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The effectiveness of a States military forces or capabilities depends on their size, composition, equipment, logistical reach and availability for new applications. Related to the size, equipment and reach of a States military forces is its military potential, that is its ability to increase these forces in a crisis or in war, and its willingness to employ these forces in disputes.

Three broad categories determine 21 states military potential: economic and technological capacity; administrative skill; and the political foundations of military power. Foreign inputs are, of course, also an important factor.

Military potential is therefore a comprehensive concept, and not as limited as the concept of war potential, which primarily concerns economic resources available for mobilization in time of war.

Threat perception and the relative military potential of hostile neighbours and other adversaries, are factors that will obviously also determine the state of a nation's military preparedness.

How the South African government perceives any threat to its sovereignty can be seen in the 1986 White Paper on Defence and Armaments Supply which divides the source of hostility into external and internal situations. Externally, the threat is seen to be directed and co-ordinated by the Soviet Union as chief planner and initiator in such a way as to further Soviet interests in Southern Africa.

The Soviet supply of sophisticated arms such as MiG-23 aircraft, MI-ZS attack helicopters, T-62 tanks, radar systems and surface-to-air missiles, especially to Angola, is perceived to ensure the dependence of the recipient countries on the Soviet Union and creates a "protective" umbrella which allows SWAPO and the ANC more freedom of movement.

Direct Soviet troop involvement in Angola (although still on a very limited scale) and the 40 000-Odd troops from surrogate countries, are also perceived by South Africa as a disturbing development, especially in view of the MPLA conventional offensive against UNITA.

As far as the African states themselves are concerned, increased activities against SA still remains a common objective, but due to internal conflict, deteriorating economic conditions and leadership conflicts in these countries. the threat emanating from them only gains substance if accompanied by the large-scale involvement of the Soviet Union and its satellites.

Internally, the current unrest situation in SA. and especially the role of the ANC. the SAC? and the UDF in promoting unrest, revolution and terrorism, is identified as the main threat.

Considering the South African threat perception as well as developments such as a global war into which Southern Africa could be drawn, there are some possibilities for a conventional threat against SA.

For instance, were SA convulsed by civil war, it could lead to a combined Soviet-proxy conventional offensive against the country, thus dividing SAs defence between internal and external protection. The ANC revolutionary model developed during the Sixties, was seen to eventually culminate in conventional war. From a strategic point of view, the fact that the

sophisticated SA economy would provide a vulnerable target; the fact that white manpower sources could become over-stretched as the ANC campaign develops; and the vast size of the country which is seen to favour ANC military activity, was stressed. At this stage the transition from guerrilla warfare to eventual mobile warfare" was also envisaged.

This model, culminating in conventional warfare, was elaborated on in the early Eighties. It would comprise a stage of guerrilla warfare, of equilibrium, and of a general offensive". During the first stage, "hit-and-run" tactics and armed propaganda would play an important role, while a reduction of enemy personnel and material, inter alia by means of a sabotage campaign, would complement armed propaganda".

During the equilibrium stage, guerrilla warfare evolves into mobile warfare where bigger guerrilla units, armed with advanced weapons are formed, while Wightning attacks against the enemy are to be launched. The last stage, that of the general offensive, is supposed to see the transition of mobile warfare into positional warfare. At this stage it is envisaged that SA will be internationally isolated; the economy exhausted; and the security forces demoralised. "Liberated zones" will then be established in the rural areas and the cities will be encircled.

Although a warning is issued that the forces of reaction" may at this point come to the SA government's assistance and that ANC gains will have to be defended", external military intervention on behalf of the ANC is not mentioned. However, during the Rivonia trial of 1963/ 1964, it became clear that the ANC envisaged direct external military assistance at this stage. In the Eighties, especially, it has been stressed that the ANC military campaign should not be waged by "professional" guerrilla units. but that the main force

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should be the upolitical army" of the masses supported by organized Umi/Ionto We Sizwt units which would handle "hat l, military targets. A llprotractedll campaign would provide time to "arm" the masses politically and militarily. s

Simultaneously, the mole of workers and trade unions in ubringing the economy to a halt", is embhasized, as well as the need for the creation of white llanti-apartheidll movements. These movements should vigorously oppose compulsory military service, and protest against the war in Namibia. This is seen as llpart 0f the stmuggle for the armed forces" which is believed to be crucial in SA.

