

South African Security

Briefing to the Dutch Minister of Defence

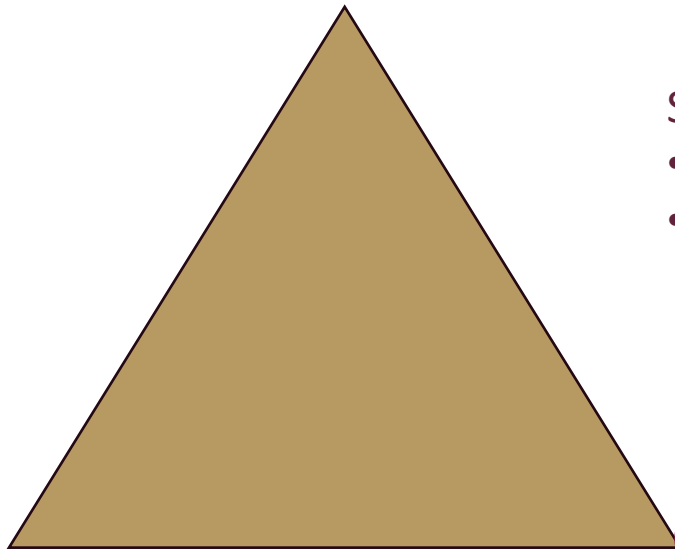
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Department of Strategic Studies

From a historical perspective

Three threat domains dominating South African security.

International Security
Security threats from outside Africa



African Security
From within Africa

Security has both an objective and subjective reality.

- Objective – there are threats that fundamentally affect every citizen.
- Subjective – **power defines security.**

Domestic Security
From **within the borders of**
South Africa

Negotiating a new pathway to security

The Military Research Group
From the outside
Theoretical outlook
New security paradigm
European perspectives



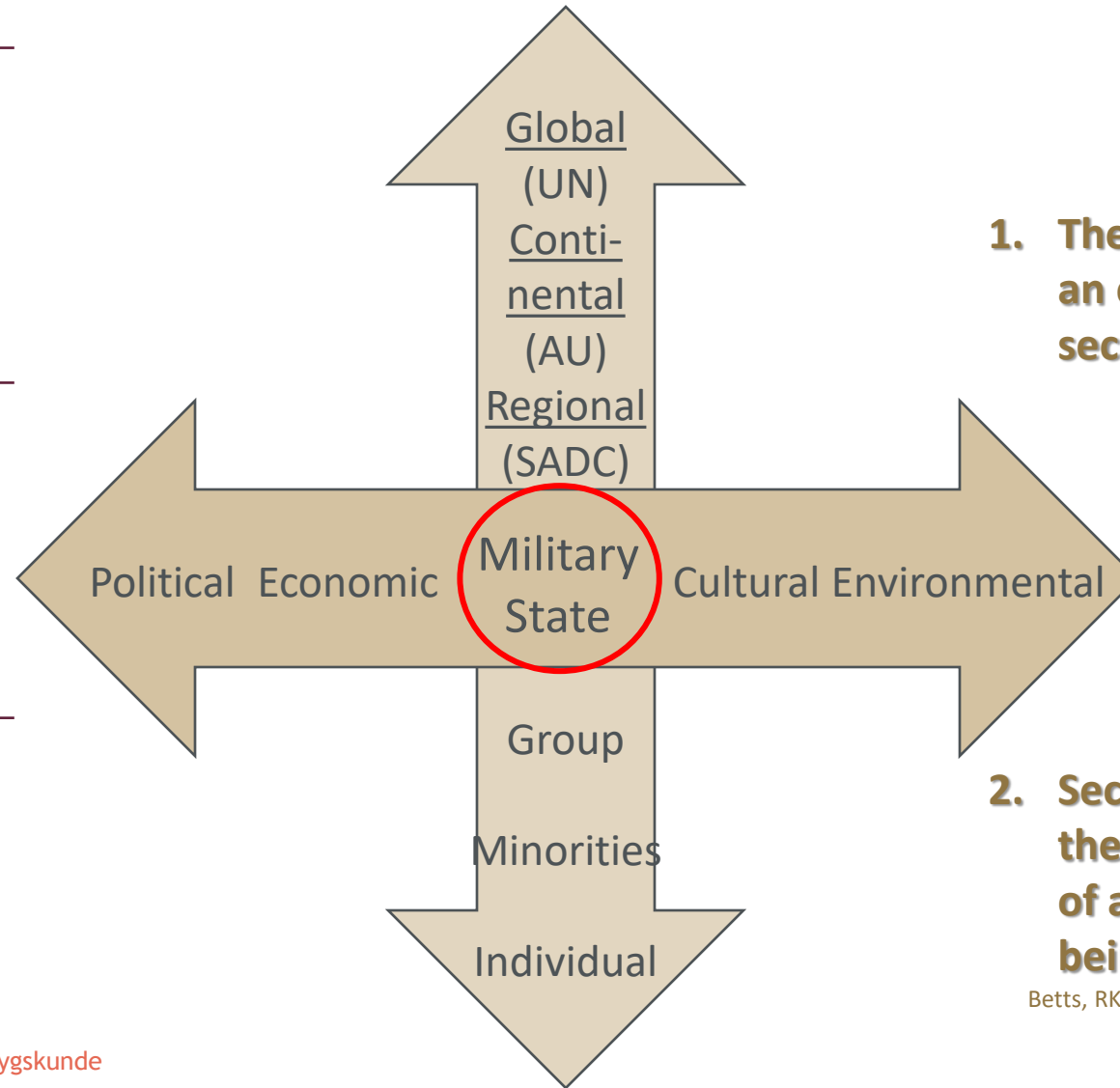
The Security Establishment
From the inside
Pragmatic in outlook
Bureaucratic views on security
African perspectives

