

South African Journal *of Military Science*

Editorial

From a defence and security point of view, the first half of 2024 continued to be overshadowed by the continuing conflicts in Europe, Africa, and the Middle East – the most recent being the ongoing Israeli– Hamas War that broke out in early October 2023. In Southern Africa, the premature withdrawal of the Southern African Development Community Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM), which is set to be completed by mid-July, comes amidst several recent setbacks suffered against Ahlu al-Sunnah wal-Jamaah insurgents. Moreover, it can be argued that the untimely withdrawal of SAMIM from northern Mozambique – which the insurgents’ propaganda claims to be a victory – indeed reflects a serious political, diplomatic, and military failure in the region. The current withdrawal of SAMIM forces from Mozambique alarmingly coincides with the recent deployment of the Southern African Development Community Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (SAMIDRC) that started in mid-December 2023. The geo-strategic shift of the regional organisation from Mozambique to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) coincides with the withdrawal of the United Nations peacekeeping mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), which, despite its two-decade-long deployment, has failed to achieve any notable gains in terms of creating enduring peace and stability in the country. While the MONUSCO withdrawal is set to occur in stages until the end of 2024, the SAMIDRC contingent deployed in its wake already faces considerable challenges relating to its mandate, force structure, equipment, and logistical provisions. Additionally, the SAMIDRC force suffered numerous casualties and operational setbacks throughout the preceding months, as the M23 rebels strengthen their grip on the eastern DRC.

These conflicts continue to have vast geopolitical implications, not only making the immediate regions unstable and volatile, but also having no clear resolutions in sight. While these conflicts will continue to stimulate debate in academic and military circles, they also provide a unique opportunity within defence and security spheres to explore topics, such as doctrinal developments, force structure and design, military operations, defence policy, and alliances.

In this issue of *Scientia Militaria*, Volume 52, Issue 1, 2024, the articles consider both historic and contemporary issues associated with war and conflict, as well as defence- and security-related matters. As always, it is trusted that these articles will provide key insights, and that they will act as a source of influence for individuals involved in the broader ambit of military planning, operations, management, and higher education.

In the article by Kyle Bester and Danille Arendse, from University of South Africa and Stellenbosch University respectively, it is argued that cyberspace has been recognised as a new domain of warfare. Consequently, the authors contend that awareness of cyber threats is essential for military personnel. The article provides insight into potential cyber threats and cyberattacks. Additionally, enhancing cybersecurity awareness among military personnel aids in detecting cyber threats in the workplace, and helps military personnel to understand their own vulnerabilities in cyberspace. The article shows that, in South Africa, cybersecurity is a significant concern, and the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) has emphasised the need to improve its cybersecurity capabilities. As part of a broader study, the Cybersecurity Orientation Questionnaire was thus created by Bester and Arendse for South African military personnel with the primary goal of assessing their cybersecurity awareness. The article thus focuses on the initial validation of the Questionnaire using a sample from the South African military. The study employed a quantitative design, and analysed the reliability and factor structure of the Questionnaire using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. The initial validation of the Questionnaire yielded promising results for assessing cybersecurity awareness among the South African military sample. The article underscores the importance of developing instruments specifically for the South African military context.

In his article, Carl Punt, from Stellenbosch University, maintains that books on the South African Border War (1966–1989) have flooded the popular market over the last two decades. Historians, journalists, and particularly ex-soldiers – often amateur writers – have tapped into this market. The genres of books include, but are not limited to, personal accounts, autobiographies, regimental histories, journalist accounts, and academic books. The late Colonel Jan Breytenbach (1932–2024) was one of the first South African Defence Force (SADF) officers to write about the Border War. He published seven books and paved the way for many writers to follow his example. Most of his books focus on the history of the infamous 32 Battalion. Against this background, Punt’s article, which was written before the passing of Breytenbach, reflects an analysis of Breytenbach’s writing on the Border War using a conceptual framework put forward by military historians.