The necessity of civil war in this model (the insurrectionary overthrow of the state) is emphasized, as well as direct damage to SAls economic infrastructure. Current unrest in SA is viewed as being important in the process of creating a upeoplels armyll. The ANC should therefore ilmarch in the vanguard ofsemi-spontaneous mass upsurges" and help them to form urevolutionary organs ofself-govemmentll. The arming of the masses at this stage would imply the concept of upart-time guerrillas" receiving "weekendll training, also in SA.

Although talk of an Iranian-style lltake-over" and a llpopular uprising" surfaced in the wake of the emphasis on the peoples war model and the current cycle of unrest in the country, it seems to be supplementary to, and not an alternative to, the conventional war model. The peoplels war model, however, seems to put more emphasis on paralyzing the economy and on undermining the security forces, than is the case with the conventional war model.

SWAPO has a liconventional brigadell, but at times the movement seems to argue that SA will withdraw from Namibia as a result of external and internal pressures, thereby eliminating the necessity for a final conventional phase in its military campaign. And although SWAPO has supported the implementation of Secutity Council Resolution 435 for a negotiated settlement in Namibia on the one hand, it has also made it clear that the iiarmed struggle" plays an important role in its campaign.

Against this background, the ANC and SWAPO would pose only a limited threat to the South African Defence Force (SADF). If they concentrate prematurely for a conventional war it would be a completely one-sided conflict. Civil war in SA could provide certain favourable circumstances for the ANC, but the movement would still be no match for the SADF. There is no sign of demoralisation of the Security Forces either. Only massive outside intervention on behalf of the ANC could conceivably tilt the balance, and Western reaction to Soviet intervention in such a situation would have to be taken into account, even though there is, at this stage, no guarantee of direct Western military counter-intervention.

During 1965, it was calculated in a US-based study,

that a successful direct invasion of South Africa would require at least 90 000 highly trained men with the most modern armaments, 700 aircraft and 100 ships and transports. The cost of each month of operations would be about \$95m, and casualties on the attacking side would run from 19 000 to 38 000 killed and wounded. Since this calculation was made, the vast increase in SAs military potential would obviously greatly increase the size and cost of such an invasion.

In this context, the Soviet supply of arms to neighbouring states has also been perceived by SA as a form of stockpiling, disturbing the military balance in Southern Africa, and creating a situation which the Soviet Union could exploit, should it decide on direct action against SA.

As far as counter-insurgency against smaller groups of ANC insurgents is concerned, it is also clear that the SADF has a well-balanced capability, although SAs long borders do create certain problems.

To some extent, SA is involved in a mini-arms race with the Soviet Union in a regional context. Although there are limits to what the Soviet Union may be willing to supply to Angola, for instance, SA does have technological, financial and also manpower constraints adversely affecting the country's capability to maintain a credible deterrent. In this sense, SA has to rely increasingly on war potential, (that is a superior ability to actually wage war if necessary) rather than on quantitative military potential, (the numerical balance of forces and types of weapon systems). In future this may not be entirely dissimilar to Israel's position.

The limitation on SAs freedom of action to carry out cross-border operations, and the possibility of increased losses of military equipment and manpower during such operations, is an important component of the conventional threat against the country. So far, world opinion rather than the military capabilities of neighbouring states has played a role in deterring SA from cross-border operations.

Recently, the OAU Defence Commission met in Harare for its 9th ordinary session where problems in creating 21 Pan African Peace Keeping force and the "destabilisation" of "Frontline" states by SA, were discussed. A combination of surprise, quick withdrawal and avoidance of direct large-scale conflict with the defence forces of neighbouring states during cross-border operations, has however still given SA a clear edge. Direct and large-scale clashes with MPLA and Cuban troops, should SA act in defence of UNITA, do entail some risk of escalation.

