

# The Effectiveness of Defense leadership of the Republic of South Africa

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## Abstract

This paper examines the effect of defence leadership of Republic South Africa. South Africa officially called the republic South Africa (RSA). Is the southernmost country in Africa.it is bounded to the south by 2.798 kilometers (1.739 mi) of coastline off southern Africa stretching along the south Atlantic and Indian Ocean to the north by the neighboring countries of Namibia, Botswana and Zimbabwe and to the country on the east and North-East by Mozambique and Swaziland and it surrounds the enclave country of Lesotho., South Africa is the largest country in southern Africa and the 24<sup>th</sup> largest country in the world by land area and, with over 58 million people, is also the world's 24<sup>th</sup> most populous nation. It is the southernmost country on the mainland of the old world or the Eastern Hemisphere. About 80 percent of South Africans are of Bantu Ancestry, divided among a variety of ethnic groups speaking different African Languages, nine of which have official status. The remaining population consist of Africa largest communities of European, Asian (Indian) and Multiracial colored ancestry. This paper is classified in to five, One Defence system of South Africa, Two Defence Leadership in South Africa, Three Raising Era for defence policy of South Africa, Four Factors to influence the defence policy of South Africa and Five Recommendation and Conclusion.

**Keywords:** *Defence System of South Africa, Defence Policy, and The factors that Influence the Defence Policy of South Africa.*

## INTRODUCTION

Defence Leadership and South-Africa. South Africa has embraced the tenet of democratic ideal with the dismantling of apartheid regime in the early 1990s. Accepting democracy as a form of Government also implied the embracement of military professionalism and international acceptable norms of behavior for the South-African Military. As part of a highly militarized state before 1994, the military was due to be an integral part of the transformation of the public sector in South-Africa. The most visible and tangible part of the transformation of the military in SA has been the integration of the previous belligerent force in to a single armed force, the South-African National Defence Force (SANDF). These force had to be trained to acceptable military standards and the underlying ethos of democratic norms. Leadership Development is an integral part of military officers training and development and is not a stagnant concept. It therefor stand to reason that any country defence force will benefit from continuously determining whether it leadership development practices are still relevant, and adapting them to fit the demands on modern military leaders. With particular reference to South-Africa, the leadership of apartheid regime appreciated the value of power in international arena, hence huge investment was made in that sector and that sustained the economics of South-Africa to hold onto power throughout the repressive regime. On the contrary, the collapse of apartheid regime in 1989

heralded democratic norm in SA in 1994 under the leadership of Nelson Mandela which prompted the re-examination of the role of the military in the context of national priorities. The security environment in which the South-Africa Defence Force operated was turned virtually upside down. As against military threat that SA forced, instead HIV/AIDS, population growth, food and water supply, migration, adequate electrical power, transportation and pollution control were the common security concern that needed to be addressed.

## **BACKGROUND OF DEFENCE LEADERSHIP IN SOUTH AFRICA**

In April 1994, seven forces were combined into one united South African National Defence Force (SANDF) according to the interim Constitution of 1993. Obviously, the merger has caused some imbalances in the staffing of the new SANDF, especially among soldiers of the former SA army. At the same time that the ongoing physical integration has been taking place, the organizational transformation of the SANDF is debated and planned based on the white paper on Defence and spearheaded by the Defence Review process, which will pay specific attention to the threat to South-Africa and the role of the military in the country's new democratic society. Obviously, the size and shape of the new SANDF Permanent Force which will direct the imperatives for rationalization, will be derived from the force design and force structure resulting from this process. It will have to take into account the constraints of the funds allocated to the Department of Defence and the Government Socio-economic policy. Any imbalances in human resource can therefore only be addressed once the SANDF has established the required future force size and shape which turn i

