

# Counter-Insurgency in Rhodesia

J.K.Cilliers



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## ABBREVIATIONS AND TERMINOLOGY

Air Force	: Rhodesian Air Force/Zimbabwe-Rhodesian Air Force
ANC	: African National Congress
Army	: Rhodesian Army/Zimbabwe-Rhodesian Army
BOSD	: Bureau of Special Duties
BSAP	: British South Africa Police, now the Zimbabwe Republic Police
CESC	: Civil Executive to the Security Council
CIO	: Central Intelligence Organisation
Corsan	: Cordon Sanitaire
COMOPS	: Combined Operations Headquarters
CV	: Consolidated Village
FPLM	: Army of Mozambique, now known as FAM
FRELIMO	: Front for the Liberation of Mozambique
Frontline States	: Zambia, Botswana, Mozambique, Angola, Tanzania
GTI	: Ground of Tactical Importance
insurgents	: armed, trained members of either ZANLA or ZPRA
Internal Affairs	: Department of Internal Affairs, now the Department of Home Affairs
JOC	: Joint Operational Centre
JPS	: Joint Planning Staff
JSPIS	: Joint Services Photographic Interpretation Staff
JSTC	: Joint Services Targetting Committee
MID	: Military Intelligence Directorate
mujibas	: insurgent local youth supporters
NATJOC	: National Joint Operational Centre
OCC	: Operations Co-ordinating Committee

PACC : Psychological Action Co-ordinating Committee  
 PF : Zimbabwe Patriotic Front. At present the PF refers to the former ZAPU. As used in this study it refers to the ZANU/ZAPU pact formed in 1976  
 Police : British South Africa Police  
 POU : Psychological Operation Unit  
 PROVOPS : Provincial Operation Centre  
 Psywar Committee : Psychological Warfare Committee  
 PV : Protected Village  
 RAR : Rhodesia African Rifles  
 Rhodesia : Zimbabwe. Name used for period up to 1 June 1979  
 Rhodesian Front : Rhodesian Front party. Now the Republican Front Party  
 Rh\$ : Rhodesian dollar  
 RIC : Rhodesian Intelligence Corps  
 RLI : Rhodesian Light Infantry, 1st Battalion of  
 SAANC : South African African National Congress  
 SAS : Special Air Service  
 Security Forces : Rhodesian/Zimbabwe-Rhodesian Army, Air Force, BSAP, Guard Force, Security Force Auxiliaries and para-military Internal Affairs forces  
 SFA : Security Force Auxiliaries  
 SFIC : Special Forces Intelligence Centre  
 situpa : registration card carried by adult black males  
 TPDF : Tanzania People's Defence Force  
 UANC : United African National Council  
 UDI : Unilateral Declaration of Independence  
 VAG : Vital Asset Ground  
 ZANLA : Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army  
 ZANU : Zimbabwe Africa National Union  
 ZANU(S) : Faction of ZANU headed by the Rev. N. Sithole  
 ZANU(PF) : Present name of ZANU. PF refers to the Zimbabwe Patriotic Front  
 ZAPU : Zimbabwe African Peoples Union, now known as the Patriotic Front  
 Zimbabwe-Rhodesia : Zimbabwe. Refers to the period 1 June 1979, to April 1980  
 ZIPA : Zimbabwe Peoples Army

ZNDF  
 ZPRA

: Zambian National Defence Force  
 : Zimbabwe Peoples Revolutionary Army. Also known as ZIPRA

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This book is based on a dissertation submitted in 1981 for a Masters Degree in Strategic Studies at the University of South Africa. The title of the thesis was A Critique on Selected Aspects of the Rhodesian Security Forces Counter-insurgency Strategy, 1972-1980. Additional information drawn from subsequent publications has been included where appropriate but the content remains largely unchanged.

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Tsumeb

## INTRODUCTION

On 11 November 1965 the British colony of Southern Rhodesia unilaterally declared its independence. Prime Minister Ian Douglas Smith made this declaration fully confident that his Rhodesian Front Party could maintain power indefinitely for the white minority group it represented. Only fifteen years later on 18 April 1980, Zimbabwe emerged as an independent country under majority rule with international recognition. Mr Smith's major adversary, Robert Mbellarmine Mugabe, became the new prime minister of this fledgeling state. During the intervening years a relentless war had been waged. The two black nationalist armies, ZANLA and ZPRA gained ascendancy over the smaller but technically superior armed forces of Rhodesia. This bitter struggle can be seen as a classic model of insurgent versus counter-insurgent strategies. The final outcome permanently altered the balance of power in the sub-continent of Southern Africa.

This general study is an interpretative analysis of the counter-insurgency strategy during the eight crucial years of the war, 1972 tot 1979. Since 1981 a small number of books have been published on certain aspects of the war, notably D. Martin and P. Johnson, The Struggle for Zimbabwe (Faber and Faber, London, 1981), J. Fredrikse, None but Ourselves: Masses vs the Media in the Making of Zimbabwe (Raven Press, Johannesburg, 1982) and P. Stiff and R. Reid-Daly, Selous Scouts: Top Secret War (Galago, Alberton, 1982). Considering the scope of the conflict, comparatively little that is available to the public has been written on the war itself.

A large number of primary sources were consulted to obtain the basic historical data for this study, but the Africa Research Bulletin series was the single most important reference work used. The



information presented by the media was often distorted and based on rumours and speculation divorced from reality. Details regarding specific operations, projects, organisations and general modus operandi of the Security Forces gathered for this study were collected and cross-checked through numerous and in-depth interviews conducted both in the Republic of South Africa where many expatriate Rhodesians now reside and in Zimbabwe. The subject files at the offices of the Herald newspaper in Harare also proved valuable in this research. Numerous officially classified documents obtained from former Security Force members were used as well.

Chapter 1 provides a resumé of events over the period 1890 to 1979 with an emphasis on the intensified confrontation from 1972 to 1979. This is a central chapter for evaluating and co-ordinating aspects of the struggle discussed in subsequent chapters. Each of the following eight chapters is concerned with specific organisations or counter-insurgency strategies which had direct bearing on the development of the conflict. The second and ninth chapters are, in particular, devoted to organisations and systems. Chapter 2 examines the command and control structures employed by the Rhodesian Security Forces, and Chapter 9 discusses the intelligence organisations and methods employed. Both aspects are vital for a complete picture of the Rhodesian Security Forces' counter actions, as the success of other counter-insurgency activities depended to a large extent on the successes and failures achieved in these fields. Chapters 3 to 8 analyse in turn a number of specific counter-insurgency strategies as employed in Zimbabwe, namely those of protected villages (strategic hamlets), border minefield obstacles, pseudo-insurgent activities, internal defence and development, external operations and the institution of a self-defence militia system. Chapter 10 briefly describes the general security situation that had developed by 1979. Only at this point is it possible to comment on the conduct of the war in general.

*dedicated to my parents*

## Chapter 1

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE WAR FOR ZIMBABWE 1965-1979

#### 1.1 The Early Years

By 1890 there were already a number of white settlers inhabiting what was later known as the British colony of Southern Rhodesia. The impingement of white interests upon indigenous black customs and property, however, led to racial tension. So, in 1893 and again in 1895, the Matabele regiments rose up under their king, Lobengula, in the first freedom struggles or Chimurenga against the whites. Although the black warriors were overwhelmingly defeated this did not secure the position of the white settlers, who remained ill at ease in their isolated outposts across Mashonaland. White military preparedness was consequently directed towards securing internal security and remained so for a number of years.

Gradually, as European influence grew, racial prejudice against the blacks increased as well, became established and institutionalized. It was expressed clearly in the Land Apportionment Act of 1930 by which the country was divided into distinct areas for black and white habitation. Areas assigned for black habitation were known as Reserves until 1969 and after that as Tribal Trust Lands until independence in 1981. Generally these areas lay in the more arid reaches surrounding the more fertile white controlled region which ran from southwest to northeast (see Figure 1.1). This division of land was made possible by the white referendum of 1922 after which Britain granted self-government to Southern Rhodesia in 1923. Faint awareness of a threat other than that from the indigenous black peoples arose after 1926, and in response to this a small standing army was formed. This force was expanded during the troubled years preceding the Second World

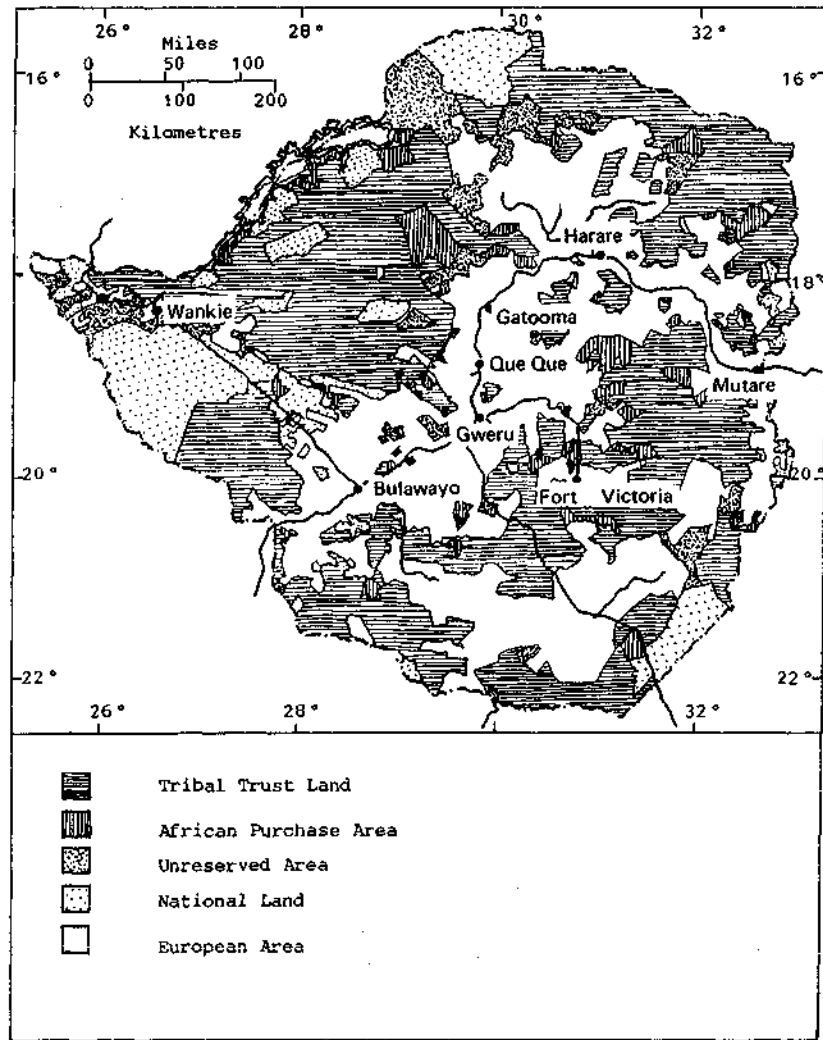


Figure 1.1 Land Apportionment 1968

War. During this war Rhodesian squadrons served with distinction in the Royal Air Force. After 1945 the armed forces were demobilized. However, during 1947 a largely black unit, the Rhodesian African Rifles, was constituted as the core of a regular Army. The territorial force, on the other hand, was almost entirely white and comprised the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the Royal Rhodesian Regiment. The Rhodesian African Rifles saw service in Malaya from 1956 to 1958.

After the general strike in Bulawayo during 1948, a revision of military policy apparently occurred, since three additional white territorial battalions were formed. Recruits into No. 1 Training Unit were formed into the Rhodesian Light Infantry Battalion in 1961. Two other units established were C Squadron of the Special Air Service and an armoured car unit, the Selous Scouts, named after Courtney Selous, a nineteenth century explorer. (This name was relinquished by the armoured car unit and given to a pseudo-insurgent infantry unit in 1973.)

During 1963 an attempted federation with Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) and Nyasaland (now Malawi) ended in failure. This politically ambitious scheme was launched in 1953. Its failure could largely be ascribed to the internal racial policies of Southern Rhodesia and the realisation that these policies were incompatible with a closer relationship to neighbouring black states. Black riots during 1960 increased white intransigence and made them less willing than ever to consider reform. Unrest first broke out in the black townships of Salisbury (now renamed Harare) when three leaders of the National Democratic Party were detained. Over twenty thousand people gathered in protest at Stodart Hall. Prime Minister Edgar Whitehead responded by ordering the distribution of leaflets from the air announcing a ban on all similar meetings. He also ordered the partial mobilisation of the Army. Further disturbances in Bulawayo were also dispersed and gatherings were banned.

During December 1962 the new Rhodesian Front party was elected to power. Since its inception the party had been committed to the entrenchment and maintenance of white supremacy without the involvement of a distant colonial mother. The leader of the Rhodesian Front, Ian Douglas Smith, was elected Prime Minister on 14 April 1964. He was initially elected to the Southern Rhodesia legislative assembly as a Liberal Party member in 1948 but became

a founder member of the Rhodesian Front party in 1962. He was a dour speaker who had won little public attention before the formation of the Front. Once elected Prime Minister, however, he gained unprecedented popularity among the white population. This support even endured beyond the war against the insurgents. Two events in particular strengthened the resolve of an increasingly isolated Southern Rhodesia to 'go it alone' in an attempt to maintain white supremacy: the massacre of whites in Kenya during the Mau Mau uprising of the early sixties and the election to power of an unsympathetic Labour government in Britain in 1964. So, on Armistice day, 11 November 1965, Rhodesia unilaterally declared its independence (UDI). Although aware of the imminent declaration, Rhodesian black nationalists were totally unprepared to offer any form of organized protest. The small number of blacks sent for training in insurgency warfare by emerging nationalist movements at the time were apparently intended for political propaganda rather than to wage a real revolutionary campaign. Arguably the major nationalist insurgent incident before UDI occurred during July 1964: a group calling itself the Crocodile Gang killed a white farmer at a roadblock in the Melsetter area.

Recruitment and training for an insurgent campaign against the Rhodesian Front government started in 1963. The formation of the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) in that year in competition with the Zimbabwe African Peoples Union (ZAPU) acted as a catalyst for armed confrontation between the black nationalist forces and the white controlled Rhodesian Security Forces.

The undisputed father and leader of Rhodesian nationalist movements in the late fifties and for many years afterwards, was Joshua Nqabuko Nyangolo Nkomo. He had been elected president of the newly formed African National Congress on 12 September 1957, after the Southern Rhodesian African Nationalist Congress and the City Youth League had united. The African National Congress was subsequently banned in February 1959, but re-emerged on 1 January 1960 as the National Democratic Party. This party, in turn, was banned on 9 December 1961. It reappeared on 17 December 1961, as the Zimbabwe African Peoples Union or ZAPU.

For some months before the formation of ZAPU, Nkomo's leadership had come under increased criticism. It was alleged that he spent more time abroad, canvassing for the nationalist cause, than in

Southern Rhodesia leading it. Further dissension broke out among black nationalists after the National Democratic Party executives agreed to the proposals of the 1961 London constitutional conference whereby only 15 out of 65 parliamentary seats were allocated to blacks. African nationalists reacted angrily to this agreement and forced the National Democratic Party hastily to repudiate the agreement, but the damage to the unity of Rhodesian African nationalism had been done. When ZAPU was banned on 20 September 1962, Nkomo was again absent from Rhodesia. He was persuaded to return only after considerable pressure from his own followers as well as from President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania. After his release from 3 months' restriction, Nkomo persuaded the former ZAPU executive to flee with him to Tanzania and there form a government in exile. Bitter dissension about the leadership of the Rhodesian nationalist movement now arose amongst prominent black nationalists including the Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole and Robert Mbellarmine Mugabe. In response, ZAPU President Nkomo suspended his executive council and returned to Rhodesia to form the interim People's Caretaker Council. Outside Rhodesia the People's Caretaker Council retained the name ZAPU. Nkomo was rearrested and detained until 1974. In spite of his long detention, he was never again seriously challenged as ZAPU president. Nkomo's foremost critics formed the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) on 8 August 1963 with the Reverend Sithole as interim president and Robert Mugabe as Secretary General. Both ZANU and the People's Caretaker Council were banned in Rhodesia on 26 August 1964. Mugabe and Sithole were arrested. Although he was released during June of the following year, Mugabe was restricted to Sikombela until his rearrest in November 1965. Both Mugabe and Sithole remained in detention until December 1974.

ZANU sent its first contingent of five men led by Emmerson Mnangagwa to the People's Republic of China for military training in September 1963. They formed the nucleus of ZANU's armed wing, the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army, or ZANLA. Having been actively involved in operations against the Rhodesian regime since 1964 it was thus understandable that Sithole precipitated his own fall from the ZANU presidency during 1969 when he stated in the dock

I wish publicly to dissociate my name in word, thought or deed from any subversive activities, from any terrorist activities and from any form of violence. (1)

Internal dissension within the ranks of the black nationalists thus brought about the formation of ZANU. Although Nkomo's vacillation had discredited him among a large section of the Rhodesian nationalist leaders, he still appeared to command majority black nationalist support within the country at the turn of the decade. At this stage the tribal bias of both ZANU and ZAPU was not as strongly manifested as from 1972 onward.

