informed the Commission
10 about your experience as a flying instructor and it is correct that you were able to be an instructor as indicated earlier in your evidence because you had qualified as an A1 flying instructor, as a pilot attack instructor, as an air traffic control officer, is it correct?

15 LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: That is correct Chair.

MS RAMAGAGA: And it is also correct that you have also qualified as a senior command and ... You have also qualified and obtained a course on senior command and staff training.

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: That is correct.

20 MS RAMAGAGA: And you have also qualified in respect of the Joint Staff Course, South African Defence College, Pretoria, you qualified from that College?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: That is correct.

MS RAMAGAGA: Thank you. Is there anything that you
25 want to talk about in relation to your qualifications that would

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have contributed to these qualifications that I've just stated now that would have contributed to your suitability to assist and contribute towards the Air Force requirements within the armament capabilities?

5 LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Yes Chair, I would just like to mention that I think 40 years' experience qualifies me to come before the Commission.

MS RAMAGAGA: Now is it correct that by virtue of those qualifications you would also, and also plus the experience that
10 you had, you would be suited to even assist to advise the Defence Force about the suitable systems or fighter systems that should be engaged?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: I surely believe I am in that position or I was in that position.

15 MS RAMAGAGA: And in actual fact from your CV it is clear that you actually, having acquired your wings, you then went ahead to train SA fighter pilots?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: That is correct.

MS RAMAGAGA: Will it be fair to say you would be even
20 more suited to advise the Defence Force about the suitable systems that relate to the fighting or the air fighting power?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: I certainly believe I can make a suitable contribution in that regard.

MS RAMAGAGA: And it is in fact correct that you have
25 during your tenure not only as the Chief of the South African

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Air Force but even as a member of the South African Air Force in different positions and designations, you have at different levels made your contributions towards the advice on suitable systems, fighter systems?

5 LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: I believe I did Chair.

MS RAMAGAGA: And among the advice that you have, or your contributions that you have made you also contributed in relation to the retention of the three-tier system, we already do have evidence that indicates that there was a time when the
10 South African Defence Force was in a dilemma and it had to decide on whether to settle for the two-tier system or to retain the three-tier system, do you confirm that you participated even in that space?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: I did Chair.

15 MS RAMAGAGA: Thank you. Shall we then proceed to deal with your decorations and medals. You were awarded the Star of South Africa Military Class 2, will you inform the Commission as to what that entails?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: I really don't know what the
20 contents of all these decorations are, I mean what the wording is, but I was awarded the Star of South Africa Military Class 2 by President Mandela when he retired, with the Chief of the Defence Force, the Chief of the Navy, the Chief of the Medical Services and other personnel, but what exactly the wording is I
25 cannot, I cannot say.

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MS RAMAGAGA: Where you can General please indicate as to what a particular medal or decoration would signify. I now proceed to record the decorations and medals that were awarded or conferred to you, the Southern Cross Decoration, are you able to elaborate on that decoration?
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LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: As far as I know Chair it was duty of the highest level, that's all I can say at this stage of the game.

MS RAMAGAGA: Thank you. And the Southern Cross Medal?
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LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: The same.

MS RAMAGAGA: Then you were awarded the Military Merit Medal, are you able to deliberate [sic] on that?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Yes, I received the Military Merit Medal during the early 1960's, we were working with the Portuguese in Angola and I was an air liaison officer on certain locations and I received that military medal for services in Angola.
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MS RAMAGAGA: Thank you. And then you were awarded the medals for the good years of service for the periods 10 years, 20 years, 30 years and 40 years respectively.
20

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: That is so, and having not had any demerits against my name you qualify for these medals.

MS RAMAGAGA: So these medals, it's not a given that as for as long you have served 10 years you get them, it depends
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on whether there have been some demerits or not?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: That is correct Chair.

MS RAMAGAGA: Thank you. The Southern Africa Medal, are you able to give some information on that?

5 LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: No Chair, I really don't know.

MS RAMAGAGA: And the Pro Patria Medal Sir?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: The same, I really don't know what it entails.

10 MS RAMAGAGA: But it is correct that the Pro Patria Medal would be given for the same reason to even other members of the Force or would it be individualised, what is the position, do you know?

15 LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Well Chair, as far as I can remember everybody in the Defence Force from the lowest ranks to the highest ranks, I'm talking about the Defence Force as a whole, could qualify for the Pro Patria Medal.

MS RAMAGAGA: Okay, thank you. And then you were awarded the UNITAS Medal, will you explain as to what that entails?

20 LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Chair, this was done in 1994, 1995 when we all merged, MK, old South African Defence Force, APLA members, we all got the medal to signify the merger.

MS RAMAGAGA: That is when all statutory and non-statutory forces were integrated.

25 LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: That is correct.

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MS RAMAGAGA: And then you were awarded the General Service Medal.

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Chair, I cannot comment. I don't know, I don't know what the content of that is.

5 MS RAMAGAGA: Thank you General. May I just indicate to the Chair that the, as already stated the general retired way back in the year 2000 and since he's out of the Force he did not have the benefit of looking at the files and refreshing his memory about the respective medals and awards and it is for
10 this reason that he has not been able to give the Commission full information about the reason why each of those medals were conferred upon him. And maybe I should also even indicate to the Commission that the decision to call the general was done at short notice, so he did not have the luxury of
15 finding time to secure the information from the Department of Defence. I would now like to proceed to deal with the evidence as contained in the statement, shall we then revert to the page 1 of the bundle General. Are you there Sir?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Yes, page 1 of my statement.

20 MS RAMAGAGA: Yes. Maybe before we deal with page 1 do you confirm that this, you have signed this statement as appears on page 11 of the statement?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: I have.

MS RAMAGAGA: And this statement was signed this
25 morning?

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LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: That's correct.

MS RAMAGAGA: Now shall we then proceed to deal with the statement, firstly the, we deal with the mandate, the mandate of the South African Defence Force, will you please take us
5 through that without necessarily reading from the document, if you want to make comments relating to the mandate of the South African Defence Force please do feel free to do so Sir.

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Chair, the mandate of the South African National Defence Force is set out on page 2,
10 paragraphs 5, 6, 7 of my statement and when we talk about the South African National Defence Force we talk about the arms of the service, the different arms of the service, the Army, the Air Force, the Navy and the Medical Core as well as the different staff divisions, Logistics, Intelligence, Personnel *et cetera*.
15 And the defence functions is set out in paragraph 7, quite clearly in paragraph 7.

The Defence Force as such is the guardian of the Constitution, it does not, it is not controlled by any political party or anything to that effect but it's the guardian, the way I
20 understand it the Defence Force, South African national Defence Force is the guardian of the Constitution of this Republic.

MS RAMAGAGA: Thank you. Shall we then proceed to page 3 of the statement where we are dealing with the rationale in
25 acquisition of the Hawk's and the Gripen's. It is correct as you

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have already stated General that you were involved in the acquisition arising from the SDP Packages or procurement and you were also in fact involved in an attempt to procure armaments shortly before the SDPP's came into place, am I
5 correct?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: That is correct Chair.

MS RAMAGAGA: Right, shall you then proceed to deal with the rationale in acquisition of the Hawk's and the Gripen's?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Chair, I would like to start off by
10 taking you to the Air Force Design prior to the SDP, and I'm talking about the fighter line specifically, I'm not talking about the helicopters, I'm not talking about transport (indistinct), I'm talking about the fighter line specifically. In the fighter line we had pre-SDP we had a three-tier system consisting of ASTRA
15 on which we did our basic flying training for all the young pilots in the Air Force up to wings standard.

The second level in the Air Force Design in that three-tier system was the Impala MK1 and MK2, and the third line was the frontline fighters, Cheetah-D and E, D standing for
20 dual and E for the single seater. That was what we had prior to the SDP. In addition to that the Impala MK1 and MK2 we did not do a midlife update on them because of a lack of funds, there was no funds available to do a midlife update and thereby extending the service life of the Impala. The planning for
25 the Cheetah-D and E was that they should be phased out of

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service, the dual aircraft in 2008 and the single seat aircraft in 2012, that was the planning pre-SDP. I don't know if there are any questions at this stage of the game.