The contemporary incremental reduction of funds allocated to defence has rendered the planning of the Joint Military Co-Ordination Committee (JMCC) strategic planning process. That has envisaged a SANDF strength of 90,000 unaffordable. Taking the actual losses sustained after April 1994 into consideration, it is clear that this total could largely have been achieved by natural attrition. However, as the real value of funds allocated to Defence have been reduced, it is inevitable that the affordable human resource strength must similarly be reduced. A dramatic reduction of the support capabilities will have to be affected to ensure that any further eroding of the SANDF's operational capability does not make its military potential ineffective. Even though the extent of the anticipated rationalization is therefore not known, it is expected that it cannot be achieved by a belt-tightening exercise, as has been the case during previous cost-cutting exercises in the former SANDF. New and innovative ideas will be required to support an already critical reduced force design, and it is expected that new skills and competencies will be required to staff such an organization.

Preparation of demobilization and/or rationalization process is therefore made and, in certain respects, some of these actions are already underway. These initiatives take place according to the principles of operational readiness, fair labour practice, transparency, productivities and the maintenance of expertise, with all the members and employees from all constituent forces being equally eligible and the main thrust being the retention of people with appropriate high levels of performance and/or potential according to the new demand of the SANDF. Preparation has therefore been made to formalize the administrative and support programmes to implement such rationalization actions, once the targets are clearly defined.

## **DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS**

**LEADERSHIP:** It is about influencing, motivating and enabling others to contribute towards the effectiveness and success of the institution. Leaders use various forms of influence, from subtle

persuasion to direct application of power, to ensure that followers are motivated to achieve institutional goals.

**Defence:** In military term, Defence is the “act of resisting attack in order to protect an individual, property and a group of people which are vulnerable to the attack” (Muktar, 1996:2), in technical term, Defence is an organization of a country’s military component, production and advancement of weaponry and pursuit of a Nation Foreign Policy in the international arena.

**National Defence Policy:** is the policy aimed at coordinating all necessary human and material resources to resist an attack from a hostile neighbor or enemy” (Fage, 1999:3). This however involves the method of acquiring or developing weapon system, training and deployment of personnel with the aim of actualizing defence objectives. Which is the preservation of territorial integrity, sovereignty and strategic interests. Fwa (2011) delineated the concept of defence both in strategic terms and in the context of war. He opined that defence in strategic terms as the sum total of the deployment of a nation’s resources to authenticate its territorial and sovereign independence, while as a concept of war, it denotes the application of military means toward of direct attacks on a Nation by an invading force. At the heart of Defence Policy is the projection of the core value of Nations States. Fwa therefore took a cue from little and defined Defence Policy thus:

Defence Policy refers to a variety of continuous activities, which state undertakes to ensure its National Security. Defence Policy can be assuredly the means of attaining and maintaining security. The concept of Defence Policy relates to the process of use of the whole coercive apparatus of the disposal at the state for preventing and resisting of all forms of attack (Fwa. 2011:101-102). Writing on the same concepts, vogt (1986) and in Imobighe (1987) opined that defence is oriented towards protection from violation or subverting the territorial borders, lands, sea air as well as to ensure adequate protection to national economic assets, military installation symbolic locations. the civilian population and cities.

It is also coherent and coordinated strategy of dealing with National Security concerns, it reflects a guideline of action which a country would undertake to promote her national interest protect her security and achieve her National Policy Objectives. Such guideline will inevitably include the identification and evaluation of threats, the necessity and justification for the use of force to employ and the availability of manpower and equipment within a country’s financial resource (Wushishi, 1987).

The question that readily comes to mind is why any Nation embark on the formulation of Defence Policy must.

### **RAISING D’ETRE FOR DEFENCE POLICY**

Firstly the debilitating and destructive consequences of the Second World War and urge to save succeeding generation of mankind from a re-enactment of these large scale calamity necessitated the need to fashion a Defence Policy by the Nation States. The second world war it was the single biggest disaster that has ever befallen mankind in times of human and material casualties. As a matter of fact the emergency of atomic and the thermonuclear as possible instruments of warfare created added impetus and has completely revolutionised the entire field of strategic studies.

