French-South African arms trade relations as a community of practice, 1955-1979

Roel M. (Martin) van der Velde

School of Languages and Area Studies
Under supervision of Professor Tony Chafer, Dr Natalya Vince, and Mr Emmanuel Godin

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of the University of Portsmouth

June 2017
Abstract

This study reconstructs the French-South African arms trade in French military helicopters between 1955 and 1979, which flourished in defiance of international reprobation of Apartheid. New evidence reveals the shaping influence to policy of inter-state social relations at operational levels, leading to extended trajectories beyond the accepted historical milestones of the 1963 and 1977 UN arms embargoes.

By retracing an emerging commercial process of arms trade spanning two decades, the crystallization of elements of the French and South African defence communities is identified, constituting de facto trade policy despite their diplomatic divergence. French promotional brokering in the mid-1950s laid the unseen foundation for the professionalisation of military procurement between unlikely partners.


Following greater international and operational pressures that led to counter-revolutionary alliances in Southern Africa, alternative supply arrangements were created between French and South African defence communities, notably through trade of helicopters-in-parts. Rather than being overtaken by diplomatic withdrawal, by the mid-1970s the inter-community enterprise of arms trade was galvanized by operational-level actors, continued away from visible executive control. New primary evidence is presented to argue that the French presidential adoption of arms embargoes in 1970, 1975 and 1977 represented not a sea-change in arms trade policy, but the maturing of a parallel and covert military-industrial channel within the French ministerial constellation, directed at South Africa and the African continent.

In sum, this thesis offers new historical evidence on an extended business life cycle in French-South African trade and its correlation to, and detachment from, national policies. Moreover, the importance of practice tracing of middle-level interactions in French arms trade and defence policy connects with new debates on French involvement in Cold War regional defence arrangements in and outside its traditional African sphere of influence.
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Author’s declaration

Whilst registered as a candidate for the above degree, I have not been registered for any other research award. The results and conclusions embodied in this thesis are the work of the named candidate and have not been submitted for any other academic award.

Word count – 79,685 words
### Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AML</td>
<td>Auto Mitrailleuse Légère (Panhard)</td>
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<td>ANC</td>
<td>African National Congress</td>
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<tr>
<td>APB</td>
<td>Armament Production Board</td>
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<td>ARMSCOR</td>
<td>Armaments Development and Production Corporation</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEO</td>
<td>Chief Executive Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>CG</td>
<td>Commandant General (Afrikaans: Kommandant-Generaal)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CHINCOM</td>
<td>China Committee (See COCOM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIA</td>
<td>Central Intelligence Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIEEMG</td>
<td>Commission Interministérielle d’Étude pour les Exportations des Matériels de Guerre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNEIA</td>
<td>Comité National à l’Exportation de l’Industrie Aéronautique</td>
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<tr>
<td>COCOM</td>
<td>Coordinating Committee for Multilateral Export Controls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COIN</td>
<td>Counter-Insurgency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSIR</td>
<td>Council for Scientific and Industrial Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAEF</td>
<td>Direction des Affaires Economiques et Financières</td>
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<tr>
<td>DAI</td>
<td>Direction des Affaires Internationales</td>
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<tr>
<td>DEE</td>
<td>Département Expansion-Exportation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DGD</td>
<td>Direction générale des douanes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DMA</td>
<td>Délégation Ministérielle pour l’Armement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DGA</td>
<td>Direction Générale pour l’Armement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DGR</td>
<td>Doctrine Guerre Révolutionnaire</td>
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<tr>
<td>DREE</td>
<td>Direction des Relations Economiques Extérieures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DTI</td>
<td>Direction Technique Industrielle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EBR</td>
<td>Engin Blindé de Reconnaissance (Panhard)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLN</td>
<td>Front de Libération Nationale (Algeria)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FNLA</td>
<td>National Front for the Liberation of Angola</td>
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<tr>
<td>FRELIMO</td>
<td>Mozambique Liberation Front</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GSC</td>
<td>General Staff Conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KG</td>
<td>Commandant-General (Afrikaans: Kommandant-Generaal)</td>
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<tr>
<td>MA</td>
<td>Military attaché</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MATRA</td>
<td>Mécanique Aviation Traction (company)</td>
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<tr>
<td>MIC</td>
<td>Military-Industrial Complex</td>
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<tr>
<td>MPLA</td>
<td>People’s Movement for the Liberation of Angola</td>
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<tr>
<td>NATO</td>
<td>North Atlantic Treaty Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>NEACC</td>
<td>Near East Arms Coordinating Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>OAU</td>
<td>Organisation for African Unity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OFEMA</td>
<td>Office Français d’Exportation de Matériel Aéronautique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OGA</td>
<td>Office Générale de l’Air</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAF</td>
<td>Portuguese Air Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAIGC</td>
<td>African Party of Independence of Cape Verde</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RRAF</td>
<td>Rhodesian Royal Air Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSA</td>
<td>Republic of South Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>SAF</td>
<td>South African Air Force</td>
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<tr>
<td>SADF</td>
<td>South African Defence Force</td>
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<tr>
<td>SAP</td>
<td>South African Police</td>
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<tr>
<td>SCE</td>
<td>Section des Cession à l’Étranger</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEE</td>
<td>Section Expansion-Exportation</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEREB</td>
<td>Société d’étude et de réalisation d’engins balistiques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
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<tr>
<td>SFERMA</td>
<td>Société Française d'Entretien et de Réparation de Matériel Aéronautique</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SGDN</td>
<td>Secrétariat Générale de la Défense Nationale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIPRI</td>
<td>Stockholm International Peace Research Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNIAS</td>
<td>Société nationale industrielle aérospatiale, also shortened to ‘Aérospatiale’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDECE</td>
<td>Service de Documentation Extérieure et de Contre-Espionnage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWA</td>
<td>South West Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWAPO</td>
<td>South West Africa People’s Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UAT</td>
<td>Union Aéromaritime de Transports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UDF</td>
<td>Union Defence Force</td>
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<tr>
<td>UDI</td>
<td>Unilateral Declaration of Independence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNGA</td>
<td>United Nations General Assembly</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNITA</td>
<td>National Union for the Total Independence of Angola</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNSC</td>
<td>United Nations Security Council</td>
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**Abbreviations of Archives Consulted**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SHDV</td>
<td>Service Historique de la Défense military archives, Vincennes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHDV-TO</td>
<td>Temoignages Orales de l’Armée de l’Air/DITEX oral history project, Vincennes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHDC</td>
<td>Service Historique de la Défense military archives, Châtellerault</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CADC</td>
<td>Centre d’Archives Diplomatiques, Courneuve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CADN</td>
<td>Centre d’Archives Diplomatiques, Nantes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAEF</td>
<td>Centre des Archives Economiques et Financières, Savigny-le-Temple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AN</td>
<td>Archives Nationales, Pierrefitte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SANDF</td>
<td>South African National Defence Force Archives, Pretoria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAAF</td>
<td>South African Air Force Museum, Pretoria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SANA</td>
<td>South African National Archives, Pretoria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DFA</td>
<td>South African Department of Foreign Affairs/DIRCO Archives, Pretoria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BNA</td>
<td>British National Archives, Kew</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BL</td>
<td>British Library, London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TUR</td>
<td>Company archives at SAFRAN-Turbomeca, Pau</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Acknowledgements

This thesis marks the end of a long personal journey, and I am grateful to everyone who helped to make this result possible. I would like first to thank the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Portsmouth and the Centre for European and International Studies Research for generously funding my research, as well as the Society for the Study of French History, whose travel bursary made possible my first research trip to South Africa.

I want to extend my gratitude to my friends and colleagues at the University of Portsmouth for their support throughout the project. My supervisors Professor Tony Chafer, Dr Natalya Vince, and Emmanuel Godin, as well as Professor Emeritus Margaret Majumdar of CEISR’s Francophone Research Cluster have all been unfailing in their discernment, optimism, and encouragement in bringing this project to completion. I also thank Dr Ed Stoddart, Dr Angela Crack and Professor Wolfram Kaiser for their advice on methodology.

Without the input of the librarians, archivists and fellow researchers at the many locations I have visited, this study could not have been written, and I greatly appreciate their assistance. I should like to give special mention to some of whom I encountered there: Director Charles Claveau at SAFRAN-Turbomeca, who spared no time to help me to understand the past and present of the company; Mr Pascale Odin and his colleagues at the military archives, Chatellerault, who do a tremendous job against the odds, and also Mr Thierry Fournier, for his support and advice on sourcing material; Mr Jean-Pierre Bat of the Archives Nationales, Pierrefitte; Mr Gerald Prinsloo and the tireless staff of SANDF, Pretoria; Mr Ken Smy of the South African Air Force Museum, Pretoria, who kindly shared his research and facilities with me; and Ms Rene Geyer, NPIHP researcher at Monash University, for her invaluable suggestions. I would also like to thank those who agreed to be interviewed for this project. A word of gratitude goes to Mr Paul van Niekerk, Mr Kobus Eksteen, and especially Ms Stephanie Olivier, who all gave generously of their time to give frank answers to my questions, and help me ask better ones.

Further afield, I would like to thank Dr Mathilde von Bulow, Dr Joanna Warson, and lastly Dr Anna Konieczna, for her example and our many discussions. I am also grateful for all the support along the way from my dear friends, near and far, who helped me to stay the course, especially when the going got tough.

Most of all, I cannot thank my family enough for their unyielding support, always ready to jump in: my Mom and Dad, my Sister, Sandra, and my niece, Isa. I dedicate this to you.

« There has been no consistent political principle underlying French actions in the arms market. Moving into Anglo-American markets ....may often improve French standing in the third world, but...Supplying arms to Portugal, Greece, or South Africa cannot be beneficial to the French international position, except in so far as they help to make possible an independent French defence effort.’ (SIPRI, 1971, p. 250)

“Passons maintenant à la pratique. Après le “pourquoi”, examinons le “comment” et voyons de quelles façons l’administration française met en œuvre deux politiques à la fois complémentaires, intimement liées et, dans une certaine mesure, contradictoires: le soutien aux exportations d’une part, leur contrôle et leur limitation d’autre part.” (Bongrand, 2006, p. 234)

Before South Africa finally and formally abandoned racial segregation in 1994, most Western states had observed varying degrees of lip service to an embargo on all trade with the pariah state. When an American in Denmark asked a visiting South African student if she could get Danish ham at home, she replied: “Yes, labelled in Brazil.”¹ There was therefore a difference between what was proclaimed by Western states in the name of upholding international order, and what was done away from public view.² Prior to the mandatory 1977 UN arms embargo on providing military technology to South Africa, many Western states had engaged in some form of military assistance to Pretoria, and none more so than France. France had substituted Britain as South Africa’s main military supplier, after the Wilson government had adopted the 1963 voluntary UN embargo on arms trade to Apartheid South Africa in 1964.

¹ Stephanie Olivier, email conversation, December 2016.
French arms trade had appeared to take full advantage from the sixteen year pause between international sanction of bloody state repression of popular black protest at Sharpeville in 1960, and Soweto in 1976. Between the first sale of seven Alouette II helicopters in August 1960 and the 1977 Security Council mandatory embargo on arms to Apartheid, French sales expanded and diversified. Steady growth of South African custom to the French defence industry peaked in 1970 only to become “less visible” thereafter with the tempered compliance to international opinion by the French executive. (Hebert, Les exportations francaises d’armement au début de la Ve Republique : la mise en place des éléments d’une politique, 2002, pp. 264-5) The first three French presidencies of the Fifth Republic were slow to curtail this trade and remained uniquely unapologetic, and successful, in publicly justifying South Africa’s right to purchase weapons for her self-defence. Such statements grew more hollow with each French Alouette helicopter, Panhard armoured car and Mirage jetfighter sold, to name just the most prominent categories.

In search for an explanation of the origins and persistence of French–South African arms trade, historians have generally accepted its exceptional nature, despite lasting over two decades. South Africa’s material pertinence for Gaullist ambitions of grandeur are one more contradiction in the French project of influence by proxy in post-colonial Francophone Africa, occurring outside its colonial stomping grounds. It is an area of ‘invisible’ French African policy uniquely left in abeyance by the parallel African networks of Jacques Foccart, presidential purveyor.3 (Chafer, 2002, p. 233) South African material assets more clearly served the nuclear pillar of French foreign policy, through a quid-pro-quo of French arms trade in return for South African uranium deliveries, satellite bases and gold payments, transacted mostly in the middle third of the 1960s. (Bach, 1990, p. 175; Cuddumbey, 1996, p. 67) Arms trade activity however occurred in a much longer window, and at the level of government-sponsored industry. Furthermore, business between defence hierarchies transcended bilateral boundaries and partially replaced executive-level interactions, effectively returning questions about the reach of French patronage systems in Africa,4 (Médard, 1999, p. 27) and connections

3 (Chafer, 2002, p. 233): “…the incoherences and inconsistencies that have been a characteristic of French African policy, and established the modus operandi of this policy, which often operated ‘invisibly’, that is, without going through the normal political channels and without being subject to the kind of scrutiny to which policy-making is usually subject in a democracy.

4 ‘Le client reçoit plus qu’il ne donne. Il est alors endetté et c’est le fondement du pouvoir du patron sur le client’.
to the exceptional perspective of apartheid South Africa which is often studied in convenient separation.\(^5\) (Mamdani, 1996, pp. 27-32; Sindjoun, 1999, pp. 9-10)

Contemporary narratives on French South-African relations have rarely extended to the intra-governmental field of analysis, and have routinely ignored its potential for independent diplomatic activity. Mostly discussions have assumed a subordinate, and positive relation of the intermediate actors to high government policy. Confronted with a dearth of information, the focus has generally been on state-level events or decisions that structured the arms trade development between the two states. The important factor of military and industrial involvement is not given its due. Moreover, sub-governmental networks of the 1950s paved the way for later inter-governmental contacts. State-level efforts of the 1970s to “trivialize” interstate arms trade by delegating transactions to non-state actors had succeeded only because those actors had by then interlocked parts of their own defence communities to suit sustained military-industrial objectives. (Kolodziej, 1987; Konieczna, 2013, p. 503).

This study revisits the conceptual underpinnings of that bilateral arms trade relationship. It arrives at new conclusions about French policy and its organization, and exposes French circumvention of the diplomatic window. As is common within studies of bilateral relations of the Cold War period, French-South African relations have been mainly covered by state-centric, policy-based analyses. This study investigates the wide operational space that existed between French policy and arms trade deliveries, by prioritising the trade of arms itself. Using the helicopter trade as a case study, it concludes that French-South African trade was exceptional with regard to the diplomatic environment that was its foundation, but was less particular, and even instrumental in its organisation and operation.

The narrative of French-South African trade

We will first explore the elements of the main narrative. While the French-South African relationship has been well documented, arms trade has only received cursory treatment. Secondly, a closer examination of the conceptual assumptions of this narrative shows the problems of a top-down policy-based approach, leading to generalization of the largely secretive and depoliticized arms trade decision making. In the third paragraph, the conceptual approach used in this study will be explored, which frames arms trade as a commercial process,

\(^5\) (Mamdani, 1996, p. 30): ‘For if the problem of South African studies is that it has been exceptionalized, that of African studies is that it was originally exoticized and is now banalized.’; (Sindjoun, 1999, pp. 9-10) Sindjoun’s argument against a comparative ‘colonial’ view of (South African) state racism is correct, but his ‘statist’ analysis actually obscures the ‘postcolonial’ project that France and South African were engaged in.
and then analyses this process from the lens of social practice. In the final section, the
collectivizing aspect of practice will be briefly discussed, which entails a dialectic between two
defence communities. The effects of practices of bilateral arms trade find their conclusion in a
community of practice, which can be seen to diverge from the narrative of state diplomacy.

The narrative of French-South African relations commonly has absorbed arms trade as a
recurring phenomenon illustrating various areas of policy, and mostly French policy. The key
pillars to redress French post-war decline were acquisition of nuclear capability, and continued
if mutated control in Francophone Africa. Other preconditions derived from these, all
coordinated within the national policies of Charles de Gaulle’s Fifth Republic from 1958.
(Mesfin, 2008, p. 115) Arms trade is pigeonholed within French defence industry and European
cooperation on security, and rarely connected to French African policy or her strategic concerns
in Sub-Saharan Africa and the Indian Ocean. (Debré, Gouverner. Memoires 1958-1962, 1988,
p. 346) French military assistance agreements\(^6\) to newly independent Francophone African
states intentionally benefited police over armies, for reasons of absorption and control; (Evrard,
2016, p. 30; Tiquet, 2013/14, p. 56; SIPRI, 1971, p. 261) the main French export markets were
in Europe and the Near-East. (Kolodziej, 1987, pp. 371-2, 391-2)

Then, on 21 March 1960, South African police fired well over a 1,000 rounds into a crowd of
around 5,000 black people protesting the debilitating working pass laws, killing and wounding
many hundreds in the sleepy township of Sharpeville, near Johannesburg\(^7\) (Frankel P. , 2001,
p. 116; Dubow, 2014, p. 76) The massacre ‘hardened battle lines’ between supporters and
opponents of Apartheid within South Africa and internationally. It resulted in swift international
condemnation through a UN SC resolution on 1 April 1960.\(^8\) (Frankel P. , 2001, pp. 183, 213-4 ) As ‘the bloodiest in a series of confrontations’, the event signalled a revolutionary and
internationalizing and, for a brief moment, critical challenge, to the South African political and
military leadership and its state security apparatus.\(^9\) (Barber, 1973, pp. 124-5) The situation was

\(^6\) (Evrard, 2016, p. 30), agreements regarding provision of French material support, not to be confused with
defence agreements stipulating the terms of French emergency intervention.

\(^7\) (Frankel P. , 2001, p. 116), the official number of 69 dead is almost certainly understated. Dubow gives the
number of 5,000, but a close approximation will probably not be ascertained.

\(^8\) Western states did take their time in making an exception to their support for states’ self-determination. UN
Security Council, Security Council resolution 134 (1960) [Question relating to the situation in the Union of South
Africa], 1 April 1960, S/RES/134 (1960), available at:
woelinge om Suid-Afrika, 1939-85’. South African racial segregation had been a regular topic in the general
assembly since the creation of the UN in 1945.

\(^9\) (Barber, 1973, pp. 124-5), also on 21 March 1960, 3 people were killed and fifty wounded in confrontations
between the black Pan-African Congress and the South African Police at Langa [CHECK]
salvaged for the government by Verwoerd’s iron fisted response.\textsuperscript{10} (Barber, 1973, pp. 124-5, 126n1) His successful referendum took the Republic of South Africa out of the Commonwealth in May 1961.\textsuperscript{11} (Barber, 1973, pp. 120-1) Stated objectives of territorial integrity and internal order, which included the mandate on South-West-Africa (Namibia), would draw the South African Defence Force into several adjacent wars of liberation, especially after Portuguese withdrawal in 1974 from her colonies. (Jaster, 1980, p. 11; Scholtz, 2015)

The 1963-1977 window between the two UN embargoes on arming Apartheid South Africa appears to neatly encapsulate the subject. It also aligns with the changing structure of French exports to the ‘Third World’, for which South African sales first accounted for over a third of total French sales in 1963, and on average 16\% of total French sales to 1972.\textsuperscript{12} (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 1975, pp. p.124-5) The singular French side-stepping of the two Security Council embargoes of August and December 1963\textsuperscript{13} was followed by strategic agreements regarding South African uranium and French satellite bases in 1964. The French preferred supplier status to Pretoria fuelled their relationship, until its gradual winding down from 1970 onwards as an international anomaly. In September 1970 the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office grudgingly admired successful French obstinacy in the UN regarding her arms trade to South Africa; the British undersecretary jealously observed that ‘one is tempted to feel that we are perhaps coming through the final stages of our colonial “revolution” whereas the French still have to undergo theirs’.\textsuperscript{14} In that sense, French exceptionalism in Africa has been doubly served; first through the insulation from international criticism it received from Francophone African states when co-opting a white supremacist state; and then its return to the fold in 1977, when French rejection of its arms trade to South Africa appeased its Francophone clients. (Wauthier, 1995, p. 409)

\textsuperscript{10} (Barber, 1973, p. 126n1), on 9 April 1960 Verwoerd miraculously survived an assassination attempt by a white male attacker, said to be mentally disturbed and unconnected to black activism.

\textsuperscript{11} Verwoerd had succeeded to overturn the objection to a republic by the anglophile United Party, which had held the popular vote in the 1958 election.

\textsuperscript{12} (SIPRI, 1975, p.124-5), or 38 $m on 111 $m total of major exports to Third World countries’, table 8. This ignores South African imports worth 2 $m and 6 $m in 1961 and 1962 respectively.


\textsuperscript{14} British National Archives, Kew, (BNA), FCO 45/677, Reply of FCO undersecretary of State Stanley Fingland, 14/9/70, CSS10/11, to F.A. Warner, UKMIS, New York, point 3. Warner’s initial letter of 17/7/70 mentions the special relation of France to her former colonies as well as to Russia’s tacit support for France.
**Origins and extension of the trade relationship**

The point of view of the South African government is deduced from its unyielding response during and after the March 1960 Sharpeville shooting of black protestors by South African police, which was condemned around the world, and accumulated opposition and active mobilisation in and outside of South Africa. The period between ‘Sharpeville’ and the December 1963 embargo saw regular condemnation of South Africa’s regime in the UN. The event represented a milestone that forced Western states to curtail their military trade. Events at Sharpeville were a catalyst for the South African Defence Force (SADF), revealing its organizational and material inadequacy, and stifling its customary supply base. British Commonwealth and American governments barred new arms trade to South Africa. The subsequent shift to French preferred military supplier status was not obvious or complete, however, due to the important caveats of continued British assistance under the 1955 Simonstown naval agreement and unaffected British and American investment and regular trade to South Africa. Risk-averse Parisian administrators took their time to wholeheartedly endorse French commercial overtures, which had begun in 1955. The South African defence leadership itself would remain divided on French assistance for almost a decade.

The second half of the window shows the decline of the French trading niche. As a personal promise to a delegation of the Organisation for African Unity, created as a pan-African state conference in 1963, and at the time headed by first Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda (1964-1991), in October 1970 President Pompidou decided to concede a unilateral embargo on the category of ‘repressive’ helicopters and armoured cars. After an impromptu statement by President Giscard d’Estaing before the press in 1975, sale to South Africa of French land- and air-based equipment was also outlawed. Faced with broad African objection, including Francophone states, Giscard was finally forced to relinquish naval trade as well in 1977. (Kolodziej, 1987, p. 370) With that, the continued ‘liens tissés par ce long compagnonnage’ disappear from view. ¹⁵ (Wauthier, 1995, p. 405; Guiringaud, 1982, pp. 451-452)

South African actions added to the darkening picture of continued trade. By 1972, President Vorster’s attempt at reconciliation with Black African states in return for minimal concessions had predictably failed, despite back-channel advocacy from Ivorian President Houpouhet-

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Boigny and his French advisors. After a bloodless coup in 1974 the Portuguese withdrew from their vast colonial empire in Guinea-Bissau, Angola and Mozambique, leaving only the Rhodesians as South Africa’s allies. Thereafter, South Africa focused on defeating liberation movements operating against her from bases in the Black African states. Deadlocked international negotiations to rescind the South African mandate on the territory of Namibia, and ruthless South African repression of student protests in Soweto in 1976 paved the way for a mandatory UN arms embargo in 1977. Still, by 1977 total French military trade included a variety of land-, air- and sea-based equipment, as well as numerous production licences, including the Panhard armoured cars in 1961, renamed ‘Eland’ at the request of the French, and the Mirage F1 jet fighter in 1971, successor to the Mirage III purchased 10 years before. A helicopter license was also issued by 1973. Local production capacity largely insulated South African defence from international sanctions. Claims about illegal spare parts deliveries were made by African states but not confirmed. (Kolodziej, 1987, pp. 371-2)

This study will present strong evidence to confirm that the French government did continue its trade in deliberate, if covert, breach of the 1977 embargo. The window of embargoes not only ignores the prior period of the 1950s, it also fails to take account of trade interaction after 1977. These findings establish a gap in the literature regarding governmental behaviour as the sole indicator of government policy. The governmental perspective provides important context but does not fully explain the French–South African trade relationship. The main objection to the causal model of a homogeneous and rational executive actor formulating directive policy is that it is less suitable to discussing the discreet and secretive trade occurring between French and South African operative levels. It falters because of the distance between the executive and the lower order constituents of arms trade policy, as well as the constitutive quality of administrative levels, in triggering and then applying and interpreting new policy.

Problem of assigning arms trade to policy: four candidates

Generally, Cold War arms transfers have been presented as a derivative function of policies of national security that involve separate policy areas, and have been ‘condemned for being the outgrowth of reactive, even mechanistic, policies adopted by global rivals’. As SIPRI observed in 1971, ‘[i]ncreased arms exports could be regarded as part of a policy to … establish France as an international force in the world independent of the two major power camps’ (SIPRI, 1971, p. 7).

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16 The UN General Assembly renamed the territory name to Namibia following Resolution 2372 (XXII) of 12 June 1968 whereas South Africa continued to refer to its mandate of South-West-Africa.

p. 260). Within the literature, arms trade has commonly been absorbed within four policy areas of foreign policy, military strategy, economic affairs, and administrative or trade management, each of which has its own sociology. (Caplow & Vennesson, 2000; Jazbec, 2013) We will have a closer look at the context of each of these policy areas.

**Diplomacy & foreign policy**

International diplomacy focused on the disruptive nature of arms trade to racial oppression, which was a topic of social injustice both power blocs of the Cold War could agree on. Defending their relationship internationally France and South Africa had nonetheless had colliding objectives. France had an interest in reconciling or cloaking its actions to safeguard its preferred self-image as an independent pole, in between the US and USSR power blocs. Criticism had a corrosive effect on French relations with the non-aligned Asian states, and especially the Francophone African ruling elites, upon which French prosperity and international standing depended. French missions to the UN General Assembly therefore attempted to frame French military supply to Apartheid as impartial, by arguing South Africa’s right to self-defence. (Konieczna, 2013, pp. 204, 275-6) French justifications consistently argued that they were selling only “defensive” weapons that were unsuitable ‘for police or repressive action’, as President Giscard stated (Kolodziej, 1987, p. 269). Such attempts to differentiate trade were not helped by the stockpiling of the South African government, claiming all forms of Black opposition as indications of Soviet designs in Black Africa. (Onslow, The Cold war in Southern Africa: White power, black nationalism and external intervention , 2012, pp. 9-10) French officials had abundant experience with international criticism from the earlier defence of the French “mission civilisatrice” during the Algerian War (1954-1962) and they would frequently urge their partner to maintain a low profile. (Connelly, 2002, pp. 279-80)

All manner of French military equipment would be traded to South Africa in the decade to follow, especially aeronautical items. International recriminations would steadily grow after ‘Sharpeville’ as the political resistance from opponents and their supporting African ‘Frontline’ states turned more militant. The isolation of South Africa was championed increasingly successfully, notably by the Organization for African Unity, established in June 1963. President Kaunda was pivotal in his denunciation of the colonial territories surrounding Zambia on three sides, (Kalley, Schoeman, & Andor, 1999, pp. 649, 655). Kaunda discussed with President de Gaulle in September 1968. and in July 1970 criticized the resumption of arms trade to South Africa by the new British Conservative government. (MacMillan, 2015)
Arms trade within French and South African defence policies

From a strategic point of view, arms trade sustains the armed forces of the procuring government, but it also bestows a measure of mutual support between transacting governments. [SIPRI, 1972: p.248] As it regarded the regional balance of power as being firmly in South Africa’s favour, the legitimizing effect of arms trade motivated the new British Labour government to ban all arms sales to South Africa not immediately warranted under their 1955 Simonstown naval agreement. Apart from the French defence industry, by 1964 South Africa had few options to obtain sophisticated weaponry and the Western legitimation it desired. To the chagrin of the struggling British aviation industry, French industry and military forces would enjoy the fruits of larger production runs afforded by exports to South Africa. (Cockram, 1970, p. 110)

Additionally, French nuclear development benefited from satellite tracking stations, and uranium supplied by South Africa free of safeguards. (Purkitt & Burgess, 2005, p. 35) In return, the latter gained French informal assurance in the defence of the sea lanes to the Indian Ocean against incursions of the Soviet Fleet. South Africa’s development of nuclear technology and later weaponization benefited from French assistance, although France was neither the first nor the last to do so.18 (Purkitt & Burgess, 2005, p. 40) French exports came to include conventional military technology as well, as South African governments sought to reduce military dependency on foreign supply by upscaling local defence production. Achieving military autonomy to erase traumatic military defeat was an age-old ambition of the South Africans, one which they shared with their French supplier. Production licensing of major equipment was a way to circumvent the international embargo, as it found some legitimation in the delivery of parts under existing contracts.19

Economics and industrial development

French defensive strategy was designed to support a policy of national independence, and French defence was based on a combination of nuclear and conventional deployment in post-nuclear and expeditionary missions. (Bellini, 1974; Gordon, 1993) A sophisticated and autonomous defence industry was an integral part of that. It was immediately realized, and

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18 (Purkitt & Burgess, 2005, p. 40) in the 1950s the Eisenhower administration granted a civilian reactor to South Africa under its ‘Atoms for Peace’ Program. South Africa would receive Israeli assistance in the early 1970s to make the final step towards weaponized material, which had had been an ambition since the late 1940s. [CHECK dates w Polakov]

19BNA, FCO 45/677, telegram British ambassador, Pretoria (Snelling), #1146, 27/10/70, to FCO, on the details of President Pompidou’s restrictions. Point 3 on Panhard vehicles notes the importance of traded parts.
admitted publically somewhat later, that the government could not on its own provide the robust order book required. French arms trade achieved a take-off during the 1960s, globally establishing itself from 1970 onwards. (Hebert, Les exportations francaises d’armement au début de la Ve Republique : la mise en place des éléments d’une politique, 2002, p. 269) The French aviation industry is the indisputable star in this government-sponsored development. (GIFAS, 1984, p. 12) Mergers and nationalisations of the higgledy-piggledy French aviation companies during the 1950s and again in the late 1960s secured international scale but also created national monopolies. (GIFAS, 1984, pp. 8-12; Carlier & Martel, 1979) Defence Minister Michel Debré wrote a White paper on Defence in 1972 to remind the French public of the blessings of the ‘double fondement’ of defence politics and economics, of territorial and job security. (Hebert, Les exportations francaises d’armement au début de la Ve Republique : la mise en place des éléments d’une politique, 2002, p. 271) Contemporary macro-analyses wondered if it had all been worth it, focusing on the strategic and costing issues of the nuclear project and wondering whether the consecutive five-year ‘programme-laws’ for defence funding since 1960 actually achieved the twin objectives of building a nuclear deterrence and modernizing the armed forces. (Pinatel, 1976, p. 34) The existence of the conventional arms industry created a practical dilemma between production to sophisticated French military requirements, and attractiveness of military equipment to foreign buyers, who often had a need for basic and affordable effectiveness. (Kolodziej, 1987, pp. 297-8) While the technological ‘trickle-down’ never fully benefited French society as envisioned, the defence industry did develop as a key driver of industrial and technological development. By the 1970s, the Helicopter Division of SNIAS/Aerospatiale was a global competitor to the American producers.

This had been achieved by massive government investment, and by commerce, which was only partly a government affair. It is important to distinguish the roles of government as financial supporter, controller, and facilitator. The French military-industrial-governmental landscape was awash with examples of public authority sharing power with private delegates. The aeronautical industry – the Mirage fighters by private company Dassault, the Caravelle airliners and Alouette helicopters by national company Sud-Aviation, and several others – depended on parastatal commercial representation. The aviation industry ombudsman Comité Nationale pour l’Expansion de l’Industrie Aeronautique (CNEIA) was industry-led but government-owned.20 CNEIA acted as an industry forum, but also allocated promotional subsidies. The Office Français de l’Exportation de Matériels Aeronautiques (OFEMA), institutional intermediary to

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20 For example, CAEF, B-26566, minutes of CNEIA meeting of 10/4/73, indicating the various partners attending.
the French aviation industry, was owned by French industry, but its president was routinely a French general with a strong personal network. National company Sud-Aviation was operationally independent from the state, its 99% shareholder, which nonetheless kept a close eye on its investment, and had a strong voice in appointments.\textsuperscript{21} Appointed leaders of these entities were almost invariably retired military officers or trusted industry captains.\textsuperscript{22} Most importantly, these powerful blocs of unevenly delegated industrial power depended on government advocates abroad and in high places to facilitate their trade at various stages of the commercial process. The monopolies thus created could negotiate their expertise with the government that funded them, and they had very cordial relations with its administrators, some of whom would find employment within the firm after their retirement. (Carlier C. , 1992, pp. 344-345)

\textbf{French defence industry}

The return of Charles de Gaulle to power in 1958 set France and its defence on a new course. Armament industry, certainly aviation industry, which had experienced a post-war restoration and a first round of consolidation in the 1950s, received greater government benevolence, additional subsidy, but also greater control. The new Fifth Republic Constitution of 1958 nominally assigned matters of national security to the Prime Minister, but by design left a large \textit{de facto} prerogative to the President in all matters of defence and foreign policy. Subsequent legislation on defence funding, its production and peace time organisation aimed to eliminate the inefficiencies and inter-service rivalries of the Fourth Republic.

If diplomacy and strategy centred on the imperatives of arms trade, they stopped short of the question of administrative control of French armament exports. Initially, arms trade had been a mere by-product following de Gaulle’s transformation of the existing nuclear and conventional infrastructure to achieve French national military autonomy. Consecutive five-year programme laws funding these new structures found majority support of the National Assembly from 1960 onwards. The French state had decreed the creation, and control, of a defence industrial base

\textsuperscript{21} Cf Service Historique de la Defence Chatellerault, 543 2A2 15, Rapport rédigé par Monsieur le Controleur de l’Aeronautique MOREAU, Paris, 1/7/65, ‘Les exportation de Materiels Aeronautiques. L’OFMA et l’OGA (1961 – 1963 – 1964)’, when OFEMA was found to overcharge its clients, and the government controller’s advice was to the industrial partners, not the government. [Check folder]

\textsuperscript{22} Bruno Ribes,’La France et les ventes d’armes à l’étranger’, \textit{Études}, January 1972, [pp.5-26] p.12n22, The process of ‘pantoufflage’ is commonly used for civil servants who gain industry positions, sometimes to revert back to government. Retired military officers were similarly ‘parachuted in’, see Service Historique de la Defence Vincennes, Histoires Orales Armee de l’Air, Ditex 146, Raymond Brohon. PPP
which could support the growing complexity, integration and pace of military technological
development, to which the nuclear dimension added further demands and a need for military
reorganisation.

The Fourth Republic would lay the groundwork for industrial rejuvenation. (Comité pour l'histoire de l'armement, 2002, pp. 7-8) Despite great ambition, political leadership had been notoriously unstable, contributing to a string of colonial military defeats to the trauma of 1940. As the boundaries of peacetime management and wartime use became blurred in the ‘war with no name’ in Algeria, the French army would pervert civil-military relations. (Chantebout, L’organisation générale de la défense nationale en France depuis la fin de la seconde guerre mondiale, 1967, pp. 178-81; Alexander, 1994, pp. 90-91) After 1960, de Gaulle had won his confrontation with the French Army over Algeria, and the new relationship of the French armed forces to NATO, Algeria, and the Cold War was already prepared. Equipped with a new international and nuclear mission, the French armed services were stripped of their responsibilities in arms procurement, and ‘reprofessionalized’. (Alexander, 1994, p. 100; Martin, 1996) A key element in this was the reassignment of their technical engineers in the new entity of the Délégation Ministérielle pour l’Armement (the DMA), within a larger organizational and cultural shift in French military-industrial management. (Kolodziej, 1987; Rasmussen, 2002, pp. 14-15)

In April 1961, the creation of the DMA was decreed in anticipation of the termination of the Algerian War and the development of nuclear weapons. DMA was foremost to ensure centralized coordination in nuclear armament design, as well as conventional production and export, in an existing defence organisation that was rife with professional and inter-service rivalries.23 (Comité pour l’histoire de l’armement, 2002, pp. 5,11; Comité pour l’histoire de l’armement, 2002, p. 17) The DMA would become an oversized and powerful directorate under Pierre Messmer, the new Minister of Defence (1960-1969) and de Gaulle’s confidant. The history of the DMA as the heart of military-industrial planning remains understudied. From its inception in 1961, it has sided with market forces to stretch the outer boundaries of its remit set by French government. It appears that from the 1970s onwards, the DMA took on ever greater industrial responsibility, (Carlier C., 1992; Klein, 1988, p. 736) without breaking the bond with

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23 (Comité pour l’histoire de l’armement, 2002, p. 17), ‘…le ministre [de la Défense] et son cabinet ont le sentiment … que la machine technico-administrative repond mal, qu’ils ne sont plus vraiment “obéis”.'
government after accomplishment of the French *force de dissuasion*.24 (Gleizes, 2002, pp. 36-38; Bellini, 1974, pp. 51-52)

Rounds of consolidation of aviation industry led to the emergence of two main poles, under private firm Avions Marcel Dassault-Breguet and national company SNIAS/Aerospatiale, turning the French aviation industry into a global contender. (Carlier & Martel, 1979, pp. 113-9) The size of industry grew inversely to government’s ability to support it. Of necessity, government spending was increasingly supplanted by exports, notably in the helicopter and missile niches. Arms trade had grown from 2.5% of total French exports in 1969, to 4.8% in 1977, employing as many as the national railways. (Cannizzo, 1982, pp. 139-140) The French aviation industry had grown from a tool into an institution. In 1970 the French government completed the consolidation of Sud-Aviation –itself a merged entity since 1957-, Nord-Aviation, and missile producer SEREB into a French national aviation behemoth called Aerospatiale25, though not as big as the American giants, nor as successful as Dassault. (Carlier & Martel, 1979, pp. 115,121,164) Gaullist Defence Minister Debré understated the crucial significance of arms export in his statements on military policy in 1969, and in his 1972 White Paper on National Defence, aiming to revive civic allegiance.26 (Hebert, Les exportations francaises d’armement au début de la Ve Republique : la mise en place des éléments d’une politique, 2002, pp. 270-1) In fact, French government ties to arms trade were many, as it was at once decision maker, investor, client and coordinator.27 (Seiffert, 2008, p. 24; Faure, 2015, p. 12) This stems from the many interests entangled in modern military procurement, which equally refers to industrial economic gain, long-term inter-state supply relations and states’ accounting and responsibility to equip and maintain its armed forces. (Landgren, 1989, p. 20n15)

The growing role of industry in French national objectives became more apparent in the 1970s. The Gaullist claim of unaffiliated arms supply to non-aligned states increasingly disconnected

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24 (Gleizes, 2002, pp. 36-38), Gleizes does not see detachment: ‘la relation d’exclusivité entre chaque état et son industrie’ remains intact until early 1990s, p.38. Bellini implies a stronger position of French industry after 1975.

25 (Carlier & Martel, 1979, pp. 115,121,164), The colloquial term for Société Nationale Industrielle Aérospatiale, or SNIAS. Aérospatiale had turnover of 3,700 mFF on 43,700 staff in December 1970, Avions Marcel Dassault-Breguet Avions (AMD-BA) had 1,570 mFF on 12,000 staff. Export accounted for about half of turnover in both companies.

26 *Journal Officiel*, French Assemblee Nationale, 1st session, 17/11/69, p.3840-1, archives.assemblee-nationale.fr/ French minister for national defence Michel Debre sets out the integration of defence industry in the military policy as the fifth and final element.

27 (Faure, 2015, p. 12), ‘l’État qui ... regroupe l’ensemble des fonctions [of the MIC] : client, producteur, investisseur, régulateur et exportateur d’armements.’
from its implied progressivism. (Brzoska & Ohlson, Arms Transfers to the Third World, 1971-85, 1987, p. 66) French arms trade policy was seen by outside observers as economically driven, while growing domestic scrutiny questioned the societal benefits of defence infrastructure. A good example is the French arms embargo against Israeli “aggression” in the 1967 war with Egypt. It opened up Arab trade of arms and petrol, but equally set a moral standard French industry would soon fall short of. French government responded by further obscuring and depoliticizing controversial aspects of arms trade. This became obvious after public exposure in 1974 of an internal circular by French Defence Minister Robert Galley to his staff on the utmost secrecy on facts regarding arms trade, ‘rappelant leur devoir de réserve aux fonctionnaires et aux industriels qui ont à connaître de ces questions’. (Dubos, 1974, p. 8) As Dubos observed with regard to research: ‘il faut aller chercher dans le maquis de la réglementation et dans les rouages de l’administration’, a task Dubos undertook with some reserve (Dubos, 1974, pp. 88, 8)

Even towards the end of the Cold War, observers failed to fully penetrate into the internal workings of the French and South African military-administrative bodies and their cooperation. (Kolodziej, 1987, pp. 461n96,n97) The French DMA had provided the model for its South African copycat ARMSCOR, constituted in 1968. (McWilliams, 1989, p. 18) By 1980 the South African military-industrial entity had become a highly successful government administrator of the defence industry, subsequently engaging in military exports despite international sanction. Discretion and secrecy by French and certainly South African governments assured that little beyond generalisations about capitalism and militarism was found. Trickling information fuelled an enduring investigative obsession with French and South African methods of assuring defence production and procurement. By the late 1980s French and international observers concluded with some justification that French defence production had turned into ‘une bureaucratie incontrôlée et incontrôlable’. (Cohen, 1994, p. 17)

28 Key quote of circular in (Gauthier, 1982, p. 335), ‘Tout ce qui touche à la vente des matériels d’armement français doit être considéré comme rigoureusement secret et aucune information ne peut être communiquée à leur sujet.’ See also SHDC 793 1D1 20, Centre des Hautes Etudes de l’Armement, Sujet d’étude 3, ‘Commerce des armes et opinion publique, May 1976, see par.3.2, deciding against ‘mettre en danger les âmes faibles’.
29 (Dubos, 1974, p. 8), Dubos wanted to outline ‘une politique gouvernementale’, and had no interest in uncovering ‘les mystères de la fabrication’, of which he had identified the appropriate level of analysis. In 1981 Dubos, then 46 years old, became deputy cabinet director for Defence Minister Charles Hernu.
30 (McWilliams, 1989, p. 18), ‘[I]n 1967 a special committee was appointed to investigate various armaments organisations abroad and subsequently the French ‘DMA’ military–industrial system was chosen as a model for the development of the South African arms industry.’
The well-worn epitaph ‘military-industrial complex’ has been used to explain a perceived unaccountability of an ‘oligarchy’ of French military and industrial elites. (Kolodziej, 1987, p. xv) Yet subsequent analysis of the French production design process has complicated this image of a structural gap between government and industry, and emphasized the importance of social ties over hierarchical function, (Kinsella, 2002, p. 210) and beliefs over logics.\(^3\)\(^2\) (Genieys & Michel, 2006, p. 137)

**Top-down analysis: the role of the French president**

The entanglement of arms trade in these dimensions makes it difficult to decide on the precise actor and the exact policy under review. The common equation between executive government and policy also does not work in a domain that is both ‘shrouded in protective legislation’,\(^33\) (Frankel P., 1984, p. 83) and is an affair largely between communities presided over by Ministries of Defence, the ‘high priests of a Church of faithful’, that congregates officers, engineers, and administrators of various ilk. (Bongrand, 2006, pp. p.32, p.236-7, q.v, p.33-44)

Constitutionally it is a safe bet to attribute French actions as originating from high government, and in particular, Charles de Gaulle. (Moukambi, 2008, pp. 86-87) Under the Fifth Republic the President had the power to decide, or deputize, all matters pertaining to defence, national security, and foreign policy. These all overlap with arms export. (Chantebout, L'organisation generale de la defense nationale en France depuis la fin de la seconde guerre mondiale, 1967, pp. 197-8; Messmer & de Saint Robert, Ma Part De France: Entretiens Avec Philippe De Saint Robert : "à Voix Nue", France Culture, Semaine Du 8 Au 12 Décembre 1997, Quai Conti 2001-2003, 2003, pp. 101-2) Indeed, ‘the French President has been a key player in French African policy since 1958’. (Chafer, French African Policy: Towards Change, 1992, p. 39) That this also included the non-Francophone parts of Africa has only recently received greater scholarly attention. (Warson, 2013, pp. 10,13-15; Chafer, 2002, p. 353) At various points between 1961

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\(^{32}\) (Genieys & Michel, 2006, p. 137), the case of the continued but obsolete Leclerc tank development through ossified engineering networks within the DGA, 1980-1990. Genieys agrees with Kolodziej’s analysis of an ‘oligarchy’, (see chapter 1), emphasizing the social context : ‘pas simplement le résultat des logiques d’intérêts s’affrontant au sein du ministère de la Défense. En effet, elle s’est imposée progressivement comme une croyance.’

\(^{33}\) (Frankel P., 1984, p. 83), on the Armaments Development and Production Act (1980), which ‘prohibits the disclosure of any information in relation to the acquisition, supply, marketing, [etc, etc, etc] of the Armaments Corporation...’
and 1963 President de Gaulle made positive soundings on military assistance to Southern Africa. He ordered his diplomats to take a position of state sovereignty in UN votes regarding France’s arms trade clients, offered the Portuguese military arms supplies, and similar assistance to South African Foreign Minister Louw, possibly also Prime Minister Verwoerd, with whom he failed to meet in March 1961.

However, to take these incidences as expressions of high policy would be dubious. French African policy was a confused and uncoordinated amalgam, caused by a ‘multiplicity of agencies’. (Chafer, 1992, p. 39) Moreover, a denial by the presidential African policy advisor until 1974, Jacques Foccart, of involvement in regular arms trade, must be given singular credence. De Gaulle’s leadership over government was indisputable, but it remains unclear what his involvement in arms trade was more specifically. His closest ministers like Pierre Messmer at defence and Couve de Murville at Foreign Affairs agree that de Gaulle at once allowed them great flexibility, and demanded to be closely informed. In his memoirs, Messmer referred to de Gaulle’s closed cabinet sessions, during which no notes were taken, and the President also limited invitations to those state officials immediately involved. (Messmer, 1992, p. 257) Wauthier pointed to South African trade as one of the presidential dossiers that remain classified. (Wauthier, 1995, p. 642) Nor has the presidential line of enquiry determined the extent to which arms trade policy was suggested by the Minister of Defence or dictated by the French President. The relationship between General de Gaulle and Pierre Messmer, both with military backgrounds, was also of a particularly close character, and should not be equated to that of President Pompidou with Michel Debré, his erstwhile predecessor as Prime Minister.

In terms of decision making, there were many links in the chain of arms trade control. Propositions were gathered by the DAI, the military export desk of the DMA, which in turn served the new Minister of Defence, who informed the office of the Secretary-General of National Defence (SGDN), which advised the Prime Minister, who as head of the cabinet of Ministers was duty-bound to the President. Nor did the two government heads singlehandedly decide on exports. The Prime Minister only infrequently arbitrated and delegated decision-making on individual trade propositions to the Commission Interministérielle d’Etude pour des Exportations des Matériels de Guerre (CIEEMG), the advisory forum presided by the three key ministries of Defence, Foreign Affairs, and Economics and Finance. (Garrigues & Denoël, 2016) Very little of substance has been published on the inner workings of this powerful committee.
Implementation of arms trade at ministerial and sub-ministerial level

Given the dispersed nature of French government decision making in French arms trade, the routinely classified nature of defence matters, and the additional secrecy maintained within government, the operational level has been the subject of both great attention and forced analytical simplification. (Duclert, 2000, p. 9) Defence industry innovation serves the state in all four fields: through their deployment in the armed forces, their profitable sale to other states, the resulting diplomatic leverage and their political and societal benefits for industrial continuity and employment. Additionally, the grey circuit of corruption and influence benefited many a French political party. (Garrigues & Denoël, 2016, pp. 48-49) Although de Gaulle single-mindedly drove the nuclear strategy and industrial modernisation of defence, the extent of his exerted influence and interest in arms trade is not much clearer for it. (Carlier C. , 1994, pp. 411-413)

Nor has the proximity of military-industrial actors to the subject of arms trade made analysis of its conduct any easier. In the 1960s, despite the role assigned to the military, government’s control over arms trade was relative. (Vial , 2002, pp. 44-45) In the 1970s and 1980s, many observers questioned the position of French institutionalized defence industry, some arguing it was no longer a servant, but an all too powerful constituent. Commentators of various colours inferred that government was either colluding with, or lost to, a wasteful or immoral industry; Marxists warned of the dangers of defence capitalism and militarism.34 economic and parliamentary analyses found industrial imbalances,35 (Pinatel, 1976; Ruehl, 1976) and insiders opened up (Dubos, 1974; Marion, 1990). Writing to debunk scholarly claims of a French wayward military controlling armed forces and industry, Cohen (1994) instead perceived a deliberate distancing on the part of French presidents, (Cohen, 1994, pp. 36-7) but his analysis has not penetrated the executive. 36 (Vial , 2002, p. 46) Even so, it has remained difficult to attribute arms trade directly to a government-led policy.

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34 CLICAN, 1977, p.197: ‘..l’explication marxiste... nous apprend que la course aux armeaments a pour origine le capitalisme et ses contradictions..’, and Ibid, p.204: ‘L’evolution technique des armeaments entraîne necessairement une evolution des structures de la defense, qui passe par la [participation au commerce d’armes, a la course quantitative et qualitative aux armes classiques et nucleaires, enfin a la militarisation de toute la societe.’

35 In particular, the report of the Limouzy Commission of 1977, which was tasked to examine aviation industry-wide funding further to discrepancies at Dassault – an investigative scope that betrayed Dassault’s influence. See Archives Nationales, Paris, Cote 19830315/1-3, TRAC 30214 (41 T 49). The other two publications point to the economic and military contradictions of French military security.

36 (Vial , 2002, p. 46), Interestingly, Vial was Chef du Service Études au Service historique de la Marine, Vincennes, and attached as an associate researcher to the Sorbonne at the time of publication.
Institutional actors: the military-industrial complex

The policy-driven, state-centric approach aggregates all factors below the executive. Bach’s 1990 analysis of the drivers of the inter-state relationship still broadly holds, but is nonetheless unhelpful in explaining French arms trade to South Africa: ‘Les échanges établis ont été façonnés par le poids des logiques étatiques et l’influence du « complexe militaro-industriel » de chacun des partenaires, sans parler de la pénétration des réseaux gaullistes par un lobby sud-africain particulièrement prospère.’ (Bach, 1990, p. 174) French state logics can be used to argue for, and against, the lucrative but disruptive trade relation. Military-industrial complexes of the two states did not automatically converge further to these logics. Lobbies like the South African Foundation had no discernible influence on regular arms trade decision making, nor does the profit motive explain policy changes. (Carlier C., 1992, p. 297; Bach, 1990, p. 180) Konieczna has warned against framing the various elements of strategic and other forms of cooperation as interconnected within a clear bilateral quid-pro-quo. It seems more accurate, to understand these operations to have worked in parallel towards state objectives. (Moskos Jr., 1974; Konieczna, 2013, p. 216)

The identification of relevant policy actors to arms trade has inherent flaws. Here we will establish the limitations of two types of actor analysis, before proposing the relegation of actor-based analysis in favour of emergent structures of the commercial process. The military-industrial complex has been a familiar instrument of analysis, also applied to the French institutionalised defence industry and the emergent South African defence industry.

Commentators on French arms trade of the 1970s and 1980s extensively debated the agency of institutional defence. The concept of the military-industrial complex, or MIC, whose origins coincide with the early Cold War, has been used to resolve the problem of attributing agency for defence procurement. It finds its rationale in the search for an identifiable and homogeneous actor that bridges the distance between government policy and its sub-governmental building blocks. This dated concept is still used to address the problematic influence of non-government actors on defence funding, by identifying the interactions between the three poles of national defence: government, industry and the military. A range of (political) lenses have looked at interrelations between the poles to scrutinize inefficient or dubious procurement, policymaking, and power bases within government. (Moskos Jr., 1974, p. 502 qv; Slater & Nardin, 1974, pp. 27-9; Dunne & Skons, 2014, pp. 282-3; Wolf Jr, 1972)
However, to expand the field of research beyond those immediately linked to executive decision making, to the relevant actions and interests of institutions of national defence is only the first step. ‘The issue is not so much the existence of a military-industrial complex -which few would deny- but to what degree it is an autonomous entity and to what purposes it is directed.’ (Moskos Jr., 1974, p. 499) Its implied homogeneity makes the concept problematic. The generic concept engages with power configurations internal to state defence hierarchies, but European configurations differ importantly from the larger and more polemic American archetype.

Early rebuttals of the theoretical model still have currency today. (Levine, 1973; Dunne & Skons, 2014) A key issue has been obtaining accurate information. The limitations on research design that result from scarce data have led to the exclusion of interactions with institutions outside the triumvirate, and with other governments, as they disrupt the presumed power balance. These important factors of interaction are usually unavailable. Levine observed that ‘we desperately lack process data: [key actor] interactions, the formation of understandings [between them and] elite perceptions data.’ (Levine, 1973, p. 303) The existence of these constituents is clear, but the institutions –presumed to be homogenous - are reconnected to policy without addressing their internal complexity. Despite having been discredited, the MIC model remains as a historical legacy and a discursive trope, largely based on the pervasive American configuration. The persistent echo of the old monolithic research model hides the emergent quality of its components. (Roland, 2007, pp. 347, 360; Joana, 2008, p. 44)

Admittedly, the drawbacks of the MIC concept make it an easy straw man for our conceptual framework. It is nonetheless important to recognize that its weakness originates from a lack of primary data on nebulous defence procurement hierarchies. New primary data allows a partial reassessment of the French and South African cases, and investigation of institutional power relations. A focus on competencies can establish the relevance of constituents of the defence procurement hierarchy, rather than assuming them based on institutional position.

In the case of France, the sophisticated military-industrial infrastructure was built up and consolidated with government approval and support. The French MIC was of a different nature than the American military-industrial complex and its attributed myths and misuse. French defence industry was created and grown with the deliberate investment and demand of both the French Fourth and early Fifth Republics. The creation in April 1961 of the Délégation Ministérielle à l’Armement, the super-department for armaments under Minister of Defence Pierre Messmer (1960-1969), has been likened to ‘la constitution d’un complexe milita-
industriel d’importance inédite.’ (Joana, 2008, p. 44) The responsibilities of peacetime preparation and maintenance of the armed forces were separated from the military command structure, and placed under the authority of the DMA, answerable directly to the Minister of Defence, whose room for manœuvre over conventional forces has remained considerable, positioned between the ‘dyarchy’ of President and Prime Minister. (Carlier C., 1994, pp. 449-50) After breaking up the jurisdictions of the armed services, the new family of ‘warriors’ was separated from the families of ‘craftsmen’ and ‘administrators’. Each had their separate practices, yet inhabited the greater defence community. Nationalized industry leaders were also entangled with these families within government. (Bongrand, 2006, pp. 31-44, 63) Under subsequent Ministers the DMA kept wastefulness of the type commonly attributed to the American defence complex under control – with the exception of the Leclerc battle tank – but the armed forces were tied to national production, which took precedence over foreign alternatives. (Joana, 2008, p. 54)

A meso-level study of the French defence industry by Edward Kolodziej in 1987 encountered a problem of attribution and identification of actors. Kolodziej saw ‘a crazy-quilt pattern of behaviour that admits to no easy –or sure- generalization.’ Crucially, he referred to the differences in French regional trade approaches, and the difficulty to ‘distinguish arms transfers as an aim or as an instrument of French policy’, or their usefulness as indicators of success in either capacity. (Kolodziej, 1987, pp. 357, 332) Very much a political economy document, Kolodziej’s study explored in detail the broad policy choices that had shaped French defence industry and foreign policy. Arms trade was not merely a support to the defence budget, but was also used as an instrument of French foreign policy, notably in the region of sub-Saharan Africa. France starved its former Francophone colonies of major military equipment, leaving them dependent on French intervention and assistance.

Kolodziej likened the French structure to an oligarchy; others perceived an uncontrolled generalcy, and a military-industrial mesosystem. (Chesnais & Serfati, 1992, p. 21; Guisnel, 1990) Cohen has dismissed analyses of a rampant French military with the argument that self-reinforcing military-industrial networks and subcultures exist, but that their fragmentation creates a healthy heterogeneity. (Cohen, 1994, pp. 16-23, 66-67) This in turn has been question by Vial (2002) who rightly points out that, despite later less optimistic analyses of an ossified
engineer corps within the DGA (the successor to the DMA in 1977), the importance of middle level actors is clear.37 (Vial, 2002, p. 47)

Analyses of the South African ‘War Machine’ (Cawthra, 1986) are easily connected to the discursive trope of a pernicious militarised sub-governmental structure in the service of racial policies, and not without justification. The substantial and near-continuous growth of the public and secret defence budgets between 1960 and 1980 supported its expansion. Militarisation and short lines of executive communication made the South African defence community38 a more compact entity than the French defence community, whose assistance and organisational example it had adopted.39 (Frankel P., 1984, pp. 72,74; Swilling & Phillips, 1989, p. 137) It has been called a light version of the MIC.40 Following Frankel, Grundy saw it ‘as a “lower-order version” of C. Wright Mill’s 1956 analysis of a ‘power elite’.41 (Grundy, 1988, p. 46) Mill’s authoritative book had diagnosed the bureaucratic elites as the ‘pinnacle’ of economic, political and, powerfully, military realms.42 (Mills C., 1956, pp. 8-9 ) If the Afrikaner South African military departed from the liberal style and values of its erstwhile British tutor, (Frankel P., 1984, pp. 13,18, 32-33) then the ascendance, and in 1977, take off, of the South African defence complex was nurtured by Defence Minister (1966-1980), and then Prime Minister (1978-89) P.W. Botha, who was instrumental in bringing industry and military together. 43 (Frankel P., 1984, pp. 89, 82) Apart from scale, militarization of the South African entity gave the SADF a strong voice, and South Africa approximated the ‘garrison state’, in the words of

38 [Swilling & Phillips, 1989, p. 137][in 1980] the security establishment consisted of : the Department of Defence and the South African Defence Force, the intelligence services; the intellectual community based (mainly) at Afrikaans universities in organisations like the Institute for Strategic Studies at the University of Pretoria and in private concerns such as the Terrorism Research Centre; Armscor; and the South African Police.’ This definition is of course outside the period of interest and includes entities with no clear relation to the direction and equipment of military forces.
39 Multiplying five-fold twice in fifteen years, from 40Rm in 1959/60 to 210 Rm in 1964/65, and again to 1,043 Rm in 1975/76. 1980/81: 1,970 Rm. This omits unknown amounts of the secret Defence Special Account.
40 [Landgren/Mcwilliams, check def;]
42 [Mills C.W., 2000, p. 9],‘the leading men in each of the three domains of power- the warlords, the corporate chieftains, the political directorate’; Compare (Moskos Jr., 1974): 502n7, also p.499-502.
43 Botha combined his prime ministerial and defence posts until October 1980.
an early hypothesis of civil-military relations. Frankel observed an accelerating movement from the late 1960s to the 1970s in which ‘[t]he general receptivity of the private sector to militarization reflects the wider movement of the military establishment into the civil realms of South African society’, in terms of organisational control, strategic imperatives, and social values. (Frankel P., 1984, p. 90) To be sure, although South African private industry paid lip service to the emancipatory power of liberalization, their interests favoured the status quo secured by the military. (Simpson, The politics and economics of the armaments industry in South Africa, 1989, pp. 218-20, 230-1) Militarization had also been a ‘logical consequence’ of the South African interpretation of the teaching of French strategist André Beaufre, who argued for a ‘total strategy’ whereby mobilisation of state non-military resources would prove decisive over mere force. (Frankel P., 1984, p. 58; Cock, 1989, p. 9; Scholtz, 2015, pp. 35-8) The South African leadership took Beaufre’s view of an inevitable battle of wills, and loosely fashioned his teachings of social and economic strength and the primacy of the political realm to its own military strategy. (Frankel P., 1984, pp. 46-7, 52-3) The severe (white) manpower shortages due to Apartheid and the better wages in industry show that the totalitarian and self-serving rhetoric of a ‘garrison state’ must not be overstated. Indeed, while Frankel sees many clues equating to a South African military-industrial complex and a militarised garrison state, he also notes that the latter is ‘imperfectly identifiable’. (Frankel P., 1984, pp. 79-80, 73)

In the 1980s the South African Defence Force and its parastatal industrial pillar ARMSCOR became household names. Their interventions between 1975 and 1990 called into question the origins and nature of this defence conglomerate. Authors like Frankel, Cawthra, and Cock and Nathan qualified the existence of the South African military-industrial complex of the 1980s, but one that was embedded in a militarized state. Kenneth Grundy echoes the sentiment of French researchers, but at the same time, his analysis of South Africa’s defence system illustrates the analytical problem of capturing the relevant actors of the military-industrial complex: ‘[T]he security establishment includes all those individuals and institutions, whether

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46 (Frankel P., 1984, pp. 79-80, 73), Frankel notes economic figures are no substitute for political analysis.
a formal part of the governmental and administrative apparatus of the state or attached to private
and parastatal organisations, that are chiefly concerned with the maintenance of the South
African state… ‘ (Grundy, 1988, p. 6) Grundy’s definition describes what we understand as
‘defence communities’, but Grundy includes think tanks and universities, only tangentially
related to military procurement. (Swilling & Phillips, 1989, p. 137)

Policy networks
The differences between the South African and French military-industrial complexes illustrate
the difficulties in analysing their interactions and their relations to policy. The actors and their
interests behind institutional power configurations of government institutions and industry are
generally hard to pin down, as they do not necessarily follow functional structures. As a result,
research on institutions has reoriented towards relational variants. This aspect of informality
coincides with more recent understandings of arms trade as ‘an intricate web of networks
between the formal and shadow worlds between government, commerce and criminality… for
the benefit of a small, self-serving elite, seemingly above the law, protected by the secrecy of
national security and accountable to no one.’ The description by Feinstein invokes the operative
middle level that exists within the boundaries of government policies.

Chapter One will evaluate the methodological and ontological motivation for the adoption of
practice theory over network analysis, which ‘tends to produce a static and overly structured
view of the world not sufficiently sensitive to process, agency and meaning’.

47 Mintzberg adoption of less structured and rational views on decision making is a case in point. Mintzberg &
Westley p.89

48 Christopher Ansell,‘Network Institutionalism’, In The Oxford Handbook of Political Institutions, Edited by R. A.
W. Rhodes, Sarah A. Binder, and Bert A. Rockman, 2006, par.9 [Accessed online, Ebrary, 14-12-2013] Examples
of macro-network analyses without a clear link to policy are Akerman, Anders; Seim, Larsson Seim, Anna, ‘The
Pages 535–551; also Senekal, Burgert A; Stemmet, Jan-Ad and Stemmet, Karlien, ‘South Africa In The
for Contemporary History 40(1) / Joernaal vir Eietydse Geskiedenis 40(2): pp.48-70. Their method of correlating
statistical datasets produces more data but provides little clarification, and focuses only on quantifiable
bilateral relations.
granted. Asking a *how*-question does not proscribe a *why*-question, but it does force us to ‘in addition, inquire into the practices that enable social actors to act, to frame policy as they do, and to wield the capabilities they do.’  

49 (Doty, 1993, p. 299)

**Capturing arms trade at the middle level**

The primacy and priority of momentous executive policy over social behaviour is problematic for the activity of arms trade, which is an ongoing and interactive process of continuous and dispersed decision making and practice, at a distance from high government. We will now briefly introduce these elements, which will be explored further in the next chapter.

In literature on interstate relations arms procurement is often reduced to sales. Leaving aside its negative associations, arms trade is an inherent consequence of the security dilemmas states face in an anarchic international system.  

50 (Booth & Wheeler, 2008) Purchase, or production, of new major weapon systems covers a host of strategic and long term considerations because of lead times, limited budgets, and the necessary organisational and doctrinal integration of equipment. The complex decision-making system within the emerging commercial process therefore justifies highlighting the arms trade as a topic. (Wrigley, 2001) By making the process of arms trade itself the subject of analysis, its complexity, emergent character and interactive nature can be borne out. Rather than orienting towards an actor or location, an armament case study will guide ‘the analysis of evidence on processes, sequences and conjunctures of events’ allowing us to hypothesize about the operative causal mechanisms informing decision making. (Bennett & Checkel, 2014, p. 7)

As the subject of this thesis, the arms trade that French and South African actors jointly engaged in was a commercial process with a broadly predictable sequence to individual deals. Based on the empirical evidence, the process of arms trade included (at least) four steps, of promotion, authorisation, production, and after-sales service, which will form the starting point of analysis. As transactions accumulated, patterned interactions emerged which at once reinforced the phases of commerce and shaped them to suit the emerging relationship. Repeating the phases of the commercial process carries both the transactional and longitudinal dimension of arms

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49 Doty advocates a discursive analysis to come to ‘how-possible’ questions. (Wendt, 1987, p. 364) has pointed out the difference between historical analysis which assumes ‘interests and causal powers of agents as given’, and Doty’s structuralist approach which critically examines the social construction of such entities. As Wendt shows, both approaches complement each other.

50 (Booth & Wheeler, 2008) embrace a constructivist view of international anarchy, which departs from the realist view of unavoidable uncertainty, by seeing threats and interests as intersubjective and mutually constructed, and therefore not unchangeable.
As a fortunate quirk of this investigation, it appears that these steps also broadly reflect the development of the French-South African product life cycle where it concerns helicopters. From initial contacts in the 1950s, the relationship developed and matured in the 1960s, to galvanize into a distinct community of shared arms trade practice. Put conceptually, the chronology establishes how a growing set of activities gradually turned into shared practices, and later, formed a community of practice. The choice to represent the arms trade between two defence communities as a sequence of activities led to the construction of a model of a commercial process. It will be remembered that the term defence community is used to avoid the loaded term ‘military-industrial complex’, and to associate it with a social group. The four steps in the commercial process are activities that to a lesser or a greater extent turn into practices over time, connecting French and South African operatives who find a common working environment across institutional and spatial borders. The process under review consists of a sequence of meaningful practices of arms trade in which elements of both state hierarchies participated. It is the conceptual argument of this thesis that through sustained arms trade, a community of practice came to exist between the two national defence communities by the end of the 1970s. This social dimension in turn points to the importance of identifying common social practices as a separate explanation of (French) policy-making.

Defence communities
In order to reflect the social dimension of trade and acknowledge the problems of institutional frameworks, here we will refer to ‘defence communities’ instead of the term military-industrial complex. A defence community is understood as a collective of people, organisations and offices who share a core responsibility for national defence procurement and production. Various unrelated practices were contained within the ‘family’ of defence, and some even extended to those outside of it. The French engineer constructing a patrol boat was not an immediately relevant actor within the defence community regarding sales to South Africa. The French Foreign Ministerial delegates assisting in authorisation would not be a member of the community, yet participated in it. As the separate French and South African communities are not themselves the subject of study, but rather their shared membership to commercial practices, the term defence communities will be used throughout to distinguish them from each other and non-members within their government.

Case study of helicopters
Within the wide pallet of French military products sold to South Africa, French helicopters are an unusually rich case study, connecting to every conceivable part of government policy.
Historically, helicopters offered an enduring example of restored French aeronautical prowess, and employment.\textsuperscript{51} (Krotz, 2011, p. 24) South Africa obtained 213 French helicopters between 1960 and 1978, rivalling Portuguese purchase of them.\textsuperscript{52} From 1962, Sud-Aviation’s Helicopter Division site in Marignane had brought employment to the Marseille area where unemployment was high.\textsuperscript{53} Almost in parallel the Alouette, Super Frelon and Puma helicopters came to be regarded by French government insiders and outside observers as the most contentious item traded within an already controversial trade relation.\textsuperscript{54} Operationally, their employment occupied two French companies, private company and engine manufacturer Turbomeca and national company, and helicopter designer Sud-Aviation (after 1970: Aerospatiale/SNIAS). These companies were very different in size, ownership and influence, Aerospatiale being the big brother in all departments. Commercially, the tactical use of French Alouette II helicopters by the French Army during the Algerian War formed a testimonial for French equipment. Conceptually, helicopters are highly sophisticated weapons system whose operationalization requires major organisational and long-term commitments by producers and end-users, which complicates and compartmentalizes decision making by both. Finally, the first and second generations of French helicopters now represent an obsolete and dispersed civilian technology that is somewhat more easily researched than other more current technologies.\textsuperscript{55}

Empirical and conceptual aims of thesis

To summarise, this study retraces historical French–South African arms trade interaction through the case of helicopters. Its general aim is to break away from an executive level analysis of French military-industrial diplomacy, and to return historical autonomy to lower-level actors.

\textsuperscript{51} With the exception of the newer SA-330 Puma helicopter, all types discussed here are first generation helicopters, limited in their operation and ‘survivability’ and economic life compared to second-generation helicopters. (Seiffert, 2008, pp. 405-7) explains the difference.

\textsuperscript{52} (Wilkins, 2000) offers the most comprehensive and authoritative account for the period, a total of 213: 7 Alouette II, 121 Alouette III, 16 Super Frelon, 69 Puma. Added to this were 13 British Westland Wasps and one Westland Scout; SIPRI Online Trade Register counts 133 French helicopters to South Africa, omitting about a third of the Alouette III and Puma, delivered through various means in the 1970s. SIPRI states deliveries to Portugal as 199 Alouette II, III and Puma. armstrade.sipri.org/armstrade/page/trade_register.php.

\textsuperscript{53} Journal Officiel, Assemblée Nationale, 2\textsuperscript{nd} session of 14/6/67, pp.1810-11, President notes unemployment there, Messmer responds with growth in worker totals since ‘62, a conflict was current over wages and looming end of the Caravelle; cf SHDV, fonds Armée de l’Air, DITEX/Témoignages Orales, 146, General Raymond Brohon, Bande 63C, side 2, (recording 185), on the unusually close relations between management and unions at the Marignane facility.