MS RAMAGAGA: We do have a portion where we are dealing
5 with the full explanation of the three-tier system, the capabilities of the Cheetah-D and the Cheetah-C respectively and that we will deal with in detail when we arrive at that portion of the statement but for now we would like you to just take us briefly through the rationale for the acquisition and
10 then you will notice that when you turn over to page 4 then there is an explanation of the different systems.

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Chair just to, on page 3 there were two fighters I mentioned, a light fighter and a medium fighter. When the SDP's started there was, the Air Force was looking at
15 both systems, doing studies on both systems, studies only at the beginning of the SDP. As far as the helicopters are concerned the combat support helicopters or the Rooivalk was purely a Government decision to acquire them, to go ahead and to buy them because they were manufactured at Denel factory
20 near Johannesburg.

The maritime helicopters was an Air Force requirement supported by the South African Navy. Because of the new frigates we had to have helicopters on those frigates to optimise the weapon systems of the frigates, and the
25 transport helicopters speak for themselves, we needed to

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replace the old outdated Puma helicopters that was in service, they came to the end of their service life and they had to be replaced and that's the rationale behind the numbers given to you on page 3.

5 MS RAMAGAGA: Shall we then proceed to page 4, or sorry, sorry Chair, page 4, the explanation of different systems. Maybe before you commence with your evidence in this respect General I should bring it to your attention that witnesses from the Air Force have testified and given the Commission an idea
10 about the three-tier system to say the Pilatus would be the entry level, as at the relevant time then it would be the Impala and then it would be the Cheetah-D and C respectively, and even in respect of the helicopter there was an indication that the Pilatus would still be the one that comes first and so forth.

15 Now in order to give the Commission a clearer understanding about this three-tier system I would like you to, I would like to invite you to talk about the three-tier system in respect of the fighter system, in respect of the rotor system as well as in respect of the transport system, these three,
20 because when you do that at least you would be able to inform us that the entry level would be the Pilatus for all three and then the split for the three then happens at the second tier. Please take us through, thank you.

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Chair all basic training for our
25 would-be pilots up to and including their wings, receiving their

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wings is done on the Pilatus aircraft, all basic training, so all pilots in the Air Force receive their wings on the Pilatus. After they have received their wings they are now considered qualified pilots but they still need a lot of experience. Then

5 the Air Force splits them into three different lines, the transport line, the helicopter line and the fighter line, and this place, this splitting is done in consultation with the young pilot personally because some young pilots prefer flying helicopters, some prefer flying transport, some prefer flying fighters, so in

10 consultation with the young pilot the decision is made, but ultimately the Air Force requirement must be fulfilled.

So, if at any one stage of the game the Air Force needs more helicopter pilots than say for instance fighters or transport, young pilots, the second choice pilots, I mean where

15 their second choice is for instance helicopters, they will be screened into the helicopter line, so that's the basis of everything. Then in the fighter line once they finished on the Pilatus they go to the basic weapons training aircraft which at this stage of the game was the Impala MK1 and MK2. Then

20 after they've done their basic and some advanced weapons training on the Impala's they go to the Cheetah-D and E. That fulfills the fighter line.

The helicopter line, they do their wings on the Pilatus, the same as everybody else, then they go to the

25 helicopter flying school in Bloemfontein where they flew prior

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SDP the Alouette, the Alouette III and from there they went to the squadrons converting onto Puma's and Oryx aircraft and those are, that's the three-tier system in the helicopter line.

5 In the transport line the same thing, wings on the Pilatus and then they would go to squadrons with light transport aircraft like the Cessna-185 and I can't remember the other one now but there's another one, also single seat, then onto the Casa 212 or Dakota aircraft which is twin-engine and eventually on to the C130 which is our major transport carrier
10 in the Air Force, a four-engine, and those are the systems used by the Air Force to qualify their pilots and to make sure that they are operationally available and utilisable as and when the needs arise.

MS RAMAGAGA: Thank you. Are you then, can you inform
15 the Commission about the life cycle of this equipment generally?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Chair it is accepted worldwide that flying systems have a 30 year life cycle but that in the middle of this life cycle from the 13th to the 17th year, more or less
20 over that four year period, a midlife update is done to ensure that the aircraft will be available and utilisable for the full cycle of 30 years, if you do not do that midlife update you start placing restrictions on aircraft with regards to their flying and they become a flying safety hazard, so you are forced by
25 circumstances to withdraw them out of the system.

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MS RAMAGAGA: Right, thank you General. Shall you then proceed to page 5 of the bundle? Now at this stage I would like you to talk about the Air Force inventory, specifically the aircraft that you have been mentioning in passing, can you now concentrate and maybe we deal with the Cheetah-D, the Cheetah-C, the Impala, the (indistinct), the Alouette please.

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Okay the Cheetah-C and D, those were old airframes, or the original aircraft, I beg your pardon, the original aircraft was bought in 1963, 1964, 1965, and throughout time they received their necessary midlife updates and even beyond that, so they could be utilised until as I said previously, the single seater up to 2008 and the dual up to ... Sorry, it's the other way around. The dual to 2008 and the E to 2012.

Then because of safety restrictions you had no option but you had to take them off the inventory and they, that was the end of their service life within the Air Force and the South African National Defence Force. That's the Cheetah-C and D. The Impala MK1 and 2, they were brought, they were bought from Aermacchi, the Italian firm in the late 1960's and up into the 1970's, the MK1 was, the dual seater was initially bought and the MK2 which is the single seater which has a better weapons capability than the 1 was bought later up to 1975, but these aircraft were used at 85 Advanced Flying School and they also replaced the Harvard aircraft at our

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citizen force squadrons.

Due to a lack of money and no funds being available the Impala MK1 and the Impala MK2 there was no midlife update done on them, the only modifications done to those aircraft were safety modifications to make sure that the aircraft was safe to fly and we will not kill anybody unnecessarily, but in time the problems arose and we had to place restrictions on individual aircraft, G-restrictions and everything like this, so you had a fleet of say, I can't remember the exact number, say you had a fleet of 30 or 40 aircraft you had, every aircraft had its own restrictions which make it near impossible for young pilots to fly it in safety because he had to swot-up every aircraft's restrictions, G-restrictions and everything that came with it, so the Air Force was compelled to retire the Impala MK1 and MK2 ASAP because there was no midlife update done.

MS RAMAGAGA: Thank you General. Can you just explain to the Commission as to what the safety, the flying safety modifications involve, what is it that would be done to the respective aircraft?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: We're talking about flying modifications to the ejection seat, we're talking about flying modifications to the instrument layout and to the instrumentation, we're talking about flying modifications to the wings and to the undercarriage as well as the tail plate because sometimes you had small or finer cracks on the

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undercarriage or the oleos as we refer to them, and you had to replace them, so these were the safety modifications we did to ensure safe utilisation of the aircraft for as long as possible.

MS RAMAGAGA: Right, thank you. Shall you then proceed
5 to deal with the Alouette?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Chair the Alouette was in the same boat, they were bought, the Alouette II and III were bought in the early 1960's, the Alouette II was phased out quite some time ago but we continued with the Alouette III as the basic
10 platform to learn young pilots to fly helicopters. Also due to a lack of funds they were never, and a midlife update was never done on them, they also as the years went by we also had safety modifications done on them to ensure that they could be utilised safely and that's the reason why pre-SDP the Air Force
15 requirement for the replacement of major systems, our first priority was the Alouette, we replaced that, our second priority was to replace the Impala MK1 and MK2 for reasons that I've mentioned, and the third requirement or the (indistinct) was the maritime patrol aircraft because we had already taken the
20 Shackleton, the patrol aircraft off the inventory and we were flying modified Dakota's. That's it.