Secondly, the emergency of the cold war after the second world war which resulted in the intense and sustained ideological conflict between the western spearheaded by the defunct USSR) and the western blocks under the of the USA) was another factor. The attendant arms build-up and the escalating possibility of man being a victim of thermonuclear war naturally necessitated the need to formulate a National Defence Policy by Nation States as an antidote to nuclear destruction.

Thirdly, the growing awareness that security transcends its purely militaristic and strategic connotations added to the renewed interest in Defence and security related matters.

In determining the kind of defence leadership of Republic of South Africa, it is important to stress that any nation is a product of its historical past, hence the defence policy and national security are embedded in the history, economy, and societal structure of RSA. To sustain the repressive apartheid policy of RSA, the quality of leadership and its perception of threats cannot but be very crucial in determining what pattern and direction the defence policy of SA would be. Hence, the defence leadership of RSA during apartheid regime was based on accumulation of power-military, economic, technological in other to sustain the apartheid regime.

### **FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE DEFENCE POLICY OF SOUTH AFRICA**

During apartheid era, maintaining a viable domestic defence industry to equip its forces, which include land, sea, and air system. Was a matter of governmentally declared National Interest? Regional incursions (specifically in Zambia and Southern Angola and Botswana), the occupation of Northam Namibia and southern Angola and the use of military to crush resistance to the apartheid regime at home created a significant demand for arms.

However, before the democratic election in 1994 (which brought in Nelson Mandela), South Africa was hindered from securing the arms to support its objectives from foreign military hardware suppliers due to the voluntary and later mandatory sanctions imposed by the United Nations Security Council prohibiting the trade in arms. Since necessity is the mother of invention, without unrestricted accessed to the international arms market, SA has no choice than to develop its own. Hence the South African Government embarked upon a programmes of development that according to Helmied-Heitman of Jane's Defence Weekly, took the country from an insignificant defence industry to one that produced nuclear weapons within fifteen years. The embargo of arms sales to SA by the UN in 1963 massacre of Pan Africanist Congress (PAC)-led protesters by South African Government forces in Sharpeville led to the adoption of the defence industry in other to systemize domestic arms manufacturing by SA while the real advances in weapon development came after the invasion of Angola in the Mid 1970s, a fledging defence industry began to emerge in SA in the 1960s with the development of some missiles systems. In addition the historical post of SA is the question of the Economy, the most basic determinant of a nation's defence policy and security. A dynamic and viral defence policy must necessarily have its foundation in a robust and solid economic. Even though the international community was increasingly vocal about its opposition to apartheid policies and rule, the good value of South Africa's defence commodities kept the exports moving. While consumer's boycotts and divestment campaigns were ongoing around the globe, military hardware continued to be sold to foreign countries looking for a bargains. South Africa customers includes Haiti, , Nigeria, Somalia, Srilanka, Sudan and Rwanda, which was a key client until just before the genocide campaign of 1994 (Nathan, et al, 1997). By 1994, weapons sales were South Africa's second largest export (1.03 billion rand) and the means for employing 54,000 workers (Tease & Yorke. 1998).

### **THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK**

Theory has to do with proposition used as principles to explain a phenomenon. Theories are tools essentially meant for understanding phenomena. They act as guides to any research work and in the social sciences: they are for recommendations and actions (Lord-Mallam, 2012:8). David Eastan (1967:97) posited that research untutored by theory may prove trivial and theory unsupported by data is futile while Kari Deutsch (1991: 26-56) argues that the plethora on theories on social issues is conditioned by the scholars approach to the understanding of the theme. The essence of the theory

adopted in these paper is to provide an illuminating thrust to a myriad of intellectual postulations on power and Defence Policy. Theories also often aim of generating g new insight into or creating better opportunities for appreciating pre-existing knowledge schemes.