\textsuperscript{54} CADC, 499INVA 1163, folder Exportations de matériels de guerre, report on visit by deputy director of DAL to Kaunda in Lusaka, #PC/ED, 2/7/70, ‘Visite au Président Kaunda’, p.3-4, ‘Nous risquerons forte d’etre la cible principale des adversaires de l’apartheid au lieu et place de la Grande Bretagne…un geste soit fait rapidement sur le plan des armes…par exemple… que nos livraisons d’hélicoptères à l’Afrique du Sud et au Portugal seront suspendues…’

\textsuperscript{55} I am indebted to the staff of the SHDC for pointing this out to me.
It does so through pursuing three separate objectives. First, it charts the interactive phases of commercialisation and operationalization of Alouette helicopters by French national producer Sud-Aviation to the South African Defence Force between 1955 and 1979, set against the background of French-South African relations. Second, this study deconstructs ‘military-industrial expertocracies’ through historical operational practices contained within arms trade. (Cohen, 1994, p. 36) Third, it restores a measure of historicity to relevant mid-level governmental, military-administrative and industrial actors, by examining the longer-term effects and the emergent qualities of policy and practice, both of which can be seen to have social dimensions.

Arms trade had an important function in French relations with South Africa. By defining arms trade as a commercial process, various forms of administrative and industrial implementation not previously connected to the bilateral relationship come into view. The focus on a collection of actors operating at this ‘middle level’ generates two objectives, one historical, and another conceptual.

In terms of the contribution of this thesis to historical knowledge, the goal is to explore French arms trade from the inside, based in part on sources not previously used. The period of the 1950s, before the visible arms trade agreement in 1960 and the French decision in 1963 and 1964 to loosely interpret international sanctions, is revealed to have been foundational to the French-South African relationship. South African dawning concerns about military procurement, and the impact on procurement of a gradual shift in defence policy are also given their due place. The most important empirical finding of this study is perhaps the confirmation of continued assistance to South African defence by the French government through the mediation of industry, two years after the public adoption of the 1977 mandatory UN embargo on arms trade to South Africa. It also serves to underline that secretive policy resided very much in negotiated activity, and much less so in formal agreements. Substantial primary evidence is also presented to suggest that a helicopter licence to assemble from parts was supplied or de facto in place already in 1971. Together with primary sources dating from 1975 and 1979, this information contradicts the common assumption of gradual diplomatic withdrawal. The instrument of embargo constituted only a tactical retreat by government, not a change of arms trade policy. It will be concluded that any final verdict on the Franco-South African relation, or at least the arms trade element in it, must therefore extend from the executive to the diplomacy occurring between and among communities of practice like that of the two defence communities.
Similar research could be conducted on other weapon types and clients, making the analysis of French arms exports towards Southern Africa from its inception to its continuance more profound and precise. Procurement and use of French helicopters by South Africa overlap with those same activities by Portugal and Rhodesia, South Africa’s partners in suppressing black national liberation movements in the region. France’s long track record in colonial wars represented an operational example, as well as a warning, and evoked political admiration among the states of southern Africa, and elsewhere. As a recent study into French arms trade in Latin America has established, the controversial French doctrines of ‘Guerre Révolutionnaire’ developed during the Algerian War, externalized political opposition, offering a practical model for counter-contestation to autocratic regimes there. (Nabuco de Araujo, 2011) Regional interconnections also associate with a pan-African and global character of French African policy, aimed at recreating French leadership as a vanguard for Third World progress, as an alternative actor in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

The conceptual goal is to present a heuristic, activity-based model to which themes, periods and actors are subordinated. In the next chapter the methodology will be elaborated further. Arms trade will be placed at the centre of investigation, and unpacked from statistics to a series of interactions and negotiations. This represents a particular challenge. Even when narrowed down to helicopters, arms trade activities do not have an apparent spatial or functional boundary. They are defined merely by their objective, which is the individual transaction, and more broadly the arms trade relationship. Transacting complex weapons systems represented a significant effort and commitment on the part of both commercial sides, and involved a range of steps and cooperation of different parties in two countries. Put differently, arms trade is understood as a collection of separate commercial practices, with longitudinal, hierarchical, and interactive dimensions.

Sources
The goal of this study – retracing changing commercial practices – comes with a high requirement for detailed information on French and South African actors, procedures and practices in national defence procurement. Data must allow both a connection to individual transactions and an organisational or temporal context to place them within the framework of a commercial process. Not all documents have ticked all these boxes, although close reading and growing familiarity with source producers usually identified elements of both.
Scale and balance of research

The empirical foundation of this study is made up in a very large part of primary source material in (primarily) South African, French, and British public archives. In a way, this study re-examines the state of research on the specific subject of Franco-South African arms trade and the source basis for its positions. The primary sources used by previous studies on the subject have been examined directly for the most part. Crucially, new primary sources on arms trade procedure form the empirical corner stone of this research. In sum, archival access to historical state secrets is becoming more difficult to access. This study has set out limitations but also opportunities for future research in this area, outlined below.

This section is organised following to two major methodological tools, process, and practice. As the first constitutive element of the framework, process is understood to be an emergent structure. The changing procedural rules and the evidence of actual sales and sales organisation have been researched through a mix of primary secondary and statistical sources. By contrast, the establishment of historic practices at middle levels of government and industry has been mostly based on primary documentary and oral evidence. This section is not intended to be exhaustive, but sets out the major and noteworthy sources informing the chapters.

Over the course of three years, over thirty visits were made to fifteen archival locations in France, South Africa, and Britain, ranging from several days to several months. The largest harvest was generated at the following archives: the two locations of the French Service Historique de la Defense at Vincennes (which includes the oral history project of the French Air Force) and Chatellerault; the two locations of the French Centre d’Archives Diplomatiques in Courneuve (Paris) and Nantes, and the South African military. It is part and parcel of the methodology that quantity mostly, but not always indicates quality of sources found. Prior doctoral thesis material has been a springboard to locating evidence, as well as to provide approximate contexts to commercial processes. Secondary sources have been used to understand the wider contexts of national defence policies, but with the notable exception of

56 Service Historique de la Défense military archives, (SHDV) including the Temoignages Orales de l’Armée de l’Air oral history project, Vincennes (SHDV-TO); Service Historique de la Défense military archives, Châtellerault (SHDC); Centre d’Archives Diplomatiques, Courneuve (CADC); Centre d’Archives Diplomatiques, Nantes (CADN); Centre des Archives Economiques et Financières, Savigny-le-Temple (CAEF); Archives Nationales, Pierrefitte (AN); South African National Defence Force Archives, Pretoria (SANDF); South African Air Force Museum, Pretoria (SAAF); South African National Archives, Pretoria (SANA); South African Department of Foreign Affairs/DIIRCO Archives, Pretoria (DFA); The Roy Welensky collection at the Bodleian Libraries at Oxford University; British National Archives, Kew (BNA); British Library, London (BL); Turbomeca company Archives at SAFRAN-Turbomeca, Pau (TUR).
Edward Kolodziej’s authoritative 1987 book, they did not offer much information at the level of analysis or with the desired detail on trade practice and process.

A distinction must be made for statistical sources and doctoral research. SIPRI’s online register remains a quick and reasonably accurate source of historic inter-state trade, as well as a long standing source of detailed studies of international trends. The historic issues of international armament monitor The Military Balance, held at the British Library, has its uses but is less suitable to trade analysis. Among the many partial sources of sales of French-South African helicopter trade however, the book by South African helicopter pilot Monster Wilkins must stand as the definitive accounting. (Wilkins, 2000, p. annex) The thesis by (Stanley, 2004) on French –South Africa relations integrates military trade as one of several areas of French policy. The theses of Moukambi (2008) and Konieczna (2013), both covered the topic of arms trade, and were helpful in identifying possible sources and understanding the relationship. Several other theses, such as those of Warson (2013), Correia (2007), Marcos (2007) and Nabuco de Araujo (2011) on bilateral relations of South Africa and France with Portugal, and France and Brazil, respectively, have been instrumental in providing bases for specific chapters, notably on regional effects. Theses by Jooste (1996), Boulter (1997) and Warwick (2009) on South African military have been helpful in the chapter on promotion.

Problems of access

The subject of study is controversial and difficult to research, for reasons of a lack of access to documents and methodological reliability, which exacerbate each other. Access is a multifarious problem for the researcher. It does not reflect solely on the cooperativeness of archival staff and governmental regulations. Most often, limitations of distance, time and resources determine the limits of examination. Archival organisation of operational and administrative material needed is often fragmented, and interfering with the historical contexts of the original production. This is an unavoidable obstacle for historical process tracers, greatly adding to the workload. For this reason the prior doctoral theses of the last ten years have been so useful. Often, it was worthwhile to follow up on documents found and used by others, because the practical dimension of trade is a specific one not usually covered in other research. As archives are of necessity organised around topics and government structures which hide these practices, assistance from archival staff can make all the difference. Against Pfister’s complaints about the inflexibility of the South African military archivists, the experience here has been of exceptional and proactive support from military archivists in France and South Africa. (Pfister, 2005, p. 8) The smallest, but most frustrating obstacle to research is the
administrative denial of requests for early declassification (‘Dérogation’). Key examples are parts of the Pompidou Presidential archives and Foccart Collection, which were not disclosed under the 2008 legislation despite their earlier use by Konieczna (2013). Equally, as regards President de Gaulle’s exact objectives and timing considerations on overtures to Pretoria, the archival material of the French national Archives showed important gaps. (Konieczna, 2013, p. 103) Files within French archives have a habit of being ‘polluted’ by documents pertaining to nuclear development, which automatically entombs non-related material along with it. Another anecdote concerns the continued unavailability of a declassified “phantom file” on Guerre Révolutionnaire at Vincennes, being ‘administratively reworked’ on three separate occasions. The French changes to legislation covering in national heritage and archives have ushered in a new and dubious scrutiny on requests for declassification. (Duclert, 2000, p. 42) Likewise, the lid of the ‘veritable goldmine’ of South African archives that Sue Onslow observed in 2005 is closing again under strict application of the 2000 Promotion of Access Information Act, as one scholar observed to this researcher.

Process

The principal sources constituting the structural elements of French and South African procurement organisation and procedures in the chapters came from primary sources. As will be shown in the following chapters, the CIEEMG documents have been crucial because of their coverage of two thirds of the period, and their uniquely revealing perspective on French internal ministerial deliberations on arms trade authorisation and its organisation. Similarly, the South African General staff documents, used already by Jooste (1995) but not previously used in French studies, provide a contrasting view of the attitudes and actions of the South African defence community regarding their French partner. French internal reporting and contemporary research can conference material provided discussions by DAI and DMA of its own operations, to a level not readily available in secondary literature like the French Revue Défense Nationale.

57 Notably SAG2, cote 1025, used by Konieczna (2013). See also Chapter Six.
59 The enduring partial classification at SHDV of the 1R 223 file titled ‘South Africa’ is most likely because of this.
60 (Duclert, 2000, p. 42), ‘La loi de 2008 se présente comme un texte de compromis dont les conséquences sont parfois jugées dangereuses pour les libertés individuelles et publiques comme pour la recherche scientifique et universitaire.’
61 (Onslow, 2005, p. 370), Onslow was referring specifically to the Foreign Affairs archive, which this researcher found especially hard to access to, following the departure of key individuals there. For details on PAIA, see http://www.dirco.gov.za/department/paia.pdf.
These encapsulating views were added to by primary South African and French sources. Previously uncovered internal reports of the South African foreign office on meeting French representatives regarding local production licensing show the independent and at times obstructive attitude of some within the South African defence community. The French Air Force Oral history project showed similar infighting between French commercial structures. In this regard, the French military archive of Chatellerault deserves special mention, as it holds an impressive, if fragmented, collection of material and data on the production and sales functions of the DMA and Sud-Aviation. Secondary sources from, foremost, Kolodziej, but also Phythian, and studies by the Stockholm International Peace and Research Institute (SIPRI) have provided comparative perspectives on different French clients, and other states leading in arms trading.

Practice
Although both are emergent, practice is an even less accessible subject than process. It requires close reading of internal debates within defense hierarchies on procurement, on purpose, and logistics. The understandings of these areas are often implied in the French case, in the South African case sometimes handwritten in Afrikaans or English. Often the Afrikaans comments show a less courteous, more realistic— if not necessarily truthful- account of the state of decision making. A wealth internal reporting by SAAF, SADF, defence minister, and the South African diplomatic mission in Paris exists in the South African military archive. At the time of writing, the SANDF military archive was in the process of moving to new locations. It is hoped that this move will not affect their generous and tremendous assistance to all visiting researchers. All documents to 1970 are routinely available, as are younger items already declassified. Two key finds are two 1975 and 1979 internal documents found in the SANDF Archives, which form the basis for the spare-parts ruse described in Chapter Five. Less dramatic examples include the Carnell visit report, helicopter sales contracts, and the peculiar ‘Aankoop’ report, which reads as an apology by the SA Air Force for the purchase of the French Alouette helicopter. This report is in SANDF. Along with other material, a somewhat different copy was also kindly made available to me by Mr Ken Smy, former Warrant Officer, present head of the South African Air Force Museum, and éminence grise of research on South African Air Force helicopters.

Essential documentation on the French perspective already contextualised by Konieczna includes the French diplomatic archives in La Courneuve and Nantes. The former holds a rich collection of internal debates by the “outsiders” at the French Quai d’Orsay, leading up to
Pompidou’s embargo in 1970. The latter is instrumental for its extensive documentation of French commercial moves to South Africa in the 1950s. By way of triangulation, the British National Archives have been used for a glimpse into British diplomacy, confirming the same ambiguity to arms trade to South Africa.

South African witnesses of events discussed here kindly and unreservedly shared their experiences and thoughts with me. The key takeaway was the confirmation by the Atlas manager of a technology being available when he was there already in 1971. The position taken in this paper is that this new testimony nuances the alleged crisis of South African executive confidence following the French presidential 1970 embargo on helicopters, and reinforces the idea of a progressive shift towards operational levels of administration and industry. Interviews with a former staff officer of the South African Air Force, and a former assistant to general Robbertze underscored the importance of middle level French-South African contacts to the smooth operation of procurement logistics. The potential value they represent has only been partially realized in this thesis, and the need to engage with them cannot be overstated. Admittedly, French practitioners form a missing dimension in this primary research.

The SHDC in Chatellerault provide many smaller and larger stones that plugged holes in the argument on French helicopter studies and sales organisation. The Moreau report is but one example of a report by an individual agent, whose work merits study of his individual professional environment. The same could be said for the likes of Robbertze, Jaboulay, and of course Brohon, whose exhaustive interviews to the Air Force Historian (recorded on 63 tapes) describe just one of a host of examples of a successful career of a French military officer in the Fifth Republic. Brohon, having lost three imperial wars, came to have a crucial role in French military procurement. South African literature so far has been more responsive to such micro-narratives. (Jooste, 1995; Warwick 2009)

**Areas for expansion**

The visit to Turbomeca was instrumental for a basic understanding of the pressures of helicopter production and industry. In the early stages of my research, Mr Charles Claveau, one of Safran-Turbomeca’s directors and president of Association des Amis du Patrimoine Historique de Turbomeca kindly showed me around the budding company archive. At the time, its archive being under development, as well as emphasizing the spectacular technical and physical development of the company led me to abandon making inroads into French privately held archives, such as the Aerospatiale company archives, and focus on public French archives. This
decision reflected a personal judgment on the limited resources and status of this research as opposed to the investments required, and the expectations of accessing innocuous commercial procedural information in the 1960 and 1970s. Within a renewed focus supported by French institutional research, a follow-on project may well come to another conclusion on these sources. The supported study of Seiffert on the growth strategies of French helicopter manufacturing, Seiffert’s excellent book is itself a considerable step away from earlier purely technical celebrations like (Carlier C., 1988) and to an extent (Carlier & Martel, Le développement de l'aéronautique militaire française de 1958 à 1970, 1979). The Portuguese Air Force Archives, in Oeiras, and the Diplomatic Historical Archive, Lisbon used intensively in the thesis by (Correia P., 2007), provide considerable scope for a comparative analysis of French military attaches and arms trade. American sources have only been used sporadically, such as the CIA Online CREST Archive, and the Foreign Relations of the US (FRUS) Archive. The American avenue disappears from consulted South African military procurement debates after the problems of obtaining American missile technology in the early 1960s.

More straightforward limitations of time and money prevented a visit to other archives, such as personal collections of South African political figures at The Archive of Contemporary Affairs (ARCA) in Bloemfontein. In this respect, another major addition to this research would be the Archive of the South African acquisition agency for the South African Department of Defence.

Chapter outline

Chapter 1

The following chapter will set out the methodology, providing the conceptual basis for process-based research as a form of qualitative research. It sets out in more detail the conceptual basis outlined above, which follows the study of arms trade as a commercial process of social practice. Identifying arms trade as a four-step interactive sequence unpacks the statistical understanding of trade deals as a number or a single decision into a stepped causation of promotion, authorisation, production and post-sales service. At the same time these steps are understood as social practices that develop over time. This effectively occupies the middle level of institutional analysis by both an interactive process and a longitudinal analysis of individual social practices which themselves show development over time. Combining the two creates an iterative development that ends in a socially meaningful group of practice, called a community of practice.
Chapter 2
The practice of promotion serves as an introduction of the operative actors to the reader, but also, historically speaking, to each other. The brokering of contacts after 1955 between South African military and political leaders on the one hand, and French industrial and government representatives on the other identifies the long trajectories that were altered, though not interrupted, by the Sharpeville Massacre of 21 March 1960. The purchase of helicopters in August 1960 illustrated organisational learning through practice. South African procurement lost its complacency and French marketing grew more professional. These developments established the groundwork for closer cooperation, which would partially negate the need for promotion.

Chapter 3
The growth of French arms export and its foreign policy effects led to the creation of an interministerial body for managing individual exports and French industry plans more generally. The minutes of the CIEEMG between 1955 and 1971, not previously analysed in this field of study, form the basis for discussion of French arms trade and the fluent development of criteria that would meet the interests of all ministries concerned as well as overall French objectives. South African military procurement similarly professionalized as procurement became more important and more complex. Case evidence suggests that awareness of these practices within the defence community helped the other side to avoid behaviour unfavourable to authorisation decision making.

Chapter 4
Procurement as a practice is perhaps best described as shared acquisition management. The South African Defence community aspired to military autonomy akin to their French counterparts. Sud-Aviation’s management of a turnkey aircraft factory project in Pretoria created enduring relations between the top decision makers, of which the evidence of contacts by Sud-Aviation’s unofficial representative Raymond with the SADF is the clearest example. In a more general sense French industrial relations were studied and copied by the South Africans. Evidence of de facto helicopter licences for Puma and Alouette helicopters in 1970 suggest a gradually refined management at distance by French government.

Chapter 5
The additional services required to fly purchased helicopters included training, spare parts, spare engines, technical support, and doctrinal knowhow. Daily communications from 1968-70
suggest an increasing compartmentalisation and professionalization of arms trade servicing. After sales became jargon for actual helicopter delivery as the principle of extra-legal arms trade to South Africa developed into a case of ‘ninety-nine spare parts for a hundred-part helicopter’, as pressure on French presidents mounted to discontinue trade.

*Chapter 6*

The structures created to support French-South African arms trade also operated in neighbouring regions of Portuguese Africa and Rhodesia, and the rest of the world. This serves to nuance the special relation, yet at the same time it supports a view of French African policy as encompassing the entire region of Southern Africa. Practices of arms trade are the instrument for such explorations, and other communities of practice originating from the French diplomatic military missions are in evidence. This transnational dimension can also be gleaned from the doctoral studies on relevant bilateral relations of the period mentioned previously.
Chapter 1: Methodology. Arms trade relations as a community of practice

This research began from the ambition to identify French policy-making by retracing one strand of the controversial and secretive French arms trade with South Africa between 1960 and 1977. It has been firmly established that mutual interests drove the interstate relation, but much remains unknown about the balance of the relationship, and its operational trajectory. Examination based on new primary sources allows us to go further by foregoing a ‘focus on personalities and diplomatic discourse’, and get at the institutional consistencies of arms trade. (Styan, 2006, p. 2) New doctoral research continues to reassess state policies, uncovering many high diplomatic contacts, and connecting the dots on some of the executive decision making regarding strategic issues within both states. Less frequent has been the analysis of operational levels further removed from policy-making. This study into the actual trade process sprang from an archival effort to verify official trade data. Far from rehashing the products of military-industrial complexes, the source material “talked back”, raising a counterintuitive question on the impact of arms trade activities on policy.

This research thus represents a ‘road less travelled’ in historic investigation, by emphasizing inter-state interaction at the middle level of government, namely a specific commercial process of arms trade, understood by both parties. A second methodological choice has been to infuse the framework of process to reconstruct historical social practices. Only then are relevant actors identified, effectively inverting habitual decision making models. From the emergent structures of social context of practice and historical development of trade ultimately result in a community of practitioners based on shared practice.

The key publications of the 1990s (Bach, 1990; Pfister, 2005; Alden & Daloz, 1996) broadly had the advantage of new source material and memoirs (Destremau, 1994; Foccart & Gaillard, 1997; Messmer & de Saint Robert, Ma Part De France: Entretiens Avec Philippe De Saint Robert : "à Voix Nue", France Culture, Semaine Du 8 Au 12 Décembre 1997, Quai Conti 2001-2003, 2003; Debré, 1988) becoming available in the post-Cold War and post-apartheid period. They have confirmed the primacy of state logics, but offer little on the priority of regular arms trade. By way of a ‘rediscovery of archival sources beyond the era of witnesses’, (Bat, 2012, p. 721) more recent doctoral work has contributed to a profound analysis of French as well as
South African diplomatic primary sources, (Stanley, France and South Africa, 1945 to 1985, 2004; Moukambi, 2008; Konieczna, 2013) and other related studies (Correia P., 2007; Nabuco de Araujo, 2011; Ribeiro de Meneses, 2014) have provided building blocks to the main argument discussed in the introduction; that France defended its opportunistic sale of arms to South Africa under the UN Charter for two decades, until it could no longer credibly maintain that position internationally. Konieczna’s (2013) meticulous reconstruction of diplomatic communications especially has allowed old questions to resurface about the importance of military diplomacy and arms trade management. So far, these questions have had to remain submerged within a predominantly state-centric ontology of Cold War history.

As will be argued, the military-operational interaction within, and between defence communities within the two states provides a social dimension parallel to the political economy of the relationship. The significance of the social dimension grew almost in reverse proportion to the declining diplomatic space. In the next three paragraphs the conceptual argument for the existence of a community of practice will be made. Chapter Two will feature the first of four practices of arms trade, promotion.

Addressing the flaws of state-centric analysis

The alternative argument of policy relevance of intermediate operators is invited by four generally accepted assumptions about French-South African arms trade. Firstly, placing the start of arms trade after Sharpeville in 1960 and its end in 1977 implies that exchanges only had relevance when there was diplomatic space created at the level of executive government. Secondly, this chronology implies a definition of arms trade as a mere two-step of executive decision and sale, limiting the number and scope of decision making. A further consequence relating to researching the executive is that national interests are promoted as explanatory of lateral lower-level connections, disregarding the potential of interaction between state representatives and agents to indirectly shape executive decision making. Lastly, such decision

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[62] Debré, 1973, p. 98) In the second volume of his White Paper on National Defence, Defence Minister Debré placed multi-level ‘reflection’ about modern armament in the hands of ‘the DMA, the Service Chiefs, the General Staff, the Ministry of Defence, the Secretary General for National Defence (liaison to the Prime Minister), security think tanks (Institut des Hautes Etudes de Défense Nationale and the Fondation pour les Etudes de Defense), and public and private organisations engaged in this field.’ See (Faure, 2015, p. 25) ‘En France, les réseaux institutionnels et interpersonnels les plus puissants sont situés au niveau politique entre d’une part le président de la République, son chef d’état-major particulier, le ministre de la Défense, le chef d’état-major des armées, leurs cabinets respectifs, et le Premier ministre lors des périodes de cohabitation, et d’autre part, les présidents des principales entreprises de défense française et européenne et leurs conseillers.’
making is studied as uniform and rational, leaving little room for bureaucratic rivalries and administrative-level biases that muddled perceptions and affected progress.

French-South African arms trade relations proved a much less straightforward affair, a complex and dynamic amalgam of policy trajectories, intermediate actors and commercial interactions, often discreet or clandestine. Within broad political boundaries, actors-at-distance performed autonomous, if monitored, initiatives to foreign national security structures, creating enduring social connections which would resonate within ministerial levels of government. This study partially reverses the view of interaction between state agencies as dictated by prior policy. Policy directs initiative and execution, but more importantly, policy is equally a response to prior engagements and priorities. Unpacking the “military-industrial complex” has proven to be less a study in policy implementation, and more an unglamorous search for structure within a sea of ministerial practices and departmental routines.

In the case of French-South African arms trade, governmental delegation to these operative levels is shown to be disproportionately important to the commercial relationship, because of its shared secrecy and permanence. Consistency in French policy direction over many years and administrations was possible because of grounding by ‘[r]elatively small groups of political and technical experts [within] three distinct [but shifting] spheres of policy’, namely governmental offices, parastatal entities and national companies, and private enterprise. (Styan, 2006, p. 3)

Investigation at the operational levels vastly increases the number of different cases and responsibilities handled, and actors involved. A case study was chosen to counter this substantial widening of the field of study. Helicopters have been chosen because the trade in helicopters shows a sustained string of transactions over time, and as a trade object its story covers all policy angles related to arms trade. Their profoundly dual nature in terms of state agency, co-production, military and civilian application, and purported ‘defensive’ application, gave them clear policy relevance. And lastly, in contrast to some other major aeronautical equipment traded between the two states, trade in helicopters of the period was more easily accessible to researchers. As will be explained in the third section, the early generations of French helicopters offer case study material that provides opportunity to elaborate on the many angles of arms trade and policy.63

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Given the ambiguity surrounding statistical data and executive decision-making specific to the case at hand, it was a challenge to find causal explanations for Franco-South African arms trade that were at once representative and formed a contribution to the existing literature. Research on the French-South African relationship has generally been of a high academic standard, but often reflective of the state of archival declassification. Certain documentation has remained unavailable despite expiry of the normal term of closure, other material is simply not in the public domain.

As a field of research the middle level of government represents a grass-roots approach to government policy. Historical governmental discretion and actual government classification of documents regarding French-South African relations have meant that the presidential influence on interactions cannot be fully accounted for. Despite the flood of studies on the policies of Charles de Gaulle and his successors Georges Pompidou and Valéry Giscard d’Estaing, (Wauthier, 1995, p. 642) and a wealth of archival information, certain key information on arms trade remain classified, or has been reclassified, which leaves the role of the French presidential level in initiating and condoning arms trade to South Africa still unconfirmed. (Konieczna, 2013, p. 21) Administrative communications show each presidency deflected international pressure on controversial trades through a calculated presidential gesture, accompanied by assurances to Pretoria. De Gaulle dominated foreign and security policies, yet entrusted great and expansive responsibilities for defence organization to the French Defence Minister, his appointee Pierre Messmer. (Messmer & de Saint Robert, Ma Part De France:

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64 (Wauthier, 1995, p. 642) : ‘Dans ce flot d’écriture et de paroles [in a 1990 conference-ed], il n’est pas une seul des interventions qui porte spécifiquement sur les ventes d’armes á l’Afrique du Sud’ 
65 (Konieczna, 2013, p. 565) uses AN, SAG2, 1025, the folder in the Pompidou archives covering South Africa. These were not accessible under derogation for this researcher, who was like Konieczna unable to get access to SHDV, 1R223 dossier 8 regarding South Africa. It is suspected that atomic subjects have ‘poisoned’ access to other documents in this file. 
67 (Kolodziej, 1987, p. 241): The power of the DGA, DMA in 1961, derives from ‘the privileged position of the Minister of Defense within the Council of Ministers. At its inception the DGA was placed directly under the Ministry of Defense but, within the ministerial hierarchy, above [italics in orig] the chief of staff of the armed forces and those of the three military services. The DGA reported directly to the Minister of Defence. Its director owed his loyalty to the minister and, in turn, to the prime minister and president.’ Conflict was avoided further by the close confidence Defense minister Messmer enjoyed with Charles de Gaulle and within the Gaullist party, who in turn influenced the profile of the appointed DGA director. [p241.]
Entretiens Avec Philippe De Saint Robert : "à Voix Nue", France Culture, Semaine Du 8 Au 12 Décembre 1997, Quai Conti 2001-2003, 2003, p. 52; Kolodziej, 1987, p. 241) Because of the flexible constitutional structure of the Fifth Republic, the cases for de facto French presidential or ministerial predominance in setting arms trade boundaries can be made with equal force, based on political responsibility and economic rationales. Bureaucratic and industrial perspective widen the search for “decision makers” even further. Former French spymaster Pierre Marion has presented a biased (Laurent, 2001) view of disarmed, disinterested or overwhelmed government offices, further disaggregating control towards the military-industrial complex.68 (Marion, 1990, pp. 162-6) Political scientists have arrived at various unsatisfactory models trading off actor attribution, institutional representativeness and comprehensive analysis. (Faure, 2015, pp. 34-5) Instead, by assuming government decision-making as boundary-setting –its scale and complexity make this plausible- the question turns to actual observance of the boundary: investigation of the field of commercial activity itself, and the practitioners involved across hierarchies and time – the middle level.

In this study, the French perspective is the more complicated one, of a more elaborate defence community tasked to grow exports. The smaller South African defence community felt compelled to prioritize military procurement and its base in the deteriorating international environment.

*From ‘Why arms trade?’ to ‘How possible?’*

The empirical gap in arms trade policy decision making translates into a question of research design. The need to explain significant events at intermediate levels of government comes with different questions and different understandings of policy making. The working hypothesis is that the middle level of analysis as a source of policy influence explains arms trade relations significantly differently and more abundantly than state-centric approaches do. The “top-down” question of ‘Why France sold arms to South Africa’ brings macro-level answers about decision making bodies which look deceptively similar. (Nutt & Wilson, 2010, p. 7) It is replaced with ‘How did arms trade transactions between French actors and the South African military come about?’, enquiring about the relevant steps required and those in a position to take them. (Doty, 1993, pp. 298-299; Kisby, 2007, p. 71) This overlaps partly with constructivist understandings

68 (Marion, 1990, p. 165), ‘[L]’existence de passerelles qui renforcent la cohésion de ce monde clos.’
that see state interests and identity as material but constituted through interaction.\(^\text{69}\) (Hurd, 2010; Reus-Smit, 2005)

In strategic decision making literature there has been a parallel change towards operational and complex understandings, from finding the ‘point of decision’ in strategic planning towards processual and practice-based approaches to decision making. (Nutt & Wilson, 2010, pp. 4-6) Because decision making is situated, ‘[m]anagers are both recipients and creators of the situational context in which they carry out the activities that go into decision making.’ (Nutt & Wilson, 2010, p. 7) In the case of complex and politically sensitive arms trade, decision making was interactive drawn-out and largely below the executive level, creating additional relevant contexts.

At the “bottom end”, the research boundary of policy relevance exists mainly as a trade-off between research resources and the decreasing policy relevance of material found. As trade occurred under the auspices of central government, only those connections can be relevant that link to central government. Partly for this reason, partly for reasons of accessibility, efforts to access company archives were abandoned. In sum, the research question aims to account for the space that exists between the boundaries of relevant actors and relevant policies of the arms trade process. The focus of analysis will be on the activity, or practice, that connects them.

Conceptually, this research understands arms trade as a commercial process of key business practices to introduce the social dimension into inter-state markets for sophisticated weaponry, and suspends the political aspects. Markets are delineated not by geography but by communication, and shared understandings, and for this reason have been likened to ‘communities of knowledge’. (Graupe, 2007, p. 166) Shared knowledge and cohesion among social groups are qualities embedded in social practices, which are pervasive social structures. (Wenger, 2002, pp. 49-50; Neumann I. , 2002) Here, practices are defined as ‘socially meaningful patterns of action’ which, through their negotiated performance, they embody, reify, and possibly alter the knowledge and boundaries of a social environment.’ (Adler & Pouliot, 2011, p. 6)

The proposition that practices over time led to a binding Franco-South African community provides the immediate purpose of this thesis: ‘Communities of practice are intersubjective

\(^{69}\) (Hurd, 2010, pp. 2, 9) : ‘Constructivism emphasizes the social and relational construction of what states are and what they want ... [and proposes] research on the constitution of individual state identity, on the making of meso-level norms and practices, and on the constitution of the international system’
social structures that constitute the normative and epistemic ground for action, but they also are agents, made up of real people, who — working via network channels, across national or organizational lines, and in the halls of government — affect political, economic, and social events.’. (Adler, 2008, p. 199) The emphasis is from the first on interconnections based on activity rather than on policy.

**Arms trade as a process**

Political studies rarely engage with arms trade as a commercial process, which is a phased sequence of separate steps (Rescher, 2006, p. 2) Because of the centrality of process in this study, it is necessary to explain this first aspect in some detail. Early corporate thinking on process-based decision making identified ‘an evolutionary process involving multiple managerial actors from the corporate, middle and operational level… exposing the weakness of rational actor notions’. (Jarzabkowski, 2005, pp. 15-16) Activity-based analysis takes this further by removing false dichotomies like formulation/implementation and introducing ‘the micro practices and processes that constitute the activity [of decision making]’. (Jarzabkowski, 2005, pp. 19, 29) The combination of perceived phases and ‘sequential flow’ in decision making whereby decisions are bound by embedded knowledge, and in anticipation of future events, most closely resembles actual decision making practice. (Wilson, 2010, pp. 624-6)

The importance of process is that it provides a structure that both buyer and seller understand and accept, but also a deconstruction of the various interests, and therefore actors, attached to different phases of the sale process. In contrast to a network approach, the use of a process framework subordinates actors and their relations to track practices of trade. Trade interaction has a causal sequence of compartmentalized negotiations regarding supply and demand, one that is also evident from the evidence. Within the literature, the processual nature of arms trade is mostly implied. The topic of arms trade thrives on descriptive case studies which tend to ignore the emergent processual side of decision making. (Nutt & Wilson, 2010, p. 13) Dubos (1974) comes closest by identifying promotion, authorisation and after-sales service as activities undertaken by the French arms sales effort, but writing in 1974, he thought it almost impossible to ‘affirm with certainty whether this or that acronym, group or individual is directly or indirectly involved [in arms trade]’. (Dubos, 1974, p. 88)

The sequence of process is also emergent, and subject to change of emphasis. At the end of the Pompidou presidency (1969-1974), the French defence industry had grown into an independent economic pillar, no longer just producing ‘tools of national defence [but also] … commodities
in international trade’. (Kolodziej, 1987, pp. 169, 167-8) Once achieved, the primary rationale of national deterrence devolved to the secondary rationale of economic advantage, requiring a new attitude to commercial diplomacy. (Bellini, 1974)

Akin to a commercial process, Kolodziej enumerates ‘requirements of the commercialisation of arms [such as] global sales structure and promotional campaigns, after-sales (après vente) training and service, export subsidies, and the availability of credit and financing for potential buyers.’ Rather than as elements of a commercial process, Kolodziej considers these below the threshold of relevance, subsuming them into products – whether weapons or commodities – that were subject to simple statistical analysis of arms production. Kolodziej’s impressive 1987 analysis of the origins and actual governance of French defence industry, like many observers critical of French defence policy of the 1970s and 1980s, contested the ‘depoliticised and bureaucratized’ view of politics and economics. (Kolodziej, 1987, pp. xv, 286) Through publications like the government’s 1972 White Paper on National Defence, French arms exports were insulated from criticism. (Debrè, 1972; Kolodziej, 1987, pp. 294-5) Kolodziej correctly asserted that trade data cannot identify the ‘scientific, technological and industrial processes’ which turned even the powerful director-general of the DGA into a ‘Gulliver’. Arms trade policy was embedded in the entrenched administrative and industrial interests, hiding behind the ‘façade’ of government, and allowing powerful officials and figures discretion in their use of state resources. This situation makes simple subordination of arms trade policy to national and foreign policies a contentious issue, and supports retracing their mechanics. (Kolodziej, 1987, p. 391): ‘Arms sales have served several masters. Explaining French arms transfers in simple commercial terms seriously distorts the shifting aims underlying French behaviour and the evolving internal and external pressures and constraints shaping the movement of French arms across state borders…..To explain the amount, composition and timing of transfers transferred to a particular state – or the French refusal to respond to outside requests – prompts reference to a host of particular political considerations and conjuncture constraints and opportunities that are otherwise hidden from sight if French transfers are viewed solely through a commercial prism.’

71 (Kolodziej, 1987, pp. 294-5) uses the following example to argue ‘weak societal checks on the arms industry’; criticisms debating French arms trade to Libya in April 1970 were dismissed by Michel Debre, Hugues de l’Estoile and General Andre Beaufre, who dismissed criticism by the French Bishop of Arras and other religious leaders, as ‘ridiculous’, and ‘irresponsible idealism’. (Kolodziej, 1987, pp. 214-5, 218, 239), enumerates arms as weapons and arms as commercial activities, asserting that ‘The arms industry may also be seen not as a product but as a process.’ (Kolodziej, 1987, pp. 215,251), quoting DGA Director Jean-Laurens Delpech: ‘I characterize myself often as a Gulliver in Lilliput, rendered financially and socially inert by an immense network of tight ties which prohibit the least movement.’ Entretiens avec m. J-L Delpech ‘Delegue Ministeriel pour l’Armement”, Armentem (October 1974), Delpech was at pains to paint his organization as a-political (p.19) but at the same time rejected suggestion of a purely administrative role for the DMA (p.17-18)

73 (Kolodziej, 1987, pp. 282-3) ‘Obscured to the opportunities for initiative of powerful figures, particularly industrial leaders of favoured arms firms, to direct governmental resources and financial credit their way’,...piecing together a mosaic... to correct and to focus more sharply the refracted image of the arms
1987, pp. 282-3) The analytical distinction between executive government and administrative levels is common, (Cohen, 1994; Marion, 1990) but its homogenization of decision-making merely redirects the problem of attribution. This study argues the same limitations of a focus on statistical and macro-level outcomes, but applies a process-based lens on multi-level commercialisation. The French trade authorisation body ‘commission interministériel pour l’étude de l’exportation des matériels de guerre’ (CIEEMG) illustrates the point. It distinguished three steps of arms trade authorisation, namely promotion, negotiation or sale, and delivery, and engaged with industrial, ministerial, and executive actors in decision making.

For the purpose of this study on helicopters the four steps will be defined as promotion, authorisation, procurement, and post-sales service. The four phases of commerce used here are informed by an internal 1976 presentation of the different desks of the French Direction des Affaires Internationales [DAI], namely Exportation, Contrôle, Coopération, and Assistance Extérieure. DAI and its small, diverse staff developed as a powerful hub of trade management after its creation in 1965. The practices and influences of arms trade are implied in the DAI desk functions. The Exportation desk ‘canvasses foreign arms markets directly and indirectly, and informs foreign clients on French equipment’. This equates to the step of Promotion. The Contrôle desk prepares, disseminates and checks authorisation of proposed transactions by the CIEEMG. The Coopération desk ‘assures cooperation at the level of doctrine, [industrial] programmes, and organisation’. These issues are all part of the make-or-buy decision discussed as Procurement. Assistance Extérieure takes care of commitments of ‘logistics and maintenance, technical and military training, infrastructure etc’, collectively referred to as After-sales service.74 Contemporary observers similarly identified French arms export functions. SIPRI’s authoritative 1971 publication on ‘Arms trade to the third world’ touched upon these four elements. Divining the hidden hand of French central government everywhere, SIPRI identified French institutional structures, under which it assorted promotion and authorisation; the defence industry; and ‘political considerations’, which mentions delivery (and embargo) of equipment and parts. (SIPRI, 1971, pp. 252-261, 270).

Having identified the problems attached to state-centric analysis, the next section will discuss, first, a model of arms trade process and practice, and its location within the literature. The

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74 SHDC, 793 1D1 20 SHDC, Centre des Hautes Etudes de l’Armentem [CHEAR], Conference document, 12ème session 1975-76, ‘Le Contrôle des exportations des matériels de guerre, financement, organisation des ventes et du service après-vente’, General Haas, p.4-6
parameters of the assumed community of practice will be discussed. Secondly, the instrument of practice will be closely examined, and criticisms and limitations explored. The third and last section on method is more straightforward, in that it discusses practice tracing as a way to argue causal explanations in French-South African arms trade through various strands of data. Thereafter the periodisation of a window extending beyond the milestones of embargo will be argued. Lastly, the use of various sources will be explained.

### A simplified empirical model of arms trade interaction

Despite the supporting historical evidence, the four step process constitutes a considerable simplification of national processes of military procurement.\(^{75}\) The main cause of simplicity of the model used here is that it attempts to capture a particular inter-state interaction between two state administrations, as opposed to reflecting state mechanisms. Elevating anecdotal evidence to a single model for the purpose of capturing perspectives of dynamic long term relations between two defence communities of very different scale and origins leaves space for contention. It has also been argued that distinct phasing of an interlinked and messy decision making process is artificial. (Nutt & Wilson, 2010, p. 14; Mintzberg & Westley, 2001, pp. 89-90)\(^{76}\) The problem of realistic description in prescriptive frameworks is resolved by using a case of inter-state arms trade process, with phases of trade interaction. Using a process of practice allows for changing understandings of these four phases, and so for commerce as an emergent structure.

As the first step in trade, French promotional agency between 1950 and 1980 developed from individual to institutional and then parastatal actors.\(^ {77}\) Therefore, within the clear role for promotional actors and interaction in bilateral trade, the phase of promotion occupied a different place in the trade relationship, and over time was configured and implemented differently. The promotion phase is relatively unproblematic, because it is most easily separated in terms of activity, time frame and actors and, as relations became closer, promotion became less of an issue.

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\(^{75}\) For example: (Defence Institute of Security Assistance Management, pp. par.9-1) ‘The foreign military sales (FMS) process fundamentally is an acquisition process....Within DoD, the term acquisition is also used to refer to the entire life cycle process DoD uses to develop, test, evaluate, produce, and sustain weapon systems to satisfy formally identified DoD military capability requirements.’

\(^{76}\) (Mintzberg & Westley, 2001, p. 89): ‘Rational decision making has a clearly defined process: define > diagnose > design > decide. But the rational approach turns out to be uncommon.’

\(^{77}\) See Chapter 2.
The second phase of Procurement authorisation was a key internal issue within the defence communities. To the creation of a community of practice it was crucial, not so much for interaction, but for its formative influence on building shared purpose. French authorisation of all initiatives preceded each phase; for clarity of argument however, authorisation is represented as one step, following the chapter on promotion. This organization more easily reflects the buy-side of South African procurement authorisation, which was less elaborate in finding consensus on major equipment purchases. Arguably, the next step following promotion ought to be negotiation of terms; here it will be included in the step of authorisation (of sale). The reason for this is threefold; negotiation of price and delivery tended to occur in several phases of the commercial process. Also, detailed information regarding negotiations is rarely found. Lastly, the aspect of negotiation includes a number of financial and commercial facilities available to French companies, which is a vast topic that is at once highly complex and difficult to verify and connect to transactions. (Kolodziej, 1987, pp. 270-271) Finance will be excluded for this reason.

Phase three, Procurement, is understood as a decision on the form of acquisition. It is most interesting from the perspective of the South African buyer, whose industry would reach a technological level just short of Western industry by the end of the Cold War. (Landgren, 1989, p. 14) French organic helicopter development offers success stories of the four-seater Alouette II, the work horse of the Algerian war, and the successor six-seater Alouette III which led the medium helicopter segment worldwide against American competition. Yet the key contextual aspect is the position of Sud-Aviation’s Helicopter Division as a milk-cow to its ambitious civilian projects, and the great dependency of the Division on international helicopter markets. (Seiffert, 2008, pp. 128-132) Within just a few years of modernising the South African Air Force (SAAF) with French aircraft and helicopters, South Africa decided to invest in local aircraft production. This in turn led to transfers of French technical and organisational know-how that created dependencies parallel to arms procurement, which would prove so advantageous thereafter.

The last step of Post-sales service, or fulfilment, discusses the principal activities of logistical support, specifically delivery, training, armament, and maintenance organisation, whether through spare parts or return of items. It is through the after sales practice that the community of practice achieved its full potential of building and sustaining shared practices at the middle level. Post-sale service required the most frequent contacts as well as occurring throughout the economic life of the equipment, and so shows the most engagement and shared repertoire.
The phases work as four steps that make up individual transactions—which are hard to fully uncover at the level of individual transactions. Each phase developed over time, showing specific actors and activities and their development of common practice. An unintended, yet significant feature of the full process is that, each phase in turn became important over time, thereby imitating the business life cycle. The 1950s saw the successful learning curve of French promotion. In the early 1960s both sides had to make a judgment on according business to a potentially risky new partner. From the mid-1960s, the setting up and servicing of local production proved to be paramount. From 1970 onwards, the emphasis was on organising after-sales service, which increasingly became a euphemism for helicopter delivery through spare parts, whereby contractual obligations deflected criticism and increased scrutiny from public and international actors. This quirk has been thankfully embraced and the thesis chapter structure is organised according to the four phases, with each chapter discussing an aspect of the practice of arms trade. This creates a loosely chronological narrative that emphasizes the emergent property of both phases and practices, and ultimately, the community of practice.

**Arms trade as practice**

The emergent quality of historical Franco-South African arms trade practices is a key argument of this study. Practice is a very rich concept, interconnecting with other social dimensions of structure, identity and agency. (Wenger, 2002, pp. 12-15) Socialization through practice creates a sense of joint membership through mutually understood and engaged enterprise. Communities based on a practice are about collective learning, about achieving, or surviving, together in a particular environment. They are a conceptualisation of what makes people do things together consistently and over time.

This sense of community is one of five aspects of social practice identified by Wenger (1998). In addition to, firstly, creating a ‘community’ or a togetherness over time, practice also expresses shared meaning among people who engage in the same activity. This understanding facilitates performance and prolongues cooperation. Third, its meaning and effects are continuously being negotiated and emerging. For this reason, it is problematic to make policy the sole basis of a longitudinal study. Fourth, practice carries perceived boundaries on its own workings and relevance held among its participants, evidenced by informal codes of membership. And fifth and finally, practice has an agreed-upon geography or locality – which in this study is largely the commercial process between Pretoria and Paris, a nexus that is itself situated in the regional context of Southern Africa in the Cold War. (Wenger, Communities of practice: learning, meaning, and identity, 2002, pp. 49-50) Not all five basic characteristics of
practice will feature throughout the thesis. In order to keep a balance between historical narrative and sociological analysis, only the aspect of community will be the focus of this study. In the following paragraph, the development of a community of practice between the French and South African practitioners will be established based on its three constitutive elements: mutual engagement, a joint enterprise (or even reciprocal fear) (Pouliot, "Subjectivism": Toward a Constructivist Methodology, 2007, p. 375; Milliken, 2001, p. 14; Adler, 2001), and a shared repertoire. (Wenger, Communities of practice: learning, meaning, and identity, 2002, p. 73) In other words, a professional community that is recognised by working together, for the same objective, in the same way. Before addressing these three elements of communities of practice in detail, some related points on practice must first be made in support of social cohesion, performance, location and membership. First of all, practice has a socially binding element; it identifies members who have an interest to adopt and defend its bounded rule as normal. Within the commercial process, individual practices of arms trade provide a negotiated social structure to participants, who choose to accept its rules after explicit or tacit understanding of its purpose, its force, and its payoff to them. The choice for the Alouette helicopter initially met with organisational resistance within the SAAF, for it meant a counterintuitive break with Anglo-American technological and military warfare upon which the entire South African organisation had been built. Once adopted, the Alouette became the new gospel. Any new non-French helicopters proposed subsequently to the SAAF would meet with the same arguments of unreliability and switchover costs that had initially been levelled against the French turbine engine helicopters now exalted. This example shows at once the endurance and malleability of organizational practice.

Another important aspect of practices is that they are intended performances, whether good or mediocre, that ‘unfold in time and over time’. As Pouliot notes, ‘In effect, practice X, that is, X-ing, is essentially the process of doing X.’ The performance of promoting a product, negotiating an agreement, informing a client or superior, is interactive, and based on a repertoire that both parties understand and accept. Practice ‘as practice’ is productive, it makes things happen. (Pouliot, Practice tracing, 2015, p. 241) Practice sits between the individual and his immediate environment, who together gauge success of performance towards the common objective. Early suspicions of the South African general staff perceiving a French breach of commercial terms, which were allayed by the South African military attaché, would resurface among defence community leaders whenever French actions cast doubt on their commitment to stable supply.
Practices are located in the social, an interplay between the environment and the individual. This difficult attribution mitigates against mono-causal agency based on shared (ideological) beliefs, harmonious relations, social exclusivity, or geographical boundaries. Against structural explanations, practices are understood to be man-made. Being subject to people’s performance, inventiveness and particularities, they are never exactly the same – but neither are they phenomenal.  

(Barnes, 2001, p. 19) Social practice is defined by Wenger (1998: p.45) as ‘the property of a kind of community created over time by the sustained pursuit of a shared enterprise’. In other words, practice is inherently bound in its progressive social context, but distinct from activities and processes. Activities may never turn into socially meaningful practices, and may remain ad-hoc events, or simple routines. The commercial activities explored here did develop the characteristics of practices, but not necessarily at the same time or in the same way. They were however situated in the larger arms trade process, which for this reason is regarded as emergent. As a ‘socially meaningful and organized pattern of activity’, practice can also be seen as a ‘process with causal power’. (Pouliot, 2015, p. 241) When we speak of process, therefore, we mean the overarching set of commercial activities. Within the arms trade process, practices express social meanings and context but are self-contained. This way, the chronological and functional structure of process and the social agency of practice complement each other.  

(Adler, 2008, pp. 196-7) Practice is understood as an engine to an evolving community, evoking membership. People consciously engage in social practice, but may not be conscious of their membership of such communities of practice. They negotiate their participation into a common engagement, and their understanding of its stated purpose; more exotic proposals and institutionally invested professionals may well take some convincing of the interest to participate. ‘The concept of practice connotes doing … in a historical and social context that gives structure and meaning’, through explicit and tacit resources. Language, procedures, and contracts can be signs of membership of a community, but so can common perceptions, underlying assumptions and shared world views. (Wenger, Communities of practice: learning, meaning, and identity, 2002, p. 47) Membership and repertoire, purpose and practice are therefore all intricately related.

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78 (Barnes, 2001, pp. 24-5) gives the example of a cavalry section, in which each horseman has the same responsibility and training, yet the horses and equipment cannot be interchanged among individuals without loss of performance.

79 (Adler, 2008, pp. 196-7), p. 196-7, ‘link[ing] the analytical mechanism to the substance of the social structure’. Adler attaches special importance to this, see also (Adler, 2008, p.223n2).
The constitutive factors of the Community elaborated

Subsequent chapters will demonstrate in turn how the three factors came to constitute a community of French-South African arms trade practice. First, by joining in a common task, members engage with shared practices by applying them in their own way, fixing or adapting their meaning. (Wenger, Communities of practice: learning, meaning, and identity , 2002, pp. 55-59) Second, participants continuously negotiate their contribution to the collective goal; they may not internalise it, and may partly disagree with it, but choose to share its dilemmas with other participants. (Wenger, Communities of practice: learning, meaning, and identity , 2002, p. 79) Thirdly, a product of this social engagement is a repertoire of common (or borrowed) language and resources used for further negotiation.

Sustained practice between actors from two state hierarchies requires a common objective, one that furthers the larger goals of each. In general terms, joint enterprise is the negotiated and reified objective of a shared practice, it is the reason members have assembled or committed in the first place. It also dictates an assumption or agreement on what each member is expected to contribute, and how each will benefit from participating. Joint enterprise in our case will be recognised by the reward each side obtained, whether the acquisition or successful sale of military equipment, their complemented services, and related technical knowledge. The social aspect comes in as the perception of the other, and the ability and willingness to apply this knowledge to further objectives. In the context of interstate arms trade, exchanges generated direct economic gain, like profit and products, but also indirect economic benefits like access to other products or markets, maintaining a prosperous or useful relation, or avoiding changeover costs or diplomatic embarrassment. Technical benefits accrued to both sides from user experience, prior and prospective, that benefitted the client and the producer.

Joint enterprise can often be gleaned from documents across the four commercial phases, like the agreed sale purchase contract, or internal policy documents. In this respect, a caveat must be added. As trade is interactive, evidence is assumed to convey the same expression on both sides. However, it is not always possible to confirm contemporaneous attitudes, and sometimes assumptions about their collective applicability have had to be made. For example, the proposals for sale made internally to the French committee for arms trade approval is assumed to reflect a South African demand, even though in the majority of cases their precise origin cannot be verified.
As the second characteristic of a community of practice, mutual engagement is understood as the actual ‘doing’, the shared experience of an activity, wielding the agreed resources, in a way understood by all concerned. Mutual engagement is an enduring participation in a practice among sales practitioners, which involves cooperation, capturing activities and rules as meaningful and setting boundaries to them. In sum, the doing and the performing are the key aspects of mutual engagement. Normally a one-off sale on its own does not offer proof of sustained cooperation, but generally the state-level, long term nature of arms trade, and the necessary preparations provide first indications that both sides are willing to do so. Engagement is easily suggested, but difficult to interpret convincingly as practice. For example, cooperation on the Atlas aviation plant project in 1965 contained a strong technical component and only the managerial aspect has been retraced in this study. Although the interaction stands on its own, the case would be even stronger if the layer of technical support in the later years that primary witnesses speak of could be traced back to its beginnings.

If shared objectives and mutual engagement represent the motive and the motion of practice respectively, then shared repertoire reflects the mode employed: the ways of expressing and protecting meaning. Meaning is at once reified and dynamic in its common understanding by participants who reproduce it in their joint engagements. Repertoires invoke a history, assisting in reification of meanings, but they are also ambiguous enough to allow old and new participants alike to (re)negotiate them. Shared repertoire can reside in ‘routines, words, tools, ways of doing things, stories, gestures, symbols, genres, actions, and concepts…’ (Wenger, Communities of practice: learning, meaning, and identity, 2002, p. 83) The obvious element of a repertoire in French-South African arms trade was the perennial desire to keep activities out of the public eye, although perceived urgency between the two communities was unequal and, as we shall see, shifted twice. It could therefore be argued that keeping secrets is a practice all its own. Indeed, elsewhere it has been equated to ‘the practice of concealing knowledge from some, and sharing with others’. (Crown, 2016, p. 68) Here, secrecy will be taken as an aspect of trade that was a formative, but supporting, part of commercial practice. Commercial practice took many forms, and so therefore did efforts at secrecy. After 1975, the need for secrecy was commonly understood as a sine qua non for continued business, and therefore, a part of shared repertoire. Awareness of arrangements increasingly came to define the members of arms trade practice; by 1979, the embassies who had nurtured the relation were excluded from practice.
Within the commercial process each commercial phase had potentially different configurations of objectives, engagement, and repertoire, and the chapters will examine each accordingly. Unsurprisingly, here too, chapters display a growing cohesion between trade partners over time.

*Arms trade practice as a community*

Communities of practice are enduring, informal social structures and easily overlooked as an organisational resource within more structural approaches to organisational analysis. (Wenger, 2002, p. 253) As such, communities of practice are about ‘how possible’; they arrive at the “why” question indirectly, approaching rationales through reconstruction of behaviour.80 Moreover, while routines are everywhere, not every activity leads to social cohesion within a community of practice. Sometimes they are simply not acknowledged as such. (Wenger, 2002, p. 125) A single commercial transaction of a major piece of military equipment involving preparation, post-sale facilities and many stakeholders on either side would result in a loose business relation. A practice is believed to be in place if there is evidence of situated understandings and behaviour that have become routinized, meaningful and embedded in relations, expressed through its practitioners. This gradual understanding and accumulated evidence of social relations can extend across territorial borders, into regional spaces of practice, for example the commercial efforts of military attaches in Southern Africa.

We note, in passing, that military acquisition generally encapsulates forms of production and export of armaments. In the example of France, observed by the South Africans, the two were intimately related, and indeed both managed closely by military administrations. Regular arms trade between French and South African defence communities is shown to have operated separately and differently from that other more infamous French African network of influence, presided over by Jacques Foccart, de Gaulle’s right hand man. Recurrent joint political scheming in Sub-Saharan Africa by Foccart’s network and the South African Defence Minister ultimately proved fruitless, as the political networks of Foccart were continuously evolving, trading members, information and allegiances as cases demanded. (Bat, 2012, pp. 38-40, 746n9) In contrast the defence communities of practice were much more permanent and hierarchical.

To argue that the commercial process and its four interrelated practices of Promotion, Authorisation, Procurement, and Post-sales service produced a community of arms trade,

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80 (Wenger, 2002, p. 126): ‘The notion of practice refers to a level of structure that reflects shared learning. Note that this is a level both of analysis and of experience.’
assumes that practitioners more or less understood their part in the entire commercial process chain. This is a point easily made, but only for those directly involved. Increased secrecy would progressively limit the number of practitioners involved, as the Chief of the General Staff, or Commandant-General, of the South African defence community observed. Like the notion of taking pride in company or country, communities are constructs of social cohesion. Therefore, a community effectively cannot be proven or disproven. This is less problematic than it seems, for the proposition compares to the assumption of rational interest underlying historical actions. To say that a community of practice existed because of a cohesion formed around activities is no more tautological than to say that decisions were made rationally because they aligned with government objectives, or appear advantageous with hindsight. Both need to be made credible based on empirical data.

The French South African relationship has been studied for its “special” character, which so far has meant a set of instrumental rationales that was peculiar given the time and context in which they were effected. Within international relations the term ‘special’ usually conflates the existing closeness and apparent harmony with particularly enduring interstate relations, which may in reality be mere ‘tradition invented as tool of diplomacy’. (Reynolds, 1985, pp. 2-3) Nor is harmony a condition for close relations. (Wenger, Communities of practice: learning, meaning, and identity, 2002, pp. 83,85) The idea of security communities has extended the realm of enduring anomalous or unusually close interstate relations to conflictual cases, like those of India and Pakistan, North and South Korea, and Israel and Palestine.

Conversely, the cooperation between France and South Africa, the one a declining imperial state and the other a rogue state fighting for its survival, has (long) been confirmed post-mortem to have had a far reaching, and special character, based on state logics. Instrumental rationales have so far negated any motives of affection and disaffection between the two states. According to Eznack (2011), affective bilateral relations based on shared values and cultural norms can explain remarkable closeness and seemingly anomalous behaviour in times of crisis. Affective relations are anchored in the culture and practice that inform a state’s foreign policy. Some of the possible bonds that Eznack identifies, a “defining moment,” mutual help provided during

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81 SADF, HSAW2 Box 193B, CG Malan to Treasury, 16 November 1978, ‘Ouditering van geheime en sensitiewe projekte’ ['Auditing of secret and sensitive projects'], on limiting Treasury’s access to information about certain projects: ‘Sadly it is true that with these kinds of projects the risk factor increases with every person involved; regardless of the loyalty or risk awareness of such person.’ ['Dit is ongelukkig so dat met sulke projekte die risikofaktor verhoog met elke persoon wat daarvan kennis het; ongeag van die lojaliteit of sekerheidsbewustheid van so ’n persoon.’]
key historical circumstances, or the existence of a “common project”, all occurred in the Franco-South African relation. (Eznack, 2011, pp. 239, 242) What this analysis lacks is attribution and perception of the basis of affectively charged relations. The framework of practice provides an instrument to locate these within the bilateral relation.

**A note on networks**

Whereas communities of practice examine identity formation, network theory argues from the perspective of ‘the structure of social action’, and network structures have a host of examinable physical qualities which can be used to aggregate and predict the nature of relations. (Jewson, 2007, p. 72) Network adepts have criticised the concept of communities of practice for its vagueness on internal structures, leaving undefined its power relations within and outside the community, its boundaries and its relations to the social environment and historical contexts. (Fuller, 2013, pp. 26-7) The term ‘community’ has been criticised as a borderless ‘container notion’ and a value-laden anachronism in today’s globalised world, dominated by knowledge webs and networks. (Jewson, 2007, pp. 70-1)

As the first successor to institutional analysis, network analysis adds greater agency to the structural forms of institutional analysis, by looking at informal lines of communication emanating from actors within and outside institutional frameworks, their material access to resources, connectivity and coherence in relations. Social relations are analysed for their power balances and situation within larger collectives. Network theory understands such traffic as ‘the power of weak ties’, meaning the comparative significance of the non-hierarchical, or otherwise extraordinary communications between actors, be they people or organisational subunits. (Granovetter, 1973) As such, identifying networks helps to explain change as an interplay of the institution with its environment. It does so with a view to hypothesize more general explanatory statements about organizational and social interaction. Moreover, modern arms trade has been defined as ‘an intricate web of networks between the formal and shadow worlds between government, commerce and criminality… for the benefit of a small, self-serving elite, seemingly above the law, protected by the secrecy of national security and accountable to no one.’ (Feinstein, 2011/12, p.xxix)

The problem in all of this is that network analysis «tends to produce a static and overly structured view of the world not sufficiently sensitive to process, agency and meaning». (Ansell, Network Institutionalism, Edited by , , par.1 [Accessed online, Ebrary,, 2006, p. par.9) As implied by Feinstein’s definition, the relational permanence and frequency required for
identification of networks may be hard to prove for arms trade. This methodological problem of networks is clear from the institutional analysis by Kolodziej, who found his subject to be too encompassing, noting on the French monopolist arms industry that ‘mapping the entire play of aims and actor interests falls beyond the scope of this study.’ 82 (Kolodziej, 1987, p. 216) Communities of practice are able to deal with this problem much better because they are emergent entities: the practice itself sets the boundary.

Peterson has observed that beyond pointing to the ‘subterranean netherworld of officials, lobbyists and experts’, it remains at the level of metaphor to explain the ‘complexity of social and political life’. 83 (Peterson, 2003, pp. par.2-1) This critique opens the door to a reflective analysis, which is better suited to our case than structural exploration of institutional structures and their nodal boundaries. The dynamism of French-South African arms trade makes it hard to establish a robust comparative framework, because interactions, procedures and interconnections changed their character quickly, and were often subject to a range of personal and institutional actor engagements, and changeable roles. Crucially, arms trade occurred mostly between middle-level actors, which is a reversal of the assumptions underlying network analysis of ‘strong institution-weak periphery’ and the understanding of informality as the limit of policy. Assuming a deviation from normal policy is to misconstrue the dynamic and emergent character of much that was later subsumed under ‘policy’. The relative rigidity of network analysis becomes obvious when trying to introduce societal ideas and discourses as factors influencing behaviour in the explanatory material framework. For example, Kisby defines a ‘policy community’ as ‘a relatively small number of actors [who] share similar programmatic beliefs’, with a larger, less socially porous ‘issue network’, with a more numerous and ideologically diverse membership. In this case, communities of practice establish the opposite, that social insulation occur was based on shared practice rather than population size, or receptivity to discourse. 84

82 (Kolodziej 1987, p.216); Kolodziej can be forgiven for this, his endnotes give many suggestions for further study, see chapter V on the DGA, eg. p481n46, 482n52 and 482n56. The full history of the many communities of practice that jointly made up the DGA, legal, organisational, commercial, industrial remains to be written
83 Peterson refers to (König, 1998): ‘... a growing number of studies use the network concept as a metaphor describing the complexity of social and political life, but they have neither explained why private and public actors are mutually dependent, whether their dependency is restricted to the boundaries of specific subsystems and how this dependency affects public decision-making, nor generated testable hypotheses regarding the causal importance of policy networks for public decision-making.’
84 (Kisby, 2007, p. 83): ‘A ‘policy community’, for example, in which a relatively small number of actors share similar programmatic beliefs, will be less likely to be open to exogenous ideational influences, whereas an ‘issue network’, with a more numerous and ideologically diverse membership, will be more open to ideational influence from outside. However, when it comes to developing those ideas and/or turning them into policy
However, the alternative ontology of network analysis, while asking different questions, has lessons for practice theory. There is strong complementarity between the two theoretical approaches. When choosing one, it is important to be mindful of the advantages and lenses of the other. First, networks identify clusters of actors, which act as powerful minorities. Their members may hold allegiances to the cluster and stereotypes about outsiders that contradict with the rest of the network. This is a useful insight not offered by practice theory which distinguishes only between members and outsiders. A key example of clustering within the South African defence community is the debate on helicopter utility between the Air Chief, supported by the Commandant general, and the Army Chief supported by the deputy Secretary of Defence. Differences were based on different doctrinal positions, not functions.

By contrast, the concept of the community of practice is concerned mostly with the outer boundary, but has little to say about internal divisions of the sort clusters may cause, so it is claimed. By contrast, ‘[n]etwork theory enables us to theorize [outer] boundaries, but also boundaries within…’ (Jewson, 2007, p. 76) Cluster analysis has some relevance, pointing to the risk of assuming homogeneity of practice within communities. At the same time, analysis of substructures ignores the continuous space for conflict, contestation and renegotiation inherent in practice.

Furthermore, network analysis assumes that power is always a ‘two-way street’ no matter how imbalanced the power relationship. (Buchanan, 2010, pp. 268-9) Apparent harmony and underlying conflict can coexist in one relation. Communities of practice can be either harmonious or conflictual, as Wenger asserts, but he does not elaborate on how consensus is reached. (Wenger, 2002, pp. 76-77) Wenger later defended the concept stating that communities of practice exist through the use and negotiation of positions of power, albeit through the production and maintenance of common identities. (Wenger, 2010, pp. 8-10) The dynamism of power relations, obvious in networks, remind us that reproduction and renegotiation among members do not necessarily resolve conflicts.

To a certain extent, the criticism on the boundaries of practice is fair. There is no easy way to determine the boundaries of a nascent community of practice, exactly because of its dynamic nature. ‘Participation [in a common practice] itself is a process’, one that gradually embeds the

outcomes, the more tightly-knit policy communities are likely to be more effective than the more diffuse issue networks.”
participant in a practice. (Hager, 2005, p. 23) By negotiating their participation and sharing a common experience with other members, the community is realised and then sustained. Wenger’s explanation that being a member of the community ‘translates into an identity as a form of competence’ has a tautological feel to it. (Wenger, 2002, p. 153) Also, people can participate in many communities at once. Shared practice is delineated loosely by its contemporaneous reproduction, and the spatial boundaries of participation, which however do not ‘necessarily imply co-presence, a well-defined identifiable group, or socially visible boundaries’. (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 98) A community is therefore a much more practical description than what Bourdieu denotes as a field: spatial, tangible boundary that deemphasizes the subjective, cognitive boundary of common understandings.\(^85\) (Maton, 2014, p. 50)

Such particularities are anathema to network theory, which does claim to have qualitative value, but is most at ease in quantitative, structural analysis of the type this study seeks to avoid. (Liebenberg & Barnard, 2005; Senekal, Stemmet, & Stemmet, 2015) Therefore interpretative power is impeded when we look for networks, because these focus on connectivity, elevating the unfamiliarity between actors over their joint constitutive experience. (Wenger, 2010, p. 10)

There is however a price to be paid for systematic and descriptive social analysis. With so little apparent structure, the practice must be supported by the sequential process, which provides a chronological boundary, and its coherence rests on the historical evidence. The case of helicopter trade offers a rich and accessible set of narrative connections.\(^86\) Although but one of many weapon types sold, helicopters combine a host of critical issues inherent in French-South African arms trade. French military helicopters had a profoundly dual nature. Their problematic dual civil-military application, jointly private-national production base, their tactical use and implication to strategic doctrine, amplify the value of their analysis. Moreover, their transaction was important to both sides, and showed an uncommon regularity, which facilitated routinized support. The crucial and intensive use of helicopters in cross-border operations created substantial maintenance requirements, further accelerating efforts to achieve South African technical autonomy. All of these aspects required that French expertise and involvement integrate with South African demands and within the limits of South African contexts.

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\(^{85}\) Early on, archivists at the French military archive in Chatellerault wisely suggested to me to change my case study from Mirage fighters to Alouette helicopters.
On Method

The method of enquiry partly adopts practice tracing, a method aimed at demonstrating the social effects of local practices for the purpose of general analysis. (Pouliot, 2015, p. 238) Practice tracing offers a reflective approach to process tracing, which itself researches the intermediates steps in a process [of decision making] … to identify the intervening causal process.’ (Bennett & Checkel, 2014, p. 6)

As a first step of practice tracing, empirical data is compiled and -avoiding interpretative pitfalls- used to learn about agents’ understanding of trade structure and their contribution to it. (Pouliot, 2007, p. 270) Then, the subjective knowledge this generates is objectified, or made intersubjective, by extrapolating individual pieces of data into discursive ideas about the general drivers of trade. (Pouliot, 2007, p. 360passim) For example, the chapter on promotion finds major divergence early on between individual French intermediaries and South African technical staff about marketing performance, to say nothing of the superiors of both groups. Gradual acceptance of French technical and military-organisational know-how by South African defence practitioners after the first deal in 1960 is a major indicator of shared practice. Specifically, the researcher uses ‘various streams of evidence to deeply interpret the context in which various political practices were enacted.’ (Pouliot, Practice tracing, 2015, p. 249) The third and final step of historicizing the objectified meanings reintroduces their dynamic nature. The framework of process is a key feature of this point. The constructed generalization is offset by its adaptability, and located in a recognizable historical framework, while allowing for historical contingency and path dependency. By retracing the changing performances and understandings of practices and procedures within each of the commercial phases in the period under review, a mosaic of interactions between two defence communities unfolds. The final step allows these contextual meanings to take on wider significance, constituting an important social structure within the inter-state relationship.

Periodisation

The chosen period runs from 1955 to 1979, which represents source material covering a period of roughly thirty years. The start date is on firmer ground than the end date. The year 1955 is clearly the beginning of the French institutional and fledgling commercial efforts at arms trade generally, and towards South Africa in particular. The choice by the South African Air force for Canadian ‘Sabre’ F-86 jet fighters over French ‘Mystère’ jet fighters in 1955 is a case in point. The Simonstown naval agreement of June 1955 between the Union of South Africa and
Great Britain represents the peak of defence cooperation, a point not conceded by then South African Defence Minister Erasmus until much later.