MS RAMAGAGA: Right. Now shall you then proceed to focus on the three-tier system at the time when there was a consideration to bring in the AFT and the medium fighter as
25 part of the three-tier system?

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LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Chair as I said pre-SDP we had the three-tier system in the fighter line and I'm referring specifically to the fighter line, Pilatus, Impala MK1 and MK2 or the ASTRA, Pilatus ASTRA, Impala MK1 and MK2, Cheetah-D and E, that was the Air Force fighter line. Remember as I said the Air Force requirement was to replace the Impala, that was our priority to replace the Impala.

Now comes SDP and the instruction from head office, whoever gave that instruction was not a replacement of the Impala but the replacement of our first, of our frontline fighters, the Cheetah-D and E. That was the instruction. So, the Air Force sat with this dilemma of a Pilatus aircraft doing basic training and then the new would-be replacement aircraft of the Cheetah-D and E, whether it was an advanced light fighter aircraft or whether it was a medium fighter aircraft it doesn't matter but that's what we sat ..., three became two.

This was a dilemma for the Air Force because you cannot teach young pilots basic weapons training on a supersonic fighter, it's just not done, it's like trying to teach your child to park in preparation for a driving license and you say we'll do parallel parking but I'll take a 50-ton truck to teach you. That's ...

MS RAMAGAGA: General just before, just before you proceed to explain further you have said that an instruction came from above that while at that time it was pre the SDPP

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acquisition your focal point as a priority was the Impala from the fighter line but then you then received word that you have to look at replacing the frontline fighter, in this case the Cheetah, and you then proceed to say this put you in a dilemma
5 because now you were going to be left with two. Now I'd like to know as to whether when you say you were going to be left with two, was it because the Impala had become obsolete, or what is the position?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Yes Chair, we were left with two
10 for the reason that I've mentioned earlier that the Impala came to the end of its service life it could not be used safely anymore, we had to take it off the inventory.

MS RAMAGAGA: Right, thank you. You can then proceed with the explanation that you were giving, thank you.

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Chair to proceed, as I said the
15 instruction came that we had, we had to do the investigation as to the replacement of the Cheetah-D and E which left the Air Force with only two aircraft in its fighter line inventory, the Cheetah-D and E which had to be replaced, so that was the new
20 advanced light fighter aircraft or the medium fighter, whatever you want to call them, and the ASTRA. Basic weapons training had to be done before you could proceed to any advanced, to any advanced weapons training or weapons utilisation.

At my, under my guidance and my insistence I asked
25 the staff officers at Air Force Headquarters to look at two

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things, and we must be clear about this, to see whether the Pilatus or the ASTRA could be used for basic weapons training, that's the one thing, or the other option was to look at the advanced light fighter aircraft or the medium fighter which everyone, the Government chose at the end, to see whether we could do both basic and advanced weapons training on a supersonic jet. Those were the instructions that I gave to my staff officers to do.

As far as the Pilatus is concerned I added three riders to this instruction, first of all as far as the ASTRA is concerned they had to determine whether we could in actual fact fit a weapon suite required by the Air Force onto the Pilatus or the ASTRA, the second thing was the cost involved and the third thing is how would the new utilisation of the ASTRA impact on its service life, those were the three things.

As far as the medium fighter and the advanced light fighter aircraft is concerned the instruction was to go out and look at the possibility of doing both basic weapons training and advanced weapons training on one supersonic aircraft, so those were the instructions from my side to the staff officers involved.

Before the work could be done, investigation could be done on the Pilatus or the ASTRA, we were informed by one of the senior staff officers, and if I remember correctly it was then Colonel Otto (Indistinct), that because of the time that the

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ASTRA was bought from Switzerland the then-Government was under an embargo and the only way that Pilatus Aircraft Company was willing to sell the ASTRA to the South African Government and to the South African Air Force was if they had
5 a commitment from the Air Force and the Government that the ASTRA would only be used for basic flying training, nothing else, no weapons training.

I have some time ago, the first, 12 years ago I did confirm this with my predecessor Lieutenant James Kriel who at
10 the time was Chief of the Air Force and he acknowledged that they drew up the letter, he personally signed the letter and it was sent off to Pilatus Air Craft Company, Switzerland and they confirmed receiving thereof, and on that basis the ASTRA was sold to us. With that in mind we only had one aircraft in the
15 fighter line to do basic and advanced weapons training on, we had nothing prior to that.

MS RAMAGAGA: Right, thank you General. So what you are saying is that at the time when you instructed the relevant officers to conduct a study so that an informed decision could
20 be made about the options that should be taken as to whether the basic fighter training should be incorporated into the Pilatus aircraft or whether that basic fighter training should be incorporated into either the medium fighter or the advanced fighter, it then came to your attention that there were
25 restrictions, there was a condition upon which the Pilatus was

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sold to South Africa. Now based on this condition that you then discovered are you saying that it would then be useless and worthless to proceed to conduct a study in relation to the Pilatus incorporation of the fighter training within the Pilatus?

5 LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Chair, with this restriction that was placed on the ASTRA there was no way that we could even proceed with the investigation and I stopped the investigation immediately because we would have spent time and money completely unnecessarily, the ASTRA would forever, that's a
10 long time, be used for basic flying training only.

MS RAMAGAGA: Thank you General. Mr Chairperson I realise that it is past 11h30 and I request for an adjournment for 15 minutes.

CHAIRPERSON: Okay. We'll adjourn for about 15 to 20
15 minutes. Thank you.

(Commission adjourns)

(Commission resumes)

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: I do.

CHAIRPERSON: Thank you.

20 MS RAMAGAGA: Thank you Chair. While we had requested for a 15 minutes to 20 minutes' adjournment we could not finalise within that period because there were other things that we had to attend to, especially with regard to use of some documents that are important for this particular witness. Right,
25 thank you General. At the time when we adjourned you had

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explained about the fact that the Pilatus had been offered with certain, or had been purchased with certain conditions attaching thereto, as a result a study to convert it into a fighter, basic fighter trainer could not be undertaken. Now
5 other than that factor were there any other challenges that could have been experienced if there was no condition barring the South African Air Force from using the Pilatus for any other reason except basic flying training?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Chair I repeat what I said earlier,
10 if there was no condition to the use of the ASTRA as a basic weapons trainer three things would have to be considered, firstly was the ASTRA capable of being modified to incorporate the weapons suite required by the South African Air Force, that was the first thing. The second thing is what would the cost be
15 in this expensive modification of the ASTRA and the third thing is how would the service life of the ASTRA be affected by the introduction of the weapons system with new flying parameters.

MS RAMAGAGA: Right, thank you. Will you then explain as to whether a study was undertaken regarding the usage of the
20 medium fighter or the advanced fighter trainer into the capability of fighter training, basic fighter training I beg your pardon, basic.

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Chair with the knowledge available at the time when we could not use the ASTRA anymore at all
25 the instruction went out to look at the advanced light fighter

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aircraft or the medium trainer which everyone, the Government wanted to buy or intended to buy, to look at the possibility of doing basic and advanced weapons training on one aircraft. The study came back and it was confirmed beyond any doubt
5 that it is not possible to use a supersonic fighter aircraft to do basic weapons training as well as advanced weapons training and with that in mind the Air Force had to rethink the whole fighter line training programme.

MS RAMAGAGA: And can you then tell the Commission as to
10 whether there is a position that was ultimately taken by the Air Force with regard to the use of the two-tier or three-tier system and if it was, what was the recommendation from the Air Force?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Chair, the decision taken by the Air
Force Command Council under my guidance was we did not
15 have a basic weapons trainer, the ASTRA was not available, we couldn't do weapons training on the supersonic aircraft that had to be, or they were intending to buy, so the aircraft was left with no other choice but to pursue a middle, a middle aircraft between the two extremes, and that is the so-called
20 three-tier system because we needed between the ASTRA and the supersonic aircraft we needed a Lead-in Fighter trainer and that was the decision taken by the Air Force Command Council under my guidance.