In analyzing the extent to which defence leadership in RSA is effective, the power or realist theory is adopted. This theory is associated with scholars such as Sun Tzu of China, Thucydides, Hans Morgenthau, Edward H. Carr, Arnold Wolfers and George Kannan. The proponents of theory saw politics as “struggle for power”. Power is loosely defined as a psychological relationship in which one actor is able to control the behavior of another actor. A second central concept for the realist is **Interest**. A rational political actor is one who acts to promote his/her interest. The realist close the definitional gap between interest and power by practically equating these two concepts, Thus, to act rationally (that is, to act in one’s interest) is to seek power (that is to have the ability and the willingness to control others).

For the realists, acting in pursuit of personal, group and National Interest is being eminently political. It is obeying the forces that are inherent in human nature. To seek for power in other to promote one’s interest is to follow the basic dictates of the laws of nature. For the realist therefore, a good political person is a rational political person- a person, who understands and seeks power but who also moderates the quest for power because he/she realizes that others also understand and seek power (Theodore C. and J.H. Wolfe 1990:6)

In his own part, the Chinese strategist Tun Tzu theorized that rulers must use power to advance their interests and protect their survival arguing that war had become a systematic instrument of power for the first time (Sun Tzu. 1963) while Thucydides in the account of the Peloponnesian war stated that the strong do what they have the power to do and the weak accept what they have to accept (Thucydides, 1992:402). Hans Morgenthau argues that international politics is governed by objective, universal laws based on National Interest defined in terms of power. Hence all nations had to base their actions on prudence and practicality (Hans Morgenthau, 1967:5).

In applying the realist/power theories to these study, it is the belief of this work that the defence leadership in RSA hinged the survival of apartheid regime on **accumulation of power increase of power** and **demonstration of power** and such power was manifested in military, economic and technology to sustain the system and be relevant in international system while the huge investment in defence policy after independence in 1994 was to make SA a reference point and active player in the international arena and a dominant factor in Africa continent. This is practical in its bid to become a permanent member of the Security Council of the UN whenever the membership is approved for enlargement.

However, the realist theory has its shortcoming of being a trouble shooter at the slightest provocation. This has manifested in the recent xenophobic attack on fellow Africans (including Nigerians) residing in South Africa thereby making the country a laughing stock in the continent because of its cantankerous and belligerent posture.

## **NEXUS OF DEFENCE LEADERSHIP IN SOUTH AFRICA AND ITS EFFECTIVENESS**

Ideally, a country’s defence policy should be a reflection of national priorities and the value system that underpins them. During the apartheid era, the defence force and supporting defence industry in South Africa were configured in such a way as to reinforce defence policies based upon the states

requirements as they were then identified. During the apartheid Era, maintaining a viable domestic defence industry to equip its forces, which included land, sea, and air systems was a matter of governmentally declared national interest. Without unrestricted access to the national arms market. South Africa had no choice than to develop its own weaponry architecture. Consequently, the South African Government embarked upon a programme of development that took the country from an insignificant defence industry to one that produced nuclear weapons within fifteen years.

## DURING APARTHEID REGIME

During the apartheid Era, the embargo placed on South African government necessitated the need to carry out a major reorganization of the Government Institutions making up its arms industry management structure for the purpose of enhancing efficiency. The Government had only a few options:

- i) It could develop domestic industry to the point that it would eventually be self-sufficient
- ii) It could exploit loopholes in the embargo regulations: or
- iii) It could covertly acquire weapons from international sources

Retrospectively, we could see that South African Government pursued all the above three options. Hardware design and produced during this time included helicopters, frigates, surface-to-air missiles, long range ballistic missiles, and nuclear weapons. Not only that, South Africa also clandestinely embarked upon a space programme and designed reconnaissance and research satellites for it. Three satellites were launched before it was cancelled (Heitman 2007).

## THE ZULU MILITARY SYSTEM

Once in power *Shaka* began reorganizing the forces of its people in accordance with ideas he had developed as a warrior in Dingiswayo's army.