By contrast, the end date of 1979 is an arbitrary one, because the system of supply of helicopters-in-parts continued after its establishment in the early to mid-70s, through to the mid-80s, and likely the end of the Cold War. Therefore, it is argued, any point on that 10-to 15-year timeline could be used to mark the coming of age of the community. Because of the scarcity of supporting evidence and the enduring nature of the community of practice, there are several moments equally suited to mark the establishment of a community between French and South African defence communities. The choice of the year 1979 as the end point thus reveals some narrative licence. Foremost, retrieval of compelling but anecdotal evidence provides strong evidence of a community of practice in existence by this date. Revealing documents dating from 1979 can be found in the South African military archives. They outline explicitly the French government's intention to continue service to South Africa through middle level engagement, despite the mandatory embargo of 1977, as well as South African steps to increase security and secrecy of procurement. Moreover, other primary and secondary sources support the continuity of trade beyond 1977. According to the former production manager at Atlas Aircraft Corporation, the South African national aviation manufacturing plant, Mr Kobus Eksteen, industrial liaisons between Atlas and (French) Aerospatiale actually intensified after 1980. Kolodziej states 1973 as date of a SA-330 Puma helicopter production licence agreement; curiously no licence for the Alouette III is stated. Such a late date fits with the crisis of the early 1970s in the trade relation, especially regarding helicopters, as hypothesized by Konieczna: the view of a failed ‘normalisation’ or redefinition in military trade relations. Based on the evidence, this study places the moment of a license earlier, in 1971, taking it as one of several relational milestones in which transfer of French military technology was embedded. The official French government position was expressed through reluctant adoption of the 1977 mandatory Security Council embargo. SIPRI’s trade register identifies a handful of helicopters sold to South Africa after

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87 Kobus Eksteen, Interview with author, 11 August 2016. Mr Eksteen worked as a director for Atlas and its successor, Denel Aviation, for many years.

88 (Konieczna, 2013, pp. 503, 526-7, 534) Based on the evidence, this study places the moment of a license earlier, in 1971, taking it as one of several relational milestones in which transfer of French military technology was embedded. The official French government position was expressed through reluctant adoption of the 1977 mandatory Security Council embargo. SIPRI’s trade register identifies a handful of helicopters sold to South Africa after
1980 under various pretences.\textsuperscript{89} (Brzoska & Ohlson, Arms Production in the Third World, 1986) From 1981, the French Socialist government’s covered continuation of this element of Gaullist policy culminates in the assistance by Aerospatiale in 1985 of the South African attack helicopter Rooivalk. (Landgren, 1989; Kolodziej, 1987, pp. 125, 129-30; Brzoska & Ohlson, Arms Production in the Third World, 1986) Contextual support for an even later date could be added, such as the election of Defence Minister Botha as Prime Minister in 1978, and slight demotion of the Délégation Ministérielle pour l’Armement, as Délégation Générale pour l’Armement, to directorate level in 1977. (Kolodziej, 1987, pp. 240-1) The key data for the period of 1975-1979 is of great import, but is presented with less corroboration from primary sources. A qualified assumption would be that the practices described in the preceding period did not change materially after 1979.

\textsuperscript{89} SIPRI Online Trade register shows 4 ‘civilian’ Pumas, but notes these were used the SAAF, and 2 Alouette Ills for the ‘homelands’. \url{http://armstrade.sipri.org/armstrade/page/trade_register.php} [Accessed 20/5/2017]
Chapter 2: Promotion

In this chapter the promotional activities of French military trade in the five years prior to 1960 are established as a formative element in French-South African relations from 1960 onwards. Trust is the first condition of business, and promotion plays an important part in gaining the credibility of the seller and his product.

As part of marketing efforts, the function of promotion is most prevalent in the early stages of the business cycle, tapering off in maturing markets and relations. (Jobber & Lancaster, 2015, pp. 66-67) In this case, French promotion foreshadowed the community of practice, becoming more routinized and effective, but also less important to sales by 1970. The 1960 Alouette II helicopter deal was a result of persistent French promotion efforts, and of the South African need for population control manifested at Sharpeville. In the 14 months following the transaction, French and South African defence communities would come to agree to substantial arms trade cooperation that would in turn cement the broader relationship that developed from 1963 onwards. From August 1960 to September 1961, helicopter orders were the first repeat sale, inaugurating the post-independence turn to French military supply.

More generally in procurement, good communication is crucial for informal connections to form and learning and trust to permeate. (Walker & Hampson, 2008, pp. 32,13) The chapter retraces the exploits of French peripheral brokers and key defence leaders within the South African defence community who found themselves in agreement, but opposed or unsupported by their opposite numbers within their own defence community. Greater focus in promotion by French government achieved a mutually beneficial transaction between key actors. Short of a community of practice, promotional activities established a mode of communication, to the point of emphatic ownership of the Alouette purchase by the South African Air Force. Promotion as a practice of arms trade facilitated subsequent deals by creating lines of communication, that would endure after the relationship had moved on from its initial stages.

The first paragraph explores the French proposition in the 1950s, which originated from an analysis of French colonial wars past and present, but excluded the regional strategic partnership that the SADF was most interested in. While French promotion appeared to connect with key persons and preferences within the South African defence community, its doctrinal
analysis of external threats domestically engaged did not entice the complacent and conventionally oriented South African defence community.

The second paragraph analyses the South African disposition towards procurement of French helicopters. Weighing on meagre budgets, they offered little utility within the strategic objectives of Defence Minister Erasmus. His ambitions to achieve a Southern African defence arrangement within the Commonwealth, or alternative European colonial powers, were hampered by South Africa’s notorious political and modest military profiles. The result of mismatched French promotional initiatives and uninterested South African military buyers was polite but pointless engagements. The third paragraph describes French brokering, and three trade interactions that embody this communicative and affective gap.

The fourth paragraph describes the closely run negotiation and decision making that led the SADF and SAAF to decide on French helicopters over their American competitors. It serves to underline the necessary distinction between public rhetoric following Sharpeville, and commercial choices still open to all three states.

The last paragraph covers the period 1961-1970, in which direct contact between community institutions came to obviate promotion. Commercial aspects of the creation of the new Republic are briefly dealt with (the strategic questions of supply follow in chapter 4). Both French and South African defence communities took a greater stake and interest, leading to more exclusive and direct contacts between institutional decision makers.

French brokering of its operational experience

From the late 1940s, modest French diplomacy had explored informal military communications with South Africa, whose white minority rule rang familiar to the French “mission civilisatrice”.90

Amidst a growing chorus of newly independent states, French and South African views gradually diverged on the need for African reform, the threat of instability in Southern Africa

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90 Service Historique de la Défense, Vincennes [SHDV], 2E 3678, Mission report by Commander in Chief of Strategic Zone of Indian Ocean, regarding Madagascar, Mozambique and South Africa’ Vice-admiral P. Barjot, (undated) 1953, Admiral Barjot, after having dismissed British colonisation as inherently unstable, concluded : ‘Pour ma part, ce que je retiens de mes observations en Afrique Orientale, comme en Afrique du Sud, est la nécessité d’un esprit de coopération entre les représentants de la civilisation blanche dans toute l’Afrique, non pas avec l’objectif rétrograde d’y maintenir les Noirs en état de soumission, mais pour qu’au moins, une bonne entente entre tous les Européens d’Afrique, maintienne entre eux une cohésion constructive qui, sans improvisations hâtives, permette à la Race Noire, d’accéder au Progrès Social dans l’ordre et dans la Prospérité.’
and likely responses to these issues. Allying with racial segregation was bad publicity for European colonial powers in Africa.

As the 1950s progressed, French missions abroad were faced with a dilemma between the advantages to France of military consultation with the Union of South Africa, and the diplomatic objection to closer relations with a rogue Commonwealth state. In May 1955, anticipating the unwelcome request by visiting South African Defence Minister Erasmus (1896-1967) for an African defence organisation, the French ministries involved had agreed internally on ‘the domain of logistics’, such as supply and information sharing to placate him. 

Military attachés

Within the long colonial history of French military networking and diplomacy, arms trade promotion had been a task of military attaches. This continued in the 1950s. (Vial, 2002) French diplomatic priorities however were long reflected in the lack of a permanent French attaché to South Africa. The French governmental stakeholders of the Defence, Foreign Affairs and Overseas Ministries had bickered about responsibility for informal military visits since 1952 and in 1955 jointly agreed to a ‘liaison officer’ visiting for a month twice a year. French ambassador Gazel (1949-1956) knew strategic contingency planning was an interest affecting ‘beaucoup plus le Territoire que la Métropole’. Noting informal military contacts of the Madagascar station with South African government had become ‘fréquents et cordiaux’, Gazel had still opposed a South African military visit to Algeria in 1956. Subsequent ambassadors Ludovic Chancel (1956-58) and Georges Balay (1958-68) would continue to press for a permanent attaché. The earliest reports of French ‘non-permanent military attaches’ date from April 1956. Chef de battalion E.J. Cortadellas reported on his first visit to South Africa, where he met with the South African military leadership, the future attaché to France, Brigadier J.H. Robbertze, and the French OFEMA agent based in Johannesburg, ‘a French businessman’

91 South African National Defence Force Archives [SANDF], HSI/AMI 3 Box 771, Memorandum by Serge Combard, representative of UAT, proposing an airline connection to South Africa, p.4, the French airline Union Aéromaritime de Transport spoke the language of ‘common bonds and common problems’ of France and South Africa, when soliciting for a third air route to South Africa in 1957.

92SHDV, (Series) 14 H 86, (folder) ‘5. Relations entre la France et l’Union sud-africaine, 1949-1958’, Inspector-General to Overseas Minister, ‘Attaché militaire en Afrique du Sud’, 22/6/51; ‘April or Nov ’56 report no intelligence purpose; compare the much lowered anticipation four years on in SHDV 14 H86, French Governor of Madagascar to Overseas Minister, ‘Attaché militaire en Union Sud-Africaine’, 11/2/55, p.1, regarding Lt.Col. Rocaboy. It was at Gazel’s insistence that the French visitor would not be called a military attaché.

93 SHDV, 14H 86, French Governor of Madagascar to Overseas Minister, ‘Attaché militaire en Union Sud-Africaine’, 11/2/55, p.1,
called Henri Jaboulay. Cortadellas struggled to build rapport with the South African military leaders outranking him, and would come to depend on Jaboulay.94

The South African permanent military attaché post in Paris had been created by Defence Minister Frans Erasmus in October 1949 for its proximity to the NATO headquarters and density of foreign attachés. It also served as a post for his protégé then major R.C. (Rudolf) Hiemstra. (Jooste, 1996, p. 176) In 1959 the post was taken up by Col. Robbertze of the (new) Military Inspectorate, a fateful appointment. Robbertze had been the first South African participant to study at the French Ecole Supérieure de Guerre in 1956/57.95 He would take up the post of military attaché in Brussels in 1957, with responsibility for representation in Belgium, Netherlands and France. Robbertze joined the Paris mission in late 1959. (Jooste, 1996, p. 177) Robbertze, was to an extent Jaboulay’s alter ego; Robbertze’s reporting shows a touch for the dramatic, but Robbertze equally was a one-man-promotional force. Attaches were generally promising senior officers, and Robbertze, like Hiemstra, would rise to prominence.

**French industry actors**

The French defence industry was nominally private, but via various arrangements the French state controlled the boundaries of public and private entrepreneurship. (Carlier & Martel, Le développement de l'aéronautique militaire française de 1958 à 1970, 1979, pp. 120-127)[ADD GIFAS] French promotion of military aviation to the South African market was the preserve of the Office Français d'Exportation de Materiel Aéronautique, an industry-owned limited company created in 1933, and its rival, the privately owned Office Générâte de l’Air.96

In order to control the market it had nurtured, the government in December 1955 decreed the creation of the Comité National à l’Exportation de l’Industrie Aéronautique, to be jointly owned by industry and government.97 CNEIA held authority in aviation promotion and had the

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94 Centre des Archives Diplomatiques, Nantes [CADN], 551PO-2-161, Report of Chef de Bataillon CORTADELLAS, 12/4/56 to 11/5/56, p.11, Cortadellas mentions his brief introduction to prospective Commandant-General Klopper, who orated on French Madagascar for fifteen of twenty minutes allocated.Klopp Army Chief of Staff from 1951 to 1953, as Inspector-General from 1953 to 1956, and as Commandant-General, i.e. head of the Union Defence Force
95 SHDV, 10T 772,folder ‘Afrique du Sud  Ventes d’armes, SGDIN à 2me bureau, 1970-72’, (document) EMAA/2 to EMA Bureau Armement & Etudes, 29/4/57, mentions Robbertze’s plans, and discusses possible purchase of French alternatives for GB trucks to Centurion tanks discussed.
96 Service Historique de la Défense, Chatellerault, [SDHC], 543 2A2 15, Report by M. MOREAU for Contrôle Generale des Armees, Paris, 1/7/65, ‘Les exportation de Materiels Aeronautiques. L’OFMA [sic] et l’OGA (1961 – 1963 – 1964)’, par 1.2.1, par. 1.2.2, on OFEMA and the OGA, which started 1920 by a former World War I pilot, equally prospected for commission, but was also a reseller of parts.
power to assign government subsidies. As such, it acted as liaison between industry and the Air Ministry.  

**Flawed French marketing, 1956**

In July 1956, the French Air Ministry had learned, doubtless from Jaboulay, that confusion and buck passing persisted between their own technical and financial bureaus and CNEIA, and OFEMA and its representative in Johannesburg. Jaboulay urged the Air ministry in July 1956 to redouble its efforts on aviation products.

Following the failed Mystère bid in 1955, CNEIA organised a promotional mission to South Africa in April 1956. Throughout the fall of 1956, Henri Jaboulay found his efforts to sell French armaments to South Africa were only haphazardly supported by metropolitan government actors. He lamented the failure of his proposal for a barter deal with the cash-strapped South Africans of new French Bréguet transport aircraft for old South African Dakotas, which French forces in Algeria could have put to good use. Still, Jaboulay was equally presumptuous of his own equidistance to the South African defence community. In early November 1956, Jaboulay had estimated a purchase potential in the SAAF budget for 10 small 2-seater Djinn helicopters, which was belied by subsequent events. Jaboulay showed little sensitivity to South African perceptions and needs. Sikorskys were American-built, weathered, piston-engined utility aircraft, used even by the French. By comparison, the new Djinn and 5-seater Alouette II constituted (much) smaller French-built alternatives, revolutionary both for their turbine engines and battlefield application.

The French brokers faced a tough sell. South African armed forces faced public and political indifference in the 1950s, and the military itself was risk averse and had imbibed negative stereotypes of French equipment as unreliable. After his second month-long visit in November

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98 SHDC, 543 2A2 15, ibid, par. 1.3.2.1 on CNEIA; SHDC, 78 1E1 204, folder ‘Notes d’info, 1956’, Secretary of Defence Jean Crouzier, to Direction Technique et Industrielle de l’Aeronautique [DTIA] and Section Administrative et Financiere [SAF] #5032/CAB/DIR, 23/1/56, announcing creation of CNEIA. Led first by Roland Cadet, postwar minister for Reconstruction (1955–1958), then by general Bonte, the former head of the Technical Directorate for Aviation DTIA (1958-65).

99 SHDC, 78 1E1 30, French Secretary for Defence, Air force, #9932, 9/7/56, ref to #2159, 22/5/56, [‘...regrettable de constater à nouveau une action desordonnée de diverse directions du Departement Air... Ce manque de centralisation aboutit également à la confusion de tous les services interessées.’]

100 SHDC, 78 1E1 30, Folder Defence/DSFP/SCE, Letter by Jaboulay, representative of OFEMA in South Africa, to State Secretary, Air Section, Export desk, Col Sauvanet, 12/11/56, on visit by Mr Etienne de la Porte 31/10/56.

1956, Cortadellas noted that while South African customary ties to the Commonwealth proved the main obstacle, French promotion was also lacking in information discipline, poorly prepared, and ignorant of growing South African military self-esteem.

Cortadellas hinted at the diplomatic origins of poor French commercial efforts in his report of late November 1956. In the fall of 1956, France had settled on a half-way position regarding South Africa, sharing views on international revolutionary threats, but avoiding public connections between racialism and French conduct in Algeria. South African governmental assertion of Afrikaner identity offered opportunities, and France should follow other Western states in accommodating South Africa in return for trade.

*French redemption at the April 1957 mission*

By January 1957 Jaboulay’s optimism about sales potential to South Africa seems to have fused with that of the attaché, Cortadellas, but again there was little beyond rumours about space to overcome British and American competition. CNEIA had been dismayed that French promotional material was still not available in English. Its availability would remain sketchy and inadequate for years to come. South African under-secretary for Defence Steyn had told Jaboulay that the CNEIA exaggerated the influence, though significant, of British language and specification on South African procurement. Steyn pointed out that the 1957 elections and likely cutbacks would push out any military budget increases to April 1958. In his report, Jaboulay claimed corroboration of Steyn’s timeline by a silent pro-French majority within Cabinet and Defence, including Secretary de Villiers – Steyn’s boss – who opposed the pro-British course for African defence. ‘They’ alleged that only a French demonstration by the fall of 1957 could keep the French bid alive.

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103 SHDV, GR 1R 26, Folder Industrie Aeronautique, CNEIA minutes of meeting of 20/1/61, p.9, ‘...surtout un manque d’information. Les catalogues, qui n’existent pas toujours, ne donnent pas d’indication sur les matériels de l’avenir et la publicité des firmes à elle seul n’est pas suffisante.’ Another lacunae is mentioned in SHDV, GR 1R 26, CNEIA minutes of meeting 28/3/61, p.5-6, about proposed limited edition of a new bi-monthly publication intended just for ‘think tanks and foreign military staffs’.


In March-April 1957 a French high–level trade mission, led by Roland Cadet and Gen. Gallois met with six key ministers and entourage, including Defence, Foreign Affairs, Economic Affairs, as well as the Defence resources Board and Electronics committee. The brief but welcome commercial involvement of Colonel Gallois, a free-thinking proponent of French nuclear deterrence and French NATO representative, remains unexplained. Gallois would seek early retirement, receive a promotion and a job offer in strategic aviation at Dassault in 1957. It is not unthinkable that South African uranium was a topic he discussed with his South African hosts. (Polakow-Suransky, 2010, p. 40) The French delegation found that South African fears of American motives and their animosity towards Britain now made them more amenable to French military aviation and, in the wake of “Suez”, naval electronics industries: ‘…le climat politique et le climat psychologique sont actuellement excellents pour notre pays’. The French also concluded on converging security issues: ‘Nos propres difficultés en Afrique du Nord nous rapprochent d’ailleurs d’un Etat, auquel se posent des problèmes de même nature.’ South African interest in the Djinn helicopter promotional film had been noted. Defence ambitions and shared sentiments regarding British betrayal at Suez and revolt in Algeria perhaps informed South African desires to befriend the French visitors. After his return from Johannesburg in June 1957 the head of OFEMA, General Fay, urged CNEIA to organize a demonstration of French helicopters.

In the French perception a black revolt was an obvious future threat to the South African government. This reflected the governmental French argument of demographics underlying...
the Algerian conflict. (Siari-Tengour, 2014, p. 469) By contrast, ‘Though black unrest was always in the political consciousness of the Nationalists there was not yet a sense of alarm’ among the military. (Boulter, 1997, p. 83) The urgent plea by General Fay for a demonstration was incorporated into Sud-Aviation’s international helicopter tour with no apparent haste.\footnote{Doc Letter of OFEMA, M. MORAL, to Comite National pour l’Expansion de l’Industrie Aeronautique Francaise, President, 24/6/1957, informing him of the advice of FR Gen FAY, of 22/6/57, in Johannesburg. Fay urged by telegram to ‘Insister pres Ministere et Constructeur pour presentation 8 helicopteres Septembre-Stop – seul solution debouche sur marche possible total dix a quinze – stop – General FAY.’ By contrast the inclusion of Pretoria in Sud-Aviation’s world demonstration tour of the Alouette does not suggest great urgency.} Nor did the South African military appear very keen to the local French Consul, in great contrast to their welcome of the British helicopter demonstration two weeks before.\footnote{CADN, 551PO-2-142, Folder ‘Defense Nationale. Achat et vente de materiel militaire, 1956-63’, Copy of letter of French Consul B. Collette to Henri Jaboulay, #141, 5/10/57, p.1-2, ‘l’inertie la plus totale.. une conspiration contre nos démonstrations’. Whereas the Brits received cocktails afterwards, the French found there was no fuel for their helicopters to begin with.}

**The follow-up mission of April 1958**

In April 1958, the French followed up their April 1957 mission with an OFEMA delegation to the Rand Show trade fair in Johannesburg, led once more by Gallois. In their presentation to Viljoen, the French delegation re-emphasized the importance of aviation in counter-insurgency operations and the strong technical expertise of their industry in both fields.\footnote{SHDC, 78 1E1 30, CNEIA/Roland Cadet, note d’information, #1451, 25/4/58, ‘..a mis l’accent sur l’utilisation de nos différents appareils de combat et d’entraînement et insiste particulièrement sur les méthodes employées par la France dans le domaine aérien en vue du maintien de l’ordre à l’intérieur de nos territoires africains.’} CNEIA President Cadet had noted the Air Chiefs’ reluctance to introduce yet another type of helicopter. Misreading Viljoen’s implied objection to the Alouette II’s inferior payload compared to the S-55, Cadet believed it to be a passing objection, easily disproved by experiences in Algeria.\footnote{SHDC, 78 1E1 30, CNEIA/Roland Cadet, note d’information, #1451, 25/4/58, Secret ‘ Mais cette position est loin d’être définitive et le Col. Jaboulay, représentant de l’OFEMA, s’efforce de la faire modifier’.}

**South African strategic boundaries and operational thinking**

Despite early collapse in 1952 of a formal Western defence initiative to the Middle East (MEDO), South Africa had agreed to contribute an expeditionary armoured division should Britain intervene there.\footnote{SANDF, KG5 box 333, Defence planning, Air Force policy, Minutes of meeting at CG office, 26/11/59, pp.2-3. US Central Intelligence Agency online reading room, see NSC Briefing, 14 January 1954, ‘Middle East Defense Arrangements Background’, \url{https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP79R00890A000200030032-7.pdf} [accessed 11/1/17]} Accordingly, during the 1950s South African military equipment was either British-made, or British-sourced. The biggest non-naval purchase before 1960 was for
201 modern British Centurion tanks in 1953. At £10m pound Sterling it was close to twice as expensive as the only major non-British items, the 35 Canadian American-built Sabre jets in 1954/55, a bid that had been lost to French aviation industry. (Boulter, 1997, pp. 136-7)

Under the 1955 Simonstown naval agreement Britain had reduced its operational exposure in Africa at the cost of renewing British strategic commitment to South Africa’s sea lanes. The South African Navy agreed to take over 20 surface ships. (Jooste, 1996, p. 204) Other British sales included armoured cars, propeller trainer aircraft, and jet bombers. The 1956 Suez debacle emphasized the downward trend of British-South African military cooperation. Strategic divergence by 1957 would lead to a freeze in South African defence spending until 1960, eliciting further space for strategic and military initiatives with France. (Jooste, 1996, p. 152)

The French propositions formed a coherent and credible offer for an operational solution, but they were mismatched with the South African perceptions and desires which derived from different strategic underpinnings. Innovative French helicopter technology was used by the French military in Algeria with great success, and embedded within a military doctrine defending against external highly mobile threats to public order. However, the South African Defence Minister, on a tight financial leash from his government, was most interested in securing strategic commitment from France and other European powers in Africa. In turn, French promotion remained oblivious to South African myopia throughout the 1950s. Consecutive South African governments underestimated the force of majorities demanding reform, and its implications for administrators, domestically and in Africa. In the mid-1950s the so-called ‘black spectre’ was still a political threat, not a military threat. Security depended on South African military credibility as a regional support to, primarily, British interests. The SADF’s existing supply relationship with Great Britain was a comfortable fall-back position, especially after the 1955 Simonstown agreement, and a pro-British strategic perspective informed the SADF’s strategic security outlook and her operational procurement, as well as SAAF’s helicopter repertoire. The Suez crisis of October 1956 and its aftermath destroyed the British power base in the Middle East and her appetite for African regional defence. By late

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117 (Boulter, 1997, pp. 136-7), Great Britain was not happy as non-GB material reduced interchangeability.
118 SANDF, MVEF2 box 52, MV18/10, ‘Defence Special Equipment Account’, p.1-2; the purchase of 2 anti-submarine vessels was ultimately cancelled, bringing the total naval sum to 24£m.
1957 South African and British interest in joint regional defence had diverged beyond repair. (Boulter, 1997, pp. 139-142)

The strategic outlook of the South African defence ministry had long rested upon the framework of the British Commonwealth, and took a conventional approach both to security and to public order. Identifying doubts about assistance by retrenching British and disapproving Americans, Inspector General Melville in May 1957 argued for increased self-sufficiency and creation of a ‘hard hitting, highly mobile force, possibly air transportable’. This was to be a land force. In July 1957, South African Army Chief Grobbelaar visited France to investigate the suppressive power of armoured cars. The Strijdom government (1956-58) decided on cost cutting however, leading Erasmus to improvise by setting up ‘Mobile Watches’, Army regular units in support of law enforcement. (Boulter, 1997, pp. 83-84) Possibly inspired by the French Algerian example, Erasmus created local ‘Citizen Force’ units, but the training and equipping of these scattered police support units would proceed at a leisurely pace as late as December 1959. (Boulter, 1997, pp. 85-86)

South African military procurement by the Union Defence Force was hampered by inexperience, political infighting, and lack of budget. Throughout the 1950s South African military procurement sourced major aviation equipment solely from Great Britain and the US. Exceptionally, in 1955, the South Africans had chosen Canadian Sabre jets over French Dassault’s Mystere fighters, but their intercepting role was undermined by lack of radar support. (SIPRI, 1971, p. 677) Acquired British Shackleton maritime patrol aircraft came without adequate spares or training. To Commandant General Klopper’s exasperation, the small air force nonetheless possessed twelve different aircraft types, and 21 engine types. Neither Klopper’s Inspector General, Melville, nor his Air Chief, Viljoen were tried in battle. (Boulter, 1997, p. 227; Warwick, 2009, pp. 124, 128, 131-2, 249)

South African helicopter repertoire was American in origin, and British in understanding. SAAF had a pioneering experience with helicopters, using temperamental American Sikorsky S-51 helicopters spraying agricultural lands in 1948. (Stannard, 2003, pp. 12-3) In 1954 the

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119 SHDC, 78 1E1 30, OFEMA to Secretariat d’Etat de l’Air, #6557, 30/7/1957, re visit by Gen Grobbelaar, CEM of the SA union, to show EBR 75 Panhard. Suggesting a further ‘démonstration du SS.10’.

120 SHDC, 78 1E1 30, Chef of Economic Desk of Secretary for Defence, Gen. de Frondeville, #3574, 19/12/56, and #21, 11/1/57, to relevant ministries, forwarding South African visit reports by Raoul de BLAY, of the Economic ministry, and Henri Jaboulay. De Blay blamed the loss of the sale to Simonstown agreement negotiation trade off. SAAF had used Sabres in the Korean War (1950-53).

121 Helicopter spraying eliminated the tse-tse fly which had decimated cattle stocks.
General Staff approved budget for three larger Sikorsky S-55 helicopters\textsuperscript{122}, to replace motorboats for ‘inshore search and rescue duties’.\textsuperscript{123} Under the personal supervision of Major G.L.H. (Geoff) Tatham, three larger piston-engine S-55 (H-19) Sikorsky helicopters, at the time ‘the most modern helicopters available’, were purchased from the British licensed producer in August 1956 and early 1957.\textsuperscript{124} (Jooste, 1996, pp. 146-7; Stannard, 2003, p. v) SAAF’s 17 (Helicopter) Squadron, commanded and instructed by Tatham, soon incorporated ad hoc tasks like police searches, emergencies, civilian assistance and military firing ranges, but no fighting role.\textsuperscript{125} In British counter-guerrilla operations over Malayan jungles the S-55 helicopters only provided logistical support to patrolling units. This had required veteran crews, and deep pockets.\textsuperscript{126} (Slater G. C., 1957, pp. 383-5) The British did not adopt helicopters as fire support units in Malaya, as the French would in Algeria.\textsuperscript{127} (Shrader, 1999; Villatoux M.-C., 2003, pp. 452-455) The SAAF would long remain the most Anglophile service. (Frankel P., 1984, p. 18)

That same month the General Staff made plain its view of helicopters as a side-show.\textsuperscript{128} A SAAF committee reiterated the intended mission of five new helicopters as search and rescue, including a ‘nucleus’ for future maritime tasks.\textsuperscript{129} This position was informed by the British RAF, which considered an operational role for helicopters in anti-submarine warfare (ASW) to be another five years off.\textsuperscript{130} Late September 1957, a month before the Alouette demonstration,

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{122} The US military referred to the Sikorsky H-19 Chickasaw.
  \item \textsuperscript{123} SAAF Museum, Ken Smy Collection, Report ‘Stappe wat gelei het tot die aankoop van Allouettes [sic]’ [subsequently: ‘Aankoop/Smy’ report], folio 14, Air Staff to squadrons, 19/3/54, DGAF/Ops/DG/Air, ‘Helikopter: Beleid’, and folio 25, Deputy Air Chief to Defence Staff, 24/1/55, DGAF/SESOC/501/1/20/Eng, ‘Aankoop van Helikopters’; SANDF Diverse 2 Box 48, UVM 1956, p.2, point 6, and 41, very happy about the S.55, [‘die lugmag uiterst tevrede met die S.55’]. A copy of the Aankoop/Smy report is in SANDF, LMH DGAF 6 Box 221.
  \item \textsuperscript{124} SANDF, Diverse 2 Box 48, UDF half yearly progress report Jan-Aug 1955, Appendix A, 6/8/55; SAAF Museum, ‘Aankoop/Smy’ report, 24/1/55, Purchase of Helicopters; (Stannard, 2003, p. v), in July 1956 SAAF helicopter Commander Major Geoff Tatham had followed a pilot conversion course for the Sikorsky S-55 helicopter at the (American) Sikorsky factory. The very next month, two S-55 helicopters arrived at Ysterplaat airbase, near Cape Town.
  \item \textsuperscript{125} SANDF, DGAF 4 Box 698, vol.5,’aircraft general–policy’, ‘Helicopter aircraft technical, Sept’59-Oct’62, ‘Brief resume of 17 Squadron (Helicopters) History and activities’, p.4 point 8, passim. The squadron was reforming from flying fixed winged aircraft
  \item \textsuperscript{127} SHDV, 11 Q 72, British internal report 1956 on the use of helis in Malaya 1952/3. The British used helicopters primarily for logistical support. Admittedly, the British beat the French in helicopter medical evacuation by one month in 1950. See (Cann J., 2015, p. 96)
  \item \textsuperscript{128} SANDF, Diverse 2 Box 48, UVM 1957, point #30, ‘Helicopter Flight’, referring to 17 Squadron, counting four helicopters, condescendingly but accurately referred to as ‘this little unit’.
  \item \textsuperscript{129} SAAF Museum, ‘Aankoop/Smy’ report, folio 107, Minutes of SAAF budget meeting, 17/7/57, p.1, 13-14.
  \item \textsuperscript{130} SANDF, Staff & Command 1 Box 14, Air Chief Viljoen to CG, 3/10/57, and attached document ‘The helicopter in Maritime operations’, 3/10/57
\end{itemize}
SAAF Air Chief Viljoen discussed his memorandum titled ‘The Need for Helicopters in Future War’ with Commandant General of Armed Forces Klopper, who concurred with his request for an additional five helicopters, complementing the three S-55s. Viljoen’s September memorandum now justified purchase of helicopters by asserting that the SADF should anticipate fighting guerrilla wars in Africa in the future. Acquiring and integrating helicopters required timely peacetime preparation. Essentially a modest shift from the maritime position, Viljoen now saw helicopters as a surgical instrument for “Special Tasks” of rescue and communications: a force multiplier, still not a force unto itself. Anglophone suppliers were among the first to be contacted.

In his evaluation report on the demonstration of an Alouette II and Djinn on 28 October 1957 SAAF 17 (Helicopter) Squadron Chief Tatham disqualified the turbine engine five-seater Alouette and 2-seater Djinn because of their limited range, payload and propulsion system, which was incompatible with SAAF’s piston-engine 10-seater S-55s. The French turbine system and size ruled out both as the required training and transport. Still, Tatham’s report demonstrably understated actual Alouette performance. His subsequent report compared the

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131 SANDF, DAGF LMH 6 Box 218, vol.2, Letter CAF Viljoen to CG [Klopper], ‘Gebruik van helikopters in toekomstige oorlog’, 29/9/57, original has handwritten comment by CG Klopper: He concurred, but noted that a proposition for new funds would have to be made. ['Lugstafhoof; Ek gaan akkoord met jou sienswijze. Daar is nog nie voorziening gemaak vir fondse nie, maar die sal goed wees om voor te berei vir [illegible] voorlegging.]

132 Memorandum is in English, SANDF DAGF/LMH 6 Box 218, vol.2, ‘The Need for Helicopters in Future War’, signed ‘HQ Air Chief of Staff, September 1957’. In the SADF 29/7 Aankoop version this document is wrongly dated 29/10/57. Apart from acquisition and integration, delivery times were estimated at 18 months, putting a window of 3-5 years before hostilities to erupt.

133 SANDF, LMH/DGAF 6 Box 218, vol2, 29/10/57, Air Chief to Commandant General, ‘Use of helicopters in future wars’, dated 29/10/57. Viljoen refers to a personal talk with CG on 1/10/57 (‘1ste’, as in first, not ‘late’). The Air Chief did see a logistical role for helicopters in future operations, pointing to British experiences in Kenya and Suez. Timely troop deployment were seen to ‘prevent situations from getting completely out of hand.’ The ‘Aankoop/Smy’ report compilation has Viljoen’s 29/10/57 letter and two copies of the ‘Future Wars’ memorandum.

134 SANDF, DAGF 4 box 698, vol.4 'Aircraft general policy, May 1958 - Sept 1959', Commercial post by agent United Products Ltd, for (American) Douglas Aircraft, 18/10/57, to SAAF, Col. Hartzenberg, carries dated, handwritten note by Air force Staff Officer, dd.21/10/57: 'Now that CG has approved the purchase of more (heavy) helicopters we should put ... in motion, in order to investigate what type we want to buy, so that we may place an order in timely fashion. The Air Chief of Staff has just ordered me to go through [dissect] these documents and inform him, the SLSO, and the SSOA. [signed] SSOA [?].'

135 SANDF, DAGF 4 box 698, vol.3,'aircraft general -policy', August 1957- May 1958, document 'Comparison Westland Widgeon & Alouette', a document to staff comparing Alouette II unfavourably to British-made (American) Westland Widgeon, which introduces the ‘extremely extensive background of the S-51’ as compared to the 2 years old Alouette. This omits that 3 of 4 of the SAAF’s own S-51s had broken down or had accidents within six years of acquisition. The Alouette IIs would fly for nearly two decades. There are also the comments on fuel consumption calculation, which seem to perpetuate Tatham’s erroneous findings. cf ‘Aankoop/Smy’ report, 9/11/57, ‘Report on Alouette II and Djinn helicopters’, see handwritten correction to seriously understated Alouette payload, p.2. Compare with Steyn’s April 1960? [REF CHECK] analysis.
Alouette II unfavourably to the (British) Westland Widgeon, a light version of the (piston-engined) S-55 helicopter. A second report by Tatham compared two larger piston-engined helicopters of American and British design, and actually anticipated the benefits of turbine engine helicopters. In a further example of hedging, Viljoen also leaned towards the larger helicopters. In November 1957, the military objective of an SADF expeditionary force was moribund – even if Erasmus stubbornly kept it alive diplomatically. (Boulter, 1997, p. 142) Civilian reluctance to invest in military equipment, deprioritized territorial defence, leaving mostly a role of supporting police control. (Boulter, 1997, p. 84) Neither task was thought to require helicopters. Aviation was to support conventional land forces. The General Staff did allocate two S-55s for combined operations experiments, but it expected serious conflict to be a long way off, and conventional in nature. Then on 9 December 1957, having received Jaboulay’s January letter on Alouette II prices, and Tatham’s comparison favouring the (British) Westland Widgeon helicopter, Klopper requested the views of his two service chiefs, Grobbelaar and Viljoen. Before the General Staff on 9 January 1958 the Air chief made another about-turn on helicopters. Despite Jaboulay’s post-demonstration follow-up, he argued that Alouette IIs

137 CADN, 551PO-2-142, folder Defense Nationale 1956-63, commercial advisor Lederlin to Ambassador Balay, 7/5/60, p.1, (Jaboulay rightly believed British firm Westland had given a demonstration of a piston-engine helicopter in 1957, the Aankoop report – SADF 29/7- says this was not the case (p.2, point 5). 138 SAAF Museum, ‘Aankoop/Smy’ report, folio 23B, ‘Comparison Westland Widgeon to SNCASE Alouette’, 9/12/57, which contains factual errors such as ceiling and greater complexity of control mechanism. 139 SAAF Museum, ‘Aankoop/Smy’ report, folio 23A, ‘Alouette II & Westland Widgeon’, and folio 23B, ‘Westland Wessex and Sikorsky S-58’. The second report noted Sikorsky’s current experiments to introduce a turbine version of the S-58. 140 SAAF Museum, ‘Aankoop/Smy’ report, folio 20, 9/11/57, item 5, ‘Konsep brief aan CG’, undated but refers to ‘my [Viljoen] letter of 29/10/57’, see note below; Original in DAGF LMH 6 Box 218, which also shows est. price of two helicopters as STG 130,000, which is equivalent to two American S-58s. ‘Aankoop/Smy’ report, folio 31, SA Air Attache, Washington to Air Chief SAAF, 5/2/58, handwritten estimated ‘basic cost’ of S-58s of STG 60,000, plus requirements 69-70,000. 141 SANDF, Diverse group 2, 48, UVM 1957, point #30, ‘Helicopter Flight’, referring to 17 Squadron, counting four helicopters, condescendingly but accurately as ‘this little unit’. 142 SANDF, KG 5 box 333, Defence planning, Air Force policy, Minutes of meeting at CG office, 26/11/59, p.10, pp.2-4. 143 SANDF, KG 5 box 333, p.10 ; SANDF, DC 1 box 78, Folder 17850/443, The Rand Daily Mail, 4/12/59, newspaper clipping ‘No Algeria Foresseen Here – Nor is Big War’, playing down Erasmus’ public admission that Citizen Force units were receiving training in guerrilla warfare.; also document 19(b), Concept Press statement, date 10/6/59 is implied. In the draft on the visit to Algeria all mention of helicopters is stricken. 144 SANDF, Staff & Command 1, box 14 vol.5, General Staff Conferences 1958, Army Chief of Staff Grobbelaar to Commandant General, 2/4/58, ‘Employment of helicopters in SA Army’, referring to CG’s letter of 9/12/57; SANDF, DGAF 4 box 698, vol.3, ‘aircraft general -policy’, aug57-may58, Jaboulay to CG Klopper, 9/12/57; SAAF Museum, ‘Aankoop/Smy’ report, folio 23B, ‘Comparison Westland Widgeon to SNCASE Alouette’, 9/12/57. 145 SANDF, DGAF 4 box 698, vol.3,’ Aircraft general-policy’, aug57-may58, Jaboulay to CG Klopper, 9/12/57; Ibid., Jaboulay to SAAF Air Chief Viljoen, 8/1/58
were too big and (their system) unsuited for both training and general tasks like rescue.\textsuperscript{146} In the interest of cost-cutting, Viljoen agreed to postpone his helicopter budget and promised to introduce the question of helicopter size in his proposed “6+2” distribution of October. It appears that Viljoen, undecided on the future role of helicopters, was anxious to avoid procurement blunders. Air-sea rescue did not require large helicopters, but as Viljoen had fathomed, new conflicts might bring new demands. This explains his incoherence on size, numbers and purpose, as well as his predilection for heavy, all-purpose helicopters, a category as yet non-existent.

A January 1958 article in \textit{Aviation Week} on the use of helicopters in the Algerian war illustrated to Air Chief Viljoen the new trends of greater size and turbine technology.\textsuperscript{147} In early February 1958, news arrived that the American Air Force would phase out of the S-55 in favour of the larger, turbine powered S-58.\textsuperscript{148} In his report to the Commandant General of late February therefore, the SAAF Chief reversed his rejection of turbine engine Alouettes as light trainers, but advised to postpone purchase of a further three unspecified larger helicopters by a year, to confirm the reported superiority of turbine engines. These should form the Northern contingent, the three S-55s and three Alouettes covering the Cape coast.\textsuperscript{149}

The internal debate on helicopter application quickly turned from technology to tasks, when on 2 April Army Chief Grobbelaar informed Commandant Klopper that in his opinion, the SADF lagged far behind the three great Western powers in the use of helicopters. Grobbelaar, an enthusiastic participant in French promotions of anti-guerrilla warfare equipment and

\textsuperscript{146} SAAF Museum, ‘Aankoop/Smy’ report, folio 32, excerpt of minutes, 9/1/58. ['kleiner en meer geskikte helicopter vir opleidings doeleinde…[Lugstafhoof] meen dat die Alouette nie aan ons doel sal beantwoord niet…’]

\textsuperscript{147} SAAF Museum, ‘Aankoop/Smy’ report, folio 29, SA Air Attache, Washington, 14/1/58 to Air Staff, ‘Special report on the use of helicopters in Algeria’, Aviation week article, published 6/1/58; for the craze of bigger helicopters see Jane’s All the World’s Aircraft (London: Jane’s All the World’s Aircraft Publishing Ltd.) 1956/57, 1958/59, 1959/60 editions : Bell H40/Iroquois (10pp), Sud Aviation SE3200 (24pp), Sikorsky S-56 (26pp), Westland Westminster (43pp). Of these only the Bell Iroquois would make a real impact, in Vietnam.

\textsuperscript{148} SAAF Museum, ‘Aankoop/Smy’ report, folio 20B, Handwritten note of Viljoen to CG, advising on S-55s; ibid, folio 31, SA Air Attache, Washington to Air Chief SAAF, 5/2/58, ['..feeling in the US Armed Services is that the S-55 has had its day…'] The S-58 version was unavailable because of production allocation to the USAF.

\textsuperscript{149} SAAF Museum, ‘Aankoop/Smy’ report, folio 32, page of general staff meeting, 9/1/58, ‘Uittreksel uit notulen…’. Handwritten note requests Staff officer to supply requested report to Air Chief, on 26/2/58, 8 weeks after CG request, but 4 29/7 – Aankoop, document #46, DGAF/S/501/1/20/Eng, ‘Lugmag Helikopter Benodighede’, ‘Dit word dus voorgestel dat die aankoop van operasionele helikopters vir ‘n jaar oorgelaat word.’ Document sits between between 9 January 1958 and March 1959 documents. The introduction in the Aankoop file, point 9, page 3, also places this choice for Alouette IIs as trainers chronologically following Viljoen’s January argument in the Staff meeting.
methods,150 favoured building a force for ‘large scale operations’ in support of local and regional defence.151 Such crossing of Army-Air Force boundaries with a helicopter component to internal control operations had triggered heated inter-service debates within much larger Western armies. (Dougherty, 2014, pp. 56-60) Within the almost inter-personal setting of the SADF, Grobbelaar’s flirt with a French-style Army helicopter force was easily unpicked by Viljoen as ‘an erroneous concept’ and ‘an uneconomical proposition in a small Defence Force such as ours and one which the finances of this country can ill afford.’152 The General Staff conference of May 1958 agreed, and shelved Grobbelaar’s plan.153

Lessons of promotion in 1959

Jaboulay’s brokering task

In the absence of a permanent French attaché in South Africa, it fell to French industry ombudsman CNEIA, and Henri Jaboulay, commissioned representative of French aeronautical industry intermediary OFEMA, Panhard, and Matra to open up the South African market. Jaboulay had been working as a commercial agent in Johannesburg since 1950, and had been involved in the failed promotion of sale of Dassault’s Mystere fighters to South African government in 1955. (Konieczna, 2013, p. 407) From both French and South African sources until 1965, Jaboulay comes across as theatrical but unrelenting, qualities which appear to have commanded a certain respect from senior officers on both sides. As a French reserve air officer and a decorated resistance fighter, Jaboulay harboured an almost sentimental belief that French superior techniques and counter-insurgency doctrine had universal application. His conviction helped to sustain his efforts over many years, even if South African military preferred to deal directly with OFEMA later on.154

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150 CADN, 551pO-2-161, Rapport, Chef de Bataillon CORTADELLAS, 22/3/57 tot 20/4/57, p.11, Cortadellas also reported some free publicity by the visiting Israeli tank officer, who spoke highly of French aircraft and armoured vehicles used in the Suez operation; SHDC 78 1E1 30, OFEMA to Secretariat d’Etat de l’Air, #6557, 30/7/1957, re visit by Gen Grobbelaar, CEM of the SA union; Grobbelaar and Mr Van Niekerk, of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research saw a demonstration of a EBR 75 Panhard APC and visited the Sud-Aviation Factory in July 1957.

151 SANDF, Staff & Command 1, box 14, folder GSC 1958, Army Chief of Staff Grobbelaar to Commandant General, 2/4/58, ‘Employment of helicopters in SA Army’, and attached ‘Memorandum on employment of helicopters in various foreign armies’. ‘[t]he helicopter will be invaluable as has been so strikingly shown by the French in Algeria.’

152 SANDF, Staff & Command 1, box 14 GSC 1958, Air Chief of Staff Viljoen to CG, 28/4/58.

153 SANDF, Staff & Command 1, box 14 GSC 1958, minutes of conference 22-24/5/58, point 9.

154 For example, SHDC, 78 1E1 30, Chef of Economic Desk of Secretary for Defence, ibid, 19/12/56, report by Raoul de BLAY, p.3, point 3; SHDV, 2E 3678, Binder EMAA/2 Afrique du Sud, Folder External relations, DMA/Service Expansion-Exportation, report on mission to South Africa 19-27/3/62, #7262, 18/4/62, Col. J.C. Avenard (Direction Expansion-Exportation) and Engineer F. Pilatre-Jacquin, (DTIA), ‘.. il est extrêmement rare de rencontrer un représentant aussi dynamique, aussi bien introduit et en même temps apprécie des États-majors
Against the background of a French diplomatic preference to maintain military contacts at courtesy levels, Jaboulay found a further asset in the South African Under-Secretary for Defence, Vladimir Steyn. Steyn was the ideal go-between, as his transfer in 1955 from the civil service to the Ministry of Defence at the age of 42 made him an enduring outsider inside the Ministry. (Nothling & Meyers, 1982, p. 92) Steyn used Jaboulay as a conduit to further his pro-French diplomacy, but as will become clear, Jaboulay equally depended on Steyn for procedural information and commercial intelligence.  

In 1956 Steyn would put to the French Ambassador that ‘Les intérêts des deux pays sur le Continent Africain sont concordants’ and privately suggested that France’s indelible ties to Africa made her the obvious choice to lead the security of the Continent.  

Throughout the 1950s, Jaboulay’s military background, permanent presence and near-monopoly on contacts with the military General Staff members made him the principal French broker to South Africa.  

**French hubris over EBRs**

French promoters regarded French military experience and equipment second to none, and sale contingent only on buyer awareness of these facts. In May 1958, one month after the French visit to the Rand Show, a related mission by French manufacturer Panhard demonstrated its EBR armoured cars to the South African high command as a battle-tested alternative to the British Saracen used by the SADF. Although chaperoned by Jaboulay and attaché Felix, this was an industry-led promotion. A successful demonstration by a faulty EBR spoke for the

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155 CADN, 551PO-2-141, idem, 11/9/56, p.2. « Il existe, au Ministère de la Défense, une commission qui est présidé par le Directeur de la Trésorerie ; lorsque l’armée a étudie un type d’armement qu’elle juge nécessaire d’acquérir, elle chiffre ses besoins, qui sont discutés en Conseil de Cabinet, puis la Commission décide si ces besoins entrent dans les possibilités du Trésor. Si oui, et su le Cabinet était favorable, la dépense est autorisée, et régularisée « ultérieurement » dans un poste d’un budget futur pour « Besoins spéciaux d’armement » ne donnant aucun détail. » Here the all-important Defence Special Equipment Account is identified.

156 CADN, 551PO-2-141, memo of 11/9/56 by Jaboulay, ‘Resumé d’une conversation “off-record” avec M. S….’, p.1, attachment to letter of French ambassador, Pretoria, to Foreign Ministry/Direction Afrique-Levant [DAL], Paris, 18/12/56, quotation marks in original. Steyn is only mentioned by his initial; he refutes the official reason to discard French Mystères.

157 SANDF, HIS/AMI 3 box 771, vol.1, folder Intelligence countries: Frankryk, Jaboulay to Commandant General Melville, 17/11/59, on new French innovations in aircraft radar guidance systems, ‘opening with ‘When I had the pleasure of meeting you in your office a while ago…’.


159 CADN, 551PO-2-161, report by non-permanent military attaché J. Felix, on mission 27/4/58 to 7/5/58, p.4, only the embassy’s commercial advisor Lederlin ‘had followed the matter’, not the Ambassador or his number two Destremeau.
quality of the material, and the boastfulness of the promotional team. Poor preparation and the team leader’s drunken temper towards his hosts met with South African understanding and generosity, but not orders.

The French attaché found Army Chief Grobbelaar and deputy secretary of Defence Steyn to be genuinely enthusiastic about this guerrilla fighting equipment. Commandant General Klopper and Inspector general Melville thought the EBR overpowered and overpriced for counter-guerrilla equipment, an early indication of Melville’s ‘policing’ approach to the problem. So soon after the internal debate on helicopters, the episode confirmed that irregular warfare remained a dirty word among the general staff.

The incident of the Panhard team leader was played up by both Steyn and Jaboulay, likely to improve their respective positions within their own communities. Little was achieved but their mutual relation improved. The deputy Defence Secretary remained ‘the only one [of all the high officials] that we can really trust’, wrote Jaboulay. Jaboulay’s influence with Steyn, and the Panhard’s mission leader’s continued tenure, illustrate the leeway and initiative that was bestowed upon local representatives within the French defence (export) community at this

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160 CADN, 551PO-2-161, report by non-permanent military attaché J. Felix, on mission 27/4/58 to 7/5/58, p.3, of Panhard’s team leader Felix noted: ‘...très sûr de lui, il a su créer et maintenir une atmosphère de bonne entente et de camaraderie entre son équipe et celle des Sud-Africains sans cependant avoir réussi à gagner la confiance de ces derniers.’.

161 CADN, 551PO-2-142, folder Défense Nationale. Achat et vente de matériel militaire, 1956-63, Henri Jaboulay to French Consul Radenac, Johannesburg, 4/4/59, ‘Incidents Castelain-Panhard’, ‘Vous savez qu’étant ivre, à Upington, M. Castelain a insulté une femme, qu’une bagarre s’en suivit, que M Castelain injuria alors très gravement les Afrikans [sic], y compris les personnes appartenant à l’Armée, à laquelle nous cherchions à vendre les matériels qu’il était venu démontrer.’. It seems the South Africans were not as impressed as Jaboulay was. See CADN 551PO-2-142, folder Defense Nationale. Achat et vente de materiel militaire, 1956-63, Conseiller Commercial Lederlin to DREE, Service Expansion Economique, #P934/YL/GK 15/9/61, ‘Exportation de matériel d’armement et financement’, p.1-2, reasons for declining on EBR were its abundant quality and therefore price, finance (centurions), and functionality (Engelbrecht). The latter suggests unclear purpose on part of the SADF.


163 CADN, 551PO-2-142, Henri Jaboulay to Guy Radenac, p.4, Jaboulay’s melo-dramatic reporting showed the agendas of both him and Steyn. Defence Secretary de Villiers overturned Steyn’s decision to revoke the visa of the Panhard mission leader. The South African observer promised Felix to evaluate and communicate only the test, not the conduct of the demonstrators. Steyn nonetheless proved to be well informed.

164 CADN, 551PO-2-142, Henri Jaboulay to Guy Radenac, French General Consul, Johannesburg, 4 April 1959, p.4, ‘De tous les Hauts Fonctionnaires du Ministère de la Défense, M. Steyn est celui qui nous est le plus favorable. Il m’en a donné des preuves positives que je n’ai pas la liberté d’exposer. C’est le seul sur l’appui duquel nous pouvions vraiment compter.’
stage, in between infrequent high-level visits. However, one observed drawback was the lack of permanent high-ranking military presence in French promotions. French military attachés visited only twice a year, were often of lower senior rank, and in contrast to the contending British team they changed over frequently. Jaboulay provided a presence on the ground, but without much technical expertise or a direct link to French military quarters. On 2 June 1958 Jaboulay had sent three non-technical reports on French operational use of Alouette IIs and Djinns in Algeria, arguing versatility over size. Given Viljoen’s dispositions, such information did not land on fertile ground.

The effects on commerce of French diplomatic custom were clear. In November 1958, the new attaché at the Madagascar station and successor to attaché Felix, chef de bataillon Muguet, remained hopeful of selling the EBRs, French helicopters and radar. Muguet asserted that ‘les chances d’Alouette II existent toujours, bien qu’actuellement la SAAF rechercherait des hélicoptères de plus grande capacité pour la constitution d’une unité de transport.’ In January 1959, the French mission noted the lack of helicopter support for the Mobile watches. In hindsight, Muguet’s positivism displays his initial inability to get close to actual decision-makers. During his April 1959 visit he had noted the effects of physical and relational distance on effective reporting. General Melville had by then told Muguet of his faith in new ‘Mobile Watch’ reserve units to support crowd control, using the existing 260 British-made

165 CADN, idem, Henri Jaboulay to Guy Radenac, French General Consul, Johannesburg, 4 April 1959, p.5, noting that the services diplomatiques and the Service Expansion Exportation should “jointly make Panhard understand” retaining the mission leader was a bad idea. Steyn’s real objection to the mission leader seems to have been his cavalier attitude, which Steyn could not control.

166 CADN, 551PO-2-161, mission report by J. Felix, p.3-4, see note by French attaché on ‘unmilitary’ performance of Panhard team leader Castelain and his civilian mechanics. Ambassadors periodically requested a permanent attaché.

167 CADN, idem, mission report by J. Felix, section VI, ‘La question de l’attaché militaire semi-permanent’. Felix saw a need to balance against the three high-ranking permanent British attaches in South Africa, who undermined all non-British purchases. Felix also noted that the SAAF regarded Jaboulay as a Lieutenant-Colonel, which he (incorrectly) doubted.


169 SANDF, DGAF 4 box 698, vol. 4, Jaboulay to Viljoen, 2/6/58, memo entitled ‘utilisation of the helicopters in the army’, ‘The Alouette and the Djinn in the Army’, and ‘Utilization of other types of machines’.

170 SANDF, DGAF 4 box 698, vol 4, W.H. Armstrong for AUTAIR Ltd, to Air Chief of Staff, 24/7/58, promoting piston and turbine engine helicopters for (American) Bell Helicopters Corporation. Sender notes that Northern Rhodesia, Mozambique and Sudan used Bell 47Gs to satisfaction for 18 Months. Viljoen comments: ‘Not at this stage. BV 1/9’.

171 CADN, 551PO-2-161, Rapport, Chef de bataillon MUGUET, 14/10/58 to 14/11/58, suggests as much in Annexe 9, on military sales opportunities, ‘..aucune information...’;
lighter Saracen armoured cars. By November 1959, it became clear that the EBR had only ever been considered for ‘external intervention’, further establishing the conservative military leanings of Commandant General Melville, who in September 1958 had taken over from Klopper. The French mission nonetheless concluded optimistically in October 1959 that ‘seuls quelques “conservateurs” resteraient … favorable au matériel anglais’.

The military proved at best lukewarm about French equipment, but South African utility companies maintained their interest in French helicopters. In 1957 Deputy Chairman of General Mining and Finance Corporation Mr Jack Scott had bought two Alouette II, followed by another in 1959. South African Railways and other utilities companies convened a purchasing pool for their various helicopter needs, but their required technical support gave SAAF’s Chief Air Staff Officer Verster a controlling vote. Itself undecided, SAAF was anxious to control these discussions. Before the SAAF leadership on 11 May 1959, Mr Scott’s experienced pilot would give a ringing endorsement of the Alouette II, placing it above SAAF’s Sikorskys in terms of ease of use, maintenance, and performance. Despite this supporting evidence, SAAF would uphold her objections for a full year.

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174 CADN, 551PO-2-161, visit report Chef de bataillon MUGUET, 6/4/59 to 5/5/59, p.7-8. Muguet appears not to have heard from Melville about the anticipated sale of Centurion tanks, which Jaboulay had been made aware of by Steyn.

175 CADN, Ibid, Rapport, Chef de bataillon MUGUET, 3/11/59 to 2/12/59, p.8, Grobbelaar has left his Inspector - General position to Hiemstra, his deputy, to become the deputy to the new Commander in chief of armed forces, Melville. It is expected that Hiemstra will take over after Grobbelaar and Melville will retire in two years.[8]


177 This important initiative is not mentioned by the 1964 Aankoop/Smy report, which presents the decision as a purely technical, un-political affair.


180 Represented by Chief Air Staff Officer Verster, who tactically raised up technical bottlenecks.

181 SANDF, DGAF 4 box 698, vol.4, Minutes of 28/5/58 meeting on pooled acquisition of helicopters, eg. p.3, and p.9: ‘Kol Verster suggest that the Dept of Def should be consulted before acquisition of a particular type of helicopter.’

182 SAAF Archives, Mr Ken Smy Collection, folder Alouette II, Memo by Maj. G.C.H. Freeman, 501/2/20/3, undated, on 11/5/59 visit by CAF Viljoen, Col. Verster, Col. Hartzenberg, and Majors Von Steyn and Freeman, to the pilot and engineer of Mr Scott’s Alouette II;

183 SAAF Archives, Mr Ken Smy Collection, folder Alouette II, Henri Jaboulay to Air Chief Viljoen, 4/7/60, ‘Alouette II Helicopters’, Jaboulay opens stating ‘As I have been advised that the South African Government was very anxious to get at least 8 Alouette II...’. Viljoen scrabbles ‘SAAF not committed yet’. Jaboulay also noted Sud-Aviation would start negotiations with West Germany for an additional 75 Alouette II the following week.
The Centurion deal, 1958-59

Lack of funds exacerbated the lack of clarity. The South African military set out to sell the 200 Centurion modern battle tanks purchased from Britain in 1953, in order to resolve its budgetary constraints. 100 of these main battle tanks no longer fitted the operational picture and were to be sold at half price, or 2.5 million pounds, about the size of the annual contribution for major equipment procurement.\(^{184}\) (Boulter, 1997, p. 89) By early 1959, the British government was anxious to limit its imperial strategic exposure, fearing especially a replication of the costly Algerian conflict in Cyprus, and in the settler-dominated Rhodesian Federation. (Thomas, 2002, pp. 179, 184-5; Stockwell, 2017, p. 14) The British government therefore closed the door on Erasmus’ hopes to commit British forces to Southern African territorial defence. (Boulter, 1997, p. 144) SADF’s new military task of border defence required greater battlefield mobility. Facing restrictive funding levels, SADF procurement had all but dried up.

The sale of 100 of these symbols of power to the Swiss government was finally agreed in July 1960 was kept from the South African public, but secured important leeway in the military budget. Part of the proceeds had been earmarked in advance for urgent purchase of 8 helicopters. Contractual veto power by the British government which, fearing a destabilising and competitive resale to Israel, however, effectively delayed the agreement.\(^{185}\) Britain had itself sold Centurions to Israel and Jordan in May 1959. (Thomas, The British government and the end of French Algeria, 1958-62, 2002, p. 184).

Space does not permit full treatment of the complicated diplomacy involved in the Centurion deal here. On 25 May 1960, the Swiss military informed the South African Foreign Ministry that the Swiss cabinet had approved the purchase, but that parliamentary approval would take until December 1960, negotiation dragged on until July.\(^{187}\) As this comes well after the exceptional funding for helicopters issued on 12 May 1960, the effect of the Centurion sale on the first helicopter purchase is not clear. In December 1959 the French attaché reported on the


\(^{185}\) SANDF, DC1 Box 189, DC17926/184, ‘Disposal of Centurion Tanks’, Office of the High Commissioner for the UK, Cape Town, to Jooste, SA Foreign Secretary, 26/5/59, points 3 and 5, ‘The British government blocked a sale to non-government buyers.

\(^{186}\) SANDF, MVEF Box 153, folder MV/219, note, 30/5/59, ‘Cabinet approves purchase of helicopters from the credit or proceeds of the sale to an amount of STG 750,000 or 8 helicopters, whichever is less.’ [‘.. met oog op dringende aard keur Kabinet goed dat helikopters tot een bedrag van STG 750,000 (of 8 helikopters, watter ook die minste is) uit die koopsom of krediete aangekoop word, of in Brittanje of elders.’]

\(^{187}\) SANDF, DC1 box 189, vol.184, folder Disposal Centurions, Secretary for Defence de Villiers, to Secretary for External Affairs, 25/5/60.
rumour of a purchase with the proceeds of Belgian-made rifles, 18 French helicopters and 30 EBR cars, clearly unaware that French buyers represented by OFEMA had not effected an option to buy.

The Robbertze-Willers mission, June 1959

In his March 1959 assessment to the Defence Minister, Viljoen anticipated buying additional helicopters ‘in the near future’, which depended on early but thorough acquisition of primary data. Revealingly, Viljoen welcomed opportunities for test flights but did not mention Algeria. In April 1959 the SAAF Chief had urged the Commandant General to learn from past mistakes and do on-site analysis and flight testing prior to major procurement of aircraft. Professional rather than pro-British, Viljoen placed great stock in not missing the upcoming biennial aeronautical fair of Le Bourget Airport, Paris, which he preferred over the Farnborough trade fair in Britain for its more varied international offering. The accompanying long list of considered helicopters and the allocated budget strongly suggest SAAF preference for the British 12-seater Westland Wessex helicopters in a search and rescue role, as used by the Royal Navy. A confidential telegram by the Commandant General outlined a total of 18 helicopters, twelve of which at the price of the Wessex. On 5 June 1959 the cabinet ordered an investigation into the ‘method of warfare used in Algeria … for problems that may occur here’. This was one sign of new thinking following Erasmus’ strategic rebuff in London in

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189 SANDF, MV-B 2 Box 218 Folder ‘In diens van haar majesteit’, Mr Lodders to Minister of Defence, 21/12/59, ‘Voorgestelde verkoop van 220 Centurions’ [proposed sale of 220 centurions], p.2, 4, Jaboulay/OFEMA represented Standard International Trading Corporation, Johannesburg; purchase of French arms was an unwritten condition of sale and transport to France.
190 SANDF, DC1 box 78, Air Chief Viljoen to CG 22/4/59, ‘Bywoning: Internationale Luchtvaartskou in Frankryk’.
191 ‘In die verlede het dit reeds dikwel gebeur dat vleigtuie en grootuitrusting slegs op besonderhede wat in publikasies en brosjures aangedui word aangekoop word sonder dat ondersoek ter plaatse ingestel was.’
192 SANDF, DC 1 Box 78, Air Chief Viljoen to CG 22/4/59, ‘Bywoning: Internationale Luchtvaartskou in Frankryk’.
193 CADN, 551PO-2-142, Westland sent two piston helis in 1957, based on the American S55.
194 SANDF, DC1 box 78, 17850/443, document #2, handwritten: ‘Royal Navy apparently are satisfied with the Westland Sikorsky development and hence the intended step from Whirlwind to Wessex.’ The Wessex was priced at 130,000 pound. No notes on the American and French helicopters listed.
195 SANDF, DC1 box 78, 17850/443, telegram CG to MS [Maritime Squadron?] 27/5/59, #G64, ‘Propose to set up the Helicopter squadron accordingly: six light helicopters, twelve operational helicopters [excluding] the 3 existing helicopters.’ Handwritten calculation shows 12 multiplied by 130,000 = 1,560,000. This refers to the British price mentioned in document two, see note 111 above.
196 SANDF, ibid, Copy of letter SecrDef J.P. De Villiers to Secretary for Treasury, 5/6/59, ‘veurgestelde besoek aan Frankryk en Algerie deur weermagoffisiere’, ‘die doel van die besoek is om die metode van oorlogvoering in Algerie ter plaatse te ondersoek aangesien daar probleme is wat ook alhier ondervind sal word indien binnelandse moeilikhede ontstaan.’ Jooste:p.177 attributes this objective to Erasmus.
March 1959. Secondly, the visitors were to identify the best replacement for the SAAF’s S-55 helicopters as well as other aircraft.197 Upon invitation of the French government, the Robbertze-Willers-Keevey mission198 spent a fortnight visiting both Le Bourget and French operational squadrons in Algeria.199 Based mainly on proven operational efficiency the two colonels recommended investing in a combination of the (effectively) four-seat Alouette II for pilot training and minor operational tasks, and the ‘six-to-eight’-seat Alouette III, due on the market in 1961.200

In June 1959, the new French ambassador, Georges Balay, put the absence of EBR sales by the SADF down to lack of budget, and was hopeful about SAAF’s technical mission to Algeria.201 Preferences can also be gleaned from the March 1959 memorandum by Deputy Secretary Steyn, which castigated Commander Tatham’s earlier 1957 evaluation of the French helicopters.202 Steyn reiterated Jaboulay’s communication to the Air staff, which had distributed it internally but observed that it ‘originated from an agent’.203 Arguing that ‘the heavier craft which the Air Chief of Staff favours’ were wasted on many operational tasks, Steyn fumed: “If members of the Air Force had visited Algeria they would have known what these are.” Although by March 1959 Air Chief Viljoen had accepted turbine engine helicopters and their tactical use as the future, he distrusted the veracity of market data on adjusted and new helicopters in what he (rightly) considered a transitioning industry. Viljoen now strongly advocated sending a technical mission to reduce their information dependency.204 The defence executives and operational commanders were occupying different vantage points exchanging broadsides from

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197 SANDF, ibid, telegram CG to Inspector General, 9/6/59, CT/698, by limiting the expo visit to 4 days, the cabinet indicated its priority to the Algerian visit. [‘…moet die skou nie meer as 4 dae in beslag neem nie…’]

198 SANDF, ibid, folio 19B, draft announcement, Robbertze visit to Algeria.: ‘Col. Willers is the commander of the Maritime group of the Air Force, the group that has air see rescue of the South African coast among its responsibilities.Col. Robbertze serves with the recently established Military Inspectorate of the Defence Staff in Pretoria.’; SANDF, ibid, telegram, CG to Inspector General, 9/6/59, CT/698. The Third member was Brigadier Keevey of the South African Police, telegram CG to Inspector General, 9/6/59, CT/698.

199 SANDF, ibid, folio 19A, French ambassador Balay sent his best wishes for the visit.

200 SANDF, DGAF 6 box 221, Report ‘Stappe wat geleit het tot die aankoop van Alouettes [no sic]’ [referred to as ‘Aankoop/DGAF’], ‘Annexe C tot besoek over Franse lugskou en Algerie’, p.6, points 15 and 16. This document may well be part of a larger document, as Robbertze was said to have written extensively on his experiences.


203 SANDF, DC1 box 78, 17850/443, handwritten note.

204 SAAF Museum, ‘Aankoop/Smy’ report, Purchase of helicopters for the SA Air Force, signed Viljoen, 3/7/59, p.2, noting the technological transition, hampering access to reliable information [‘..daar die helicopter industrie tens in die oorskakelingsperiode van suier naar turbine aangedrewe helikoptere is en gevolglik is min informatie verkrygbaar…] and ‘the current French Alouette (which can only carry 4 passengers)’ [‘..die huidige Franse Alouette (wat slegs 4 passasiers elk dra kan).’]
reproaching each other of bias, firing off political and operational motives for procurement. The June visit to Algeria therefore appears to have been a truce between SAAF and the (deputy) Secretary of Defence. (Warwick, 2009, pp. 148-150) 205

Sharpeville, the first deal and its aftermath

After six years of fruitless French engagement the SAAF agreed to purchase seven Alouette II helicopters in August 1960. Events at Sharpeville, five months earlier, had followed an organisational turn within the South African defence community at the end of 1959, and also raised concerns about her strategic environment in advance of the Republic that was decreed by referendum in October 1960. The Sharpeville Massacre galvanized international resistance to Apartheid, but it did not startle the Verwoerd government. 206 (Dubow, 2014, pp. 82-4) Within the SADF General staff, ‘Sharpeville’ was recognized as a ‘wake-up call’ to mass protest as a logistical problem, a spike in a string of deadly clashes between police and antagonized civilians between late 1959 and January 1961, and arguably long before. 207 (Boulter, 1997, pp. 103-4; Shear, 2012, pp. 189-90) Nonetheless, the decision to purchase of Alouette IIs in August and then Alouette IIIs in December 1960 was an operational corrective on inadequate controls, informed by general unrest culminating in March 1960. The evidence here suggests the Air Chief had been won over on helicopters by 1959, but seems to have given little credence to the French Algerian model at this time. The South African government had been horrified by Sharpeville, less by the loss of black lives, than by the speed at which Western support melted away, edifying the scenario of a UN-led military intervention triggered by communist-led black subversion... 209 (Warwick, 2009, pp. 14, 181n374; Malan, 2006, p. 39;

205 Retrospectively, his conduct may also have been a nail in the coffin of the position of the civilian Secretary of Defence, a position which Steyn would come to hold until it was abolished in 1965. [Warwick? Boulter?]

206 (Dubow, 2014, p. 84), Had it not been for Verwoerd’s icy determination, just after his miraculous survival of an assassination attempt on 9 April, the South African government might have taken a more conciliatory course.

207 SANDF, Staff & Command 1, Box 18, General Staff Conferences 1966, Minutes General Staff Meeting 20-21/6/66, p.38 point 58, ‘for some years after [WW2] was the climate for starting local production unfavourable, but Sharpeville (1961) [sic] shook every one awake’. [Vir ‘n aantal jare na die laaste oorlog was die klimaat vir plaaslike vervaardiging ongeskik, maar met Sharpeville (1961) het almal wakker geskrik.]; (Seegers, 1996, p. 120), a forced removal from Cato Manor near Durban in late 1959 led to policemen being overrun by protestors, and nine officers were killed. CADN, 551PO-2-161, Mission Rapport Chef de bataillon MUGUET, 2/5/60 to 3/6/60, also notes ‘Durban’. See (Frankel P., 2001, pp. 100-101, 213), Hostilities in Windhoek also occurred in late 1959, and other riots had happened in weeks preceding Sharpeville.

