

**Classe des Sciences humaines  
Klasse voor Menswetenschappen**

19.XI.2024

**(Dis)utilities of Force in a Postcolonial Context:  
Explaining the Strategic Failure of the French-led Military Intervention in Mali**

by

Tony CHAFER<sup>1</sup>

KEYWORDS. — Mali; France; Sahel; Military Intervention; Protection of Civilians; Security.

SUMMARY. — In this talk I use the concept of 'utility of force' and advance a new counterpart – 'disutility of force' – to explore why France's military intervention (2013-2022) in Mali failed, despite a major material power advantage of France and its allies over the 'jihadist' armed groups it was combatting. I will explore how this military approach, unable to adapt appropriately to a changing context, not only failed to generate political utility – by preparing the ground for a resolution to the conflict – but actually created disutilities of force that deepened the crisis. This failure reignited postcolonial tensions that increased the intractability of the conflict and ultimately made it harder to resolve.

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<sup>1</sup> Em. Prof. University of Portsmouth (UK).  
Email: [tony.chafer@port.ac.uk](mailto:tony.chafer@port.ac.uk)