MS RAMAGAGA: Now I would like to draw your attention or
25 focus your attention to page 24 of the bundle which is marked

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“WHH5” and yes, and it is headed “Minutes of the Second Council on Defence Meeting held at 08h00 on the 6th day of March 1998 in Pretoria”.

CHAIRPERSON: Which page?

5 MS RAMAGAGA: Page 24 Chair, and the document is described as “WHH5”. Right, should I proceed Chair? Thank you. Now will you just inform the Commission about how it came about that you should be at this meeting?

10 LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Chair as I said again the Air Force did find itself in a dilemma in this respect that we had no capability of doing basic weapons training and we also knew that for us to succeed in the Government buying the LIFT, the Lead-in Fighter trainer we had to approach the Ministers Committee that’s been referred to and we also knew that the

15 LIFT as it was then known at that stage was outside the Strategic Defence Packages, so we had to approach Government to make either money available, additional money available or cancel another programme within the Strategic Defence Packages and that is how it came that I got permission

20 from the Secretary for Defence, the Chief of Defence Force to approach the Minister and the Deputy Minister to do this presentation that I did on the 6th of March to incorporate or to convince them or try and convince them that we needed the LIFT and that we should buy the LIFT, even if it meant outside

25 the Strategic Defence Packages.

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MS RAMAGAGA: Right, thank you General. I notice from this page, page 24 of the minutes that this meeting was the meeting of the Minister, the Deputy Minister, the Secretary for Defence, the Chief of Defence as well as the executive chairman of ARMSCOR and the Secretary, it would seem that this was a meeting of the executive or the executive and governance, is it correct?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: I would imagine so, yes.

MS RAMAGAGA: And you state that at your request to present this item on the agenda you were then given leave to participate in this meeting, if you turn to page 25 of that document it is actually indicated at item 6.8.1 that:

“The Deputy Minister welcomed General Hechter and his team of Mr Shaik and Kok and Brigadier Viviers and Colonel Bayne”

Do you see that?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Say again, what was the last answer [sic]?

MS RAMAGAGA: Do you see that or would you agree that this signifies that actually you were not ordinarily members of this committee, of this committee meeting but you came in, in order to address specific issues?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Yes. Chair we didn't sit in for the whole meeting because they had an initial meeting and then the additional points were agreed upon and we came in at a later

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stage, what happened before the meeting I am not privy.

MS RAMAGAGA: And it is correct, and I'd like to draw your attention to paragraph 6.8.6, it is the last paragraph on that page, it is correct that at this meeting the following happened
5 which was a presentation from the Air Force that:

*"The proposed two-tier fighter training system would have to be replaced with a three-tier system using the ASTRA for ab initio training and a new light Lead-in Fighter Trainer (LIFT), Project Winchester
10 for weapons training on to the advanced light fighter aircraft project because the jump was too great from ASTRA to ALFA and it would be too expensive to do weapon training on the ALFA".*

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: That is correct Chair, we did ask
15 for this and the reasons were quite simple, it's a system known to the Air Force, it's been in Air Force operation, the three-tier system since time immemorial, it's also used by 92% of air forces all over the world, it's a system that works, it's a safe system and it gives the required results that we want, so that's
20 why we went back or we proposed to go back to the three-tier system and not continue with the two-tier system.

To give you an idea, a flying hour on a Gripen-type aircraft is between R26 000 and R30 000 an hour. A flying hour on a LIFT-type aircraft is between R12 000 and R17 000
25 an hour, so these are the costs involved and that's why then,

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we asked to go back to the three-tier system because it's a system that works, it's been in the Air Force and it has proven itself.

5 MS RAMAGAGA: And as appears from this extract that I have read on the record it is correct that the idea that the South African national Defence Force should retain the two-tier system came from the South African Air Force and from nobody else?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: No, ...

10 CHAIRPERSON: I'm sorry Ms Ramagaga, can you repeat that question?

MS RAMAGAGA: Thank you Chair.

CHAIRPERSON: Just repeat the question because I thought you are putting words into the witness's mouth.

15 MS RAMAGAGA: Thank you Chair, I will then rephrase the question, thank you. General, please advise the Commission as to who came with the idea that the South African national Defence Force or rather the South African Air Force should retain the three-tier system and not change to the two-tier
20 system that had been recently, prior to this meeting, proposed.

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Chair that was a decision taken by the South African Command Council under my guidance, the two-tier system was not viable, it could not work, we were used to the three-tier system, it's been in use in the Air Force since
25 time immemorial with good results and that is why we preferred

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the three-tier system to the two-tier system.

MS RAMAGAGA: Now can you also inform the Commission as to whether at the time when the issue of changing from the three-tier system to the two-tier system and then reverting back to the three-tier system, as to whether at that time all the instructor, the what, the fighter instructors or fighter pilots had been trained on the three-tier system or not.

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Chair, up to the SDP all fighter pilots in the Air Force were trained on the three-tier system, we never trained fighter pilots on a two-tier system because it was never in place to train pilots on a two-tier system.

MS RAMAGAGA: Now regard being had to the fact that the pilots that were doing basic fighter training had been trained on the three-tier system, according to your observation would it be smoothly done without an intervention that these basic fighter training instructors should be able to then give the same instruction but with an aircraft of a higher level, higher performance, a different bracket from the one from which they had been giving training to the candidate pilots?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Are you referring to a two-tier system?

MS RAMAGAGA: Yes. Yes, I am Sir.

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Chair pilots and instructors, pilot attack instructors giving instruction on the ASTRA, they would also eventually be qualified to give instruction on the advanced

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light fighter aircraft or medium fighter aircraft, so there would be no problem in giving the instruction on an advanced light fighter aircraft or a medium fighter aircraft if they have the experience of having gone step-wise through the whole training process.

MS RAMAGAGA: Right, thank you. Shall you then revert to page 9 of the bundle and then proceed to inform the Commission about the combined Staff Target which was implemented in due course in line with the SDPP programme as appears on paragraph 28 of your statement?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Chair I have not been privy to have a look at the combined Staff Target, so I would not like at this stage to comment on that.

MS RAMAGAGA: Right, thank you. And would you then proceed to inform the Commission about what happened after you made a recommendation and when I say "you" I'm talking about you as the head of the Air Force, that the three-tier system should be retained.

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: We made the presentation to the committee that we've just mentioned and the committee under the chairmanship of Deputy Minister Ronnie Kasrils, they approved our request.

MS RAMAGAGA: Now shall you then proceed to take us through the paragraph 30 and 31 of your statement, that relates to the NIPS and the DIPS as provided for which was supposed

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to be implemented through the Department of Trade and Industry, I will not require you to give details but you may give information to an extent that you can independently give.

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Chair, I would like to comment as follows; that for the first time in the history of the South African National Defence Force this new acquisition process was used and what do I mean by a new process, three departments were identified because of this speciality, of their own specialities, you had the Department of Defence, department of Finance, Department of Trade and Industries, and every department had a specific task during this acquisition process.

The Department of Defence, i.e. the South African Air Force, we were primarily concerned with the operational utilities and usage of the equipment to be bought, that was our speciality, we concentrated on the operational side of the aircraft to be bought. Finances had to find the money to buy this aircraft and Department of Trade and Industries had to consider countertrade or trade, whatever they want to call it, but from an Air Force point of view it was a good, solid process because we were not involved in Finances or in countertrade through the Department of Trade and Industry, we concentrate on our speciality.

MS RAMAGAGA: Right, thank you General. You mention in paragraph 31 of your statement that:

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“The selection of the best aircraft stood on three legs, that is the technical, the finance and the countertrade and they were weighed equally at 100 points each”.

5 Do you confirm that?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: I do.

MS RAMAGAGA: Now will you then continue to take us through paragraph 32 of your statement when you are talking about the role played by the Air Force Command Council.

10 LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Chair, the South African Air Force Command Council in cooperation with ARMSCOR, the Procurement Division went through the whole process of selection and evaluation of the RFI, it means those countries that responded to our Request for Information, there was a
15 clear cut evaluation process that was approved at the highest levels and from a technical point of view the aircraft were evaluated against that evaluation process and nothing more.