208 (Boulter, 1997, pp. 103-4), During the Durban riots of January 1949, exceptionally army units had been involved in its suppression alongside the police, leaving 142 dead; (Shear, 2012, pp. 189-90) Example of continuity in policing from the 20s to the 60s.

Seegers, 1996, p. 124) Only after creation of the South African Republic and her forced exit from the Commonwealth on 31 May 1961 was the strategic supply position reconsidered. (Boulter, 1997, p. 87; Warwick, 2009, p. 49n38)

In December 1959, upon leaving office, Erasmus had stated that in future land and air forces should focus on ‘conventional warfare against lightly armed forces of aggression apart from its internal security task’ using mobile ‘Citizen forces’; no funds had been available for new equipment. 210 (Boulter, 1997, p. 85; Jooste, 1996, pp. 84, 146) Sharpeville would illustrate the flawed inter-service arrangements and lack of effective air support. ‘The state of emergency taught the defence force a number of lessons and revealed the consequences of low expenditure during the Erasmus years.’ (Boulter, 1997, p. 87) The SADF would have to make good on its supporting role to the South African Police (SAP), and government would have to foot the bill. (Boulter, 1997, pp. 87, 104)

However, by January 1960 the French promotional effort appeared dead in the water. The French team did not understand the complacency of the SADF towards anti-guerrilla warfare, and French expertise in it, despite the many domestic and foreign warnings. Frustrated, Henri Jaboulay predicted to Destremeau, first advisor to the French ambassador, that the South African government would learn the hard way, ‘as soon as unusual events’ would present themselves.211 Regrettably, Jaboulay and general Perdrizet, representing OFEMA on behalf of a French partner, had failed to secure a barter deal of Centurion tanks for French equipment last December.212 Six months before, the Robbertze-Willers mission had favourably described the material and methods used in French military operations in Algeria, but the SADF appeared no closer to complementing the three obsolete Sikorsky helicopters. Nor had the report dispelled SAAF thinking about helicopters as troop transport and its priority of helicopter size over operational speed. Jaboulay was dismayed at the SADF’s galling ignorance of the ‘undeniable superiority’ of French counter-revolutionary doctrine.213 In conversations, Robbertze and

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210 (Jooste, 1996, p. 84), there was no apparent domestic role for the air force in 1958, reduced to 10 squadrons in 3 groups. Helicopters as a new Air force squadron do not yet play a great part.

211 CADN, 551PO-2-142, Note by Jaboulay on meeting with SA Air Force general staff on 14/1/60, dated 18/1/60, p.2 ‘Aussitot les evenement inusites le justifient.’

212 SANDF, MVEF2 Box 218, Folder ‘In diens van haar majesteit’. [CENTURIONS], ‘Sy Edele de Minister van Verdediging. Voorgestelde verkoop van centurions, 21/12/59’, proposed was French defence equipment in return to 75% of the transaction value. Perdrizet had implied that this was the price for French government compliance.

213 CADN, 551PO-2-142, ibid, Note by Jaboulay ['conception ridicule'].

Willers told him their findings had not even reached the Minister and Secretary of Defence. They identified Commandant General Melville and Army commander Ingelbrecht as the culprits leaving only Ingelbrecht’s predecessor, experienced deputy-CG Grobbelaar as a staunch supporter. This remarkable frankness by the South African military attaché was not lost on Jaboulay, who praised Robbertze for his efforts and professionalism.

Verwoerd’s decision for a 1960 referendum on South African exit from the Commonwealth as a Republic had led to Erasmus’ sacking and a defence community reshuffle. (Boulter, 1997, pp. 208-9) The new Defence Minister Jim Fouché took office in December 1959. He inherited Melville’s docile general staff and underprepared armed forces. Fouché toned down Erasmus’ divisive Afrikanerisation policy, immediately reached out to Britain and to alienated Afrikaner English-speakers. (Boulter, 1997, p. 70)

Sharpeville created a new sense of urgency to old operational questions. (Warwick, 2009, pp. 43-45) The riots had exhibited the results of complacency and low expenditure of the Erasmus years. There had been a reluctance within the South African defence community to consider the possibility of domestic hostilities. A newspaper clipping of December 1959 in defence archives sums up public and governmental attitudes to military security: ‘No Algeria Foreseen Here – Nor is Big War’. Stifled command had kept the SADF army and citizen support units from timely assistance to police, which had buckled. (Boulter, 1997, pp. 86-87) Henceforth, the brief was a continuous defence of the state. (Boulter, 1997, p. 104) Late May 1960, the SADF bolstered its public image performing a mock exercise against ‘guerrillas’ (Warwick, 2009, p. 51) A regimental anti-guerrilla exercise (‘Letaba’) followed in 1961, exhibiting SADF’s poor

214 CADN, 551PO-2-142, ibid.
215 CADN, 551PO-2-142, ibid, of Ingelbrecht it was said he wanted an armoured personnel carrier which delivered troops from its floor, a design which was not available then or later.
216 UK Public Record Office, Rump to Maud, 8 February 1960, DO 35/10545, in Boulter, 1997, ibid: p.70. The British were not impressed with South African attaches of the (late) 1950s, but this was surely unkind, given the futures of men like Hiemstra, Verster, and Robbertze. Cf Nothling 1982.
218 CADN, 551PO-2-161, Mission report Muguet, 3/11/59 to 2/12/59, p.8, Grobbelaar left his Inspector general position to Hiemstra, his deputy, to become the deputy to the existing Commander in chief of armed forces, Melville. It is expected that Hiemstra will take over after Grobbelaar and Melville will retire in two years.[8]
219 Boulter, ibid, p.69 claims Melville had kept the effects of the meagre years on the army from his Minister, with some units only existing on paper.
220 Boulter, Ibid, p.84, ‘Though black unrest was always in the political consciousness of the Nationalists there was not yet a sense of alarm.’
221 SANDF, DC1 box 78, 17850/443, The Rand Daily Mail, 4/12/59, newspaper clipping ‘No Algeria Foreseen Here – Nor is Big War’, playing down Erasmus’ public admission that Citizen Force units were receiving training in guerrilla warfare.; also document 19(b), Concept Press statement, date 10/6/59 is implied. In the draft on the visit to Algeria all mention of helicopters is stricken.
grasp both of counter-insurgency, and of the nature of domestic opposition.222 (Malan, 2006, pp. 39,54; Scholtz, 2015, p. 8; Eloff de Visser, 2011, pp. 85-6)

After the declaration of a state of emergency at the end of March, air operations were re-examined and found to be ineffective.223 (Boulter, 1997, p. 87) At Sharpeville, SAAF aircraft ‘buzzing’ the crowd had only fuelled protests, and their aerial perspective had been unavailable to the police encircled in their police station. (Frankel P. , 2001, p. 101) Aircraft were subsequently fitted with tear gas canisters. (Boulter, 1997, p. 87)

Assistance in public order control would from now on be included explicitly in SAAF’s responsibilities.224 On 12 May, Viljoen informed the CG that ‘The recent disturbances in South Africa have emphasized the value of helicopters in combating rioting’. Integrating the problems of riots and anti-guerrilla required fast, aggressive and sustained counter-action by medium-sized helicopters. A force of thirty modern turbine 8-seater helicopters in support of land operations by Police and Army would be created.225

In May 1960 consultations between Air Force, Army and Police led to a new assessment for helicopters. No S-55 helicopters had been available at Sharpeville, but according to the French attaché, the S-55s were used extensively in other places.226 The effective use of helicopters in crowd control in the final months of 1960 during the Pondoland riots confirmed SAAF’s plan to buy Alouette III in January 1961.227 (Konieczna, 2013, p. cf 118; Dubow, 2014, pp. 79-80) Completing the operational change, the SADF leadership now wholeheartedly embraced

222 Malan argues that he had received COIN instruction as an officer as early as 1960, and asserts that Defence consistently taught the political nature of counter-insurgency. Eloff de Visser argues that COIN was only developed in response to hostilities after the expired South African mandate to Namibia in 1966. Scholtz states that ‘The fact is that, in 1966, the army was not in a position to fight a war of any kind.’
223 The commission investigations on the Langa and Sharpeville clashes do not suggest deployment of helicopters, see SANA K109 Report on the Langa Commission of enquiry, 14/7/60 and K110 Sharpeville Memoranda. The Langa Commission did use a SAAF helicopter to investigate the scene, see K109, Report...., Chapter I Introduction, p.6, point 10.
224 SANDF, DGAF 4 box 698, vol.5,’aircraft general -policy. Helicopter aircraft technical’, September 1959-October 1962, ‘Brief resume of 17 Squadron’ shows the latest police assistance (chasing a criminal) in January 1960, and the only entry for March 1960 as assistance in extinguishing a mountain fire. Order control had not been its primary role.
225 SANDF, DGAF/LMH6 219, vol.3, CAF to CG & CA [Army Chief], ‘Aankoop van Helikopters, cover letter 12/5/60, p.2
226 CADN, 551PO-2-161, Mission report Muguet, 2/5/60-3/6/60, p.4 : S-55s were used a lot during ‘troubles’. SANA K109 Commission on Langa Riots, 14/7/60 ; SANA, K110, Sharpeville – Memoranda. No mention of helicopters in either the Commission reports of the Langa riots or Sharpeville, however the commission was hampered by police attempts to cover-up (Frankel 2001:198).
227 Konieczna (2013:118) argues this result was an epiphany of January 1961, but purchase of Alouette III had been the intention all along.
Robbertze’s earlier advocacy of French Algerian methods: ‘L’exposé de ces méthodes a été fait de façon très détaillée par le General [sic] ROBBERTZE dans le rapport volumineux qu’il a rédigé à la suite de son voyage en Algérie. L’Etat –Major de la Défense semble attacher à ce document une importance exceptionnelle.’

As SADF’s last non-naval equipment purchase had been for 200 British Saracen APCs in 1956, major procurement procedures were passive. Air Chief Viljoen’s blunt disapproval of purchase-by-magazine echoed CG Klopper’s 1955 complaint about the potpourri of aircraft within SAAF. (Boulter, 1997, p. 82) Unavailability of the shortlisted 8-10 seat Bell 204 and the 6-8 seat Alouette III until 1961 left the three-seat Bell 47 J2 and the 4-5 seat Alouette II. Despite an exceptional £1m pound budget by the Minister, Viljoen insisted on proper due diligence, repeating his disdain for catalogue purchases; In June Major Tatham found the J2 unsuitable for entry-level instruction, but discounted the Alouette. With ongoing riots in Langa and Nyanga, a renewed argument by the Army and the Police for displacement of eight equipped soldiers ensued. The SADF’s rumoured inclination in June for British helicopters tried the patience of Jaboulay and the diplomatic mission.

Amidst ongoing uprisings in Pondoland, Viljoen on 2 July urged an evaluation visit to France. (Boulter, 1997, p. 82) Following an intensive two-week visit by the Air Chief and his staff to Sud-Aviation, Turbomeca, French training centres, and German Air Force users, Viljoen placed a provisional order for seven Alouette helicopters, which arrived in November.

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228 CADN, 551PO-2-161, Mission report Muguet, 21/4/61 to 14/5/61, Annexes, p.2, point 12, French non-permanent attaché’s assessment must be interpreted with care, however. Robbertze was at this time a Brigadier. See also CADN, idem, Mission reports Muguet, 2/5/60 to 3/6/60, and 31/10/60 to 30/11/60, the June 1960 mission report was understanding of the ‘nervous’ police being overrun in light of earlier police casualties., His October 1960 mission report spoke of ‘brutal’ police conduct. Caps in original.

229 SANDF, DGAF/LMH6 219, vol.3, Air chief to CG, 12/5/60, attachment ‘Memorandum on requirements for helicopters.’; Part I (Summary), p.2


231 SANDF, DGAF/LMH6 219, vol.3, CAF to CG & CA [Army Chief], ‘Aankoop van Helikopters, cover letter 12/5/60, p.2 refers to talks between the services in April.


233 CADN, 551PO-2-161, Mission report Muguet, 2/5/60 to 3/6/60, the June 1960 mission report was understanding of the ‘nervous’ police being overrun in light of earlier police casualties., His October mission report spoke of ‘brutal’ police conduct.

With Steyn’s assistance, the French had staged a promotional ambush for Viljoen, who had held the deciding vote over the Bell-friendly, but retiring Melville.\textsuperscript{235} (Warwick, 2009, p. 111) Afterwards, American recriminations about a political purchase were indignantly rejected by Viljoen,\textsuperscript{236} but they were not untrue. Like the Americans, political and industrial actors involved in both communities recognized the possibility that “the deal may prove greater than its purely commercial significance”.\textsuperscript{237} A second purchase of 24 Alouette IIIIs was confirmed in December 1960,\textsuperscript{238} deepening industrial connections.\textsuperscript{239}

1961-1970: New professionals of promotion

In the two months following the South African exit from the Commonwealth on 31 May 1961, her efforts to secure continued British military support faltered. Its strategic consequences will be discussed in chapter 4. Here the cause and consequence of arms trade in the deepening relationship are elaborated. A mid-summer tour of Western-European capitals by Minister Fouché and Commandant General Grobbelaar, per September 1960, included a warm reception in Paris. French Defence Minister Messmer offered assistance in procurement, intelligence and staff training, an offer he would repeat in 1963. Fouché placed a third order for Alouette IIIIs during his visit. (Moukambi, 2008, p. 94) In a prescient nod to future military relations the French Chief of General Staff Olié and the new DMA head General Lavaud declared themselves sympathetic to the political burdens of fellow military men, as well as understanding of South Africa’s strategic predicament.\textsuperscript{240} In general, the delegation considered France to have

\textsuperscript{235} CADN, 551PO-2-142, folder Defense Nationale. Achat et vente de materiel militaire, 1956-63, Lederlin to Herrenschmidt, SEE, 13/7/60, ref to Lederlin’s letter of 9/7/60; Warwick states that Melville’s retirement in favour of Grobbelaar had accompanied the replacement of Fouché for Erasmus.

\textsuperscript{236} SANDF, DGAFLMH6 Box 219, vol.3, CAF to CG and SecrDef, 26/6/60, [a 23/6/60 version follows] ref to talk with Dep. Secretary of Defence Steyn, ‘I can state without fear of contradiction that the Alouette II in its class is superior in all respects to the Bell... I therefore take strong exception to this false and unwarranted allegation...' It was clear to observers that cooperation was clearly the result if not the intention.

\textsuperscript{237} SANDF, DGAFLMH6 Box 219, vol.3, Sud-Aviation to SAAF HQ, 28/8/60, designating OFEMA as ‘our export office’, ‘Nous espérons que ce dernier [contract for 6 AL2s] marquera le début d’une coopération fructueuse de notre Société avec le Forces Aériennes Sud-Africaines...’. Also DGAFLMH6 Box 219, vol3, Charge d’affaires to SA Foreign Secretary, 30/8/60, noting that apart from technical proficiency the ‘wider significance of the deal in French eyes’...‘strengthen relations with France’... ‘a transaction of ‘value to us [RSA, that].. may prove greater than its purely commercial significance.’

\textsuperscript{238} SANDF, Ibid, CAF Viljoen to CG, ‘purchase of helicopters’, ‘december 1960’, ref to 12/5/60 doc, ‘the S.55 and S.51 helicopters are obsolete’, AL3 meets minimum requirements, lowest price, and compatible with AL2. Propose to order 12 AL3 before 31/1/61, and further 11 in 1962, making 30 ‘for internal security purposes in the SAAF’

\textsuperscript{239} SHDV, GR 1R 26, folder Industrie Aéronautique, minutes of CNEIA meeting of 20/1/61, p.9-10, on a Sud-Aviation mission of January that absorbed the promotional coffers for the year of the Service Expansion-Exportation, managed through CNEIA.

\textsuperscript{240} SANDF, MV-B 2 Box 219, Folder JJ FOUCHÉ, ‘Besok aan die vasteland van Europa deur Minister Fouché, die Kommandant Generaal en geselskap. Uiters geheim’, France, visit on 5/7/61. Visit reports of Portugal, France, West-Germany, Switzerland, and Italy; French General Ollie observed that that the Western militaries were in
a ‘very favourable attitude’ towards RSA. Additional purchases confirmed this sentiment. By the end of 1961 the major purchases of French equipment by Pretoria included 7 Alouette IIs, 33 Alouette IIIs, 16 Mirage III fighter jets, early warning radar for the Cape, and 600 AML Panhard armoured cars, of which 40% to be produced under licence in South Africa. New South African demand was created following her strategic shift, which had also disconnected customary British supply.

In January 1960, before Sharpeville, and Macmillan’s inadvertent warning before the South African Parliament in February, Inspector-general Hiemstra had ruminated whether France, burdened by instability, constituted a credible supply alternative. Since then, SADF’s positive experiences with French equipment and organization would pave the way for closer, more strategic forms of cooperation. Arms trade did create its own cohesion. A French technical mission in February 1962 in support of the arriving Alouette IIIs and Mirage IIIs found great enthusiasm for French equipment within SAAF. The report by colonels Avenard of the DMA and Pilatre-Jacquin of the French aviation testing institute found that French arms trade positions were strong, compared to past coordination issues within OFEMA. Since the arrival of the new Alouette IIIs, ‘le Major Tatham, Commandant le squadron des helicopteres du Cap, jadis adversaire acharné du materiel français, est devenu l’un de nos plus sérieux

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241 SANDF, ibid, ‘that the French are favourably disposed towards us’, [‘..dat die franse ons baie goed gesind is’].
243 Erasmus’ protégé, Afrikaner nationalist and agent-provocateur General Rudolf Hiemstra.
244 SANDF, MV-B 2 Box 219, Folder JJ FOUCHÉ, ‘Memo’, General speech by Genl. Hiemstra on military outlook, Jan 1960, p.1-2, [Frankryk is die vernaamste Europese land waarvandaan ons kan hoop om krygstuig te koop, maar sal Frankryk nog vir ‘n lang tyd die drukking van die swart state in die Franse gemeenskap van volke kan weerstaan?] France remains as the principal source of supply, but how long will she be able to resist the black states in the French Communauté?, also Hiemstra’s analysis on NATO, p.3, depicting France as the sick man of NATO: ‘weens sy politieke onbestendigheid, ekonomske swakheid, koloniale moeilikhede en ‘n sterk kommunisteke element steeds ‘n bron van kommer voor die West bly.’
245 CADN, 551PO-2-142, folder Defense Nationale. Achat et vente de materiel militaire, 1956-63, Foreign Ministry to South African Ambassador, ‘mission aéronautique’, 14/2/62, p.1; Pilatre-Jacquin was head of the French testing center, directeur du Centre d’essai en vol (CEV), see CADN 551PO-2-142, ibid, Lederlin to DREE/Service expansion Eco, secteur 1, 15/9/61.
246 SHDV, 2E 3678, Binder EMAA/2 Afrique du Sud, folder External relations, DMA/Service Expansion-Exportation, report on mission to South Africa 19-27/3/62, #7262, 18/4/62, Col. J.C. Avenard (Direction Expansion-Exportation) and Engineer F. Pilatre-Jacquin, (DTIA), [Jaboulay] est maintenant bien organisé et que son intermédiaire, loin de retarder les problèmes, permet de les centraliser et de leur donner une exacte orientation vers les Etats-Majors...’
That Tatham of all people had reversed his opinion, the officer who had introduced the American S-55s into his own squadron, confirms the operational embrace of French equipment by SAAF. The French military attaché reported similarly in June. The colonels did warn that in order to consolidate this substantial market, the French military export community should produce at least one permanent military attaché to compete with the four British and six American attachés in South Africa. The promotional objectives had been achieved; henceforth the promises made would have to be kept.

The operational rapprochement concluded six years of commercial canvassing and was baptized by Prime Minister Debré who agreed in February to scrap the Chilean attaché post in favour of a position to South Africa, by pointing to its promising role in a region likely to become ‘an active front in the Cold War’. The case evidence shows the gravitation of French promotion towards central industrial and military-administrative actors and protectors. Pierre Messmer would personally play an important part in guarding confidence levels of the South African ministry. Such connections negated the elaborate promotional theatre of the 1950s, but regular engagement also established mutual expectations of access and discretion that were passed on to new practitioners. In this respect, the exact role of French Prime Ministerial and Presidential approval remains unclear. Konieczna has shown how in September 1961 Foreign minister Eric Louw received de Gaulle’s promise of France’s enduring support, and his advice to play the long game with regard to opposition by African states. De Gaulle gave the same

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247 CADN, 551PO-2-142, ibid, French Foreign Affairs Minister to South African Ambassador, ‘mission aéronautique’, 14/2/62.  
249 Idem, over 10% of ‘nos ventes totales’, generated 180m new francs, or 18Bn old francs, in 1961.  
251 CADC, 499INVA1163, Prime Minister to Defence Minister, 6/2/62, ‘l’ouverture d’un poste d’attaché militaire à Pretoria’, ‘considérations … nos moyens de renseignements et l’expansion de nos ventes de matériels… Les événements du Congo, les pressions qui s’exercent sur le territoire portugais, les efforts de pénétration des pays de l’Est dans cette région, sensibilisent particulièrement cette partie du monde, et en feront dans les années qui viennent un des fronts actifs de la guerre froide.’  
253 The obvious examples of this are President de Gaulle to Pompidou, Defence Minister Messmer to Debre, French Ambassador Balay to Foreign Minister de Leusse.  
254 (Konieczna, 2013, p. 177), ‘…l’intérêt de la civilisation ne réside pas dans le retrait des Blancs … Le gouvernement sud-africain a tout le temps nécessaire pour faire face à cette révolution. Ces pays continueront
advice to the Portuguese around this time. It is possible that de Gaulle was willing to come to terms on nuclear cooperation with Verwoerd already in March 1961, prior to creation of the Republic, but their meeting had been cancelled. (Konieczna, 2013, pp. 130-1) It has been alleged that French Ambassador in Pretoria, Georges Balay, favourable to arms trade with South Africa, had a personal correspondence with President de Gaulle.255 His actions would take on a political importance already in 1958/59. This claim must also remain unverified, because of a lack of available sources on the French Presidential level. (Konieczna, 2013, pp. 101-2) What is undisputable is that promotional achievements far removed from executive levels had made its involvement necessary. The South African perspective is also important. Growing South African confidence in French equipment and contacts, as well as in their own ability to procure, led to substitution of institutional promotion with direct discussions between delegated partners.

Professionalization gradually came to the South African diplomatic mission in Paris, where Brigadier Robbertze was swamped in diplomacy, industrial missions and administrative tasks for the General Staff, as Robbertze himself was not shy in pointing out directly to the Commandant General. Robbertze consolidated his position as foremost French expert and exceptional industrial intermediary.256 A visiting colleague reported in 1962 to the Commandant General on the profound support given by French counterparts in all areas, as well as the comparative inefficiency of South African procurement.257 Procurement planning258 and exclusive mediators were initiatives that the French welcomed.259 Ousting commissioned agents did not hurt OFEMA. Instead, working relations became more selective and strong. Selective did not necessarily mean exclusive, as other South African clandestine procurement illustrated.260

d’ailleurs à dépendre économiquement des autorités sud-africaines, mais c’est là un argument sur lequel il ne faut pas trop insister’.
255 SHDV, fonds Armée de l’Air, DITEX/Témoignages Orales, 146, General Raymond Brohon, Bande 63C, side 1, (recording 184)
256 SANDF, KG 5 box 260, vol.3, folder Delivery of Helicopters, KG/GPP/2/3, passim; SANDF, Staff and Command 1, box 16, AG 512/3, vol.2, ‘Konferensies generale Staf 1962’. GSC, 18/10/62, p.10, point m, agreeing Robbertze’s workload must be alleviated, compare with p.22-23, which decrees avoiding getting too cosy with one national military (Italy, West-Germany). On p.23 is implied this worry does not regard France; also SANDF, LMH/DGAF, 6, box 112, Visit report by Maj. F.W. Carnell, 18/7/62, pp.3-5, 15. Carnell’s technical visit to Paris will be discussed in Chapter 5.
257 SANDF 22/7, S&C1 Box 16, GSC 1962
259 SANDF, DC1, box 111, folder 17926/194, 28/9/65
260 SANDF, DC1, box 191, folder 17926/187/9, vol.1, ‘DTS07607, dd. 9/11/66.'
Trust would henceforth be built on interaction between professionals, and increasingly, military professionals. In line with the French ‘solution intermédiaire’ of sovereign but ambiguous trade, it fell to OFEMA to represent the French government. (Konieczna, 2013, p. 184) OFEMA would arrange, and benefit from, a further meeting in October 1963 between South African Secretary for Defence De Villiers and the French Defence Minister. Messmer would confirm French ‘considerable good will and sympathy towards South Africa’. By the mid-1960s, OFEMA and CNEIA would soon defer operational control to the DMA. The process of communication had fully occupied the middle level: assuring operational discretion, and in the French case, avoiding direct executive responsibility, whether industrial or governmental.

In 1965, DMA’s new Department des Affaires Internationales, or DAI, took over the management of the French trade chain from ministry down to the trade representatives. Initially an undersized functional department of the DMA, DAI was to take command of arms export promotion abroad, and to activate the French government bureaucracy, whereas the military, the diplomats of the Quai, and the armament engineers of the DMA all regarded exports as secondary to their mission. Badel has shown French post-war industry was generally reluctant to risk exports without a government cushion, especially to politically unstable countries.\(^\text{261}\) (Badel, Diplomatie et Grands Contrats: L'état Français et les Marchés Extérieurs au XXe Siècle, 2010, pp. 172-3) The highly export-dependent aviation industry giants did not require much incentive DAI soon expanded its informal power disproportionally by liaising on behalf of the executive with the stakeholders and piggybacking their services. (Kolodziej, 1987, pp. 263-65)

With the fervent Gaullist Michel Debré as Ministers of Defence (1969-1973) in President Pompidou’s cabinet, the DAI transformed into ‘a superagency with tentacles reaching to most key sectors of the French bureaucracy and to foreign and military establishments around the globe’. (Kolodziej, 1987, pp. 266-7). Debré would double down on French autonomous defence, and after the damaging ‘Vedette affaire’\(^\text{262}\) he ordered his new DAI director Hugues de l’Estoile to focus on and prioritize arms sales. By the late 1970s, DAI had moved from being the gatekeeper of deals to being their champion. (Kolodziej, 1987, p. 268)\(^\text{263}\) ‘The DAI often entered the process early by searching out orders or by placing would-be buyers in contact with

\(^{261}\) (Badel, Diplomatie et Grands Contrats: L'état Français et les Marchés Extérieurs au XXe Siècle, 2010, pp. 172-3), the export desk of the Economic Ministry, DREE, had found in the 1950s that “l'exportateur français connaît mal son métier.”

\(^{262}\) See Chapter 3.

\(^{263}\) (Kolodziej, 1987, pp. 263-70, 482-3); Kolodziej bases his depictions of DAI/DRI largely on anonymous interviews and secondary sources between 1977 and 1983.
French arms makers.’ (Kolodziej, 1987, p. 268) As the head of the DMA, J.L. Delpech, implied in 1974, this required taming the monopolistic intermediaries OFEMA and its rival OGA that ‘S’il reste important au niveau de la participation, le role des offices tend à s’effacer au niveau de la negotiation’. Delpech alluded to the big French aviation companies like Dassault and Sud-Aviation were able to maintain their own local company offices abroad.

It is indicative of the (much) smaller, and militarising South African defence community that the South African Foreign Affairs office in Paris, assisted by the military attaché, was at the centre of communications with the French minister of defence. The contrast with the French attachés is revealing. The French Ministry of Foreign Affairs rejected trading against the 1963 arms embargo – and, as the next chapter demonstrates, would continue to militate against controversial arms deals.

As had been obvious to all French military attachés to Pretoria, military rank determined the type of conversation with their South African opposites. As a rule the DAI director and the presidents of CNEIA and OFEMA were retired generals. The engineers of the DMA held military rank and national industry also kept military officers at its core for their contacts. These persona visited South African military and ministerial chiefs frequently and received them in Paris. The wily director of Sud-Aviation’s subsidiary SFERMA, former Air Force General Raymond Brohon, was respected by the South African military leaders, as a general officer working for industry, as a delegate of the French government, but also as a proven warrior. After the obvious improvement represented by the new Puma SA-330 helicopter in 1968, the phase of promotion came more or less to an end. OFEMA had become a commercial service provider, not a canvasser.

Conclusion

As a function of the trade process, promotion acquainted actors and their agents with the opposite defence community and generated several successful trade negotiations. In the lean early years promotion was the trade process. The tenacity of the likes of Verwoerd, Viljoen, Jaboulay, and Robbertze in acquisition shaped events, but it was commerce that connected their

264 SHDC, magazine for DMA personnel, L’Armement, ‘Exposé de M. Jean Laurens Delpech à la 11e session du CHEAr [sic]’, no.37, October 1975, [pp.6-25], p.20-1.;
265 SHDV, fonds Armée de l’Air, Témoignages Orales, 693, Colonel Jean-Georges Cavaroz, tape 8, side 1, ‘Organisation des exportations’; Cavaroz speaks of ‘claudication’ or jellification among the bureaus, and complaints of Aérospatiale against OFEMA
266 (Kolodziej, 1987, p. 287), the custom of French high civil servants moving into industry is called ‘pantoufflage’, but it has worked just the same for French general officers, and the reverse is also in evidence.
actions. The fact that relations were informal and meaningful yet neither fully personal nor institutional underscores this point. By the mid-1960s, promotion had served its purpose. Defence communities had agreed a mode of communication between their hierarchies. The French promotional activities did not culminate in shared practice. The contextual significance of promotion to the later community of practice is that it was also a process of shared learning. During the 1950s, French operational efforts appealed to South African fears of Black subversion and they claimed authority in quelling rebellions over French operations against the Algerian National Liberation Front (FLN), but this did not sway the underresourced and largely unimpressed South African military. Jaboulay had been mistaken; French Guerre Révolutionnaire doctrine became relevant to the SADF only after 1965, well after it had lost operational appeal within the French armed forces. What did not help commercial initiatives was that French diplomacy kept its distance from South Africa until the closing stages of the Algerian War (1954-1962), and holding off suggestions French military commitment towards South Africa. French ministerial overtures to South Africa were stepped up by late 1961 and in 1963, when French decolonization and renegotiation with African states had largely unburdened French diplomacy. This also suggests the early and deep connection between the regions of Southern and West-Africa. The Centurion divestment demonstrates the collapse of South Africa’s plans to ally with regional partners, but its delay prevented financial flexibility. Had the sale happened in 1959, it is unlikely that a purchase in 1959 would have been for non-British helicopters, but the intention itself must be accredited to Jaboulay and his colleagues.

The shooting of black protestors at Sharpeville in March 1960 reinforced the tentative operational change, and secured budget. The fact that Robbertze’s reports were revered by his superiors only after the successful purchase of Alouettes, but not before, demonstrates the significance of Franco-South African engagement in the period 1955-1960. The lack of a permanent French military attaché ultimately proved only symbolic, although the distance to the SADF hierarchy signalled and delayed French institutional involvement. French commercial brokering also had to convince French metropolitan administration. The relevance of the Algerian operational theatre of war was long deflected by the South African defence community because of the organisational change and financial stress its adoption represented. Most of all, the political analysis of vulnerability did not resonate.
Chapter 3: Authorisation

Promotion led to negotiated transactions between brokers of the two defence communities. The export to South Africa of major military equipment produced by an amalgam of French state-led and private manufacturers and subcontractors, involved state objectives of both states; strategic, economic, and political, which all carried some form of trade off.

At the governmental level therefore, authorisation was an administrative effort of actors at the core of the separate communities, assessing the multifarious risks and returns attached to single deals. Authorisation would have been just one more step in the commercial process, had no more sales followed the order for Alouette IIs and IIIIs in fall and winter of 1960/61. The process would have ended with the delivery and servicing agreed in the contract. As the relationship under review spans twenty-five years, the two systems of procurement – understood in its broader sense to include the French perspective – existed side by side, and after the belated promotional success of 1960, the onus was on the South Africans to learn—and the French to teach—about the French system, especially on authorisation.

South African internal control was chiefly about quality and financial control. The considerations of military hardware were treated in the previous chapter. Part of the professionalization of procurement was the attempts by the South African defence community leaders to understand the French system of authorisation.

French authorisation was created as a delegated, inter-ministerial instrument of government implementation and control. However, it soon developed as a forum of negotiation, whose structures emerged from the interaction of South African demand and French supply. They also closely aligned to foreign policy objectives, which in the case of trade to rogue regimes clashed with the economic objectives of the defence industry, a pillar of military policy, and of its advocate, the Defence ministry.

The emphasis of this chapter will be on the developing French authorisation process, and South African growing understanding of it. South African willingness to buy—once terms had been

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agreed – went through procedural hoops, but these were rarely as consequential to the relation as the extension of approval or refusal by the French delegated body.

In the phase of authorisation, the two defence communities would internally –separately-decide to agree to a contract, a delivery, or a demonstration involving the other side. Foremost therefore, this chapter understands the commercial step of authorisation as an indirect interaction between two defence communities that follows the phase of promotion.

Because of its much smaller size, and its more straightforward concerns regarding authorisation, the South African defence community was faced with a French troika of sorts that shared authorisation responsibility. There were three principal actors: the French defence community, the Foreign Ministry, and the executive level of the President and Prime Minister. The South African delegates and decision makers were confronted with differing noises and positions.

The position of the French defence industry on arms trade propositions and that of its outsiders, led by the Foreign Ministry, were generally opposites, but both worked to further French national economic and political interests. Based on arguments used in the minutes, the French defence community used trade criteria to build jurisprudence and ‘plausible deniability’, serving economic and strategic interests which the South African military underwrote. The Foreign Ministry, which interacted with the South African defence community on a formal diplomatic level, operated mostly on a basis of ‘plausible explanation’, judging deals on their public reception. The South Africans gradually came to understand the interplay between the double-speak and interplay between French diplomatic and defence objectives.

The chapter’s main argument is that a division between insiders and outsiders with regard to French-South African arms trade emerged as a result of authorisation practices. Through authorisation the French defence community developed a form of managed controversy that resonated with its South African customer, but conflicted with stated French foreign policy. The conditions for a community of practice were furthered by a growing South African understanding of the pressures within the French defence community and sharing of its repertoire.

The argument of developing distinction rests on the idea that social practice is a dynamic phenomenon that is constituted of structural and performative elements. But these intertwined and changing elements can be hard to unpick. Fortunately, a large previously untouched body
of evidence exists in the French archive, in the form of the monthly minutes of the conferences of the Commission interministérielle d’étude des exportations de matériel de guerre (CIEEMG) from 1955 to 1971. These minutes allow us a frame-by-frame insight of the evolving practice of authorisation. They also show the emerging legal framework, from the foundation of the CIEEMG under French law in 1955, to the mid-1970s, when authorisation of arms deals to South Africa was normalised. For the post-1971 period CIEEMG minutes were not declassified by French military archives at the time of consultation, and no clear picture on authorisation exists, apart from what is known from anecdotal reporting by military attachés, incidental mentions in primary documents, and statistical data. Nonetheless the CIEEMG has largely survived as an institution. Perhaps for that reason, the practical realities discussed in this chapter have largely escaped attention. Hitherto, the workings of the CIEEMG have not yet been described in any great depth, with existing secondary sources focusing on the legal framework of French armament export authorisation.

The first section of this chapter discusses the structural and international origins of the French authorisation commission CIEEMG, and the increasing focus of its activities on the cusp of the Fifth Republic. The Ministry of Defence had had a firm handle on the commission’s commercial brief but it would be forced to share responsibility with others, notably the Foreign Ministry, colloquially called the Quai d’Orsay.

The second section discusses the political overtones of arms trade authorisation during the 1960s. The absence of authorisation criteria was only partly remedied, and the Defence Ministry was largely successful in controlling the discourse of decision making, especially with regard to the sale of helicopters, which was a problematic case affecting Portugal, South Africa, and Rhodesia. The extent of executive decision making is discussed.

The third section shows how the South African defence community engaged with the French authorisation process, which was characterised by an ambiguous understanding of defensive

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269 (Kolodziej, 1987, pp. 265-66, 482-3); bases his details on interviews from 1977, and finds (sub)departmental entities representing in the CIEEMG that appear to have no antecedents in the 1960s.
weaponry. Its efforts of understanding reflected a growing if partial awareness of the discourse created in the CIEEMG by the end of the 1960s.

The final section shows how in 1970 new presidencies and pressures provided the context for an important change in helicopter authorisation. The period represents the surge of diplomatic perspectives on arms trade and a progressive narrowing of the available space for authorisation negotiations. Restrictions on trade created the final impetus for the creation of a community of practice among longstanding members.

Creation and acceptance of the French authorisation committee, 1955-1960

The CIEEMG of 1955 built on prior institutional influence of the Ministry of Defence through its continuous hold on secretarial responsibility. The new 1955 law represented a significant boost in legislation and formal regulation of arms trade.

*The new CIEEMG, July 1955*

The Western democracies had been caught unprepared for World War II, and costly lessons had been learned about the need to control direction of defence production and export of technology to likely friends and enemies. (Moravcsik, 1991, p. 32) French arms trade control had been a function of the French government’s pre-war preoccupation with her lagging private armament industry. Much like the legislation of its British ally (Brzoska & Ohlson, Arms Transfers to the Third World, 1971-85, 1987, pp. 71, 68-70; Phythian, 2000, pp. 47-48), the French law of 18 April 1939 on arms production and trade would integrate the existing 26 laws and decrees in a last-ditch effort to mobilise industry for war, making all exports and imports of arms subject to government approval.270 After 1945, the cash-strapped French government required control over her expensive imports, and politically delicate exports to the Soviet zone. (Lachaux & Lamoureux, 1987, p. 376; Dubos, 1974, p. 94)

In 1948, export authorisation had been in the portfolio of the Secretary General to the Minister of Defence, who had a mandate over other ministries on the matter.271 Then in 1949 a more communal form called the Commission interministérielle pour l’étude des exportations de matériels de guerre, or CIEEMG, was created under the auspices of the Defence Ministry, allowing other ministries a say in the decisions of the Ministry of Defence, and its

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administrative ‘Section des Cessions à l’Etranger’ (SCE).\textsuperscript{272} The SCE communicated on authorisation issues with other Ministries,\textsuperscript{273} but without the status the Secretary General had had.\textsuperscript{274}

Events soon made this procedure inadequate. Arms exports grew exponentially from a meagre 67 million francs to over 24 billion French francs between 1947 and 1953.\textsuperscript{275} The long and arcane\textsuperscript{276} certification processes for fabrication and shipment proved especially problematic for the revived aeronautical industry,\textsuperscript{277} as the SCE and the Directorate for Technics and Industry continually cautioned.\textsuperscript{278} By early 1955, preventing clandestine arms shipments from reaching the Algerian FLN became another reason for greater control over arms exports.\textsuperscript{279} The French participation in Israel’s October 1956 attack on Egypt had been driven by French convictions that Nasser was driving the Algerian insurrection.\textsuperscript{280} News of the Czech-Egyptian arms deal of Soviet jets and armour in September 1955 fuelled French suspicions, but also expanded French-Israeli arms trade. (Golani, 1995, pp. 818-9) Much as 1955 was a pivotal year for French arms diplomacy, it is well to remember that arms trade had been a trusted instrument of French


\textsuperscript{273} For example SHDV, 20 R 152, Ministry of Finance, Customs Office, #5513, 21/10/1954, to Foreign Office, with reference to letter by ministry of Defence, regarding export of war material and similar items.

\textsuperscript{274} For example SHDV, 20 R 152, Ministry for the Interior to legal office of Ministry of Defence, State secretary for War, 14/6/54, implying in word and timing that it had been ignoring SCE; SHDV, 20 GR 152, Ministry of Finance, Customs Office, #5513, 21/10/1954, to Foreign Office, with reference to letter by ministry of Defence, regarding export of war material and similar items; SHDV GR20 R152, Ministry of Defence, Direction des Services Financiers et les programmes, #425, 29/7/1966, Note pour le Col. Herouville, par. ‘Historique’, p.8

\textsuperscript{275} SHDV, 20 R 152, Internal note by Col. Dousset, Direction des Services Financiers et des programmes/SCE, to the Minister of Defence, #1826, 15/2/55, ‘Arms exports for 1954’, p.3

\textsuperscript{276} Idem, Ministry of Budgets, Customs Office, to Ministry of Defence, SCE, #5797, 23/10/1953, p.2 on ‘arms exports regime: aviation equipment’, noting pre-war regulations had not followed aviation development.

\textsuperscript{277} Ministry of Budgets, Customs Office, to Ministry of Defence, SCE, #5797, 23/10/1953, ‘arms exports regime: aviation equipment’.

\textsuperscript{278} SHDV, 20 R 152, Ministry of Defence, DTI, note to Section Administrative et Financiere, #11019, 25/8/1954; not everyone agreed, see SHDV, GR 20 152, Ministry for the Interior, sub-department for interior regulations, to Ministry of Defence, legislative desk, #4672, 15/10/1952, on proposed modification to the 14 August 1939 decree.

\textsuperscript{279} SHDV, 20 R 152, Folder ‘DSF/SCE 1952-56’, Legal Desk of Ministry of Defence to Chief of High Command, 18/1/55, ‘on regulations of sale of arms to French muslims in Algeria’; SHDV GR 20 R 152, Director of Customs Office to the Minister of Defence, #4421, 14/10/55, ‘Arms exports to North Africa’.

\textsuperscript{280} Centre des archives économiques et financières [CAEF], B-63074, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Directorate Africa-Levant, to Permanent Secretary General of National Defence, #1, very secret, 3 January 1956, ‘Coordination of tasks relative to deliveries of war material to countries of the Near East’. ‘...[L]’importance et l’extrême complexité des problèmes soulevés par la fourniture de matériel de guerre aux États du Proche-Orient’.
foreign policy well before 1940. (Thomas, To arm an ally: French arms sales to Romania, 1926–1940, 1996, p. 254)

1955 Categories & Criteria

The July 1955 decree reorganising the CIEEMG delegated two advisory tasks to the cabinet-level entity: to assess individual proposals for production and export of armaments, and to advise on the required policy direction for production and export of such items. 281 A structure was created which applied established codes of arms exports. As would become clear, the authoritative arms categorizations in the decrees of 1939, did not actually constitute a method of authorisation. (Lachaux & Lamoureux, 1987, p. 378)

The CIEEMG would be the French Fourth Republic’s attempt to synchronise and make effective the cooperation of myriad departments and ministries engaged in producing, promoting and selling French weapons. During the January 1956 meeting the Ministry of Foreign Affairs requested certain rules of the game to be clarified. The minutes of the monthly meetings282 would form the record guiding the subsequent decisions by committees of Trade Finance and Customs. The minutes were to assure ‘the avoidance of misunderstandings’ between the two main actors, the Foreign and Defence Ministries.283 The Israeli bid for Mystère jets in the wake of the 1955 Czech-Egyptian deal had been negotiated directly between Defence Ministries, infuriating the French and Israeli Foreign Ministries and causing delays. (Golani, 1995, p. 819)

The Near-East Arms Control Committee and Coordinating Committee for Multilateral Export Controls

State requirements and internal regimes combined to influence arms trade policy. Already in the early Cold War, Western arms trade to Soviet Russia, the Warsaw Pact states and China were opposed by the United States through the COCOM and CHINCOM lists, the Coordinating Committee for Multilateral Export Controls. The COCOM list embargoing arms and strategic materials lasted throughout the Cold War, but was almost immediately subverted by France and other European states who resented the limitation to their trade. (Badel, France’s Renewed Commitment to Commercial Diplomacy in the 1960s, 2012, pp. 75-76, 75n70) In order to

282 CAEF, B-63074, minutes of CIEEMG meeting 20 January 1956, p.2-4.
283 CAEF, B-63074, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Directorate Africa-Levant, to Permanent Secretary General of National Defence, #1, 3 January 1956, above, p.2[‘de façon que toute malentendu devienne pratiquement impossible’].
prevent further destabilisation of the volatile Middle East by Western by arms trade, the Near East Arms Coordinating Committee was set up in June 1952. NEACC was a joint Franco-British-American monitor of arms trade to the region, as well as blocking Soviet interference. (Tal, 2009, pp. 177-8) One of its stipulations was that ‘Les gouvernements donneront priorité aux cessions d’équipements défensifs par opposition aux armes offensifs’, an interpretation that would serve both France and Britain in their justifications of controversial trade. (Tal, 2009, p. 190)

The NEACC cooperation collapsed before the decade was out, hampered by arms trade competition and conflicting geopolitical positions of its members. (Tal, 2009, pp. 182-6) Members had increasingly ducked reporting their transactions to the NEACC. NEACC and COCOM identified the problem of achieving consensus on arms control among different interests. The CIEEMG minutes confirm French willingness to push the envelope regarding arms trade with Cold War adversaries. For the next two decades, France would maintain the defensive-offensive distinction of armaments that was articulated in the NEACC documents, judging specific cases on their political economic consequences. In the late 1960s and 1970s British internal deliberations would similarly make the distinction but with less commercial success.

As a ‘pattern of meaningful action’ the Committee had several clear routines, which actors tried to shape according to their own (organisational) interest. Its brief was clearly a response to domestic and international trends and events, giving CIEEMG clear policy relevance on an

284 CAEF, B-63074, French Ambassador to Washington, to Foreign Ministry, DAL office, 3 March 1956, ‘Memorandum agreed by ambassadors for the coordination of arms deliveries to the Near East’, points 6, 8 and 9. Italy joined later.

285 British plans to deter Egypt from attacking Israel by supplying ‘defensive’ war planes, and ignoring the Egyptian dilemma of interpretation of such weaponry.

286 CAEF, B-63074, CIEEMG 19/12/55 meeting minutes, p.3-4, the decision to pre-empt NEACC approval for jet aircraft to Israel and competing offers by US and GB.

287 See for example the mentions of French and British trade in each other’s sphere of influence, Saudi Arabia and Lebanon respectively, CAEF B-63074, Minutes of CIEEMG meeting of 19 March 1956, p.4-6; see also CAEF, B-63074, CIEEMG minutes 13 February 1956, Annexe V, on potential for demand from Jordania which wanted to broaden its purchasing options (‘envisage à s’affranchir de la tutelle anglaise’).

288 For example, SHDV, 8 Q 287, CIEEMG meeting of 20/1/58, on reconsidering decision not reporting shipment of aviation material, because it was a small batch that would likely be passed by the other members.

289 In the case of the USSR these were items not listed under COCOM. See SHDV, 20R 152, Folder Exportation de materiel de guerre 1960-61 (5), CIEEMG meeting of 19/12/60, p.32, debating the limits of exposition at the July 1961 Scientific conference in Moscow.

290 See for example, BNA, BT353/18, R.L. Davies to Secretary of Defence, 12/2/69, doc XP903.68, paragraph 15, noting ‘Our policy ... is inconsistent in certain respects.’, and .L. Davies to Secretary of Defence, 7/3/69, paragraph 3, ‘Export of components for arms for sale through “third countries” to South Africa and other sensitive destinations’, on ‘offensive’ and ‘non-sharp’ items.
increasingly important item of national security and foreign policy. There was a relatively straightforward routine in place. Approval for arms export had to be asked separately for prospection, negotiation and sale, and shipment abroad. A decision would take one of three forms: (conditional) approval, refusal, or adjournment.\textsuperscript{291} Decisions had to be unanimously carried, which caused the more controversial items to be adjourned. The minutes of CIEEMG conferences [‘procès-verbaux’] holding the recommendations would then be ratified by the Prime Minister, represented by the (‘Permanent’) Secretary General for National Defence who had the secretarial role of the CIEEMG.\textsuperscript{292} The bulk of cases evaluated received positive decisions.\textsuperscript{293} Finally, approval could be final, or conditional, but it always had to be based on a consensus among CIEEMG participants.\textsuperscript{294} From the start, the CIEEMG was intended to be the only place for decision, but this was a status to be earned, not given.\textsuperscript{295} The February 1956 minutes state that cabinet meetings (‘Conseil des Ministres’), or meetings of Ministries involved in security (‘Comité de Défense Nationale’) would also inform CIEEMG meetings, or arbitrate.\textsuperscript{296} The secretary general for defence as committee secretary could discuss with other ministries to square differences, or request a ministerial position from hesitant delegates.\textsuperscript{297} This informal circuit is rarely explicitly referred to in the minutes. The reality of evaluation proved to be more complex, and affected by various internal and external, economic and political considerations. The 1956 and 1957 minutes of the new CIEEMG have fairly long descriptions of cases, and explanations and investigations of form and procedure are frequent.\textsuperscript{298} The minutes of the first few years discuss a variety of sound and controversial arms trade proposals, but generally seem mostly concerned with payment and currency issues.

\textsuperscript{291} SHDV, 20 R 152, CIEEMG meeting 20/3/61, Annexe II. Also has a list of foundational documents.
\textsuperscript{292} For example SHDV GR 20R 152, Ministry for Defence, Section des Cessions a l’Etranger, #7061, 11/9/1956, to the Permanent Secretary General for National Defence, section Economic Affairs, sending agenda for the September 1956 meeting of the CIEEMG. On French Defence reorganisation in 1962, see (Chantebout, L’organisation generale de la defense nationale en France depuis la fin de la seconde guerre mondiale, 1967, pp. 224-225). On the SGDN see (Beauvallet, 1971)
\textsuperscript{293} Based on a selection of CIEEMG requests for aviation, infantry weapons and missiles between 1957-1970. Of 208 South African 13 were refused and 6 withdrawn, 257 Portuguese items 27 refused and 1 withdrawn, 47 Rhodesian items 17 refused, and a minor selection of 54 Israeli items showed one refusal.
\textsuperscript{294} CAEF, B-63074, CIEEMG minutes of meeting 20 February 1956, p.2-3.
\textsuperscript{295} CAEF, B-55149, Note to minister, #4362, 3/11/55, on new decree CIEEMG [page missing] ‘‘..aucune décision relative à l’exportation de matériel de guerre ne serait prise en dehors d’elle [CIEEMG], de même que aucune négociation ne serait engagée en la matière sans qu’elle en ait été préalablement informée …L’institution de la commission d’exportation de matériels de guerre avait eu pour objet de coordonner les actions des différents départements ministériels intéressés d’éviter les actions désordonnées.’
\textsuperscript{296} CAEF, B-63074, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Directorate Africa-Levant, to Permanent Secretary General, 3 January 1956, above. Confirms arbitrage by Conseils.
\textsuperscript{297} CAEF, B-63074, CIEEMG minutes of meeting 20 February 1956, p.2 ‘Lt.col. Hubert’, and p.3-4.
\textsuperscript{298} SHDV, 8Q 287, CIEEMG meeting of 17/6/57 on treatment of licensing contracts is a case in point.
International opinion and pressure from allies is rarely mentioned in the minutes of 1958 and later, but sometimes implied. The positions of the two main protagonists are in evidence almost from the start. The defence ministry advocated French defence industry interests and thereby indirectly its own budget; the Foreign office valued arms trade on what could be explained internationally. Appearing as an observer, the Ministry for Economic and Financial Affairs focused on commercial and financial risks of propositions. The committee on export finance it presided over would follow rulings of the CIEEMG.

Structures without rules

A key issue that followed from joint ministerial custody for arms exports would remain the absence of firm criteria for authorisation. The 1955 decree itself did not stipulate any, nor the 1939 law which merely stated which categories were considered military weapons subject to authorisation. Authorisation was to be done on a case by case basis of expediency. (Lachaux, 1977, p. 36) In case consensus was not found, arbitrage would be in the hands of the cabinet meetings (‘Conseil des Ministres’), or the (ministerial) Defence committee (‘Comite de Defense Nationale’) would also inform CIEEMG meetings, or arbitrate.299 Very few of the post-1955 minutes mention arbitration, and an early example shows that Foreign and Defence ministries appeared to be of one mind on beating competition of the Warsaw Pact in the principal markets of the Middle East.300

Short of a Soviet menace, there was little to agree about. A particularly revealing case is the December 1955 meeting which saw Foreign Affairs first advocating a speedy transaction to Syria, but then refusing one to Saudi Arabia. Whereas the USSR was competing for supply to Syria, Saudi Arabia was eyed by American suppliers. Foreign Affairs implied that she had agreed to a geographical division in recent discussions with the US and Great Britain in Geneva about setting up a new consultation committee on arms control in the Middle East. As chair, the Secretary General of National Defence rebuked Foreign Affairs for not having informed the other committee members beforehand, especially as the Syrian (and presumably Saudi) case had already been discussed in the ministerial Defence committee. The CIEEMG ruled that

299 Arbitrage by Conseils also confirmed in CAEF, B-63074, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Directorate Africa-Levant, to Permanent Secretary General, 3 January 1956, above.
300 CAEF, B-63074, CIEEMG Minutes of 2 December 1955 meeting, p.1-2 The Foreign Office noted the political context of potential Czech and Egypt supply to Syria, reason to speed up French deliveries. The SGPDN, the Economic and Defence Ministries did not object.
Saudi sales would be approved, and the NEACC members informed.\footnote{CAEF, B-63074, minutes of CIEEMG meeting of 2/12/1955, p.1-6.} This again shows that decisions were subject to political manoeuvring, not mere evaluation.

**Reluctant acceptance of the CIEEMG**

It took several years to formalise and anchor procedures after the first session of 30 August 1955.\footnote{CAEF, B-55149, Note to minister, #4362, 3/11/55, on new decree, CIEEMG.} The wide brief of the new CIEEMG was infringing on that of older rival committees,\footnote{CAEF, B-55149, Doc DREE/SEE/Wahl, #5070, 19/12/55, to SecrGenDefNat/Secretariat of CIEEMG, re ‘Inscription a l’ordre du jour de la prochaine Commission’, on timing of recent activities by Commission des Garanties et du Credit au Commerce Exterieur; Idem, Doc DREE/SEE 3/Drillien,#4982, 15/12/55, to DIME, writing to kindly rule against their wish to have authority over relevant import licenses.} and key industrial actors like Sud-Aviation tried to ignore the additional red tape.\footnote{SHDC, 78 1E1 214, Doc MinDef/Chef Section Cessions à l’Etranger (Chabal) to President of Sud-Aviation, #2034, 3/6/57} Ministries extended their turfs over what had been the preserve of Defence. For example, it is telling that in his January 1956 letter to the Secretary General of National Defense, the Foreign Minister omitted the export planning function handed to the CIEEMG in the 1955 decree, an area it deemed itself competent in. At the same time the Foreign Minister set out to empower the new body, mentioning the scenario of disagreement between Foreign and Defence ministries. Now that the SCE no longer reported on foreign arms demands to Defence alone, he wrote, an agenda (‘ordre du jour’) should be prepared outlining all old and new items to be discussed.\footnote{Idem, CAEF B63074, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Directorate Africa-Levant, to Permanent Secretary General of National Defence, #1, very secret, 3 January 1956, ‘Coordination of tasks relative to deliveries of war material to countries of the Near East’.} Ostensibly an effort at clarification, it was to place control of information outside the Ministry of Defence.\footnote{CAEF, B-63074, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Directorate Africa-Levant, to Permanent Secretary General of National Defence, #1, very secret, 3 January 1956, above, p.2[‘de facon que toute malentendu devienne pratiquement impossible’].}

Some mid-1950s incidents suggest that the CIEEMG was regarded as a glorified postman, rubberstamping approvals from the various constituents that could be contacted directly by industry. In June 1957, the Section des Cessions à l’Etranger reprimanded the CEO of newly merged Sud-Aviation for jumping the gun on a ruling by the Committee. Sud-Aviation had requested a blanket order for approval of sale of Alouettes to four countries and Djinns to nine, a common request, but only after having signed contracts with several. The head of the SCE, Mr Chabal, reminded the President of Sud-Aviation to submit proposed business a month in
advance. Repeatedly fast-tracking and taking liberties might cause other ministries to give a negative verdict, or even refuse the accelerated procedure altogether.\textsuperscript{307}

The French Foreign Ministry arguably had the more difficult task of defending French diplomatic interests. It oscillated between foreign diplomatic pressures and French economic interests. In the wake of the Suez Crisis, and the UN resolution 997 of 2 November 1956, which had sought to defuse the situation,\textsuperscript{308} the Foreign Ministry revoked its previous approval on certain exports to Israel. The Quai d’Orsay made an exception for delivery of parts, munitions and missiles for French Mystère jets already purchased, for it would be bad form to stop these too. [‘il serait peu honnête de ne pas livrer…’]\textsuperscript{309} Arms trade to Israel was part of the competition in the Middle East between the Western powers, and between 1956 and 1958, the French and Israeli ‘defense establishments … enjoyed an exceptionally close, almost intimate, relationship’. (Heimann, 2016, p. 147) With the NEACC collapsing as a forum for genuine consultation, the Quai may have been resentful at being sidelined by its Defence colleagues in this key area of foreign policy. (Tal, 2009, p. 188) The CIEEMG minutes however do not say if this was a particular consideration for the Foreign Ministry’s decision. That same CIEEMG meeting also discussed CNEIA’s request to extend a trade mission to Rhodesia to include an economic, unofficial mission to South Africa, as well as the South African ‘apparent interest’ in arms and aircraft. Given the reported lack of South African funds before 1958, the French embassy in Pretoria was asked to evaluate.\textsuperscript{310} This prelude to the South African questions identified the thinking of metropolitan diplomats to be at considerable distance from promotional practitioners, a situation that would only marginally improve with the arrival of Charles de Gaulle as President.

\textit{A changing role}

A stronger example of a progressive focus on political authorisation came two months later, in March 1957. The 1955 decree had also assigned to the CIEEMG the task of advising the government on armament planning and export stimulation. The head of CNEIA, Robert Cadet,

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\textsuperscript{307} SHDC, 78 1E1 214 (b), Defence Ministry to Section des Cessions a l’Etranger, #2034/SCE, 3/6/1957, ‘Cession d’hélicoptères Djinn et Alouette a l’étranger’.

\textsuperscript{308} UN General Assembly resolution 997 of 2/11/56 called on members to support a ceasefire and withdrawal, which was ignored by warring parties. UN Security Council resolutions, ‘Resolutions adopted without reference to a committee,’ \url{http://www.un.org/depts/dhl/dag/docs/ares1000e.pdf} [20/1/17].

\textsuperscript{309} SHDV, 8Q 287, minutes of CIEEMG meeting of 21/1/57, p.3, ‘... a décidé de se conformer strictement à la resolution de l’ONU... Une exception est faite...’

\textsuperscript{310} SHDV, 8Q287, CIEEMG minutes of 21 January 1957 meeting, p.14-15, ‘Cet interêt a été signalé à plusieurs reprises ...semble cependant que l’Afrique du Sud ne puisse effectuer aucun achat avant 1958.’
argued before the committee that with government backing the long delays within aviation manufacture could be shortened and export chances improved. This led to consideration of further subsidies and supply from army stock. Cadet’s proposal in 1957 of a permanent seat on the CIEEMG for CNEIA was not supported by the ministries. The proposal was not unreasonable – if opportunistic – given that CNEIA’s institutional brief was to plan export promotion, and that aviation was easily the most innovative and internationally competitive of French arms industry. The absence of CNEIA from subsequent minutes suggests that the ministries had no interest in adding a separate industry voice. It is tempting to see this as reflective of uncoordinated industrial and military policies of the Fourth Republic, which succumbed to financial and political crises. (GIFAS, 1984, pp. 7, 9; Carlier & Martel, 1979). The consolidation into two national aviation groups of Nord-Aviation, and Sud-Aviation did not hide their unstable production book. Yet this image must be nuanced. (Carré, 2001, pp. 406-7) The aviation industry overall benefited greatly from government funding and hard choices by government before June 1958 benefited some aircraft designs over others. (Carlier & Martel, Le développement de l’aéronautique militaire française de 1958 à 1970, 1979, p. 17)

The acceptance of the CIEEMG as an institution corresponded with the changes in the new constitution and security arrangements of the French Fifth Republic. (GIFAS, 1984, p. 9) CIEEMG would withdraw from its second task of export planning advice, and focus on arms trade approvals. As a minor example, in March 1961, the Committee decided not to include transport arrangements in its brief. One month later, authorisation formally became the sole task of CIEEMG following the creation of the DMA as purveyor of all matters related to the production, management and allocation of equipment on 5 April 1961. Part of this change was the abolition of separate secretaries for each armed service, and the concomitant grouping of their individual technical engineering under the DMA, and generally subordinating the military as a separate political force.

311 SHDV, 8Q 287, cieemg, 5/3/57, project de decret, article 1, second point. SHDV GR 14 S 158 ; Letter by de Menthon, Note pour la Direction Politique, #96.DE, ML.MT, 26/5/61, re ‘Livraisons d’armes a ANG’, on the need for speedy conclusion in the face of Belgian and Italian competition.
313 A host of administrative measures were taken between 1957-59, see SHDV, GR20 R152, folder SCE-Textes de base 1952-55/1959-60, ‘Project de redaction’, p.9-11
314 SHDV, 20R 152; minutes of CIEEMG meeting 20/3/61. It was felt that the DSFP/SCE was best placed. A loophole in the legal categorisation of explosive material was found, and subsequently dealt with.
French Authorisation procurement and practice 1960-1970

In the second half of the 1960s there was growing divergence among the committee members. It was caused by an increased demand from the Southern African states, quickly followed by a general downturn in aviation industry, the largest contributor of exports. The Secretary General for National Defence, the military representative\textsuperscript{315} to the Prime Minister, observed that South Africa was particularly concerned about the recent French embargo on Israel,\textsuperscript{316} a sentiment mimicked by aviation industry. In his subsequent letter of August, the SGDN warned that the position of the French arms industry had been steadily eroded by the lack of new innovative products, and aggressive Anglo-American payment facilities. Furthermore, authorisation policy had caused a lack of market confidence, especially when approvals had sometimes been overturned. Therefore, he called for ‘une libéralisation des conditions de paiement et un assouplissement des procédures correspondantes’.\textsuperscript{317} This liberalisation does not feature in a policy document, but the minutes show a positive attitude to sales to South Africa and Portugal thereafter.

New criteria: 1962 – 1964

In September 1961, upon request of the Foreign Office, French Prime Minister Debré had prohibited the sale of large calibre munitions and small arms to South Africa,\textsuperscript{318} after that state had already received the equipment for production of 9mm ammunition.\textsuperscript{319} The Economic desk of the Foreign Ministry (Direction des Affaires Économiques et Financières, or DAEF) must have taken heart from this restriction, arguing internally against supply of air-to-ground rocket launchers to South Africa as an offensive weapon in April 1962.\textsuperscript{320} However, a Portuguese request for MATRA launchers and ammunition was approved after the Ministry of Defence

\textsuperscript{315} Not to be confused with the état-major particulier, the individual advisor on military affairs, part of the Prime ministerial cabinet.

\textsuperscript{316} SHDV, 1 R 152, PM/SGDN/DivAffEco/ Maillard, #880, 28/7/67, Note pour le Premier ministre/Cabinet Militaire, ‘Principales affaires en suspens dans le domaine de l’exportation de matériels de guerre.’, Ref. #880, 28/7/67, [RSA] ‘est en effet un de ceux qu’inquiète le plus l’éventualité de mesures d’embargo du type de celles appliquées au Moyen-Orient.’

\textsuperscript{317} SHDV, 1 R 152, Doc PM/SGDN/DivAffEco to MinArm/Cab, #900, 1/8/67, copy of PM/SGDN/DivAffEco, #880, 28/7/67, Note pour le ministre/Cabinet Militaire, ‘Principales affaires en suspens dans le domaine de l’exportation de matériels de guerre.’

\textsuperscript{318} SHDV 8Q289, CIEEMG meeting minutes, 10 April 1962, p.41. Indeed, Defence was contesting the wisdom of this decision for French export.

\textsuperscript{319} SHDV 20 R 152, CIEEMG minutes of 14 and 22 December 1960. Production and delivery of 33 machines for production of 9mm 7.62 NATO rounds by French firm Manurhin had been agreed to in 22 December 1960.

\textsuperscript{320} CADC, 12QO Cabinet du Ministre. M. Couve de Murville, 1958-68., 114, Note de la DAEF pour le cabinet du ministre as : la livraison de matériel de guerre à l’Union sud-africaine, Paris, le 16 avril 1962, in (Konieczna, 2013, p. 225n540). No trace of this request was found in the CIEEMG minutes, either in the SHDV or SHDC archives.
had the Prime minister overrule the reservations of the diplomats. The Foreign ministry delegate did request that the disapproval of his department to supply 50kg bombs be noted in the minutes.  

This points to a familiar quirk in French policy: that despite the porosity of its rules, the form must be upheld. The South Africans would come to understand this aspect of French policy following the Israeli embargo of 1967.

By 1962 arms trade to colonial regimes in Southern Africa had been ever more strongly criticised within the UN and in French diplomatic circles. French Ambassador Balay was therefore pleasantly surprised to find his Foreign Minister Couve de Murville now willing to sell Mirage jets to Pretoria, albeit unarmed.  (Konieczna, 2013, p. 225) Given this unusual support for arms, it is likely that Couve de Murville had expected the South African government to be more conciliatory after Sharpeville. (Konieczna, 2013, pp. 85, 102) In July 1962, the Secretary General for National Defence [hereafter: SGDN] raised the question of arms to Portugal with Prime Minister Pompidou. SGDN expanded its query to South Africa in late August. It is noteworthy that for this initiative the SGDN had the support of delegates of both the Defence and Foreign Ministries.  

Pompidou responded internally in early September. Portugal could have its rocket launchers, under condition that these and any future orders would not be used in her African colonies of Mozambique, Angola, and Guinea-Bissau.  

This was also the condition under which Great Britain and Germany had supplied naval vessels and trainer aircraft to Portugal, a fellow NATO member. (Waals, 2011, p. 149) The CIEEMG meeting of 18 September 1962 was likely a effort to wipe the slate clean, for further exports were also approved, such as South African business for French air-to-ground 68mm rockets, T-21 trainer aircraft and medium to heavy mortars, and Rhodesian requests for 250 Bren guns, along with numerous Portuguese orders.  

Pompidou’s 10 September 1962 letter engaged with the question of controversial trades more generally; it would be the umbrella for authorisations of export to the southern states for the

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321 SHDC, 251/POR, CIEEMG meeting 09/10/1961 ‘AE demandent que soit noté leur désaccord à l’envoi des 3000 bombes de 50kg.’


323 SHDV, 8Q289, ‘reunion du CIEEMG, 18 Septembre 1962’, p.2, on the same page Algerian exports were liberalised.

324 SHDV, 8Q289, EMGDN, Note to Col. Aubert of the SGDN, ‘reunion du CIEEMG, 18 Septembre 1962’, handwritten note. In the same communication, the removal of precautions on arms trade to Algeria was advised.

325 SHDV, 8 Q 289, cieEMG minutes, meeting 18/9/1962, p. 5.
rest of the decade, and a brief analysis is therefore in order. If the committee members had expected a clear set of rules, they were to be disappointed, because the Prime Minister returned the issue to the Commission for ‘case-by-case’ analysis by his delegates:

‘Au cours des dernières réunions de la Commission d’Etude d’Exportation des Matériels de Guerre, il a paru nécessaire de définir, compte-tenu de la conjoncture politique actuelle, un critère général fixant dans ses grandes lignes la nature du matériel d’armement dont il est possible d’autoriser l’exportation vers des pays comme l’Afrique du Sud et le Portugal. L’existence d’un tel critère ne saurait bien entendu dispenser la Commission d’un examen cas par cas des demandes qui lui seraient soumises.’

Using examples, Pompidou then set out in some detail the limits of French arms trade in four categories: prior contracts, acceptable new orders for ‘defensive’ major equipment, and unacceptable new orders for light weapons or slow aircraft commonly used in anti-guerrilla warfare. He did not mention helicopters, but condemned slow aircraft used for ground attack. Licensing was permitted in all cases. In sum, the problem would not go away. In September 1964, the Foreign Ministry achieved a ban on South African trade by the Prime Minister on 9mm assault rifles and limiting 7.65 revolvers to 1,000 annually.326 This attempt expanded Pompidou’s 1962 criteria but did nothing to interrupt the prevailing spirit of accommodating arms trade. The measure was taken loosely by both the Defence Ministry and even Prime Minister Pompidou himself seems not to have cast the rule in stone.327 Again, the importance of criteria should not be overstated. They served as a discourse for internal consistency, not as a mathematical standard.

A strong role of the Defence Minister

In the 1950s the CIEEMG had developed from a rubber stamp to a function of governmental trade control. Procedures were agreed to and criteria interpreted in sessions of the CIEEMG. Under the Fifth Republic responsibilities were more clearly defined. From 1958 onwards, the minutes show an incremental reduction of information in them, reflecting greater clarity on the committee’s brief, and possibly extra-cameral discussions. Under force of internal choices and external pressure – as far as the cases of Southern African trade permit us to see –CIEEMG

326 SHDV, 1 R 152, SGD/Maillard, #880, 28/7/67, ‘Note pour le Premier ministre/Cabinet Militaire. Principales affaires en suspens dans le domaine de l’exportation de matériels de guerre.’
327 SHDV, 8Q 293, Minutes of CIEEMG meeting 05/05/1966, p.35, Pistolets mitrailleurs 9mm (‘plusieurs milliers’), ‘la position du Premier Ministre étant négative pour le moment, l’affaire sera présentée à la prochaine Réunion de Défense.’; also SHDV, 8 Q 294, 10/01/1967, p.35, 2,000 automatic pistols, 7.65 and smaller, to private party, Lisbon, ‘accepted.’
would be be dominated by the Defence Ministry during Pierre Messmer’s tenure (1960-1969). The significance for authorisation of the personal appointment and great trust Messmer received from de Gaulle can only be inferred, but anecdotal evidence throughout this thesis intimates that Messmer was confident to take and push controversial orders.  