ZANU and ZAPU, however, increasingly competed in revolutionary zeal and recruitment. The ZAPU armed forces later became known as the Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZPRA or ZIPRA) (2)

The insurgents' strategy at this stage was based on two false assumptions. First, that Britain could be induced to intervene forcibly in Rhodesia should law and order seem in imminent danger of collapsing, and second that

... all that was necessary to end white domination was to train some guerrillas and send them home with guns: this would not only scare the whites but would ignite a wave of civil disobedience by blacks. (3)

By 1966, however, ZAPU, still the major black nationalist movement, had realized that the British government could not be induced to intervene actively in Rhodesia. ZAPU's armed wing, ZPRA, also recognized that it did not have the ability to force a collapse of law and order. The major task of the insurgent forces existing at this early stage was therefore to convince the Organisation of African Unity and the world at large that the forces to overthrow the regime of Ian Smith really did exist. This was vitally important if financial and political support was to be forthcoming. It was also apparent that if Rhodesia was to become Zimbabwe, Zimbabweans themselves would have to take up arms and fight for it. While leaders of ZANLA and ZPRA were convinced of this, black Rhodesians as yet were not. Rhodesian citizens resident in Zambia and Tanzania were thus forcibly recruited to swell ZANLA and ZPRA ranks until the trickle of refugees and recruits turned into a flood.

While ZPRA bore almost the full weight of the

war effort in these initial years, ZAPU remained at the same time the major exponent of the 'external manoeuvre' designed to obtain maximum international support. ZANLA, trained by China, played a very limited military role during this period. Both movements also increasingly appeared to represent a major tribal grouping in Rhodesia. ZAPU had the backing of the Matabeles, who constitute some 19% of Zimbabwe's black population, while ZANU had that of the loosely grouped Shona nations (77%). (See Figure 1.2)

Following UDI the first military engagement recognised officially by Rhodesia occurred on 28 April 1966 between Security Forces and seven ZANLA insurgents near Sinoia, 100 km northwest of Harare.

That day is now commemorated in Zimbabwe as Chimurenga Day - the start of the war. The group eliminated was in fact one of three teams that had entered Rhodesia with the aim of cutting power lines and attacking white farmsteads. A second of the groups murdered a white couple with the surname of Viljoen on their farm near Hartley on the night of 16 May 1966. The insurgents were subsequently captured by Security Forces. In total all but one of the original fourteen insurgents were either killed or captured.

Shortly afterwards a second ZANLA infiltration was detected near Sinoia. In the ensuing battle seven insurgents were killed and a number captured.

During August 1967 a combined force of 90 insurgents from ZPRA and the South African African National Congress entered Rhodesia near the Victoria Falls. They miscalculated the attitude of the local black population and the Security Forces soon knew of their presence there. In the first major operation of the war 47 insurgents were killed within three weeks and more than 20 were captured. The remainder fled to Botswana in disarray. Fourteen of the Security Force members were wounded and seven others killed.

Early in 1968 a second force of 123 insurgents from ZPRA and the South African African National Congress crossed the Zambezi River from Zambia into northern Mashonaland. The group remained undetected for three months, setting up a series of six base camps at intervals of 30 kilometers before being reported by a game ranger. On 18 March Security Forces attacked and destroyed all of the six camps. During the ensuing month 60 insurgents were killed for the loss of six members of the Security Forces.

During July 1968 a third joint incursion took place. The 91 insurgents involved formed into three groups.

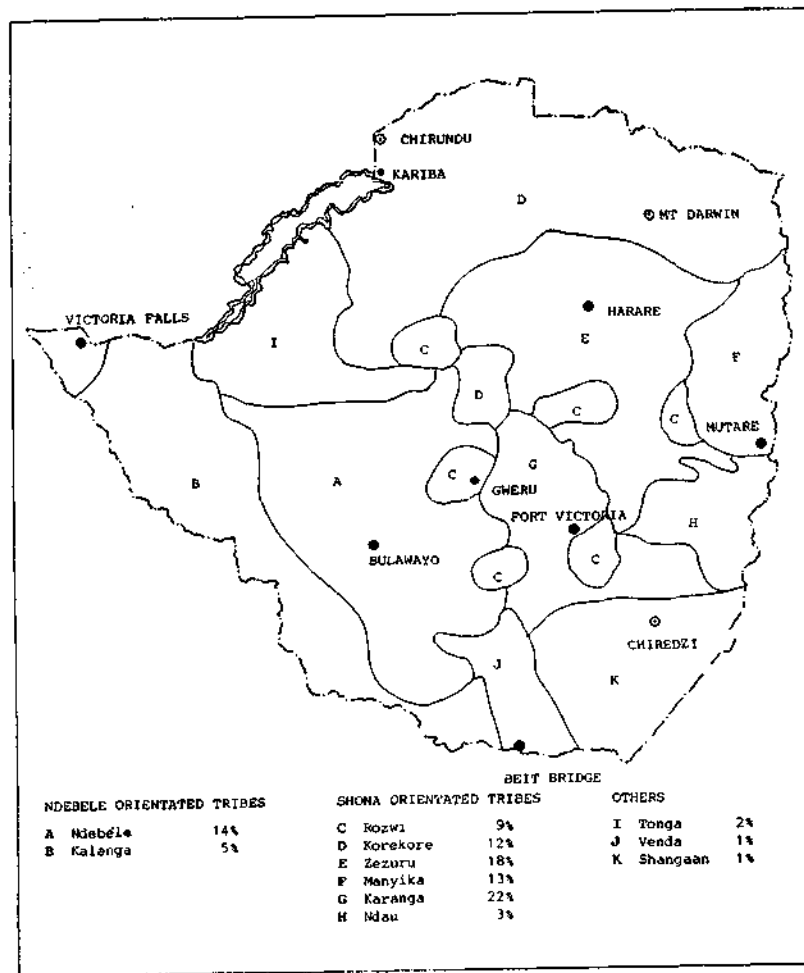


Figure 1.2 Major Tribal Groupings in Zimbabwe

About 80 insurgents were either killed or captured at that time and significantly, the first member of the South African Police deployed in Rhodesia also died then. Following the entrance of the South African African National Congress into Rhodesia, members of South African Police counter-insurgency units were detached to the Rhodesian Security Forces. In the ensuing years the Republic of South Africa involved itself increasingly with the security situation on the borders of its northern neighbour.

These first insurgent incursions into Rhodesia all originated from Zambia across the floor of the Zambezi River valley. This sparsely populated area was deemed the natural infiltration route as mobilisation of the masses did not yet constitute an important principle in insurgent strategy. Security Force counter-measures were thus largely track and kill type operations. Furthermore infiltrations took place in relatively large groups, which Security Forces located more easily.

After a peak during 1968, almost no incursions took place the following year. By the end of 1969 both ZANU and ZAPU had realized that their military strategy had serious shortcomings. These problems proved to have less impact on ZANLA than on ZPRA, for since the latter had borne the brunt of the insurgency effort up to that stage, the defeats suffered in the field resulted in a collapse of morale and the withdrawal of ZPRA from the conflict for a number of years. On the other hand, Rhodesian authorities were satisfied with the performance of their small Security Forces. This later had the effect of lulling Rhodesia into a false sense of security, as reflected in the figures for defence expenditure which remained relatively constant over this period. It also tended to strengthen the impression amongst Rhodesians that military action, to the exclusion of political and other non-military action, would be sufficient to destroy the insurgency threat, for, at this stage, the insurgent groups had not yet resorted to internal subversion as a major element in their strategy. This sense of complacency was further increased by the apparent economic success of UDI. The economic upswing led to an influx of white immigrants and increased optimism. This was in stark contrast to the defeatism and low morale among insurgent forces.

By 1970 ZANU, under the external leadership of Herbert Chitepo, emerged as leader of what was regarded as a liberation struggle. Although the ZANU president, Reverend Sithole, was

still imprisoned in Rhodesia, this did not have the divisive and eventual disruptive effect on ZANU that the concurrent imprisonment of ZAPU leader, Nkomo, had on his organisation. Within ZAPU a struggle had been waged between James Chikerema and Jason Moyo for external leadership. The infighting soon led to a split between ZAPU as a political wing and ZPRA as a military wing. In a document entitled 'Observations on our Struggle' Moyo summarized the situation as follows:

Since 1969 there has been a steady decline of serious (sic) nature in our Military Administration and Army. Military rules have been cast overboard. Relations between some members of the War Council and the Military Administration are strained. Accusations of a serious nature have been made. Military Administration and War Council meetings are no longer being held. Planning of strategy is seriously lacking. There is no co-ordination in the deployment of cadres in Zimbabwe. (4)

The clash between Moyo and Chikerema reached a climax in April 1970. From the total number of approximately four hundred ZPRA insurgents some decided to side with one of the two faction leaders while others either stayed in a small neutral group, or deserted altogether. Chikerema subsequently formed FROLIZI (Front for the Liberation of Zimbabwe) in October 1971 with a splinter ZANU group led by Nathan Shamuyarira. The original objective behind the creation of FROLIZI was to reunite ZANU and ZAPU into a single nationalist movement but neither party was prepared to do so. In 1973 FROLIZI itself split and consequently played an insignificant part in the insurgency campaign.

Even at this early stage the basic differences in strategic concept between ZANLA and ZPRA were readily discernable.

By 1971, ZANU's emphasis was on the political education of the Zimbabwe workers and peasants. The purpose of this was to elicit support from the masses and to recruit more people for guerrilla warfare training. Another significant factor for this change in strategy was to widen the areas of combat. (5)

As regards ZPRA, the general strategy adopted relied principally on military action. As expressed by W.W. Nyangoni:

Since 1970 we have analysed the basis of the enemy strength and revised our strategy and tactics so as to be able to strike where it hurts most. (6)

and further

The strategy pursued by the liberation forces of ZAPU was that of engaging the enemy largely with series of landmines accompanied by limited and calculated armed attacks. (7)

From 1970 onwards ZANLA placed a higher premium on politicizing the population than ZPRA. Rhodesian intelligence reports indicated that it was only as from 1978 that ZPRA turned to the politicization of the local population to the same degree that ZANLA had been doing. Probably with Russian backing and instruction ZPRA forces also tended to be more conventionally orientated and trained than those of ZANLA. The latter took its doctrine from China that the main object of such a protracted war is to gain the support of the local population.

Regarding the politicization of the Rhodesian black population in general, the single most significant event was the formation of the African National Council on 16 October 1971, led by Bishop Abel Muzurewa. In December of the following year the African National Council succeeded in helping to persuade the Pearce Commission to report adversely on the acceptability of the Anglo-Rhodesian proposals for a settlement. Possibly for the first time, the rural and urban black population of Rhodesia had been made politically aware *en masse*. In its report, the Pearce Commission *inter alia* noted:

Mistrust of the intentions and motives of the Government transcended all other considerations. Apprehension for the future stemmed from resentment of what they felt to be the humiliations of the past and at the limitations on policies on land, education, and personal advancement. One summed it up in saying, 'We do not reject the Proposals, we reject the Government'. (8)

#### 1.2 The Establishment of a Strategic Base Area in the North-East

ZANLA chose the Tete province in Mozambique

as approach route to Rhodesia more by force of circumstance than by conscious analysis. Both ZANLA and ZPRA were still based in Zambia, and were forced to operate from that country as Mozambique was a Portuguese colony at the time. Yet the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique, FRELIMO, who had been fighting against the Portuguese for a number of years, had been gaining ground steadily in the Tete province and initially offered ZPRA the use of this front as an alternative entry route into Rhodesia. Not least as a result of the continual small scale Rhodesian operations in support of the Portuguese forces, FRELIMO had become convinced of the necessity to 'liberate' Rhodesia as well, if the liberation of Mozambique was to be effected. Low morale and internal strife caused ZPRA to show little interest in this route. Furthermore it would take ZPRA, a movement under Matabele control into an area of the country under Shona control. The use of the route was thus offered to ZANLA, who eagerly grasped this opportunity. (9)

A number of demographic, historic and geographical factors favoured the North-eastern border of Rhodesia for insurgency. The rugged Mavuradonha mountains presented numerous obstacles to Security Forces in locating and eliminating known insurgent groups, while dense vegetation hindered observation, especially during the summer rainy season (November to March). Owing to its vast expanse and relatively low economic value, the area had furthermore suffered decades of administrative neglect. The traditional tribal way of life had been allowed to continue, with little active interference from Harare. The Shona tribe in the area, the Korekore, also spilt across the border into the Tete province of Mozambique, thus easing the infiltration of insurgents from that country into the North-east. A final factor was the lack of a physical impediment comparable to the Zambezi river on the common national border. With active FRELIMO cooperation ZANLA was presented with an excellent opportunity. (10)

As indicated above, ZANLA strategy had shifted its emphasis markedly since the sixties. In accordance with the teaching of Mao Zedong greater attention was now given to the politicization and mobilization of the local population before mounting any attacks on Rhodesian Security Forces or white farms. Yet at this early stage ZANLA had, in total, only about 300 trained insurgents. Of these, 60 men mounted the infiltrations in the north-east.

Noel Mukona, the head of ZANLA from 1969 to 1973 could later claim with little hyperbole:

In 1969 it was decided to operate silently ... We worked underground, training, stocking equipment and regrouping inside the country. Special Branch could not find out what was going on and that we were preparing for a continuation of the struggle. Much contact was maintained with the local population to review the terrain ... In July 1972 ZANU called together all its forces and met in the bush in Mozambique and reviewed the situation. We were satisfied that the preparations were enough and that enough arms and food had been stashed in the bush and that we could restart the onslaught. (11)

In the early hours of 21 December 1972, ZANLA insurgents attacked the white homestead of Marc de Borchgrave in the Centenary district, marking the resurgence of the insurgent onslaught, indeed of a new campaign. Most Rhodesians, however, accepted the news philosophically. Official concern over the deteriorating situation in the area had been expressed some weeks earlier by Prime Minister Ian Smith when he stated on the radio that the security situation was

... far more serious than it appears on the surface, and if the man in the street could have access to the security information which I and my colleagues in government have, then I think he would be a lot more worried than he is today. (12)

Yet the information available to the government at this stage was somewhat incomplete. All of the four traditional intelligence sources, Army, uniformed Police, Special Branch and the Department of Internal Affairs (subsequently renamed Home Affairs) had limited representation in the area, and in the case of the Army had maintained little more than a token presence.

At a later stage Prime Minister Smith explained how the insurgents were able to remain undetected for such a period of time:

... they were able to move backwards and forwards across the border from their so-called base camps and were thereby able to avoid detection for long enough to enable them to subvert pockets of local tribesmen. Thereafter their task was made easy through shelter, food



and assistance they received from the locals. This situation has complicated the position as far as our security forces are concerned. (13)

Not only had ZANLA succeeded in establishing a relatively secure base area inside Rhodesia, but had also succeeded in obtaining the full co-operation and support of the black rural population within the area. This proved a crucial factor in their later success and in the way the Rhodesian government attempted to eradicate the threat.

### 1.3 Operation Hurricane

Before the formation of the operational area in the North-east that was to become known as Operation Hurricane, Rhodesian Security Force authorities had become increasingly anxious about the security situation in the neighbouring province of Tete in Mozambique. Although the Security Forces was largely unaware of the extent of insurgent activities inside Rhodesia itself, they had, since early 1972, considerably stepped up co-operation with the Portuguese forces who were then still in control of Mozambique. The two elite Rhodesian Army units, C Squadron of the Special Air Service and the 1st Battalion of the Rhodesian Light Infantry, were operating in Tete itself on an almost continuous basis. Yet when insurgent operations inside Rhodesia resumed in late 1972, Army presence in an area of more than 1 000 square kilometers was only at company strength.

The extent of the insurgent penetration at the turn of 1972 was widespread, ranging from Sipolilo, west of Centenary, across to Mutoko in the east, and southwards to the Chiweshe and Madziwa Tribal Trust Lands. In contrast to the Security Force operations of the sixties, the war for Rhodesia had now entered a new phase. Previously members of the local population had willingly come forward to supply information on the presence and activities of insurgents, but within a matter of weeks all intelligence sources in the North-east dried up. Security Force morale plummeted as they failed to meet the enemy face to face. After the war Lieutenant-Colonel Reid-Daly wrote

For the first time the Rhodesian Security Forces were faced with a seemingly insoluble problem ... after carrying out their attacks the terrorists had not gone to ground in bush-camps in uninhabited areas where they could

eventually be tracked down ... neither had they gone to ground in inhabited areas where information from the local population to the Police or Special Branch had indicated their whereabouts. This time there was nothing. No tracks ... no information. (14)

A Joint Operation Centre (JOC), code-named Hurricane, (see Figure 1.3) was formed at Army brigade level of command to counter the internal threat that had developed. JOC Hurricane was initially situated at Centenary, was then moved to Bindura and eventually to Harare as its area of responsibility increased. It constituted the formalization of a committee system approach that had already been used to counter the insurgency threats of the sixties.

With the limited scope of active operations during 1973-74, JOC Hurricane benefitted from almost all the available forces of the Army, Air Force and British South Africa Police. The latter alone could contribute some 16 companies to the counter-insurgency effort. This enabled the Army, nominally in control of Hurricane, to formulate a strategy based on two fundamental requirements; first, the necessity of stemming the flow of insurgents from Mozambique and second, that of population control. The vital elements of JOC Hurricane strategy as developed by 1974 were succinctly summarized by the then brigade major as follows:

Large external operations to turn off the tap; a cordon sanitaire with warning devices, patrolled and backed by a 20 km wide no-go area; population control consisting of Protected Villages, food control, curfews and (eventually) martial law, and massive psychological action. (15)

The object was to channel insurgents into designated areas from which the local population had been removed. Here the Security Forces could easily track and eliminate the insurgents before they reached populated areas. In areas adjoining these depopulated or 'no-go' areas, movement of the local population was to be restricted by placing them in Protected and Consolidated Villages. Strict curfews were to be enforced within these areas with the aim of cutting the link between the local population and the insurgents. Largely due to the limited availability of manpower and other resources, and the increasing demands made upon them, the strategy described

was not employed in full.