'94 Democratisation & the Broadening and Deepening of the Security

Search for “Alterative defence” –
Copenhagen School

Human Security – 1994 UNDP.
*Human Development Report 1994:
New dimensions of human
security.*

1996 – White Paper on Defence



1. The security institutions remain an essential ingredient of security.

2. Security as a concept contains the risk of being too broad to be of any practical value – “well-being of society”.

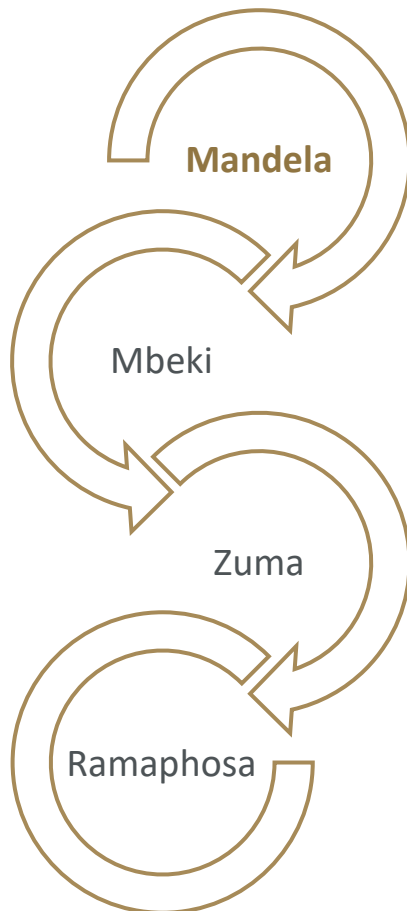
Betts, RK, “Should Strategic Studies Survive?”, *World Politics*, Vol. 50, October 1997, pp. 7-33.

