

# Securing the Pan-African Aerospace: The Role of Academia in Analysing the US Navy's "Unidentified" Aerial Vehicles

Prof. Tim Murithi



# Securing the Pan-African Aerospace

- 27 April 2020 – **US Navy issued a statement** – “unidentified aerial vehicles” – Defence Website:
- <https://www.defense.gov/Newsroom/Releases/Release/Article/2165713/statement-by-the-department-of-defense-on-the-release-of-historical-navy-videos/>
- 2020 – **United State Space Force (USSF)** – “stood up” – budget of **US \$ 15.4 billion for 2021** - [space “warfare” service branch](#)
- The U.S. Navy has officially published previously released videos showing unexplained objects;
- Office of Naval Intelligence – conducting analysis;
- *What is **Africa’s position** on this emerging phenomenon?*
- *What is the role of academia in analysing the UAV’s?*



# Securing the Pan-African Aerospace

- Back-track to 2007-2012:
- **Advanced Aerospace Threat Identification Program (AATIP)** - Defense Department officials – a budget of US \$22 million from 2007-2012 – *collected video evidence*;
- 27<sup>th</sup> April 2020 - **US Navy formally authorized** release of statement, posted on its website, confirming that the three unclassified videos depicting high velocity UAV's were real;
- videos were captured by trained Navy pilots in *November 2004*, and the other two in *January 2015*;
- information obtained - citizen-initiated Freedom of Information (FOI) requests submitted to the **Naval Air Systems Command**;



# Securing the Pan-African Aerospace

- *First time in history* that a branch of the **US government** has confirmed that there are UAV's that are not in "known" inventory;
- there was always a reluctance by the **senior military leadership** to release the information;
- "ridicule and of stigmatization" – around the topic;
- *What are we doing as Africans to analyse this emerging phenomenon – of UAV's?*
- This is also an **ungoverned space** - too preoccupied fighting terrestrial battles that we forget *to look up to the skies* to see what might be lurking out there that is **beyond the realm of our cognition**;
- Colleagues with *classified security clearance* to know what is going on, helpful if they let us know what is emerging in this **ungoverned space**?



# Securing the Pan-African Aerospace

- **US Senator Marco Rubio**, Chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence – requested a report from the **Defence Intelligence Agency in 2021** – “an unclassified report” and on the UAV’s;
- In anticipation of this report...
- Appeal to all of the participants at this conference to apply their minds to answering **two questions**:
- What is this ‘unidentified’ phenomena?
- What should be Africa’s response?
- *How do we secure the Pan-African aerospace,*  
in light of the formal establishment of the US Space Force?
- **African Union Non-Aggression and Defence Pact**, entry into force in 2009;
- Establish a **Working Group** to further research **Pan-African Aerospace Security**;
- If interested you can send me an email: [tmurithi@ijr.org.za](mailto:tmurithi@ijr.org.za)
- [tkmurithi@hotmail.com](mailto:tkmurithi@hotmail.com)