In an attempt to reassert control over rural areas, four new districts were proclaimed in the north-eastern and eastern highlands, at Centenary, Rushinga, Mudzi and Mutasa. In an attempt to persuade Zambia to desist from aiding both ZANLA and ZPRA, Rhodesia closed its border at Chirundu, Kariba, and Victoria Falls to all Zambian traffic on 9 January 1973. Although Zambian copper exports were exempted from this embargo shortly afterwards, President Kaunda refused to use any of these routes. Officially the border remained closed until 1978, when Rhodesian external raids into Zambia forced President Kaunda to reopen his southern export routes.

When the campaign began in 1973 it seemed that the Rhodesian government was not yet convinced of the political character of the threat facing it. Heedless of the possible consequences of such action, government then empowered Provincial Commissioners on 19 January 1973 to impose collective punishment on tribal communities assisting the insurgent forces in accordance with the Emergency Powers (Collective Fines) Regulations. The most extreme case of collective punishment documented was the resettlement of nearly 200 members of the local population from Madziwa Tribal Trust land in the Beit bridge area in 1974 "... as punishment for assisting terrorists"<sup>(16)</sup> The extent to which collective punishment was to be enforced is apparent from the following extraction from a poster distributed in Marante Tribal Trust Land and Mukumi African Purchase Area during January 1978:

as from dawn on the 20th January 1978 the following restrictions will be posed upon all of you and your TTL (Tribal Trust Land) and Purchase Land

1. Human curfew from last light to 12 o'clock daily
2. Cattle, yoked oxen, goats and sheep curfew from last light to 12 o'clock daily
3. No vehicles, including bicycles and buses to run either (in) the TTL or the APL (African Purchase Land)
4. No person will either go on or near any high ground or they will be shot
5. All dogs to be tied up 24 hours each day or they will be shot
6. Cattle, sheep and goats, after 12 o'clock, are only to be herded by adults
7. No juveniles (to the age of 16 years) will

be allowed out of the kraal area at any time either day or night, or they will be shot

8. No schools will be open
9. All stores and grinding mills will be closed. (17)

Specifically during the period up to 1976 collective punishment measures such as those quoted above could only have had serious negative effects on the attitude of the black rural masses for at this stage the majority of the local population were not necessarily supporters of either ZANU or ZAPU.

In execution of the strategy devised for Operation Hurricane, the first 'no-go' area was proclaimed along the Mozambique border on 17 May 1973. In one way or another 'no-go' areas were extended along vast stretches of Rhodesian border in an attempt to establish depopulated 'free-fire' zones for Security Force operations. Government attitude to the infringement of curfews and 'no-go' areas was well summarised by P.K. van der Byl, Rhodesian Minister of Information on 31 July 1975 in Parliament when he stated that "... as far as I am concerned the more curfew breakers that are shot the better".<sup>(18)</sup> On 21 June the Deputy Minister of Law and Order, Mr Wickus de Kock, told Parliament that there were indications that the removal of tribesmen from parts of the north-eastern border to form a cordons sanitaires was beginning to have the desired effect. The use of the name cordons sanitaires was however misleading and should not be confused with attempts to establish a proper cordons sanitaires some months later (see Chapter 4).

In July 1973 the first major abduction of schoolchildren by insurgents occurred. St Albert's Mission, on the Zambezi Valley escarpment, was entered by a group which abducted 292 pupils and members of staff, who were then forced to march into the Zambezi Valley and north towards Mozambique. Security Forces intercepted the column and rescued all but eight of the abductees. Similar abductions were repeated in years to come and Security Forces were increasingly unable to prevent these actions.

At the start of the summer rainy season towards the close of 1973, the insurgent forces intensified their efforts. In an attempt to cut all links with the insurgents in subverted areas, Deputy Minister de Kock announced the initiation of the Protected Village programme. Four villages were in various stages of completion as part of a pilot scheme, It was estimated that more than 8 000 blacks would be resettled

in the Zambezi Valley by the end of December. Thus started one of the essential elements of Rhodesian military strategy which eventually led to the formation of an independent arm of the Security Forces, the Guard Force, to man and protect these villages. It placed a heavy strain on the limited resources available to the war effort, but some 750 000 rural blacks were eventually resettled in over 200 Protected Villages. Geographically, the distribution of these villages gave a very clear impression of the spread of insurgency, but even when the scheme had reached its most extended phase, the vast majority of Protected Villages were still found in the North-east where ZANLA had set up its original base area. In general the strategy was not consistently executed and, as a result, success varied. Eventually the Security Force punitive approach to the scheme, limited manpower and finance and bad execution was to lead to the failure of Protected Villages in general. (This strategy is evaluated in Chapter 3.)

But by the close of 1973 the number of insurgents in Hurricane was estimated at a mere 145 men. Insurgent casualties for the year stood at 179 while 44 members of the Security Forces and 12 white civilians had lost their lives. All in all the Rhodesian Security Forces had barely succeeded in holding their own. As a result Government announced during December that the period of national service would be extended from that of nine months instituted in 1966 to one year. Prior to 1966 national service had consisted of a short 4½ months.

#### 1.4 1974: Security Force Reaction

During 1974 the Rhodesian authorities made a concerted effort to restore law and order. The Minister of Defence announced in February:

The Government is embarking on a call-up programme in which the first phase will be to double the national service intake. A second battalion of the Rhodesian African Rifles will be raised to augment the Army ... These arrangements by the Ministry of Defence, together with other actions are designed to eliminate the terrorists in the shortest possible time. (19)

Measures introduced included extending the powers of protecting authorities in the north-eastern area.

These authorities had previously consisted of commissioned police officers, but legislation was extended to include certain District Commissioners from the Department of Internal Affairs. Protecting authorities could now order residents to do specified public security work, which included the building or maintenance of bridges, roads, fences, and dams. Detention without trial was extended to sixty days. A government statement during April set out a scale of fixed rewards ranging from Rh\$ 300 to Rh\$ 5 000 for information. This included information leading to the death or capture of a senior insurgent leader or to the recovery of insurgent weaponry.

Already, at this early stage of the conflict, logistics played a major role in the insurgents' strategy. All weaponry had to be carried in from either Mozambique or Zambia. While food was readily obtainable from the local population, the insurgent forces were not able to capture and thereby arm and resupply themselves with weaponry from the Security Forces. In the case of ZANLA, which was supplied by the People's Republic of China, this problem was further complicated by the erratic and limited supply of arms. ZPRA, in contrast, tended to be better and more heavily armed by the USSR. Awareness of the ZANLA problems influenced Army and Air Force planning for external operations in the years to come.

Operations were almost exclusively confined to the North-east at this stage. During March 1974, however, it was becoming clear that the ZPRA reopening of the Zambian front in the North-west was imminent. This was officially confirmed on 6 October in a government statement which lodged a formal complaint with Zambia over the use of its territory by insurgents.

On 25 April 1974, the armed forces of Portugal staged a successful coup d'état and overthrew President Ceatano. General Antonio de Spínola became the new President. On 27 July he recognised the right of Portugal's overseas provinces of Mozambique, Angola and Portuguese Guinea to independence. June 1975, was set as date for the transfer of power in Mozambique to FRELIMO. A month after the coup the revolutionary junta in Lisbon asked Harare to halt all cross-border operations into Mozambique. Rhodesia did not immediately feel the military impact, for it was some months before FRELIMO leader, Samora Machel, moved south to Maputo then still known as Lourenço Marques, and assumed the presidency. Once in power, however, his commitment to the 'liberation' of Rhodesia was clear. As a result

construction of the Rutenga-Beit bridge rail link to South Africa was hastily begun: during the years to follow it developed into a Rhodesian life-line and important insurgent target. The collapse of Portuguese colonial control in Mozambique also had a distinct effect on politically conscious black Rhodesians.

In 1974, particularly following the collapse of Portuguese colonialism, and the impending independence of neighbouring Mozambique, sent (sic) an euphoric wave of high revolutionary hopes among the masses who now voluntarily sought and followed the ZANU-ZANLA 'freedom trail' into the training camps. (20)

A team of Security Force pseudo insurgents, when posing as members of ZANLA were '... shocked and disillusioned at the wild sometimes ecstatic, receptions that ZANLA was getting (amongst the local population)' (21)

Not only did the independence of Mozambique have a profound effect on the war in Rhodesia, but also on the independence of Angola, which was prepared to play a large role in the training of ZPRA forces.

During May 1974, construction began on the first border minefield obstacle. Known as the Cordon Sanitaire it was completed in April 1976 and stretched from the Musengedzi to the Mazoe river. As the name implies, it was planned to establish an impassable obstacle to prevent all cross-border movement in the areas in which it was erected. Despite the fact that this soon proved impractical, however, by 1978 border obstacles of various descriptions had been constructed along virtually the entire eastern border with Mozambique, as was the section of Rhodesian border with Zambia from Victoria Falls eastward to Milibezi. While all the initial efforts entailed the use of an electronic alarm system and a reaction force, these were phased out. Eventually the Cordon Sanitaire merely became a border minefield obstacle. Owing to restrictions in manpower and finance, Security Forces were unable to cover it by observation or fire, patrol or even maintain it. In planning and execution these border minefield obstacles bore clearest witness to a lack of a coherent national strategy to counter the insurgency, as discussed in Chapter 5.

The pressures of the war were now increasingly exerted upon white farmers in the affected areas.

During June a scheme was announced which included grants of up to Rh\$ 3 000 for establishing protected compounds for labourers. The compounds were to have floodlighting and wire fences. It was envisaged that the Department of Internal Affairs would provide armed guards at a later stage, yet manpower limitations precluded any such plans.

In the latter half of 1974 the first two major operations to move the total black population of a Tribal Trust Land into Protected Villages took place. On 25 July Operation Overload was announced by Army Headquarters and consisted of moving the 46 960 people of Chiweshe Tribal Trust Land simultaneously within 6 weeks into 21 Protected Villages. Although this objective was achieved, it totally failed to provide the local population with improved living conditions. Operation Overload Two followed in Madziwa Tribal Trust Land in August/September/October and proved to be a substantial improvement. Both Chiweshe and Madziwa Tribal Trust Lands were seen as key areas in halting the insurgent advance on Harare. Contrary to established principles it was decided to relocate the most subverted areas first, instead of consolidating government controlled areas as a secure base. As documented in Chapter 4 the Army viewed the Protected and Consolidated villages purely as population control measures. Where members of the local population were concentrated in a restricted area, the Security Forces could move freely in the vast depopulated areas. This approach negated any advantages achieved by the whole scheme in the long run, although both Operations Overload One and Two temporarily broke contact between local population and insurgent forces in the areas concerned. This break enabled Security Forces to regain the initiative in these heavily infiltrated areas.

Government estimates of defence expenditure tabled in Parliament on 24 August for the financial year 1974/75, provided for greatly increased spending in all the related ministries for the period ending 30 June 1975. The defence vote was increased by Rh\$ 6,7 mil to a total of Rh\$ 46,176 mil.

Intelligence estimates released towards the end of 1974 put the number of insurgents inside Rhodesia at between three and four hundred. Nevertheless, despite the opening of the Zambian Front, Security Force morale was high and prospects seemed better than a mere twelve months previously. Since December 1972, 468 insurgents had been killed and only 48 members of the Security Forces lost - a ratio of nearly 10 to 1. This high kill ratio was also the

result of a new tactic adopted by the Security Forces known as Fire Force. Largely as a result of successes obtained by pseudo insurgents in Madziwa and Kandeya Tribal Trust Lands during which armed helicopters delivered fighting troops directly onto or close to the enemy. The concept was formalized and honed to a vital element of Security Force action. The first Fire Forces were formed at Mount Darwin and Centenary during June 1974. Initially they consisted of three elements: G-cars, K-cars and members of the Rhodesian Light Infantry as fighting force on the ground. G-cars were normally helicopters armed with twin Browning machine guns and each carried four troops. K- or kill-cars were Allouette helicopters armed with 20 mm canon to provide fire support. At a later stage Lynx fixed wing aircraft were included to provide further close support as well as a DC-3 Dakota aircraft which could carry twenty paratroopers to be deployed as stop-groups. Fire Force call-ups normally originated from Security Force operation posts on high ground which then 'talked' the aircraft onto the target. Yet the high kill ratio achieved could at best have pointed to tactical superiority, for insurgent numbers inside the country continued to rise.

### 1.5 Detente

When Rhodesia was pressured to accept the South African proposals for a *détente* on 11 December 1974, Security Forces claimed that there were a total of only 70 active insurgents on Rhodesian soil. Although no troops had been withdrawn from active operations, offensive and aggressive actions were temporarily halted. Troops were in fact ordered to desist from attacking insurgents leaving Rhodesia - although how this intention was to be measured remained uncertain. For the hard-pressed insurgents this presented a welcome reprieve and they stood only to gain psychologically from reduced Security Force actions in the countryside. Many left Rhodesia to regroup, replenish and retrain.

During the preceding months there had been intense turmoil within the ranks of ZANU. In November 1974 what was to become known as the Nhari rebellion had taken place in reaction to the high standard of living enjoyed by most of the ZANU High Command members in Lusaka. Although ZANU defence chief Josiah Tongogara had forcibly repressed the rebellion, the effects of the Nhari rebellion later

culminated in the assassination of High Command chairman Herbert Chitepo on 18 March 1975. This then led to the imprisonment of all ZANU High Command members in Zambia. They were released shortly before the Geneva talks in 1976. The combination of these confused events rather hamstrung the offensive efforts of ZANLA for some months. The disruption within ZANLA ranks presented the Security Forces with an excellent opportunity to disrupt the insurgent effort further. Strangely enough Rhodesian politicians dreamed of an accord with FRELIMO whereby access to the ports of Beira and Maputo would be retained indefinitely. The result was that both ZANLA and FRELIMO were allowed time to consolidate their forces without active Rhodesian interference. This was possibly the major result of the *détente* forced onto Rhodesia by its South African ally.

President Kaunda, together with President Machel, had grown increasingly impatient of the disunity among nationalist forces both within the movements themselves as well as between the various parties and armed forces. Prior to the constitutional talks in Lusaka during December 1974, the two presidents had been able to induce ZANU, ZAPU, FROLIZI and the African National Council to join in a united African National Congress. The signatories to this Lusaka Unity Accord of 8 December 1974, were Sithole, Nkomo, Chikerema and Bishop Abel Muzorewa. Bishop Muzorewa was leader of the only internally based nationalist movement, the African National Council. Launched in November 1971 to organize a massive negative vote against the Pearce proposals, the African National Council (ANC) was essentially an internal coalition between ZANU and ZAPU. Following the rejection of the Pearce proposals, the ANC took on a more formal political structure. In the years leading up to the Lusaka Unity Accord Bishop Muzorewa had been involved in repeated talks with the Smith regime. The most serious weakness as regards the African National Council was its lack of military strength. The latter was an obvious precondition to legal recognition inside Rhodesia. Although thousands of youths in fact left the country to fight 'in the Bishop's army' they invariably ended up fighting for either ZANLA or ZPRA.

Several weeks before the Lusaka Unity Accord, the Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole had still been the undisputed leader of both ZANU and ZANLA. Even as the *détente* initiative was gaining momentum, however, his fellow prisoner at Que Que, Robert Mugabe, was elected to the ZANU presidency in a palace coup.

When South Africa coerced Rhodesia to release imprisoned nationalist leaders in order to attend the constitutional conference in Lusaka, both Sithole and Mugabe then claimed to represent ZANU. (At this stage Frontline states had, in confusion, refused to recognize Mugabe as ZANU president.) ZAPU leader Nkomo was also released on 15 December 1974.

The first sign that there was an imminent collapse of the proposed constitutional talks came on 10 January 1975. The Minister of Justice, Law and Order, Mr Lardner-Burke, announced that he had stopped the further release of political detainees on the grounds that neither ZANLA nor ZPRA was observing the negotiated ceasefire. On average, six incidents were being reported daily during that month. Furthermore, Martin Meredith could write that

The ceasefire and the release of African leaders had had the effect of convincing the local population that the guerillas had won a victory similar to the one which the ceasefire had brought FRELIMO in Mozambique. All intelligence sources had dried up and the army's position on the ground was weaker than it had been since the beginning of the war in 1972. (22)

The momentum of détente had now slowed down considerably. The first contact between the African National Council and the Rhodesian government, since agreement had been reached in Lusaka on convening a constitutional conference took place within Rhodesia on 20 January. Nevertheless, Prime Minister Smith's reluctance to press ahead with any meaningful agreement with the nationalist forces now led to the withdrawal of some 2 000 South African Policemen from forward bases in Rhodesia as a prelude to their total withdrawal from Rhodesia, which was completed by August 1975. With the arrest and renewed detention of the Reverend Sithole in early March, talks with the Rhodesian government temporarily collapsed. As stated above, however, it was at this stage that the assassination of Herbert Chitepo threw ZANU into a new crisis. Mainly as a result of South African pressure, Sithole was released during April, ostensibly to attend the OAU Ministerial Council meeting in Dar-es-Salaam. Talks with the African National Congress were thus resumed. Simultaneously Robert Mugabe escaped into neighbouring Mozambique in an attempt to consolidate his supremacy within both ZANU and ZANLA.

The Chitepo murder and related incidents finally

tried the patience of Zambian president Kenneth Kaunda and Tanzania's president Julius Nyerere to breaking point. Both leaders outlawed ZANU and ZAPU, recognising only the Lusaka Unity Accord African National Council as the single and united voice of all Rhodesian nationalist movements. Yet as the prospect of meaningful talks with Harare dimmed, so did the unity of the African National Council.

