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ANC STATEMENT ON THE RETIREMENT OF GENERAL PIERRE STEIN

The retirement of Lieutenant General Pierre Steyn at the end of the year as announced in a statement by the Minister of Defence Kobie Coetsee on Tuesday 12 October raises a number of questions.

Lt. General Steyn together with Lt. General Alwyn Conradie was appointed last year by the State President FW De Klerk to head an investigation in support of and in conjunction with the Goldstone Commission into the activities of Military Intelligence's Directorate of Covert Collection. This followed the Goldstone raid on the offices of the Africa Risk Analysis Consultants, a front company of Military Intelligence in Pretoria.

As part of his terms of reference, Steyn was to:

i assume immediate command of all intelligence functions of the SADF including the Military Intelligence and the intelligence branches of the four services to secure immediate control of and carry out a comprehensive analysis of the documentation of all the SADF's intelligence activities so as to ascertain whether any activities have taken place which might be in contravention of the law or government policy. to recommend on the advisability of restructuring of these functions.

Although Steyn's appointment to head the investigation was clearly an attempt by the De Klerk government to sideline the Goldstone Commission, control its investigation, allow a military regrouping, to cover their tracks, his investigation into these activities and the subsequent retirement of a number of senior SADF officers including some generals earned him respect.

This move, however, allegedly made him extremely unpopular amongst his colleagues who viewed him as a traitor.

At the time of the announcement of the commission, De Klerk had made claims that there was no third force within the security forces working against the government. The ANC and the majority of our people still await the findings of this investigation.

It will be unfortunate if a public perception were to develop that Lt.General Steyn's retirement is linked to:

a discovery of the third force within the ranks of the defence force and military intelligence a the raid on an Umtata house on Friday 8 October by a unit of the SADF t the supply of arms and ammunition to white farmers by the SADF t the delay in the creation of a National Peace Keeping Force to quell the violence and to create a climate for free political activity t frustrations at the nonApromotion of navy and air force officers to the position of Chief of Defence Force. This also led to the retirement of General Jan van Loggerenberg in 1991.

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