MS RAMAGAGA: Right, thank you. Then you then mention page 10, you mention at paragraph 34 that:

20 *“After the (indistinct) process six aircraft out of 21 complied with the minimum requirement as specified by the URS and the technical evaluation system”.*

And in paragraph 35 you state that:

25 *“These aircraft which complied with the requirements for evaluation were the MIG-8, the*

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AMXTT, the (Indistinct)-130, the Hawk L159 and MB339”.

Is that correct?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: That is correct.

5 MS RAMAGAGA: Now I would like to take you to page 20 of the bundle, page 20. The document is identified as “WHH4”. Now that document is the minutes of, a copy of the “Minutes of Special Ukhozi Control Council Meeting held on the 24th day of April 1998”. Now at item 2.1.1 there is an
10 indication that:

“The members did not satisfy the requirements for a quorum, therefore the decisions made at the meeting will have to be confirmed at the next Ukhozi Control Council Meeting”.

15 Do you confirm Sir?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Well it states so in the minutes, so I have to.

MS RAMAGAGA: Yes. And I’d like you to turn to page 21 then. In paragraph 5.1, in actual fact paragraph 5 deals with
20 the results of the first round evaluation of the replies received for the LIFT in relation to the RFI, do you see that?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Yes.

MS RAMAGAGA: And at 5.1.1 the decision captured there, it’s a decision relating to countries that were eliminated and
25 they are six, do you see that?

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LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: I do.

MS RAMAGAGA: And a decision 5.1.2 indicates the manufacturers that had been shortlisted or that were shortlisted and they are four, do you see that?

5 LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: I do.

MS RAMAGAGA: Now as I stated earlier the indication was that the meeting did not quorate and as a result any decisions taken at this meeting would be confirmed at the next council meeting.

10 LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: That is so, yes.

MS RAMAGAGA: The next council meeting was then held on the 30th day of April, please turn to page 16 of the bundle. The document is identified as "WHH3" page 16. Do you see it General?

15 LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Yes.

MS RAMAGAGA: Have you found the page Chair and Commissioner Musi? Right, thank you. Please then turn to, in fact before we turn to page 17 the document is described as a: "Copy of the Minutes of a Special Ukhozi Control Council Meeting held on the 30th day of April 1998". Do you see that?

20 LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: I do.

MS RAMAGAGA: And you Lieutenant General were the chairperson of this meeting on that day.

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: That's correct.

25 MS RAMAGAGA: Now please turn to page 17 of the same

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document. Now maybe before you turn to page 17 just keep your finger there, I'd like to take you back to page 16 Chair and Commissioner and I beg your pardon for any inconvenience caused. Look at item 3, the last item, it says:

5 *"The purpose of this meeting was to confirm the decisions taken at the special Ukhozi Control Council Meeting held on the 24th day of April 1998".*

Is that correct?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Yes.

10 MS RAMAGAGA: Now we can then proceed to turn to page 17. At page 17 item number 5, 5.1.1 is actually an identical decision of what was decided on the 24th day of April, it states firstly 5.1.1 the countries or manufacturers that were eliminated, they are six, is that correct?

15 LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Yes.

MS RAMAGAGA: And 5.1.2 also states the manufacturers that were shortlisted and they are five. Do you confirm that this list is identical to the one that appears on the minutes?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Yes.

20 MS RAMAGAGA: Now at 5.1.3 it states that:

"The shortlist will be tabled at the AAC meeting scheduled for the 30th day of April 1998 for approval".

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Correct.

25 MS RAMAGAGA: And it is correct that this decision, these

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decisions were in fact then tabled at the AAC meeting of the 30th day of April 1998?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: I'm not sure, I haven't got that document in front of me but I would imagine that it would have been presented there.

MS RAMAGAGA: In actual fact General, it would appear that this was just a typo error because it refers to a confirmation that would be done at the meeting of the 30th day of April and this, these are minutes of the 30th day of April and when one looks at the minutes of the 24th day of April this narration does appear there, it seems it was just erroneously carried over to this minute, do you have any comment thereto?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: No Chair, definitely not.

MS RAMAGAGA: Right. Thank you. Shall we then go back to page 10 of the bundle. Now at paragraph 36 you are now talking about the outcome of the evaluation of the shortlisted manufacturers, can you please take us through that.

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Are you referring to paragraph 35 or 36?

MS RAMAGAGA: I am now talking about paragraph 36, paragraph 35 is covered by the minutes of the 24th and the 30th day of April respectively.

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: The final decision for the ALFA after the proper evaluation was done, was the Mirage 2000-5 which was the French aircraft, the Gripen which was the

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Swedish aircraft and the AT-2000 which was the German aircraft. I would just like to also continue in saying that the Mirage 2000-5 and the Gripen were already operational and flying, so they were flying types whereas the AT-2000, the
5 German aircraft was still in development and in what we refer to as a paper aircraft.

MS RAMAGAGA: Now can you indicate to the Commission Sir as to whether the Air Force indicated any preference in respect of these three aircraft or what is the position?

10 LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Chair after the evaluation these three aircraft came about, they met all the requirements that the Air Force had and the Air Force Command Council under my guidance said we are happy with any one of these three, it is for Government to decide, but we did have a rider to this
15 because we were worried about the AT-2000 not being operational, still in the development phase that it would not meet the time scales of replacing the Cheetah which had to be phased out in 2008 and 2009, so from an Air Force point of view, although we agreed with all three the aircraft we warned
20 Government about the AT-2000, the German product.

MS RAMAGAGA: Right, thank you. I'd like to take you to page 74 of the bundle, page 74. Maybe just for smooth reading I should first focus your attention to page 72 which gives clarity as to what this document is. Are you there?

25 LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Yes.

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MS RAMAGAGA: These are “Notes of Confirmation of South African Air Force Command Council Meeting held at the South African Air Force Headquarters on the 17th day of November 1997”. Now let us then move to the page that I
5 wanted us to deal with the substance of and that is page 74. Now I’d like to focus your attention to paragraph or item 6.1.1 which is under “Recommendations” and it reads:

*“Decision. The aircraft recommended by the Ukhozi Project Team for further consideration by the
10 Management Committee and with which the South African Air Force would be satisfied should any of the aircraft be chosen is the following, it is the AT-2000, Germany, it is the JAS-39 Gripen, UK, it is the Mirage 2000, France”.*

15 Do you confirm this Sir?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: That’s correct.

MS RAMAGAGA: Okay, thank you. Let us then go back. Maybe before I take you back to page 10 is there any comment that you want to make about this decision that is captured in
20 page 74?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Can you just repeat the question again?

MS RAMAGAGA: I just want to enquire from you Sir as to whether is there any comment that you would like to make on
25 that decision or recommendation before I take you back to page

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10?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: No Sir, we were happy with the three aircraft that succeeded in the evaluation test in the air and the South African Air Force was happy with any one of them, it was for Government to decide which one they were going to buy.

MS RAMAGAGA: Right, thank you. Are you able to talk about the functionality in terms of either superiority, inferiority among the three aircraft, are you able to comment on that or not, and if you are able to comment please give your comment Sir.

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: This happened 14 years ago, I wouldn't even like to venture to answer your question.

MS RAMAGAGA: Right, thank you. We are back now at page 10. Now you mentioned at paragraph 37 about the light utility helicopters, the LUH that were evaluated and shortlisted, you may proceed from there. Paragraph 37 Sir.

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Only these helicopters succeeded in the evaluation and they met the evaluation requirements and that's the EC-653 which is a German helicopter, the Bell-427 which is a Canadian helicopter and the Agusta-109 which is an Italian helicopter. And once again any one of the three the SAAF would have been happy with because they succeeded in the evaluation programme that was there.

MS RAMAGAGA: Thank you General. Chair, I notice that it

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is 13h15 but I am not far from finishing with the witness, if it is suitable to the Chair and the Commissioner I would request for the indulgence to continue to lead this evidence, the witness of this witness to the end.