As Security Forces slowly re-established their authority and regained lost ground, détente reached its high water mark during talks held at the Victoria Falls bridge on 25 August 1975. When this attempt failed, further dissension within the ranks of the African National Council was inevitable. Nkomo was now leader of the Internal ANC and Bishop Muzorewa, in self-imposed exile, was leader of the External ANC. Both were competing for control over the middle and lower structure of the original African National Council. Externally, Muzorewa, Sithole and Chikerema formed the African National Congress - Zimbabwe Liberation Council (ANC-ZLC) with minimum ZAPU participation. Attempts to obtain control of ZANLA forces in Mozambique and Tanzania failed, and the ANC-ZLC finally collapsed when the Reverend Sithole withdrew his ZANU faction in September 1976. By then Mugabe could claim effective control of both the original ZANU and ZANLA. The collapse of yet another attempt at unity prompted Bishop Muzorewa to return to a tumultuous welcome in Harare.

On 17 September 1975, Security Force Headquarters in Harare announced that 651 insurgents had been killed since December 1972. Security Forces lost 73 members. Although the summer rainy season was approaching, Army commanders were confident that the insurgency threat could be contained. During the rainy season insurgent movement was largely screened by the thick foilage. At the same time water was more plentiful. But this was against the background of reports of increased ZANLA and ZPRA recruitment, both voluntary and compulsory. Besides the ongoing Protected Village programme, Security Force efforts were mainly aimed at easing the acute manpower shortages facing them.

Government estimates of expenditure tabled in Parliament on 25 June 1975 for the financial year ending 30 June 1976, represented the largest increase in expenditure accountable to Defence yet, from Rh\$ 46 mil to Rh\$ 57 mil: an increase of 23,5%. Security spending was also included in some other votes. The estimates of the Ministry of Internal Affairs was increased from Rh\$ 4,3 mil to Rh\$ 30,94

mil which included allocations of Rh\$ 1,09 mil for administration of security measures in border areas, and Rh\$ 3,72 mil for counter-insurgency programmes, including administrative bases, Protected Villages and a security corridor. Of the Rh\$ 2,77 mil allocated for road traffic, Rh\$ 7,75 mil was earmarked for 'special road and bridge works in border areas'.

A final round of talks between Prime Minister Ian Smith and Joshua Nkomo commenced in December 1975. These recurrent talks with the ZAPU president had placed a premium on Security Force operations against ZPRA bases in Zambia, as well as on the numbers of ZPRA insurgents infiltrating Rhodesia. It was becoming increasingly apparent that ZAPU would soon have to choose between a political settlement and full-scale war. On the other hand, the Nhari rebellion, the death of Herbert Chitepo and the eviction of ZANLA from Zambia seriously affected the ZANU war effort during 1975.

At this stage, however, Rhodesia was still on a war footing. Security chiefs and the white population as a whole refused to believe that the nationalists could in any way pose a real threat to 'the best counter-insurgency force in the world'. Nationalist leaders seemed inept in their dealings with Prime Minister Smith and were in general held in contempt by their white counterparts. On the other hand, the lack of combat sense and skills amongst insurgent forces when faced by Security Forces led by white officers, caused an even greater underestimation of the nationalist forces in the field. Rhodesian Security Forces had not yet realized that a good kill ratio and tactical ability were not the only determinants for success.

A factor that was discernable at this stage was the lack of central direction and co-ordination of the war. The threat was contained on a day-to-day basis. Few regular Security Force members, and certainly no Rhodesian Front politicians appreciated the necessity for a real political settlement as a means of regaining the initiative on all fronts and thus towards restoring peace. Nevertheless, the final stage of the war was fast approaching, for President Machel had consolidated his hold on Mozambique and totally backed ZANLA. In Zambia, President Kaunda had finally concluded that force alone could solve the problem. In the west, Botswana, although not actively committed to the struggle, could not halt the use of its soil as a transit route to and from western Rhodesia under Matabele domination. In South Africa the spirit of détente had gained general

support, and Prime Minister Vorster had decided to pressure his ally into a settlement in the interests of a peaceful and stable sub-continent.

Although not yet evident, the relative quiet of 1975 was at an end. The military intervention of the Republic of South Africa into Angola early in 1976 had foreshadowed the end of détente. As expressed by Anthony Wilkinson:

The effect of South Africa's military involvement was to undermine the limited basis of trust which had been achieved by her apparently ready acceptance of Mozambique's independence and which had paved the way for the joint initiative with Zambia on Rhodesia. (23)

#### 1.6 1976 and Dr Henry Kissinger

The extent to which President Machel was committed to the 'liberation' of Rhodesia was soon evident. Rhodesian Security Forces continued to conduct hot pursuit raids into Mozambique. In addition, Rhodesia effectively halted all rail traffic into that country in retaliation against the arrest of Rhodesian employees at Malvernia. On 3 March 1976, President Machel closed the borders of his country with Rhodesia, banned all land, air and communication links, confiscated Rhodesian property and assets in his country and in effect prepared for war. Prime Minister Smith had again underestimated the commitment of the Frontline states to the struggle.

Security Forces had already been confronted by a series of renewed incursions from Mozambique, which reportedly included approximately 150 men. If final proof of the extent of the Mozambican commitment was still needed, it was provided a mere three months later when Harare confirmed on 27 July that Security Forces had clashed with FRELIMO troops inside Rhodesia. In response, a government official disclosed on 28 January that call-ups would be extended to bring force levels up to their former high levels in the North-east. During January to April 1976, three waves of insurgents crossed into Rhodesia. The first group of about 90 crossed the border south of Nyamapanda. A second group infiltrated the Melsetter area and a third group the south-east.

In a broadcast on 6 February Prime Minister Ian Smith warned that Rhodesia was facing the most



serious insurgent threat since the start of the war in 1972. He also warned of the increased burden that would have to be placed on the civilian sector as skilled manpower had to be withdrawn for long periods of operational duty. Some indication of this was received three days later when a Security Force communique disclosed that a total of 32 insurgents had been killed inside Rhodesia during the preceding few days. To the public at large it was also becoming clear that 1976 would be a difficult year. Reports indicated that 1 000 insurgents were active inside the country with a further 15 000 in various stages of preparedness in Mozambique. A second operational area, Operation Thrasher, was designated in February, followed by a third, Operation Repulse, in May. (See Figure 1.3)

For some time ZANLA had been engaged in expanding its area of operations, and had slowly shifted its offensive southwards. The main infiltration routes now ran through the Gona Re Zhou game park in the South-east. Partly as a result of the Cordon Sanitaire in the North-east that was now nearing completion, ZANLA needed to extend its operations over as large an area of Rhodesia as possible. Severely hampered by white manpower shortage and politically hesitant to increase the black contingent of the Army, Rhodesian forces lacked the manpower resources to consolidate their authority in the ever-increasingly subverted areas. ZANLA also had other, more specific, objectives. These included threatening the main Rhodesian rail link across Beit bridge, which would also have great symbolic value. A second objective was the ZANLA attempt to encroach on the traditional ZAPU power base in Matabeleland. During April it was evident that a second wave of ZANLA insurgents, some 450 in total, had followed this route. Both the Rutenga-Beit Bridge railway and the Fort Victoria-Beit Bridge road link were attacked. These attacks came as an acute blow to Harare, which had remained relatively complacent, even though rife with rumours. The introduction of selective censorship on 26 April and the imposition of strict controls on visiting foreign journalists in July indicated the extent of government concern about the effect that a deteriorating security situation could have on white morale.

On 15 April 1976, Finance Minister David Smith, announced an interim budget to raise Rh\$ 60 mil by higher taxes on luxury items to help meet the rising costs of the war. This followed supplementary defence estimates of Rh\$ 3,245 mil tabled in the House of

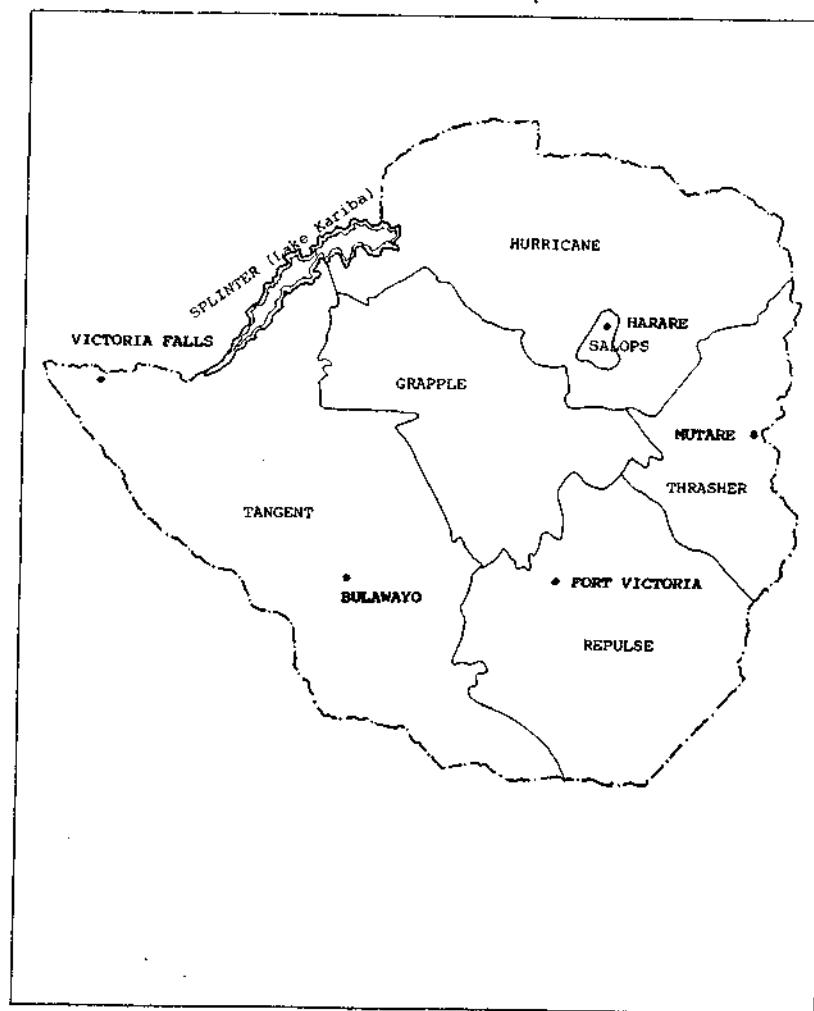


Figure 1.3 Delimitation of Operational Areas



Assembly on 12 February 1976, which had raised the total defence vote by 5,7% to Rh\$ 60,259 mil for the financial year 1975/76.

Between 1971/72 and 1975/76 direct defence expenditure had risen by 280%, while related expenditure also rose dramatically - that of the Department of Internal Affairs by 320%, the British South African Police by 199%, Roads and Traffic by 357%. By 1976/77 defence related expenditure accounted for 23% of the total expenditure.

Extended call-up and the extension of the initial period of uninterrupted national service from 12 to 18 months with immediate effect signalled the start of a counter-offensive. But April had shown a marked increase in the number of whites leaving the country with a nett loss of 817 for the month, compared to 40 for March. In Lusaka, President Kaunda was threatening to open a new front in the near future. By the end of May, the total death toll for that month stood at a record 231. ZANLA forces were reported to number 1 500 internally and the previous record 11 to 1 kill ratio had dropped to a relatively poor 6 to 1. It almost seemed that the Security Forces had also lost their tactical edge over the insurgents.

It had become clear that white morale was the primary target of the insurgents, while the military aim was to overtax the capabilities of the Rhodesian Security Forces. The continued call-ups were already having a distinctly detrimental effect on white morale. Attacks on politically sensitive targets such as the southern rail and road links forced the government in Harare to divert further forces towards protecting these key installations. A further strain was consequently placed upon the already limited manpower available. A total of 63 Army companies were already deployed at this stage (7 560 men) together with about 10 000 members of the British South African Police. (24) Escalating attacks on the estates and plantations in the Eastern Highlands were part of this onslaught. By striking at white commercial farmers, insurgents were given the added incentive of hitting the Rhodesian economy at its most vulnerable point.

An attack on the Bumi Hills airstrip in north-western Rhodesia on 5 June made it known that ZPRA forces were ready to reopen the long dormant Zambian front in all earnest. Since talks between the leader of the Internal ANC, Joshua Nkomo, and Prime Minister Smith had failed, the last restraint on ZAPU was lifted. For some years ZPRA had been bitterly

accused by ZANU of intentionally holding its forces at bay and leaving ZANLA to do all the fighting. While the talks between the Rhodesian Front and ZAPU had been in progress, ZPRA recruitment and infiltration into Rhodesia had been curtailed, while Harare refrained from striking at the main ZPRA base camps in Zambia. Now that this tacit agreement had failed, there were signs that the whole western front with Botswana was gradually being activated after nearly 18 months of relative peace and quiet.

For some months Security Force commanders had been deeply concerned about intelligence reports that indicated a mass of 6 000 ZANLA insurgents preparing for an offensive of between 1 000 and 2 000 men into Rhodesia at the start of the annual summer rainy season. This would have been the third large influx of insurgents within a period of ten months. Some doubt existed as to whether the Security Forces had the ability to contain this threat. Within the ranks of the military there had long been support for external raids to eliminate insurgents, where they presented a viable target in base and transit camps. Political caution had tended to forestall any such large scale raids which could not reasonably be categorized as 'hot pursuit'. Zambia's membership of the Commonwealth further complicated the problem. Already hard pressed to contain the 1 200 insurgents operating inside the country, the security chiefs were not confident of their ability to deal with a further influx of several thousand. Largely as a result of the visit of the American Secretary of State, Dr Henry Kissinger, and his peace initiative in general the South African government was vehemently opposed to Rhodesia launching external operations against its neighbours. Nevertheless the Selous Scouts were ordered to go ahead with the first attack of this kind on the Nyadzonja training base in Mozambique on 8 August 1976. This unit, which specialized in pseudo tactics, had been formed in 1973. It adopted the name Selous Scouts which had been relinquished by the Armoured Car Regiment. The Nyadzonja raid marked the start of a new phase in the struggle for Rhodesia. Later it spread to Zambia, Angola and Botswana ending as a limited interdiction campaign during 1979. Besides immediate relief to the security situation, external operations proved an important factor in bolstering white morale. White emigration for November was already running at 1 200.

South African Prime Minister Vorster was, however

not amused. Similar attacks could only serve to finally scuttle all attempts at reducing tension in the sub-continent. As a result South African military aircraft were withdrawn from Rhodesia while inexplicable congestion hampered the railway line to the south.

During the final months of 1976, food control measures were instituted on an experimental basis as a further element of total population control. These measures were known as Operation Turkey and were first introduced in the Mtepatapa farming area between Chiweshe and Madziwa Tribal Trust Lands. Although emergency regulations empowering the control of food supplies were only introduced on 28 January 1977, the concept had gained relatively wide support. Owing to lack of manpower and the absence of concurrent population control measures such as total movement control, Operation Turkey was, however, limited to white farming areas where the farmer could ration the supply of food to his black workers in the compounds. The rationale behind food control was closely related to that of Protected Villages. Food in the Tribal Trust Lands had become less readily available to insurgent forces owing to a general drought and the movement of locals into Protected Villages. The insurgents had in some areas thus resorted to obtaining sustenance from farm compounds. The intention was to further limit even these supplies by rationing the farm labourers to that which was needed, and no more. In general the scheme was ineffective as it relied almost exclusively on farmer compliance and regulation, which in some areas such as the ranching farms of Matabeleland, white farmers found impossible to implement.

During a twenty-minute nationwide broadcast on 24 September 1976 Rhodesian Prime Minister Ian Smith calmly announced the acceptance by his government of majority rule within two years. This marked the high water mark of the Kissinger peace initiative. That Smith's acceptance was less than total is clearly illustrated in a classified psychological directive issued on 15 October 1976

The National Aim remains unchanged ('To sustain a united and sovereign Rhodesia which guarantees a permanent home and equal opportunities for all its communities, which maintains responsible government and civilized standards.')(25)

Only a few days previously South African Prime Minister John Vorster, had reprimanded his Rhodesian counterpart in Pretoria. The extent of South African pressure is best illustrated by the confidential notes of a speech given to a closed white audience by Ted Sutton-Pryce then Deputy Minister in the Rhodesian Prime Minister's Office. Inter alia these read:

Vorster is the bad guy. The reason for the RF (Rhodesian Front) failure was because of pressure put on Rhodesia ... Fifty percent of the Rhodesian defence bill was paid by South Africa up until June. A reply had not been given since then as to whether they would support it for a further year. There has been a delay on war items for as long as 2½ years. The railway system is moving very few goods - reported congestion. The border was closed over the period of the Kissinger talks, 1-4 days. Fuel supply down to 196 days. It is difficult to prove these facts as we cannot afford to antagonize South Africa by exposing her ... Against this background they had no alternative but to accept the Kissinger package deal. (26)

The Kissinger initiative soon ran into difficulties; chiefly as a result of the American Secretary of State's high risk diplomacy in promising everything to everyone, simply to break the deadlock, while simultaneously wielding as much political and economic pressure as possible. The various parties started voicing their respective interpretations of the proposals before settling down to talk, thus prejudicing the Geneva conference that was to convene under the chairmanship of Britain's Ivor Richards on 28 October 1976.

