

Interview with Richard Young : Epicentre of Allegations

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Interviewee	Richard Young

...new corvettes the SAS Amatola. Various dignitaries have expressed their delight at the vessel's presence. Even the Chief of the Navy was quoted as saying that from a price perspective we are getting more than we bargained for.

Well, someone who disagrees, someone who in fact reckons that we have been royally ripped off over the Amatola and someone who has put his thoughts in writing in a letter to Business Day this morning is Richard Young. Yes, that Richard Young, the MD of a company called C² I² which is at the epicentre of the allegations against Jacob Zuma and the Shaikh brothers.

Put very simply, Young alleges that because of corruption, funds for the Amatola ran out long before she was properly fitted out. Richard Young on the line from Cape Town. Good afternoon to you and welcome, thank you for joining us.

Richard Young : Hi, good afternoon.

Reporter : First of all, having read your letter in Business Day this morning, I want to ask the question, what should the Amatola have that she is missing?

Richard Young : Okay, as my letter says that the combat system is seriously being reduced in scope from that specified in the Navy's own User Requirements Specification. I have documents in front of me which I've pretty much quoted in my letter and I will tell the people listening that I'm perfectly legally entitled to be in possession of these documents and that is pretty much as my letter says...

Reporter : Okay Richard, bear in mind that a lot of people won't have read the letter. In layman's terms, what is a combat system?

Richard Young : Okay, a combat system is actually a combat suite. It is a collection of systems which allows the corvette or the frigate to engage in naval combat.

Reporter : Now, when you say suite of systems, do you mean things like torpedoes and cannons and guns or do you mean the computers that drive them?

Richard Young : No, I'm talking about, you see, each thing which engages in a particular area of warfare would typically be a system. So if you want to engage an air target there's a radar, or two radars, the guns, missiles and the computers and together they would work as a system and then of course if you want to engage a surface target, there is another system for that and underwater targets for that, in defence systems.

Reporter : I understand. We have got a suite of systems and you are saying that the suite of systems onboard

the Amatola when she is finally fitted out, because that is what they start doing now, will be inadequate, will be beneath the original spec.

Richard Young : What I'm saying, yes certainly the original spec called for certain numbers of systems, missiles, radars, etc. and we are getting approximately half, maybe 60% of what was originally specified.

Reporter : Why is that?

Richard Young : It's because of the costs. In fact this has been put into the public domain by the Department of Defence officials to rig during the Public Protector's public enquiries and effectively I think as it was said by the Project Officer they had to squeeze a lot more out of the budget than was available. Eventually the negotiations and the bargaining actually led to a much higher price.

Reporter : It's an issue of an unrealistic price as apposed to an unrealistic budget?

Richard Young : No, I think it's...

Reporter : I mean, I can say I order a dozen surface-to-air missiles and I've got a hundred bucks to pay for it and you can say you can't even have one for that price?

Richard Young : No, if you read my letter, I've quoted the Department of Defence as saying that the same quotation, audited quotation, had been given to them the year before by the local industry. When Thales and ADS were effectively given exclusivity in the negotiations, in preferred supplier status, then the playing fields were tipped in favour of the suppliers rather than of the buyers and effectively, in fact, the first price they offered was R3,9 billion whereas the budget was R1,47 billion, so it was double when they started the negotiations.

Reporter : So, when the Chief of the Navy says we're getting more than we bargained for, your contention is that we are actually getting half of what we should have?

Richard Young : Absolutely. What I've said, we paid, at the end of the day, we paid R2.599 billion on what should have cost us about R1,8 to R1.9 billion which is about 50% more. At the same time we got about 60% of what we had originally budgeted for. So we paid 50% more and we got 50% less. At the end of the day that means we got about half the bang for the buck.

Reporter : And if somebody, we're not making any allegations here, if somebody got paid off in the course of that decision-making process, we can all see why you in particular are so concerned about the element of corruption.

Richard Young : Actually it shouldn't only be me as an individual citizen, it should be the citizenry who've paid for this Arms Deal who should be getting excited. Here we've got Captain Guy Jamieson, the captain of the ship who said we've got the most sophisticated modern warship in the world.....

Reporter : And we're going to leave it. Richard Young, MD of C² I² one of the chief whistleblowers in the allegations of corruptions in the massive Arms Deal case. He says the Amatola packs 50% of the punch that she should pack.

With acknowledgements to Chris Gibbons, Richard Young and Radio 702