Finally, although SA has officially adopted a policy of "qualified neutrality", an East-West conflict of global dimensions could make it difficult for SA to remain uninvolved, given the strategic importance of the Southern African region.

According to The Military Balance 1985-86, published by the London-based International Institute of Strategic Studies, quantitative SA military strength in 1985 was:

TOTAL ARMED FORCES:

Regular: 106 400 (64 000 conscripts).

Terms of service: 24 months. Reservists: eight camps totalling up to 240 days, then commitment to age 65.

Reserves: 317 000. Army 140 000; Navy 2 000; Air 25 000. Military

National Service. active reservists serve in the Citizen Force for 5 years, in which they spend 720 days in uniform. They then spend 5 live years in the Citizen Force Reserve (ISO 000) and may later be

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Only an
increase in
internal
instability will
increase t/ze
possibility of
external
intervention.

allocated to the Commando Force, where they serve 12 days a Year
up to age 55.

ARMY: 76 400. Regulars: 18 400 (12 000 white, 5 400 black and
Coloured, 1 000 women). National Service: 58 000. Part-time Citi-
zen Force and Commando.

11 territorial commands. e

2 div HQ(1 armd, 1 mech inf bns). '1

1 an'nd bde (2 tk, 1 mech inf bnsM' k

1 mech bde (1 atmd car, 2 mot inf bns).T

3 mot bdes (each 3 inf bns. 1 armd car bn).T

1 para bde (3 para bns).T

1 special recce regt.

9 fd, 3 med, 6 It AA arty regts. '1'

1 AA missile regt (3 Cmtak, 3 Tignmt btys).

15 fd engr sqns.T

3 sigs regts, 3 sigs sqns.

Tks: some 250 Cmmrian/Olifant. AFV: recce: 1,600 Eland (90mm
gun, 60mm mot); MICV: 1,500 Rate! (20mm/60mm/90mm gun);

APC: 1.500 incl Buffalo, Hippo, R/Iirm, Lynx (wheeled). Atty: how:
30 25-pdr (88mm), 75 5.5-in. (140mm), 40 6-5 towed, (?10) G-6 SP.

15mm, 20 Valtiri 127mm SP; mor: 81mm, 120 120mm. ATK: RCL:

84mm, 106mm; guns: 6-pdr (57mm), 17-pdr (76mm), M-67 90mm;

ATGW: 83-11, 120 ENTAC. AD: guns: 20mm, 55 K-63 twin 35mm,

25 U70 40mm, 15 3.7-in. (94mm); SAM: 20 Cum (Cmta/e). 54 Ti -

mt.

NAVY: 9 000. incl 900 marines, 4 000 conscripts.

Bases: Simonstown. Durban.

Subs: 3 Daphne. '

Frigates: 1 Pravda! (Br Typev12)ASW with 1 Wasp hel (trg).

FAC(G): 9 MOD (Minimr afDq/mce) (MM (Saat-4)-type) with 6

Stomiom (Gabriel-IYPC) SSM.

Patrol craft: 4 Br Fond, 4 mod Tan, 1 other large; 30 Namrm
armed harbour.

MCMV: 6: 3 Br Ton minesweepets, 3 Ton minehuntets.

1 fleet replenishment ship (with hel deck; 2 hel).

1 ocean (2 hel), 1 inshore hydrographic ships.

(On order: 3 MOD, 3 Dvora-type FAC(G).)

MARINES: (900; 600 conscripts); 9 local harbour defence units.

AIR FORCE: 13 000 (Z 000 conscripts); 356 combat ac (incl 93
with Citizen Force). some 16 anned hel.

3 Territorial Area Commands; Ttg, Tactical Spt, Logistics Com-
mands.

Bbrs: 2 sqns: 1 with 5 Canberra B(I)12, 3 T-4; 1 with 6 Buccaneer S-
50.

FGA: 4 sqns with 20 Mirage F-1AZ. 82 MB-326M/K Impala 1/11.

Interoeptor/FGA/reece: 2 sqns: 1 AD with 20 Mimgz IIICZJEZ; 1
with 12 F-1CZ; 1 flt with 6 RZRZZ.