### 1.7 The Patriotic Front

As a prelude to the negotiations, various nationalist leaders went through what was by now an almost ritualistic scramble for power in an effort to combine personal ambitions with the strategic necessity of presenting at least a facade of unity in the international area. The unity now achieved under the banner of the Zimbabwe Patriotic Front (PF), however, proved more enduring than any previous attempt. Although both ZANU and ZAPU changed their names several times they had remained essentially

unaltered. As recounted above ZAPU had already attempted to establish an internal base within Rhodesia by attempting to gain control of the middle rank structure of the African National Council. Having less of a single tribal basis than either ZANU or ZAPU, the Council was still the party most representative of the black Rhodesian population as a whole. ZANU had become increasingly dominated by the Karanga tribe - a process completed in the High Command by March 1975, when all five of the elected members were from the Karanga tribe. ZAPU, on the other hand, had fallen almost completely under Ndebele dominance. To both Nkomo and Mugabe the Patriotic Front was thus a unity of convenience. For, while Robert Mugabe lacked his co-leader's international political standing, ZANLA had by far the largest armed force. As each party represented a major power block within Rhodesia, the Patriotic Front was structurally complementary. Nkomo had in fact been taking part in tentative talks with the external ANC in Botswana on the establishment of a united front. The tumultuous welcome accorded Bishop Muzorewa at Harare airport by some 100 000 blacks on 3 October led to Nkomo leaving Rhodesia for Lusaka and then Dar-es-Salaam, where the formation of the Patriotic Front was jointly announced on 9 October. Within Rhodesia Nkomo desperately needed to improve his tarnished nationalist political image which had been damaged after his talks with Ian Smith ended in failure during March.

Unified in name only, ZANLA and ZPRA were jointly to be known as ZIPA (Zimbabwe People's Army) which had already been formed during November 1975 by the so-called Frontline states (Zambia, Angola, Tanzania, Mozambique and Botswana) and the Organization of Africa Unity's African Liberation Committee. This was an attempt to bypass the nationalist political leaders and unify the armed struggle. ZIPA was also known as the Third Force.

As explained by Dr Masipula Sithole,

Originally, ZIPA had a High Command of 18 men, 9 from ZANU and 9 from ZAPU. Clashes ensued. After a few weeks of joint operations, the surviving ZAPU men withdrew from ZIPA in Mozambique and fled to Zambia, where they have largely remained. Thus, ZIPA, as a joint ZANU-ZAPU enterprise remained in name only. The frontline states and the Liberation Committee encouraged and endorsed the creation of the Patriotic Front with (sic) the hope that political

leadership would cement ZANU-ZAPU guerrillas in ZIPA. But this did not work. The ZAPU army ... (ZPRA) remained in Zambia, while the ZANU army (ZANLA) remained in Mozambique. (27)

Even as the ill-fated Geneva talks continued into December, it was clear that the insurgent onslaught on Rhodesia was intensifying. During October 131 insurgents had been killed, one of the highest monthly totals since 1972. Once again it had become obvious that a concerted effort was being made to undermine white morale as white farms and government buildings had become prime targets for insurgents.

On 4 November Ian Smith returned to Harare, stating that if the Geneva talks failed, he would attempt an internal settlement with moderate black leaders. Geneva had already failed, however, and the official Christmas recess which started on 14 December only served to confirm the impasse.

#### 1.8 1977: ZPRA intensifies the War

Within weeks the new year provided evidence that the war was rapidly intensifying. Incidents along both the Botswana and Mozambique borders gave a clear indication that 1977 would be particularly difficult. The five Frontlines states met in Luanda on 9 January and declared their full and unqualified support for the Patriotic Front. In effect this endorsed the armed struggle as a vehicle for settlement and forced Bishop Abel Muzorewa and the Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole into political obscurity. As the year progressed it became clear that Nkomo was desperately trying to match his political stature with an equal military capability. ZANU's armed wing, ZANLA, had been carrying by far the greater burden of the war effort against the Smith regime, as can clearly be seen when comparing casualty figures for the various operational areas (see Table 1.1). The figures for ZANLA's traditional areas of influence, Hurricane, Thrasher and Repulse are much higher than those for Tangent, ZPRA's established domain.

	Killed	Missing	Wounded	Captured	Total
Insurgents	1 033			372	1 405
Operation Security Forces	106	-	769	-	875
Hurricane Civilians	525	4	740	-	1 269
Total	1 664	4	1 509	372	3 549
Insurgents	359	-	-	46	405
Operation Security Forces	41	1	324	-	366
Thrasher Civilians	269	-	263	-	532
Total	669	1	587	46	1 303
Insurgents	262	-	-	53	315
Operation Security Forces	29	-	138	-	167
Repulse Civilians	96	7	104	-	207
Total	387	7	242	53	689
Insurgents	18	-	-	13	31
Operation Security Forces	14	-	30	-	44
Tangent Civilians	36	3	37	-	76
Total	68	3	67	13	151

TABLE 1.1: Casualty figures per Operational Area up to 30 January 1977

Note: Operation Tangent was only officially designated during August 1977.

The disparity between their respective war efforts had led to considerable friction between ZANU and ZAPU. The attitude of the Frontline states had made it clear to ZAPU president Nkomo that any political future and power had to lie within the confines of the Patriotic Front, as such armed forces were the decisive factor. Nkomo thus forfeited his negotiating power *vis-à-vis* Harare and wasted little time in building up the ZPRA armed forces from an embryo liberation movement into a fully trained and capable army of a largely conventional nature. February saw the first sign of this; reports indicated increased recruitment by ZAPU in western

Rhodesia, via Botswana. The most dramatic example was the abduction of approximately 400 pupils from the Manama Secondary School in south-western Rhodesia. Only 51 of the 384 students elected to return to Rhodesia after personal appeals by their parents. This was followed on 16 February by the proclamation of the first 'no-go' area along the border with Botswana. Although Botswana did not become an active training area for insurgents as did Zambia, Mozambique, Angola and Tanzania, it was slowly developing into an established transit area from which recruits and abductees were forwarded (mostly by air) to training camps in Zambia and Angola. The return route into Rhodesia was usually back through Botswana, down the Grove road and into western Rhodesia. Although Sir Seretse Khama did not choose to bring Botswana from Frontline status into the front line itself, his commitment to the armed struggle strengthened perceptibly. While there was no *prima facie* case to be made against Botswana as to the harbouring and training of insurgents, Rhodesian authorities hesitated to open an active third front in view of the burden already imposed upon their Security Forces.

Until 1978, ZPRA infiltration into Matabeleland had been relatively limited, for Nkomo had decided on a risky strategy. As from 1977, ZPRA was divided into two forces, a smaller insurgent force, and a large, mostly external, conventional army stationed in Zambia. The relative cohesion of the Matabele ethnic grouping was reflected in the cohesion of ZAPU as against the divisions within ZANU. Nkomo's traditional tribal base was secure and, aware of the historical animosity that existed between Shona and Matabele, he appreciated the difficulty of making inroads into Shona territory. Since the Matabele represented only twenty percent of the Rhodesian black population, it seemed obvious that ZAPU would have to resort to other means to reassert its dominance over the Shona majority. This could only be effected by force of arms.

In contrast to ZANU, which had committed all its forces to Rhodesia, consolidating its power base and even attempting to infringe on that of ZAPU, Nkomo's forces were training and waiting *en masse* in Zambia and Angola. Had the war reached the final stage of insurgency, that of mobile warfare, the outcome of the Lancaster House talks might have been quite different. By early 1978 ZPRA was reported to be 8 000 strong, and growing, with Cuban instructors based in Angola responsible for much of the training. In

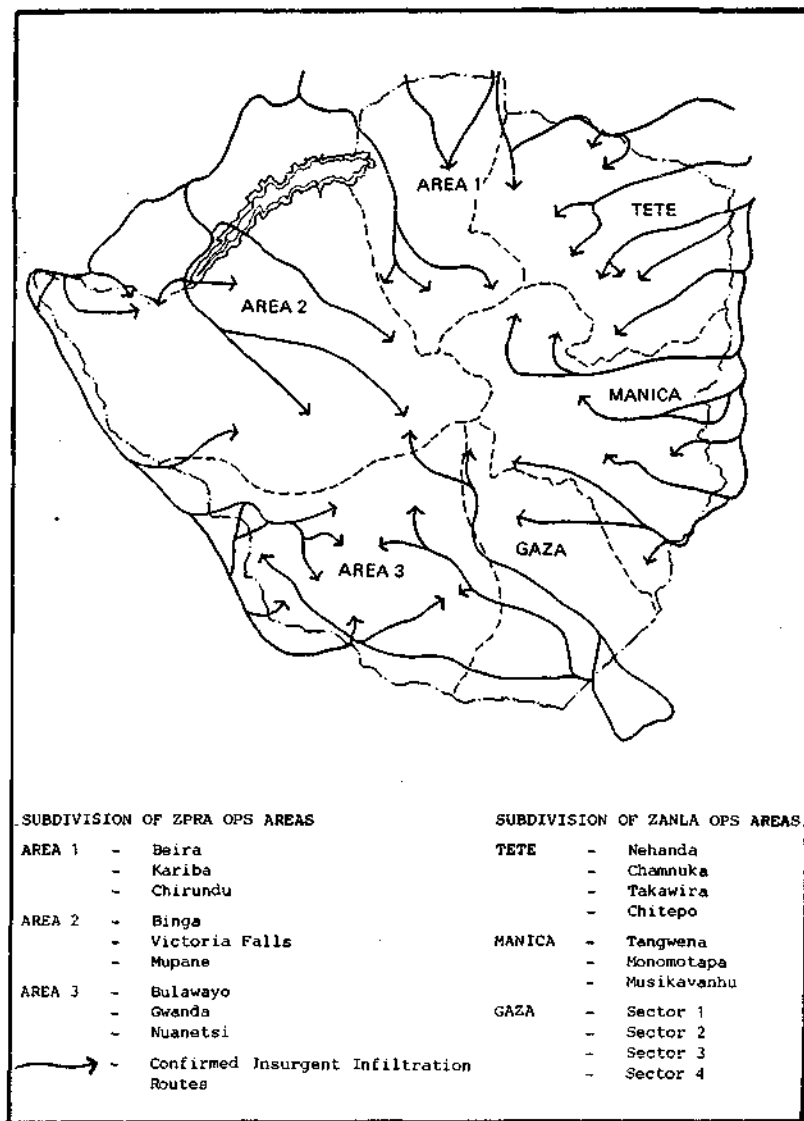


Figure 1.4 Insurgent Infiltration Routes

Lusaka a number of high ranking Soviet officers had taken control of ZPRA strategy.

Prime Minister Ian Smith was apparently influenced by the strongstand taken by his security chiefs and rejected Ivor Richards' final proposals on 24 January 1977, which effectively ended the Kissinger initiative. The British envoy had already given an indication of future trends the previous day by ruling out British recognition of any internal settlement - even one elected by means of a landslide victory. Both Nkomo and Mugabe had also made it clear that they were no longer interested in the proposals made by Richards and the latter had no choice but to end his mission. In the meantime, across the Atlantic, the rise to power of President Jimmy Carter and that of his United Nations representative, Andrew Young, indicated a significant shift in American foreign policy concerning the surviving white regimes in Black Africa.

Within Rhodesia the bush war had reached a new intensity with the massacre of Roman Catholic missionaries on 6 February at St Paul's mission, Musami. The onslaught against the morale of the whites was about to be intensified to an unprecedented level bringing the war closer to the urban white communities than at any time before.

For the first time since the start of the war, cracks seemed to appear in the cohesion of the Rhodesian Front Party as a result of the intensifying war. During February Minister of Defence Reginald Cowper resigned, ostensibly as a result of the controversy surrounding new call-up measures. The tight rein kept on the running of the war by the Prime Minister, sometimes to the exclusion of his Minister of Defence, later proved to be the real reason for Cowper's resignation. Further dissension occurred when Prime Minister Smith forced through the Land Tenure Amendment Bill during March, whereby white agricultural land was opened for purchase by all races. A group of twelve dissident Rhodesian Front members opposed the Bill and Smith had to rely on the votes of six African Members of Parliament to have it passed. Predictably this led to a cabinet reshuffle on 10 March.

By late March 1977 the Rhodesian government admitted that the insurgency had developed into a full scale revolutionary onslaught. This was confirmed by the formation of Combined Operations Headquarters (COMOPS) and the announcement on 23 March that the senior army officer at each Joint Operations Centre (JOC) would assume command of counter-

insurgency operations in his designated area. Against a background of strenuous efforts to tighten the call-up system, the announcement was made that the death toll in the four year campaign had passed the four thousand mark and stood at 4 044. Of these, 79 were white civilians, 1 394 black civilians, 292 Security Force members and 2 279 insurgent fatalities (inside Rhodesia only). By 6 April official estimates totalled some 2 500 insurgents operating inside Rhodesia with 520 in Operation Hurricane, 1 000 in Thrasher, 650 in Repulse and 220 in Tangent. The latter operational area encompassed the south-western and much of the western area of Rhodesia. It was officially proclaimed during August 1977, to counter ZPRA infiltration from Botswana.

The Protected Village programme was gradually extended along the eastern border with Mozambique. Meanwhile, in a nationwide address on 3 April the new commander COMOPS, Lieutenant-General Peter Walls announced the start of a fresh 'hearts and minds' campaign among the black population. Although a small number of territorial officers had been engaged in promoting both civil action and psychological action, very little success could be claimed within the ranks of either regular or territorial members. Their efforts, however, were formalized in the creation of 1 Psychological Operations Unit on 1 July 1977. In general, however, psychological operations executed in Rhodesia proved a failure. They were aimed at convincing the blacks to support the white regime instead of attempting to change white racial views as a prelude to any such support. That Rhodesia entirely lacked any grasp of the dynamics of the revolutionary threat facing her is nowhere more perfectly evidenced than by the statement of the then Minister of Information P. K. van der Byl in which he, in hindsight, said

I wanted to step up the use of the bayonet that's the most effective propaganda - the bayonet .(28)

Van der Byl was, as Minister of Information, in control of the majority of psychological operations.

In the meanwhile the roving Owen-Young settlement initiative had been gaining momentum. Despite some alarmingly naïve political views, Ambassador Andrew Young did, however, see that: 'if you want to stop the fighting you have to talk to the people with the guns.'(30)

Both Young and British Foreign Secretary Dr

David Owen had toured the Frontline states to gain impressions and to gather support for their proposals. Dr Owen arrived in Harare on 15 April to prepare for the Anglo-American consultative team which was to arrive on 26 May. These talks soon ran into difficulties. As the year progressed it became apparent that neither Ian Smith nor the Patriotic Front was interested in what could be offered. Smith favoured an internal settlement with moderate black nationalist leaders. To this end the Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole was allowed to return to Rhodesia on 10 July. This followed talks with Rhodesian Government officials in Malawi regarding a coalition between himself and Bishop Muzorewa.

It seemed that Prime Minister Smith had at last become convinced of the necessity for a political settlement, although with defunct black nationalist figures. By now the Reverend Sithole had lost all effective control over both ZANU and ZANLA, as well as any backing he might have had from members of the Frontline states. Following both Organisation of Africa Unity and Frontline endorsement of the Patriotic Front and its leadership, Bishop Muzorewa had also been left without any external support. The white general election fought in Rhodesia on 31 August was also aimed at obtaining a mandate for a possible internal settlement, as well as crushing the right wing Rhodesian Action Party.

In a White Paper dated 1 September 1977, the British government published Anglo-American proposals for a Rhodesian settlement. Field Marshal Lord Carver was nominated as resident commissioner designate for the transition period. Prime Minister Smith's response was characteristic: 'We have had crazy proposals before and managed to shrug them off and go on.' (31)

Yet the proposed internal settlement was delayed in view of the new proposals. At the same time a third prominent black nationalist leader returned to Rhodesia, the veteran James Chikerema. He subsequently became Vice-president of Bishop Muzorewa's United African National Council (UANC). In an effort both to divide the Patriotic Front and to obtain the concurrence of 'the men with the guns' a highly secretive approach by Smith to Nkomo failed during October.

During this time Lord Carver and the United Nations appointee, General Prem Chand, had run into distinct difficulties on their tour of Southern Africa. Finally disillusioned with the Anglo-American proposals, Prime Minister Smith announced on 26 November

that he accepted majority rule as a preliminary to beginning internal settlement negotiation. Thus ended the last attempt at a negotiated international settlement before the Lancaster House deliberations.

Inevitably, the war for Rhodesia had forced Smith's hand in the intervening months. By the middle of 1977 it had spread across the entire country. Although large scale external operations into Zambia only began during 1978, Smith had, to President Kaunda's extreme chagrin, used the 'good offices' of the British government to warn Zambia, some months earlier, that pre-emptive strikes could be launched against insurgent bases in his country. The Zambian leader promptly responded on 16 May 1977, by placing his country on a war footing. Tension along the common Rhodesian-Zambian border rose dramatically, as was also the case along Rhodesia's eastern border. In the case of Mozambique, external operations had now come to be accepted as a primary element in Security Force strategy. As with the Mapai and Tembue raids on 24 and 25 November the main justification from a military point of view was the elimination of the potential threat before the start of the annual summer rains. In the case of both countries, the initially spectacular results obtained from external operations did not last indefinitely. After the first Chimoio raid into Mozambique (1976), and as from late 1978 in Zambia, insurgent forces were quick to adapt their base camp strategy to counter the methods used by Rhodesian Army and Air Force elements during these raids.

Internally, sporadic insurgent activity surfaced around the central plateau towns of Que Que, Gweru and Shangani, and even the major urban centres of Harare and Bulawayo no longer seemed entirely safe. Facing the grim prospect of urban terrorism, precautionary measures became a way of life. New operational areas flourished. The great tourist attraction and holiday resort of Lake Kariba was designated Operation Splinter, for ZPRA infiltration across the lake in rubber dingies had become too widespread to ignore. During August the central province of Midlands officially became Operation Grapple, bearing silent witness to the spread of insurgency across the country. Largely as an administrative and logistic unit, the urban area surrounding Harare was designated Salops (Salisbury Operations). In rural areas the local administration was fast approaching almost total collapse. Insurgent forces had launched a concerted campaign to close all schools, hospitals, clinics, and in fact all local

representation or symbols of government authority. By July some 300 schools, mostly in Operation Hurricane, had already been forced to close, leaving more than 40 000 children without schools. The most devastating success by ZANLA insurgents was a bomb explosion at a Woolworth store in Harare on 7 August 1977. Eleven people were killed and more than 70 injured. Although nearly all casualties were black, the war had become a sudden reality to people in the cities. As a barometer of white morale, white emigration during August exceeded immigration by 1 006.