The strong organisational position of the Ministry of Defence reflected its influence. The personality of the President under the Fifth Republic clearly had an effect by setting the diplomatic boundaries. None were as bold on foreign policy, and as close to the military, as General de Gaulle himself had been. Presidential prestige would inevitably reduce after de Gaulle’s departure in 1969, and pressure on French arms trade policy was mounting. The stated boundaries of arms trade narrowed accordingly. President Pompidou did not have the stern governing style of his former boss, but his talent for measured equivocation on arms trade would continue under his presidency. It can perhaps be said of President Giscard d’Estaing that his room for manoeuvre was less again, and also his dexterity at managing arms trade were less inspired again. (Thody, 2002, p. 81) As will become clear, presidential measures would result in operational responses. The lack of a paper trail on many relations within the executive makes it impossible to attribute CIEEMG decision making to one single location in government which is always a shared responsibility. (Pilleul, 1979, p. 18) Placement of propositions on the CIEEMG agenda was mandatory, and preparation would not have occurred in isolation. Much of the preparation for CIEEMG discussion was done within the functional departments of the ministries. The principal ones are the DMA, and its DAI office, at Defence, the DAEF, economic desk of the Quai, and DREE, the economic desk at the Economic Ministry. Most intriguing of these practitioners are the various ‘cabinets du Ministre’, which remain largely

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328 See (Carré, 2001, p. 423) for an anecdote, by Messmer, showing de Gaulle’s confidence in Messmer regarding the launching of the 1965 Diamant missile test, as well as de Gaulle’s attitude to ministerial accountability. 
329 For example, SHDV, 1 R 152, Internal Doc, ‘note sur les exportations « Armentem » de la société Hotchkiss – Brandt, 2/2/66 [to Min/Arm ? Messmer], on blocked sizable munitions deals with India and Pakistan Messmer wrote internally: ‘Pourquoi les commandes indiennes et pakistanaises sont-elles encore bloquées ? Me rendre compte. S’il le faut, je saisirai le Premier Ministre.’ Messmer’s contacts with Botha (Chapter 4) and trade to Portugal (Chapter 5 and 6) also relate. 
330 (Thody, 2002, p. 81), ‘De Gaulle’s view of the relationship between the president and the prime minister was a simple one: the president took the major decisions, and the prime minister carried them out.’ Also (Wauthier, 1995, p. 405), ‘[In November 1977.] ‘Un trait était tiré sur la coopération militaire avec l’Afrique du Sud, vieille de vingt ans inaugurée par le général de Gaulle. Mais les liens tissés par ce long compagnonnage restaient solides, et les échanges commerciaux ne se ralentirent guère.’
331 SHDV, 1 R 152, folder Exportations d’armes, August 1960-June 1969, MinArmees/Sicurani for the minister, #11949/DMA/DEE, 29/6/64, to PM/SGDN/DivOrg, de la Fournière, ‘Exportation d’armes dans les pays sensibles’. Ref to Votre note #139/DN/ORG/AES of 13/6/64. Certain authorisations take place based on telephonic contacts between services.
out of reach on this subject. The red lines on defence matters were undoubtedly set by the President, who sometimes bypassed his Prime Ministers to communicate with his Defence minister. (Messmer, 1992, p. 254) The great level of trust and delegated responsibility which de Gaulle placed in Messmer was certainly unusual, and justified. (Carré, 2001, pp. 421-3) Regarding our subject, Messmer’s three memoires (1992; 1998; 2002) have left few concrete clues on the interaction between administrative layers and their superiors. From below, industrialists of the major armament companies provided trade opportunities, meeting regularly with the export desks of the various ministries, ministers, and their cabinet staff. (Carlier C., 1992, pp. 228, 231; Badel, 2010, pp. 258, 260) Governmental or commercial intermediaries would pass on industry propositions onto the agenda held by the SCE, and later the DAI. The relatively autonomous position of CIEEMG was based on the combined know-how of its members to assure discretion and assess risk. As we shall see in Chapter 4, only CEOs of the biggest firms like Sud-Aviation, would risk ostracism in a largely government-run defence market by ignoring the rules. Undeniably though, insiders knew how far to bend the rule without breaking it. General Fay’s successor as OFEMA head, General Yves Ezanno, looked back on it: ‘Il’y avait des interdictions de vente de matériel militaire, c’était périodique en plus, il y avait des moments où c’était interdit et des moments où … c’est-à-dire qu’il y avait une ligne pointillée qu’on pouvait dépasser à ses risques et périls, et une ligne rouge continue qu’il ne fallait pas dépasser sans que l’on se ferait virer de la présidence de l’OFEMA. C’est en fait comme ça que je le vois. Et alors, la ligne pointillée, permettait de passer légèrement outre aux ordres, c’est-à-dire de bénéficier d’un espèce de tolérance tacite des autorités qui permettait par exemple dans les livraisons de rechange à Israël à un moment donné de leur donner quelques petites rechanges tout de même, bien que ça soit interdit.’ The price for failure in this regard

332 A key figure for the French Defence Ministry is Martial de la Fourniere, Messmer’s head of cabinet and long-time confidant, for whom certain key dossiers are still blocked at AN. Also of interest are Bertrand Larrera de Morel, head of DREE from 1962, MinEco, described by (Badel, Diplomatie et Grands Contrats: L’état Français et les Marchés Extérieurs au XXe Siècle, 2010), and Olivier Wormser, at the Foreign Ministry’s DAEF, researched by Konieczna).
333 (Pilleul, 1979), p.17, suggests De Gaulle was more reluctant to intervene in areas that were less important or less well known to him.
335 The exceptional figure is Marcel Dassault, who could demand an audience with everyone short of the President, and expect to be seen. (Carlier C., Marcel Dassault. La Legende d’un Siecle , 1992, pp. 228, 231) The telephone number of the ‘Presidence Republique is in the diary of Turbomeca’s CEO Joseph Szydlowski, known to have considerable influence Directors of DAI, DAEF, and DREE, of the Economic Ministry; De la Fourniere as Messmer’s right hand man,
336 SHDV, fonds Armée de l’Air, DITEX/Témoignages Orales, 663, Général Yves ÉZANNO, Tape 4, side 1,
337 SHDV, 20 R 152, minutes of CIEEMG meeting 20/3/61, p.5
to French key leaders was steep, as the South Africans observed in the case of the distinguished head of DAI, Louis Bonte.\footnote{MV/Botha 2, Box 22, MV 56/4, vol 1, 'Frankryk: samewerking', SA military attaché, Paris, to Chief of Defence Staff, 8/7/70, report for Sept’69 to May’70, p.1, ‘New appointments’. Ingenieur-Général Bonte, the first head of DAI, was axed after Israeli operation had stolen back patrol boats from Cherbourg ports in 1969, allegedly with collusion of some within French government, which the media called the ‘affaire Vedette’.} Bonte had been a trusted contact for the South African embassy in Paris, but was sacked by Defence Minister Debré in late December 1969 over the dubious release of embargoed Israeli patrol boats (see chapter three).\footnote{HVS/KG 1, Box 83, vol.2, HVS/206/34/4, ‘Verdediging-samewerking Frankryk’, SA Attaché, Paris, to Chief of Defence Staff, 9/8/68, ‘Armament contracts’, report on Bonte’s talk on trade at the embassy; HVS/DGAA 1, box 436, HVS 212/3/3, vol 2, ‘RSA militere verteenwoordigers in ander lande.: Verslae: Frankryk’, SA Attaché, Paris, to CG, 16/7/69, telegram 219, on Bonte’s being awarded the ‘Grand Croix de l’Ordre National du merit’. On it, CG wrote he had already personally congratulated Bonte, so no formal congratulations were necessary; this indicates a close working relationship.} According to Cohen (1994), the unusual lack of scrutiny by CIEEMG in this case implies an executive decision to look the other way.\footnote{Cohen, 1994, pp. 184, 185), ‘Cette somme incroyable d’inattentions ne peut s’expliquer que par la volonté de tous de voir le problème résolu au mieux des intérêts de la France et ceux d’Israël. L’embargo était une épine au pied du gouvernement français, constamment harcelé par la presse et par une opinion publique qui le jugeaient inique.’} The remarkably mild response by the French government gives support to political motives. It is entirely possible that Debré had not been fully initiated in the operational framework he had inherited from Messmer. This would explain his reported rage at the bad press, and also shows the intricate balance between personal and institutional influence. (New York Times, 1970)

**Negotiation and contestation between Defence and Foreign Affairs**

Authorisation on trade to South Africa was an affair negotiated most vocally between the delegates of the Foreign and Defence ministries, and Finance a distant third. Other ministries and departments acted mostly as props on this stage.\footnote{As per the 1955 decree, the regulars were the three ministries of Defence, Foreign Affairs and Economic Affairs and Finance, with a secretarial role for the Secretary General of National Defence on behalf of the Prime Minister. Other were called as relevant. The State Secretaries and later Ministries, of Industry and Cooperation routinely attended. The foreign, military and signals branches of the intelligence service were also present; the SDECE, Direction Sécurité Militaire and the Comité de Coordination des Telecommunications (the French equivalent of the British GCHQ, signals intelligence agency) For example SHDV, 8Q 294, minutes of restricted CIEEMG meeting 6/2/67, annexe 2, point 2; SHDV, 8Q 292, minutes of restricted CIEEMG meeting 11/3/65;} Some dossiers were too sensitive to elicit immediate agreement. These were discussed in ad-hoc restricted conferences between key delegates of the primary ministries, chaired by the Secretary General.\footnote{For example SHDV, 8Q 294, minutes of restricted CIEEMG meeting 6/2/67, annexe 2, point 2; SHDV, 8Q 292, minutes of restricted CIEEMG meeting 11/3/65;} The Ministry of Defence defended the markets for French military industry, which required long lead times and major investment. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs guarded over the short to medium term political risk to French prestige and influence, especially among the francophone African states,
which were jeopardized by trade to the vestiges of colonialism in Africa. While the Foreign Ministry was mostly opposed to selling arms to South Africa, it was generally actively promoting French arms trade. Together with the Ministry of Economic Affairs, it was engaged in an extensive government-led commercial diplomacy on normal trade. (Badel, 2010, pp. 138-9)

Portuguese demands in 1961 probably best mark the introduction of diplomatic pressure into the CIEEMG. Before that date no transactions to Portugal are found to have been refused or even adjourned. In 1961, Prime Minister Michel Debré gave his approval to a transaction for 12 Algeria-based T-6 spotter aircraft, but under most discreet expedition. French customs were told to treat this as a ‘transfer’, not a commercial sale, thereby preventing excise registry. In late February 1961 four T-6 were flown by the French air force to Portuguese Angola ‘without delay and with a maximum of discretion’ by pilots in civilian clothes. By July 1961, 5 months after the start of the insurgency in Angola, the Portuguese military had placed large orders for trucks, napalm, machine guns and rocket launchers with over a dozen French producers. In the Committee meeting of 10 July 1961, the Quay d’Orsay delegates managed to adjourn most of these.

It is uncertain from the evidence what made Commission members accommodate or acquiesce to opposing points of view. Nor is it clear what effect on authorisation decision-making the large measure of procedural control by Defence had. After 1965 the Direction des Affaires Internationales (DAI) was the convenor of the CIEEMG conferences. DAI liaised with the SGDN as the host, and the chief participants of the Ministries of Finance and of Foreign Affairs. (Kolodziej, 1987, p. 264) The new export desk within the DMA, created in 1965, was an intriguing Janus-faced diplomatic hub within the Defence community driving the export part of

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343 CADN, 551PO-B-32, folder Vente de materiel français à la RSA, 1968-85, French Foreign Affairs to Defence Ministry, #2584, 29/10/69, ‘sale of Breguet Atlantic patrolling aircraft to South Africa’, both Ministers discussing strategies of sale of naval patrol aircraft to attract minimal attention and criticism.

344 (Badel, Diplomatie et Grands Contrats: L’état Français et les Marchés Extérieurs au XXe Siècle, 2010, pp. 138-9), ‘La continuité de la politique commerciale française …. s’explique essentiellement par le fonctionnement néo-corporatiste d’une diplomatie commerciale sur les marchés en développement qui associe étroitement aux diplomates et aux hauts fonctionnaires du ministère de l’Économie et des Finances les grandes entreprises exportatrices.’

345 SHDC, 78 1E1 48, Defence Ministry/DCMAA deputy Director, Col. Labarre, #55874, 2/3/61, to Economic ministry, Customs, ‘Exportation d’Aerodynes au Portugal’. Further to ‘Decision taken by Minister for Armies’, 12 T-6s originating from Bliida, Algeria, are passed on [not sold] to the FAP [above], under sale number #4143

346 SHDC, 78 1E1 48, Defence Ministry/Air staff, Brig.Gen. Jacquard, #351, 23/2/61, Tres Secret, Urgent, to AIR Z.O.M., Brazzaville re ‘Cession d’avions T-6 au Portugal’

347 SHDC, folder 78 1E1 251, Portugal, minutes of CIEEMG meeting 10/7/1961.
procurement, which had been orphaned within the peace-time French armed forces organization. (Kolodziej, 1987, pp. 264-66) In sum, the positioning and preparation by ministries on specific dossiers largely escapes from our view, but the CIEEMG was still the place where decisions must go on record. A basic analysis of the presence lists and distribution lists of individual CIEEMG minutes shows a broad but consistent group attending the meetings and receiving the minutes in duplicate.348

Decisions were made largely in favour of exporting. In June 1964, the cabinet of the Minister of Defence gleefully threw back a complaint by the Foreign Ministry over undocumented delivery of small arms to private parties in South Africa. Their records dismissed the complaint, and they reminded the Foreign Ministry of its own responsibility in issuing the required export visas: ‘Ce visa a d’ailleurs été donné en toute connaissance de cause, les affaires étrangères étant représentées à la CIEEMG’. Suspicions about the profile and intentions of certain clients could call for verification of their ‘honourability’, either by French intelligence (SDECE) or the military attaché,349 and precautions could be taken in the shape of non-re-export clauses, and especially in the later years, geographical limitations. Of course, military attachés would then be ordered to verify, but could also turn a blind eye as instructed by their military masters.350

As the head of the export desk of the Economic Ministry (the Direction des Relations Economiques Extérieures, DREE), party to the CIEEMG- concluded internally in 1975, French customs data of trade to South Africa excluded trade, production licensing and spare parts rendering an incomplete picture. South Africa constituted, at minimum, 0.8% of total French exports in 1974, which prompted DREE to argue against drastic measures on arms trade.351 It appears therefore, that those within the French defence community privy to the details of trade approval and execution constituted a particular membership, not open to outsiders, within and

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348 Based on comparison of both lists for the January minutes between 1957 and 1969.
349 SHDV, 8Q 291, Minutes of CIEEMG meeting 28/5/62, p.6-VI, engaging embassy and SDECE to confirm ‘l’honorabilité des clients et la destination de ces munitions.’; SHDV, 1R 152, MinArmees/Sicurani for minister, #11949/DMA/DEE, 29/6/64, to PM/GDNAV/DivOrg, de la Fournière, re ‘Exportation d’armes dans les pays sensibles’. Ref to Votre note #139/DN/ORG/AES of 13/6/64, ‘sous réserve que le Ministère des Armées (DMA) [sic] prenne contact avec l’Attaché militaire d’Afrique du Sud en vue de vérifier l’honorabilité des clients’.
350 SHDV, 14S 157, Doc MinArm/DMA/DEE [Departement Expansion et Exportation], #4426, 14/3/63, Secret/Confidentiel, copy 1 of 8, to AmbaFR/MA, Lisbon, re’ roquettes de 37[mm] et B-26 Invader’, ‘S’il apparaissait que les B 26 et les roquettes etaient destinés à des besoins d'instruction, compte tenu du fait que le Portugal appartient à l'OTAN, il n'y aurait plus d'obstacles au deux exportations en cause.’; Interview with Paul van Niekerk, 12 August 2016.
351 CAEF, B-69020, folder DREE December 1975, DREE Director de Morel to Ministers for Finance, and Commerce Extérieure, ‘Note pour le Ministre – Ventes de matériel militaire à l’Afrique du Sud’, #1163, 10/10/75, p.1-3. Page 3 states that ‘nous n’avons pas encore tiré profit ... de la position privilégiée que nos ventes d’armes ont réussi à nous créer...’
outside of government. For insiders, therefore, authorisation was an internal hurdle within the commercial process, for which the defence community organized.

Industry was a silent partner in government trade to South Africa, and elsewhere. (Badel, France’s Renewed Commitment to Commercial Diplomacy in the 1960s, 2012, pp. 62-63; Warson, 2013, pp. 217-18) Tellingly, a 1961 proposition made on behalf of Sud-Aviation spoke of “purely defensive” radar equipment to Israel. 352 Messmer clearly saw the dilemmas of trade to Portugal, South Africa and Israel as similar, for by 1963 he ordered his subordinates to send all communication regarding trade to these three states directly to him. (Konieczna, 2013, p. 226) Helicopter trade provides a hint of the divergence between the French Foreign office and French industry. Sud-Aviation, by that time no stranger to working back channels, noted in its bi-monthly commercial report to 31 December 1965 that the Rhodesian programme for 9 Alouette IIIIs would require some time for the political consequences of UDI to metabolise, but that negotiations were ongoing: ‘Il convient d’attendre les conséquences politiques de la décision de l’indépendance.’ 353 Apart from the obvious, the statement implied Sud-Aviation’s understanding that helicopter trade might still be authorised despite diplomatic rupture. (Warson, 2013, pp. 216-7)

In the middle years of the 1960s, conflicts between white minority governments and black liberation movements in Southern Africa were escalating. Concomitantly, demands for additional military equipment from that region were also hotly debated. The case of 24 T-28 aircraft to Rhodesia is instructive of the limits of the CIEEMG minutes as historical evidence, and the impact of external pressures on authorisation. T-28s were slow propeller aircraft, and therefore anathema under the 1962 rules. The aircraft were surplus stock of the French Air Force, which had used them precisely for reconnaissance and ground attack in Algeria. The minutes show how between 22 December 1964 and 25 May 1965 - half a year before Rhodesia’s controversial unilateral declaration of independence in November 1965 – a proposition by OFEMA was adjourned and twice refused by the Foreign Ministry delegates. The Ministry of Defence had challenged the Foreign Ministry to enquire about actual British objections. When

352 SHDC, 78 1E1 251/ISR, minutes of CIEEMG meeting 16/05/1961, ‘électrificateur de campagne, barrage de détection ‘électromagnétique ... Matériels de caractère purement défensif analogues à ceux proposés a l’Armée de Terre.’

353 CAEF, 1A 194, folder Sud-Aviation (1949-70)/Activité et gestion 1966-70, commercial country ledger December 1965, Rhodesia entry.
consulted by the Foreign Ministry, the British returned a negative verdict.\textsuperscript{354} Perhaps as compensation, the 25 May 1965 meeting produced a positive decision for 81mm mortar rounds, which had been refused earlier in the year.\textsuperscript{355} It is therefore telling that Rhodesia nonetheless almost managed to receive the aircraft. Wood reports that ‘28 refurbished North American T-28 ‘Trojans’ had been bought from France in 1966-1967, but the ship carrying them had turned back within sight of Cape Town’ after an American ultimatum to the French. (Wood, 1996, p. 13) The CIEEMG minutes give no indication of this shipment, leaving room for speculation about the robustness of decision-making, and the importance of clandestine operations (managed) by French industry.

\textit{Repertoire: ‘defensive – offensive’}

Pompidou’s guidelines referred back to the ‘Defensive/Offensive’ distinction of weapons for border defence and those for public repression, a fiction that had failed a decade earlier. The distinction rested on the United Nations Charter which stipulates states have the right to defend their borders and make preparations, short of threatening international order.\textsuperscript{356} It was the charge of the Afro-Asian block that internal repression could also form a threat to regional peace, a claim President de Gaulle rejected based on an uncertain mix of liberalising principles and national interest. Throughout the 1960s, the new criteria proved to be unauthoritative, yet unalterable. The rules of the game of authorisation continued to develop, especially regarding armed helicopters.

Broadly, criteria were followed by the Foreign Ministry, and interpreted by the Defence Ministry advocates, who argued a certain jurisprudence – when it suited them. One key 1970s example of Foreign Affairs using prior decision as justification as opposed to executive criteria was in the normal levels of spare parts, which it deemed inflated.\textsuperscript{357} When three proposed production licences to South Africa were made in late 1966, for aerial bombs, anti-tank missiles, and their warheads, the Defence Minister initially objected. DMA Director Fourquet then

\textsuperscript{354} SHDC, 78 1E1 194, folder Rhodesie du Sud, minutes of CIEEMG meeting 22/12/64 ; SHDC, ibid, minutes of CIEEMG meeting 25/5/1965: ‘Affaire remise à l’ordre du jour malgré la décision négative prise le 17/2/65 pour permettre aux Affaires Étrangères de consulter la Grande Bretagne.’

\textsuperscript{355} SHDC, 78 1E1 194, folder Rhodésie du Sud, minutes of CIEEMG meeting 25/5/1965.

\textsuperscript{356} UN Charter, Chapter 7, art. 39, ‘threat to the peace, breach of the peace or act of aggression’, article 51, ‘the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense’; \url{https://treaties.un.org/doc/Publication/CTC/uncharter.pdf}, [Accessed 28/1/16]

\textsuperscript{357} One key example of Foreign Affairs using prior decision as justification as opposed to executive criteria was in the normal practical levels of spare parts, which it deemed inflated in a 1970s proposal XXXXXXXXXX REF
pointed out that licensing was admissible under the 1962 guidelines. This argument had either been inconvenient, or forgotten by the Minister. The CIEEMG minutes show that sale of at least one of these licenses was approved in January 1967. In July 1967, one month after the Israeli arms embargo, the SGDN noted to the Prime Minister that ‘les mesures prises en 1962 n’ont plus, en raison notamment des achats de licence, qu’une portée limitée’.

Helicopters had come to represent a particularly contentious issue in the authorisation phase well before they became a high political issue, for reasons of their dual use and their visibility. In the early 1950s they had served in emergencies and evacuation tasks, before being pioneered as transporters and gunships by the French in Algeria, but in the 1960s their counter-insurgency role in Vietnam and elsewhere was well established. That type of war, in that particular conflict, and fought by an American hegemon, were all irritants to the image that President de Gaulle was portraying in 1966. Helicopters were a reminder of the flip side, of French colonial wars in Vietnam and Algeria, her competition with America politically and economically, her arms trade policy.

**Authorisation of helicopters and their armament, 1960 to 1970**

Unsurprisingly, one area of authorisation which was far from a rubber stamp exercise was the question of selling armed helicopters. According to CIEEMG minutes a total of 171 French helicopters were sold to Portugal between 1960 and 1971. In chambers the French Defence ministry gave a total number in 1971 of 110 Alouettes, Frelons and Pumas sold to date. Rhodesia purchased 8 Alouette IIIs in 1961-62.

As per Pompidou’s silence on helicopters in his 1962 criteria, authorisation did not initially consider the ambiguous record of the helicopter in this regard as problematic. The civilian, policing and military applications of helicopters had made this a half-way credible position. In

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359 SHDV, 8Q 294, Minutes of CIEEMG meeting of 10/01/1967, regarding Nord-Aviation production license of ENTAC missiles.

360 (Blang, 2011, pp. 89, 109), specifically, de Gaulle’s decision to take France out of NATO, 7 March 1966, and his Phnom Penh speech on 31 August 1966.

361 (66+2+2+56) =126 AL3s & 6 Puma & 4 Alouette 2 in the 1960s, 33 AL3 & 6 Puma in the 1970s.

362 Minutes of CIEEMG meeting 28/10/1971, OJ DAI/57/44, helicopter spare parts to South Africa: ‘Rechanges pour héli (pales, tete de rotor, turbomoteurs et équipements spéciaux) pour Alouette III, Super Frelon, SA330. 6MF pour chaque type d’appareils. Within the CIEEMG minutes the furtively scribbled comments are still clear, showing an argument between Defence and Foreign Affairs over the normal level of parts needed.

363 SHDC, 78 1E1 185, table ‘Alouette III-Serie, 31/3/68, section ‘Afrique’. Internal document of Sud-Aviation, 1960-69; South African sales are also listed.
a similar reading, South African heli-borne police units rather than army units were sent to combat ‘terrorist infiltrators’ in the mandate of South-West Africa.\textsuperscript{364}

The initial helicopters sold to South Africa had arguably been at least in part intended for civilian use – a civilian purchase pool had been established to this end in 1958.\textsuperscript{365} The Portuguese counter-revolutionary doctrine to deal with insurgencies within their vast African territories triggered the argument that missile launchers and the MG151 20mm canon used to arm the Alouette II and III helicopters were controversial items for authorisation. In 1960, arming Portuguese light aircraft with missiles had received no objections within CIEEMG, but after the Angolan insurgency started in 1961, the Foreign Ministry bolted. Unarmed Alouette helicopters would be agreed to, but the Foreign Ministry drew the line at supplying their armaments. It was this question that had prompted Pompidou to intervene and draft his criteria in 1962. He had approved sale under condition of a non-reexport clause, a guarantee by Portugal not to use this equipment in Africa, thereby exonerating France.

As the military image of the helicopter was built on internal repression, requests for armed helicopters complicated authorisation decisions. By 1965 the Foreign Affairs delegates within the Commission no longer agreed to selling ‘unarmed’ helicopters and their armaments separately to South Africa, Portugal and Rhodesia.\textsuperscript{366} In apparently heated debates in December 1964 and in February 1965, the Quai first adjourned and then refused an order for twenty MG151 20mm canons, which made ideal side-board anti-personnel weapons for Alouettes.\textsuperscript{367} MATRA’s 37mm missile launchers were refused for the same reason.\textsuperscript{368} Defence delegates in favour of selling additional material would deny a connection,\textsuperscript{369} or argue that prior sale of

\textsuperscript{364} Scholtz, p.7. Scholtz notes the hasty swearing in as police officers of soldiers, but still attributes this measure internally to South African understanding, rather than externally to perceptions of observers; Cf Staff & Command 1, Box 20 ‘1968’, Operation ‘Chinamen’, GSC February 1968, p.9-11

\textsuperscript{365} See chapter 2.

\textsuperscript{366} SHDC, 78 1E1 255, folder Portugal, minutes of CIEEMG meeting, 23/04/1964, p.PV 32Ter, concerns over armament of 12 Alouettes cause adjournment; SHDV, 8Q 293, minutes of CIEEMG meeting 25/01/1966, p.PV #7 quiter, one order by South Africa for Alouettes, machine guns and missiles (withdrawn); SHDV, 8Q 293, minutes of CIEEMG meeting 02/09/1965, presentation of Alouette IIs to Rhodesia adjourned by Foreign Affairs: ‘Les Armées préciseront s’il s’agit de matériels armes ou non.’ Note that the Rhodesian reference is prior to UDI of 11 November 1965.

\textsuperscript{367} SHDC, 78 1E1 194, folder Portugal, cieemg 17/2/65, ‘ces mitrailleurs sont destinées à équiper des hélicoptères vendus sous réserve qu’ils ne seraient pas armées - décision réunion de défense’

\textsuperscript{368} SHDC, 78 1E1 194, folder Portugal, minutes of CIEEMG meeting 25/5/65, ‘Malgré l'insistance des Armées, la commission ne peut donner un avis favorable en raison des directives données par le Premier Ministre dans ce domaine. Le problème sera soumis à la décision du Premier Ministre.’

\textsuperscript{369} SHDC, 78 1E1 194, folder Rhodesie du Sud, minutes of CIEEMG meeting 26/10/1965, ‘à la demande des Affaires Etrangères, bien que les Armées aient précisé qu'il s'agissait de matériels non armes.’.
armament, clients’ training needs, or that civilian application created jurisprudence for follow-on sales. In the mid to late 1960s, the political tide of South African diplomatic and military confidence, and the economic downturn hitting French industry favoured trading major equipment. Between 1966 and 1968 six trade proposals to South Africa clearly skirted the accepted criteria: armed helicopters, small arms, and light mortars. They were withdrawn rather than adjourned. Given the date this suggests that the preponderance of the Defence Ministry was waning.

The Portuguese May 1965 proposal of armed Alouettes appears to have poisoned a similar request by South Africa for 15 armed helicopters. It was approved only after arbitrage by the Elysée. Separate sales of helicopters and MG151s to Pretoria passed without a murmur in 1966. The example is also instructive of CIEEMG decision making in the heyday of aggressive trading under French Defence Minister Pierre Messmer (1960-1969). Pompidou’s 1962 criteria had confirmed a political as well as a commercial decision. French-Portuguese relations had been rekindled by de Gaulle, and Defence Minister Messmer had personally vouched for French military exports to Lisbon. (Marcos, 2007, pp. 112-113) In the early 1960s, Messmer received several Portuguese ‘shopping lists’ for intended purchase of French material from his Portuguese colleague. In January 1965, CIEEMG could not reach consensus on selling machine guns after just having sold 12 unarmed Alouette IIIIs, as well as a new order for “unarmed” helicopters.

‘Des decisions prises en Reunion de Defense ont autorisé la cession au Portugal d’helicopteres Alouette III non armes. Dans cet esprit la CIEEMG a refusé la vente de 20 mitrailleuses de 20mm destinées de toute évidence à armer ces hélicoptères. Il apparait que le Portugal lierait ces deux affaires.’

The same gesture was made to South Africa, by de Gaulle on principle in September 1961, and by Messmer with regard to arms trade in October 1963. (Konieczna, 2013, pp. 177, 227) The

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370 SHDV, 8 Q 296, minutes of CIEEMG meeting 9/1/69, p.PV36 Six 16-seater Pumas to Portugal, four times the cargo space of an Alouette III, were approved for shipment to Portugal as ‘medical evacuation’ transports.

371 The six withdrawals are SHDV, 8Q 293, Armed Alouette IIIs on 25/01/1966; idem, 8Q 294, 50 mortars of 60mm, 11/07/1967; 8Q 295, 9 Transall C 160 cargo planes, 16/05/1968; idem, missile launching pads for helicopters, 20/06/1968; and idem, 1,000 automatic pistols to private company, 25/07/1968; the blanket order for unarmed helicopters is in 8Q 295, 03/10/1968, p.56, ‘withdrawn from agenda, may be reposted in a different form’.

372 SHDV, 8 Q 292, minutes of CIEEMG meeting 25/5/65, 15 AL3 armed helicopters to South Africa.

373 SHDV, 1 R 152, folder Exportations d’armes Aug’60-Juin’69, PM/SGDN, #1000/RD, 18/5/65, ‘Fiche de presentation du SGDN’, Secret, re ‘Reunion interministerielle du 19/5/65 sur lexportation de materiel de guerre’.
well documented internal debates on Portuguese sales would lead the way for the lesser discussed affairs to South Africa. Both would elicit the same arguments, and would be reinforcing from a perspective of jurisprudence. Nonetheless, arbitrage by the Prime Minister approved the delicate sale to Portugal, which was after all considered a ‘minor affair’. [‘.. a malgré tout un caractère mineur’] The actual reason was the veiled Portuguese threat to cancel the order for the second batch of helicopters. In the case of seven German-made machine guns, the decision communicated by the Prime Minister seems to have been ‘pre-cooked’, as by the mid-1960s Messmer was in personal contact with his Portuguese counterpart about arms supply:

‘La cession de ces mitrailleuses parait désirable car elle permettrait au Ministre des Armées de pouvoir annoncer lors de sa visite à Lisbonne une décision qui est souhaitée par le Gouvernement Portugais.’

The Secretary General of National Defence, who was the committee chair and the formal representative to the Prime Minister on military procurement, blatantly sided with the Ministry of Defence. The Secretary General noted that certain dossiers were being adjourned meeting after meeting. While sound deliberation is good, he argued, the CIEEMG should not lose sight of the object of the committee, which is to facilitate business:

‘…il ne faut pas perdre de vue que toute prolongation non justifie de ce delai va à l’encontre de notre objectif qui est le developpement des exportations et qui suppose un aboutissement rapide de tous les problemes qui ne soulevent pas de difficultes sur le plan politique ou militaire.’

These uneven exchanges do not support the view of a clear-cut presidential policy. In all cases, the decision making originated at the level of ministerial export delegates, the DAEF, DAI, and DREE, all defending the brief of their ministry. In May 1966, presidential arbitrage over a stalemated CIEEMG had weighed in to support sale of “15 armed Alouette III helicopters”.

Five years later, DAEF saw space to argue a new presidential course. A DAEF report of May 1970 rejoiced that the ‘liberally-minded’ Defence colleagues no longer dominated authorisation. DAEF’s advocacy of strict observance of “non-repressive” arms trade convinced

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374 SHDV, 1 R 152, #1000/RD, 18/5/65, Secret, ‘Fiche de présentation du SGDN, Réunion interministérielle du 19/5/65 sur l’exportation de matériel de guerre’.
375 SHDV, 1 R 152, SGDN, Gen de l’Air Fourquet, #1679, 29/11/65, to Defence Minister’s cabinet, ‘fonctionnement de la CIEEMG’
376 SHDV, 8 Q 292, minutes of CIEEMG meeting of 25/5/65, [arbitrage de l’Elysee’]
Pompidou to make his presidential public ‘gesture’, issuing an embargo on helicopters to South Africa in October 1970. Pompidou may have lacked de Gaulle’s stubbornness, but circumstances had also deteriorated. Pointing to the political risks of continuing this policy, the DAEF succeeded in effecting a more restrictive policy. As will be made clear in Chapter 5, this apparent turn in official policy did not impede but only mutate the illicit arms trade to South Africa.

South African Procurement procedures 1960-1970

South African institutional buying was also guided by rules, but these were both more straightforwardly hierarchical and less organic than the French system. The decision makers within the South African defence community were often identifiable as individual officers or officials, and not departments.

In 1956, before the reorganisation of the SADF and the constitution of the Republic, Steyn explained the purchasing procedure to his French contact Jaboulay « Il existe, au Ministère de la Défense, une commission qui est présidé par le Directeur de la Trésorerie ; lorsque l’armée a étudié un type d’armement qu’elle juge nécessaire d’acquérir, elle chiffre ses besoins, qui sont discutés en Conseil de Cabinet, puis la Commission décide si ces besoins entrent dans les possibilités du Trésor. Si oui, et si le Cabinet était favorable, la dépense est autorisée, et régularisée « ultérieurement » dans un poste d’un budget futur pour « Besoins spéciaux d’armement » ne donnant aucun détail. »

The first question was always funding. If budget was available, the question of quality and quantity would be left to the various service specialists, under the watchful eye of the Commander in chief and his Chief of Defence Staff. The Minister did however have to convince the Finance Minister of the wisdom of expenditures. The normal “bread & butter” items were bought via the State Tender Board.

Since July 1961 Pretoria had been engaging in high level ministerial visits with France, straightening out commercial difficulties and strengthening interstate relations. The South African defence community had demanded discretion from its French partners on several

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378 SANDF, HVS 1, box 209; SANDF, HVS 412/6, Chief of Defence Staff to Chief of Air Force, 22/4/68, ‘Helicopter replacements’. Also SANDF HVS 1, box 209, HVS/412/6, CDS to CG, 22/5/68, handwritten note by CG, 18/6/68, showing primacy of the Cabinet.
379 SANDF, HVS 1, box 209; HVS 412/6, CG to Secretary of treasury, 29/11/68, ‘purchase of main equipment - Cabinet memorandum 10/68’.
380 SANDF library, 1964-65 White Paper on defence, par 5.2
occasions, and was equally vigilant towards its own departments. French diplomats had also been well aware of the need to protect the details of their business from prying eyes, and the head of the Quai d’Orsay’s Africa desk, Direction Afrique-Levant, worried about South African press highlighting Defence Minister Botha’s informal visit to Paris. Ambassador Georges Balay, in his ninth year in Pretoria, assured his colleague that: ‘Vos conseils de prudence et de discrétion sont suivis ici depuis longtemps’, and elaborated that ‘comme je l’ai déclaré à vos prédécesseurs, et je crois au ministre lui-même, je n’irai jamais accueillir … l’arrivée des Mirage ou d’hélicoptère.’ Balay’s courteous assurances revealed the DAL director to be an outsider to arms trade to South Africa.

In 1967, a purchase order for 15 Alouette IIIs (Sud-Aviation) and 10 Artouste turbine engines (Turbomeca) was signed for approval by the ‘State Buyer’, under condition of Treasury approval. Major equipment was on occasion purchased from the unpublished Defence Special Equipment Account, which was the preserve of the Ministry of Defence and the Treasury. South African diplomacy took an active role in maintaining good relations with French arms trade decision makers. Following a query made by the South African Foreign Minister during his visit to France in the fall of 1964, Ambassador to Paris, Van Schalkwyk, passed on a Memorandum for ‘establishing more effective and consistent procedures in placing the orders for armament in France.’ It showed both a South African willingness to closer trade relations with France, as a realization that greater care and discretion was needed to maintain them. A lucid analysis of the French Defence Ministry’s armament structures was provided. Within the DMA, the Department of Expansion and Exports [DEE] was identified as

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381 CADN, 551PO-2-142, Balay to DAEF, 9/11/61 [‘‘Les autorités sud-africaines insistent pour que les transactions en question gardent un caractère confidentiel.’’] ; Doc MinDef/EMA/DlV Rensgmt/Frederic-Moreau, #980, 10/2/65, Secret/, Très Urgent, ‘Note pour le Ministre des Armées (Cabinet Militaire)’, ‘Visite en France du General Grobbelaar [sic], Commandant en Chef des Forces Armées sud-africaines’, similar request on the visit by Commander-in-Chief Grobbelaar to Messmer, [‘que son séjour en France ait un caractère strictement confidentiel’]

382 SAAF Museum, Mr Ken Smy’s collection, #501/1/20, South African Military Attache Robbertze to Commandant general, 17/1/61, ‘concerning Alouettes’, complaining about leaks in the London station; MV/Botha 2, Box 22, MV 56/4, vol 1, ‘Franckryk: samerwerking’, Botha to Diederichs, 19/4/67, on French payments beign routed via London. [‘Amend… with a view to better relations’]

383 CADN, 551PO-B-32, Quai d’Orsay/DAL to French ambassador to Cape Town, Georges Balay, 20/3/67, on the coming visit of Defence Minister Botha to Paris, 9-14/4/67


386 SANDF library, 1964-65 White Paper on defence, p.3.

387 SANDF, HSI 2 box 18 arms policy, Ambassador, Paris, to Foreign Secretary, 16/10/64, ‘Armaments purchase in France’.
responsible for both arms production and export. All export orders must go to DMA for approval, whose current director was previously a ‘highly placed official in the Department of Customs and excise’. Aviation research development was managed by the DTI, the ‘aeronautical Technical and industrial directorate’ which depended largely on industry for R&D capability. The Memorandum took great interest in the organisation production management by the DMA. The main lesson was that for ‘all aspects of war supplies’ approval and authority from the DMA was necessary.

The recommendation was as follows: rather than going directly to particular production or planning departments, the Embassy was best placed to make initial approaches to the DMA. Such approaches would have to be signed off on by the Commandant General, and presented by an entity having the support of the Minister of Defence, so that a communication of equals was established. Keeping the South African embassy informed would facilitate contacts with the French and also ‘eliminate the intervention of agents in the initial stages of negotiation’, thus saving public money. Agents would thereafter be crucial in the smooth running of the process; OFEMA’s crucial services in recent aviation deals were noted in this respect. This could be construed as support for routinization and intensification of trade, but other possibilities are a focus on discretion, disenchantment with (French) sales agents, an extension of trade control by the military, and some documents suggest a clamp-down on corruption within the SADF. At the very least, trade practice was changing SADF methods.

A subsequent warning by the Commandant-General dated 25/2/65 noted that nonetheless certain industry parties still used ‘commercial channels without the knowledge of the military attaché, causing ‘misunderstanding and embarrassment’. The reason for this circular was that contacts between producer Hotchkiss-Brandt and their DMA contact person on the as yet adjourned items of 190 60mm mortars had been passed on to Hotchkiss-Brandt’s South African agents Mr Jaboulay and Mr Yale. These two took this as a softening of French positions and unilaterally informed the DMA to triple the amount. This heightened amount then caused the refusal of the proposal by the CIEEMG - erroneously described by the South African CG [Chief of General Staff] as the ‘interdepartmental committee’ (it was interministerial). Together with suspicions of fraud by South African operators, and a lack of understanding of French decision making, such incidents escalated the mounting unease of the South African defence community with promotional agents. A South African committee found that “unqualified actions and mutual competition between parties involved” disclosed South African interests, which prompted foreign authorities to pre-emptively refuse exports that would have otherwise passed
through the regulatory mill without a murmur.\textsuperscript{388} This analysis recognised the need to limit outside pressure, but ignored the debates within the French government. OFEMA was partly to blame, recruiting local agents on a commission, and taking a handsome fee for itself, especially on helicopters. The agent operating in South Africa could get up to 15\% commission on sales of helicopters and spare parts. From the perspective of the SADF, that was a double charge.\textsuperscript{389} In September 1965 the South African Cabinet issued a five-point procedure on the purchase of ‘security requirements’ abroad. It ruled out as negotiating partners every person and group not directly representing the principal, and mandated the Special Defence Committee of the State Tender Council as the only South African negotiator.\textsuperscript{390} Separately, in 1964, French truck manufacturer Berliet had also refused Jaboulay’s services, preferring its own technical representative.\textsuperscript{391} Doubtless, such measures on both sides reduced the number of common practitioners, but increased trust between them.

Thus, by 1968 French supply was taken for granted by the South African military, and their internal analysis shows considerable overlap with the French terminology. By May 1968 the South African Air force had decided on Sud-Aviation’s larger more powerful SA-330 Puma helicopter to replace the park of ageing Alouette III and deal with a worsening security situation.\textsuperscript{392} Expanding demands of ‘Internal Security’ operations in South West Africa and ‘Counter-Insurgency’ or ‘COIN’ operations in Rhodesia and elsewhere required quadrupling the number of obsolescent Alouette IIIIs to about 200.\textsuperscript{393} A follow-on report also twice noted

\textsuperscript{388} SANDF, MVB2 box 15, Folio 2C, Report of the interdepartmental advisory committee on state foreign purchasing [‘Verslag van die Komitee insake die aankoop van staatsbenodigdhede wat uit die buiteland verskaf word.’] 14/9/65, [date per folio 1A], p.3, ‘Hierdie onoordeelkundige optrede, gepaard met onderlinge wedververing tussen die betrokke partye, lei daartoe dat die Staat se moontlike behoeftes in die betrokke lande rugbaar word, met die gevolg dat die regering van daardie lande op hul hoede gestel word en uitvoerlisensies weier wat, was dit nie vir die feit dat die regerings verplig is om kennis te neem van die aktiwiteite van bedoelde persone nie, heel waarskynlik sonder enige moeilikheid deur normale handelskanale sou kon geword het.’ [This unqualified conduct, along with mutual competition between parties involved, leads to broadcasting of the State’s potential requirements in the countries concerned, with the result that their governments are alerted, and refuse export authorisation, which, if not for the mere fact that these governments are obliged to take notice of activities of said persons, would most likely have been achieved through normal trade channels without any difficulty.]


\textsuperscript{390} SANDF, DC 1 box 111 – 194, #28-965.

\textsuperscript{391} CAEF, B54911, folder Exportations 1955-66, Doc DREE/SPC B1/Languepin, #2350, 6/11/64, to Commercial Attache, Pretoria, re berliet selling trucks in SA.

\textsuperscript{392} SANDF, HVS 1 box 209, HVS/412/6, Verster, Chief of the Air Force, May 1968, ‘Review of SAAF helicopter requirements’, p.4. Seven of these 54 were of the smaller 2+3 seater Alouette II type, used for training.

\textsuperscript{393} Idem, SANDF HVS 1 box 209, HVS/412/6, Verster, Chief of the Air Force, May 1968, ‘Review of SAAF helicopter requirements’, p.6, the total order came to 16 Super Frelons, 32 Puma’s, and 48 Alouette IIIIs.
that the French Puma was designed as a ‘non-offensive’ attack-transport helicopter. [‘nie-offensief’] 394 It was therefore urgently recommended that the usual French ‘sales talk’ be tested by a SAAF mission to Paris.395 It is significant that a proposed military tool was described internally as non-aggressive, especially when the French promoter did not use such terms. 396 This goes some way to suggest that South African buyers had acquired both an awareness of the French governmental sensibilities to authorising major equipment, and of OFEMA as one of the intermediary layers shielding its core. Such prudent attitude also fits with other internal indications of South African fears to “rock the boat”. 397

Stricter interpretations of criteria, 1970s.

CIEEMG’s workload rose substantially in the 1970s, causing a further rationalisation. (Hebert, Les exportations françaises d’armement au début de la Ve République : la mise en place des éléments d’une politique, 2002, p. 260)398 In 1971, French arms sales only began their meteoric rise and South African purchases of French Mirage jet fighters and submarines are responsible for the first spike of sales. (Hebert, Les exportations françaises d’armement au début de la Ve République : la mise en place des éléments d’une politique, 2002) By 1976, most exports below 2.5 mFF and all under 1.5 mFF were exempted from CIEEMG approval, which suggests the commercial emphasis and scale of French arms trade by this time. 399

Perhaps for that reason, by the mid-1970s the CIEEMG procedure was strictly regimented. Approval led to issue of an ‘autorisation d’exportation des matériels de Guerre’ (AEMG), a four-fold document, with the DAI, the SGDN, the MinAE and the Customs Office [DGD] all approving within their specific competency.

In May 1970, and with the objections of black African states in mind, the Foreign Ministry’s Department for Economic and Financial Affairs (DAEF) reexamined the authorisation record. DAEF reflected that its conservative interpretation of Pompidou’s 1962 instructions had often

394 SANDF, HVS 1 box 209, HVS/412/6, CDS to CG, 8/5/68, ‘Aanvulling van Helikopters’, points 3 and 8.
395 SANDF, HVS 1 Box 209, HVS/412/6, Verster, Chief of the Air Force, May 1968, ‘Review of SAAF helicopter requirements’, p.6, also SADF, HVS 1 Box 209, HVS/412/6, CDS to CG, 8/5/68, p.2
396 SANDF, HVS 1, box 209 HVS/412/6, Rebuffel for Sud-Aviation, to South African Government, 14/6/68, ‘Proposition pour helicopters SA-330’.
397 SANDF, HVS 1, box 209 HV5/412/6, SAAF to CDS, 5/11/68, ‘Evaluation report SA-330 helicopter’. See dates of handwritten entries by CDS, and Senior Staff Officer SAAF.
398 Physically comparing the number of propositions contained in minutes of the 1950s, or even the 1960s to the 1970s clearly shows their multiplication.
399 SHDC, 793 1D1 20, presentation by DAI deputy director for Control, Mr Pierre Germain, 16/3 1976, p.6-7; in this simplified procedure, imports and transits of armaments were dealt with outside of the CIEEMG, by the DGD and Ministry for the Interior.
faltered in favour of the ‘rather liberal’ interpretations of the Ministry of Defence. When called to arbitrate CIEEMG (prime) ministerial stalemate, the Presidency had upheld decisions to sell abnormal quantities to “private” buyers in South Africa and Portuguese territories, as had the French prime minister in propositions to supply both states with guerrilla equipment, including helicopters. In the wake of the British government’s decision to restart arms trade to South Africa in July 1970, the Foreign Ministry saw an opportunity to change CIEEMG decision making, by urging a ban on helicopters to South Africa and moderation of spare parts.

In April 1970, Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda, as acting president for non-aligned African states united in the Organisation for African Unity, wrote to President Pompidou about arms trade to South Africa and Portugal. Having been railroaded by President de Gaulle in 1968, Kaunda found the new President more amenable. Anticipating the coming September 1970 conference of the OAU in Lusaka, and concomitant UN meetings, the French Foreign office feared a deterioration of the French international position, to the point of taking Britain’s position as a punching bag for principled Afro-Asian indignation. Convinced that a gesture of some kind had to be made, Pompidou announced in a personal meeting with Kaunda on 21 October 1970, that France would outlaw new contracts for helicopters and armoured cars to South Africa. (Sales to Portugal were not curtailed). For Pompidou this was merely a tactical withdrawal. To Kaunda he located his decision within the policy of non-interference, which had been adjusted to inhibit support for guerrillas? and repression, in the spirit of his ‘precise’

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403 CADC, 499INVA 1163, ibid, 2/7/70 – report by sous-direction Afrique [DAL], on visit by deputy director of DAL to Kaunda

1962 instructions against arming South Africa with such weapons.\textsuperscript{405} Having shrewdly positioned France as a proponent of African development and international order, Pompidou boldly denied training South African pilots in France, then emphasized that he himself had made rulings, in 1962, and in 1969 against Portugal, that French arms trade did not disrupt either. Kaunda demurred, having his claims and facts of white repression in Southern Africa and Western culpability in it deftly absorbed by Pompidou’s narrative.\textsuperscript{406} With this ‘adjustment’ of the 1962 criteria, French arms trade simply bounced back, after initial shockwaves had subsided. By 1974, secrecy was stepped up by a shrinking group of operatives, as DAEF realized. DAEF noted the unlikely awareness of General Brohon, the Inspector General of Aérospatiale, about CIEEMG discussions. Brohon had been enquiring about DAEF’s objections to supplying spare parts to Pretoria under authorized contracts.\textsuperscript{407} In October 1975 DAEF ordered its ambassador to South Africa to start reporting on arms trade regularly and systematically.\textsuperscript{408}

Five years after Pompidou’s embargo, on a visit to Congo-Zaire in August 1975, President Giscard announced during an interview his intention to ban all non-naval trade to South Africa. Its rationale was similarly conceived, but less expertly orchestrated. This time, the OAU was unimpressed with the measure, conveniently tailored to South Africa’s naval priorities. (Wauthier, 1995, p. 401) The French lower diplomatic and industrial strata were frantically trying to interpret president Giscard’s impromptu announcement.\textsuperscript{409} In response to greater scrutiny, aircraft trade turned ever more discreet. Under a covert joint French-Rhodesian flight

\textsuperscript{405} CADC 499INVA 1163, ibid, transcript of personal meeting between Presidents Pompidou and Kaunda, ‘Tête-à-tête entre le Président de la République et Monsieur Kaunda’, 21/10/70, p.1, 3. ‘néanmoins, nous n’intervenons pas dans les affaires des autres états’,

\textsuperscript{406} CADC, 499INVA 1163, ibid, transcript of meeting Presidents Pompidou and OAU delegation led by President Kenneth Kaunda, ‘Entretien du Président Pompidou et de Monsieur Kaunda’, 21/10/70, p.2, ‘La France.. partie des pays non-alignés..’, p.6, ‘l’aspect morale de ce problème’.

\textsuperscript{407} CADN, 551PO-B-32, DAEF director Aumale to ‘Department’ and Minister, personal and confidential, 9/10/1975.

\textsuperscript{408} CADN, 551PO-B-32, DAEF director Aumale to French ambassador in Pretoria, #17/DE/ARM, 18/2/74, ‘Marches d’armement’.

\textsuperscript{409} CADN, 551PO-B-32, Doc by French ambassador, Pretoria to Ministre Plénipotentiaire, C. d’Aumale, DAE, 9/10/75, p.2, ‘..je vous serais reconnaissant de me donner si possible votre interprétation des conséquences que l’on tire à Paris des propos tenues à Kinshasa par le Président de la République en ce qui concerne la fourniture de matériel militaire à Pretoria.’. Ambassador Schricke is also alarmed about Brohon’s contacts with Botha, indication of his distance to these matters, and reason for his letter.
plan 18 Cessna aircraft were delivered from the French factory to Salisbury in 1976.\textsuperscript{410,411} It is also noteworthy that the seven obsolescent South African Alouette II helicopters bought in 1960 were almost certainly spirited to Rhodesia by OFEMA in 1973.\textsuperscript{412} Closed CIEEMG minutes have so far prevented verification of this trade.

**Conclusion**

The Defence community created space within the realm of authorisation for arms trade proposals. In so doing it presented itself as an ally to their South African colleagues. This served to bolster their relations. As a process, authorisation was a game of words between various centres of power within the French government, which South African military struggled to understand. Furthermore, the South African Defence community, itself small in scale and unified under the cabinet, could claim a connection to only one of these power centres. As the 1970s arrived, Pretoria was forced to redouble efforts to build sustainable, and above all secure, connections with those able to ensure supply.

In this sense authorisation practice prepared the community of practice of the later 1970s, although as an internal process it does not provide the strongest link of an actual community of practice between defence communities. As an activity internal to the state, it nonetheless demarcates the membership of those in the French defence community that were engaging with the question of entertaining South African proposals and dealing with the concomitant concerns. As such it identifies the basis of membership of a shared community. Based solely on her sustained authorisation practice, the French Foreign Ministry is arguably a prospective member of the community, even if shown to be antagonistic and lukewarm. If we include other commercial phases, however, the ‘Quai d’Orsay’ was clearly not a participant.

The Pompidou criteria have been understood as the introduction of policy, that ‘Jusqu’en 1962, la France n’a pas une politique des ventes d’armes’. (Konieczna, 2013, p. 223) Hebert sees systematic trade emerging only after 1970. (Hebert, Les exportations françaises d’armement au

\textsuperscript{410} SANDF library, (Brent, 2001, pp. 68-71), Cessna FTB337s, produced in France under American license, were flown by French and Rhodesian pilots over two routes to fool control towers of French African airfields of Dakar, Abidjan and Djibouti; (Salt, 2015), p.543, orders were placed in 1975, delivery was in January 1976.

\textsuperscript{412} SANDF, HVS 1 box 209 vol.1, doc HVS to KG, ‘omruiling van Alouette II vir Alouette III’, 29/9/70 carrying handwritten approval, dated 8/10/70; SANDF, HVS 1 Box 209 vol.1, 9/11/70, CG to Secretary for Treasury, ‘omruiling van Alouette II vir Alouette III’, three AL3s for six AL2s to be returned to Sud-Aviation; SANDF library, (Bosman, 1998), p.108, notes the obsolescence of 6 remaining Alouette IIs and 5 spare engines; (Brent, 2001), p.92, claims ‘six SAAF alouette 2s were transferred to the SAP in Rhodesia on 3 April 1973’. 
début de la Ve République : la mise en place des éléments d’une politique, 2002) Both convert deliveries and particular sales levels into policy outcomes. Indeed, in internal reporting the French civil service acknowledged the problematic nature of deliveries, and instead favoured orders as a much clearer accounting tool.\textsuperscript{413} Trade had preceded the 1962 criteria by the Prime Minister, and these did not end debates about trade thereafter. It is therefore incomplete to equate the criteria to policy or its objectives. Given the previous, it seems more apt to consider these criteria as a discourse to sustain the fiction of a ‘defensive’ nature of French arms trade. French arms trade policy was, and would remain, to generate arms trade that would support domestic and foreign policy objectives. Ultimately policy was that body of decisions which the government could defend. As will be discussed in the next chapter, customers would be expected to observe these parameters in order to sustain the relationship.

\textsuperscript{413} CAEF, B1018, folder Année 1969, Note to the minister, for Mr Dupont Fauville, 15/2/68, ‘Exportations de l’industrie aéronautique en 1967’, p.1, ‘livraisons n’ont pas d’influence précise quand [sic] à leur valeur globale’. 
Chapter 4: Procurement

This chapter discusses the decision to acquire as the third step of the commercial process. The term procurement, sometimes taken as a synonym for ‘arms trade’, is understood here to comprise two decisions, one technical, one strategic. At the technical level, it concerns deciding on whether to acquire an item of potential interest by a particular supplier, or in the case of a seller, to prioritize a certain line of production. The second, transformative question is that of buying or making independently. The choice between these questions is not as stark for complex weapon systems like aircraft, whose operation involves a continuum of a choice of a suitable type of armament, its regular maintenance, and the provision of the necessary service and expertise; technical and strategic questions of procurement likewise related to each other. The articulations of interest and clearance for proposed acquisitions have been discussed in the previous chapters. The transactional decision is only briefly touched upon here, as most of its aspects are covered in the other chapters.

Instead, our focus will be mainly on the second question of South African procurement dependency, which was raised and partially resolved by SADF between 1960 and 1970. The French (industrial) decision to sell, as opposed to its ministerial authorisation, is relatively unproblematic. Ironically, French defence industry was doubly served by enabling the self-sufficiency of her commercial partner. Sud-Aviation benefited in 1964 from supervising the ATLAS turnkey project for local aircraft and maintenance production, and later, by extending its partnership to include helicopter production licensing. The next chapter on post-sale fulfilment will cover the new-assembly-from-spare-parts deal that formed the next stage of South African helicopter procurement after 1970.

Chapter outline

The subject of strategic procurement provides a ‘double bridge’: between the early steps of the commercial process and the last step of after-sales service, and between the initial trading years of the relationship, and the final stage of construction from spare-parts accomplished by a community of practice. Three sections cover the prelude, execution and aftermath of the strategic decision to build the Atlas aircraft factory outside Johannesburg. The engagement in a major and consequential common project significantly changed South African attitude towards the relationship, broadly moving from suspicion to maturity.
In the first section the French and South African positions on immediate purchase are set out as a starting point, after which it analyses the context of the French-South African rapprochement between 1961 and 1963. Despite the operational gains from the Alouette II deal in 1960, full strategic and political South African divergence from British supply occurred only after post-independence exit from the Commonwealth. British equivocation on military supply prompted a reorientation by the SADF towards alternative European partners in 1961. In 1963, with an international embargo looming, French supply invitations to explore were accepted with some hesitation.

The second section shows the studies and negotiations from 1963 onwards that lead SAAF to choose Sud-Aviation as project manager of production of an Italian trainer aircraft. The cooperation between 1964 and 1966 feature a veritable joint enterprise, mutual engagement between defence communities, and elements of shared repertoire. The South African choice for French assistance settled into an attitude of accommodation.

The third section starts with the French unilateral embargo against Israel’s aggression in the Six-Day war of June 1967, and the May 1968 protests in France. These events signalled to the South Africans the dependence of their supply relationship on President de Gaulle and his policies. Strategic independence was stepped up organisationally as a result, and escalation of regional hostilities prompted the planning of helicopter production at Atlas.

The chapter conclusion summarizes the extent to which common objectives, shared engagement and repertoire took shape between French and South African defence communities in the decade of the 1960s. By early 1970, before the embargo, French assistance in improvement of South African defence industry and its management had led to optimism about the French supply relationship.

First Procurement option: Purchasing

*South African purchasing*

The Atlas project which would facilitate maintenance for all of SAAF aircraft, also coincides with a lull in SAAF helicopter purchasing between 1963 and 1967. This was a consequence of a defence strategy in favour of sophisticated aviation purchases, notably from France. South African military procurement decisions were reshaped in November 1960 with the formal jettisoning of Erasmus’ project of a regional defence alliance by the new Defence minister
Fouché. The SADF had feared, with some justification, that the year 1963 would bring international revocation of the South West African mandate and, outrageously, an Indian-led UN invasion.

Between the two ‘purported’ security crises of 1961 and 1975 – SA independence and Portuguese exit from Africa – SADF budgets skyrocketed to modernize and expand its arsenal.  

(Scholtz, 2015, p. 55; Moukambi, 2008, p. 300) Moreover, South Africa’s strategic environment was continuously evolving in the 1960s, and the SADF was ordered to be ready for a UN-led invasion, first by 1963, then by 1965, then 1967. These “invasion deadlines” delayed further expansion of the helicopter force, despite multiplying budgets and Portuguese and Rhodesian adoption of Alouette IIIs. The successful suppression in December 1960 of the lingering Pondoland revolt by Alouette II assistance confirmed helicopter utility to SAAF. After two orders of Alouette III helicopters, 12 in April, 21 in July 1961, however, ‘amended requirements’ for an expansion to 64 helicopters were put on hold. By 1963, final deliveries of ordered Alouette helicopters, Mirage jets, and British Canberra bombers had expanded SAAF’s regional footprint, necessitating investment in local production, but also in advanced maintenance infrastructure. (McWilliams, 1989, pp. 11, 113; Warwick, 2009, pp. 186-7)

Against growing military and economic South African strength stood the growing pressure on the Portuguese and Rhodesian buffers by Black liberation movements. Consequentially, procurement of helicopters, which had been paused for other SAAF wishes, came back in to play as a key operational tool. The South African government had pretended to the world and to itself that the South African Police was able to quell ostensible public disorder in South West

414 (Scholtz, 2015, p. 55), ‘From a very low R36 million in 1958/59, it [defence spending] increased to exactly double that in 1961/1962 (R72 million), but concomitant with the first security-strategic analysis conducted in 1961, it suddenly jumped to R129 million in the next financial year, the steady increases then resumed until the Savannah debacle [operation in Angola], when the R692 million budgeted for 1974/75 shot up sharply to R1043 million for 1975/76.’ By 1982/83, the budget stood at R2668 million’. Spending to GDP went from 0.9% to 5% in the period; Moukambi’s appendix 4 gives budget totals, 1960-1988.

415 SANDF, Staff & Command 1, box 17, folder General Staff Conferences 1964, GSC meeting 28/2/64, p.2.

416 SANDF, MVB2 box 216, Report ‘Die Unie se Militêre probleem, idem, p.29, compare the implied adequacy in the numbers of available light aircraft and helicopters under points iii and iv. The helicopter number is outdated, and corrected in handwriting; also SADF 22/7/15 - STAFF & Comd 1, box 15, Conferences, vol.1, GS Meeting 25/9/61, aanhangsel (Annex) A, ‘Report on the situation in Pondoland’, 10/1/61, ‘helicopters and light aircraft are found particularly useful by the land force in the difficult terrain where they can lift troops to otherwise inaccessible features and watch for escape attempts during operations.... There is a marked improvement in the security situation in Pondoland...’

417 OMG list 60-61. MOUK:94 implies 2nd batch was the July’61 meeting, however, SAAF had already envisaged SADF 22/7/15 - STAFF & Comd 1, box 15, Conventions and Conferences, 1961, vol I, GSC 1-4/8/61, p.1-2, 14 point 48, ‘...die aanskaffing van meer helikopters moet tot later oorstaan.’

418 (McWilliams, 1989, p. 113), ‘the so-called “logistics tail” of a weapons system [which] Armscor, through its subsidiaries, was manufacturing ... as part of the complete system’. See chapter 5.
Africa. Yet in August 1966 SAAF assisted in the first heli-borne intervention there by South African Police. By 1967 the SADF General Staff was pessimistic about the Portuguese ability to hold on, and the SAP anti-guerrilla operations in the mandate in South West Africa were overextended, and the strain on equipment put a strain on logistics and available parts. By 1968, 20 of 48 Alouette IIIIs were engaged in cross-border operations in Namibia (8), Rhodesia (6), and Angola (6), and future requirements were expected to double, not to mention those of other tasks like training and maritime duties. Not surprisingly, additional helicopters and small aircraft again became a priority item for procurement planning.

**French Selling**

Well before the South Africans, the French defence community had warded off its ‘isolation and weakness’, embracing industrial cooperation and consolidation in the mid-1950s. (Hamel, 2002, p. 122) The Fourth Republic had left a revitalised but unbalanced aeronautical industry, which its successor provided with a new financial basis and comprehensive defensive orientation. (GIFAS, 1984, p. 7) By the start of the first five-year plan of the Fifth Republic (1960-64), French aviation was the first nuclear vector, and had become internationally competitive. (Carlier & Martel, Le développement de l’aéronautique militaire française de 1958 à 1970, 1979, p. 44) As part of the Fifth Republic’s aims of international prestige and autonomous nuclear deterrence, the French defence community and its armament industry quickly embarked on an ‘arms exports policy tout azimuts’, sharpening a rusty ‘industrial tool’, and equipping it with a significant measure of responsibility and autonomy. (Kolodziej, 1987, p. 83) Part of the endeavour of improving the effectiveness of the French defence industrial base was to assign an important institutional role to the new Minister of Defence, Pierre Messmer (1960-1969) responsible for wartime deployment and peacetime management of military organisation and strength. (Chantebout, La défense nationale, 1972, p. 17) In 1961 production management was separated from peacetime preparation of the armed forces, and

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420 SANDF, S & C 1 Box 19, Folder GSC meeting minutes 1967, GSC meeting 25/4/67, p.2, ‘dat hulle breekt punt bereikt het’ [‘have reached breaking point’].
421 Ibid., GSC meeting 26/5/67, p.5, the SAAF supplying the helicopters was unimpressed with the SAP’s care for her helicopters: ‘Niemand wil loop nie – almal wil orals met die helikopters ry.’ [‘Noone (soldier) wants to walk – all want to ride the helicopter everywhere’].
422 SANDF, HVS 1, Box 209 vol 1, Folder Helicopters, folio 19A, ‘Review of SAAF helicopter requirements:1968’, points 5, 10 and 14. Motives are: expansion from present 36 to 5 Sq of 8, 7 for training and 4 reserve (order for 15). Needs & ‘success of OVambo land’ prompt further purchase. ‘dekmantel van die polisie’ [27/7, Verster; Gsc 1968—Bourget search laptop]
423 (GIFAS, 1984, p. 7), specifically the ‘Ordonnance’ of 7 January 1959
allocated to the DMA. Between 1959 and 1962, French international armaments sales quadrupled. (Moukambi, 2008, p. 86)

In the early 1960s Sud-Aviation’s financial position was not helped by stagnating sales.425 Sud-Aviation’s helicopter division aimed to defend its light-helicopter niche, and to renew its attempt to compete in the heavy helicopter market, after the narrow customer base of the Super Frelon helicopter had proved costly. (Seiffert, 2008, pp. 132, 141) In the development of the new ‘hélicoptère de manoeuvre’, the French army was consulted for its experiences in the Algerian war: more men, more speed, greater range. Arriving in 1965, the greater payload and range of the new SA-330 ‘Puma’ would, like the Alouette III before, become the optimal military platform compared to its American competitors. (Seiffert, 2008, p. 148) Against any claims of political favouritism, SAAF could therefore continue to transmit strong technical and operational arguments for choosing French equipment.

*South African Procurement, 1960-1963*

South African overestimation of the strength of its capabilities and of its cooperation with Britain did not mean the function of military supply was not appreciated. When late assessments of both aspects came up short, French supply appeared as the rational alternative. Already in 1952 South African Prime minister Malan had pointed out the dangers of dependency on foreign militaries. (Cockram, 1970, p. 107) The South African government’s desire for ‘manufacture of both airframes and engines’ for aircraft went back to 1949, hoping it would ‘enable the SAAF to choose its type of aircraft under licence, irrespective of the country of origin.’426 Lack of supporting infrastructure and rapid technological developments had prevented the ‘risky undertaking.’427 For a long time, the project had also seemed militarily unnecessary. In November 1959, just four months before the clash at Sharpeville, the military command thought that ‘… there are indications that the tension in the international situation have eased off to such

426 SANDF, MVEF1, box 60, folder MV/22/6/4 - Bou van vliegtuie in republiek, ['construction of aircraft in republic'], Letter Defence Minister Erasmus to Prime Minister, 19/1/49, pp.1-2.
427 SANDF, MVEF 60, MV/22/6/4, reply by Economic Minister Eric Louw to Defence Minister Erasmus, 6/4/49, p.3 ['Die snelle tegniese ontwikkeling van voertuie en vliegtuie maak die tenswoordige nie die geskikte tyd om groot kapitaalbelegging vir vervaardigingsdoeleindes te onderneem nie…’n geskikte tyd.. gedurende ekonomiese insinking’.]
an extent, that outside aggression against Union borders is unlikely to happen within the next five years.\textsuperscript{428}

In his military outlook of January 1960 Deputy Commandant General Hiemstra was pessimistic about the continuity of Britain’s military supply to the SADF. Hiemstra estimated that the new French Fifth Republic, although sympathetic to South Africa, remained weak and divided, and would not fare much better in the face of international pressure.\textsuperscript{429} His low expectations of French government were not unwarranted, but probably also informed by his brief spell as a military attaché in Paris during the unstable IV Republic, and the intractable conflict in French Algeria.\textsuperscript{430} (Aben & Cottin, 1998, pp. 43-4) As an indication of mutual perceptions, French Foreign Minister Couve de Murville would in April 1960 regard South African society as a powder keg that France could do without. (Koniczna, 2013, p. 85)

In February 1960, the visiting British Prime Minister Macmillan asserted to great furore of the South African Parliament that white rule in Africa could not ignore the long-term forces of decolonisation. Similarly, South African defence planners had for years felt secure to follow a diplomatic security strategy, eschewing major defence investments. By April Macmillan’s generational challenge to South Africa was quickly overshadowed by the events at Sharpeville.\textsuperscript{431} (Barber, 1973, pp. 122-4) The Security Council Resolution of 1 April 1960 declared apartheid a threat to international peace.\textsuperscript{432} In an increasingly volatile international environment and unresponsive security frameworks, it fell chiefly to the hodgepodge Air Force to ensure control over South Africa’s vast geography and borders.

\textsuperscript{428} SANDF, KG5 box 333, KG/GPW/2/3/1, Verdedigingsbeplanning ['defence planning'], GSC 26/11/59. P.10, also p.16 ['Daarbenewens is daar aanduidings dat die spanning in die internasionale toestand tot so ‘n mate verslap het, dat agressie van buite die Unie se grense onwaarskynlik is binne die volgende vijf jaar.’]

\textsuperscript{429} SANDF, MVB 2, box 218, Folder JJ Fouché, ‘Memo’. General speech by Genl. Hiemstra on military outlook, Jan 1960, ‘Frankryk is die vernaamste Europese land waarvandaan ons kan hoop om krygstuig te koop, maar sal Frankryk nog vir ‘n lang tyd die drukking van die swart state in die Franse gemeenskap van volke kan weerstaan?’ ['France is the foremost European country from which we can hope to buy armaments, but will France be able to resist the pressure of the black states in the French community for a long time to come?]

\textsuperscript{430} SANDF, MVV 2, box 218, Folder JJ Fouché, ‘Memo’, Ibid., on France: ‘weens sy politieke onbestendigheid, ekonomiese swakheid, koloniale moeilikhede en ‘n sterk kommunistiese element steeds ‘n bron van kommer voor die West bly.’ ['due to its political instability, economic weakness, colonial troubles and a strong communist element it will remain a source of worry for the West.’] On Hiemstra’s attaché position in 1950/51, see (Jooste, 1996, pp. 30, 175-6) Jooste 1995, and (Nöthling & Meyers, 2012, p. 93)

\textsuperscript{431} (Barber, 1973, pp. 122-3), ‘The great issue in the second half of the twentieth century is whether the uncommitted peoples of Africa will swing to the East or the West.’ (Thomas, Fight or flight: Britain, France, and their roads from empire, 2014) also sees Macmillan’s intentions as skewed by later events and audiences.