The Assegai. He had seen that the traditional type of spear, a long-handled assegai thrown from a distance, was no good for the regulated fighting in close formation he had in mind. A group of warriors who held unto their assegais instead of hurling them, and who moved right up to the enemy behind the shelter of a barrier of shields would have its opponents at its mercy and would be able to accomplish complete victory. Having proved the advantages of the new tactics. Shaka armed his warriors with short-handled stabbing spears and trained them to move up to their opponent in close formation with their body-length cowhide shields formation on almost impenetrable barrier to anything thrown at them.

The formation most generally used was crescent-shaped. A number of regiments extending several ranks deep formed a dense body known as the chest (Isifuba), while on each side a regiment moved forward forming the horns. As the horns curved inward around the enemy, the main body would advance killing all those who could not break through the encompassing lines.

Discipline. By means of much drilling and discipline. Shaka built up his forces. Which soon became the terror of the land. Shaka prohibited the wearing of sandals, toughened his warriors feet by making them run barefoot over rough thorny ground and in so doing secured their greater mobility. His war cry was 'Victory or death!' and he kept his *impi* on continuous military campaigns until he thought they had earned the right to wear the headring (Isicoco) of manhood. Then they were formally dissolved and allowed to marry.

The male Amabutho. The young men were taken away to be enrolled alongside others from all sections of the kingdom in an appropriate Amabutho, or age-regiment. This produced a sense of common identity amongst them. Each of these Amabutho had his own name and was lodged at one of the royal households,

which becomes military communities as well as retaining their traditional functions. Each military settlement had a herd of royal cattle assigned to it. From which the young men were supplied with meat. The hides of the cattle were used to provide the shields of the warriors and an attempt was made to select cattle with distinctive skin coloring for each Amabutho.

The female Amabutho. Numbers of the young women of the kingdom were assembled at the military settlement. Officially, they were wards of the king. They were organized in female equivalents of the male Amabutho and took part in ceremonial dancing and displays. When one of the male Amabutho was giving permission to marry, a female Amabutho would be broken up and the women given out as brides to the warriors. Until such time, however, sexual intercourse between members of the male and female age regiments was forbidding. Transgressions were punished by death.

## POST-APARTHEID ERA

However, in the post-apartheid regime, there was a paradigm shift in the defence policy of SA with the emergence of Nelson Mandela as a democratically elected President. Mandela had laid out the underlying principles that will inform the policymaking of the ANC government the maintenance of pre-democracy armed force and arms industry production levels simply was not an option entertained by the newly elected government.

The new leadership saw the need to demilitarize SA for the future of the country. Its force would be used only in self defence and for peace making and peace keeping with the savings from this shift yielding financial benefits that would be diverted to social development. Another important defence leadership strategic decision taken in the post-apartheid Era was the integration of the former liberation force- ***umkhonto we Sizwe (MK)*** (Spear of the Nation-the Armed military wing of the ANC before 1994 responsible for the armed struggle against apartheid government) of the ANC and the Azanian People's Liberation Army (APLA) of the Pan African Congress into one armed force and christened South African National Defence Force (SANDF). Though a daunting task, but it yielded a lot of benefits. The new military organisation was truly representative of the people of SA by bringing political, ethnic and tribal groups together. Hence the military forces adjusted to the new political realities as well as the defence-related industries.

The South African Defence Industry has had to adapt to the changed priorities of the new regime through focusing on development of specialized equipment for export such as electronics, communication, sensors and a few finished weapons systems. The emphasis is no longer on possessing the capacity to design, develop, and manufacture a broad array of weapon systems. However,

There is a contradictory policy espoused in the 1996 Defence White Paper, which called for "the containment of military spending" but also "the need for a balanced, modern and technologically advanced defense force" (The White Paper on the South African Defence Related Industries, Chapter 2, Section 7 and 11.7).

## CHALLENGES FACING SOUTH AFRICAN DEFENCE POLICY

There are strong indications that the South African military culture at present is negatively affected by political and other societal influences. The ANC as a ruling party does not necessarily draw a very clear line of demarcation between the nations of a 'military for a political party (ANC)' and a 'military for the country'. The desire to develop the SANDF as a military for the nation and the country as a whole may be questioned. In addition, as ***Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK)*** and its armed wing were never disbanded

after 1994, it is still a military in the ANC barracks. MK cadres are still often seen in the media and at official ANC gatherings.