By November 1977, insurgent strengths within the various operational areas were as follows:

Operation Hurricane	904
Operation Thrasher	1 500
Operation Repulse	1 650
Operation Tangent	932
Operation Grapple	180
Salops	50
Total Insurgents	<u>5 216</u>

With the onset of the annual summer rainy season, monthly incidents had risen from 479 (October), to 540 (November) to 642 (December) and 763 (January 1978). During February 1978 the monthly tally fell to 579 and stabilized at well over 500 incidents per month. While the total number of trained insurgents both inside and outside Rhodesia had almost trebled between early 1976 and late 1977, internal insurgent casualties for 1976 were 1 244 killed and 160 captured against 1 770 killed and 219 captured for 1977. Purely statistically, the security situation was deteriorating with each passing month. The most critical Security Force commodity was manpower and that seemed dangerously limited. The major source of manpower remained the mobilisation of reserves. The call-up eventually encompassed all able-bodied white men between 18 and 60 years of age. All white youths between 18 and 25 were liable for conscription which increased from 12 to 18 months. Eventually the eight battalions of the Rhodesia Regiment with a strength on paper of 15 000 provided the backbone of the Territorial Army. Its counterpart in the British South Africa Police, the Police Reserve, became a repository for less able and older men.

In April 1977 conscription was extended to the 38 to 50 age group and exemptions were severely reduced. The maximum call-up for those under 38 was increased to 190 days a year: those older than 50 were asked to volunteer for police duties. In

September of the same year a short service scheme was introduced whereby the government encouraged national servicemen to stay on for another year by offering a Rh\$ 100 a month bonus. But even such inducements could not solve the problem of a dwindling white reservoir of manpower and an ever increasing enemy.

The year 1977 ended in a spectacular way for the insurgent forces with a bold although unsuccessful attack on Grand Reef Air Base near Mutare on 18 December.

### 1.9 The Internal Settlement

Meanwhile internal settlement talks had duly begun on 9 December 1977, against a background succinctly described in the Financial Times:

Yet a combination of factors now makes an internal settlement appear more possible than at any time in the past ... perhaps most important of all, the four parties engaged in the discussions fear that if they fail, they will become increasingly irrelevant to the outcome. (32)

The internal talks in Harare resumed on 3 January 1978, after a Christmas recess and the Patriotic Front sought desperately to thwart the momentum that seemed to be building up from Prime Minister Smith's projected settlement with moderate black leaders. Talks ensued in Malta with both British and American representatives, while the threat of losing the international initiative led to attempts by both Nkomo and Mugabe to solidify their two factions within a single political and military structure. As before, however, politics, personalities, tribalism and ambition precluded any really integrated structure.

On 15 February Harare announced that an eight point agreement had been reached as a basis for a majority rule government. This was followed by further discussions concerning the composition of the future defence force and the structure of the constitutional government. Against the background of British scepticism, American condemnation and Patriotic Front rejection, Ian Smith, Bishop Abel Muzorewa, the Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole and Chiriah Chirau signed on 3 March 1978, what was to become known as the Internal Settlement Agreement.

White minority rule effectively came to an end in Rhodesia with a Transitional Government ruling the country until majority rule was instituted on 31 December 1978. In the interim an Executive Council consisting of the four signatories governed the country with black/white parity in the Ministerial Council. Although the internal leaders had left the door to negotiations with the Patriotic Front ajar, it was evident that a final effort was under way towards a settlement of the Rhodesian dispute.

The Agreement of 3 March was based on two primary objectives: the first was the achievement of international recognition; the second an end to the war. Recognition was to be achieved by presenting the outside world with the results from a free and fair election which bore witness to the support these three black parties had amongst the black population.

On the one hand an end to the war flowed from the internal political initiative, and on the other from the support Bishop Muzorewa and Reverend Sithole claimed to have within the ranks of the insurgents. The two aims were closely linked. When the one failed to materialize so did the other.

In an attempt to benefit at an early stage from the momentum of the settlement talks, the first full scale safe return programme, including an amnesty offer, was announced by Harare on 20 January to be repeated on 2 May. Both proved futile gestures. Intelligence reports indicated that the achievement of majority rule under an internal settlement could lead to possibly hundreds of insurgents making use of the amnesty offer. It soon became apparent that conclusive proof would first have to be given that the agreement was to achieve international recognition and the lifting of sanctions. Any such offer of leniency had of necessity to be made from a position of strength and at a time that insurgent defeat seemed only a matter of time. This was hardly the case within Rhodesia at the time. During February, when the eight point plan agreement was announced, insurgent strengths were as follows:

	ZANLA	ZPRA	TOTAL
Operation Hurricane	710	110	820
Operation Thrasher	1 920	-	1 920
Operation Repulse	1 610	10	1 620
Operation Tangent	240	570	810
Operation Grapple	140	238	378
Salops	25	25	50
Total	4 645	953	5 598



By March, the total stood at 6 456. At the same time black nationalists, who had now obtained both executive and Cabinet status, realized that having linked their fortunes to that of their former enemies, the forces of their external nationalist 'allies' would at least have to be held at bay until the political initiative overtook events. To this end external operations against Botswana and Zambia were stepped up, and it almost seemed that the new black/white government in Harare was set to fight an even more ruthless war than had the previous all-white regime. Nevertheless, reports indicated that ZAPU recruitment in western Matabeleland was continuing unabated, with more than 10 000 recruits airlifted from Botswana to Zambia. The abduction of 420 black children from the Methodist School at Tegwani once again provided substantiating evidence to this effect. By June, Prime Minister Smith was publicly expressing his disappointment over the results achieved by the Internal Settlement, and appealed to Britain for recognition.

Despite the repeated demands of the internal black leaders, very little was done for five crucial months towards the removal of discriminatory measures, owing to Rhodesian Front resistance. Much of the international momentum gained towards recognition of events in Harare was thus lost. Only on 10 October was an announcement made, envisaging an end to racial discrimination in schools, hospitals and residential areas. In the first of yet another series of shocks to white morale, twelve missionaries were massacred by ZANLA insurgents at the Elim Pentecostal Mission on 3 June. In what seemed part of a concerted campaign, officials from Bishop Muzorewa's United Africa National Council attempting to explain the internal agreement to the rural black population were also killed. In the period January to June alone, some 20 000 black Rhodesians fled into Botswana, while figures released during September indicated that 4 664 insurgents had been killed since the start of the war in December 1972. Nearly 550 members of the Security Forces had also lost their lives during the same period. On 4 September white morale received its second shock when it was reported that an Air Rhodesia Viscount had been shot down by a SA-7 ground-to-air missile and that ten of the eighteen survivors had subsequently been massacred by ZPRA insurgents.

This incident had two direct results. On 12 September it was announced that martial law was to be introduced. People in the affected areas had hence-

forth to comply with and obey all regulations, orders and instructions issued by officers of government and the Security Forces. Special military courts-martial were empowered to impose any sentence, including capital punishment, on any person who committed an act relating to what was simply described as 'terrorism' within the martial law areas. This also applied to those who impeded the suppression of insurgency or the maintenance of law, order and public safety.

Executive officers of the Government, the military forces and other security forces of the Government and its other servants employed to assist the Government are hereby vested with full and complete powers and authority to do all things in their judgement proper and necessary. (33)

By early November almost a half of Rhodesia had been placed under martial law. Three weeks later this had been extended to roughly 70% of the country. By September 1979, 90% of the country was under this law.

Although Security Forces were accorded wide discretionary powers by the institution of martial law, the Rhodesian armed forces were no longer able to enforce compliance. Having delayed the institution of martial law, the security situation had been allowed to deteriorate to such an extent that the available manpower was totally inadequate to cope with the threat.

The second, and potentially the most serious result of the Viscount massacre, was that resentment amongst the white population forced Prime Minister Ian Smith to halt all talks with Joshua Nkomo, leader of ZAPU, at a time that these had seemed on the verge of success. An agreement with Nkomo at this critical stage could possibly have tilted the balance of international recognition in favour of the Transitional Government. The massacre had occurred the day after Smith and Nkomo admitted they had met in secret.

Internally, the momentum gained from the internal settlement seemed to be slipping away slowly as an increasing number of reports told of a general black apathy towards the Transitional Government. A scheme to open Protected Villages soon ran into difficulties as it became evident that this only served to further loosen the precarious grip the government had on the rural populace. The latter, in fact, bore silent witness to the general failure of the

Protected Village programme. Standards of living among the local population had declined instead of rising while they were concentrated in these villages, resulting in a general belief that life outside the Protected Village was better. The reverse was the only guarantee for the success of the Protected Village scheme as a whole. The inability of the new government to abide by the 31 December target for the achievement of majority rule seemed further to underline the relatively leisurely pace at which Rhodesia's leaders were seeking an internationally recognised settlement. On 29 October an official announcement was made setting a new timetable for achieving majority rule. Black elections were now scheduled for April 1979. According to Ian Smith the delay was entirely due to 'mechanical problems'. But 1978 had seen one promising development, that of the Security Force Auxiliaries. Although not in accord with the initial idea, the Auxiliary scheme encompassed the formation of private political forces loyal to Bishop Muzerewa and the Reverend Sithole respectively. When Special Branch initiated the scheme the idea was to provide villages with their own local militia for protection. After a pilot scheme started in Msana Tribal Trust Lands early in 1978 proved highly successful the scheme was expanded. By the end of that year the Security Force Auxiliaries numbered over 2 000 men.

Although some serious mistakes were made during the execution of the Security Force Auxiliary scheme, this represented the first broad attempt by the authorities to regain and consolidate their hold on the Tribal Trust Lands. This vital element of providing permanent and participatory protection at local level had always been lacking in Security Force strategy. Numerous 'search and destroy' operations were conducted, but a 'clear and hold'-type operation had never been introduced in a satisfactory manner. In the months preceding the April 1979 elections, every possible effort was made to field, recruit, train and deploy as many Security Force Auxiliaries as possible. Their success was validated in no uncertain terms by the April 1979 election results.

Those insurgents considering support for the internal settlement were encouraged to join the Security Forces. To facilitate this, an intensive propaganda campaign was launched to present these forces as consisting of ex-insurgents that had decided to support the Transitional Government. While this was initially the case to a certain extent, the

majority of Auxiliary members were recruited by the political parties themselves.

Following the Viscount massacre any agreement with ZAPU was now ruled out and amidst increased reports of an alarming build-up of ZPRA forces within Zambia as from 21 October. Rhodesian armed forces launched their deepest air raid yet on insurgent bases at Chikunbi, Mkushi, Old Mkushi and Mborama. The reasons for these operations before the summer rains lay in the extension of martial law announced on 31 October to include most of Matabeleland, the traditional ZAPU power base. These areas were being infiltrated on an increased scale from the bases mentioned above.

White morale was obviously declining rapidly. During December white emigration recorded a nett loss of 2 771 emigrants, while the total loss for 1978 stood at 13 709. On 11 December ZANLA insurgents attacked the central oil storage depot in the heart of Harare's industrial site. The resulting fire lasted six days and destroyed tens of million litres of precious fuel. Harare was aghast. Guarantees as to white pensions, property, jobs and the like that Prime Minister Smith had extracted from his three black co-leaders and detailed within the proposed constitution for Zimbabwe-Rhodesia seemed of little consequence to a white population having to fight an increasingly desperate war.

A concise statement of the eminently successful insurgent strategy that had been followed during 1978 reads as follows:

The PF strategy is to undermine government control over the population in three ways. First is disruption of internal administration and governmental services ... The second ... is complete intimidation of the populace. One objective is to break down the traditional authority, with its implied replacement, ultimately by some new form of social organisation. The other objective is to demonstrate government inability to provide security ... The third part of PF strategy is to render the entire counterinsurgency effort of the government cost ineffective. (34)

The year 1979 held little hope for the whites in Rhodesia. Black conscription produced a poor 300 recruits out of 1 544 drafted. Call-ups for whites were extended to all men aged between 50 and 59, each of whom had to serve 42 days of the year, while

government announced that it was examining ways of tightening deferment and exemption procedures. The only promising news from the security point of view was the success that the Security Force Auxiliaries were having in Msana, Chinamora, Chesa and Manyeni Tribal Trust Lands. On 12 February a second Air Rhodesia Viscount was brought down by a SA-7 missile resulting in the death of all 59 people on board. In the short period from December 1978 to January 1979 insurgent numbers inside Rhodesia had risen from 8 954 to 11 183, an increase of 2 229 (25%). As indicated below, the whole of Rhodesia had now been divided into operational areas by the insurgent forces. Operation Thrasher had the highest density of insurgents at this stage. (See Figure 1.5)

Ian Smith's attitude *vis-à-vis* the newly published constitution was well summarized by Martin Meredith:

The welfare of the whites was Smith's concern. He did not perceive at the time that, to make the internal settlement plan work, the black leaders needed to win terms favourable enough for them to be able to convince the black population that a real transfer of power was taking place which merited their support. Instead he argued that, as the whites had agreed to one-man one-vote, it was the turn of the nationalists to make concessions. (35)

This was possibly best illustrated by the 28 seats allocated to the whites in parliament. Since entrenched clauses in the constitution could only be amended by a vote of 72 black and 6 white members, Smith had secured a considerable veto for white power for a period of 10 years.

Against the background of a very successful air attack on the ZPRA training base at Luso in Angola, the Security Force apparatus started with the largest build-up of forces the country had ever witnessed. To counter Patriotic Front threats to disrupt the elections that had now been scheduled for April, Security Force numbers were raised to unprecedented levels. In fact, for the first time in the six years of war, at least in terms of the white population, Rhodesia was mobilized. Leave for all regulars and civilians with Security Force commitments was cancelled. Curfews were extended. By April 60 000 Security Force personnel were in the field. On 16 March an amnesty and guaranteed safe return offer was once again made, but had almost no success. March provided

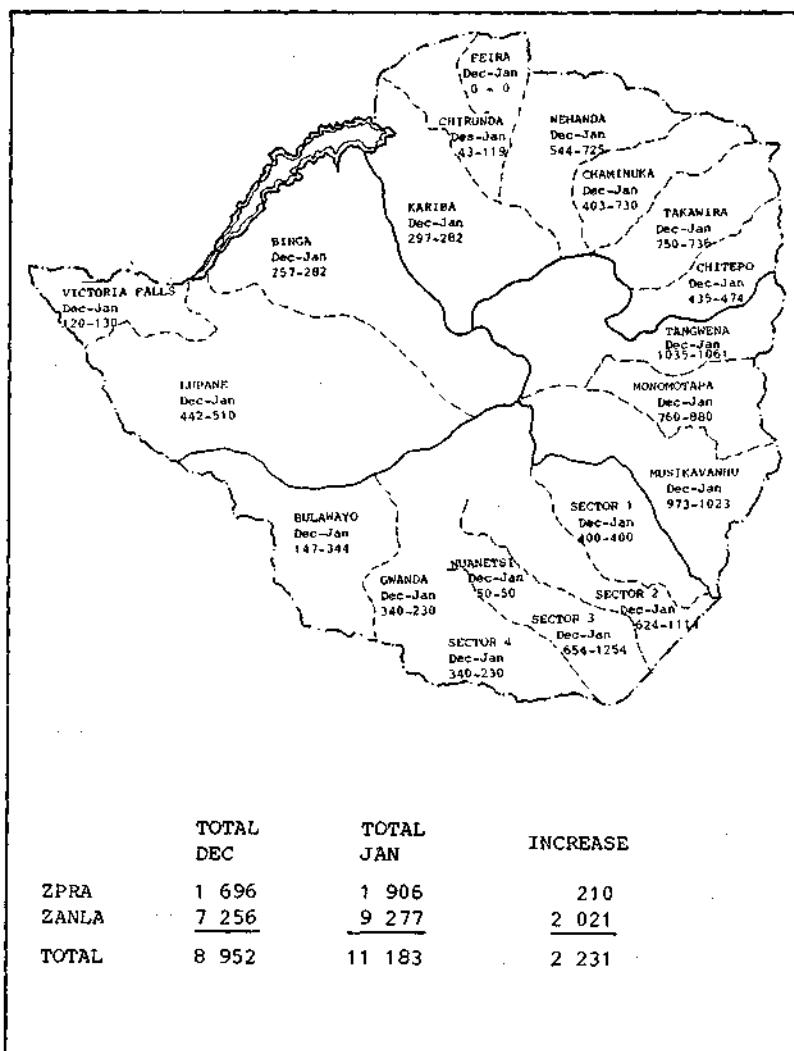


Figure 1.5 Increase in Insurgent Numbers:

Dec. 1978 to Jan. 1979

a rare public example of the personality clashes that were so prevalent within the ranks of the senior Security Force commanders. The Commander of the Army, Lieutenant-General Hickman was dismissed for 'disciplinary' reasons. Ostensibly this was as the result of a clash between General Hickman and Lieutenant-Colonel Reid-Daly, the commander of the Selous Scouts. In fact, however, the reasons were rooted more deeply than the bugging of the colonel's telephone as part of investigations on an alleged charge of game poaching. This kind of clash was quite common among senior Army commanders as well as amongst Internal Affairs, Special Branch and British South African Police officials. This bickering hampered the smooth functioning of the defence apparatus as a whole.

Prior to the elections, Rhodesian forces launched a daring Land Rover raid into Lusaka on 13 April. Although Nkomo was not killed in the attack on his home, the operation was a definite blow to both ZPRA and Zambia. At the same time the Kasangula Ferry, the only link between Botswana and Zambia, was sunk in the most audacious raid yet into Botswana. Then, during the first days of April, having delayed the announcement for as long as possible for security reasons, Harare announced that polling would begin on 17 April. Although Patriotic Front forces attacked 18 of the 932 polling stations, none was closed.