5 CHAIRPERSON: Yes, you can continue.

MS RAMAGAGA: Thank you. Thank you Chair. Now you also in paragraph 38 speak about the maritime helicopter and the other two helicopters that were received, can you take us through Sir?

10 LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Chair, the maritime helicopter is a very special aircraft, or a very special type of aircraft, that's why there are not numerous manufacturers manufacturing these maritime helicopters, that's why only two companies responded, that was the GKN Super Lynx and the Cougar, and that's why
15 there were only two, and of the two the preferred aircraft was the GKN Super Lynx because it was the superior aircraft and it evaluated at a higher point than the Cougar.

MS RAMAGAGA: Right thank you, shall you then take us through paragraph 39 that deals with the approved aircraft list
20 for the LIFT.

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: As it says there the approved aircraft list for the LIFT is four, that's correct, three aircraft for the ALFA, for the advanced light fighter aircraft, the three helicopters mentioned in the LUH as I had it up there, the EC-
25 653, the Bell-427 and the Agusta, and then the two maritime

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helicopters mentioned. Those were sent to the next higher level for decision making because the Air Force was happy with any one of those aircraft bought, it was for government to decide what they were going to buy.

5 MS RAMAGAGA: Right, thank you. You also mention now page 11 at paragraph 40 of your statement that the other rejected aircraft, in particular the MIG80 and AMXTT were paper models and they were not flying. This evidence has also already been presented before the Commission, is there
10 anything that you would like to add other than what you have mentioned in your statement?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Chair, I would like to add the following comment, if you buy an aircraft that is still under development you eventually become the launch customer and
15 you pay through your neck for the further development of this aircraft, that's why the South African Air Force right from the word go said if an aircraft is not operational or it cannot be proved to be operational in a short time we will not buy paper aircraft and pay for the development thereof.

20 MS RAMAGAGA: Right, thank you. And it is so that, now I'm in paragraph 41, it is so that on the 18th day of November 1998 the Cabinet approved acquisition of the LIFT, the ALFA and the LUH, is that correct?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: I would imagine so Chair.

25 MS RAMAGAGA: And after the Cabinet had made its

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approval then the Air Force Board had to come back onboard in order to can negotiate the procurement terms and further specifications.

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Yes, once this was approved the
5 main player in the game was ARMSCOR, ARMSCOR
procurement and that's why this sentence is there, thereafter
the Air Force Project Team again came into play with the
contract negotiations process by giving support in the technical
evaluations. ARMSCOR was the driver of this, we supported in
10 the technical and operational evaluations.

MS RAMAGAGA: General, I'd like to take you to the copy of
the book *The Devil in the Detail* written by Paul Holden and I've
just put the pages in front of you, the bundle of, or the portion
of that bundle Chair and Commissioner are not as far as I know
15 put inside the bundle, but they are put ... Are they? Oh sorry,
thank you. Then this part of the bundle appears from page 75
to page 81. Now from your evidence General you have
indicated that the idea of the Government retaining, or the
South African Air Force retaining the three-tier system is an
20 idea that came from the Air Force under your leadership. Now
there is a suggestion by the authors of this book who are Paul
Holden and Van Vuuren, the suggestion that they make is that
the idea of retaining the three-tier system came from the
Minister of Defence-then, and that is the late Minister Modise.
25 I'd like to draw your attention page 76 of the bundle, do you

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see that, the second paragraph on that page reads:

“In November 1997 the South African Air Force Command Council busy overseeing the selection of preferred bidders met to discuss the tiered system once again. During the November 1997 meeting apparently on the strict instruction of Modise this system was again changed and it was decided to revert to a three-tier system”.

Do you have any comment to what I have read thus far?

10 LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Chair, I've said it previously in my presentation and I say it again, from where I sat as Chief of the Air Force Minister Modise did not try to influence us into any, either a two or a three-tier system. Circumstances and the facts on the table compelled the Air Force into a system and I don't know where the author gets his information from but I was there and I know for a fact that we had a three-tier system, because of circumstances of phasing out of the Impala MK1 and MK2, the phasing out of the, phasing out of the Cheetah-D and E circumstances changed and we were forced to look at the two-tier system, that was the Air Force.

The two-tier system didn't work, we couldn't work the ALFA, ag the ASTRA as a basic weapons trainer, so we were left with one aircraft to do the work of three and that was under my leadership that we had a look at the possibility of bringing back the LIFT, the Lead-in Fighter Trainer and we

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knew it would be difficult to influence the Minister and the Deputy Minister at the AAC because the LIFT would have been acquired outside of the SDP, the SDP was fixed and the LIFT would have been bought outside the ..., Government would have to make extra money available. That's the fact.

MS RAMAGAGA: Right, and further down on the next paragraph, I'm actually omitting to read the further portion of that paragraph because in your answer you have covered whatever issues that are raised in that paragraph, so I proceed now to just read into the record the next paragraph and it says:

"It was a bizarre decision however one looks at it. If the two-tier system was used South Africa would have received a considerable amount of money as only one class of plane would have had to be purchased, however, even if a three-tiered system was to be used, surely it would it would have made sense to ensure that the middle tier could be used to train and fight, thus increasing the overall combat capacity of the South African Air Force. By selecting a plane that could only train in the middle tier a decision was effectively made to increase the number of planes bought but effectively decrease the combat capacity of the South African Air Force".

Do you have any comment on this opinion?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Chair yes, I would like to comment.

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The first thing that this author does not keep in mind is that he says "South Africa would have saved considerable amounts of money" and by that I would understand that he says we could have modified or we could have used the ASTRA. That study
5 was never completed, I told you some time ago during my presentation that three things had to be considered before you can even think of modifying the ASTRA as a basic weapons trainer, first of all could the weapon system or the weapon suite that the Air Force required could be fitted into the
10 ASTRA, that had to be decided, and if we could fit it into the ASTRA what was the cost involvement. It would have been millions because you have to rebuild the aircraft from ground upwards.

And then thirdly in the new environment that you
15 are going to train now where the stresses and strains and the G-'s are higher than with general flying the service life of the ASTRA would have decreased considerably, I wouldn't like to mention a percentage but it would have been considerably, so at the end of the day you would have, there would have been a
20 requirement to replace ASTRA aircraft at a faster rate, so to make the statement that we could have saved considerable amounts of money is not a true statement, it's a half-truth because the study was never done to determine what the real costs involved was, that's the first comment I would like to
25 make.

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“However, even if a three-tier system was to be used surely it would have made sense to ensure that the middle tier could be used to train and fight, thus increasing the combat capability of the SAAF. By selecting a plane that could only train in the middle tier a decision was effectively made to increase the number of planes bought but effectively decrease the combat capacity of the aircraft”.

5
10 Which is not true. The aircraft that was eventually bought as the Lead-in Fighter Trainer, the Hawk-100 is a full operational combat aircraft used by air forces over the world, especially in the Middle-East and the Arab countries, it is used operationally, so instead of saying that we decreased the
15 combat capacity we increased it because you must remember that we came down from a 100 frontline fighters in the Cheetah-D, E, F1 *et cetera, et cetera*, down to the 28 Gripen’s that we bought. So, the 24 Hawk’s that we did buy enhanced the fighting capability of the South African Air Force, the Hawk
20 was a fully operational aircraft.

MS RAMAGAGA: Right, thank you. And I would like to take you further down on that same page, ...

CHAIRPERSON: Just hold on. Thank you. Thank you.

MS RAMAGAGA: Sir, I’d like to take you further down on the
25 same page but overlapping to the next page, that is page 77.