\textsuperscript{432} Refworld website, Security Council resolution 134 (1960). Resolution of 1 April 1960, Question relating to the situation in the Union of South Africa http://www.refworld.org/docid/3b00f1893c.html
Two factors would force a comprehensive decision on the SADF with regard to its supply arrangements, namely the Sharpeville massacre, and Verwoerd’s project of a South African Republic. ‘Sharpeville’ had caused the drying up of traditional British and American sources of supply. (McWilliams, 1989, p. 11) It had been the most violent in a string of operational upsets in the midst of a tumultuous quarter. In December 1959, in a precursor to events at Sharpeville, police had killed 11 protesters and wounded a further 50 at Windhoek in South West Africa. Sharpeville had followed other events in 1959 in and outside of South Africa, like the Nyasaland Emergency in the Rhodesian Federation, the perceived domestic ‘spectre of black mass opposition’, and fierce contestation in the UN of South Africa’s policies and mandate on South West Africa in late 1959. 433 (Posel, 2011, p. 341) Then in 1960 came the flurry of newly independent African states starting with nearby Belgian Congo, and the first UN mission there led by Indian forces. 434

Verwoerd’s long ambition to complete South Africa’s Afrikaner dominance through an independent, racially segregated republic would soon affect supply issues. 435 (Dubow, 2014, p. 68) In order to appease the English speaking United Party, Verwoerd had sacked Defence Minister Erasmus in November 1959, whose Afrikanerization of the military had proved highly polarising. (Boulter, 1997, pp. 208-9; Warwick, 2009, p. 111) Verwoerd’s ‘cool recalcitrance’ in the wake of Sharpeville would bring all white voters into the fold of white ‘baaskap’ [supremacy], or at least sufficiently so, to win the October 1960 referendum on independence. 436 (Dubow, 2014, pp. 83-4, 85)

The flurry of African colonies gaining independence, made clear that the Verwoerd government had sorely underestimated the momentum of decolonisation. (Pfister, 2005, p. 31) Before 1960, Erasmus had denounced a growing Soviet influence spreading ‘restless awakenings’ in African states, but in his defence planning had remained focused on external ‘Asian’ designs on Africa, notably by India. The threat to the status quo had been considered political, continental and

433 (Posel, 2011, p. 341), Black opposition was caused by increasingly poor prospects for a growing black population, and also mentions the strong grievances against pass laws.
434 UN General Assembly at its 16th session, resolutions on creating a UN peacekeeping force to the Congo, #1633 on 30/10/61 and #1732 on 20/12/61. Four other resolutions on South West Africa were adopted on 19/12/61, notably 1704 on according the dedicated Committee special UN status.
435 (Dubow, 2014, p. 68), Dubow sees apartheid as Verwoerd's political lever, ‘as much the making of Verwoerd, as it was his personal making’.
436 (Dubow, 2014, pp. 83-4, 85), the government’s call to defend white supremacy gained a narrow 52% victory among Afrikaans speakers and English speakers.
long term, not a conventional military threat directed at South African borders. Moreover, voter mobilization around white independence would poison British attempts to maintain old white members and newly independent African and Asian states within the British Commonwealth. (Barber, 1973, pp. 120-1)

A strategic reassessment delivered to the new Defence Minister Fouché in November 1960 noted with concern the pace at which Western self-interest ‘surrendered Africa to the black man’. With ironic prescience, it pointed to the Israeli state as an example of the potential speed of military build-up by new states, despite non-proliferation controls. Therefore, in order to defend white southern Africa against revolutionary black states, the Union should urgently achieve substantial military self-sufficiency. In the months and years to follow, Verwoerd’s government would boost defence spending year on year by way of ‘insurance policy’. By 1965 the South African government boasted to have acquired 120 military production licences, and between 1961 and 1967 defence expenditure multiplied by five. (McWilliams, 1989, p. 11; Moukambi, 2008, p. 300)

Following the creation of the Republic and its forced exit from the Commonwealth in May 1961, old arrangements required affirmation, notably the 1955 Simonstown naval agreement. The immediate supply problem was for ammunition. Despite equally old grudges a strong Anglo-American preference had remained within the South African defence community.

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In a General Staff meeting of May 1961 Undersecretary Steyn excoriated the SADF’s passivity, not looking beyond British tutelage, despite worrying signs of apprehension within the British Ministry of Defence. The SADF had displayed complacency in acquiring specifications, and disregarding the difficulties of alternative supply or autonomous production. French supply had not been considered. Following secret talks in late June 1961, British Defence Minister Watkinson wrote to Fouché that, except for small arms and their ammunition, ‘there should be no serious difficulty about supplies. In principle, there was no objection to licensing agreements for production in South Africa.’ This proved idle talk, however. Two months later, Fouché noted to Watkinson that despite what was agreed, naval training posts had been cancelled, and the final word on supply and licensing was still outstanding. Commandant General Grobbelaar agreed that the SADF had struck a poor deal. By then, British equivocation compared poorly against the reception in July of the South African Defence Minister in other European capitals. French minister Messmer saw few obstacles to facilitating licensed production of Panhard armoured cars, intelligence sharing, staff training, and a military attaché to Pretoria.

In his June 1961 House of Assembly speech on national defence, Defence Minister Fouché had identified preservation of internal security, amenability to Western alliances, and defence from external invasions. In the years to follow these points were expanded as threats of black subversion and communist subjugation. As Barber observes: ‘[i]n retrospect many of the military dangers can be seen as paper tigers, but at the time they seemed real enough’ – to the South African government. (Barber, 1973, pp. 190-1) Secondary literature has perpetuated boasts by the South African government of her military production licences obtained prior to the 1963 embargo. Claims of 127 licenses obtained by 1961 have been repeated to establish the early response of the South African government to its isolation. This fits the narrative of a

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444 SANDF, KG 5, box 274 vol.1, folder Procurement ... Ibid, Minutes of meeting committee on ammunition, 23/5/61, p.2, ‘has been passive in respect of procurement from countries other than Britain...’.
445 SANDF, KG 5, box 274, vol.1 folder Procurement ... Ibid, Minutes of meeting committee on ammunition, 23/5/61, p.3-6.
446 SANDF, MVB 2, box 219, folder ‘Watkinson’, Letter, personal, from British Defence Minister Watkinson to Defence Minister Fouché, 4/7/61.
steady and growing South African industry in direct contravention of the toothless 1963 embargo, a linear effort towards ‘full-scale mobilization’. (Barber, 1973, p. 194) Still, little is known about the purchase, coherence, and development of these licenses. Their varying results were subject to many factors, among them the rate of technological adoption. The Impala aircraft license discussed in this chapter shows that licensing was not a homogenous and routinely successful endeavour. The point of uneven development is implied in Landgren’s study of different South African arms industries. Landgren uncovered the only qualification of the 127 licences, namely that these largely covered small arms and low tech equipment which already enjoyed a strong local base, and not major equipment. (Landgren, 1989, p. 124) Landgren explains delayed aviation production development to inadequate response by enterprise, but as this chapter shows, preconceptions by the South African air force and Atlas industry presented obstacles as well. (Landgren, 1989, pp. 65-66)

During the July 1960 deal the SAAF leadership saw many of its prejudices about French equipment and operational methods dispelled, but South African sympathy had not immediately turned into strategic preference. Still, French leading defence manufacturers were quick to capitalise. In December 1960 French munitions firm Manurhin delivered 33 machines and equipment for production of 7.62 NATO 9mm Parabellum munitions, the kind that would be blacklisted by Prime Minister Pompidou in 1964.450 French deals worth R30m were made only in the summer and fall of 1961, of Mirages, Hotchkiss mortars and rockets and their licenses, and Panhard AML armoured cars also including partial local production of 600 AMLs.451 Foreign observers dubbed France South Africa’s ‘preferred supplier’ over these autumn sales - a premature statement at this stage. Secondary literature has also largely ignored sizable purchases from Britain, Belgium and Switzerland, which totalled over R20m between August 1960 and December 1961.452 Other than new major arms contracts banned by the 1963 embargo Britain would continue military trade: servicing existing contracts, components through third parties, supplying technology. (Cobbett, 1989, p. 233)

450 SHDC, 78 1E1 250/SA, Minutes (PV) of CIEEMG meeting 19/12/1960. See Chapter 3 on Pompidou’s criteria.
451 (Moukambi, 2008, p. 172), counts the Panhard license as the ‘first [French] military licence’. His source is the French foreign office who seem to have had a loose administration of arms data. (SIPRI, 1971, p. 268), refers to a Defence announcement on Panhard of 27 August 1961, the actual deal was not concluded until November. (Landgren, 1989, p. 82), states that the Panhard deals was not concluded until April 1962, well after the buying spree of late 1961.
Not only was procurement sourcing up in the air, South Africa’s threat perception grew darker as its isolation increased. By early August 1961 the SADF was tasked to be ‘battle-ready against a probable [external] threat against the Republic in 1963.’ Uncertainty ensued over the nature, itinerary and estimated arrival of the strategic threat from the North, such as proxies using Russian long-range capability. The SWA mandate before the International Court provided an unpredictable casus belli for Indian UN troops based in the Congo. Air defence and counter-strike capability became the chief priorities – causing the cancellation of additional helicopter purchases.\(^{453}\) On the suggestion of a likely Western defection over apartheid, the CG stated with unintended irony ‘that geography is more important to strategy than skin colour is.’\(^{454}\) In January 1962, the General Staff, as arbiter on major procurement,\(^ {455}\) laid the more grandiose scenarios of invasion to rest and extended the deadline for readiness to 1967, with a focus on the Portuguese buffer states of Angola and Mozambique.\(^ {456}\) The 1962 General Staff minutes suggest that a certain calm had temporarily set in: Air Force crews greatly enjoyed their training in France, a permanent French military attaché was due, and relations with Britain were improving again. A personal letter to Verwoerd by the authoritarian Portuguese President Salazar provided a basis for further cooperation and standardization based on French equipment.\(^ {457}\) (Cann J. , 2015, pp. 345-7) By February 1964, anticipating election of a hostile British Labour government, helicopters were once again a low priority to long-range air power for all spectrums.\(^ {458}\)

\(^{453}\) SANDF, Staff & Command 1, box 15, Conventions and Conferences, 1961, vol.1, GSC 1-4/8/61, p.1-2, 14 point 48, ‘..die aanskaffing van meer helikopters moet tot later oorstaan.’

\(^{454}\) SANDF, Staff & Command 1, box 16, GSC 1962, 29/1/62 meeting, p.9, (‘KG,SAW sê dat strategie gekoppel word aan geografie en NIE aan die kleur van die vel van mense NIE.’ p101237)

\(^{455}\) SANDF, Staff & Command 1, box 15, General Staff Conventions and Conferences [GSC], 1961, vol.1, ‘notule van ’n vergadering...’, 25/9/61 meeting, p.1, CG Grobbelaar states ‘...as the General Staff takes decisions on the purchase of military equipment...’ regarding information held by the Secretary for Defence; also Ibid., box 16, folder AG 512/3, vol.2, GSC 1962, 29/1/62 meeting, p.12, as budget and procurement were based on the General Assessment approved by government, it was up to the SADF to decide on a type. ([‘...dit is onwaarskynlik dat die Regering so ’n versoek sal afkeur.’

\(^{456}\) SANDF, Staff & Command 1, box 16, GSC 1962, 29/1/62 meeting, p.9-10. One suggestion was of countermeasures against attacks by ICBMs; ibid., p.4. A scenario of Ghana or Egypt attacking RSA was considered, as well as Russian and Chinese enabling support for an atomic proxy strike by 1964. Both scenarios generously inflated South Africa’s strategic importance to those states, quite apart from the high risk involved in such operations.

\(^{457}\) (Cann J. P., 2015, p. 345) it would lead to the ALCORA agreement, facilitating substantial cooperation between South Africa, Portugal and Rhodesia from the late 1960s onwards.

\(^{458}\) SANDF, MVB, 2 Box 218, Folder ‘die Privaatsekretaris van sy edele die minister van vervoer’, Memo of Cabinet subcommittee for Defnece, to, Transport Minister, 14/2/64, p.7-8, the cabinet is hopeful of acquisition of (British) Buccaneer bombers, as western observers consider them as ‘maritime bombers’ only.
During the period of 1960 to 1963 South African security planning was exposed to major change. The French sale of helicopters in 1960 was at best an operational band-aid. The tension between perceived threats, strategic options and external dynamics, most of them triggered by the project of an independent, segregated Republic, had to be resolved first, before French strategic assistance could become a real factor.

Second procurement option: local aircraft assembly

French-South African relations were based on rational interest throughout, but a growing relational component seeped in as engagements grew closer and more frequent. The close cooperation on local production set the stage for high level personal liaisons that created distinctions between insiders and outsiders into South African considerations about French decision making, but distinguished the initiated within the French Defence community.

In mid-1962 Retired Air Force Chief of Staff General turned Director Raymond Brohon had been sent by the President of Sud-Aviation, former Air force General Andre Puget, to canvass for business in South Africa. Brohon was director of SFERMA, Sud-Aviation’s struggling aviation repair company. SFERMA already serviced the Portuguese air force in Angola. SFERMA’s joint-venture with South African company Barlow and Sons called ‘Strato-Avionics’ failed to win a turnkey aircraft maintenance facility project in February 1963. Their brochure offering ‘the backing of the entire French Aircraft Industry’ may have unsettled the South African military decision-makers preferring a local firm to take the lead.

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459 SHDV, Armée de l’Air, Témoignages Oraux, 146, Gen. Raymond Brohon, tape 63A, side 1
460 SHDV, Armée de l’Air, Témoignages Oraux, Brohon #146, Bande 62 Face 1. Sferma was un trouble after the bankruptcy of the Facel car brand.
462 SANDF, MVB 2, Box 214, Roux Committee report on local aircraft production in South Africa [Verslag van die Komitee.....], December 1963, p.1-2.; (Landgren, 1989)blames inadequate industrial competence, Brohon states anti-British sentiment directed towards Barlow. It was probably a combination. (Simpson, The politics and economics of the armaments industry in South Africa, 1989, p. 226), referring to Mr C.S. ‘Punch’ Barlow, chairman of Barlows, one of five members of Botha’s newly created Defence Advisory Council in the 1970s. Rand Barlow was described by Simpson in 1989 as ‘[currently] the biggest industrial corporation in the country’, Barlow may not have been as popular in 1963 when he started his business.
463 SANDF, KG 5, box 274, vol.1, folder Maintenance and put into service …. Strato Avionics brochure ‘Military Aircraft – Proposal for Maintenance, 27/2/63; SANDF, Staff & Command 1, Box 17, General Staff Conferences 1964, GSC meeting 28/2/64, p.6 point 18,CGr has urged that new aircraft be acquired from ‘a firm firmly rooted in South Africa.’ [Warwick: p.192-3, 216] In the early 1960s the SADF public maintained the threat of invasion, partly for political convenience, partly because of paranoia; (Lord, 2008) still maintains the communist threat was serious and immediate.
In June 1963, under the auspices of the South African CSIR, the Le Roux Committee embarked on a feasibility study to replace the Harvard and Vampire aircraft with a single jet trainer. With traditional sources of supply increasingly uncertain and growing demand, the time was right to set up local aircraft production. That same month the British Conservative government had denied ‘an unequivocal and binding pledge’ on military supply to South African diplomats, who had hoped to hedge against a likely hostile Labour government in 1964. While they had obtained top-secret assurances from the Labour shadow cabinet of delivery of Buccaneer bombers, future Prime Minister Harold Wilson publically promised to end arms deliveries to Apartheid South Africa. In July 1963 the US government pushed the boat out on an ultimately negative decision on supply to South Africa.

Given recent deliveries and hoped-for expansion of the South African Air Force and, especially, shortages of skilled manpower, the committee brief soon included the design of a sophisticated aeronautical support and production organisation. Since 1961 studies on management of these critical tasks had been ignored by key leaders. Indeed, in 1961 Defence Minister Fouché had rejected a commercial proposal for production of ‘a jet-powered 2-seat basic training machine [and] internal defence weapon’, after SAAF default pessimism about operational cost and performance.

In December 1963, following the Security Council’s voluntary embargo against Apartheid, the South African Commandant General received the committee’s recommendation. Production

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464 Above references show that the Sferma bid and brochure are dated February 1963, but the Committee report was ordered only in June-August 1963. The Roux committee report did mention Sferma as one of the parties invited to make a bid.
465 SANDF, KG 5, box 264, folder Purchase of aircraft and helicopters, Letter SA Ambassador London, to Foreign Secretary, 9/7/63, on his meeting with Lord Home, State Secretary, re UK-SA arms trade, and SA worries regarding.
466 SANDF, KG 5,box 264, Ibid., Letter by Jack Davison, sales representative for Blackburn Aircraft Limited in South Africa, to Foreign Secretary, 28/6/63. See also (Phythian, 2000, pp. 8-9), explaining why Wilson found himself forced to acquiesce to delivery of the Buccaneers.
467 SANDF, KG 5, box 264, Telegram Foreign Secretary to to Defence Secretary, 24/7/63, onarms purchases in UK and USA ['wapenaankope...'], US State Secretary Dean Rusk informing of potential change in policy towards South Africa from 1964.
468 SANDF, MVB 2, box 214, Roux committee report, 10/12/63, p.1, 3, 12% of tasks had been expedited to civilian contractors, which also drew alarming numbers of underpaid trained military technical staff. Man hours were expected to double by 1970. On p.17, manpower shortages are identified as the key issue.
469 SANDF, MVB 2, Box 214, Roux committee report, 10/12/63, p.17
470 SANDF, MVEF 1, box 60, MV/22/6/4, Mr W.A.T. Johl to Defence Minister, 9/11/61, proposing a a’jet powered 2-seat, basic’ trainer, and copy of (belated) reply to WAT Johl, 1/2/62, stating ‘no requirement for ...four to five years...doubtful ...foundation for aircraft industry....far more economical and sure to purchase a type that is already proven.’ See Ibid., MV/22/6/4, Miles Aircraft Ltd, 25/8/63, to Ministry of Defence, minutes of discussion on licensed aircraft production, which (again) shows the CG enthusiastic, but SAAF hesitant.
licensing could reduce dependence on foreign military assistance.\textsuperscript{471} A dedicated, South African-owned company would receive assistance from a foreign aircraft-licensor, as well as from American, British and French groups able to service SAAF’s mixed air fleet.\textsuperscript{472} It should gradually take over the task of major overhaul, representing 42\% of SAAF’s Maintenance Group workload. Crucially, this ‘fourth line’ maintenance included not just full engine revision, but also production of spare parts and (re)assembly.\textsuperscript{473} It should also assemble some 50 trainer aircraft annually.\textsuperscript{474} Helicopter maintenance was anticipated to be complex, but not laborious.\textsuperscript{475}

Further to SAAF consultation, a tender was issued by the Committee among thirteen American, British, Australian, German, Italian and French candidates, to introduce the technical knowhow, and the aircraft, to a South African state-controlled commercial entity\textsuperscript{476} Henri Jaboulay was invited to represent two separate bids. In its session of 19 November 1963, the CIEEMG, noting the competing bids of the Italian Macchi, and the British Jet Provost, approved a request by manufacturer Potez to negotiate a production licence for their Fouga Magister aircraft.\textsuperscript{477} Potez lost out in early 1964. SAAF chose the performance of the Macchi MB-326M trainer aircraft co-produced by Piaggio-Fiat- and Aeromacchi.\textsuperscript{478} In mid-August 1964 Aeromacchi and Piaggio signed a memorandum with Bonuskor, the appointed holding company.\textsuperscript{479}

\textit{Negotiation on Atlas contract, 1964-1965}

The South Africans were hedging their bets, rationally and relationally. Worried about the political and industrial profile of their Italian partners, Bonuskor had already decided on Sud-Aviation, specifically SFERMA, to nurture Atlas’ maintenance capacity.\textsuperscript{480} French

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\item \textsuperscript{471} SANDF, MVB 2, box 214, Roux committee report, 10/12/63, ch7, p.104.
\item \textsuperscript{472} Ibid., p.6
\item \textsuperscript{473} Ibid., p.20.
\item \textsuperscript{474} SANDF, ibid., Roux committee report, 10/12/63, p.7. This was an assumption, as was the minimal production level of 275 aircraft, see p.6.
\item \textsuperscript{475} SANDF, ibid., Roux committee report, 10/12/63, p. 151 [Annexe B], expected hours for 46 Alouettes is negligible at 5,600 man hours in 1964, compared to 52,500 for 210 Harvards.
\item \textsuperscript{476} SANDF, ibid., Roux committee report, 10/12/63, p.14, p.6.
\item \textsuperscript{477} SHDC, 78 1E1 253, folder South Africa, minutes of CIEEMG meeting of 19/11/63, p. PV6 bis, ‘Autorisation de négocier la cession éventuelle de la license de fabrication de l'appareil CM 170 MAGISTER.’
\item \textsuperscript{478} SHDC, 78 1E1 253, ibid., the Economy Minister later admitted that urgency had created imperfect decision making, see SANA, MEM 1/362, Defence, I15/2, Economic Minister to Prime Minister Verwoerd, ‘Atlas Vliegtuig Korporasie’, 23/5/66, p.2.
\item \textsuperscript{479} SANDF, MVB 2, box 214, folder ‘Vestiging van ‘n vliegtuignywerheid in die republiek’, private secretary of Economic Minister to Defence Minister, ‘Voorgestelde vestiging van ‘n vliegtuignywerheid...’, 25/8/64, p.1, discussions with Piaggio and Aeromacchi went on from 10-21 august 1964.
\item \textsuperscript{480} SANDF, MVB 2, box 214, folder ‘Vestiging van ‘n vliegtuignywerheid in die republiek’, private secretary of Economic Minister to Defence Minister, ‘Voorgestelde vestiging van ‘n vliegtuignywerheid...’, 24/8/64, p.3; DFA, 9/56/1/1, Department of Defence, 1/12/65, Note ‘Uittreksel uit verslag van die minister se europese reis,
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
participation might also cover the very real concern for an Italian withdrawal or British withholding of key engine parts licensed to Piaggio. The memorandum of understanding signed by Brohon in October 1964 was certainly also intended to soothe French disappointment. Either unaware, or made aware, of the existing strategic cooperation and military assistance with France, the Economic Ministry felt this participation would ‘rebuild French goodwill towards the Republic.’

The French were more worried about negative effects on their foreign relations, and observed discretion. The French Defence Ministry supervised the negotiation, anxious to obtain an advantageous and ostensibly business-to-business agreement. (Konieczna, 2013, p. 358) Two days after Defence Minister Messmer had sent instructions on the contract to General Puget, Sud-Aviation’s CEO, his DMA warned the Prime Minister against hostile reactions from African states over this controversial deal. The decision to proceed does not appear to have been manufactured by the French executive. Prime Minister Pompidou arbitrated only after loss of the tender had required Pompidou to arbitrate extending CIEEMG approval from ‘peace time maintenance’ for the Fouga aircraft in November 1963 to ‘assembly of Macchi’ in November 1964. Pompidou approved this licensing proposition, the fourth in twelve months. He did so verbatim to Messmer’s Defence Cabinet director Jean Sicurani who informed the DMA Director, rare proof of oral communication. Following a final negotiation on 16 December

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481 SANDF, MVB 2, box 214, folder ‘Vestiging van ‘n vliegtuignywerheid in die republiek’, private secretary of Economic Minister to Defence Minister, ‘Voorgestelde vestiging van ‘n vliegtuignywerheid...’, 24/8/64, p.7-8.
482 DFA, 9/56/1/1, Note on meeting of David Sole, Secretary of Foreign Affairs with Brohon, 3/11/65, ‘Discussions with General Brohon of Sud-Aviation’, and notes Sud-Aviation’s insistence on right of first refusal’, in the face of pressure from French Foreign Office.
483 SANDF, MVB 2 box 214, folder ‘Vestiging van ‘n vliegtuignywerheid in die republiek’, private secretary of Economic Minister to Defence Minister, ‘Voorgestelde vestiging van ‘n vliegtuignywerheid...’, 24/8/64, p.2-4
484 SHDC, 78 1E1 253/SA, CIEEMG minutes meeting 19/11/1963, p.PV6 bis, ‘Autorisation de négocier ... CM 170 MAGISTER’.
485 SHDC, 78 1E1 254/SA, minutes to CIEEMG meetings of 27/10/64, and 24/11/64, maintenance of French aircraft
486 SHDC, 312 1A1 107, DMA to cabinet of the Defence Ministry (de la Fourniére), #359, 16/12/64, ‘Assistance technique de Sud-Aviation pour la création d’une industrie aéronautique en République d’Afrique du Sud. Projet d’accord entre Sud-Aviation et la Société SUD-AFRICAINE BONUSKOR’, ‘La Délégation Ministérielle pour l’Armement n’a pas reçu de réponse officielle à la lettre qui a été adressée au Premier Ministre le 21 novembre 1964, mais a appris qu’une réponse officieuse avait été donnée oralement au directeur du Cabinet du Ministre [Défense], Monsieur SICURANI, et que cette réponse était en faveur de l’approbation d’un tel contrat.’
all references to the French government were struck out from the contract.488 Matters were just as secretive on the South African side; The Deputy Secretary of Defence queried the ‘untoward’ queries by French military staff on the matter.489

The negotiations also established credentials on both sides. To the South Africans, Messmer and Brohon would henceforth be authoritative and sympathetic representatives of the French government; by contrast, Jaboulay was implicated in discrepancies in trades, and no longer trusted by CG with SADF’s procurement plans.490

*Atlas contract renegotiation and the ‘Don’t Rock the Boat’ principle, 1965-1966*

Following Sud-Aviation’s project plan of mid-1965, the Atlas Aircraft Corporation was operational in the second half of 1966. The production plan called for assembly of 200 Italian Macchi MB326M ground attack aircraft, powered by British-built Viper II engines and renamed ‘Impala’.491 French quiet hopes of an early revocation by the new Labour government of the Viper production licence to Italian parent company Fiat were in vain. (Landgren, 1989, p. 66) British internal regulations on arming South Africa proved to be just as conveniently ambiguous as the French guidelines.492

Whether provoked by anxiety or commercial provocations, the South African defence community would oblige her French suppliers. In his almost quarterly visits in 1965 and 1966, Brohon had indicated to his South African hosts that the patience of Sud-Aviation’s stakeholders was wearing thin. Sud-Aviation had little turnover to show for providing her expertise and national pedigree to a controversial client, an easy bone to pick for detractors of the relation, an aspect well understood by the French Defence Minister.493 Brohon’s words resonated with Secretary of Defence Steyn, who found them repeated by French Ambassador

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488 SHDC, 312 1A1 107, Doc MinArm/DMA/DeptPLANS &devt/B4, Fiche #359, 16/12/64, Secret Confidentiel, to DMA head, Copies to MinArm/de la Fourniere & Sallebert & DMA departments, [‘Dans une dernière négociation qui a lieu le 16 décembre 1964, le General BROHON a obtenu la suppression de cette mention.’]
489 DFA, 9/56/1/1, Deputy Secretary of Defenceto Secretary of Economic Affairs, 7/12/64, on [‘onvanpas’]
490 SANDF, Staff & Command 1 box 17, GSC meeting of 15 January 1964, p.7.
491 SHDC, 312 1A1 108, Internal discussion on memorandum by Messmer/DMA, #24537, 19/11/64, ‘Fiche au sujet d’une operation de Sud-Aviation en Afrique du Sud’ ; a first draft is in 312 1A1 107 SHDC, #24537, 17/11/65. The final version emphasizes plausible deniability.
492 BNA, BT535/15, ‘Export control of components used in the manufacture of arms...’ 12/2/69. In 1969 British export controllers internally defended their shipment for use in the “offensive” Impala aircraft, because the engines were used in standard [i.e. non-repressive] aircraft, and had only ended up in South Africa through their French and Italian handlers. “Non-sharp” components shipped to South Africa via third countries were considered decent enough. A Conservative government came in in 1970.
493 SHDC, 312 1A1 108, Ibid., Messmer/DMA, #24537: ‘Ce n’est pas uniquement pour les beaux yeux de la firme française mais bien et surtout parce que le gouvernement italien et plus encore le gouvernement britannique auraient élevé des objections d’ordre politique à des opérations dépassant la simple vente.’
Balay. As the exception among French ambassadors to South Africa, Balay had revealed himself to Brohon as an ally in arms trade, with a direct correspondence with de Gaulle. The South African defence community had refused French Magister and Caravelle aircraft, and ignored Brohon’s advice for timely planning beyond Impala production. Even worse, the Atlas management preferred to sit out the initial contract of 1964, and referred to Sud’s advisors explicitly as “outsiders” [‘buitestaanders’]. The South African government reversed the dangerous hubris of the Atlas board, and instead adopted a compliant attitude.

Sud-Aviation’s wish to extend the 5-year contract, including a right of first refusal to new aviation projects was accommodated.

Other forms of shared engagement and licensing between the nascent South African defence industrial base and its French tutor were in place. Some had strategic importance to the SADF, like Atlas; others were maintained for their diplomatic value. Perhaps for this reason, the French propensity to interact through ministerial, commercial and industrial envoys resonates especially in the Atlas case. In 1966 South African ambassador Van Schalkwyk warned Pretoria that the ageing French president de Gaulle was the force holding back more opportunistic voices within French government. Therefore, in anticipation of his eventual stepping down, the balance must be strengthened to favour friendly French interests. Government and market

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496 DFA, 1/30/1, vol.2, ‘Strengthening of Franco-South African relations’. The committee on French-South African relations ‘therefore feels that South Africa should try to comply as fully as possible with the French desire, often expressed, that French licenses should be purchased for the armaments we require and that these be manufactured locally as far as possible.’ The committee recommended that the Defence Ministry start a study to optimise this.

497 SANDF, CA Fraser Collection 5, box 44, folder Supreme Command Meeting 28/4/70, meeting of Defence Minister, SADF, and Armaments Board, pp.11, 18, in which helicopter production planning was decided upon, and in which Botha referred to the celebrated Crotale/Cactus surface-to-air missile developed jointly with French Thomson CSF, as ‘predominantly a diplomatic weapon’ [‘Dit is ‘n diplomatieke wapen en nie soseer vir die [SADF] nie’]. See (Moukambi, 2008, p. 299) for a list of major licensing agreements. These differ in character and importance.

498 DFA, 1/30/1, vol 2, South African ambassador, 1966, undated, ‘Memorandum: Urgent need for the strengthening of Franco-South African relations’ p.1, and p4, ‘a rapid and consciously directed extension and
spending, as well as military, scientific and cultural acquisition must be increased.\textsuperscript{500} The ambassador noted that French private enterprise was still underrepresented in South African markets compared to British and American business, and often unable to bridge the gaps in language and mentality.\textsuperscript{501} (Bongrand, 2006, p. 237) Nonetheless, he asserted, ‘the French should feel that South Africa is prepared to be accommodating and to offer reasonable opportunities.\textsuperscript{502}

In a meeting with Van Schalkwyk on 28 January 1965, Defence Minister Pierre Messmer had expressed his satisfaction that ‘past problems’ regarding transactions had not spoiled the good relationship between the Paris embassy and his own Ministry. Discussion started with both men agreeing that criticism from Black African states was misguided, and best avoided. After having jointly mocked the callous attitude of British ‘cross-channel friends’, the ever charitable Messmer conveyed that through production licences the ‘widest possible facilities’ continued to be available to South Africa.\textsuperscript{503} It was understood by both that sale of French production licenses could deflect concerns from France’s African partners and other detractors. Personal relations created bonds of trust, and even though they were few, they were important. When Maurice Papon stepped down as CEO of Sud-Aviation to enter parliament, against the background of the May 1968 student revolts in Paris, it was reported that Henri Ziegler, managing director of French aircraft producer Breguet, was nominated to run the state-owned company. South African ambassador Dirkse-van Schalkwyk could simply pick up the phone to general Brohon to receive the inside story. Brohon confirmed the news and said that the word from up high was of ‘a green light for future arms sales’.\textsuperscript{504}

\textsuperscript{500} Idem p.7-8. French non-military exports to South Africa were dwarfed by the US, the UK and GER, and even marginally behind Italy.
\textsuperscript{501} Idem, p.11. Page 15 also notes a mentality gap with the ‘analytical French’, different from the ‘empirical’ Anglo-Saxons. (Bongrand, 2006, p. 237) agrees: ‘Une impression partagée par beaucoup est que dans ce domaine les Français ont une approche rationnelle et une retenue, les Anglo-saxons un pragmatisme et un savoir-faire qui confèrent un net avantantage culturel au seconds.’
\textsuperscript{502} Idem, p.11-12. Steps were taken to prioritise information and opportunities for French parties.
\textsuperscript{503} SANA, MEM 1/360, South African ambassador, Paris, to South African Foreign Minister, 5/2/65, [die wijdst moontlike fasiliteit] here as in the September 1963 meetign Messmer was reported as smiling.
\textsuperscript{504} SANDF, HVS (KG/DGAA), Grp1, vol 2, box 83, HVS/206/34/4, ‘Verdediging-samewerking Frankryk’. 
Brohon’s “singular position”

The Atlas deal had made Brohon the back-channel between defence communities of both states.\(^{505}\) (Konieczna, 2013, pp. 411-2) Retired senior military officers were routinely employed for their personal networks by French industry,\(^{506}\) but Brohon would prove unusually successful for 15 years. Much like Pierre Gallois, he had a shrewd sense of business, rare English language skills,\(^{507}\) and an extensive personal network and he wisely courted the top positions without coveting them.\(^{508}\) Brohon had retired only five years after his command of French units at Suez, an experience that made him wary of those in authority.\(^{509}\) Prior to accepting his mission to Africa he had insisted on the cover of a senior management position at Sud-Aviation.\(^{510}\)

To researchers in the 1990s, Brohon described in considerable detail Sud-Aviation’s steps to secure South African business. Three consecutive CEOs of Sud-Aviation mandated his discreet\(^{511}\) missions and DMA contacts – General André Puget, the air force officer sacked over the Concorde fiasco (1962-66), Maurice Papon, the reprobate prefect of Bordeaux (1967-68), and Henri Ziegler, the industry veteran (1968-1973).\(^{512}\) Brohon explained the personal basis of

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\(^{505}\) SHDV, Armée de l’Air, Témoignages Oraux, 146, Gen. Raymond Brohon, tape 63C, side 1 (184) said of Botha: ‘Avec lui j’ai trouvé mon correspondant impeccable jusqu’à la fin de mes fonctions.’

\(^{506}\) SHDV, Armée de l’Air, Témoignages Oraux, 146, Gen. Raymond Brohon, tape 63B, side 2 (183), Military retirees could also move into industry, But as Brohon notes, working a network commercially was a very different skill from commanding an airbase. Not every military ‘pantoufle’ was able to make the transition, as industrialists were only interested in their military contacts.

\(^{507}\) (Debré, Livre Blanc sur la Défense Nationale. Tome I, 1972, p. 283), Debré would not speak anything other than French at international conferences. As a former Foreign Minister, he admitted that adapting when in English-speaking nations was a ‘normal gesture’.

\(^{508}\) SHDV, Armée de l’Air, Ibid., Brohon, tape 63A, side 1 (180), Brohon rejected offers to become Puget’s successor, for the great prestige of leading Sud-Aviation, the largest national producer and perennially loss-making, came with inevitable demotion.

\(^{509}\) SHDV, Armée de l’Air, Ibid., Brohon, tape 63D, side 1; More than Indochina, Brohon considered Suez to be ‘vraiment l’affront le plus cinglante qui soit, on nous arrête à mi-course et on nous prie de rentrer chez nous.’…’Alors cette génération a été tout de même assez marquée. Pour moi, d’avoir à des affaires qui tournent mal, m’ont enlevé toute confiance dans l’autorité quel qu’elle soit le pouvoir politique aussi bien que l’autorité militaire double, mon comportement autonome que vous avez manifestée au fil des enregistrements, et qui vous surprend, il m’aurait de refuser des affectations de faire des excès de mauvais caractère, tout simplement que je ne le crois pas, ce que me disent mes chefs, je crois encore moins les hommes politiques, parce que j’ai travaillé très près avec eux. Et il y a une autre chose qui me gene enormement, c’est que je vois la part de la mythologie dans l’histoire de Fran…’

\(^{510}\) ‘Je ne suis pas une montgolfière en dispositif, je suis obligé de prendre ma couverture quelque part. [And so he chose the position of] Le Directeur général projets spéciaux [qui] ne peut pas travailler sans approbation partielle au niveau du premier ministre, au niveau d’Elysee, et d’abord [emphasized] à la délégation ministérielle à l’armement.’

\(^{511}\) SHDV, Armée de l’Air, Ibid., Brohon, tape 63A, side 1, Brohon stressed he ‘had to book his own tickets’ to South Africa, and joked ‘he did not have a SDECE airplane to take him’.

\(^{512}\) Uniquely, Sud-Aviation’s CEO Puget did not receive a customary sanctuary position, of the kind Papon had found at Sud-Aviation. Papon had been disgraced over the Ben Barka affair, but had also been responsible for the death of hundreds of Algerian protestors in Paris in October 1961. A particularly scathing indictment of Papon is in (Schneider, 2014), p.114
his singular position of influence within the French Defence community: ‘… fin 1966 je me trouve dans la position suivante: très libre par rapport à la direction générale de Sud-Aviation, parce que aucun a des contacts semblables, ni avec la DMA, ni avec l’Elysee, ni bien entendu avec les services du premier ministre.’ The anchor of this pyramid was general Deguil, the état-major particulier of Prime Minister and President Pompidou, and briefly under Prime Minister Couve de Murville. Deguil’s successor was also recruited by Brohon. Once approval was secured, specific actors within the operating companies ensured discretion in executing the orders. The mechanism ran on discretion, personal loyalty, and overlapping interest, and did not always follow institutional hierarchy.\textsuperscript{513} Ziegler would continue the covert sales mission to South Africa, which Puget and Papon had tacitly placed with Brohon. To his interviewers, Brohon described Ziegler’s unmistakable orders as follows:

« Vos papiers, je veux pas les voir ! S’il y arrive quelque chose, ou titre d’une protestation d’un pays étranger, ou titre de protestation d’une organisation quelconque, sur ce que nous faisons en Afrique du Sud, je n’en connaitrai rien, vous serez le seul responsable, la Direction générale n’est pas dans la course. Alors vous avez ma bénédiction pour voir l’Elysée, voir le Premier Ministre, voir le DMA, vous êtes totalement autonome, et je dis vis-à-vis les directeurs de l’établissement, la même chose. .. Vous êtes le responsable vis-à-vis de moi. »\textsuperscript{514}

Brohon’s involvement ended with his retirement in 1976, under President Giscard. Brohon boasted that by then objection by the CIEEMG and the public was routinely avoided, and he identifies the cabinet of Minister of Defence Pierre Messmer as his allies.\textsuperscript{515} Brohon’s exceptionally rich testimony is not contradicted by the South African reports of his interactions, which at first remained ignorant of his unique position.\textsuperscript{516}

\textit{Close relations continue at intermediate level}

Sources suggest that, compared to their South African opposite numbers, the French military attaché and the French ambassador acted mostly as caretakers: useful facilitators but not decision makers. They were not privy to key interactions with the South African defence community, and contacts with the French aviation industry and officials grew more direct. General Ezanno, who had replaced the retired General Fay as OFEMA President in 1967,

\textsuperscript{513} SHDV, Ibid., Brohon, tape 63A, side 1, When Brohon encountered an uncooperative DAI director, he avoided using him. [‘J’ai donc dû, tant qu’il était la, prendre mes garantis ailleurs’]

\textsuperscript{514} SHDV, Ibid., Brohon, tape 63A, side 2,

\textsuperscript{515} BNA, CAB 45/677, article clipping, Colin Legum, The Observer, 18/10/70, ‘Secret French arms deals help Vorster’, alleges that clandestine trade routes went via Switzerland and Djibouti, French Somaliland.

\textsuperscript{516} SHDV, Armée de l’Air, Témoignages Oraux, 693, Col. Jean-Georges Cavaroz, tape 8 side 1, on role of intermediaries of the big French aviation companies, notably Dassault and Sud-Aviation/Aerospatiale.
recounted that Messmer had chosen him for his many contacts with foreign Air Force Chiefs. Some of them Ezanno had fought with in the Libyan Desert in 1943, some against. Ezanno’s former brother in arms, a Huguenot Afrikaner and atrocious French-speaker, was now South African Air Chief Martin.\textsuperscript{517}

The Atlas project tied the South Africans to their French sponsors, who were in a strong position to demand even greater commitment. Over several years and through frequent and multilevel engagement, a select group of insiders was formed. The South African accommodation of French wishes was made on the understanding that objectives and goals were shared. This assumption would be put to the test.

**Third procurement option: Licensed production**

The South African Atlas project – producing an Italian aircraft on French-built production lines using British engines – is one of several examples of early and broad South African orientation to acquire the technological base and industrial organization to support military self-sufficiency from Western European states. (Frankel P., 1984, p. 86) Equally, it points to the importance of maintaining good relations to ensure that French support for that shared rational goal remained intact.

In the face of continuing international pressure, the South African Republic had adopted licensed production as a form of military procurement from its inception.\textsuperscript{518} (Frankel P., 1984, p. 81) While harassing the British defence community on their perceived obligations, South African defence leaders considered non-British tutelage and expertise.\textsuperscript{519} French and German know-how on missile technology had become interesting after the South African Council for Scientific and Industrial Research [CSIR] saw similar requests to Great Britain declined. (Konieczna, 2013, p. 221) In October 1964 the French Ambassador had requested additional

\textsuperscript{517} SHDV, Armée de l’Air, Témoignages Oraux, 663, Général Yves ÉZANNO, tape 3, side2.
\textsuperscript{518} SANDF Library, White paper on Defence 1965-67, p.8; (Frankel P., 1984, p. 81), ‘1963 ...creation of a National Rocket Project at [CSIR]... was to result in the first of a subsequently long stream of selected South African scientists proceeding abroad to acquire specialized knowledge of production techniques in the armaments industry.’
\textsuperscript{519} SANA, MEM 1/360, South African Foreign Minister to Prime Minister, 26/2/65, handwritten reply on document by Verwoerd plainly reveals systematic questioning on concrete supply lists as a tactic to keep them involved. [‘Die idee bly dat soos ons over een lys konkrete punte antwoord kry ons met ‘n volgende kom. Die taktie is om hulle aan die gang te hou met die problem te worstel deur werklikhede te moet beslis in plaats van vage stellings te maak’]; Also moukambi 2008:p.,173, identifying FR, GER/FRG, BEL, ISR, and Swi as licensors by 1963.
funds to accommodate the string of French lobbyists visiting the Cape, attracted by a growing local appetite for French science and technology.\textsuperscript{520}

\textit{South African study of the DMA}

Technology acquisition did not immediately equate to successful exploitation; however, in October 1964, a memorandum by the South African embassy had advocated closer ‘alignment of South African purchasing procedures with … the French system [of] control of armament supply’. Coming three years after Grobbelaar’s visit to Paris, this statement indicates the slow pace of South African appreciation of the French procurement organisation. The memorandum identified the French Delegation Ministerielle pour l’Armement (DMA) and its ‘Département Expansion-Exportation’ (DEE; which became DAI in 1965) as governmental gatekeepers for any requests pertaining to war supplies.\textsuperscript{521} The South African embassy argued that a central role by the diplomatic mission in Paris would reduce the need for commercial agents. It was conceded that OFEMA had been instrumental in recent aviation deals, which suggests that OFEMA – whose head was appointed by the Minister – was still perceived as a mere industry representative.\textsuperscript{522}

Production control was also touched upon, which would invite French assistance. The creation of the Defence Production Board [DPB] in December 1964 would be the foundation on which to ‘integrate state with private sector activity’: the almost 1,000 armament producers and subcontractors dedicated to making arms and components.\textsuperscript{523} The government had asserted itself in the Atlas project, taking all the risks attached.\textsuperscript{524} (Landgren, 1989, p. 45) In 1966, three ministerial advisory bodies on resources, research and major procurement were merged into the Defence Council, advising the Minister.\textsuperscript{525} In 1967, a designated committee investigated

\textsuperscript{520} CADC, 32QO-50 Afrique Levant – Afrique du Sud 1960-1965, Ambassador, Pretoria to Foreign Ministry, 1/10/64,, #454/PL, ‘.Conditions des agents du Département en Afrique du Sud’, ‘.En butte à un monde hostile, elle s’arme. Depuis qu’elle s’est procurée en France du matériel de guerre, elle a en quelque sorte découvert la science et la technique françaises.’
\textsuperscript{521} SANDF, HSI 2, box 18, MAP/70/15, armament policy, Ambassador van Schalkwyk to Secretary of Foreign Affairs, 16/10/64, Memorandum by SAMA Meintjes, p.1-6.
\textsuperscript{522} SANDF, HSI 2, box 18, MAP/70/15, armament policy, Ambassador van Schalkwyk to Secretary of Foreign Affairs, 16/10/64, p.6, This study’s label for ‘the Minister of Defence representative of all interests affected by Defence Research development production and, procurement; e.g. the General Staff, Secretary for Defence, the Committee for Scientific and Industrial Research [CSIR], the Defence Production Board, the Departments of Finance, of Commerce and Industries, and of Foreign Affairs.’
\textsuperscript{523} SANDF, National Defence White Paper 1965-67, p.8, refers to ‘Defence Production Board’; (Frankel P. , 1984, p. 82) refers to the Armaments Production Board, or Armaments board.
\textsuperscript{524} The full extent and practice of European, or even French, production licensing to South Africa cannot be recounted here, and deserves further, integrated study.
\textsuperscript{525} SANDF Library, National Defence White Paper 1965-67, p.7
‘various models for local arms production’. (McWilliams, 1989, p. 18; Frankel P., 1984, p. 82)

That month Botha also visited Messner to finalize the purchase of three Daphne submarines for the SAN, and to discuss the joint Cactus missile development project.526 Botha’s preference was likely already with the French example at this time, adopting DPB head Prof H.J. Samuels as his delegate on procurement matters that same year.527

By now the South African leadership was committed to exploiting French assistance. A visit to the French DMA by the South African Treasury comptroller, Mr Rive, was discussed in the staff meeting of 9 February 1968. Rive, who had in October 1966 superseded the financial functions of the, by then, defunct position of Defence Secretary,528 detected an uncritical Francophile attitude in this regard. Given the background of the DMA, he did not think it wise to ‘base our structures on their ideas’, as South Africa lacked the ‘manpower, funds, and technical know-how’.529

In a marked change from eight years earlier, such opinions were now in the minority. Moreover, South African visitors had been impressed with the elaborate help received from the DMA, and especially the ‘spirit of friendship and cooperation’ with which this was provided.530 And so, in February 1968 Defence Minister Botha expressed his gratitude in a personal letter to his French colleague Pierre Messmer: “The mission which visited [France] recently to make a study of your DMA organisation has returned to [South Africa] full of praise for the wonderful way in which they were received and treated. They were much impressed by what they heard and saw and the lessons which have been learnt may yet have a profound effect on our way of

526 SHDV, 1R 223, folder 7-Afrique du Sud, Cabinet for Defence Ministry, Biros to DMA, #15357, 11/5/67, copy of letter by SA MinDef Botha, #MV/28/2, 1/5/67, on Daphne transaction; on Botha’s visit for Cactus, see SADF – 29/7 – S&C 1 Box 20, HWA 512/3, GSC 19 March 1968, p.8, ’…toe die Miniter en KG laas in Frankryk was…’
528 SANDF Library, White paper 1965-67, p.3-4. This came in conjunction with the departure of Steyn from the Defence Ministry. CG Hiemstra had integrated the procurement and policy tasks of the secretary in his brief. See Warwick 2009. The militarization of this function was completed in 1969, see SANDF Library, White Paper on Defence, 1969, p.13.
529 SANDF, Staff & Command 1, box 20, HWA 512/3, GSC 9/2/68, p.16 point 40, ‘[O]ns beskik nie over die mannekrag, finansiële vermoë en tegniese kennis om ons stelsels op hulle idees te baseer nie.’; ‘he feels that we should not follow them like slaves, be slaves to their example’, [Hy voel dat ons hulle nie slaafs moet navolgie] Since its creation in 1961, the DMA had grown into a massive, institution linking national armament industry and the armed forces, consisting of nine directorate, 64 plants, and over 75,000 employees.
530 SANDF, MVB 2, Box 22, MV 56/4, vol.1, Folder Frankryk: samewerking, Afskrif/JMC, is the visit report ‘Besoek aan Frankryk in verband met DMA-organisatie’, Attached to 29/2/68 letter
coping with problems similar to those experienced in your country in relation to armament production."  

In March 1968, the General staff invited Professor Samuels to give a detailed account of his recent travels to France. Samuels was not a regular visitor to the GSC. Samuels began by praising both the French openess and the great zeal of the South African military attachés in Paris. He then proposed to copy the French system of separation, under the Ministry of Defence, of military production by the DMA, and military organization by the General Staff. The Armament Production Board would henceforth take responsibility for military design and production management and the enlistment of private enterprise from the military. The DMA’s control of research of military technology also stimulated efficient project management, an area that was of particular concern for South African Defence. Samuels argued that the Armament Production Board [APB] needed to be involved in research projects at a much earlier stage, as it alone controlled the resources for industrialisation.

Two other features of French military industrial management would be adopted. First, the new structure would integrate the State Tender Board institution, effectively rendering military purchasing less prone to politics. Furthermore, in order to deal with the lack of quality and efficiency of domestic military manufacturing, largely privately held defence producers would be subordinated to a supervisory Armaments Development and Production Corporation, the future state production giant ARMSCOR. Strategically important production like Atlas would be placed under government control. Lastly, Samuels added that French industrialists like Thomson CSF were keen to help, but were also tough negotiators. The Commandant

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531 SHDV, GR1 R 223 /7, Letter by MinDef SA Cape Town/ PW Botha [signed], 29/2/68, to MinDef Messmer, thanking him for study trip of DMA; also in SADF 30-7/15, MV/Botha 2, Box 22, MV 56/4, vol 1, 'Frankryk: samewerking', copy letter, Botha to Messmer, 29/2/68.

532 SANDF, Staff & Command 1, box 20, HWA 512/3, GSC 193/68, p.2-6.

533 (Frankel P., 1984, p. 74), major equipment was accounted through the 'Defence Special account, under direct authority of the prime minister'; State Tender Board oversaw all regular and ordnance expenditures.


535 SANDF, Staff & Command 1, box 20, HWA 512/3, GSC 19 March 1968, p.10, 'Ons sal hulle moet goed [sic] dophou om nie uitoorlê te word nie – dis [Cactus /Crotale] ’n moeilike projek. Hulle is baie skerp bseigheidsmense.’ [We will have to keep a close eye and not be outsmarted. The Cactus project is difficult. They are very sharp professionals.]
General of the SADF agreed with Samuels’ proposals.\textsuperscript{537} In June 1968 French internal defence bulletins noted the new structures empowering the South African Defence Ministry, although without mentioning DMA’s role.\textsuperscript{538}

\textit{Limits to leverage 1967-1970}

South African confidence in her French procurement partner was dented by the French embargo on Israel following its initiation of the Six Days War in 1967. French credibility as an honest broker would also be affected and signal to the South Africans that only domestic supply could ever be fully secure. The French defence community tried to mend fences with her South African customer, after the loss of Israel as a primary customer and the May 1968 strikes had hit industry revenues. As a result, the relationship did not break up, but rather matured from the strategic bedrock created before.

As an example of French arms trade policy, the 1967 French unilateral embargo against Israel would change South African perceptions, as well as French attitudes. Fearing international escalation of Israeli-Egyptian border disputes in 1966, and given French leverage as the longstanding preferred arms supplier of Israel’s air force, de Gaulle had presumed to curb Israeli belligerence with an arms embargo.\textsuperscript{539} (Vaïsse, 1998, p. 635)

Two rationales can be seen. Instituting an arms embargo on Israel as an aggressor reaffirmed French ‘defensive-offensive’ arms trade policy, although the measures proved largely artificial.\textsuperscript{540} (Vaïsse, 1998, p. 626) Moreover, the move promised great political and economic dividends with Arab states. Compared to these, Israel’s use as a strategic lever to Egyptian support for Algerian nationalism had gone, after France had withdrawn from Algeria in 1962.

\textsuperscript{537} SANDF, Staff & Command 1, box 20, HWA 512/3, GSC 19 March 1968, p.8, point 24. Also see p.16, point 57, whereby Samuels adds French perspective on intelligence processing. ‘In France defence policy formulation is fully in the hands of defence experts...military revaluations make changes necessary...Timely information is therefore of cardinal importance to the APB.’


\textsuperscript{539} (Vaïsse, 1998, p. 635) De Gaulle estimated the Egyptians would not initiate hostilities. See also (Peyrefitte, 2000); (Kolodziej, 1987, p. 355), Over two decades after Suez, the Egyptian-French rift was still fresh; French arms trade to Egypt before 1967 was insignificant, and directly after it was blocked by embargo.

\textsuperscript{540} (Vaïsse, 1998, p. 626), Prime Minister Pompidou had stated to his Israeli counterpart Levi Eshkol in late June 1964 that arming an ally should not develop into facilitating an aggressor. ['D’une part Israël est un Etat ami qu’il convient d’aider, d’autre part l’armement d’Israël doit être un armement défensif, destine à lui permettre de se protéger contre des agressions et non pas susceptibles de porter l’agression chez les autres.']
Israel by contrast had begun to compete with France for the favour of African states. (Heimann, 2016, pp. 163-4)

Having identified de Gaulle as the pillar of French foreign policy and protector of arms trade to the Republic, the South African defence community assumed, correctly, that the Israelis had simply pushed the General too far.\textsuperscript{541} (Polakow-Suransky, 2010, p. 57) Disrespecting the French fiction of defensive weapons and de Gaulle’s ties to Lebanon had been a cardinal mistake.\textsuperscript{542} The Israelis claimed to visiting South African military contacts to have been surprised by the French reaction, as well as those of Francophone African states receiving Israeli assistance.\textsuperscript{543}

\textit{South African lessons learned}

Then in December 1968, the Israelis used Frelons and Alouettes in a punitive expedition against Lebanon in which they destroyed passenger aircraft of airlines affiliated with Air France. The French declared a full embargo in January 1969. The situation went beyond repair after the ‘Vedette’ affair, in which Israelis used a ruse to appropriate eight quarantined French patrol boats from Cherbourg docks during Christmas 1969, for which the French had already received payment from Israel. Pompidou therefore upheld a full embargo against arms to Israel.\textsuperscript{544} The South Africans noted these developments with great interest. They learned from Israeli countermeasures of stockpiling spare parts and cooperating with Turbomeca for local production of essential parts.\textsuperscript{544} They also understood that the embargo would combine with the reduced French 1969 defence budget to increase exports to them.\textsuperscript{545} The main lesson was that French prerogatives and narratives of arms trade were not to be disturbed by their customers.

\textsuperscript{541} (Polakow-Suransky, 2010, p. 57), suggests that de Gaulle cooled off after visiting Auschwitz in November, praising the indomitable Israeli people. (Peyrefitte, 2000) sees this visit simply as a sign of de Gaulle’s enduring respect for Israel.

\textsuperscript{542} SANDF, HVS (KG/DGAA)\textsuperscript{1}, box 83, vol 2, HVS/206/34/4, Ambassador Van Schalckwyk to Foreign Minister, 9/1/69, 'Midde-Ooste crisis: Franse embargo op die lewering van alle wapentuig aan Israel', p.3.

\textsuperscript{543} SANDF, Staff & Command 1, box 20, HWA 512/3, GSC 20-21 June 1968, p.2-3. The South African MA's has seen many similarities between the Israeli problems and their own, and noted Israeli willingness to cooperation.

\textsuperscript{544} SANDF, HVS (KG/DGAA)\textsuperscript{1}, box 83, vol.2, HVS/206/34/4, Ambassador Van Schalckwyk to Foreign Minister, 9/1/69, 'Midde-Ooste crisis: Franse embargo op die lewering van alle wapentuig aan Israel', p.3. ‘produsering van noodsaaklike onderdele ter plaas’ [production of essential parts locally]

\textsuperscript{545} SANDF, HVS (KG/DGAA)\textsuperscript{1}, box 83, vol 2, HVS/206/34/4, Ambassador Van Schalckwyk to Foreign Minister, 8/12/68, ‘Frankryk se verdedigingsbegroting vir 1969’, ‘dat ‘n groter uitvoer poging dus noodsaaklik is’ [necessitating a greater export effort]; cf SHDV, 20 R 152, Compte Rendu sur le Programme d’Equipment Militaire, 1966, p.36. Between 1963 and 1966, sales to RSA were consistently in the top three.
Pretoria began worrying about the vagaries of a successor to the ageing French president, whose fearless politics they admired. In April 1967, two months before the Six Day War, Defence Minister Botha had met with his French counterpart Pierre Messmer to finalise South African purchase of three Daphne-class submarines. Botha had written shortly afterwards to again suggest to Messmer ‘that the continued supply should form the subject of a separate contract between the [SA] government and a French agency, operating under the auspices of the French government’. In November 1967 Botha wrote to Messmer about his worries, which clearly had not dissipated after recent contacts;

‘Towards the end of October, Gen. Ezanno of O.F.E.M.A. paid a visit to South Africa and had an interview with me. During the discussions he informed me that the French Government was prepared to submit in writing a guarantee to South Africa in connection with defence equipment. I gathered from his message that whatever happened in Africa and elsewhere France would be prepared to sell defence equipment to South Africa as in the past.’ [Underlined in original]

Alluding to the downside of a close personal relationship such as he had with Messmer, Botha now wanted this promise in writing. In reply, Messmer referred to his own earlier assurances to Botha in May 1967 about spare parts for ‘Daphne’ submarines. Messmer extended this assurance to other materials, but did not reciprocate with an agreement as suggested by Botha. The proof of the pudding would therefore have to come through actual French performance. Analyses in 1968 pointed to the increasing regional demands on SAAF which required a significant expansion in the number of helicopters. By 1969, the government was ‘deeply convinced’ of the strategic importance of Atlas, now placed under Armscor. A committee assembled to study its future tasks for the next two decades, specifically to include future licensed aircraft production.

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546 SHDV, 1 R 223, dossier 7, Defence Ministry cabinet to DMA Director, #15357, 11/5/67..
547 SHDV, 1 R 223, dossier 7. Copy of Letter by SA Defence Minister Botha [same signature as previous letter], 9/11/67 to Messmer.
548 SHDV, 1 R 223, dossier 7. Carbon copy, undated, of letter by Messmer to MinDef Botha, Pretoria, no heading. Referring to previous letter by Botha
549 SANDF, HVS/DGAA1, box 209, HVS/412/6, ‘Helikopters’, SAAF HQ to Chief of Defence Staff, 8/5/68, ‘Aanvulling van Helikopters’ [‘Resupply of helicopters’].
550 SANDF, HVS 1, box 10, HVS/102/37/1, SAAF HQ to Committee Chair, 31/10/69, attachment ‘Memorandum Komitee’, idem, p.2 [‘die Regering se diepste oortuiging dat Atlas van die grootste strategiese waarde vir ons land is.’].
551 SANDF, HVS 1, box 10, HVS/102/37/1, SAAF HQ to Committee Chair, 31/10/69, attachment ‘Memorandum Komitee’, idem, p.4, ‘As Atlas has set up an R&D department, it is the intention to obtain a much higher level of design authority in any future license program.’ [Aangesien Atlas ‘n ontwerps- en ontwikkelingsafdeling
The impact of the Israeli affair also resonated in day-to-day contacts. When in October 1968 Dassault gauged South African objections to a possible sale of Mirages to hostile Uganda, the South Africans decided not to compromise the export drive towards Anglophone Africa favoured by the French government.\(^{552}\) (Kolodziej, 1987, pp. 343-4) As Minister for Foreign Affairs Muller put it to the new French Defence Minister Debré in July 1969, South Africa would honour arms trade contracts ‘both to the letter and in the spirit of our good relations with France’. \(^{553}\) Debré responded cautiously that France was prepared to ignore arms transfers to Portugal ‘in exceptional cases’, but not Israel. \(^{554}\)

President de Gaulle’s ‘French exception’ from Cold War realities proved to be finite: the space in which South African trade was artificially separated from the discontent of Black African states through a fiction of benevolent French cooperation and principled military assistance, increasingly came under fire. \(^{555}\) (Vaïsse, 1998, p. 297; Skinner, 2017) The Israeli embargoes foretold the end of French ‘political’ arms trade policy, which had tried to correspond to the French world-view as legitimately different from those of the super powers. This collapse would soon have consequences for the South African trade relationship, when international attention returned to Southern Africa. By mid-1969 DAI director General Bonte had been fired over the patrol boat affair, de Gaulle had resigned, and Messmer had temporarily retired. Sud-Aviation’s CEO Henri Ziegler objected vehemently to the unilateral government decision that had encroached on a market already suffering the effects of the French student revolt and worker strikes of May 1968. Bonte, the head of DAI informed the South African military attaché in Paris learned that France was redoubling its efforts to grow arms exports, \(^{556}\)

\(^{552}\) SANDF, HVS (KG/DGAA)1, box 83, vol.2, HVS/206/34/4, ‘Verdediging-samewerking Frankryk’, Telegram South African embassy, Paris, to Foreign Secretary, telegrams #102, 28/10/68, and #108, 5/11/68. ['nie kant te kies', not to choose sides]

\(^{553}\) SANDF, MVB2 Box 22, vol.2, Top Secret, ‘Onderhoud tussen Minister Muller en Mnr. Michel Debré, Minister van Verdediging. Parys: 8/7/69’, p.2, ‘…beide letterlik en in die gees van ons goeie verhoudinge met die Franse.’

\(^{554}\) SANDF, MVB2 Box 22, Ibid.


\(^{556}\) SANDF, HVS (KG/DGAA)1, box 83, vol.2, HVS/206/34/4, ‘Verdediging-samewerking Frankryk’, South African military attaché, Paris, to Chief of Defence Staff, 9/8/68, ‘Armaments contracts’; Indeed, Bonte had written to the Sud-Aviation President specifically on their plans to promote helicopters, see SHDC, 78 1E1 185, Gen. Bonte (DAI) to the CEO of Sud-Aviation, #74256, 19/8/68.
perhaps this time, replace the Italians at Atlas which was struggling to locally produce the Macchi aircraft parts.\textsuperscript{557}

After the prolongation of the Atlas contract the relationship between defence communities matured in two ways. Not content with merely acquiring expertise, the South African defence community embraced the French example, and its support, to effective industrial planning and organization. On the other hand, the French government’s political use of its dominant arms trade position brought home to the South African leadership the interpretability of French national interests and the need to anticipate an end to its support to Pretoria. The return to economic rationales by their French counterparts seemed to reassure the South African defence leaders, who could look to the new decade with confidence.

\textit{French perspectives}

From the French perspective, the South African search for military autonomy so far had been a source for more business, and its commitment to domestic production was partly a natural development from purchase, to licensed assembly, to local design and production.\textsuperscript{558} On the other hand, South Africa could not hope to achieve self-sufficiency without a benevolent French supplier. By 1969 however, French aviation industry was convinced that French government policies were generally eroding customer confidence in French after-sales services. South African moves to local production were spurred as much by French expansion in 1969 of the 1967 embargo on arms to Israel as by international opinion. It estimated that as much as of 500 million (new) French Francs worth of Israeli business had since been placed with alternative suppliers. In a letter of 13 January 1969, two weeks after the Israelis had spirited away purchased patrol vessels from under French noses, Sud-Aviation’s CEO Henry Ziegler urged the Secretary General for National Defence, General Brebisson, to confide in industry more. In his capacity as CIEEMG chair, General Brebisson had asked Ziegler, the head of the largest French aviation producer, for his input on how to grow aviation exports, four weeks earlier.\textsuperscript{559}

After-sales service formed an important part of selling war material, and to Ziegler, the French government was demonstrating its unreliability in this area. The Israeli account constituted a


\textsuperscript{558} See (Seiffert, 2008, pp. 156-7), describes the steps of German helicopter development in the 1950s and 1960s. The South African development took longer, and was somewhat less successful, but similar.

\textsuperscript{559} Turbomeca Archives (TUR), AH43, DGA-DGAC (P), Letter by SGDN/DAE, gen. de Brebisson, #800/DN.AE, 12/12/68, writing to CEO Ziegler of SUD; and Ziegler’s draft letter to his own Directors, HZ/JK, 9/1/69; this letter was finalised by J. Rebuffel, to Director and to PDG Ziegler, 15/1/69, DHV/#7851.
major loss not just for its sales, but also its testimonial use of French material in real operations, and the benefits of comparing technical notes with them. Instead, the 1967 embargo had now increased the risk profile that potential customers attached to French material. [‘...donne un caractère d’incertitude à nos fournitures.’] In what must count as a strong rejection of the view of French-South African arms trade as the mere outcome of policy, Ziegler objected to the fact that President de Gaulle had not bothered to consult with industry prior to his decision. Doubts about the assured flow of spare parts were hurting French promotional efforts. More generally, the importance of orders for French equipment made by the French armed forces was reemphasized, which customers tended to took as a sign of continued product support. After complaining about state interference in promotion and negotiation, Ziegler ended his letter on the two key selling points of credibility of continued delivery and after-sales service.

Ziegler had not mentioned South Africa, but the inference was clear. In his request for feedback on his draft letter to the heads of Sud-Aviation, including Brohon, Ziegler had emphasized helicopters and spare parts for the Vautour fighter-bomber aircraft. He had prudently decided to omit to Brebisson the latent threat of competition from current South African and Israeli efforts at local production that his notes identified. Obviously creating competition had not been Sud-Aviation’s objective when agreeing to help set up Atlas. Sud-Aviation would spend over half of its 1969 allotment for government promotional support on helicopters. Together with the continued successes in helicopters sales, these facts point to the importance of helicopters to Sud-Aviation’s loss-making aeronautical portfolio.

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560 TUR, AH43, DGA-DGAC (P), Ziegler’s letter for Brebisson, to his own Directors, HZ/JV/#26, 13/1/69, p.3.
561 TUR, Ibid., Ziegler to Brebisson, p.3 [nous ne pouvons que regretter que l’aspect économique n’ait pas été préalablement examiné en prenant contact avec notre profession.]
562 TUR, Ibid., In a handwritten note by Ziegler? Rebuffel (CNEIA?) on the draft letter, Israel and South Africa are the two immediate examples.
563 TUR, Ibid., PDG Ziegler to Directors Giusta, Guibert, Brohon, du Boucheron, de Lagarde, Pertica, Marnay, 9/1/69.
564 TUR, Ibid., Handwritten note, undated, ‘Rebuffel, pour le répondre en son absence’, point 1B, ‘concurrents non-négligeables.. Israel, Afrique du Sud.’ Unfortunately, Brohon’s contribution to the draft is not in the file. The risk of future competition from (European) partners was not missed in the interministerial committee on industrial affairs, see CAEF, B-1018, minutes by State Secretary for Economics, ‘compte rendu, réunion interministérielle du Mardi 12 mars 1968’, p.5, point c), ‘travail en cooperation avec d’autres pays, limitant l’ampleur.’
565 SUD to DMA/DAI, gen. Bonte, AD/AB/#2326, 14/11/68, outlining the requests made for government aviation promotion and development support under Article 52-90 and Article 90. Of 4.1mFF under art.52-90, 2.6mFF are for Helicopter promotion, allocation for Carvelle and Concorde together is 0.8mFF.
566 CAEF, B-1018, Carcelle to Treasury, #75/69/PC, 1/7/69, ‘Sud-Aviation- comptes de l’exercise 1968’, p.10 shows the growing dependency on helicopters for the fixed-wing projects between 1967/68. In 1968, the
Conclusion

On Franco-South African strategic cooperation on local production, South African approaches moved from neutral, or even anti-French, state logics to including a measure of trust in decision making. This chapter has established a relational trend from assertion, to engagement and then adoption, and finally, maturity. This was not an across the board phenomenon, but settled on key groups and individuals, which were nonetheless instrumental in setting up and reinforcing significant mutual understandings and sustained shared practices. The crucial framework of the later community of practice was therefore established through the project of local production at Atlas. The three elements of that Franco-South African community are all in evidence.

Joint enterprise

South African state logics were informed by an oversensitive threat analysis within the defence community, the growing importance of the SAAF in defence planning and necessary self-sufficiency in defence infrastructure. In the 1960s South Africa changed its procurement dependency through local aviation production. It also introduced political thinking into procurement, a requirement that came to include a reappraisal of its French supplier. The ensuing professionalization drive was achieved with a significant amount of French military and industrial assistance, made possible by a supportive French defence community.

Mutual engagement

Political and economic reasons served to activate the middle level actors. All were understood to speak on behalf of the French government. Events surrounding the Atlas deal confirm delegated liaisons as the main form of communication. The rarity of reciprocal French official visits to South Africa concealed flourishing exchanges between the South African defence community and French commercial and industrial actors in the 1960s. Aside from a ‘system of invitation’ centring on Paris, the South African willingness to learn invited an assortment of lower level technicians to operations and factories in South Africa. (Konieczna, 2013, p. 410)

For Sud-Aviation’s broker Brohon, to be successful as a government delegate was quite unusual; his internal access across institutional boundaries is indeed remarkable. Brohon certainly played his hand better than his friend and boss André Puget. Brohon’s testimony is an important correction to the executive perspective, even ministerial perspective, as directors-in-chief, unencumbered by operational considerations. The perpetuated view is that de Gaulle was

helicopter division accounted for 233mFF of total sales of 506mFF, down 17%. Among seven other product groups, the Caravelle and vaunted Concorde brought in respectively 216, from 333mFF, and 18, from 8mFF.
the ‘only captain’, but the evidence offered for this view only covers singular and cardinal foreign policy decisions, and rarely concerns seemingly mundane recurring affairs like arms trade.\footnote{Fallows, 2007, p. 303, ‘[de Gaulle,] Seul maître à bord?’ Il n’y a pas de question sur ce point.’ The term originates from Jean Lacouture, De Gaulle, tome 3, Le Souverain. (Paris: Seuil, 1986), p.452. Lacouture refers to the French nuclear bomb. (Vaißes, 1998, pp. 294-5) states that the decision of a French 1966 exit from NATO were taken by de Gaulle outside of the Conseil de Defense or the Conseil restraint. Arguably these big one-off decisions were quite different from smaller more corrosive decisions.}

The Atlas deal made clear who the outsiders and insiders were, and their interests. Operators from Sud-Aviation and Atlas worked together not just on producing aircraft, but on maintaining them, and producing parts for them. The Israeli affair also deepened understanding on both sides about the value of their arms trade relationship. It created a crisis in the ‘regimes of competence and accountability’ of the shared practice of strategic procurement. (Wenger, 2010, p. 6) The South African concern about the French level of investment was moderate, exactly because Atlas (and Israel) appeared to be a strategic alternative. By early 1970 both defence communities were again comfortable in their relationship – until political events disturbed the parameters once more. As we will see, by then the stakes were raised, raising investment in shared objectives.