When the final results of the election were announced on 24 April Bishop Muzorewa's United African National Council had taken 67% of the total vote, the Reverend Sithole's ZANU 16,5% and Chief Chirau's ZUPO, 6%. An astounding 64,45% of the voting population had cast their votes. (35) International recognition seemed only a hairsbreadth away. Insurgent casualties internally had shot up from 208 during February 1979, to 423 for March and nearly reaching 650 during April. Intelligence reports indicated that the massive electoral support obtained by Bishop Muzorewa had led to literally hundreds of insurgents waiting for an indication of international recognition before making use of the amnesty offer. Yet the momentum that had been restored to the floundering internal solution slowed down almost immediately. With nearly all available white manpower mobilized, the Rhodesian economy was approaching stagnation. The result was that demobilization of forces commenced very soon after the elections. The intense pressure that had been brought to bear on insurgent forces eased, and as it did, so did the

incentive to make use of any amnesty offer. The Security Forces were, however, themselves totally misled by the election results. Instead of realizing that essentially the black people had voted for peace, a classified Army briefing document simplistically stated:

Subversion. The high election poll (63,9%) indicates that the terrorists have not subverted the African population to the degree sometimes believed. As 65% of the African population live in the rural areas, and 60% of the total vote came from rural areas, the indication is that only 5% of adults in the rural areas support, or are totally dominated by the terrorists. Most of their support in rural areas seems to come from irresponsible youths (Mujibas).

The Reverend Ndabaningi Sithole, astounded by the lack of support for his party, condemned the election as a fraud and refused to participate in the government. Prior to the elections, Special Branch had predicted the number of seats he would win with amazing precision. Convinced, however, of his own prowess and stature as nationalist leader, Reverend Sithole had rejected these alarming findings. The Reverend saw himself as the natural alternative to the rather inept and bumbling Bishop, but in reality he had lost all control over both ZANU and ZANLA. His sole support was amongst that of his own tribe, the Ndau, along the eastern border.

In reaction to the election results, the leaders of the two most committed Frontline countries, Presidents Kaunda and Machel met in Maputo to discuss the fragile unity of the Patriotic Front. Little resulted, although the two Patriotic Front co-leaders did announce in Addis Ababa during May the formation of a single constitution and joint command for military operations.

Once political initiative had started to ebb, the weight of the 2 500 to 3 000 ZPRA and 10 000 to 11 000 ZANLA insurgents inside the country again began to take its toll. To counter this, COMOPS stepped up the frequency of external operations. Raids into the heart of Lusaka and deep into Mozambique appeared to become an almost weekly occurrence.

While the election of President Carter had announced a US foreign policy severely hostile to the Smith regime, the election of Mrs Margaret Thatcher as British Prime Minister on 3 May, seemed

to indicate a less hostile British policy. The choice, however, of Lord Carrington as Foreign Secretary instead of Francis Pym was the first sign that a Conservative Government of Britain might not necessarily be sympathetic to Rhodesia. Further indication of this was received during the Commonwealth Heads of State Conference held in Lusaka during August. It soon became apparent that Conservative government policy regarding the government of National Unity in Rhodesia was based on expediency rather than principle. Yet the release of the Boyd and Drinkwater reports on the Rhodesian elections encouraged optimism as to the chances of British recognition. Meanwhile, at one minute past midnight on 1 June, the Republic of Rhodesia ceased to exist as the new Zimbabwe-Rhodesia Constitution came into effect, to last a total of 195 days.

Other internal developments were also having their own effects. Disciplinary problems within Security Force Auxiliaries loyal to the Reverend Sithole led to Security Forces killing 183 Auxiliaries in Gokwe Tribal Trust Land during June. Within the ruling United African National Council (UANC) Prime Minister Muzorewa had also run into difficulties. During July James Chikerema and 7 UANC Members of Parliament broke away to form the Zimbabwe Democratic Party (ZDP) as a Zezuru tribal grouping. This effectively stripped the UANC of Parliamentary control, reducing its share of the total 100 seats to 44. Prime Minister Muzorewa was once again dependent on the 28 white Members of Parliament as the second largest voting block. The Reverend Sithole had occupied his 12 seats after his Security Force Auxiliaries power base had been shut down by a UANC government. By favouring his own Manyika tribe in the composition of the Cabinet, Bishop Muzorewa further hastened the loss of united political and local support.

The security situation in the post election period had deteriorated. During July 1979 the deployment figures for Security Forces were roughly as follows:

33 Infantry companies deployed (8 companies each in Hurricane, Repulse and Tangent, 7 in Thrasher and 2 in Grapple)	3 300
3 Rhodesian Light Infantry commando's as reaction force	240
2 squadrons Grey Scouts	80
Special Air Service	250
Selous Scouts	420

Security Force Auxiliaries	8 000
Guard Force	7 000
Internal Affairs	5 000
Defence Units	6 900
British South Africa Police	9 000
British South Africa Police Reservists	30 000

Note: The figures indicate actual deployment and not total strength of unit(s).

The total number of officially recorded monthly incidents had increased from an average of under 600 in late 1979 to 935 during March 1979. By April this figure increased to 1 110, and totalled 1 706 for May. The majority of these incidents consisted of reported cases of intimidation and contacts between Security Forces and the insurgents. The latter, especially in the case of ZANLA, were exacting a terrible revenge for the local support given to Bishop Muzorewa. By September 1979 the UANC popular base had vanished.

#### 1.10 Lancaster House

British Foreign Secretary, Lord Carrington, had by now decided on a last attempt at resolving the Rhodesian problem. Not very confident of success, his approach differed in one important aspect from previous British initiatives. He was prepared to reassert Britain's responsibility for devising a solution, including active British participation in the process. The basis of the Tory solution was agreed upon through discussions among Britain, Zambia, Tanzania, Nigeria, Jamaica and Australia during the Commonwealth conference in August. Instead of primarily talking to the Patriotic Front as was the case with the Owen-Young initiative, the proposals first were directed at Mozambique and Zambia as the countries serving as hosts to the insurgents. Both countries were economically desperate for an end to a war that was threatening to engulf them. With internal dissension rife in Mozambique, President Machel was in particularly dire straits.

Thus the first Rhodesian constitutional conference on British home soil opened on 10 September 1979. As if to underline the Zambian need for a settlement, Zimbabwe-Rhodesian forces bombed three bridges on the Beira-Moatize railway line in Mozambique and blew up the Chambeshi railway bridge in

northern Zambia. Both Zambia's eastern outlets to the Indian Ocean had thus been severed. The Benguela railway line through the west was also closed by UNITA insurgents operating in Angola, with the result that Zambia was virtually strangled. To forestall any possible conventional ZPRA attack from Zambia, four bridges on the Lusaka-Chirundu and Lusaka-Victoria Falls were also destroyed. In effect Zambia was denied the use of road or rail to move their imports or exports. Even the Kasangula ferry had been sunk the previous year. Zambia was now almost totally dependant for all her imports and exports on the remaining link through the south.

By a shrewd combination of brinkmanship and diplomacy, Lord Carrington forced through his settlement plan. With the majority of his forces still based in Zambia, ZAPU leader Joshua Nkomo ordered his ZPRA forces to infiltrate Rhodesia in an effort to consolidate his internal power base to the extent that had already been achieved by the ZANLA forces of Robert Mugabe. COMOPS still pursued a forward defence posture as regards Zambia. Special Air Service, Selous Scouts and Rhodesian Light Infantry forces were pushed across the Zambezi river with the aim of halting all movement southwards from Lusaka. Some success was achieved but British pressure brought to bear on the Zimbabwe-Rhodesian delegation at Lancaster House forced the withdrawal of these forces from Zambian soil. With the vast majority of his forces already committed, Mugabe and ZANLA were potentially in a much stronger position than Nkomo. Although the negotiated ceasefire called for the movement of all insurgents inside Zimbabwe-Rhodesia to 16 selected assembly points and a stop to all cross-border movement, neither ZANLA nor ZPRA were to pay much more than lip service to the latter. Against the background of continual external raids by Zimbabwe-Rhodesian Security Forces, Lord Carrington, in a desperate gamble, sent British appointed governor Lord Soames to Harare on 11 December. His appointment and despatch to Harare were directed more towards supplying momentum to the stop-start talks at Lancaster House than at the exercise of any real authority, for on 15 December Mugabe had walked out. Pressure mainly brought to bear by Mozambique forced him to return to the negotiating table. Thus, at midnight, 21 December, all cross-border movement was to stop and efforts were initiated towards informing all insurgents of the ceasefire arrangements. A Commonwealth monitoring force under command of General John Acland was to supervise the movement

of all Patriotic Front insurgents to 16 Assembly Points and then keep them there. Only 1 300 men strong, by 6 January 1980 the force had assembled 15 730 insurgents. Within days this number swelled to about 22 000. Of these about 16 500 were ZANLA and the remainder ZPRA. Several thousand distrustful insurgents chose, however, to remain outside the Assembly Points and sent mujiba's instead. Officially this marked the end of the war, yet the political war was only finalized with the announcement during April 1980 that ZANU, now known as ZANU(PF), had against all predictions had an overwhelming victory of 63% of the national vote. Mugabe's party was thus entitled to 57 of the 80 black seats in Parliament. Voting was clearly divided between the Shona and Matabele groupings, with Nkomo receiving the overwhelming vote in the latter areas. (37) On 18 April 1980, Zimbabwe became independent with Robert Mugabe as its premier.

The war that had been fought so tenaciously by the whites in Rhodesia for almost 15 years ended with their worst fears being realized. Robert Gabriel Mugabe, a self-avowed Marxist, was undisputably the next Prime Minister. The Rhodesian Front was reduced from a position of strength to one of impoverishment and impotence in which they no longer had the power to effect a compromise. Ian Smith and his inflexible colleagues had been entirely circumvented in a revolutionary struggle of classic proportions fought on a total frontage. It could be proudly asserted that Rhodesia had never lost a single battle but had most ignominiously lost the war.

## NOTES

1. P.L. Moorecraft and P. McLaughlin, Chimurenga The War in Rhodesia 1965-1980 (Sygma/Collins, Marshalltown, 1982), p. 100.
2. Two authoritative studies on ethnicity within the Zimbabwean nationalist movements are: W.W. Nyangoni, African Nationalism in Zimbabwe (University Press of America, Washington D.C., 1978) and M. Sithole, Zimbabwe: Struggles within the Struggle (Rujeko, Harare, 1979).
3. D. Martin and P. Johnson, The Struggle for Zimbabwe (Faber and Faber, London, 1981), p. 10.
4. Sithole, Struggles within the Struggle, pp. 34-35.
5. W.W. Nyangoni, 'Revolutionary Strategies for National Liberation in Zimbabwe', (paper presented

to the African Studies Association Conference, Chicago, 31 Oct. - 3 Nov. 1974), p. 10.

6. Ibid, p. 11.

7. Ibid.

8. As quoted by J. Fredrikse, None but Ourselves: Masses vs the Media in the Making of Zimbabwe, (Ravan Press, Johannesburg, 1982), p. 35.

9. The circumstances leading to ZANU acceptance of FRELIMO's offer are well documented in Martin and Johnson, Struggle for Zimbabwe, pp. 14-20.

10. The northeast suited the requirements laid down by Maozedong to a large degree. The following quotation from ZANLA documents captured by the Security Forces at Mororo on 30 and 31 July, 1978, illustrate this clearly

Selection of Base Area

a. Mass condition must be favourable.

b. Organisation condition (of insurgents) must be good ...

c. Enemy condition must be weak. Where the enemy is ruling not so efficiently like places far away from the cities and his strongholds.

d. Where we can expand our forces and develop an organisation and political influence.

e. Good terrain features.

f. Economic strength to support us and the masses for the long period ...

11. From an interview conducted between Mukona and Maj. P.C. Erasmus.

12. As quoted by A. Wilkinson in his introduction to M. Raeburn, Black Fire (Julian Friedman, London, 1978), pp. 12-13.

13. 'Zambezi Konfrontasie', Africa Institute Bulletin, vol. XIII, no. 2 (1973), p. 47.

14. P. Stiff and R. Reid Daly, Selous Scouts: Top Secret War, (Galago, Alberton, 1982), p. 16.

15. Interview with Lieutenant-Colonel I. Bates.

16. Africa Research Bulletin (1-30 Apr. 1974), p. 3212.

17. Fredrikse, None but Ourselves, p. 85.

18. Ibid., p. 88.

19. Africa Research Bulletin, (1-28 Feb. 1974), p. 3144.

20. Sithole, Struggles within the Struggle, pp. 75-76.

21. Stiff and Reid Daly, Selous Scouts, p. 84.

22. M. Meredith, The Past is Another Country, revised and extended edition (Pan Books, London, 1980), p. 171.

23. Wilkinson in Raeburn, Black Fire, p. 41.

24. According to classified Army documentation

total Rhodesian mobilisation figures at this stage were

Army Regulars	3 650
National Servicemen	2 000
Active Territorial Army	4 100
Territorial Army Reserve	7 000
Colours and Asians	1 500
Total	18 250
Air Force	1 200
BSAP Regulars	8 000
Reservists	35 000
Total	43 000

25. Fredrikse, None but Ourselves, p. 132.

26. Wilkinson in Raeburn, Black Fire, pp. 42-

43.

27. Sithole, Struggles within the Struggle, p. 123.

28. This law updated the land Tenure Act of 1969, whereby 45 million acres of land was set aside for blacks and whites respectively. In the white area 38,5 million acres was allocated for farming purposes. Of the 45 million acres reserved for blacks, 39,9 million acres was categorised as Tribal Lands, previously called Reserves. Here a system of communal tenure operated, in contrast to the 3,7 million acres designated as African Purchase Areas where the more wealthy black farmers could purchase land.

29. Fredrikse, None but Ourselves, p. 126.

30. Africa Research Bulletin (1-28 Feb. 1977), p. 4334.

31. Ibid. (1-30 Sep. 1977), p. 4575.

32. Ibid. (1-31 Dec. 1977), p. 4681.

33. Rhodesia Herald, 26 Sep. 1978.

34. J.K. Burton, Counterinsurgency in Rhodesia; Military Review (Apr., 1980), p. 31.

35. Meredith, Past Another Country, p. 325.

36. Fifty one percent, using World Bank projected figures.

37. Mugabe's victory was gained despite a massive propaganda and disinformation campaign launched against him. Entitled 'Operation Welfare' it included false information spread within Mozambique, Zambia, and Zimbabwe, forgery of the weekly Moto newspaper and thousands of pamphlets dropped by air within the rural black areas.

Chapter 2

COMMAND AND CONTROL

2.1 The Rhodesian Security Force's approach to Command and Control

At the start of insurgency activities immediately after the Unilateral Declaration of Independence in 1965, the British South Africa Police quite correctly insisted that the Army was in support of the Police and not vice versa. The type of operation conducted during this period tended, however, to emphasise military rather than police actions. Since incursions were conducted in large groups across relatively uninhabited areas, counter-insurgency operations required tracking and pursuit operations that seemed to fall more within the military domain than within that of the Police. The attitude, particularly amongst middle and lower ranking Rhodesian Army officers, as well as that of the Department of Internal Affairs (now Home Affairs), was not conducive to an effective, total counter-insurgency effort.

Within the Army more than fifty percent of small-unit training was devoted to counter-insurgency tactics such as patrolling, ambushes, cordon and search and pursuit (follow-up) operations. All of these represent an adaptation of conventional military doctrine to meet the threat of armed insurgency. While the above tactics constitute a vital element of counter-insurgency operations, both in eliminating insurgent forces and in dominating an area, the emphasis of Army operations have to change. Since the majority of military forces become involved in operations amongst the inhabitants of various regions, and probably in population control measures, they represent a further extension of administration, thus assuming a partly policing rather than a strictly military role. Obedience to both the spirit and

the letter of the law is essential for the execution of this role within a balanced counter-insurgency campaign. Training and the total approach to counter-insurgency should be supportive rather than punitive. From their experience of the war up to 1972 white Rhodesians believed that the insurgency problem was primarily a military threat. This perception remained a hallmark of the Rhodesian approach to counter-insurgency. Coupled with a sincere belief that the unsophisticated black African was incapable of choosing between alternative political systems, Rhodesian Security Forces and in particular officials from the Department of Internal Affairs continued a paternalistic tradition irksome to an increasing section of the black population.

The whole Rhodesian concept of counter-insurgency warfare suffered greatly as a result of the pre-1972 phase of isolated terrorism and banditry. This image was perpetuated in the command and control structures and mechanisms that were developed to counter the insurgent threat of post 1972. They were largely unsuited to meet the serious threat.

2.2 JOC's, JPS and Operation Hurricane

Before 1972 the Army had divided Rhodesia into three temporary brigade areas. These corresponded with Matabeleland, Mashonaland and Manicaland/Victoria/Harare Police Provinces respectively. The school of Infantry at Gweru was responsible for the initial planning and co-ordinating of operations in Midlands Province. Were an insurgent threat to develop in any of these areas, Joint Operations Centres were formed at the appropriate level to counter the threat. This could either be at company, battalion or even brigade level of command. It consisted of the senior Army British South Africa Police, Special Branch and Air Force officers, and the appropriate Commissioner of the Department of Internal Affairs.

According to the official Rhodesian Army definition, a Joint Operational Centre is:

A joint agency set up by the Security Forces on the authority of Government for the conduct of operations when no single service is solely responsible. (1)

Since the Army representative was normally the highest ranking officer, he assumed chairmanship of the Joint Operational Centre at the start of operations.