[Western] Concepts vs [Local] Realities & practice

- Democratic Theory
- Liberal Constitution
- Human & common security
- Human rights
- International law & Rule of Law
- Obj/Demo Civil-military model
- Defence legislation
- Military professionalism

- Ruling party paradigms
- Dominant political / struggle culture
- Local political realities & factionalism
- [Domestic] Security realities

Conceptualisation, Optimism, and Policies



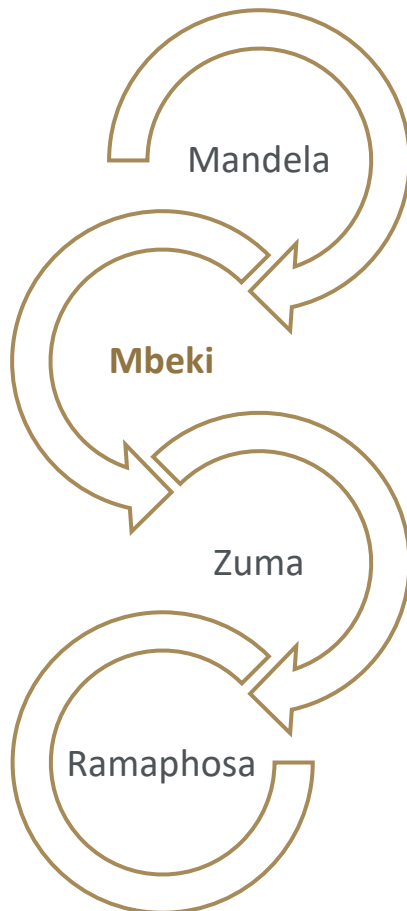
Strategic

- High expectations.
- A new security paradigm.
- Re-thinking of the threat agenda.
- New strategic partners, positioning, and alignment.
- Selling the “South African Model of Peace and Reconciliation”.
- = **strategic caution and restraint** especially towards Africa & West.

Structural

- Transformation, representation, and redesign.
- A smaller defence budget!
- Constitutional realities – “to defend and protect the Republic, its territorial integrity and its people”.
- End domestic deployments!
- Civil-military trust.
- = **Structural caution** on the side of the defence establishment.

“I am an African”



Strategic

Articulation of a vision for Africa.

Not the end of history for Africa.

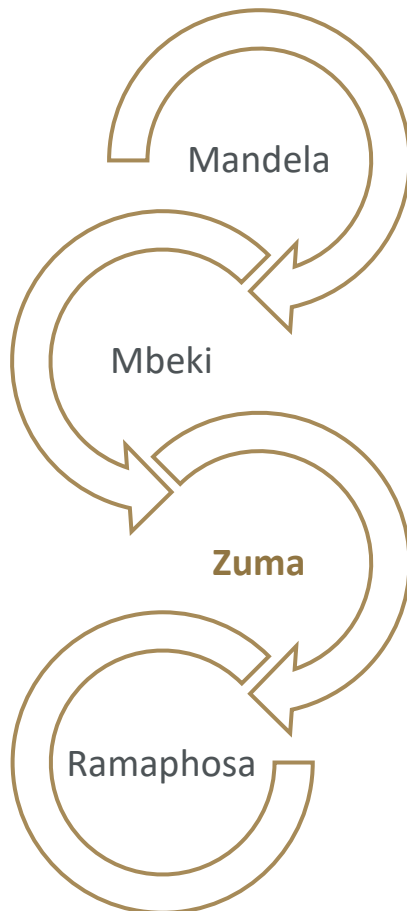
Structural

Residual defence capacity.

“Wars of choice” i.e. situation of **strategic choices &** room for manoeuvre

When, where, and how to engage in African peacebuilding and prevention?

From Defence Reviews to State Capture and Regime Security



Soccer World Cup – domestic deployments.

Battle of Bangui – what are you doing in Africa?

Realities of the defence budget.

Dealing with structural realisms.