*Shared repertoire*

A shared repertoire can be seen in many aspects, the chief among them being the interest in French procurement systems, which resulted in deliberate adoption of French organisational practices of the DMA, and the gradual understanding of French diplomatic contradictions of procurement. The linking event in these phenomena is the cooperation on a shared project. It also allowed better understanding of French interests, which made them comfortably predictable.

The Franco-South African relationship had become subordinated to what Kolodziej has called France’s ‘postcolonial geostrategic policy [which was] based more on France’s techno-scientific competitiveness and diplomatic finesse than on the direct use of its military power.’ (Kolodziej, 1987, p. 342) However, the new currency of technological dominance turned out not as the hoped-for alternative to stable colonial-style influence, but a pervasive and transitory foreign policy instrument that – in sub-Saharan Africa - depended on regional conditions, and required substantial reinforcement and engagement below state level.\footnote{Kolodziej, 1987, pp. 383} ‘[By the middle 1970s,]’Trade and investment were directed to other developing areas to widen France’s access to other markets, to increase its global competitiveness, and to encourage...
Thus, after French decolonisation, the state had to once again rely on lower order operators for her access to African resources and opportunities. This time these operators required a more manifestly janus-faced organisation, responding to nominal African statehood but simultaneously organizing for parastatal exploitation, while working towards the interests of their state. Kolodziej sees the Israeli episode as a clear case of French ‘duplicitous behaviour’, ‘a self-made mesh of contradictions and hypocritical posturing’. (Kolodziej, 1987, pp. 354, 343) While this is most certainly true, the double-speak of French arms trade was not a new phenomenon. The French colonial state had been founded on different standards for the Metropole and for the empire. (Charbonneau, 2008, p. 281) What had changed was the impunity with which French state operators and delegates could operate in their African zones of influence. While this study only identifies a military trade relationship, and one with a uniquely powerful and willing African partner, it can be argued that other exploitative endeavours of trade, diplomacy, finance, and development cooperation existed in separation. However, all of them combined a publicly expressed government policy with a purposely less visible, instrumentalized, or even informal collective of confidence that implicated administrative and entrepreneurial professionals on both sides.

greater initiative and risk-taking among French firms used to their comfortable ways but restricted in the opportunities in the Francophone zone.’
Chapter 5: Fulfilment

This chapter discusses the final step of the commercial model, that of after-sales activities. In particular, we will discuss four practices deriving from standard obligations in the sale contract, but which took on particular forms due to the special South African requirements. ‘After-sales’ marks the last step in French-South African transactions. Fulfilment is a critical buyer concern, and a normal seller responsibility. Promotional promises were worth very little without a servicing apparatus available. No military aircraft can be effective for any length of time without trained crews and regular maintenance. For this reason, buyers took heart from governments employing their own merchandise, signalling continued servicing. (This also tied French defence to the use and promotion of French equipment.)

In this chapter we will look at four after-sales practices specifically prominent in South African documents: product transportation, crew training, arming helicopters, and obtaining and fitting spare parts. Taken together, the various after-sales activities-to-practices further to helicopter transactions represent the strongest evidence of a community of practice developing between 1960 and 1975. Previous chapters have established the actors and institutions driving helicopter trade, and the development of shared enterprises. This chapter argues that within the commercial process, after-sales activities were among the most frequent and repetitive of all the phases, and as such, they demonstrate the functioning of the community. Top level engagements had by the late 1960s established the joint benefit of cooperation on local aircraft production. Selling complete military helicopters to South Africa stalled after 1970, rendering the previous steps of trade largely redundant. Especially after 1970 therefore, after-sales service became a vehicle for continuation of deliveries of helicopters-in-parts. This phenomenon was the culmination of the community of practice that had emerged from over a decade of interaction.

The object of this chapter is to bring out both the continuous and recurrent nature of activities throughout the period under review, as well as the singular importance of spare parts supply, especially to the evolving trade relationship by the 1970s. Fulfilment shows most clearly how the operational level became the alternative commercial relationship after embargoes prevented normal commerce. Each of the four after-sales practices is shown to contribute to the formation and sustenance of a community of practice, which is a dynamic but enduring gathering of people, who share some characteristics with each other, but not others. The four practices are
part of the same bilateral arms trade relationship, and therefore will share some attributes, but not all. For example, they may display an overlap in actors (e.g. the military attaches), but their ways of working, challenges and objectives are different in each case.

Of the three socialising properties of practice, fulfilment by operative levels naturally shows mutual engagement, and a repertoire of understandings, with common objectives generally taken for granted. Delivery, training, helicopter armament, and spare parts provision all carried a clearly defined objective. Each of the four types of fulfilment featured an acquisition or exchange of some kind, which brought certain groups (to work) together for that specific purpose. Fulfilment therefore has a clear performative aspect, in terms of efficiency and secrecy. Lastly, the key operators within the defence community managing these separate affairs for longer stretches of time, can be seen to share certain characteristics. Nearly all of them had a military rank or affinity, which in a sense carried over in their relationship with other defence communities. (This is a perspective that we will return to in Chapter 6.) Community members tended to express respect for those displaying high levels of professionalism.

The strongest contributors to a common practice of arms trade are those practitioners involved in the delivery of helicopters by air bridge between South Africa and France, and the spare parts provision, an essential element of the helicopter licence deal discussed in the previous chapter. Their objective and engagement were obviously crucial to the continuation of the business relationship, as well as maintaining its maximum discretion. High stakes resulted in high investment of actors in a satisfactory outcome. By contrast, arming the helicopter was an activity that had few common elements. Finding the best armaments was a technical, but fairly straightforward affair. French test centres provided the best technical solution available, regardless of the client. South African choices in fire practice and application rested on their own conceptions and limitations. The training of pilots and crews was a normal part of the sale contract, a non-committal goal requiring moderate reciprocity. It nonetheless required increasing discretion, as French embargo measures emphasized the distinction between existing commitments of outlawed weaponry and new business.

Where convenient the chapter will embed the helicopter case in the wider field of military procurement and after-sales management. French after-sales facilities in support of South African helicopter operations set the outer limits of cooperation in two ways. They formed barriers to exit for the South Africans, which were partially material and partially built on trust
created. At several occasions, alternative offers for supply and maintenance were courteously rejected because of implied worries over continuity, especially in an environment that seemingly got more threatening for the SADF with each passing year. Additionally, service organization created efficient routines among those participating. Membership was therefore both a rational and an affective condition.

The community of practice developed from the joint actions of individuals and individual organisations with the separate French and South African defence communities. In that sense, we are exploring territory that sits between these two. Again, our interest is less with the agents and their engagement with their respective social environments. Instead, the question is about the construction of a new shared practice, by agents originating from different defence communities.

**Air transportation**

For reasons of discretion and operational urgency, the delivery and maintenance of French helicopters was an immediate concern to the SADF, as Robbertze considered sea transport along ports of several hostile states both too risky and too slow. This relatively new need for secrecy, continuous external overhaul, and the high costs involved, brought home to the South African Air Force [SAAF] and its masters at SADF the continued dependence on a new and still largely unknown partner. As this section shows, such anxieties would gradually be replaced by familiar routines creating firm understandings on both sides.

This paragraph will focus on performance and secrecy of transport, which were key considerations especially on the South African side. With the purchase of nine American-built C-130 cargo aircraft in 1962 the delivery issue was resolved.\(^{569}\) A bi-monthly charter was set up with assistance from the French air controlling authority. These charters were dubbed ‘training flights’, but the practical benefit to the crew was certainly secondary to the function of unseen shipments to and from France. Communications with French interlocutors occurred regularly. By 1970 when SAAF received seven French C-160Z Transall cargo planes, many of these changes had taken place. (SIPRI, n.d.)

The purchase of the first seven Alouette II helicopters in August 1960 had raised the issue of transportation, Robbertze favouring speed and security, the Commandant-General (hereafter: CG) emphasizing costs. Before the SAAF acquired its own capacity, charters by French air

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\(^{569}\) South Africa ordered nine C-160Z Transall Transport aircraft in France in 1969, these were delivered in 1970.
transport company UAT would ensure delivery to a South African military largely unfamiliar with continental methods. The choice in favour of sea transport on 29 September 1960 generated much correspondence, and was revoked already by 3 November in favour of transport by French charter UAT, to commence pilot training urgently in the face of ‘recent disturbances’ in Pondoland. The French involvement concerned exchanging landing rights, which were renewed pro forma whenever the previous term expired.

In 1960, impatience in South African headquarters at French delivery times of aviation equipment point to mistaken assumptions about the French defence community as a centrally run mechanism. More generally, SADF’s reserved attitude towards the French defence industry was continuously challenged by the military attaché in Paris, Brigadier Robbertze, to the point where ‘some in HQ think I am a Francophile’. Aware of the SADF’s great concern to accelerate rearmament, Robbertze nonetheless deviated from the SADF party line in arguing to prioritise preparation for unconventional warfare, by intensifying research into French extensive experience in equipping for internal security. Concerning delivery lead times, he pleaded with CG Grobbelaar for sensitivity and discretion with regard to the state-controlled French companies, which in his estimation were already offering good delivery times. Added pressure could backfire with the French military, whose own stocks were cannibalised to improve lead times of French exports. The CG kindly rejected Robbertze’s personal characterisation, but nonetheless derided the unfamiliarity of SADF staff with Dassault’s bait-and-switch tactics of forced renegotiation of delivery times and prices for Mirages and parts. Of course, opportunististic price hikes were not beyond major French exporters, but it was also true that normal causes of production delays were not immediately understood or accepted by

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571 SANDF, KG5 box 262 vol.1, folder Purchase of Aircraft and Helicopters, Copy of letter Defence Secretary to Treasury Secretary, DC 2490/1, 3/11/60, ‘Aankoop van Helikopters: Lugvervoer’, p.1; These were the Pondoland riots, see CADN, 551PO-2-161, Report by Attache Muguet, 31/10/60 to 30/11/60, p.4.
572 SANDF, KG5 box 262 vol.1, folder Purchase of aircraft and helicopters, KG/GPP/2/3/3, Letter Robbertze to CG Grobbelaar, 6/2/62, referring to his meeting with Jaboulay, who was again better informed on South African procurement plans then Robbertze was.
573 SANDF, KG5 box 262 vol.1, folder Purchase of aircraft and helicopters, KG/GPP/2/3/3, Letter Robbertze to KG Grobbelaar, 22/1/62, p.4-5.
574 SANDF, KG5 box 262, vol.1, folder Purchase of aircraft and helicopters, KG/GPP/2/3/3, Letter CG Grobbelaar to Robbertze, 14/2/62, p.1, ‘die Franse leveransiers betere “adverteerders” is as wat baie van my personeel begryp’.
the SADF leadership. Ever cost-conscious, the CG demanded that the empty return flights would be used to carry cargo and passengers visiting or returning from courses in Paris or the UK, thus portending the future arrangement of the so-called training flights. It would take the routinized air transportation by C-130 of bi-monthly or quarterly shipments to pacify the CG.

Such arrangements were not quick decisions, and involved a certain conditioning and convincing of the SADF command. In November 1960, the South African military attaché to Paris, Brigadier Robbertze, noted his satisfaction about Sud-Aviation’s delivery performance to his boss, the CG. CG Grobbelaar displayed all the characteristics of a first time buyer, taking great precautions in minimising the substantial risk, demanding repeated checks, and second-guessing the seller’s intentions. The debate on transport was repeated in November 1961 for shipment of Alouette IIIIs came in 20% lower than their shipment of the Alouette IIs. From then on, helicopters and their engines were shipped by SAAF ‘Training Flights’ between the units and the factories of Sud-Aviation near Marseille and Turbomeca, Bordes, in the South-West of France.

In early 1962, the senior leadership of the SADF briefly experienced buyer remorse regarding French equipment when a SAAF operative overstated the maintenance requirements, to increase by two-thirds the number of shipments to France of helicopters for maintenance. Much effort had gone into choosing the best available helicopters to SAAF requirements, and Alouette performance during the Pondoland revolt had helped to encourage additional purchases of Alouette IIIIs in January, but one year on, the senior leadership seemed quick to believe the worst about their new French suppliers. In light of the later 1963 meetings to secure British supply, and SADF’s own concern for immediate expansion for potential war, such responses must be taken as evidence of lingering uncertainty about the new equipment and

575 SANDF, KG5 box 263, vol.4, folder Purchase of aircraft and helicopters, Air Chief Viljoen to CG, 13/7/62, actual delivery is ‘dependent on many factors’.
576 SANDF, KG5 box 262, vol.1, folder Purchase of aircraft and helicopters, KG/GPP/2/3/3, Letter Air Staff to CG, Quarter Master General, Defence Secretary, Navy Chief, Army Chief, ‘Afwerving helikopters alsook algemene uitrusting’.
578 SANDF, KG5 box 262, vol.1, folder Purchase of Aircraft and Helicopters, Air Force HQ to CG, 15/11/61, ‘Delivery of Alouette III Helicopters’.
579 SANDF, KG5 box 262, vol.1, Purchase of aircraft and helicopters, KG/GPP/2/3/3, letter by Defence Secretary, for CG, ‘Helicopter Maintenance and Repair’, dd. 8/2/62, copy sent 12/2/62; idem, telegram ‘CT 186’, CG to Air Chief, 5/2/62; idem, telegram ‘Your CT 186 Feb 5 re Engines Helicopters’, Air Chief to CG, 6/2/62. The (mistaken) contention by SAAF major was that lack of resources made additional flights convenient, which was (mistakenly) understood by defence leadership as poor procurement investigation.
supply relationship. Then again, Jaboulay himself was no less adamant, reminiscent of the ‘gruelling battle’ he had experienced in preliminary negotiations with SADF in June 1960. Jaboulay complained in July 1962 to the South African Air Chief when six British naval helicopters were chosen over Alouette IIIs.

The maintenance task also required regular shipments between South African air bases and French factories. Apart from regular maintenance, operational helicopters needed periodical major overhaul. It was industry custom to ship back aircraft to the manufacturer for ‘third and fourth line’ maintenance, as the two most advanced stages of repair were called. Making the 6,000 mile journey by sea to Marseilles carried particular drawbacks for the SADF however: long delays reducing operational strength and the risk of stop-overs in hostile African ports.

After the purchase of the C-130s the SAAF was able to ferry three disassembled Alouette IIIs at a time. The SAAF equally placed great stock in efficiency and savings, and there are many anecdotes of discussions between the Air Staff, the South African military attaché, Sud-Aviation and OFEMA. The C130 shipments were to be loaded as close to capacity as possible. The pros and cons of shipping three partially disassembled Alouette IIIs at a time were carefully weighed each time.

By the mid-1960s a bi-monthly schedule of return flights was in operation, which was closely monitored by French and South African military and diplomatic operatives. This is known through the South African communications; calendars in their monthly mission reports show military attachés routinely oversaw the landing and passing on of shipments. Frequent communication took place regarding the most efficient and speedy organisation and loading of

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580 SHDC, 78 1E1 30, letterhead Jaboulay to President of OFEMA, 30/6/60, Paris, ‘Il est inutile que je vous fasse par écrit un historique détaillé de la bagarre acharnée qui vient d’aboutir à une solution de principe en notre faveur.’
581 SANDF, LMH/DGAF6 box 233, vol.1, ‘Aircraft general – Westland Wasp naval version P531’, Jaboulay to Air Chief Viljoen, ‘Supply of Helicopter [sic] to the South-African Navy’, 16/7/62, ‘...as in [sic] no occasion has France refused to sell you any military equipment, even some quite secret ones...’. This was untrue, as South African visitors had been denied info on the Mirage IV strategic bomber the previous year; cf SHDC, 78 1E1 30, Doc MAA, #29602, 13/4/61, cover note to DTIA & SEE, per 14/4/61, on limiting info to South African visitors on the Mirage IV strategic bomber.
582 SANDF, LMH/DGAF6 box 112, folder Visit report by Maj. F.W. Carnell, Appendix G, point 5, and 6, Carnell learned from the larger Australian technical mission in Paris about major cost savings by limiting expensive anti-corrosive treatment to spare parts with long shelf-life.
583 SANDF, MA1, folder Shipping: Air Transport C130 Training Flights, Armed Forces Attache to Air Chief, ‘Shipment of Alouette III Helicopters by C130’, 21/11/67, passing on confirmation by Sud-Aviation of shipment of three Alouette IIIs.
flights. Logistical planning was but one of the many topics exchanged by the French mission in Pretoria, in telegrams to Paris from chiefs of defence staff, ambassador, military attachés and the SAAF Maintenance Group.

Remaining French telegrams and notes by South African attachés on flights between 1968 and 1969 form the echo of a direct line of communication between operative levels, such as OFEMA, military attachés and South African Defence headquarters. Topics cover the gamut of procurement and assistance subjects, ranging from confirmation of SFERMA’s assistance to Atlas, defective rotor blades returned to Sud-Aviation, differences on agreed prices, confirmations of senior and technical visitors, 1969 Christmas wishes from the South African Air Chief to his military attaché in Paris and the French colleague French Air Chief, even a 1974 request to speed up CIEEMG approval for French small arms production equipment. These are routine communications with concise, subject-specific content, usually assuming prior context and referring to previous messages, sometimes secret. Sud-Aviation in France communicated regularly with the South African military attaché in Paris, and through Sud-Aviation’s representative in RSA, sometimes daily. One message requests that South African military attachés no longer be copied on logistical queries.

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584 For example SANDF, Ibid., ‘Shipment of Alouette Helicopters by C130’, p.1,’Sud-Aviation have confirmed definitely that Alouette III no’s 1478, 1479, and 1480 will be ready for loading on C130 flight V61 on 13 December 1967… Regarding the suggestion to save space by retaining the rotor…’; SANDF, Ibid., Cypher telegram, Defence, Pretoria to Embassy, Paris, 19/2/68, CAF to SALEG, ‘Sud-Aviation representative in RSA has advised Maintenance Group … This information is urgently required to amend routing…’

585 SANDF, MA1, folder Shipping … Ibid., Cypher telegram, Embassy, Paris, to Defence, Pretoria, AT2/567 April 1969, handwritten note to sort out urgent matter re flight landing advising to call directly with the Director of DAI, General Bonte, or his representative, Eng.Gen. Joyau.


588 SHDV, 3Q 1081, Ibid., SAAF to embassy, Paris, #33732, February 1969, ‘Suggest you request OFEMA explain added escalation’.

589 SHDV, 3Q 1082, folder Transmissions gouvernementales: telegraphmes de pretoria 14/3/1969 to 31/12/78, from Chief of SAAF, to Paris embassy staff, and FR Chief of AIR staff, #21643, December 1969, sending Christmas wishes.

590 SHDV, 3Q 1082, Ibid., MILFrance Pretoria to Delegarm Paris, #63438, November 1974, request to DAI Director Gen. Assens to ensure speedy authorisation of French machinery for new Armscor factory, ‘que vous intervenez pour le permis d’exportation soit accordé dès que possible afin que cette commande ne retarde pas le program.’

591 SHDV, 3Q 1081, Ibid., Military Attache, Pretoria, to ‘Miniarmees’, #27264, confidential, August (undated) – The Macchi aircraft rumoured to be contracted ‘despite of opposition from certain person’.

592 SHDV, 3Q 1082, SAAF Maintenance Group to Military Attache, Paris,#6899, 22/10/69, in future no more copies of indents to be sent to the military attaché in Paris.
This example is vexing for a number of reasons; it may reflect strong South African (and French) efforts to limit dissemination of arms trade data. It may also point to team expansion to cope with the great demands placed on the military attachés, as flagged up early on by French and South African attaches to their superiors. Certainly, such communications confirm direct contacts between Sud-Aviation and Turbomeca and the SAAF Maintenance Group, in itself a development of cutting out the management middlemen. Much of the weekly communications found in French military archives is only in coded form, although the sheer number of them still gives an indication of the high frequency of contacts regarding services. Despite their largely coded\textsuperscript{593} nature, and compared with South African source material, French telegrams confirm a routine and a repertoire of colloquial contacts between otherwise unintroduced operatives in Paris and Pretoria. As such these are key indicators of a community of practice.

Secrecy was an ongoing concern and to an extent a repertoire shared with French operatives, and it could also be used to raise other issues. By 1968 the training flights had become routine, evidenced by the intensive communications kept in French archives. However, apparently anxious about third-party charters, the French authorities had proposed to the South African foreign ministry, in charge of arranging transport of all foreign procurement, using French shipping in future.\textsuperscript{594} Suspecting profit motives by those French parties outside of the French defence community, SADF referred the issue of selecting normal carriers to the responsible diplomats. The CG explained more or less truthfully to their own diplomatic colleagues, that it operated ‘a transport shuttle service to Europe, primarily as a training flight for our aircrews, but it also affords the opportunity of ferrying sensitive material with the utmost security. This shuttle service has been used extensively to transport major equipment, e.g. Mirage and Alouette aircraft from France. We naturally prefer this arrangement and feel the French authorities have no reason for complaint in this regard.’\textsuperscript{595} This shows a recurring dilemma of trust in French professionalism, but doubts about their venality.

Mutual engagement between 1960 and 1969 grew to a level of trust and organization on the part of the South African defence community that initially was not there. Air transportation provides evidence of this development. French arms traders developed such liaisons world-

\textsuperscript{593} The French copies in SHDV 3Q 1081 and 1082 use a five letter code basis which may provide a future avenue of historic research for crypto-analysts.

\textsuperscript{594} SANDF, HVS1 box 83, vol.2, Department of Foreign Affairs to CG, ‘Vervoer van Strategiese goedere tussen Frankryk en Suid-Afrika’, 11/12/68, in Afrikaans.

\textsuperscript{595} SANDF, HVS1 box 83, vol.2, CG to Department of Foreign Affairs, ‘Transportation of strategic material between France and the RSA’, 30/12/68, reply in English, the Commandant General’s office concluded on small urgent parcels shipped through commercial channels, that it had no say in the choice of airline.
wide, but the political dimension of the South African relationship added a heightened attention of secrecy. Facilitating chartered flights went a long way in managing the risk of shipping controversial items, among them French helicopters. A core of South African staff officers, military attachés, and military maintenance operators communicated with French commercial consultants, military engineers and industrial technicians, building discreet routines for day-to-day handling, all of them adding to the nascent community of Franco-South African arms trade practice.

Training

Training helicopter crews and ground teams occurred throughout the period under review, as part of the purchase contract. SAAF flew its personnel to France to receive technical training on the premises of Sud-Aviation and Turbomeca. There is little mention of secrecy, due to the direct contact between the French manufacturers and the South African Defence Force on flight plans, which points to trust, but also to the tight controls of the C130 training flight shuttle service. Even before the choice of Alouettes, 17th helicopter squadron of the SAAF, under its chief Tatham, had taken great care in training its own instructors and pilots on (American-made) S-51s and S-55s. The SAAF would continue to train its own (and those of Rhodesia) – the SA Police would develop the first operational manual for the Alouette III. Standard contractual efforts required the seller to offer basic training to air crews and ground crews. South African air and ground crews received instruction in France on how to field and maintain French helicopters. Technical teams would visit to study maintenance and production methods, generating demands for additional accessories and information. French flight training and maintenance courses were often at an advanced level, causing the South African crews to struggle. Generally they formed enthusiastic opinions of their French instructors. Again this was an emergent quality. As an example, in 1962 Turbomeca would contest the supply of data

596 A higher level was to avoid civil service channels altogether and communicate directly and secretly. See SANDF, HSI/AMI 3 box 791, vol.1, folder Liaison with MA Paris, Brig. P.M. Retief for CG to Robbertze, 28/2/63, to investigate exchanges with German intelligence.
598 SANDF, DGAF/LMH, 6, box 308, ‘Details for requirements for RRAF participation in SAAF exercise’, 24/7/64; Ibid., South African mission, Salisbury, to CG, 20/11/64, ‘Helicopter conversion course’, requesting CG’s approval to send two RRAF pilots to train with SAAF on Alouette IIIs.
599 SANDF, DGAF/LMH, 6, box 308, SAP Commissioner to CG, 26/3/65, ‘SAP Manual: Helicopters support during police operations’, the 60-page manual is in the folder. Section 8 sets out the basis for cooperation between SAAF and SAP.
on fourth line maintenance. It was warned internally in 1967 of complaints about the absence of an after-sales department, yet by the late 1960s SADF found support by Turbomeca forthcoming.

In 1962, a technical mission by South African Major Carnell to French industry had experienced first-hand the lack of attention by South African senior leadership with regards to the problems that South African crews training at French bases were experiencing. Substandard accommodation and inadequate directions to visiting South African officers undercut their effectiveness. For this reason, Robbertze requested a car soon after his arrival in Europe in 1957, and Carnell urged a minimum hotel standard to avoid the embarrassment of South African officers in Paris. Reports by the French military attachés generally referred unfavourably, if sympathetically, to South African military operations and craft. In 1963, the permanent French attaché observed a lack of a maintenance culture within the SADF, demonstrated by an anecdote of the unpacking of brand new Panhard engines in the South African desert sand. On licensing of AML armoured cars it was observed that the risk existed of blaming the French supplier for technical problems to cloak South African deficiencies. In terms of training, language was an issue, especially below management levels. Very early on, the opportunity to send a South African senior officer to the prestigious French Ecole de Guerre Supérieure was almost wasted because hardly any South African officers spoke French. High level meetings were best conducted in English, as the attachés advised when deputy Commandant-General Hiemstra came to Paris in November 1964 to discuss future strategies and procurement with his counterparts of the French military and the DMA. The French companies gradually began catering to English-speaking technicians, and South African middle cadre like staff and the

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600 SANDF, LMH/DGAF6 box 112, folder Visit report by Maj. F.W. Carnell, appendix ‘Visit by Brig Robbertze 6-7 December 1962’, p.5
602 SHDV, 2 E 3678, Binder 1, folder Military situation, French permanent attaché col. Orsini, #360, 30/9/64, to EMAA/2e Bureau, ‘compte rendu…visites’, ‘…nous avons pu voir des moteurs d’A.M.L. neufs, arrivant de France dans des conditions excellentes d’emballage, sortis de leur conteneur et posés à même le sable en attendant d’être montés sur les véhicules.’ This problem was caused by government’s focus on acquisition over indoctrination, and leakage of trained engineers to the private market. See also SHDV, 14 S 295, Col. Orsini’s end of mission report, #100, 24/6/66, conclusion: ‘une insuffisance de planification aggravée par une certaine versatilité propre’, respectively SHDV, 14 S 295, Chef de Bataillon Fouillard’s end of mission report, #32/AM, 19/7/62, on the concern held by ‘les techniciens français qui sur place suivent le matériel, celui du personnel charge de son entretien périodique’.
603 SANDF, LMH/DGAF6 box 112, folder Visit report by Maj. F.W. Carnell, Appendix F on French language issues.
604 SHDV, ZE 3678 AIR, MinDef/EMA/Div Rensgmts/Section Attaches Militaires, #70, 26/11/64, confidentiel. ‘Visite non-officielle e France du General Commandant en Chef Adjoint des forces Armees sud-africaines M. Lt. Gen RC Hiemstra’. 
South African military attachés in Paris would attempt to learn French. In July 1962, the South African military attaché sent back a recording of an ‘impromptu’ technical discussion of Mirage aircraft amongst operatives for the benefit of French-language students. Such anecdotal evidence suggests a willingness to invest in better French language skills within the SADF but little organization. Incidentally, this particular communication directly to the Air Chief attests to the small size of the South African defence community.\(^{605}\)

Carnell’s mission to explore specific technical problems revealed many opportunities for improving mission management and logistical organisation, something Robbertze himself had repeatedly exhorted.\(^{606}\) What the French Pilatre mission had identified in 1962 as pro-French sentiment, was partly a healthy respect for French defence organisation and technical proficiency, partly also a growing realisation of the need to not only re-equip the South African armed forces, but also to modernise its organisation and processes. However, it would take time to convince senior staff of the SADF of France’s ‘unique experience in Algeria’, given Robbertze’s perception of ‘the light-hearted way in which any suggestion of a parallel between our dangers and those in Algeria have been received in certain quarters’.\(^{607}\) The French military attaché had also observed deficiencies in operationalising the new purchases. Robbertze was only one of several with exposure to France who would take up high military positions under Minister of Defence Botha, favourable to French cooperation.

In March 1964 South African military attaché Col. Meintjes also reported that the continued good shape of diplomatic relations depended on humouring French counterparts by speaking French, and he therefore requested that a South African officer enrol in a course at the French War College.\(^{608}\) Meintjes noted of his environment that ‘there is an increasing degree of sympathy for our cause, from the ministry [of Defence] downwards’, although he had to make allowances for ‘much muddled thinking in France’, doubtlessly referring to encounters with those outside the French defence community, less taken in by his government’s policies.\(^{609}\) Meintjes echoed Robbertze’s earlier report on complimentary observations by French instructors on the performance of the two visiting South African captains. In his May report


\(^{606}\) SANDF, KG5 box 260, vol.1, folder Procurement of SADF requirements: SAAF, Robbertze to CG, 10/12/60, ‘Monthly report no.3, November 1960’, p.4


\(^{608}\) SANDF, HSI/AMI 3 box 791, vol.1, folder Liaison with MA Paris, Meintjes report March 1964

\(^{609}\) SANDF, HSI/AMI 3 box 791, Ibid., p.2
Meintjes mentioned the French Air Force had invited his fellow attaché to participate in a service skiing event, by way of fraternisation and sport promotion.\textsuperscript{610} The French course, taught in English, was equally indicative of the positive attitude within the French defence community, certainly when coupled with the exceptionally warm and frank reception South African technical missions had experienced at SFERMA.\textsuperscript{611}

Internal reporting on training courses in France by South African crews shows the dependency on French tutelage, with regard to helicopters. ‘First line’ and ‘second line’ maintenance occurred routinely at helicopter bases and the repair facilities at Atlas; a full overhaul (fourth line maintenance) required the tools and competence of the French manufacturer. From September to December 1967 groups of ground crew received training on routine maintenance on heavy Super Frelon helicopters, purchased in the same year. Commandant Tatham and twenty SAAF staff went to Sud-Aviation; another ten officers and men went to helicopter engine producer Turbomeca.\textsuperscript{612} Training for SA-330 Puma helicopters took place at Sud-Aviation.\textsuperscript{613} Due to the great number of international students, the number of English speaking tutors at Sud-Aviation was in short supply. Time and places for South African students at Turbomeca were also limited, and no SAAF helicopters were present. The level of basic electrical knowledge of South African ground crew was found to be insufficient. It was therefore recommended that South African ground crew take full benefit from the assembly of delivered helicopters by Sud-Aviation’s visiting specialists.\textsuperscript{614}

With material modernisation came questions of maintenance and management, forcing the SAAF to adapt; the Border War would force it to professionalize even further. South African crew received training on the (French) Transall C-160Z cargo aircraft, ordered from Nord Aviation and to be delivered May 1969. The October 1968 planning report interestingly notes that contractual obligations would allow training not only of the ground and air crews, but also a resident engineer to the French factory to coordinate SAAF’s servicing and technical requests, and an eight-man SAAF provisioning team. It would both secure basic (first and second line)

\textsuperscript{610} SANDF, HSI/AMI 3 box 791, Ibid., p.1
\textsuperscript{611} SANDF, HSI/AMI 3 box 791, Ibid., p.2
\textsuperscript{613} SANDF, HVS/DGAA1 box 377, folder Kursusse in ander lande Lugmag: Franse kursusse, Commander Tactical Group to Commander Swartkop Air base, 5/12/69, ‘Verslag oor SA-330 Puma Helikopter kursus in Frankryk’, 22 SAAF personnel attended.
parts, but also ensure the ‘compilation of fourth line spare servicing spares lists’, as well as ‘overhaul information from the various vendor firms’. Fourth line servicing was essentially the disassembly of the entire craft; this competence equated to assembly capability. Fourth line capability is anecdotal, but unmistakeable. Formation of such a team had been recommended by Carnell in 1962, having met the Australian team in Paris. The aim of fourth line full overhaul servicing is evidence of a renewed drive to complete autonomy, and follows Dr Samuel’s call for industrial independence under Armscór’s supervision – itself an emulation of the French example.

A report on a two-monthly follow up training in France during September – November 1969 covered maintenance for twenty-two pilots, co-pilots and ground crew on the new SA-330 Puma helicopter. The extensive course covered first and second line maintenance of engine and air frame, as well as disassembly for air transport. It also included a trip for technicians to the French and British spare parts manufacturers. The absence of fourth line maintenance for the Pumas at this time, despite the SAAF’s clear preference for this helicopter, suggests that (re)assembly was not a competency at this time, one year before the embargo. There was praise from the students for the instructors of producer Sud-Aviation and engine manufacturer Turbomeca, for their focus on continuous improvement, and their very friendly disposition especially to the South African visitors. The latter kept aloof from Algerian trainees, but made pleasant contacts with Argentinian trainees. Argentina purchased significant amounts of French military equipment, and enjoyed the same service. (Nabuco de Araujo, 2011, p. 22) At least six Portuguese SA-330s were also spotted. Internal reporting still noted that the courses at times assumed too much prior knowledge, and therefore future pilot students ought to have 800 hours on Alouette IIIs at the start; crews should be qualified for first and second-line maintenance beforehand. A later report of the same course noted that the SA-330 Puma helicopter was referred to as ‘Puma’ in training courses. In an awkwardly formal adoption of French nomenclature, it was decided by the CG to use the word in correspondence. No mention was made of language problems. Clearly, South African crews had come a long way since the training on Super Frelons in 1966. It appears that by this time South African

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615 SANDF, HVS/DGAA1 box 377, Ibid., ‘Overseas courses in France on Transall C160Z aircraft’, 21/10/68
616 SIPRI, Online Trade Register, France to Argentina, all types, 1960-1980, http://armstrade.sipri.org/armstrade/page/trade_register.php
619 SANDF, HVS/DGAA1 box 377, Ibid., Defence Staff to Air Chief, 19/3/70, ‘Benaming van SA330 Puma helikopter’.
participants received language training to benefit from the French training; engineers received language training for the concurrent Cactus/Crotale project, the joint French and South African project on Anti-Air missile development. In all, these points show the establishment of a close working relationship. After ten years of commercial canvassing visits by key intermediaries and Ministers, by the mid-1960s communications and visits were broadening. The calendar in the monthly attaché reports of the early 1970s show the intensive and regular visits by a host of military and industrial actors, operational and managerial, to French industry. The object was in all cases either to train, to extract know-how within military research projects, and to obtain industrial data.

South African military attachés routinely benefited from the French programme to invite promising foreign senior officers to their military for one or several years. Here was a common way to disseminate and inculcate French military knowledge among future decision makers within small to medium-sized militaries. It also tied those militaries to France, as Robbertze’s tenure shows. In early 1972 the CG approved the acceptance of a French invitation to Air Force colonel Van der Merwe, military attaché to Paris. A misunderstanding about the length of the course caused them to prolong van der Merwe’s participation to the follow on course. The motivation was the ‘tremendous benefit to individual and the SADF’, but also to avoid ‘the impression that we are not genuinely interested in this course’. This example points to the SADF’s susceptibility to Francophone military conceptions, but also its desire to maintain good relations with the French defence community.

The South African 1973 Annual Report on Defence stated that from ‘leaning on Britain… In training as much as in the acquisition of armaments, we had to become ever more self-sufficient and independent’. Compared to a decade earlier military assets had certainly reduced dependency on British supply, but the SADF was still far from self-sufficient. In terms of helicopters, their acquisition, development and maintenance, SAAF remained strongly dependent on French assistance. This was certainly the view of the Etat Major de l’Armée de

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620 SANDF, HVS/DGAA 1, Box 377, HVS/208/4/2, ‘Kursusse in ander lande Leer Frankryk’.
- Project Cactus, staff French language training, 29/4/69


622 SANDF Library, Box White Papers, Republic of South African, Department of Defence, White paper on defence and armament production, 1973, p.15
l’Air, who in 1974 commented on the exceptional relations between the two air forces, seeing 48 pilots and crew visiting France:

‘Ces relations sont en fait un peu à sens unique. Il s’agit avant tout d’aide apportée par l’Armée de l’Air à son homologue Sud-Africain. Cette aide se traduit pas des visites de spécialistes Sud-Africains dans nos unités venant s’informer de nos méthodes d’entraînement, d’instruction et d’emploi des matériels.’

Training efforts were attached to acquisitions and were followed up at home. As such French exposure was a recurring, but not a continuous activity. Exposure of individual crews to French ways would therefore be important but fleeting, and more relevant to the objectives of their commanders and operators. Mutual engagement began in the context of contractual obligations, and the French came to understand the importance of good after sales services. In sum, of the three factors of the Franco-South African community of practice the shared commitment to improving the use of French equipment is the strongest unifier brought on by element training of South African personnel.

Armaments

French helicopter armaments were first promoted and tested before the SAAF in 1964. They became commercially interesting only after insurgent threats in Namibia in mid-1966 had made them necessary, and before French arms trade policy was further restricted in late 1970. Because of a perceived lack of doctrinal fit and underwhelming French demonstrations, the South African Air Force was long reluctant to adopt specific French technology. The high cost of sufficient training round stocks was also seen as prohibitive. This fact belies the common assumption, that South African procurement was merely for French suppliers to acquiesce to, or that South Africa was fully taken in by her doctrine. Despite its relative wealth, the SAAF was behind Portugal in the tactical use of helicopters. South Africa had provided logistical assistance during the outbreak of hostilities in Portuguese Angola in 1961, and in 1963 the heads of state would agree to explore joint support. (Cann J., 2015, p. 347) In July 1960, when SAAF

624 SHDC, 78 1E1 254, folder South Africa, minutes of meeting CIEEMG of 3/7/64, regarding 108 68mm rockets by Hotchkiss Brandt and AS-11 missiles by Nord-Aviation.
625 (Stanley, 2004): p.,19 ‘‘However, by beginning their examination with the inception of arms sales, these studies miss that France and South Africa had already passed through a period of official and close political cooperation, which France had rejected, recognising it as an impediment to its wider African interests; a decision which formed the back drop to all future interaction.’
had been contemplating its first helicopter purchase, a Portuguese order for rockets to be used for ground attack ‘by light aircraft’ was approved by CIEEMG. The Rhodesian Royal Air Force also considered themselves ahead of the South Africans, but depended on their supply. The RRAF would later perfect the combined air-assault in their ‘Fire Force’ units.

The move towards French cannon and rockets was the SAAF’s to make, it seems. Sources do not suggest any special preparation by the French technical bureaus for the South African demonstration, which seemed similar to those made for demonstrations to Austria, Germany, and Portugal. The picture on SAAF adoption of French tactical doctrine is sketchy but suggestive. Reporting by the French technical branches within French defence production illustrates the vast amount of French testing and technical knowledge available on the subject. (Gauthier, 1982, pp. 72, 100-104) Evaluation of the MG151 20mm cannon by SAAF appreciated the fire mission tactics and the gun’s deadly and demoralising effect on untrained enemy infantry as seen in Algeria. While this image only anecdotally connects with the South African customer, the respect for technical ability does establish another commonality between the two defence communities.

Until the September 1970 embargo, French export policy to South Africa was malleable enough to allow trade within its contradictions. Based on Pompidou’s 1962 criteria, the official ‘defensive’ policy for trading with RSA allowed conventional weaponry, and used licensed production as a solution to questionable items. The reader will also recall the machines to produce 9mm ammunition, mentioned in chapter 4, which were shipped prior to the 1964 embargo on such ammunition. Armaments like rocket launchers and machineguns were a hot item because when linked to helicopters they removed the ambiguity of their actual application. Exports drove DMA efforts, but after 1960, not only was innovation lagging, but Anglo-American competition was picking up. Just as CNEIA had warned of lagging aeronautical innovation, the DMA Director commented negatively on the tendency within the CIEEMG

626 SHDC, 78 1E1 250, folder Portugal, CIEEMG minutes to meeting of 18/7/1960, rockets 37mm and 68mm ‘pour avions legers’.
628 SHDV, 1 R 152, folder Ventes d’avions, April 1963 – August 1969, CNEIA President, Gen. Bonte, to Ministère des Armées, #274, 3/4/63, warning against delay of study into successors to Alouette II and III; SHDV, Ibid., CNEIA, #5615, 5/10/64, ‘Exportations aéronautiques pendant la durée du Ve Plan’, ‘Les matériels que notre industrie peut présenter ont vieilli...’.
to adjourn repeatedly. Also thinly disguised was DMA’s criticism of the 1967 embargo on arms to Israel, the number one customer that year. With rare humility, the OFEMA technical delegation based in Pretoria in January 1969 admitted to a poor demonstration in 1965, but hoped to try again with AS11 missiles on Alouette III helicopters and Impala [Macchi] aircraft.\footnote{SANDF, HVS 1 box 209, vol.1, folder HVS 412/6/3, Lansoy for OFEMA, Pretoria, to CG, 13/1/69, ‘AS 11B on Alouette III’. Further to the visit by CEO of Nord-Aviation, Gen. Crepin.\footnote{SHDV, 20 R 127, folder Rapports de la direction technique et industrielle de l’aéronautique (D.T.I.A.) sur l’exécution des programmes d’armement (1962-1969), the 1963 yearbook supports the commercial pessimism of CNEIA, p.A-21, p.A-96.\footnote{SHDV, 8 Q 298, 100 lance-roquettes 123N [sic] de 68mm, to gouv SA, 800kff, CIEEMG meeting 28/5/70; SHDV, 8 Q 300, minutes of CIEEMG meeting 6/8/70, ‘8 Canons MG 151/20 et rechanges’.\footnote{SHDV, 8 Q 302, minutes of CIEEMG meeting 23/12/71, OJ DAI/44, pièces détachées, ‘rechanges et accessoires pour canon MG151/20 to SAAF’, remark on document: ‘Lettre du 23/11/71. Commande faisant suite à la livraison à la SAAF d’installations de canon MG151/20 autorisées par AEMG n°2619 du 8/8/68 (contrat de vente d’Alouette III armées de MG151 datant de 1967, la dernière Alouette a été livrée en mars 1971.) Service après vente entrant dans le cadre de la directive du Premier ministre, ref 480/CAB.XIII.2.CD du 24/3/71.’ The cabinet document could not be consulted.\footnote{Cf SHDV, 8 Q 293, CIEEMG minutes 6/11/66, shows 15 ‘armed Alouettes’ and separately, 8 MG151 canon. The French government could equally have argued that, post-embargo, to supply every helicopter with the MG151 would be surplus to requirement, as the “armed” qualification had been a condition to sell the MGs in the first place.\footnote{CIEEMG minutes: Negotiation for missile production and supplies approved, 17/4/63; ENTAC anti-tank missiles adjourned, 13/12/66, Crotale/Cactus surface to air missile development approved; Exocet anti-ship missile approved, 25/3/71.}}}}

Helicopter armament support to South Africa divided French authorisation decision making, even if it was considered purely business by practitioners and technicians.\footnote{As we have seen French Foreign Ministry had shown its practical inclination before, but it would nonetheless consistently oppose sale of MG151 canons and rocket launchers for ground attack.\footnote{Despite a 1970 presidential veto on future sales of such items, Pompidou still agreed to a December 1971 sale of spares and parts for MG151 cannon to SAAF, justified as part of the 1968 sale of Alouettes to SAAF.\footnote{Crucially, the justification confirmed ‘after sales service’ as an existing business category, an explanation that stretched the rule to its limits.\footnote{Instead, Messmer’s promise to Van Schalkwyk of 1965 still held, and industrial licensing systematically undercut diplomacy.\footnote{Other weapons like 60mm mortars also show the typical sales sequence from product and munitions, to licence, and spare parts. These acrobatics occurred against the backdrop of Pompidou’s dilemma of holding fast to two conflicting markets: of African commodities and South African demand for goods, of which France holds mainly the military segment. (Konieczna, 2013, pp. 471-3)}}}}
South African agency in procurement is once again borne out by the conservative approach by SAAF to acquisition of helicopter weapons. Despite interest in helicopter tactics going back at least to the Robbertze-Willers visit to Algeria in June 1959, the Air Force had thereafter shown little interest in arming helicopters, or at least in buying the equipment proposed by Sud-Aviation. The reason was that the SAAF did not have “the intention to use helicopters in an offensive role”. Until the incursions to its western and northern borders by 1966, buying significant numbers of rockets for training was rejected for this reason. In acting against “best practices”, as it were, the SAAF revealed its narrow view of the threat of insurgency at this time. Even after evaluating the MG151 cannon in 1965 as ‘far superior to any fixed weapon used on a helicopter’, SAAF’s Tactical Group argued it was doubtful if purchase could be ‘justified’, clearly waiting for direction from SAAF. A year on, in March 1966, an unfortunate French demonstration firing rockets and the MG151 from an Alouette III failed to impress the South African Army and Air Force staff attending. French supply was not the only source for helicopter armament, and hardly the cheapest, but it was a reliable source in comparison to some others. In October 1965 clandestine procurement of forty second-hand .50 Browning heavy machine guns was agreed with an Italian supplier. Delivery would be in crates holding “metal parts”, to the Metal Works Company in Pretoria. Had it not been for South African improvisation, the deal would have made headlines, because the Italian seller had fumbled the delivery and left documentary evidence in the package. Ultimately, the guns were shipped to SAAF 10 Air Depot where they were mixed with a French shipment of weapons. One might speculate that this episode was the reason the French were

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635 SANDF, LMH 6 box 255, Commander of Bloemspruit airbase to Maintenance Group SAAF, 19/2/63. ‘Report on 37mm stray test rockets during demonstration of 20/12/62’; ibid., Commandant Tactical Group SAAF, to Air Chief, 27/9/63, ‘33mm SNEB rocket firing: Alouette III aircraft’; ibid., SAAF HQ to Jaboulay, ‘SS-11 on helicopters’, 31/1/64, ‘No requirement at present. Kindly notify Sud-Aviation and thank them for their offer.’ This is one of the last entries in the SADF archives referring to Jaboulay.

636 SANDF, LMH6 Box 255, Commandant Tactical Group SAAF to CAF, ‘Rocket firing: 17 Squadron’, 23/4/64, ‘not considered ... offensive role’

637 SADF LMH6 Box 255, Commandant Tactical Group SAAF to CAF, ‘Report on Rocket firing using the 37mm rocket and Matra launchers on the Alouette III’, 2/3/64, referring to a prohibitive minimum of 144 rounds fired annually to train a pilot to fire accurately while flying, as opposed to hovering. ‘...there is no object in doing rocket firing from the helicopter.’

638 SANDF, LMH6 Box 255, 17 Squadron to Commandant Tactical Group SAAF, 21/3/65, ‘Evaluation of the MG151 20mm automatic cannon’, p.2, point 16, referring to ‘far superior’ performance; idem, Commandant Tactical Group SAAF to CAF, 30/4/65, ‘Toets van MG 151 20mm automatisese geweer’, p.2, agreeing with this assessment but ‘doubting nonetheless whether purchase can be justified’.


640 SANDF, DC1 box 191, vol.1, folder 17926/187/9, Director of Military Intelligence to CG, 17/11/65, Purchase of weapons in Italy; Defence Secretary to Foreign Secretary, 12/2/65, ‘Aankoop van wapens en ammunisie in italie’,
invited half a year later to demonstrate the weapons the SAAF had already tested. Then in late 1966 SWAPO incursions suddenly intensified. Eight MG151 20mm canon were ordered for use as a side-board weapon on Alouette IIIs. The first helicopter-based assault by SAP units on a SWAPO rebel infiltration in Omgulumbashe, South-West-Africa, in September 1966 most likely influenced purchase. For the 1966 contract, the machine gun was chosen over the MATRA rocket launcher. With hostile Angolan forces joining SWAPO on the South West African border from 1965 onwards, and Rhodesia’s UDI in November 1965, the SADF’s strategic environment was about to change once again. In January 1968 SADF decided that new operations in SWA and RHO should employ armed helicopters. In 1968, as a result of unofficial support for the Rhodesian Royal Air Force in counter-insurgency operations, the Alouette IIIs of the South African Police were armed with home-made .303 Browning machine guns, tested by SAAF. The SADF struggled to meet the substantial demands of supporting regional counter-insurgency efforts against guerrillas whose operational scale and support by was by 1970 consistently growing, inviting an ill-conceived conventional attack into Angola. (Scholtz, 2015, pp. 15-19)

South African adoption of armaments was gradual and dictated by the SAAF’s perceptions. These changed quickly during the Border War. There was not much mutual engagement involved in arming the helicopters, as missiles and machine guns were technical accessories. These were not joint enterprises, for French export and SAAF’s armament did not share similar objectives. The point does serve to mitigate against assigning too much power to the French suppliers, although they provided opportunities for acquisition on both sides. Tellingly, SAAF objections never questioned French doctrinal proficiency, but only its suitability. Armaments can be seen as a step in completing the self-sufficiency in helicopter operations. Their early adoption in the Portuguese theatres, their late adoption by the South Africans, and their perfection by the RRAF in their Fire Force tactic offer symbolic indications of the development of helicopter operations in Southern Africa, driven by French assistance, as well as informed by other non-French examples. This point will be explored further in the next chapter.

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641 SHDV, 8Q 293, CIEEMG minutes of meeting 11/10/1966, 8 installations MG151/20 for AL3s, approved.
642 SANDF, HVS1 box 209, HVS 4/2/6/3, vol.1, ‘Lugmag vliegtuie Helikopters-Alouette’, contract by Sud-Aviation for fifteen SE-3160 Alouette IIIs, idem, p.3; the evaluation of the SS-11 is also in 23/7.
643 See SHDV, 9Q 106[5], Ambassador to DAL, 10/1/69, ‘concurrences des autres puissances occidentales considerables’. Also the Israeli embargo and the May 1968 protests.
644 SAF 14/7 – HQ Joint Combat Forces to CDS, 24/4/68. [Add book on RHO]
Spare parts

Supply of spare parts was a standard element of after-sales service, gaining salience after Pompidou’s embargo on helicopters. The contracts did not carry a limit to spare parts supply, being charged to the customer. By upgrading Atlas to helicopter assembly, spare parts became the most frequent and critical of services. Assistance in helicopter assembly carried obvious risk after the October 1970 embargo. Increased investment in practices came at the cost of heightened secrecy and member exclusivity, a mechanism repeated after the 1977 embargos.

Exactly one month before Pompidou met with Kaunda, the CG had ordered a study on possible production by Atlas of all helicopter requirements. In November with assistance from Sud-Aviation anticipated helicopter demand to 1980 came to 41 Pumas – including the 20 ordered but not yet received. Atlas was competent to manufacture helicopters, if provided with a production licence and three years of preparation time. Assembly from sourced parts was assumed. Days after, the South African Ambassador heard Debré’s close advisor, and the head of DAI, Hugues de l’Estoile, both stress the urgent need to agree, preferably within the next quarter, on local helicopter production with Aerospatiale, and to draft ‘prior’ contracts for future equipment needs. Hugues noted that Portuguese licenses of French material could aid in sourcing high risk items.

As agreed with CG Hiemstra on 8 December 1970, Professor
Samuel would discuss his draft letter of intent for a helicopter license, in deepest secrecy, a week later in Paris. Clearly it was going to be a close run thing. Discussing the supply situation with South African ambassador Burger on 16 February 1971, Debré had suggested, subject to Pompidou’s approval, a top secret expansion of Atlas’ present capabilities to the full cycle of maintenance and overhaul for all helicopters so far supplied. Based on presidential archives, Konieczna asserts that Pompidou had balked at the last minute in February 1971. (Konieczna, 2013, p. 470) However, Kobus Eksteen, who was production manager at Atlas at the time, has attested to this researcher that a full licence for helicopter production was in place by 1971 at the latest. In fact, both statements can coexist, because of the increasing compartmentalisation of the expanding delivery process. From delivery of complete equipment, supply took the shape of parts and licenses, and then to local parts

650 SANDF, HVS 1 box 83, vol.2, HVS 206/34/4, folio 49A1, Armaments Board chairman Samuels to CG Hiemstra, 31/12/70, Samuel noted the ‘extremely delicate affair’, requiring French PM to arbitrate between opposing views of French Defence and Foreign Ministers.

651 SANDF, HVS 1 box 83, vol.2, HVS 206/34/4, Telegram Embassy, Paris, to Foreign Secretary, 16/2/71, top secret, ‘As for helicopters the case is more difficult and here [Debré] stressed the requirement of the utmost heedfulness firstly regarding any publicity and secondly regarding further development.’, ‘[By helicopters is saak moeiliker en daar bekleemtoon hij noodskaalikheid vir uiterste versigtigheid eerstens wat betref enige publisiteit en tweedens wat betref verdere ontwikkeling]’; Temoignages Oraux, Armee de l’Air, Raymond BROHON, #146, Bande 63C, side 2/DITEX 185, Brohon did state that ‘Ce qu’il fallait que nous fassions c’est faire en sorte que nos opérations ne soient jamais discuté au niveau de la commission interministérielle qui était chargée d’étudier les demandes d’exportation de matériel de guerre. Alors j’étais à ma façon familier avec toutes ces subtilités, et bien entendu nous étions aidé par la D.A.I. qui manœuvrait très bien, et comme nous avons eu des points délicats à régler, ça se traitait finalement entre le patron de la DAI, le représentant du cabinet Messmer, et moi-même.’

652 SANDF, HVS1 box 83, vol.2, HVS 206/34/4, Telegram Embassy, Paris, to Foreign Secretary, 16/2/71, top secret. ‘Ous meen hij dit sou beter wees dat Snias en ons saam eers industrie uitbou om alle reparasies te onderneem….Natuurlik sal dit ook montering en gebruik van Franse onderdele impliceer. Dan sal ons sien hoe sake verder ontwikkel. Minister Debre wil ons absoluut help en sy hele houding dui op verwachte organiese groei in die richting wat ons in feite beoog. ’[‘So he thinks it would be better for SNIAS and ourselves to first build up industry to (be able to) undertake all (manner of) repairs… Of course this implies assembly and use of French (spare) parts. Thereafter we will see how matters develop. Minister Debre is determined to help us and his whole demeanor points to expected organic growth in the direction that we in fact envisage.’]  

653 Konieczna refers to AN, SAG, 1025, Note du général Thénoz, chef d’État-major particulier pour le président, as : vente d’armement à l’Afrique du Sud, le 11 février 1971; Pompidou asserted: « Pour les hélicoptères, je ne veux pas manquer ma parole. Donc je n’accepte pas. On verra les réactions à l’affaire Mirages. Si Kaunda et Cie nous vouent aux gémenies, on pourra peut-être aller dans votre sens. Mais pour l’instant, c’est non ».  

654 Kobus Eksteen, Interview with author, 11 August 2016, ‘The license was there [in 1971]. Not the orders for those helicopters but the license to manufacture was available, it was signed. And I remember that case. I was dealing with the follow-up production, at that stage so that was done in the maintenance side, and the last batch of 330Js [PUMA helicopters] came down in transport, in knocked down kits, flown down and assembled it, I cant remember how many but quite a few.’
production, and delivery through third parties and countries of what could not be produced in South Africa despite assistance. France was not alone in this practice.

The existence of a helicopter license has hinted at, but not been verified, and only Kolodziej (1987) estimates 1973. According to Konieczna, in November 1972 Botha scolded a French delegate that France ‘has broken its word’ on helicopter deliveries. He demanded at minimum delivery of spare parts, and threatened to put other major deals on hold. (Konieczna, 2013, pp. 521-2, 535) The Foreign Ministry had in the CIEEMG of July 1972 protested the unusually high level of spare parts to Portugal and South Africa. The French Ambassador to Pretoria Philip de Luze, toed the line of normal service levels for existing contracts. South African orders recommenced after Prime Minister Pierre Messmer agreed to an Alouette III licence (purportedly) without parts delivery in 1973. (Konieczna, 2013, pp. 523-4) By that time a distribution of labour already existed. A direct communication existed between South African maintenance facilities and French aircraft manufacturing organisations, of Sud-Aviation, Dassault, and others, which determined the necessary and possible deliveries for the maintenance of South African operations. A managerial level then ensured that this demand was authorized, planned or improvised, and managed to fit priorities and resources. As a former staff member at SADF headquarters put it:

‘We had a body of boffins called the defence planning committee, with the political presence in there, and Atlas [as] the factory presence, and the military, air force side present, a side of about 34 people. They will bash out what can be done, what cannot be done, how quickly it should be done, and then they all go back to their work. And they say “we are going to get this from France within three months”. Three months is a short time, overhead and things like that for choppers, the impuls to buy and find a supplier comes from mutual meeting between military and industrial people, and on one side sits the minister of finance as well, because money must be supplied, and some of it rather quickly. You know how a budget is a whole

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655 Kobus Eksteen, Interview 11 August 2016, ‘We manufactured the engines, the gearboxes, plates, rotors, the lot, and just put them together. They [the French] supplied some parts though, because the process was slow, [and offered] the documentation and assistance here to get production sorted out, but yeah, that’s how it worked.’

656 Paul van Niekerk, Interview 12 August 2016, ‘it was not just the French, the Israelis were there, Germans, the Impala was built on an Italian license, and this still continued.’

657 CADN, 551PO-B-32, folder Vente de materiel français à la RSA 1968-85, Note by ‘JCM/ME’ to Cabinet du Ministre, #332/DE/ARM, 30/6/72, helicopter spare parts for to Portugal and RSA.

bag of rants, and all of a sudden people want food, or bullets, and how much, that gets decided there, and then it happens, rather quiet.659

A community of practice is born

The sudden slump, or temporary disruption in the relationship appears to stretch the practice model, especially given the continued presence of Gaullists Michel Debré, Pierre Messmer, and President Pompidou. Should practice not guarantee continuity at this late stage? Certainly, the embargo of 1970 and the reshuffle of key actors to different posts prompted a crisis in South African confidence. Nonetheless, the persistence of the community of practice is unmistakable. A South African report on Giscard’s impromptu embargo of August 1975 on land and air-based weapons conveys the French community’s assurance of continued “assembly from spare parts”; of which the President is not fully aware. A few next-generation helicopters can still be obtained as 'naval'; concerns over the Indian Ocean by the French admiralty can be used to obtain their support. Brohon, contacts at Thomson CSF and OFEMA Director Ezanno all confirmed ‘business as usual’, on absolute condition of secrecy. One French contact expressly rejected a distrusting comparison with the Israel-embargo, asking if the South Africans had ever heard any Israeli complain since the embargo. Based on these signals the South African attaché to Paris concluded that 'it would appear that they will not abandon us.660

Whatever the exact starting point, by the end of the 1970s a secretive supply system was firmly in place, based on a middle-level community of practice. In 1979 South Africa announced its complete self-sufficiency concerning the large French helicopter fleet. (Landgren, 1989, p. 78) Publicly, the French government conformed to international law as stated by the Security Council in 1977, covertly it ensured that trade continued unfettered. In a meeting between the South African Chief of Staff of Operations and the new head of OFEMA, French (Air Force) General Roland Glavany on 28 November 1979, the South African military was informed that France would continue to provide South Africa with military spare parts regardless of its public stance on the embargo against Apartheid South Africa. As a special precaution, the parastatal entity of OFEMA would henceforth be the exclusive order taker and facilitator of the covert

659 Anonymous, Interview with author, 10 August 2016
660 SANDF, MVB2 Box 186, Military attaché, Paris, to Head of Intelligence, Monthly reports by Mas from FRA [75-77], MA Bekker, 8/9/75, ‘Implikasies van die franse president se verklaring in zaire en andere sake’, ‘Report further to secret discussion of Ambassador with French Prime Minister.’; SANDF, MVB2 Box 186, Appendix A, ‘Standpunt van wapenleveransiers teenover die franse president se uitletting op 9 Aug 75 tydens amptelike besoek aan Zaire’, ‘[Position of arms suppliers on French presidents statements on 9 Aug 1975 during his visit to Zaire’], p.3-5,7.
trade now proposed. The French ambassador would not be made aware of transactions, nor their military attachés. Insofar as the logistics could be credibly cloaked, the continued and near-unfettered supply of the highly prized spare parts and complete engines for French equipment already purchased was guaranteed, with special attention to helicopters and Mirages. 661

Specifically on parts, the message was that: ‘For the current year 1979 the French Government has fixed the ceiling on the supply of parts at 70 million Rand... This however is limited to what can be classified as strictly military equipment only. Other equipment, and [OFEMA Chairman Gen. Glavany] used the example of batteries for submarines, can be classified as civil or commercial equipment and is not necessarily included in the ceiling amount. There can be a brought [sic] interpretation of spares, for example, complete engines for aircraft can be supplied but it is necessary for them to maintain credibility with for instance the French customs in their packaging and handling of equipment.’ 662

This confirms Brohon’s testimony. In his interviews for French military archives in 1990, Brohon also hinted on the distinction between contractual supply of spare parts, and “insider” facilitation of deviating South African service requirements for the larger Puma:

‘Mais le service le plus insigne que nous leurs avons rendu c’était d’abord assurer en plus que je viens [de] dire, d’assurer les rechanges pour les hélicoptères qui nous avaient été achetés. Normalement nous étions tenus de le faire par contrat quand on [a vendu] des matériels on doit assurer le contrat d’entretien donc la vente de pièces de rechange. Mais c’est que très vite nous nous sommes aperçus que leurs besoins étaient d’une nature différente, c’est-à-dire qu’ils voulaient accéder par exemple au PUMA. Alors, … jamais le gouvernement français n’a été mis en accusation publique.’ 663 Brohon prided himself that the French press never made the connection. 664

The French Government escaped full scrutiny for its wilful embargo-busting, because it could rely on the grass-roots level to ensure that no unanswerable facts would be produced from the exchanges. This had been an organic development stage managed by the French armament

663 SHDV Temoignages Oraux, Armee de l’Air, Raymond BROHON, #146, Bande 63C, Face 1.
664 Ibid., ‘Il y a eu quelques articles parce que par l’argus [de la presse], nous essayions, donc nous avions service de Sud-Aviation, nous avons essayé de trouver des traces dans la presse, que ce soit Le Monde Diplomatique par exemple qui est spécialisé dans ce genre de chose, que ce soit le Canard Enchaine ou des revue politiques étrangères plus ou moins progressistes.’
industry, which by the 1970s had itself outgrown the immediate necessity of creating a strategic deterrent. This level of risk could only be taken with a concomitant level of trust and understanding, emerging from many years of middle-level trade interaction. Military practitioners created an inter-state “ensemble des fidèles” based on high military standards and the self-imposed burdens of African rule.

**Conclusion**

French after-sales service shows a growing mutual engagement. This is a process that has gone almost completely unexplored in the secondary literature. While the successful major projects like the Cactus/Crotale joint ground-to-air-missile development program, and the licences for the Mirage F1, and the Panhard AML car and its armament, are commonly used as illustrations of joint cooperation, the implementation and consequences of these programmes and impacts of these activities generally have remained unexplored. (Landgren, 1989; McWilliams, 1989)

Provision of services in support of purchased military equipment was routinely covered under the individual purchase agreements. A responsibility to provide assistance, parts, accessories, and inform on product flaws and upgrades formally tied the producer to the buyer throughout the economic life of the helicopter. Far from using contractual loopholes or principled statements to extricate French suppliers from their controversial responsibilities, the French government and its defence sector doubled down on trade, trusting the discretion by the community

Fulfilment brought together practitioners and their immediate superiors of the two defence communities. Seemingly innocuous landing rights agreements created a stable basis for regular military flights. It would go too far to attribute a strong French sentiment to those training momentarily before applying their new skills at home. Nevertheless, those that sent them there, and general officers like Commandant Tatham saw their attitudes confirmed. Adoption of helicopter armament came with a gradual appreciation of the offensive role of the helicopter. With growing budgets in the early 1960s it was strange not to invest in the necessary amount of missiles for adequate target practice. The opening of hostilities against SWAPO in Namibia in August 1966 accelerated the use of such weapons.

Spare parts represent the clearest and fullest combination of shared objectives, and shared engagement both within the South African industrial management, and within French authorisation organisation. It was part of joint discretion that Botha and Brohon would refer to
parts or existing contracts, thereby identifying the French diplomatic profession as outsiders to this practice. Such exclusion was confirmed by the 1979 contract which also excluded the military attachés. In that sense the direct communications on managing shipments and exchange of parts and repaired items had laid the ground work for the slimmed down but direct links between the two defence industrial bases. Beyond spare parts, the accompanying practices together underwrote and reproduced the relationship. The last chapter discusses the boundaries of the community, and its transnational character. Separate practices of arms trade extended across borders, overlapped with other communities, or were emulated in other bilateral relations.
Chapter 6: Regional contexts of practice

The previous chapters concluded on the community of practice emerging in the mid-1970s as a consequence of sustained trade practice. Commercial interaction had formed a sense of membership between French and South African operators and decision makers. After the better part of two decades, sustained interaction and external pressures had ultimately led to a dedicated but diverse collection of French and South African practitioners that had sprung from quiet logistical procedures and a new infrastructural base.

However, French-South African arms trade is a particular, but not a unique case. The common characterisation of the French-South African relationship as ‘special’ or ‘autonomous’ is somewhat misleading. (Konieczna, 2013; Bach, 1990) The commercial processes initiated by the French towards South Africa were equally directed at, and responded to by, most other parts of the globe.

Not only were the fields of commercial interaction of French arms trade - the four practices – the same towards other states. The states of what the CIA called ‘the White Redoubt’ of Southern Africa, Portugal, South Africa and Rhodesia, slowly but decidedly expanded their mutual cooperation while at the same time relying on all French assistance available to them. Together they wrestled with the same problems of international opprobrium and real and imagined regional hostility, even if the Portugal-South African cooperation was slow to materialize. (Correia P., 2007, pp. 61, 90, 97; Marcos, 2007, p. 26) These issues badly affected their military procurement options.

Apart from Portugal and Rhodesia, examples are of Greece, Israel, and Chile.

The boundaries and significance of the community of practice established in the previous chapters were therefore not necessarily limited to the Franco-South African bilateral relationship. Similar sets of shared arms trade practices featured in French-Portuguese, and, to a lesser extent, French-Rhodesian bilateral relations. The same four commercial practices are in evidence in these two relation as in the South African case. They often paralleled these practices, happening in the same period. In the case of helicopters, South African defence procurement, the decisions of acquisition and production, also directly affected the procurement

665 Apart from Portugal and Rhodesia, examples are of Greece, Israel, and Chile.
activities of Portugal and Rhodesia. It was also affected by their lack of procurement, and came to serve as an “arsenal of retrenchment”.

The background of this chapter is the so called ‘Border War’ (1966-1989) in Southern Africa which was a conflict that absorbed earlier tensions in the region. Insurgencies in the Portuguese colonies of Angola, Guinea and Mozambique in 1961, South Africa’s “policing” escalation against ANC infiltration and the SWAPO insurgency in South-West-Africa, the dissolution of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland in 1963 and finally the Rhodesian Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) in November 1965 all contributed to a muddled picture of regional conflict. (Scholtz, 2015) The Border war caused procurement responses by France and each of the three states involved. It would first eliminate the Portuguese colonial presence in 1974, and then lead to majority rule of Rhodesia [Zimbabwe] in 1979.

Short of analysing the various bilateral relations individually, we will discuss the extent to which those activities overlapped with French-South African trade in helicopters. Discussion will focus once again on the three components of common practice, to be sure: the joint enterprise, the mutual engagement, and the shared repertoire. The most obvious parallels and spill overs of arms trade practice between the various actors and constituencies are drawn.

Establishing the wider connections that form the context of the arms trade under review, allows us to readjust the image of autonomous French-South-African arms trade in three ways. (Bach, 1990, p. 174) First, the comparison demonstrates that the French arms trade approached South Africa’s neighbouring states in similar fashion. For all its shadow, South African-French trade was not exceptional. It was paralleled by French-Portuguese relations between 1955 and 1974, and more briefly by the French-Rhodesian arms trade relationship. Secondly, the joint enterprise enjoined by defence communities in the various states demonstrates the identification of other groups engaged in procurement practice by ostensibly distinct institutions, which validates the perspective of separate but closely interacting defence communities. Lastly, the regional connections of French procurement to its customers and between them, at a time of conflict, confirms and deepens the direct involvement of the French government in the regional dynamics of the Border War.

In the first of three sections, the overlapping security objectives of the white minority regimes are set out. These featured especially in promotion when brokers in French commercial diplomacy, within the SADF and the Royal Rhodesian Air Force came around to emphasize the benefits of standardization of military procurement.
The second section discusses mutual engagement in production and after-sales. After-sales services formed a strong basis of cooperation and interdependency between the southern states. Secrecy of regular arms trade is distinguished from the French networks that attempted covert political cooperation with the status quo states to alter the political economy of Nigeria and the Congo as a matter of defence.

In the last section, two bases of shared repertoire are investigated. Depending on the perspective, the military attaché was both a source and an opportunity for influence. French policy to invite foreign senior officers to French military academies assisted commercial diplomacy in developing its network of military attachés by impressing upon likely procurement decision makers the utility of French counter-revolutionary doctrine, making them more receptive to the catalogue of French military equipment. The different reception of ‘Guerre Révolutionnaire’ within Portuguese, South African and Rhodesian militaries indicates its influence on procurement. Within the dominant analytical frameworks of Cold War confrontation and state-oriented paradigms of research, the regional dynamics and connections of French policy, not to mention those of other states, in Southern Africa still await integral discussion. (Saunders & Onslow, 2010, p. 222) This is partly a consequence of the peripheral theatre of Southern Africa, and of the perceived exceptionality of French African policy. Short of a full account of the regional dimension of French-South African arms trade, this chapter has tried to convey the merits of such a study.