Another challenge facing South African defence policy is that she has been hindered in her goal of assuming an obvious position of leadership on security matters, despite the comparative sophistication of its weaponry and the size and professionalism of its armed forces. Even though she joined South African Development Community (SADC) two years after its inception on August 17, 1992 and attained the chairmanship shortly in 1996, nevertheless, her interaction with the rest of the membership-Angola, Botswana, the DRC, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe-has been tenuous at times. This could be attributable to the sensitive to the excesses of the apartheid past which has been a key determinant in the post-apartheid government's interactions regionally, and this has been particularly evident in regional peacemaking operations.

There is also the problem of demilitarization of the entire system in South Africa, in 1994, the ANC government inherited a military force that well trained. Well-equipped, highly experienced in counterinsurgency operations and conventional warfare, and knowledgeable in matters of different African Languages, Cultures, Climates, military structures, doctrines and operational procedures. But it has been a dilemma how it could be used as an instrument to advance the policies of the new government. It has been an albatross as it sought to recast this highly symbolic vestige of the apartheid Era into an effective Army of National Unity (Army Trues dell, 2009:107-125).

Furthermore, ANC's outright refusal to work with the US Africa Command in Africa on matters where a clear confluence of South African and US interests is obvious.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The defence sector in South Africa has been radically reformed since democratization in 1994, the transformation of the military relied heavily racial representation as the key indicator of defence sector reform. Giving the political changes in South Africa, the history of the armed forces, and the changes in the global and African strategic realities at the time, such an emphasis was expected and, indeed necessary. However, the transformation process also impacted on the effectiveness of the armed forces. This situation was exacerbated by a substantial cut in the defence budget and a weapons procurement process that was not aligned with the strategic needs of the country and riddled by corruption. The result was a growing misalignment between missions and capabilities within the armed forces and the SANDF, as an institution, seen to be in a serious state of decline. The policy frameworks made provision for education to bring about transformation and addressed the issue of military effectiveness. However, that was easier said than done.

The debate on the role of education in the transformation and effectiveness of the armed forces was increasingly bureaucratized and focused on the role of the National Defence and the National War Colleges in Pretoria. The programmes at both institutions were critical in shaping the thinking of the future defence leadership as well as shaping the strategic narratives of the personnel in the SANF and the strategic realities of the country.

In conclusion, for the new government, integrating itself within international institutions and assuming an important role was a measure of its leadership. Since 1994, SA has made frantic effort to attain the leadership roles in international organization as a sign of its separation from the apartheid Era and has been signatory to a number of arms control and non-proliferation treaties and agreements.

In December 1999, the government of South Africa embarked upon the largest defence procurement programme that it had ever undertaken by shopping for five categories of big-ticket item for its defence

force composed almost entirely of material designed to fight conventional war rather than support peacekeeping operations. The arms deal was to bolster domestic defence companies by forcing prime contractors to use qualifying South African Defence for defence leadership to be effective in SA, the following recommendations might be appropriate:

- i) South Africa's forces should serve as ambassadors for the nation through participation in peace support missions in order to demonstrate to the international community of its commitment to humanitarian principles and conflict resolution. In this regard, sponsorship of joint military training with fellow SADC members would help to establish the country's diplomatic credentials and serve as a confidence building measure within the organization.
- ii) The service of the clearly offensive equipment that South Africa purchased through the strategic Defence package should be offered to SADC to serve as a command asset for members.
- iii) The government must adjust its policies with regard to the defence industry. Specifically, South African Government should discontinue the policy of bailing out Denel (the state owned armaments company) as it has perpetually failed to adjust to the realities of today's defence market. The government should also develop a strategy or plan that maps out the future of South Africa's defence industry.

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