Hel: 7 sqns with 12 Super Fnlan, 50 Puma, 80 Aloud): III.

Tpt: 3 sqns: 1 with 7 01308. 9 Transall C-160Z; 1 with 4 118-125

Mmrim, 1 Viscount 781; 1 with 12 C-47.

Liaison: 3 sqns with 15 AM-3C Bosbol, 25 C-4M Kudu, 20 Cessna
185.

Reece/MR: 2 sqns: 1 with some 8 C47; 1 with 12 Piaggio P4668

DL3MAR Album. Some C-130 have a MR role.

Trg: 1 sqn with C-47 and Album.

Anack/u-g: 1 sqn with 24 Impala I/II.

ASW: 1 hel sqn with 10 Wasp HAS-1, 6 Alouate 111.

Training Command (incl OCU):

6 schools: ac: 80 T-6G Harvard 11A/I11. 40 Impala 1111. 25 Mimgt
111(some 10 E2. some RZZ. some 10 DZZ). 12 C47; hel: 30 Alone!!!
II/III.

Reserves: 93 Impala COIN ac 15 L-100 (Hawks; civil freight ac).

AAM: R-S30, R-SSO Magic, Sidewinder: Kutn'V-3 (Sidewinder-tyPC).

ASM: AS-20/30.

(On order: 4 Partenavia: 3 Spartan: (liaisonl-tpt). 1 Observer (patrol) ac.) 3

Medical Corps: 8.000.

Source: 1158, London, TA: Military Belem 1985 - 1986. Reproduced with permission;

Compared to SA's total regular armed forces of 106 400 the uFrontline" states (Angola, Botswana, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Tanzania) have a total of 166 850 men. Both these figures exclude reserves and although Angola and Tanzania have 50 000

T Cadre fomlanons completing the 2 divs when brought to full strength on mobilization of Citizen Force.

reserves each, only SA has a well-organized reserve capability of 317 000 men. In Angola especially, the Cuban and other surrogate forces must also be taken into account.

As far as arms are concerned, SA has 356 combat aircraft as against the 290 of the 11Frontline" states, and 250 main battle tanks as against the 871 of the 11Frontline" states. When making comparisons, it is also important to remember that different types of aircraft and tanks have different capabilities under different circumstances. Also, the serviceability of some weapon systems in some African states is uncertain.

In pure quantitative terms, the combined 11Frontline" military strength, especially if surrogate forces are included, outweighs that of SA in a number of respects. Moreover, SA does not have the access to equipment and replacements that the 11Frontline" states have, (although it is seemingly only in Angola that the Soviets have been willing to supply large quantities of more sophisticated equipment), and is largely dependent on producing its own requirements. Ingenuity has compensated for obsolescence and insufficient quantities, but problem areas do exist.

But it is in the qualitative sphere, the economic technological, administrative, and strategic foundations of military power, that SA has formidable military potential. It is not a colonial situation, and the issue at stake is of vital importance to SA. Manpower and equipment may be stretched in a war of long duration, but such a conflict will also have a devastating effect on the much more fragile economies of the 11Frontline" states many of which are, at least economically, dependent on SA. In addition, logistical problems, the problem of integrating varied forces within the 11Frontline grouping and internal conflicts in Angola and Mozambique, make it unlikely that SA will face a conventional threat from these quarters if massive and direct Soviet involvement is excluded. Speculation about a SA nuclear capability is also a deterrent, even though the country's possession of nuclear arms has not been verified and it is not presently SA's intention to become a nuclear power. Internal stability and the maintenance of a well-balanced conventional military deterrent, probably remain SA's best investment in avoiding conventional conflict. It is probably only an increase in internal instability that will, at this stage, increase the possibility of external intervention. Even then, any invading power will still face a formidable opponent, raising the cost of invasion to a point where only the overriding importance of the issue at stake, and extensive international freedom of action, could possibly justify the action.

It is also clear that in unrest and revolutionary situations, it is largely the contribution of non-military efforts, the political and socio-economic dimensions, that ultimately determine stability and contribute towards

overall strength and legitimacy. Military strength
only one component of national power, and no
panacea for all problems.