Even after arduous years of assailing the South African security outlook by French commercial brokers like Jaboulay in the 1950s, the Sharpeville massacre still only triggered an operational issue within the SADF. The strategic regional outlook remained largely conventional. It was not until South Africa’s entry in the Border War in 1966, that the SADF began to reassess its strategy and operations in earnest.

Joint Objective
Subscribing to a 1950-1978 window of trade, Kolodziej has noted a French arms trade preference of non-Francophone Africa. (Kolodziej, 1987, pp. 368-9; table 7-4) The more direct explanation of his data is French support for the ‘bastion blanc’. Stanley offers the strongest articulation of a new ‘expansionist tendency in French military policy’, following African

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666 SHDV, 9 Q[5] 105, SGDN, note de renseignement, 14/1/64, ‘coopération entre le Portugal et la République de l’Afrique du Sud.’, perceiving indications that SA is trying to help Portugal to stabilise its colonies Mozambique and Angola, which have ‘le rôle de glacis’ of the ‘bastion blanc’. 
independence and amidst a Cold War ‘scramble for Africa’. (Stanley, France and South Africa, 1945 to 1985. Thesis, 2004, p. 107; Treverton, 2003, p. 125) According to Stanley, Franco-South African military co-operation, [and arms sales]… collapsed irrevocably during 1976 and 1977 … [which] suggests that it was not connected, at least for France, to deeply held strategic or political demands’, but rather ‘more narrow interests’. {Stanley 2004: 118-119} However, the ‘quid-pro-quo’ argument for French arms exports to an extent cloaks the question of its underlying policy, and treats as incidental the active French supply of every material, essential to the defence by white supremacist regimes against liberation movements and their supporters from 1961 onwards.


France recognised the wider commercial potential of arms commerce leading to political togetherness between South Africa and Portugal, and Rhodesia. Alouette demonstrations had toured the region in the 1950s. Military attachés in Lisbon and their Defence minister worked just as tirelessly to compete for orders as the diplomatic mission in South Africa. Given the regional tensions, standardisation of French equipment between the three states was seen as a way to expand French influence.

The French 1956 sale of Alouettes and EBR armoured cars to Portugal long preceded purchases by South Africa. In 1958 the French had hoped, in vain, that adoption of the EBR by Pretoria would be ‘le prélude à une future standardisation des armements dans ce théâtre, faciliter, par ce biais, une certaine unité de vues dans les politiques de défense et même, si nos ventes d’armes venaient à se développer, favoriser une organisation éventuelle de commandement à notre profit. » This hope of an alliance between South Africa, Portugal and Rhodesia would be realised by the early 1970s, albeit under much less inviting circumstances.667 (Correia & Verhoef, 2009, pp. 68-69) Around 1960, the regional outlook and strategic and operational preparation of Portugal, South Africa and (South) Rhodesia differed significantly. As we have seen, in 1960 CG Melville was quick to urge the Portuguese to join

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667 This was operation ALCORA, General Fraser's brainchild.
them in adopting French-built helicopters. The Royal Rhodesian Air Force, initially just as anglophile as SAAF, would follow her into buying French Alouette IIIIs in 1961.

Two years before the breakup of the Rhodesian Federation in 1963, its president Roy Welensky had opened top secret discussion with the South African Defence Force on cooperation after his appointed Committee had communicated a plan to deal with ‘the threat of Pan-Africanism’. After a chill in 1960 in the Federation’s defence ties with Britain, the Rhodesians requested setting up a joint and secure communication network for shared operations, intelligence and (medium term) planning, the standardisation of weapons and munitions, and logistical preparation. After the SAAF had acquired Alouettes, South African Commandant General Melville wasted no time to urge his Portuguese neighbours in Angola and Mozambique to also invest only in Alouettes. Melville argued this would pay great dividend in case ‘Portugal and South Africa were to be faced with the same problem’.

In the mid-1950s the RRAF had followed the negative British view on (early) helicopters; by 1963, following the collapse of the federation, visits by SAAF established that while it had the numbers and financial support, the RRAF had the operational skills. By that time RRAF pilots received training from the SAAF, to fly the Alouette III purchased by Rhodesia. In 1973, project Alcora was the code-name for advanced cooperation between Portugal, Rhodesia, and South Africa, including supply of all types of munitions, equipment, and above all, helicopter support to the northern theatres. Both Portugal and South African actively cooperated with French intelligence.

Rhodesian overtures to France in 1962 and 1963 connected with a ‘counter-pan-African’ initiative of Foccart’s brokers in Francophone Africa, which eventually did not materialize. It went with a concomitant decline in influence of the French Ministrty of Foreign Affairs.

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668 Bodleian Archives, Welensky papers; 231-4 [12p], Report of the Committee appointed to consider the external policy of the Federation in relation to its defence and committee paper on the basis for cooperation with the South African and Portuguese authorities (EDF (61) P1 and P3), with covering letters. Oct61-Jan62, p.10

669 SHDV, 14 S 158 -., folder Separate documents 1960, Consul General de France Mr Thesmar, Lourenco Marquesto French ambassador, Lisbon, and military attaché, #251, 15/11/60, ‘Achat d’un heli BELL 475 par la Mission de Photogrammétrie Aérienne du Mozambique’, on Melville’s advocacy to ‘.. unifier le type d’appareils utilisés de part et d’autre des frontières ...L’influence considérable de ce vœu est de nature à favoriser l’achat d’hélicoptères Alouette pour l’armée portugais.’

670 Bodleian Archive, Welensky papers; 235-10. Memorandum of the Chief of the Air Staff on discussion held with the visiting South African Air Force staff team.

671 SHDV 14 S 149, Military attaché, Lisbon, Revault, #1297, 14/10/58, Très Secret, to Defence Ministry and High Command, ‘échange de renseignements franco-portugais’.
After South Rhodesia persisted in majority rule with the dissolution of the Federation of Rhodesia in December 1963, the ‘Quai’ thereafter refused or adjourned every CIEEMG proposal for promotion and sale of military equipment to Rhodesia.

Portugal equally needed South African helicopters and their support was that helicopters were not only subject to arduous French authorisation, but also relatively expensive comparative to their size and requiring a substantial organisation to keep them operational. Most importantly, sufficient air power was essential to the retention of Portugal’s three piece empire, completely disproportionate in size, distance and security requirements. The Atlas project which took shape in 1963 had at first been a measure to create national capacity to service the jets and bombers and train the pilots to fly them. The menace by SWAPO insurgents in South West Africa was administered by the South African Police, albeit with helicopter support from SAAF. The importance of the proximity to the Portuguese theatre was clear to the South African government from the start of the Angolan rebellion in 1961. (Cann J. , 2015, p. 347) In this regard, therefore, the Atlas project had a regional exposure.

Standardization of equipment is an important commonality, as it makes possible cooperation between militaries. After 1966, South Africa’s cooperation with Portugal and RHO is amplified by SAAF helicopters which are a crucial element in support for POR and RHO militaries also used to these craft. Although after her withdrawal from Algeria France claimed to have turned the page on colonialism, she actively supported the white minority regimes that secured her position on the Indian Ocean.

**Mutual Engagement**

French-South African arms trade was paralleled by French arms trade to Portugal, her NATO ally. Portuguese demand was roughly concurrent with SADF’s demand, concerned the same equipment, and would largely be used in the same operational theatres, even though this was later obfuscated in propositions to the CIEEMG. French industry serviced the Portuguese Air force just as they did after South African procurement. CANN notes that SFERMA provided maintenance to the PAF from 1961. (Cann J. , 2015)

Moreover, all four post-sales activities within the South African –French trade were in turn provided by the SADF to her newfound Portuguese and Rhodesian allies. As a consequence South African requirements for military production and procurement were added to, confirming and – it is argued- reifying the choice for continued French assistance.
Chapter three has illustrated how the procurement requirements of Portugal and Rhodesia were closely linked with those of South Africa, first for commercial opportunity, later for diplomatic problems.

As has been noted, standardization of military equipment provided an early motive to contemplate cooperation. Organisationally, these practices locked in the use of the Alouette between the three states. Later on, when considering helicopter production, the South African CG discarded the idea of a non-French helicopter production project. Opportunity costs and risks attached to, say, an American partner managing the project of maintaining French technology, were deemed too high.

While this may appear logical, at the same time, this mixing of expertise had been exactly what the South Africans had chosen earlier in building Atlas, and indeed the Alouette II. It appears that once committed to French technology and support, it was too much to turn away from “the devil that you know”. This preference showed hints of affective reasons, but of course also connected with the South African realization by 1968 that helicopters were essential to its effort and that of its northern allies.

SAAF had offered more mundane assistance to Portugal and specially Rhodesia from very early on. It delivered armed helicopters and provided training and supplies. Rhodesia had received five Alouette IIIs from Sud-Aviation in 1962, and another three the following year. From 1960 onwards, it turned to the SADF for supporting services, in line with Federal President Roy Welensky’s ambition to join forces. It is unclear why Sud-Aviation’s contractual assistance did not suffice prior to 1964, but thereafter the Quai clearly blocked access to all surplus to Rhodesia, in defence of new-found French credibility that had been secured with the

672 SANDF, HVS 1, box 209, vol.1, folder Helikopters, Deputy air chief to Chief of Defence Staff, 16/7/66, ‘Wagner SKYTRAC model FJ-V2’, arguing German design, presented through Rhodesian agent, lacks power, experience, and efficiency of having additional helicopters. Also note the absence of both a position on demand (point d) and the political argument of reliable supply. [‘Van een versienings en uitrustings oogpunt beskou is dit nie wenslik dat ‘n addisionele tipe helicopter aangeskaf word nie, veral aangesien hierdie vliegtuig se vermoeë nie gunstig vergelyk met helikopters wat tans in gebruik is nie.’]; cf SANDF, Ibid., Helicopter Technology, Inc, to Prime Minister Vorster, 28/4/70, unknown American firm proposing to build helicopter production in RSA, handwritten comment shows priority for Sud-Aviation first, or a major American producer [Sikorsky, Bell etc] second.

673 It is interesting to note that on the German proposal, SAAF had simply regurgitated CG’s suggestions and concluded that ‘the Allouettes [sic] are giving satisfactory service [therefore] this type should be retained unless a helicopter of outstanding qualities is available.’ CG replied that the response was ‘completely inadequate’. [‘geheel en al ontoereikend’], see SANDF, Ibid., Acting Chief of Defence Staff to Air Chief of Staff, 20/6/66, ‘Wagner SKYTRAC model FJ-V2’, CG’s handwritten response of 4/7/66 at the bottom.

674 SHDC, 78 1E1 185, table ‘Alouette III-Serie, 31/3/68, section ‘Afrique’. Internal document of Sud-Aviation, 1960-69; South African sales are also listed.
independence of Algeria in 1962. In August 1960, the supply of rocket parts, launchers, and (French) rockets for testing to the RRAF was approved by the SADF, who had access to licensed production of these items.675 Already in 1961, RRAF pilots joined SAAF for conversion training on AL2s.676

The French dilemma soon became clear: trading led to word-of-mouth promotion and increased demand, but also increase of controversial use; for this reason, Pompidou had been asked to set the boundaries of trade in September 1962. Strong disapproval by the Quai allegedly did not prevent Rhodesia receiving a clandestine shipment from French factories, ostensibly for a Spanish customer, of 18 Cessna FTB337 aircraft, flying via Ivory Coast and Gabon. (Brent, 2001, pp. 68-9) SADF supplied the RRAF with every possible help: training, ammunition, and armaments; spare parts initially was more difficult.677 The SAAF sent its helicopters to fight in the buffer formed by Angola, Rhodesia and Mozambique, most clearly the aging Alouette IIs in 1972 (Brent, 2001, p. 92) most likely after being swapped by SAAF to Sud-Aviation for Alouette III.678 SAAF helicopter crews and their SAP teams first participated in operations in Rhodesia on 1 September 1967. (Brent, 2001, p. 88) Common practice resided in mutual assistance, and these initial relations served the RRAF well after UDI cut off regular French supply of spares in 1965 (Brent, 2001, p. 50) – the Quai saw to that.679

Against the odds, the Portuguese Armed forces managed to fight the respective insurgent forces of the PAIGC in Guinea, the MPLA, FNLA and UNITA in Angola, and the FRELIMO in Mozambique to a standstill by 1969. Like they had done to Messmer in the past, the Portuguese military requested a long shopping list to the South African military, who gave a measured response. (Correia & Verhoef, 2009, pp. 72-73). Fraser advocated supporting the Portuguese financially and operationally from simple strategic self-interest.680 To send Alouette II

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675 SANDF, DGAF/LMH 6, box 308, folder Stores and Material disposal ... to South Rhodesian government to 1964, telex RSA Air Force HQ to RRAF HQ, 2/8/60, ‘Your signal A178 of July 15...’
676 SANDF, DGAF/LMH 6, box 308, Ibid., RSA military advisor, Salisbury, to CG SADF, 20/11/64, ‘Helicopter conversion course’.
677 SANDF, DGAF/LMH 6, box 308, Ibid., passim. Respective examples: RSA Foreign Secretary to Defence Secretary, 11/1/63, ‘Helicopter training: RRAF pilots’; Ibid., Deputy CG to Military advisor, Salisbury, 18/11/60, ‘Verkoop van vliegtuigbomme aan RRAF’; Ibid., telex ‘Your signal A178 of July 15...’; telex RRAF to CG SADF, on Alouette III spares, 16/10/62. Handwritten note regrets this is not possible.
678 SANDF, LMH/DGAF 6, box 242, folder Aircraft general – Alouette III 1966-71, CG to Treasury Secretary, 9/11/70, ‘Omruiling van Alouette II vir Alouette III Helikopters’.
679 SHDV, 8 Q 293, minutes of CIEEMG meeting 8/7/66, p.PV35, adjournment of ‘12,500kg de rechange et accessoires divers pour heli Alouette’; to be refused in the CIEEMG session of 9/8/66.
680 SANDF, CA Fraser collection 5, folder GOC 14, ‘Plan APRON’, 15/2/68, Document by Joint Combat Forces Headquarters, ‘Contingency plan APRON’, Fraser’s contingency plan if Portugal requested additional military support. The idea was soon activated by RSA government, see SANDF, CA Fraser collection 6, folder GOC 12,
helicopters into Angola and Mozambique required clearance from the French government. It is a tell-tale sign of the regard for the French relationship that the South Africans would not simply send the aircraft without telling the French. It also implicated the French, who gave their clearance for use to the SADF. On 4 April 1968 the Commandant-General, SADF, wrote to the Portuguese commander in chief General Pena that the French government had authorised the use of five South African Alouette IIIs and 33 Panhard armoured cars in the Portuguese colonies. This had been an affair concluded between the three defence ministers. This is significant both for the regional deployment, as for the fact that this was in direct contravention of the non-re-export clause demanded by the CIEEMG. It also ran counter to Pompidou’s 1962 guidelines which forbade the export of French weapons for use in anti-guerrilla purposes. While anecdotal, the evidence clearly shows French implication in actual operations.

By December 1970 helicopter spare parts were becoming a critical problem for all three states. In a personal letter to the Commandant General, the Joint Combat Forces Commander Gen ‘Pop’ Fraser gave a clear warning that ‘the Alouette III spares situation assumes a gravity that we cannot overlook’; from his visit to the Rhodesian command he had learned only 3 sets of rotor blades were available in all Southern African theatres due to the slow repairs by the French manufacturer. Air Chief Verster concurred with Fraser’s analysis and responded that – almost ten years after Major Carnell had first suggested same in 1962 – a dedicated team would be sent to Paris to chase spare parts.

In what should stand as a multiplication of direct French influence in SADF operations, Verster concluded that ‘[U]fortunately production at Sud-Aviation and repair at Atlas is not under my direct control… I have advised the CG some months ago that the SAAF is not in a position to help our friends with large-scale provision of helicopter spares as the primary shortcoming lies at [sic] Sud-Aviation at present who cannot supply spares[,] or service blades fast enough.’ The spares situation would be simplified, though not improved, by the collapse of Portuguese empire with the Carnation Revolution in Lisbon in 1974. What is clear is that apart from geopolitical reasons, arms trade was a major contributor to cooperation between France and the

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682 SANDF, LMH/DGAF 6, box 242, folder Aircraft general – Alouette III 1966-71, Joint Forces Commander Gen. Fraser, to Air Chief Verster, 21/12/70.
683 SANDF, LMH/DGAF 6, box 242, Ibid., Air Chief Verster to Gen. Fraser, 29/12/70, p.3.
Southern African ‘White redoubt’. This serves to underline that French arms trade should not be judged solely on a bilateral basis.

There was also a downside to the close and discreet professional relations based on common objectives, in that membership was open to compromise. As we have seen, the South African leadership was increasingly aware of this weakness.684 As former assistant to General Robbertze in the early 1970s, Paul van Niekerk considers the damage done by South African naval commodore Dieter Gerhardt, one of the most successful KGB moles of the Cold War, who had access to the special ‘Silvermine’ surveillance project that South Africa shared with NATO.685 Apart from a South African military education, Gerhardt may also have received training in France, just as Hiemstra, Robbertze, Dutton, and other South African staff had.686 Van Niekerk believes the South African procurement organisation was most certainly compromised as well.687

**Shared Repertoire**

As has been covered in chapter 2, military attachés are commonly used in government arms trade efforts and military diplomacy. (Vial, 2002) The Military attaché at the French embassies had an important role to play throughout the process of armament sales. Depending on the host country, his priority was either to generate open source intelligence, to develop military relations with the host country, or to generate interest in French technology. For example, the French attaché to Romania in 1964 arrived on the back of a major deal for licensing and purchase of Alouette helicopters, and was expected to generate sales in this country behind the iron curtain.688 By contrast, the new attaché to Lisbon, a year after the 1974 Carnation Revolution, was notified of the chaos and change of course that would be affecting the former Portuguese ally, and was to passively target naval business.689

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684 See page 61, note 82, on increased security measures.
686 Paul van Niekerk, Interview with author, 12 August 2016. Van Niekerk also mentions head of RSA Special Forces, Colonel Breitenbach, who studied the French Foreign legion in Biafra.
687 Paul van Niekerk, Interview with author, 12 August 2016.
688 SHDV, 12 S 446 French General Staff, Intelligence Division to military attaché of French legation to Bucharest, #614, 31/1/64.
689 SHDV, 12 S 446 General directive by Deputy of French General staff, to Capt. De Fregate RAMBOURG, Attaché, Lisbon, #5873, 2/10/75.
A deliberate French tactic was the invitation to foreign officers of smaller sized militaries with promising career paths – such as military attaché- to French military academies. By imbuing them with French doctrine and outlook, these officers would come to influence procurement policy in their own states, thus positively influencing French export efforts, by creating a shared repertoire of military analysis.

In the words of French defence inspector Moreau: « Ce que nous considérons comme du « marketing », pour notre part, c’est une étude qui remonte à une doctrine tactique. Les ventes militaires sont profondément imbriquées dans une conception politico-militaire. De ce fait, un de nos principaux recours pour la vente est évidemment le militaire affecté dans le Pays.»

The Portuguese Colonel Hermes de Oliveira who was invited to see Bigeard’s counterinsurgency training centres in Algeria would become an authority on the subject in his own right, and French military attachés in Lisbon noted how easy it was to speak on doctrinal matters and business with their Portuguese counterparts who had received French training. The South African military attaché Robbertze – and his predecessor Hiemstra - who was posted in Paris because of his reasonable French, which also made him a scarce South African candidate to take the invitation to study at the French military Academy in 1957. Robbertze was one of three South African officers sent to Algeria in 1959 to study French operations and French helicopters. He would go on to become the head of the Department of Strategic Studies. The name hid the central liaison function of the department, which included procurement. Robbertze would remain a Francophile throughout his service, and engage in friendly bickering on procurement with his anglophile predecessor, General Koster. There is also a clear analogy with Latin American states in the same period of mid-1955 to the 1960s of French induced standardisation and sharing of French doctrine and accompanying equipment. (Nabuco de Araujo, 2011, pp. 167-9) It is perhaps no surprise that a helicopter license was requested for Brazil for production of 150 Gazelle SA341 and 150 Alouette III SA319B, including a non-exclusive license to sell to Latin America. The decision was adjourned. This is a further indicator of arms trade analysis supporting a regional approach.

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691 Paul van Niekerk, Interview with author, 12 August 2016,

692 SHDV, 8 S 464, SGDN to [CIEEMG participants], #339, 11/4/72, ‘fiches étudiées à la réunion CIEEMG du 8/3/72. No CIEEMG minutes after 1971 were accessible at the time of consultation in 2015.
The French doctrine of ‘Guerre Révolutionaire’ (DGR) had an operational and a strategic component. The operational component held certain key tenets that were developed by the French Army during the Algerian war. Crucial was the analysis of external revolutionary subversion of legitimate rule, through persuasion of the population through ideology and violence. The counter-insurgency doctrine thus developed became a key example for other militaries defending autocratic rule. Heli-borne assault was an important operational aspect of the doctrine, as the revolutionary would avoid conventional battle, and strike state authority and military before blending into the terrain. The Portuguese were avid students of the French methods and equipment employed as early as their engagement during the war in Indochina, but were finally sold by a visit in 1960 of French Air Force officer Pierre Clostermann who convinced the Portuguese military and President Salazar of the blessings of French military acumen and reliable assistance.693 (Cann J., 2015, pp. 109-11)

The strategic underpinnings of DGR were articulated most clearly by French strategist general André Beaufre (1902-1975), who advocated winning over the population through a comprehensive approach. In his memoires, Messmer claims to have disliked the theorists because of their contradiction in fighting the people they claimed to depend on. (Messmer, 1998, pp. 160-1) As governor however, Messmer had planned the violent repression to subdue the Cameroonian revolt in 1958. (Atangana, 1997, pp. 100-3) Similarly, the SADF was unimpressed with aspects of Portuguese operational conduct, but the SAP fared no better, triggering an SADF intervention in 1974 after Portugal’s withdrawal. Beaufre’s ‘Total strategy’ was translated by SADF Joint forces commander general ‘Pop’ Fraser, in 1967 but would not develop into a coherent COIN strategy for another decade, until the escalation by Cuba and USSR in Angola in 1975. (Scholtz, 2015, p. 36)

Lastly and tied to both the military education and the military doctrine, is the military professionalism and the respect for the French interpretation of it. This again reinforces a form of membership once key actors become involved in arms trade, and military brokering. French counter-revolutionary doctrine of ‘Guerre Révolutionnaire’ led the French Army to forget its place as servant of the state at the end of the Algerian War. But by 1959, it was also an umbrella for arms export. Military attachés were to inculcate smaller scale militaries with French doctrine. French military education was used to expand on interest, inviting selected foreign

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693 SHDV, 14 S 158, Untitled folder, Letter from French military attaché, Lisbon, #1914, Secret, 8/8/60 to EMGDN/REN, ‘entrevue du Lt.Col Clostermann avec le President Salazar.’
officers to benefit from the prestigious French academies. National militaries found in the French doctrine of Guerre Révolutionnaire a workable conception of the enemy;

‘… la doctrine de la guerre révolutionnaire (DGR) est une manière de voir le monde, une école de pensée. Sa force est justement d’universaliser la menace intérieure : elle s’applique à toutes les conjonctures politiques où le statu quo est mis en péril. Elle offre une réponse tactique et technique aux luttes intérieures qui affaiblissent le gouvernement ou les structures de la domination.’ (Nabuco de Araujo, 2011, pp. 225, 224)

At a political level, the doctrine provided authoritarian regimes with a justification for the vilification and radicalisation of all opposition;

‘Conçue pour un contexte colonial, pourtant, elle s’adapte parfaitement à une conjoncture de luttes internes grâce à la polysémie de ses concepts. Le militant indépendantiste devient alors un adversaire communiste, tandis que l’armée de libération nationale se transforme en organisation communiste terroriste et le réseau de soutien à l’étranger des ramifications du communisme international.’ (Nabuco de Araujo, 2011, p. 222)

On this bedrock, French equipment was more easily bought, as suppliers were perceived as ideological partners. The adoption of French doctrine and military strategy by South African military planning can be argued as a bilateral affair, both from a commercial and military perspective. No definite link as has been made between doctrine and (commercial) operations. Beaufre’s thinking offers a weak general-staff level connection between his strategic thinking and the use of helicopters. He was a high ranking French army officer, commanding the French land component at Suez in 1956 (with Brohon in charge of the Air effort), and thereafter the principal French liaison to NATO.

In his 1967 analysis of the failed operation Beaufre blamed the unimaginative plan and noted Staff refusal of his plea to achieve surprise using carrier-borne helicopters from the Algerian theatre. (Beaufre A., 1967, p. 214) In his 1972 book on ‘Guerre Révolutionaire’ (Paris: Fayard) he identifies the phenomenon as an ideological conflict, which can fought militarily, but will only be defeated by political means. As the American experience in Vietnam showed, not even massed helicopter power could defeat the new political type of conflict. Operational doctrine arguably had a regional audience in a commercial sense, but militarily, there is little to contradict the creation of distinctly national responses to the military challenges of facing the Southern states. No direct and durable link between Guerre Révolutionnaire and SAAF
operations exists at the operational level. The Portuguese case did specifically embrace French knowledge, but still oriented widely when constructing their own counter-insurgency approach. The South African military took notice of French operational art as early as Robbertze’s 1959 visit, but as part of a general and latent interest in counter-insurgency. Most likely, the South African Defence Force had no interest in presenting its susceptible black population with a counter-revolutionary narrative, and prior to the first heli-born assault on SWAPO insurgents in Ongulumbashe, Namibia in August 1966, helicopter tactics were created. It is significant that the first Alouette operational manual was created by the South African police in 1965.  

Ironically, the SADF would after 1966 scold both the SAP and the Portuguese for their excessively violent and uncontrolled approach to stability operations.

On the other hand, the literature has convincingly connected knowledge transfer between military high leadership of the French strategic doctrine of Revolutionary War. Secondary literature has agreed on full adoption of the thinking of French strategist André Beaufre by the South African Chief of General Staff Fraser and the Minister of Defence Botha. Beaufre argued, that in times of nuclear parity, and limited war, the use of (military) force, would come at a moral cost of political unsustainability. The essence of contemporary strategy was creating freedom of action, which was ultimately a political question. Military effectiveness depended on the political sustainability of its goals. (Charnay, 1976, p. 102) Revolutionary war was the opposite of nuclear thinking about force by seeking imbalance and intractability, but the fundamental dominance of the political and the moral remained. This could only be avoided or mitigated by an indirect strategy, in which non-military forces were also applied to challenge the adversary’s position, through economic, social, political and diplomatic means. (Beaufre A., 1972, p. 51) Under Botha’s rule as Prime Minister (1978-89), Beaufre’s indirect strategy influenced Botha’s ‘Total Onslaught’ doctrine. Frankel (1984) has convincingly made the case of the unmistakeable if loose South African strategic adoption of Beaufre’s teachings, but the operational translation of joint strategic purpose, engagement, and repertoire remains obscured.  

(Frankel P., 1984, pp. 48-70; Baker & Jordaan, 2010, p. 90) The South African version was more totalitarian and less progressive than its creator intended. Beaufre did congratulate the ‘purely technical’ success of the South African state in maintaining its ‘rigid’
regime. (Beaufre A., 1972, p. 282) Distinct from other groups of practitioners, the operational significance of military brethren like Beaufre, Gallois, Glavany, Brohon and Puget and many others (net)working on behalf of key French industry sectors remains unclear.696 (Cuddumbey, 1996, p. 72)

Cooperation was reinforced by doctrine in its two manifestations, common threat analyses, and a mutual respect of military professionalism, which created the inherent common understandings and shared meanings. Importantly, as the evidence shows, these understandings were not bilateral, but social in nature, that is, they were grounded in practice. Despite dissemination of French operational doctrine and strategy, neither dimension suggests French operational tutelage.697 It is only when these are connected to the myriad connections within arms trade that the links between defence communities becomes clear.

**Communities of practice and Foccart’s reseaux**

Finally, Foccart’s parallel networks must be discarded as tangential to regular arms trade. Ostensibly, they are an obvious example of a combination of middle level interaction, arms deliveries, and regional impact, and a convenient bogeyman to explain France’s contradictory African policy. The transnational relations between South African, France, and Francophone African partners should not be homogenized in a single ‘réseau triangulaire’. (Bach, 1990, pp. 242, 205) Foccart’s network of networks supported a host of French projects skirting South African interests in the 1960s. The three most subversive were supporting secessionists in uranium-rich Katanga in the Congo between 1960 and 1964, (Polakow-Suransky, 2010, p. 39) sending French, South African and Rhodesian mercenaries, as well as French tutelage by ‘Guerre Révolutionnaire’ theorist and Algerian war veteran Col. Roger Trinquier. (Pfister, 2005, pp. 34-6; Faligot, Guisnel, & Kauffer, 2012, pp. 246-8) Secondly, Botha liaised with Presidents Houphouet-Boigny of Cote d’Ivoire and President Bongo of Gabon for arms shipments to Biafran secessionist during the Nigerian Civil War in 1967-69. Lastly Jean-Mauricheau-Beaupré liaised with Houphouet and Botha on building a ‘Dialogue’ between

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696 Compare (Cuddumbey, 1996, p. 72), ‘The Gaullist lobby, so powerful in Francophone Africa, rallied to Pretoria’s defence not only because many of its members tended to regard the Afrikaners as distant relatives by virtue of the Huguenot connection, but because it was anti-Anglo-Saxon and anti-Communist to boot.’

697 Anonymous, interview with author, 10 August 2016. Having a relative who had been engaged in heliborne deployments in Namibia, he estimated that French influence on helicopter doctrinal development was probably ‘just a spark’.
South Africa’s executive and the African ‘cordon sanitaire’ against Apartheid between 1968-72.\(^{698}\) (Pfister, 2005, pp. 48-9)

The political affinity shared by various non-official French lobbies toward South Africa should not be conflated, nor extended to arms trade.\(^{699}\) (Bach, 1990, pp. 204-5) Foccart’s networks differed from the arms trade communities in several respects. First, their membership seemed to value political reliability, not so much military professionalism, which was the hallmark of the defence communities, or what have been called ‘epistemic communities’.\(^{700}\) (Haas, 1992, p. 3) The clandestine projects carried economic interests, and primary industry were never far behind, but they always prioritized a political objective, and an extractive business model that did not necessitate a long-term client relationship, like aviation commerce. Logistical implementation was relatively straightforward, not requiring regular military planning or institutional, or industrial frameworks. Apart from its role in verifying the bona fides of arms dealers, the involvement of French intelligence services in facilitating regular arms trade appears to have been sporadic.\(^{701}\) For these reasons, decision making circles were kept small and personal. The Biafran affair came to an end because it was a losing battle for the secessionists, but also because Botha distrusted Messmer’s successor at Defence, Michel Debré, whom both thought to be lacking in conviction.\(^{702}\) In that sense, “Biafra” was a precursor to the falling out over helicopters in 1972, discussed in the previous chapter.

Certainly, the South African defence minister Botha through his personal liaison, General Loots, became the principal South African actor to establish top level liaisons to the two key Francophone leaders, all hoping to create favourable political situations and facts on the ground

\(^{698}\) (Pfister, 2005, pp. 48, 49), explains SADF’s acquisition of French weapons from ambitions within government and the region, does not seem to correspond with SADF’s absence in the theatre until 1973, and its laggard approach to doctrine.


\(^{701}\) In their near-encyclopaedic examination of French Cold War intelligence (2012), Faligot, Kauffer and Guisnel make no connections to major actors of regular arms trade. Botha is not mentioned, nor the DMA, and Messmer only laterally to intelligence. SDECE had a moderate role supporting the CIEEMG, see Chapter 3.

\(^{702}\) SANDF, MVB 2, 26, folder Ivory Coast-Gabon, folio 21A, Van Tonder to Botha, some time between 4 nov 69 and 9 nov 1969, Messmer apologized for Debré’s weak reception of Botha, calling Debré ‘...n baie senuweagtige persoon’, a very nervous person. Botha sent Debré an ultimatum to confirm further use of South African deliveries to Biafra in writing, to which Debré apparently did not respond.
in contested or hostile African states. On behalf of the French reseau of key African leaders, French intelligence and oil industry, Foccart’s lieutenant Mauricheau-Beaupré liaised with President Vorster (1966-77) through the South African Military Intelligence Director and minister of Defence Botha, on a number of important clandestine operations.

By his own admission, Foccart was not involved in arms trade to Southern Africa: ‘‘Ni le Portugal ni les colonies portugaises n’étaient de ma compétence. Le commerce des armes m’échappait complètement. J’avais marqué dès le début que je ne voulais pas y être mêlé, et personne ne m’en parlait jamais, en dépit de ma réputation ‘homme des services spéciaux’.’’ (Foccart & Gaillard, 1997, pp. 113-4) Foccart was certainly being less than truthful about his competencies, and has generally sought to further inflate his legacy. (Keese, 2007, p. 594)

Foccart’s lore has come at the expense of his lieutenant Mauricheau–Beaupré, who throughout the 1960s tried to forge a sub-Saharan, anti-communist, anti-British, status-quo alliance. Yet while Foccart’s network, through the presidents of Cote d’Ivoire and Gabon, found Minister Botha ready to support their clandestine secessionist projects in Katanga (1960) and Biafra (1967), there is no indication that this involved regular arms trade. (Warson, 2013, p. 142; Pfister, 2005, pp. 49, 53-4) In fact, Mauricheau’s lack of discretion eroded the trust of his partners in the affair. (Warson, 2013, p. 143) Notwithstanding the (practical) importance of SAAF covert military shipments, there is no reason or evidence to suggest that Foccart was involved in regular arms trade to South Africa. (Pfister, 2005, p. 36)

A stronger note of the separation of French defence and political African networks comes from Jean Mauricheau-Beaupré. After a long harangue to Botha about the failings of South Africa’s Africa policy, in which Mauricheau presented himself as an exceptional facilitator, Mauricheau ended with a reference to Botha’s Intelligence liaison officer, General Loots. This final thought on Sud-Aviation shows that Mauricheau was either unaware or unencumbered with the arms embargo that had prompted secret negotiations on licensing: ‘As soon as I could, I made available to General Loots everything I know about ‘K’s visit’. I am very surprised about what he told me about Sud-Aviation. What is the truth? And can I help you?’.

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703 For example, SANDF, MVB 2, 26, folder Ivory Coast-Gabon, folio 1A, handwritten minutes of personal meeting ['Onderhoud'] between Botha and Bongo, 26/10/69, at Libreville. The two found common ground in anti-communism, French-African assistance, and economic cooperation, eg. p.2.

704 SANDF, MVB 2, 26, folder Ivory Coast-Gabon, handwritten letter in French by Jean Mauricheau-Beaupré to Defence Minister Botha, 19/11/70, a typed translation in Afrikaans is also in the file, p.4.

705 SANDF, MVB 2, Ibid., p.5, It is unknown who K is. The Afrikaans translation is more revealing than Mauricheau’s French original, translating the ‘Affaire K’ as ‘K’s visit’.
strongly suggests that the military network, which included Sud-Aviation’s key advisors, was separate from the political network run by Foccart and Mauricheau. The French defence community was at best indirectly involved in clandestine political projects, occupying itself with regular arms transactions. Therefore, there existed not one but several French networks, or communities, in Southern Africa, which operated more or less independent from each other. Until more information becomes available on (French) presidential and ministerial thinking on African policy, this must remain a proposition. What is possible is to examine the view from the ground, the practices engaged in. This in turn validates research in regional constellations of practice.

Conclusion: how does practice transcend into the region?

Within the dominant analytical frameworks of Cold War confrontation and state-oriented paradigms of research, arms trade provides a novel entry into the regional aspects of Southern Africa, and French hopes to extend its interests there.\(^{706}\) (Airault & Bat, 2016, pp. 90, 92) Short of a full account of the regional dimension of French-South African arms trade, this chapter has tried to lay out the merits of such a study, which rests on the three findings presented in this chapter.

First of all, Franco-South African relations were particular, but they were not exceptional. Seminal works have discussed the original or special character of the French-South African relation. From an interstate perspective, the singular importance of French arms supply to South Africa, and the anomalous relation entertained by France outside of its colonial sphere of influence combine to give the bilateral relation its special character. From a transnational lens, however, both these assumptions become circumspect. Thomas questions the simple ‘linear model’ of French francophone African policy of progressive submission to international pressure, which is usually applied to Franco-South African relations as well. Such narratives run in the face of historic contingency, and ignore ‘a sense of process’. (Thomas, 2014, p. 283) The particular but not exceptional relation becomes clear when examining arms trade practice.

French supply was largely undifferentiated, and deeply engaged in the Lusophone and Anglophone parts of Africa.

Furthermore, trade was conducted between closely interacting defence communities. Several networks had interests and influence on the Franco-South African arms trade relationship, either for geographical reasons or because of their raison-d’être. There was very little genuine cooperation on South African arms trade between French ministries, chiefly because it was regarded as a responsibility of the Defence Ministry. The main competing network within Africa was Jacques Foccart’s ‘réseau’; there is no evidence that it had interests in with arms trade, and some indication that it did not. This leaves some space to argue for a constructed view of French African policy, in favour of function, or practice, as opposed to homogenising attempts at qualifying the nature of French post-colonial relations to Africa. Secrecy was maintained by the insiders of the various defence communities. It was observed by all who worked to sustain the operation of arms trade, but it did not mean the same thing to different actors. As such it points to commercial process as a constellation of loosely bound communities of practice. Within the French-South African relation maintaining secrecy was not merely a responsibility, but also a sign of membership, which at times rendered certain profitable deals, and certain powerful partners, unacceptable;

‘As SAAF members, we assumed the French are our friends and they will remain our friends. Aid from France was more and more difficult [in the 1970s -Red] but it did still come. The association between France and us grew all the time, even though they were also under pressure. What they said in public was not necessarily the truth. We, the air force, we could bargain on a steady supply of what we need to keep our mirages going… If we needed something for Mirage [aircraft], we would get it from France. It took time, it might take six weeks before the component finds its way to us, but they made sure we remained friends.’

_Direct French involvement in the region_

The ostensibly “special” French contributions to South African military power must be seen within its designs on sub-Saharan Africa, which coexisted in collusion as well as competition with those of other western states. The Atlas turnkey project is a good example of such a convenient division of labour. At the same time, French African policy itself cannot be meaningfully aggregated to a national level from its constituent parts without losing a substantial part of agency, conflict and consistency of presidential and operational policy. The

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707 Anonymous, interview with author, 10 August 2016.
analysis of the below-cabinet level of government – ministries, militaries, national industries – has placed the top of government at some distance. At the same time, it has featured a host of actors whose horizons extended laterally across the region of Southern Africa. These elements favour a transnational historical perspective, which emphasizes ‘what lies between and through national societies and other units of historical analysis.’ (Saunier, 2013, p. 2) Standardization, after sales activities, and doctrine provide angles to these historical spaces. They reveal that state rationales were often reinforced or justified by social repertoires that allowed the maintenance of relations that did not immediately correspond with national ambitions in Pretoria, Lisbon, Salisbury and Paris, but still contributed to them.

Standardisation made commercial sense to the French attachés and ministry, and it was militarily sound to the SADF. The clear material benefits to both parties however also connected to ideological properties. In this sense too, the case of French-South African trade is not unique from either the French or the Subsaharan perspective.

Repeated successful delivery of helicopters and parts created confidence in a smooth clandestine system. By and large, trust between practitioners helped to bridge the gap between diplomacy and commitments. Nonetheless, it is telling that each of the key persons identified in this research shares at least some aspects of the colonial or perhaps warrior-like mindset that brought them together over a long period of time to achieve a common goal. Military positions past or present are a defining quality of those in key positions of the sales community.

Counter-insurgency doctrine was an important gift obtained from the French, like the South African copying of the DMA organisational structure. The Guerre Révolutionaire doctrine of the Algerian war resonated with the militaries of colonial regimes in Southern African Africa. French counterinsurgency represented one of several important examples among campaigns of other western states. It created a common language among defence community members, which in turn facilitated exports. French strategic thinking likewise had a clearer influence on the South African defence community and its understanding of its own strategic position. Like doctrine, the application was specific to South African circumstances but nonetheless facilitated communications.
Conclusion

‘Diplomacy is a very funny thing. I can say no to you now, officially I have to say no to you. But as we walk out, I say, ‘Well, it’s four o’clock, so let’s have a beer’, and then we carry on with the same discussion, but now it’s not official anymore. And tomorrow morning I have a brainwave and take our personal discussion as an official discussion, drafting the documents saying this and that, you should think about this and this and that. It was never officially done.’

This study has revisited the reasons behind the remarkably prolonged French-South African arms trade interaction between 1955 and 1979, by reconstructing the management of interstate arms trade. Arms trade and armament policy are part of larger interdisciplinary debates on past and present national and regional defence policies and international security. Arms trade has always been intimately connected to questions of military autonomy and national defence policy. The Cold War arms race and resulting technological advances made the relationship between governments, their costly defence industrial bases and their security environment more complex. Their growing interdependence has made armament procurement a polysemy, signifying both a strategy, a supply base and a process of acquisition. This research took shape in early 2013 after initial failed attempts at the military archives at Vincennes to find evidence for the arms trade and reveal a central policy. Follow-up visits to Vincennes and other archives mushroomed, but the “master plan” of dealing arms to South Africa did not come into focus. In the absence of clear government intervention, it became increasingly likely that the trade was the policy, or at least the only trace of it. The research question became, to paraphrase Samuel Faure, “Who sat in the pilot seat of French-South Africans arms trade?” (Faure, 2015, p. 34) Taking a quarter-century period, and placing the trade itself centre stage, the answer became more complicated, involving many actors. Moreover, the commercial balance of power was shown not to be fully with French actors merely receiving requests from the SADF. French industry had to work long and hard to gain and sustain South African business, and the relationship was then put under pressure by presidential political stances and international reprobation.

708 Paul van Niekerk, Interview with author, 12 August 2016.
By contrast scholarly treatment of Cold War French-South African relations has long accepted the trade of arms to Apartheid as a logical outcome of the Fifth Republic’s African and national policies. (Vaïsse, 1998, pp. 493-4, 489; Lellouche & Moisi, 1979, p. 119) The narrowing space between the two policies has been presented as special or anomalous, as French actions went against international repudiation of apartheid because they hindered African support for French aspirations to be a champion of non-aligned and newly independent states. (Konieczna, 2013; Bach, 1990) French delivery of contraband weapons is seen as a major explanation for the delayed return of the South African state to the international fold. (Alden & Daloz, 1996; Pfister, 2005; Landgren, 1989)

State-oriented analysis is problematic in the case of French-South African arms exports because it favours systemic or international-level explanations. This lens does not invite deep analysis of decision making processes, and perpetuates the analytically vacuous concept of the military-industrial complex. (Faure, 2015, p. 32) As a result the preceding period of French commercial diplomacy to South African defence hierarchies of the 1950s is often only treated tangentially.

Nor were national policies easily translated into international settings. French defence policy and French African policy were wrought with contradictions and invested in de Gaulle’s unusually successful efforts to regain former grandeur and international leadership in the space between the superpowers of the Cold War. French arms trade permitted technological contestation of the super powers, and supported France’s self-proclaimed stewardship to non-aligned states of Africa, Asia and Latin America. In this geopolitical sense, French arms trade to Apartheid South Africa was not an aberration, if politically the Third World audience had itself begun to develop a new discourse that redefined human rights, being trampled by the forces of colonialism on the continent. (Skinner, 2017, p. 124) South African armament procurement during the time of apartheid was organised under Western intervention and sanction, and lack thereof. This research has shifted attention from the political and international aspects of rising South African power (McWilliams, 1989; Landgren, 1989) back to the intricacies and agency of industry and government administration, notably in the period prior to the 1963 embargo.

And so, the appropriateness of national state logics and executive policy as a starting point in explaining bilateral arms trade relations over the long term was called into question. From a wish to identify the scope and importance of French military diplomacy in arms trade, this research decided to turn the apparent absence of executive policy directives into an asset. This
study has introduced the middle-level of operation, which subordinated the national, executive-level view of bilateral arms trade and treated them as contexts. The general aim of this study is to establish the historical significance of lower-level actors. Three separate objectives have been fulfilled. First, the interactive phases of commercialisation and operationalization of Alouette helicopters by French national producer Sud-Aviation to the South African Defence Force between 1955 and 1979 have been established, in the context of French-South African relations. The importance of its milestones, like the 1960 Sharpeville Massacre and the 1963 and 1977 embargos, was consequently nuanced. Secondly, deconstruction of the commercial process has also shown that occupants of national military-industrial complexes had interests that emerged from historical contexts. Third, it has retraced the actions of relevant mid-level governmental, military-administrative and industrial actors, from which over time policies and practices emerged.

The chosen method of process tracing responds to the greatly complicated picture of the middle level of government operation. The approach originates from the field of international relations, and is uncommon in history-writing. Faure who adopted the method in his doctoral thesis (2016) recently concluded that French armament policy has been understudied and cornered by macro approaches. Furthermore, he knows of no study that has dropped below meso-level analyses to the ‘relations interindividuelles des décideurs de l’armement’ and their development over longer period. In his substantial review of models explaining its dynamics, he argues that ‘l’enjeu est d’incarner par des faits empiriques les relations de pouvoir entre l’État et l’industrie qui demeurent aujourd’hui impressionnistes.’ (Faure, 2015, p. 35) Faure argues for process tracing as the most convincing approach so far, as it combines these objectives within a clear falsifiable framework.

Here the reflective variant of practice tracing is chosen. Retracing the emergent processes and practices of arms trade decision making in their contexts shows the constitutive nature of social interaction in arms commerce. Defence communities are the logical incubators of practice, hosting a variety of arms trade activities themselves. Defence communities have been identified as a significant cohesive entity, and they are a way to level the hierarchical playing field prior to analysis.\textsuperscript{709} (Faure, 2015, p. 25)

\textsuperscript{709} (Faure, 2015, p. 25), ‘En France, les réseaux institutionnels et interpersonnels les plus puissants sont situées au niveau politique entre d’une part le président de la République, son chef-d’État-major particulier, le ministre de la défense, le chef-d’État-major des armées, leurs cabinets respectifs, et le Premier ministre lors des
Significance of research findings

This study has argued that arms trade can be gainfully disaggregated as an interactive commercial process. It makes an important contribution to our knowledge of historical French-South African relations and proposes an innovative method of analysis of policy environments. The evidence presented here reevaluates existing perspectives in a middle-level framework and merges existing scholarship with a genuinely tri-lingual body of previously unaddressed source material from French, English and Afrikaans sources. As such, it offers an alternative view of the development of bilateral relations between French and South African defence communities between 1955 and 1979. Exciting opportunities exist to expand on its findings. Using a sequential understanding of commerce was useful and necessary, but this came with a trade-off. In order to uncover the social relations behind the numbers, arms trade needs to be unpicked, and placed in an interactive, at times even reflective, setting. Pitting a detailed analysis of the historic French procurement system against an equally detailed analysis of its South African counterpart would have made this requirement completely impracticable, nor would it have avoided contextualisation and shortcuts. Such a method would also face choices on context, and would also demand an arguably insurmountable threshold of primary evidence. Most importantly, the focus of this study has been to explore areas of convergence, rather than identify the differences between the two communities.

The findings of this research deepen our understanding of the bilateral arms trade between France and South Africa. They compare French expectations to those perceived by South African institutional actors, whose acquiescence was not automatic, and became more considered – indeed, professional – over time. The South African industrial development did not follow logically from the embargoes; instead South African decision making both lagged somewhat after previous procurement, and pre-empted the major embargoes with French assistance. The wider contribution of these findings lies in the conceptual benefits of the perspective of the middle level, as well as the use of process and practice in a case, and in a historical part regarding the position of French arms trade within French policy across the Southern African region and the continent. Based on the secretive character of arms trade, this research has asserted the extraordinary relevance of middle level actors engaged in matters of national security to the formulation of policies normally attributed to the executive. The

périodes de cohabitations, et d’autre part, les présidents des principales entreprises de défense française et européenne et leurs conseillers.’
research has provided an insight into the functioning of defence communities engaged in military trade, which underlines their importance to decision making and policy formulation.

Within the parameters of the present case study, executive government in both states was found to perform at best an intermediate function in the decision making of trading armaments. Policy was an emergent property. French operational levels initiated and interpreted authorisation criteria, the SADF obtained the removal of the civilian Secretary of Defence in favour of direct contact with the Commandant General. Precisely because Pompidou’s criteria were authoritative, they were subjected to debate and jurisprudence. Middle level actors performed both political and diplomatic roles. Within the elaborate French government hierarchy especially, the military progressively avoided interference by diplomatic levels in export dealings.

The reconstruction of a transactional process
Throughout, the trade process has been the real actor of the narrative presented in this thesis. Operatives were active in some or most of the practices, but all were steps of the process that were shown to have changed from sporadic activities to sequenced commercial practices, to particular audiences.

Promotional activities took long years to turn into shared engagements. In the face of French hubris and South African inertia, isolated brokers on both sides had laid sufficient groundwork in preceding years. Nonetheless, without the encounters these activities generated, the Sharpeville shootings of March 1960 would not have led to the same results. Even immediately afterwards, French helicopters were still not the obvious choice. The obvious explanation for the choice of Alouettes in August 1960 is that of French political reliability in the face of international outrage, which was meekly shared by South Africa’s key supplier, Great Britain. It is part of the more profound understanding of practice that the SAAF Chief refused any arguments for acquisition of military hardware other than technical and operational value, and continued for a time to rely on British aviation. Part of the maturing relationship between the two defence communities was the increasingly cynical attitude of the SADF towards ‘salesmen’, French and others. The increasingly direct trade relations of the late 1960s and 1970s of the heads of OFEMA and especially DAI show greater French care, but also greater savvy within the SADF. Between purchase of the Alouette IIs in 1960 and the Pumas in 1968, the technical acumen of the SAAF, and the procurement skills of the SADF had greatly improved.
Authorisation communicated to the other side the limits of internal systems controls. The South African community took a long time to fully comprehend the contentious nature of the French CIEEMG, and attributed delays to ‘vagueness’ or even French duplicity. At least one altercation on authorisation involving OFEMA’s commercial agent Jaboulay was blamed on “sales persons”, when really the root problem of rejected authorisation was the stand-off between the French ministries of Defence and Foreign Affairs. After 1970 there clearly was a crystalizing French base for continued trade with Pretoria. Brohon certainly put plainly that Sud-Aviation needed more business from Atlas to come their way.

The procurement strategies of the two communities came to align, as signalled by the Atlas project – a precursor to the later community of practice. The South Africans went from being first time buyers, to regular clients, to full partners, and in this respect the near-concurrent reorganisation of French and South African procurement structures in the mid-1960s is coincidental only in that French professionalization also responded to the broader incentives of Cold War arms trade. The South African military archives and French diplomatic archives appear to bear out the “demystification” of inter-state arms trade. Reporting on acquisition decision making on helicopters documents becomes progressively mundane and succinct, going from a wealth of trace evidence of mission communications and delegations visiting in 1960, to sparse contracts, central meetings and SADF procurement planning and budgeting documents. Backing up this trend towards routinization as well as shared secrecy is the Atlas project, in which Sud-Aviation’s leaders Brohon and Puget negotiated directly with leaders of both defence communities. Atlas was by no means the first, or last, case of production licensing, but the crucial importance of aircraft maintenance to SAAF’s operations made it a topic of great interest, on a par with Panhard AMLs and the Crotale missile project. South African confidence in French long term propositions (as was the purchasing of a helicopter) was still fragile, as underscored by the French unilateral embargoes on arms to Israel. The South African leadership came to understand the affair as an Israeli failure to observe the French discourse of “defensive arms trade” under which all categories could be traded. The South African themselves narrowly believed the strength of this fiction to hinge on the resolve of de Gaulle. The Israeli affair has been identified as a major factor in French-South African relations, and merits closer study. The three crisis moments of 1971-2, 1975, and 1977 - not just triggered by presidential decisions, but also by disruptions from key staff changes - were followed each time with ever more secret French assistance, rejuvenating and reinforcing procedures among the small band of faithfuls.
As the final commercial phase in this study, after-sales activity represents a crucial element of the ‘sale’ that has been neglected in the literature and in a sense it as the heart of the community of practice. It is a major contribution of this study, and a point easily made. The logistical arrangements for servicing of existing clients involved the manufacturer and its servicing department. Trading to a world-wide audience would have required a year-round schedule of various clients, and South Africa and Portugal would have been frequented significantly. Their joint custom is conservatively estimated by SIPRI at 10% of world-wide French helicopter trade between 1956 and 1980, but likely to have been closer to 15%. The largely forgotten work of the technical departments of the DMA remains to be uncovered, precisely because of the salience of lower-level diplomacy revealed in this study. One tangential aspect not uncovered is the battlefield intelligence that may have been obtained from SAAF and SAP units to benefit French arms development. The case of helicopters should be easily duplicated with other French weapons systems, such as the Panhard armoured car. A follow-on study in participation with private and company archives could add significantly to the subject of post-sale service. Depending on the availability of data on seemingly innocuous lines of communication, additional sources in combination with network analysis may well add to greater understanding of the day-to-day activities of arms trade logistics and the cohesion between practitioners.

An enduring community of social practice

The inter-disciplinary character of this research is expressed in the emergence of a community of practice. This concept helps us to understand the formation and persistence (and demise) of cohesive social structures outside of institutional boundaries. This study has offered compelling historical evidence in support of the concept. Commercial activities turned into practices over time, contingent on the frequency and nature of the engagement, the re-negotiation of objectives and re-enactment of repertoires by commercial partners. The evidence demonstrates a business life cycle that exemplifies how the French and South African defence community were introduced, engaged in close cooperation, then adapted to changing demand and external pressures, and finally by 1971, arrived at a silent partnership. While much remains to be unearthed about these cooperative arrangements, their performance and continuity are beyond doubt. What has been made clear are the constitutive elements of the resulting community: the mutual engagement, joint enterprise and shared repertoire.

The various forms and incidences of ‘mutual engagement’ came to constitute an enclosed community of arms trade practice, which functioned on the mutual business interests and shared values of an initiated caste of military professionals of two defence communities, whereby normal business practices were organised for secrecy based on long experience. On the French side, this nucleus involved selected French defence manufacturers, their local offices in South Africa, OFEMA, DAI and the DGA, under the auspices of the French Ministry of Defence, and excluded the French diplomatic missions; and on the South African side the military and diplomatic members of the mission in Paris were aware, as was the SADF and the Ministry of Defence. As one former SADF staff officer points out, this still large group was divided further between functional levels at Staff Headquarters, Atlas, and Sud-Aviation and a general awareness of managerial levels at Armscor and the SADF, for financial risk and payment. Relations between operatives were business-like, cordial to friendly, and stable throughout the 1970s, which mitigates the crisis of confidence in French helicopter supply expressed by Botha in 1971/72, that is in evidence from the diplomatic sources. (Konieczna, 2013) These mixed signals are in fact a precursor to the later disconnect between French diplomatic disavowal of the trade relation in 1977, and French operational continuation in 1979.

The ‘joint enterprise’ combined shared state rationales of anti-communism, perceived regional guardianship, real regional power, and access to strategic resources in support of military autonomy. Although their degrees differed, engagement in normal overt trade and finance had a legitimizing function for both states. One opportunistic logic that is harder to substantiate is the convenient role of South Africa as a “bête noire” against the Black African front line states and the francophone states. Her position in all camps allowed France to perform the role of arbiter it desired, as Pretoria’s tutor and honest broker, and also as benefactor towards her non-aligned audience. In sum, such overarching arguments provided context to more specific shared objectives, like agreeing to authorize a proposition, or organising helicopter shipments back to Sud-Aviation for maintenance.

The relatively few instances of ‘shared repertoire’ are partly inherent in its informal nature, and there is a window of opportunity to collect the oral testimony of staff and operators on both sides. The interviewed South African operatives all expressed a contentment with enduring French contacts (and on occasion a fair bit of anti-British sentiment). As professionals with military backgrounds their testimony attests to a desire to conduct the business of South African

Footnote: 711 Anonymous, Interview with author, 10 August 2016 [around 40:00]
procurement, efficiently and professionally. The attributes of military discipline and professionalism negated any need to question the legality or moral right to use overwhelming force to defend the South African state against its captive black majority. Although more research on practitioner’s attitudes is needed, the French and South African regional designs, and military doctrines, favoured a territorial view of subversion. This allowed a shared externalisation of the threat presented by liberation movements, which is likely to have been more convincing and material than any general ideological assertions of anti-communism, for example by the French Foreign minister.\textsuperscript{712} (Destremau, 1994, p. 209) Politics could change, but perceived professional responsibilities stayed the same. The flip-flop of the French military attaché reporting internally on Sharpeville in March and October 1960 can be understood in this way, first showing understanding for South African police, later condemning their conduct against black citizens protesting. The latter was described as an ‘action subversive intérieure’, which had prompted the army to step in as well as to improve its equipment and organisation.\textsuperscript{713} Therefore, as a chef de bataillon, his objection of police shooting civilians was not moral, it was professional. It may be added that the use of state logics to explain French arms trade to a large extent also serves to avoid the more difficult question of French operational affinity for the ideological positions taken by the South African, Rhodesian and Portuguese regimes in Southern Africa.\textsuperscript{714}

Research of the South African defence community members did not reproduce the exuberant gratitude for French military assistance expressed by the South African Foreign Minister Pik Botha, who equated it to a sea rescue. (Pfister, 2005, p. 49) Rather, their attitude was instrumental like that of OFEMA operatives, which ensured delivery of all of SADF’s requirements, but against premium returns. The force of logic and the relative dearth of evidence of an affectionate – as opposed to affective – relation between practitioners do not invalidate the community of practice.\textsuperscript{715} The instrumentality was itself a code, a growing notion

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{712} (Konieczna, 2013, p. 225) notes that in 1961 Couve de Murville approved of selling only unarmed Mirage jets, under strict adherence to the defensive-offensive distinction.
\item \textsuperscript{713} CADN, 551PO-2-161, Report of Chef de bataillon Muguet, 2/5/60 to 3/6/60, blaming Black opposition and excusing police ‘nervousness’ as ‘very understandable’; Ibid., Report of Chef de bataillon Muguet, 31/10/60 to 30/11/60, notes ‘la réaction brutale de la police à Sharpeville’.
\item \textsuperscript{714} CADN, 551PO-2-161, Report of Chef de Bataillon Cortadellas, 22/3/57 tot 20/4/57, questioning the South African countermeasures against communism, but not fear of it; Cf Ibid., ‘Revolutionary Warfare’, 20/12/67, p.3, transcript of General Fraser’s radio broadcast on Revolutionary Warfare, extolling the ‘classic’ example of Algeria.
\item \textsuperscript{715} Paul van Niekerk, Interview with author, 12 August 2016, implies relations were underwritten by trust and reliability, rather than camaraderie; regarding French service, ‘there was no particular sentiment there… [but] I think we had a cordial… relationship in that respect with the French, very good.’
\end{enumerate}
of the South Africans that to buy weapons of war with France demanded organisational discipline, and an understanding of “not rocking the boat”, like the Israelis had done. Despite the ever more ominous reports on official French attitudes to sending weapons to apartheid, the word through operational channels was always the same: business would continue as before. It is also important in this respect that the South African understanding in 1975 of Giscard’s declared intention to embargo non-naval weapons was that not only the Presidency –‘the Elysée’- was at a distance of the operations, and that President Giscard remained sensitive to economic arguments despite his stated intentions. Moreover, it was noted that Giscard’s attitude had been influenced by Brohon, and so could in future be influenced by their contacts in the French arms industry:

‘The business proposition [of the Airbus project] can make the President change his mind … For the future we will have to determine our requirements carefully, and place them discreetly [while] observing the right timing. It is very clear that the arms suppliers will support us and that we can rely on them, even for persuasion at the ‘Elysée Palace’, if necessary.’

The French president and arms trade

South African procurement was largely left to the military specialists; the authority of the cabinet and prime minister is acknowledged but underrepresented in documents. Similarly, and within the inevitable limits of research on arms trade, and the particular issues of French presidential archives already mentioned in the introduction, the agency and substantial autonomy of the French Defence Ministry in the period is clear. Very few concrete connections of French Presidents to arms trade have been found. Only a handful of relevant CIEEMG minutes feature arbitrage by the Elysée. As against the principal monitoring role in export decision making by the French Prime Minister, this implies the delegated model that features principal operators like Jacques Foccart and Pierre Messmer. In arms trade to South Africa the President set the outer boundaries, leaving his Prime Minister to delegate further the task of bi-weekly evaluation of what were by 1970 nearly a hundred propositions each month. Short of

716 SANDF, MVB2 Box 186, Appendix A, ‘Standpunt van wapenleveransiers teenover die franse president se uitlating op 9 Aug 75 tydens amptelike besoek aan Zaire’, [‘Position of arms suppliers on French presidents statements on 9 Aug 1975 during his visit to Zaire’], p.5 point 11, p.6 point 14 and 17, b ‘Die ekonomiese proposisie hiervan kan die President van opinie laat verander… Vir die toekoms sal ons ons behoeftes sorgvuldig moet bepaal en diskreet en op die regte tyd moet deurvoer. Dit is baie duidelik dat die wapenleveransiers ons sal ondersteun en dat ons op hulle kan staatmaak vir selfs oorreding by die “Elysée Palais” indien nodig.”
information on closed defence conferences and personal contacts, the apparent absence of presidential interest and involvement must be assumed.

On the presidential boundary setting, the image that results is a managed de-politicization of arms trade. Although this was as much an illustration of the decreasing role of government as financial guarantor of French defence industry, increasing export dependency, de-politicization of course also formed a distinct part of the French-South African relation, as it allowed trade to continue at the middle level into the 1980s. (Bach, 1990) Neither factor however meant a reduction of government involvement. It is revealing that each of the three French presidents engaged in at least one public gesture of a limitation on French arms trade immediately followed by backchannel placations and proof of “business as usual” to South African contacts. Importantly, the clear if ‘delegated’ and controlled continuation of arms trade to Pretoria shows the diplomatic disavowal of trade as the actual aberration of policy. It was this requirement of compliance with the shifting public image of French arms trade that the South Africans grappled with throughout the relation. After 1970, it was to their pleasant surprise to find the French quite willing to subvert their own rules. As a French contact intimated in 1975 after Giscard’s embargo: “Have you ever heard an Israeli complain [about lack of French arms deliveries]?”

The relative autonomy of ministerial levels in French arms trade decision making casts a different light on French policies on defence and in Africa. Once more, it is established that arms trade cannot adequately be explained or analysed through the lens of the ‘military-industrial complex’. The ‘MIC’ describes a real phenomenon, but as a concept it hides the all-important social dimension, and is an analytically vacuous concept. (Faure, 2015, p. 32) Because of the diverse and polysemic nature of the arms trade, no one person, or organisation, can fully represent France’s intertwined and interactive engagements in defence procurement, or for that matter, exports to sub-Saharan Africa. As a function of commercial diplomacy, French arms trade in Africa remains largely unexplained. This is not surprising. Twenty years after Foccart first published his own take on his work as presidential advisor to African affairs, research is beginning to reconstruct the extent and reach of the networks constituting his parallel

718 It was certainly regarded as such by South African insiders. Paul van Niekerk, interview 12 August 2016, on Giscard’s 1975 decision: ‘This was a political move, the lines [of communication] were continuous.’
719 SANDF, MV2 Box 186, folder MV56/4/1, Aanhangsel A [Appendix A], ‘Standpunt van wapenleveransieteenover die franse president se uitlating op 9 Aug 75 tydens amptelike besoek aan Zaire’,[‘Position of arms suppliers on French presidents statements on 9 Aug 1975 during his visit to Zaire’], p.3.
African diplomacy. As has been argued, these were communities of practice of a different kind, assuring their persistence even after Foccart was ousted from the Elysée in 1974. The French Defence Ministry created a separate framework of influence, notably through its export management section, connecting with Portuguese and South African defence communities. According to Laurence Badel, the Economic Ministry created yet another network of influence through the DREE. (Badel, 2012) Internal documents found in CAEF also suggest the existence of a multi-state Eastern African ‘réseau’ of commercial operatives and missions managed by DREE. These and other poles of French policy influence worked together when necessary, but each had their own objectives, competencies, and codes. This study has purposely avoided the French financial and nuclear fields of interest with regard to South Africa, but here too we can see specific communities based on institutional functions and interests. In sum, there is still much to learn about French commercial diplomacy, its practice, and the communities involved. Middle-level analysis of policies – and archives – towards Africa outside of the French pre-carré can help us learn about this still largely unknown aspect of French African policy. The method of practice-and-process tracing used here also provides an instrument for transnational and constructivist historical approaches which seek to complement dominant national and state-level analyses. Studying historical practice provides a tool to capture and integrate lesser known actors, movements, connections and experiences into existing historical narratives.720 (Saunier, 2013, p. 134)

Opportunities for future research

The present research offers some obvious, and some more ambitious avenues to deepen and expand on the social dimensions of historic French arms trade to Southern Africa. To start with, two immediate areas would be to expand research of the bilateral relationship by adding additional resources, and focusing on other practices. Two more expansive ways are either to integrate French-South African arms trade with other adjacent bilateral relations, or to make a fully regional analysis of arms trade relations.

While substantial amounts of archival sources in three countries have been consulted to reconstruct the case of helicopter trade, this constitutes only a part of the available sources. The present images could be substantially enriched by further research in government archives,

720 (Saunier, 2013, p. 124), ‘The toolkit required is certainly a lavish one: transnational historians have to find order but account for mobility; they need to integrate a different conception of spatiality but situate their quest for movements within specific contexts; they can use a range of different quantitative or qualitative methods; they may invent new sources as well as revisit or rearrange existing ones.’
personal archives of key persons, and interviews of operatives of the 1970s and 1980s period. Research into similar military sales and the defence communities themselves will provide lateral access back to personal and procedural aspects not yet addressed.

More tangentially, establishment of other communities of practice could be filled out that are already identified in the secondary literature, notably by Konieczna (2013). The French South African relationship was a constellation of various mutually beneficial enterprises. The importance of some, like the use of gold payments as an international monetary lever, has been exaggerated, while the diplomatic importance of others, such as French satellite bases, and airline arrangements, has not been integrated with other practices into the broader relation.

French arms trade was inherently tied to French foreign policy. Apart from the political significance of French military assistance to her newly independent former colonies, arms trade has not been sufficiently nor specifically connected to French African policy. New research is expanding our knowledge of French ventures outside of its former colonial sphere of influence zone, especially towards the Anglophone African states in Southern and Eastern Africa. As has been argued, this brings renewed focus on the various networks of Jacques Foccart, who in his memoirs claimed to have sidestepped matters of arms trade. This research establishes the Defence Ministry and its export management as a separate network of influence, inviting research into the policy relevance of other such networks. In sum, there is still much to learn about the configuration of French military and commercial diplomacy, its practice, and the communities involved. Middle-level analysis of policies – and archives outside of the French pré-carré can help us learn about this still largely unknown aspect of French African policy.

A further point worth making is that a comprehensive transnational history of decolonisation in Southern Africa in the Cold War has yet to be written, even though the dynamics of, say, multi-theatre proxy wars in the region easily transcend bilateral analysis. A good first step could be a genuinely regional perspective on the historic military-industrial diplomacy in supremacist Southern Africa. Such a vehicle would fill a historical gap, and contribute to our understanding of arms proliferation and imperial endurance more generally.
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Secondary sources


19 May 2016

Dear Roel Vandervelde

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Thank you for submitting your documents for ethical review. The Ethics Committee was content to grant a favourable ethical opinion of the above research on the basis described in the application form, protocol and supporting documentation, revised in the light of any conditions set, subject to the general conditions set out in the attached document.

The Ethics committee provide a favourable ethical opinion with following requirements. These requirements are:

1. The participant may withdraw from the research at any point up to data analysis.
2. The researcher should be explicit as to how the data will be stored, for example, encrypted USB, password protected laptop etc.
3. The participant will not name or use identifiers for professionals they may refer to in the interview and this will be put in the information sheet.
4. The participant will not disclose criminalising information about himself or others. The participant will be warned about this verbally and in writing on the information for participants. The interview will be stopped if this occurs and the data can not be used for research purposes. Appropriate parties will be informed.

There is no need to submit any further evidence to the Ethics Committee; the favourable opinion has been granted with the assumption of compliance.
## FORM UPR16

**Research Ethics Review Checklist**

Please include this completed form as an appendix to your thesis (see the Postgraduate Research Student Handbook for more information).

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<td>Roel Martin van der Velde</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Department:</strong></td>
<td>SLAS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>First Supervisor:</strong></td>
<td>Prof Tony Chafer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Start Date:</strong></td>
<td>October 2013</td>
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If you are unsure about any of the following, please contact the local representative on your Faculty Ethics Committee for advice. Please note that it is your responsibility to follow the University's Ethics Policy and any relevant University, academic or professional guidelines in the conduct of your study.

Although the Ethics Committee may have given your study a favourable opinion, the final responsibility for the ethical conduct of this work lies with the researcher(s).

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1. **a)** Have all of your research and findings been reported accurately, honestly and within a reasonable time frame?  
   - YES ☑  NO ☐

2. **b)** Have all contributions to knowledge been acknowledged?  
   - YES ☑  NO ☐

3. **c)** Have you complied with all agreements relating to intellectual property, publication and authorship?  
   - YES ☑  NO ☐

4. **d)** Has your research data been retained in a secure and accessible form and will it remain so for the required duration?  
   - YES ☑  NO ☐

5. **e)** Does your research comply with all legal, ethical, and contractual requirements?  
   - YES ☑  NO ☐

### Candidate Statement:

I have considered the ethical dimensions of the above named research project, and have successfully obtained the necessary ethical approval(s).

**Ethical review number(s) from Faculty Ethics Committee (or from NRES/SCREC):** 15/16:37

If you have not submitted your work for ethical review, and/or you have answered ‘No’ to one or more of questions a) to e), please explain below why this is so:

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Date: 1/6/2016

UPR16 – August 2015