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The, and it reads, I'll start at the beginning of the paragraph because if I don't I think I may be assuming that some things will be understood:

5 *"The South African Air Force was alert to this
absurdity and was clearly unconvinced that a three-
tier system was necessary. During a meeting on the
19th and 20th November 1997, merely two days after
the decision to revert to the three-tier system was
made, a Steering Committee meeting was called to
10 discuss various aspects of the Arms Deal with the
aim of making decisions that could be presented to
the Arms Acquisition Council and Cabinet. As the
draft version of the Auditor-General's Report
indicate a key presentation during this meeting was
15 made in which it was mentioned that all suppliers
except for the Mirage 2000 confirmed that pilots
could convert to proposed aircraft directly from
ASTRA. This is in direct contrast to the conclusion
reached by the South African Air Force Command
20 Council on the 17th day of November 1997. The
reason for switching to a three-tier system with a
Lead-in Fighter trainer in the middle was that it was
considered essential in order to train pilots to move
from ASTRA to the combat fighter but this was
25 completely false as all the suppliers have confirmed*

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that pilots could move straight from the ASTRA to the combat fighter making the two-tier system a perfectly acceptable and indeed preferable option. The outcome of this process was BAe SAAB could now submit both Hawk and the Gripen anew”.

5

Do you have any comment to that Sir?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Chair I would like to comment as follows; this is a typical statement made by arms dealers that would like to sell arms to a country and make millions of Rand's profit because firstly it's a half-truth. Yes, you can convert from an ASTRA to a Gripen. If I give the young pilot sufficient hours, additional hours on an ASTRA so he can fly he can take off and he can land and he can do general flying I will be able to teach him to fly the Gripen in the same configuration, I will be able to take off, to do general flying, rolls and loops, come back and land, but that's not what the Gripen is there for, the Gripen is a combat aircraft with combat systems.

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This young pilot that have converted directly from ASTRA to Gripen without any weapons background, any weapons training will never be able to fly the Gripen to the complete ability of the aircraft, to fly in the complete envelope, the performance envelope of the aircraft, it will never happen and if it will happen it will happen at great cost because as I said R26 000 a flying hour *versus* R13 000 to R17 000, it will

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take you so much more flying hours, and the risk involved is not acceptable to anybody, you lose one or two pilots because of poor training and the whole system fails, so the risk to go from an ASTRA to a Gripen is not acceptable.

5 Where in the ASTRA the maximum speed is about 270, 300 knots, that's about 600 kilometres, 500 kilometres, in the Gripen its double that, so you want to teach young pilots to do weapons training and weapons delivery at a 1 000 kilometres an hour and he hasn't done any weapons delivery
10 prior to that? It's a lot of hogwash, this statement in the book.

MS RAMAGAGA: Thank you Sir. Now the critics, people that actually criticise these SDP acquisition are of the view that, or require that amongst others the contracts that were concluded towards the procurement should be cancelled and
15 even the Terms of Reference do give provision for that. Now what would the consequences be if the contract, the contracts were to be cancelled?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Chair, the first thing is you will not have an air force, you will not have a fighting capability, so the
20 Air Force as part of the South African National Defence Force would not be able to carry out its mandate, it's as simple as that.

MS RAMAGAGA: Now when you started presenting your evidence you mentioned that the South African national
25 Defence Force is actually the guarantee or the guarantor of the

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implementation of the Constitution of South Africa, can you please deliberate [sic] to that and also as you deliberate, also indicate as to whether in your view as a person that has been involved in the South African national Defence Force at a leadership level you would say that the Defence Force is adequately provided for. I'm asking this question well aware of the fact that in your ascendancy within this arm of service you were not only confined to identifying the needs of the Air Force but you have had opportunity to also occupy positions where you would contribute towards ensuring capabilities even within arms of service outside the Air Force.

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Chair the tasks of the South African National Defence Force is spelled out in the White Paper on Defence, it's contained in the White Paper. I haven't got the detail but it is clearly spelled out there, it guarantees the Constitution, that's the task. Furthermore I would not like to comment on that. As far as the second part of the question that was raised is that for the Defence Force to carry out its mandate it is mandated by the Constitution that the Government must fund the Defence Force adequately as well as other departments but I'm talking specifically about the Defence Force. The Government must fund the Defence Force adequately.

If we do not, if the Government does not fund the Defence Force adequately you have no defence force that can

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carry out its mandate. If you have, I'm talking about the Air Force, if you have Gripen's standing at Makhado Air Force Base that cannot fly due to a lack of fuel, there's no money to pay for the fuel or due to a lack of modifications that cannot be done because there is no money, the Defence Force was not funded, or the Hawk's can't fly or the Pilatus can't fly Sir, then we cannot, the Defence Force cannot carry out its mandate and the Government is in abeyance of what it should do. So, adequate funds is the only guarantee for the Defence Force to carry out its mandate, if the Defence Force does not have that money it cannot do its work. Thank you.

MS RAMAGAGA: Right, thank you. You have spoken about the requirement for the budget and actually the obligations of the South African national Defence Force arising from the Constitution and you say if the Defence Force is not adequately funded then it could be in breach of its obligations towards the country, are you able to comment in your view just from general observations, I'm quite aware of the fact that you are now a retired general, are you able to comment as to whether according to your view standing from a distance whether the looking at the allocations in terms of the GDP, whether the South African Defence Force is being adequately provided for, and I emphasise standing from a distance just generally what would your comment be?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Chair, from a personal point of

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view this is my own observation, I don't think that the Defence Force gets its fair share from the GDP. A study by the United Nations in the 1994, somewhere around there, confirmed that developing countries should spend 3% of their GDP on their defence forces, 3%. I know at one stage of the game when I was Chief of the Air Force our percentage of the GDP was 2.8% and it came down to 2.4%, I'm not at liberty to say now exactly what it is but I think it's closer to 2%, it could be below 2%, it could be just above 2%, which is insufficient for the South African national Defence Force to carry out its mandate.

MS RAMAGAGA: Right, maybe let me just ... Thank you about that General. May I just take you back again just a little bit on the three-tier system, are you able to inform the Commission as to whether generally within the defence forces, whether the three-tier system is being used by other countries that have defence forces and if you know, are you able to give us an estimate as to whether the usage by countries that have the defence systems in their countries, whether the usage of the three-tier system is against the two-tier system is perhaps 90%, 20%, 15% or so?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Chair, I know that about 90% of the NATO countries use a three-tier system, some of them even use a four-tier system and it is to the benefit of their own air forces that they use a three and in the case of the Americans even a four-tier system, so a three-tier system has proved itself over

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many, many years in a lot of different air forces, it's not a thing that comes from yesterday or a thumb suck that the South African Air Force did the other day. I joined the Air Force in 1960 and we had a three-tier system and we've had a three-tier system ever since and it works.

MS RAMAGAGA: Right. Thank you General. Chair, it would seem that my colleagues would like to bring something to my attention, may I consult?

CHAIRPERSON: Yes.

10 MS RAMAGAGA: Thank you.

NOTE: Caucus.

MS RAMAGAGA: Thank you Chair. May I proceed Chair? Right, thank you. General, the question that I'm going to ask you is something that only came to my attention now, the critics of this procurement have made their comments, some on the websites, some in the media, some formally by communicating with the relevant institutions. Now I'd like to read to you what appears from the Money Website [sic] and this actually refers to, there is also an indication of what you could have done or not done in relation to the acquisition and it reads, ... Chair, like I indicated it only come to my attention now, we will make copies after I have used the ...

CHAIRPERSON: Okay.

MS RAMAGAGA: Thank you.

25 *"The Chief of the South African Air Force General W*

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H Hechter also added his voice in opposition to the DAE proposal, he wrote that the South African Air Force would only accept the Hawk if 'politically obliged' to do so".

5 So they are actually saying that the General, and I look at the initials, I take it, it is yourself, of course is the Chief of the South African Air Force, they say:

"The Chief added his voice to opposition towards the procurement of the Hawk".

10 And the suggestion is that well, it will only be accepted if there is political pressure to accept that procurement, do you have any comment?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Yes Chair, I'd like to comment. As I said right in the beginning of my presentation the Air Force Command Council under my guidance accepted the three
15 aircraft, the Gripen ... Sorry, you were talking about the ...