In their article, Kevin Gopaul, Elma van der Lingen, and Rudolph Oosthuizen, from the University of Pretoria, contend that the South African Defence Industry has undergone several significant changes during the past six decades, with its current state being deemed unfavourable for continued survivability. To develop a robust understanding of the industry, the authors reviewed the relevant scientific literature and government policies to chart the trends in the defence industry throughout the preceding decades. The South African political ideologies in the sixties and seventies gave rise to a need for self-sufficiency in defence. By the late eighties, increased military spending resulted in a powerful and capable defence industry, but the end of apartheid and regional conflicts

saw an expected sharp drop in the defence budget. The Strategic Defence Package offered some respite in terms of exports, but the exports have declined in the recent past. The defence budget has remained at a steady low value for two decades, with no real possibility of an increase. The authors argue that, to maintain relevance and ensure organisational resilience, the remnants of the South African Defence Industry should use the Defence Industry Strategy as a baseline to develop robust local relationships to drive innovation and foster economic growth, while also strengthening international market share by enhancing unique South African technologies.

In their article, Sky Mkuti, Jo-Ansie van Wyk, and Oluwaseun Tella, from the University of South Africa and the University of Johannesburg respectively, argue that the world witnessed a drastic change in the global security landscape after the infamous 9/11 attacks on the United States of America, which influenced the dynamics of counterterrorism globally. In due course, the United States expanded its global alliances, including its financial assistance and scope for cooperation in East Africa as well. Part of this fundamental transformation was the growing reliance by the United States on African partners, such as Kenya. Despite visible power disparities between the asymmetric relations between the United States and Kenya, the two states formed an unmatched counterterrorism partnership in East Africa – even with the growing criticism of the United States militarisation in some parts of Africa, such as in the Sahel region, which remains prone to coups despite enduring counterterrorism interventions. The article shows that, despite the United States–Kenyan asymmetric relations, a stable and multidimensional implementation of counterterrorism efforts in East Africa was achieved. The dynamics of these asymmetric relations on counterterrorism demystify the perception that asymmetric relations between powerful and weak states are inherently unstable. Employing secondary data, the authors deconstructed such rhetoric by conceptualising asymmetry whilst identifying five main conceptualisations of asymmetry theory that characterise the asymmetric relations between the United States and Kenya. Thereafter, by taking stock of the multidimensional efforts by the United States and Kenya, the authors argue that triangular asymmetries are the significant force multipliers of stability and normalcy in asymmetric relations.

In her article, Janet Szabo, from the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), maintains that, because of its air superiority during the counterinsurgency conflict against the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO), the South African Air Force (SAAF) had neglected to build up modern air and counter-air defences. When Soviet air defence systems were therefore deployed in Angola in the 1980s, both the SADF and SAAF were forced to reconsider their tactics and responses to the war. The Soviet systems included early warning networks, surface-to-air missiles, and anti-aircraft guns to cover troops advancing in the field, as well as fighter aircraft. While this build-up was observed in neighbouring Southern African countries and had the appearance of a purely defensive stance, given Soviet air defence doctrine, South Africa viewed this as the first steps to offensive actions in Angola and possibly Namibia (then South West Africa) and the start of a dangerous escalation in the military situation. In response, Szabo contends that the South African Defence Force adopted a strong defensive stance and improved its own air defence capabilities to ensure that it was not outclassed, while the SAAF also

introduced new tactics. These included the introduction of toss-bombing, making greater use of precision-guided missiles and bombs, and investing more in research in terms of missiles and new technology for their aircraft.

In the final article, Suné Kleynhans from North-West University, shows that, while the South African involvement in the Second World War produced several high treason cases, the trials of those historical figures who worked “behind the scenes” during the war are occasionally neglected within the broader academic literature. An example of such is the cases of high treason of four Afrikaner men accused of broadcasting propaganda in Afrikaans from Radio Zeesen in Germany to South Africa, with the aim of jeopardising the South African war effort. This propaganda was carried out strategically within the context of the existing Afrikaner resistance against participation in the war. The four accused were Sidney Erich Holm, Jan Adriaan Strauss, Johannes Jacobus Snoek, and Michael Johannes Pienaar. Kleynhans’s article focuses on the trials of the four accused men as a series of lesser-known cases in South African legal history, and provides a historical narrative of these high treason cases. After providing the necessary contextualisation, the positions of the prosecution and defence as well as the verdicts of the trials are outlined. In doing so, this article by Kleynhans makes a historiographic contribution to an overlooked aspect of South African history.

A selection of book reviews by David Jacobs, Evert Jordaan, Unarine Emmanuel Maduwa, and Graeme Plint conclude this issue of *Scientia Militaria*.

The Editors

Evert Kleynhans  & *Anri Delport* 