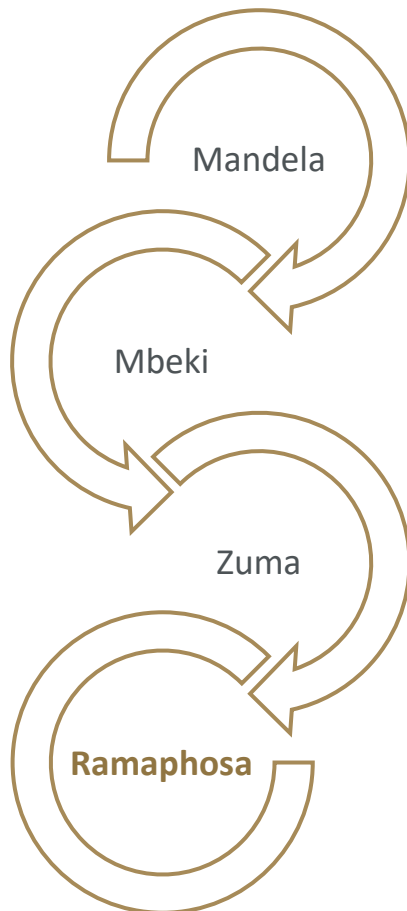
Inability to progress from policy to strategy to execution

Critical civil-military issues –

- Society
- Media
- Unions
- Academia
- Treasury

Democracy as an ongoing process . . .

A return to National Security



Realities of an undebated strategic agenda:

- **Regional insecurities:** working with strategic actors from outside the region.
- **Border security:** migration; violent and organised crime; and transnational green and environmental security.
- **Domestic instabilities:** lack of economic growth, systemic corruption & issues pertaining to governance and services.
- **CMRs:** social contract & domestic political tensions and realities of a dominant party democracy?

The conundrum of strategic realities

“Failure of the relevant State institutions *to conduct timely risk assessments*, despite the constant attacks on the authority of the state by some individuals and organisations.”

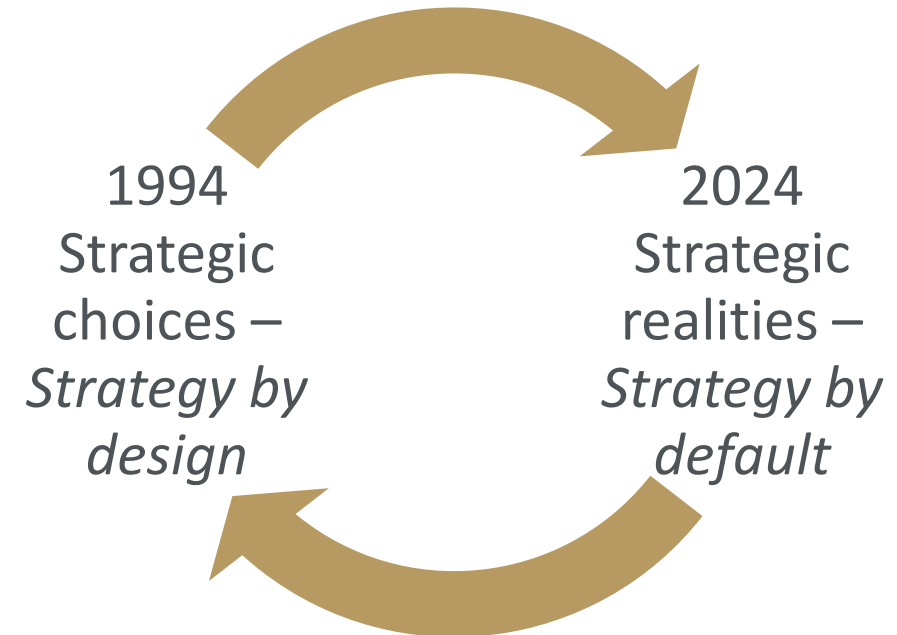
[Intelligence Failure]

“... when the security services failed to act decisively, the question many were left with was whether *the State had collapsed*, and the people left to fend for themselves.”