MS RAMAGAGA: It's about the Hawk, they are saying the Hawk.

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Yes, accepted the three aircraft,
20 the Hawk, the L159 and the Aermacchi 339 and we were happy with any one of them and I state that categorically, but within those three there are certain, there are aircraft that are better in certain aspects and some aircraft are better in other aspects. From a personal point of view, this is my personal
25 opinion and I never tried to influence anybody on this, of the

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three the Hawk was the better aircraft and I gave you the reasons why, the Hawk was a fully operational aircraft, it has proved itself beyond doubt in many countries, that was my personal opinion that I spoke out, but I repeat again, the Air Force was happy with any one of the three.

MS RAMAGAGA: Thank you General. There is also an allegation that among the three shortlisted the Air Force had a preference and in particular the allegation is that the Air Force preference was the Aermacchi, do you have any comment thereto?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Yes Chair, the Air Force had no preference, I repeat that once again, the Air Force had no preference, we were, we presented Government with three and we were happy with any of the three. From my own personal experience once again the Aermacchi aircraft as such built by the Italians was at the end of its normal service life. If you had to buy into the Aermacchi it would have meant a lot of extra work, extra money to ensure a service life of 30 years. But I repeat again, the Air Force never said we prefer this or we prefer that, or we prefer this, the Air Force was happy with any one of the three.

MS RAMAGAGA: Right thank you General, I just would like now to invite you to make your own personal comment with regard to the acquisition of these armaments that were acquired through the SDPP and I'm inviting you to make a

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comment because when you started you indicated that in actual fact at the time when the SDPP came into place there was already a drive towards acquisition of armaments (indistinct) and now in hindsight what is your comment about this acquisition that was done in terms of the SDPP bearing in mind that at that time there was already a drive within the Defence Force to acquire the necessary, other necessary armaments?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Chair, as I said there was a South African national Defence Force acquisition plan in place pre-SDP, pre-SDP. Because major equipment has a 30 year life you have to plan ahead because there's a lot of money, you have to plan it when you are going to phase equipment out and when you are going to phase equipment in because you cannot just at one day stop and say the aircraft is now out of service and the new one comes in, you have a period of about four to five years minimum for this transition to take place from the old to the new, that's the first thing I would like to say, so that was in place, that's why the Air Force could categorically state that our first priority in replacing our major equipment was the LUH, the light utility helicopter, the replacement of the Impala and our maritime patrol aircraft, that was on the cards, that was in the books, that was in the National Defence Force plan, it was there, it would have happened in the future if Government made money available. That was that.

The next thing was the SDP, I don't know where the

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SDP originated from, who decided what to buy, all that I can say is we got the instruction to start the process going in cooperation with ARMSCOR to replace the Cheetah, to replace the LUH and that was it, those were the two systems that was, that we were told to start the process off. Where it came from, who decided that I don't know, but that was the process and we did it.

MS RAMAGAGA: Right thank you Chair, that concludes the evidence of this witness.

10 CHAIRPERSON: Thank you. Any person who wants to cross-examine the General? Thank you, nobody wants to cross-examine. Any ...

JUDGE MUSI: I would like some questions.

CHAIRPERSON: Any re-examination?

15 ADV CANE: Chair, thank you for the opportunity. The Department of Defence legal team has not been given the instruction to actually represent the general as he is retired and so we wouldn't ordinarily have those rights under the process as I understand it.

20 CHAIRPERSON: I'm sorry, can you repeat? I missed what you were saying?

ADV CANE: Certainly Mr Chair. The Defence, Department of Defence's legal team have not been instructed to represent the general being retired as he is and so whilst I notice the Chair looking in our direction when you invited us to re-

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examine this witness I don't think that that is actually within our entitlement as we don't represent, as we did the other Defence Force witnesses.

CHAIRPERSON: Thank you. Thank you. Yes?

5 **QUESTIONS BY JUDGE MUSI:**

JUDGE MUSI: I have a few questions General. I understand that the South African Air Force had wanted to replace the Impala and I understand that the Impala was acquired in 1960, around 1960 and by 1990 it would have been obsolete, is that
10 correct?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Yes.

JUDGE MUSI: The Cheetah, when was it acquired?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Chair, the original Cheetah Mirage III Aircraft was acquired in 1963, 1964.

15 JUDGE MUSI: And when was it, would it have become obsolete?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: The original Mirage III, they were modified extensively, they did that half-life modification, midlife modification which I spoke about, so the service life
20 was extended and they became the Cheetah's, that the was the new South African name for them, and the Cheetah-E ..., the Cheetah-D, that's the dual aircraft was supposed to come offline, out of service in 2008 and the Cheetah-E, the single seater in 2012.

25 JUDGE MUSI: I heard you saying that your priority was to

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replace the Impala but that you were told that it's got also a replacement for the Cheetah, is that correct?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: No Chair, what I said is what the Air Force priority was the replacement of the Impala and not
5 the Cheetah because the Cheetah was planned to go to 2012 but because of the safety factors and the lifespan of the Impala and not having done the mid-life update our requirement was to replace the Impala first and foremost.

JUDGE MUSI: So it was not in your plans to replace the
10 Cheetah?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: No it was, it was in the planning but the Cheetah replacement 2008 and 2012.

JUDGE MUSI: I mean you hadn't yet started the process of replacing the Cheetah?

15 LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: No Chair, definitely not.

JUDGE MUSI: So how came that it had to be replaced?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Sir it had a life cycle, a 30 year life cycle and every component on an aircraft have a life cycle and you reach a stage where it becomes too costly, too
20 expensive to maintain those aircraft because it's old technology, so the spares are unavailable *et cetera, et cetera*, so you have to replace them after a certain lifespan, service life you have to replace them, which accepted in the world today is 30 years with a half-life update at 15 years.

25 JUDGE MUSI: What I'm trying to get at is whether as at the

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time that the SDPP's were initiated whether there was any need at that stage to replace the Cheetah?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Can you just ... Can you just repeat the question please Sir?

5 JUDGE MUSI: I would like to know at the stage, at the time when the package, the SDPP were initiated, whether there was any need at that stage to replace the Cheetah?

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: No Sir, the planning was for the Cheetah 2008 and 2012 but the instruction that we got was to
10 replace the Cheetah with either an advanced, with an ALFA, advanced light fighter aircraft or a medium fighter aircraft, that was the instruction we got.

JUDGE MUSI: So the replacement of the Impala had to fit into that package? It appears to me that there was a decision to do
15 an overhaul and bring about this particular package and the Impala simply had, with the replacement of the Impala simply had fit into that package.

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Yes, with the decision of the SDP the Impala replacement fell by the wayside, it was not
20 addressed, not in the SDP, whereas the Cheetah replacement was addressed.

JUDGE MUSI: I would have thought that the Hawk would have replaced the Impala in that whole package.

LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Sir, the Hawk eventually came
25 onboard and as a replacement for the Impala but initially it was

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not part of the SDP. That's why we, from an Air Force, from the Air Force Command Council side, we pushed for the replacement of the Impala with a LIFT-type aircraft, a Lead-in Fighter trainer, but it was still outside of the SDP money and we had to bring that into the SDP money otherwise it wouldn't have succeeded.

JUDGE MUSI: Is it right to say that the incorporation of the Hawk into the package resulted from the need to implement the three-tier system?

10 LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: That is so, yes Sir.

JUDGE MUSI: Thank you, that's all.

CHAIRPERSON: I think we have come to the end of the evidence of this witness and General thanks a lot for testifying, you are now excused.

15 LT GENL (RET) HECHTER: Thank you Chair.

CHAIRPERSON: Ms Ramagaga.

MS RAMAGAGA: Thank you Chair, the next witness that we would like to call is General Shoke, the Chief of the South African National Defence Force and the general will be available tomorrow to present evidence and as a result we will request for an adjournment and then we will be able to call the general tomorrow morning.

CHAIRPERSON: Thank you, we will adjourn until tomorrow morning.

25 **(COMMISSION ADJOURNS)**