



# **WHY AFRICAN ARMIES FAIL**

**A Personal Opinion that does  
not necessarily reflect the  
opinions and/or views of the  
SAG, Univ of Free State,  
and/or Osaka School of  
International Public Policy**



# **HOW WOULD I KNOW?**

- **Officer in SADF – 1975 to 1990**
- **FAA (Maj Gen)**
- **Kopassos (Brig Gen)**
- **SL (Maj Gen)**
- **UPDF (Maj Gen) – 4 Inf Div**
- **NA – 72 Mobile Force (Maj Gen) – 7 Inf Div**
- **Advisor to several African govts/armed forces**



# **FAILURE OF AFRICAN ARMIES**

**Several reasons: In brief...**

- 1. Political**
- 2. Intelligence**
- 3. Military**
- 4. Economic**
- 5. Foreign**
- 6. Threats**
- 7. Inability to align and synchronise  
combat power**



# **POLITICAL**

- **Attempt to balance ‘power’ and ‘fear’**
- **Lack NS/NSS**
- **Lack political will**
- **Ethnic/tribal preferences – private protection force**
- **Do too little, too late**
- **Deploy AF’s for Law Enforcement duties**
- **‘Regime change’ concerns**
- **Political blackmail**
- **Accept ‘free’ advice and training**
- **If intelligence clashes with narrative, discard**



# **INTELLIGENCE**

- **Lack of NSS – impacts on NDS**
- **Highly politicised**
- **Use intel to ensure self-preservation**
- **Poor leadership**
- **Overreliance on ‘partners’ for intel**
- **Lack of resources**
- **Lack HUMINT – no Intel Process**
- **Inability to conduct recce/pseudo ops**
- **Discarded if narrative not matched**
- **Poorly trained**
- **Failure to exploit all sources /resources**
- **Result is being ‘caught off guard’**



# **MILITARY**

- **Stagnation**
- **Politicised**
- **Corruption**
- **Irrelevant ORBATs**
- **Top heavy – lack understanding**
- **Problematic C<sup>4</sup>ISR**
- **Outdated, unworkable doctrines/TTPs result in poor standards**
- **Poor leadership/Discipline/Training**
- **Poorly-equipped**
- **Poor welfare**
- **Lack of trust from LP and human rights violations**
- **Not mission trained/qualified**
- **Strategic, Operational, and tactical deficit**



# **ECONOMIC**

- **Bloated armies result in excessive costs**
- **‘Incentives’ to purchase irrelevant equipment**
- **Procurement of incorrect equipment**
- **‘Free’ means expensive**
- **Collusion with AGFS – operational ability impacted**
- **Reliant on foreign suppliers - costs**



# FOREIGN

- **Foreign suppt often to both sides**
- **One-sided 'partnerships'**
- **Poor 'free' advice**
- **Trained to fail**
- **Irrelevant equipt 'dumped'**
- **Arrogance of foreign trainers**



# **THREATS**

- **Lack Int and NSS**
- **Result is being caught off balance**
- **Don't understand the threat**
- **Result is poor campaign strategies/op designs**
- **Don't understand cause of threats**
  - **Domestic**
  - **Foreign**
- **Media coverage compromises operations**
- **Incorrectly structured to counter threats**
- **Inadequate approaches result in failure**



# **ALIGN/SYNCHRONISE COMBAT POWER**

**Inability to align and synchronise elements  
of combat power:**

- **Intelligence**
- **Manoeuvre**
- **Firepower**
- **Logistical support**
- **Protection**
- **Leadership**
- **Espirit de Corps**

**Troops can only do what they are trained to  
do—no bad troops, only bad leaders**



**QUESTIONS?**

