

## **Arms deal timeline**

Posted Thu, 15 Nov 2001

### **1996-1998:**

- \* Comprehensive review of South Africa's defence needs, involving, among others, Parliament, the public, and the military.

### **November 1998:**

- \* Cabinet announces preferred suppliers for the procurement of equipment for the SANDF.

### **September 1999:**

- \* Cabinet announces it will go ahead with purchase of aircraft, helicopters, corvettes and submarines at a cost of R29,9-billion over 12 years.
- \* Anonymous document, purportedly from concerned ANC MPs, raises questions about the proposed arms deal.
- \* PAC MP Patricia de Lille raises concerns in Parliament about the arms deal.

### **November 1999:**

- \* PAC MP Patricia de Lille hands over information to corruption buster Judge Willem Heath.

### **December 1999:**

- \* Defence Minister Mosiuoa Lekota signs arms deal.

### **January 2000:**

- \* Finance Minister Trevor Manuel signs loan totalling US4,8-billion to finance package.

### **September 2000:**

- \* Auditor-General releases a special report to Parliament.

### **November 2000:**

- \* Parliament's watchdog committee on public accounts (Scopa) calls for a multi-agency probe into the arms deal, also involving Judge Heath.

**January 2001:**

- \* Fall-out among political parties in Scopa after ANC claims it never singled Heath out for inclusion in the probe.
- \* ANC reshuffles members on committee, demotes independent ANC MP Andrew Feinstein.
- \* President Thabo Mbeki excludes Heath from arms deal inquiry, ostensibly because of Constitutional Court judgment saying a judge cannot head the special investigating unit.
- \* Three Cabinet minister launch public attack on Scopa and accuse it of incompetence.

**February 2001:**

- \* Auditor-General reports back to Scopa on investigation.
- \* Finance Minister Trevor Manuel rejects claims that the public was misled about the costs of the arms deal, which had risen to at least R43-billion.

**March 2001:**

- \* Sunday Times publishes article about ANC Chief Whip Tony Yengeni and his luxury 4X4 vehicle received from a company with an interest in the arms deal.

**April 2001:**

- \* National Director of Public Prosecutions Bulelani Ngcuka says at least 24 individuals under investigation for alleged corruption and fraud in the arms deal.

**May 2001:**

- \* De Lille questioned by the Scorpions in Cape Town about her claims of corruption.
- \* Three investigating agencies hold controversial public hearings into the deal.

**June 2001:**

- \* Mbeki accepts Judge Heath's resignation as judge.

**July 2001:**

- \* German investigators in Munich begin probe into European Aeronautic Defence and Space, one of the company's at the heart of the arms deal and alleged kickbacks.

**August 2001:**

\* ANC MP Andrew Feinstein quits citing the his party's handling of the arms deal as the reason for his resignation.

**October 2001:**

\* Yengeni arrested and released on R10 000 bail, along with suspended EADS head Michael Woerfel, on charges of corruption, fraud arising from the arms deal.

\* New row erupts over the probe following claims that Cabinet members rejected some aspects of the Auditor-General's draft report.

\* Scorpions raid various premises in France, Mauritius and Durban and confiscate documents relating to the deal, now standing at R66-billion, as rand continues to weaken.

**Nov 2001:**

- Auditor-General Shauket Fakie submits forensic investigation report into the arms deal to Parliament.

[http://iafrica.com/news/specialreport/armsdeal\\_focus/845947.htm](http://iafrica.com/news/specialreport/armsdeal_focus/845947.htm)