[Enclavement of society]

“... all the security services were found wanting in some way or the other, which was the strongest signal that the *[security] structures of the State had been hollowed out*.”

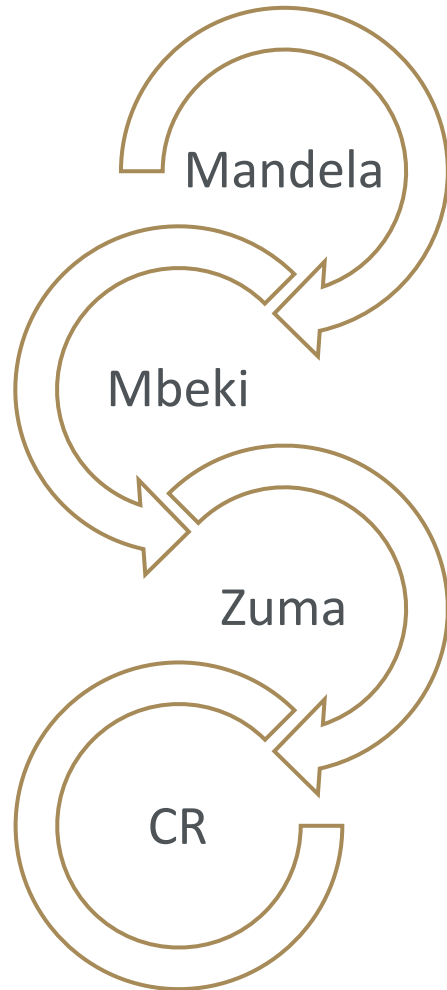
[Dwindling security capacity & institutions]



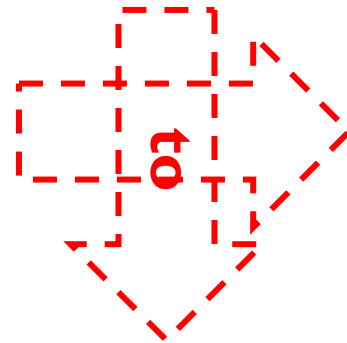
Report of the Expert Panel into the July 2021 Civil Unrest

<https://www.thepresidency.gov.za/content/report-expert-panel-july-2021-civil-unrest>

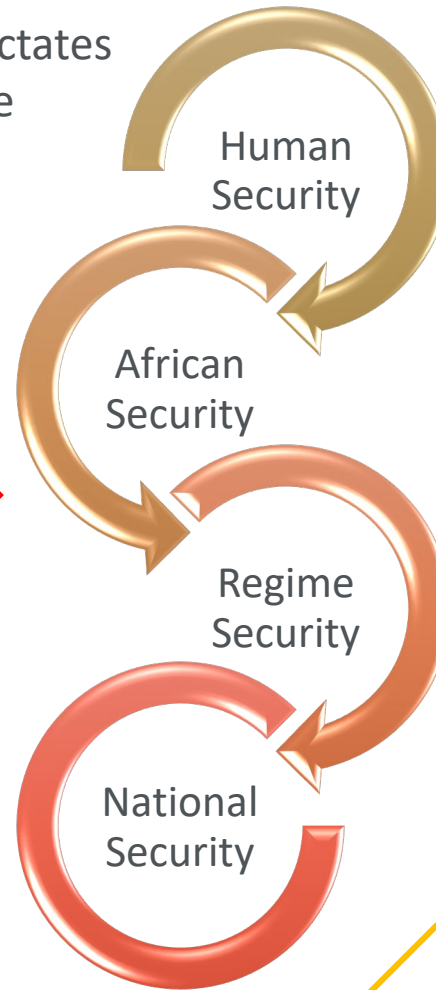
To summarise ...



Concept / ideal dictates
Freedom of choice



Realities dictate
Abdication of
decision-making



Declaratory
Vs
Reality

Strategy-by-
design
vs
Strategy by
default

Ons Is in die moeilikheid...