Discussions of counter-insurgency measures and planning of action were essentially done on a committee basis. Execution remained strictly departmental. Split decisions, or those possibly in conflict with existing policy, were referred to higher authority for decision. Lower Joint Operational Centres reported to one of the Provincial Joint Operation Centres (PROVOPS), namely SALOPS (for Salisbury Operations), MASHOPS (for Mashonaland), MANOPS (for Manicaland), MIDOPS (for Midlands), MATOPS (for Matabeleland) or VICOPS (for Victoria). PROVOPS roughly corresponded to Army Brigade levels of command but were effectively controlled by the Police. When operations were not being conducted in the specific province, they were usually dormant.

Within the Security Forces, co-ordination was effected via Joint Planning Staffs (JPS) which consisted of a small secretariat and the Operations Co-ordination Committee (OCC). The latter was the senior security planning council immediately below political level. Its members included commanders of the Army and Air Force, the Commissioner of Police and the Director of the Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO). (2) The secretariat to the Operation Co-ordination Committee was supplied by the Joint Planning Staffs and members usually met in person, which lent it considerable weight. As a joint decision-making body, however, the Operation Co-ordination Committee had little authority. An impasse could only be resolved at a higher (political) level.

The chairman of the Joint Planning Staffs was also the secretary of the Operation Co-ordination Committee. This appointment alternated between the Army and Air Force. Initially the post carried the rank of colonel, but was later upgraded to that of brigadier.

At the political level the Deputy Minister in the Department of the Prime Minister was responsible for co-ordinating the civil side of the war and for liaising with the military (i.e. Joint Planning Staffs) on matters of mutual concern. This post was initially held by Wickus de Kock, but on appointment as Minister of Information in 1974, he was succeeded by Ted Sutton-Pryce. The Deputy Minister was chairman of an increasing number of committees, the most important of which were the following: Civil Executive to the Security Council (CESC); Roads; Air-fields; Anti-Mine Measures; Psychological Warfare; Protective Forces and Cordon Sanitaire. The Civil Executive to the Security Council was the most important of these, dealing with all matters relating

to the protection of the civilian population in general, but particularly with white farmers within operational areas. It included responsibility for civil/military co-ordination of Protected Villages. (See Chapter 3)

The Prime Minister headed the Security Council at cabinet level. Members included the Ministers of Finance, Internal Affairs, Law and Order, Defence, Information, Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs, Commanders of Army and Air Force, Commissioner of Police and Director of the Central Intelligence Organisation. Upon the formation of the Guard Force its commander became a member of both the Security Council and Operation Co-ordination Committee. In 1977 Combined Operations Headquarters (COMOPS) replaced the Joint Planning Staffs and the name of the Security Council was changed to that of War Council. The newly appointed Commander COMOPS also gained representation on the War Council.

The fact that senior officials were able to sit on the Security Council, enjoying equal status with their political superiors gave these officials direct access to the Prime Minister. This allowed Ian Smith to exert direct control over the war but weakened the Operations Co-ordination Committee. This lack of real authority rather than a controversial call-up system led to the resignation of Minister of Defence Reginald Cowper in 1977.

As long as the Army commander was sufficiently capable the Joint Operations Centre system at brigade level (PROVOPS) worked effectively, but at lower levels some friction developed. This was mainly due to Police resentment of the senior role of Army officers. Initially, Joint Operation Centres at the lowest level included the local Army company commander, an Air Force pilot or flight commander and the local Police station commander. Normally rank would determine that the Army representative assumed chairmanship.

British South Africa Police and Army approaches to the problem of insurgency, as well as law and order in general, differed. As a result the Police attempted to match the rank of the senior Army officer present to avoid Army domination. Thus district policemen came to represent Police at these Joint Operation Centres. It was soon found, however, that this 'over and above' task was too time consuming. British South Africa Police officers, whose sole task was Joint Operation Centre liaison, were then provided. The Police eventually fielded assistant commissioners equivalent to the Army rank of

colonel, but did not succeed in obtaining general Joint Operation Centre control before 1977 when Army chairmanship was formalised. To protect their own interests, and in reaction to what was seen to be Army domination of a Police problem (at least initially), the British South Africa Police representatives at some Joint Operation Centres insisted on referring decisions taken by the Joint Operation Centres to Police headquarters for ratification.

Permanent Air Force representation at the various levels of the Joint Operation Centres also replaced initial *ad hoc* representation by pilots. Thus, by the time the Army took over the dominant role in Operation Hurricane in 1973, the concept of joint planning and co-ordinated execution had already been established, if somewhat tentatively.

With the launching of Operation Hurricane in 1973, it became necessary to establish a permanent Joint Operation Centre at brigade level. Two Brigade Headquarters had shifted from Harare, first to Centenary and then to Bindura. The Joint Operation Centre (JOC) at brigade headquarters became JOC Hurricane while the brigade commander retained the nominal function of MASHOPS chairman in Harare. As the operational areas were established, PROVOPS was superseded by brigade Joint Operation Centres and fell into disuse by the end of the war.

By 1979 Zimbabwe-Rhodesia was divided into four major operational areas, namely Hurricane, Thrasher, Repulse, Tangent and Grapple (see Figure 1.3, Chapter 1). For a number of years the insurgent threat was confined to Operation Hurricane (Two Brigade) area, making it the most well known sector.

During 1972 the only Joint Operation Centre existed within Two Brigade at Centenary (Rhodesian Light Infantry). As a result the first brigade-level Joint Operation Centre was also stationed there with two sub-centres at Mount Darwin (Rhodesian Light Infantry) and Guruve, formerly Sipolilo (Rhodesian African Rifles). At the end of 1973 the Rhodesia African Rifles took over the sub-centre at Centenary, the Rhodesia Light Infantry stayed at Mount Darwin and the main Joint Operation Centre moved to Bindura. Sub-Joint Operation Centres were also later formed at Mutoko, Chinhoyi (formerly Sinoia), Bindura, Karoi, Guruve, Lomangundi and Marondera (formerly Marandellas). The headquarters of Two Brigade later shifted to Harare. The battalion responsible had its main headquarters within the sub-centre while the rear battalion headquarters remained at the units training base.

Operation Thrasher (Three Brigade) was proclaimed in February 1976 with headquarters at Mutare (formerly Umtali) and sub-centres at various stages at Rusape, Nyanga (formerly Inyanga) and Chipinge. Operation Repulse (Four Brigade), was launched during May, initially as 'One Brigade Tactical Headquarters, Operation Repulse' with headquarters at Masvingo (Fort Victoria). It was officially designated as Four Brigade at the end of 1977. Repulse sub-centres were at Masvingo, Chiredzi and briefly at Rutenga and Beit Bridge. Their main responsibility was to combat the threat in the South-east. Operation Tangent (One Brigade) was formed in August 1977. Brigade headquarters was at Bulawayo and sub-centres were at Hurange (Wankie), Bulawayo, Gwanda and Gweru (Gwelo). Operation Grapple was constituted concurrently with Tangent and covered the Midlands area. Sub-Joint Operation Centre Gweru was subsequently transferred to Grapple. Midlands was initially commanded by an Army colonel and when the latter was transferred, by the officer commanding, School of Infantry, Gweru.

The two final operational areas, SALOPS (for Salisbury Operations) and Splinter differed from those mentioned above. SALOPS was controlled by the Police and formed mainly for logistical and administrative reasons. Operation Splinter was a maritime command to counter ZPRA infiltration across Lake Kariba.

By 1978, however, ZANLA and ZPRA incursions across the length and breadth of Rhodesia were threatening to destroy the system of Joint Operation Centres. In a secret document entitled 'Hurricane Strategy' prepared in June of that year, the following recommendations were made *inter alia*:

With the spread of operations and the decreased force levels the sub JOC system no longer works efficiently. Commanders are not able effectively to influence operations in their extended areas. The local control of operations in certain areas is now a fact and has become the responsibility of the OIC (Officer in Command) and DC (District Commissioner) in that particular area ... JOC members are unanimous in recommending that Hurricane aim at a District JOC system for future command and control. Districts should operate directly to Hurricane.

Above all, the preceding also bears silent witness to the lack of central direction in the war.

While the system of joint Planning Staffs had worked well during more stable conditions, the intensifying war demanded a more authoritarian command structure with powers over all civilian agencies involved in activities related to security.

### 2.3 War Council, COMOPS and NATJOC

When the extent of insurgent penetration in the North-east had become clear, Army Commanders realised the need for a Director of Operations. Veterans of the Rhodesian forces who had fought in Malaya were familiar with the idea. Lacking an overall strategy to combat the threat at national level Security Forces badly needed somebody in a post powerful and influential enough to direct their efforts. This need was nowhere deemed more important than in the lack of enforceable co-operation between different government departments.

During the comparative peace of the sixties the leisurely pace of co-ordination and discussion at various ministerial levels aimed at achieving a uniform approach to counter-insurgency had led to a history of wavering and indecisive action. Thus each ministry took a different view both of the threat itself and any countermeasures to be taken. A system of unempowered committees had therefore led to slow and apathetic attitudes to a problem in need of urgent and speedy decisions and execution.

Since the Department of Internal Affairs had resisted attempts in 1972 by the Army to step up its force levels along the Rhodesian border of the Tete province in Mozambique, much blame for the situation that had developed was placed on Internal Affairs. (3) Army commanders and Special Branch officers felt vindicated only months later when Operation Hurricane was launched. At a fairly early stage the need was thus recognised for a strong, central executive with power to enforce compliance from all services related to security. To the Army this became further apparent in their efforts to obtain sufficient numbers of territorial soldiers on call-up.

The calls for a 'supremo' became loud enough to force Lieutenant-General Peter Walls, then Army Commander, to draft a signal to all units towards the end of 1973 forbidding the use of the word. (4) Yet as the war intensified, these calls were repeated from both inside the military as well as from

prominent Rhodesian Front politicians. The idea was also mooted in a number of Joint Planning Staff papers. When put forward to Prime Minister Ian Smith it was rejected on the grounds that he, as the Prime Minister, was the 'supremo' who would make policy decisions and enforce compliance. The Operations Co-ordination Committee could thus refer controversial decisions to him if necessary.

This response was given at an early stage when the need for a supreme commander was not as obvious as it was to become at a later stage. Yet Smith failed to appreciate the complexities of this type of command. It was impossible to refer a large number of decisions to him in addition to his exacting task as head of government. On the other hand, the Rhodesian Prime Minister was reluctant to delegate the running of the war to someone else who could possibly become a challenge to his own authority. This had apparently already started to happen with the appointment of P.K. van der Byl as Minister of Defence during August 1974. He was subsequently relieved of his defence portfolio in September 1976 after the execution of the Nyadzonia raid into Mozambique. This operation had caused both Prime Minister Smith and Prime Minister Vorster from South Africa some acute embarrassment at the height of the Kissinger initiative. To a number of politicians and senior government officials there seemed a lack of suitable candidates for such an appointment, while the Prime Minister was wary of the political ambitions of the most likely candidate, Lieutenant-General Walls.

Eventually bowing to both military and Rhodesian Front pressure, Smith took a first step towards better co-ordination of the Rhodesian war effort. Having relieved Van der Byl of the Defence portfolio, he approved Reginald Cowper as the new incumbent, while also announcing the formation of a War Council in charge of defence matters on 9 September 1976. As discussed, this was largely limited to the renaming of the existing Security Council.

The next step was taken some months later on 3 March 1977, when Roger Hawkins was appointed to the newly created post of Minister of Combined Operations.

On 23 March 1977, Smith announced that, in accordance with the recommendation of his security chiefs, a unified command was to be formed to streamline the control of Security Forces in the field.

Accordingly it has now been decided to appoint a Commander, Combined Operations, who will be

responsible to the Minister of Combined Operations and will have the authority to exercise command over all elements of the security forces, as well as civil agencies directly involved in the prosecution of operations against terrorists. This will be implemented with minimal disruption of the command functions of individual service headquarters. He will have the assistance of a Deputy Commander, who will be the executive officer responsible for the control of a small Combined Operations Headquarters staff, all of whom will be drawn from existing organisations. In order to complete the chain of command under this system the senior army officer at each joint operations centre will assume command of counter-insurgency operations in his designated military area. (5)

The authority, functions and intentions underlying the formation of COMOPS are best illustrated by the following quotations from an extensive article that appeared in the Rhodesia Herald on 8 May 1977.

This means that again all problems affecting the sub-JOC's and JOC's will flow to a single source and not, as previously from the representatives of the various components of the JOC such as Army and Air Force, Police, Intelligence and Internal Affairs having first to be fed into their separate Ministerial channels .. Included in the General's authority will be all such matters as the allocation of force levels to main JOC's and considerations of the changes in force levels coming from them. Also, he will have the direction and co-ordination of Special Force Operations such as the Selous Scouts, Grey's Scouts and PATU. (6)

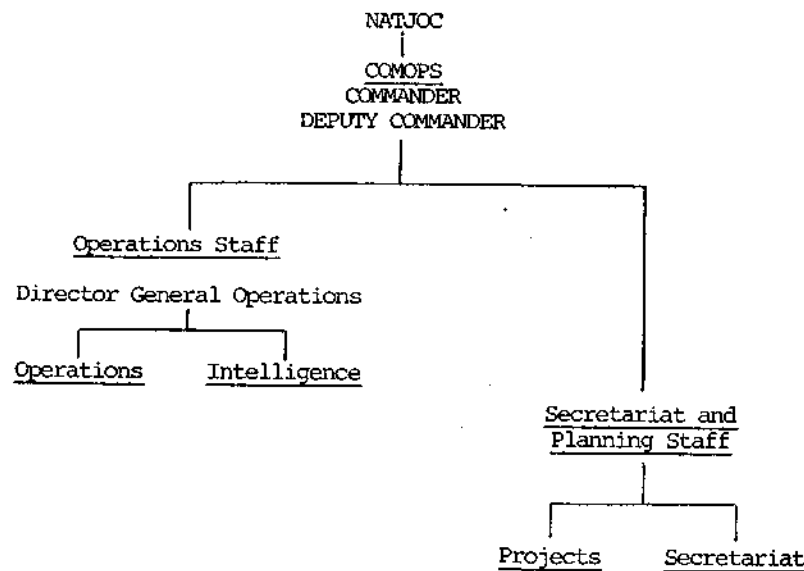
The most important of these, central authority, was never vested in COMOPS.

In terms of rank, Lieutenant-General Walls held no superiority over his counterparts in the Army, Air Force, Police and the Central Intelligence Organisation. He had not been promoted to full general and the post that he held amounted to little more than chairmanship of the National Joint Operations Centre (NATJOC). The composition of NATJOC was similar to that of the now defunct Operations Co-ordination Committee with no real authority conferred on the Commander COMOPS to enforce compliance from his

NATJOC members. All COMOPS directives had to be issued in the name of NATJOC and not COMOPS (i.e. endorsed by the relevant head of the department) to ensure compliance. In the case of the Departments of Internal Affairs and Law and Order, COMOPS made no provision for either control or inclusion of their planning staffs. Each continued to plan and execute within traditional departmental constraints.

By way of comparison, NATJOC became a looser organisation than the Operations Co-ordination Committee had been. Commissioner of Police Peter Allum did not attend in person (as had been the case with the Operations Co-ordination Committee) but sent one of his two deputy commissioners. The Director General of the Central Intelligence Organisation sent his Director External Affairs, a retired Commissioner. Although those seconded were given wide discretion and delegated much power, this tended to weaken COMOPS in comparison with the Operations Co-ordination Committee, rather than strengthen the central co-ordination. Lieutenant-General Walls approached the Prime Minister on repeated occasions to obtain clarification on his own authority but never met with any success.

In very broad terms COMOPS was organised as follows:



Initially the services of Air Marshal M.H. McLaren were retained as Deputy Commander COMOPS after his retirement from the Rhodesian Air Force. Lieutenant-General John Hickman succeeded Lieutenant-General Peter Walls as Commander of the Army, while Major-General A.L.C. Maclean became Army Chief of Staff Operations. Brigadier Herbert Barnard became COMOPS Director General Operations. Air Commodore John Rodgers was appointed Director Operations. The British South Africa Police was represented by Senior Assistant Commissioner Gardner while the Central Intelligence Organisation and Special Branch were both represented by Assistant Commissioner Edden. Internal Affairs was represented by Provincial Commissioner J. H. Tapsen.

The task of the operations staff was to prepare operation orders for operations that fell under COMOPS authority, i.e. involving the use of so-called Special Forces (Special Air Service troops, Selous Scouts, etc.). The intelligence section existed only to gather all relevant intelligence and information from members of the intelligence community, but initially had no evaluative or other intelligence function. As from 1979 the Army Chief of Staff also fulfilled the functions of the Director General Operations at COMOPS, and thus had a dual role. The secretariat was mainly concerned with providing secretarial services and with representing COMOPS in other government departments. While the planning staff was earmarked for long term military strategic planning, this remained a paper function.

Organisationally COMOPS did not meet the demands of the war. Although Comops and Army headquarters were two separate entities, Army headquarters was almost solely involved with the administration and logistics of COMOPS' decisions. While this was an unavoidable side-effect of the co-ordinating machine decided upon, it was exacerbated by personal animosity between Lieutenant-General Walls and Army Commander-Lieutenant General Hickman. The latter had lost many of his command functions, but retained his staff.

COMOPS thus obtained control over the operational planning functions of the various services (Army, Air Force and to a lesser extent Police and Internal Affairs) without incorporating their various planning staffs. For example, in the case of the Army and Air Force, the G (operations) staffs were not incorporated. Planning was thus done without the necessary supportive staff work. By excluding these various staffs, COMOPS should have limited

itself to the determination of broad planning guidelines. The resulting problems were especially notable as regards logistics, intelligence and most important, broad strategic planning.

The initial COMOPS organisation made no provision for a logistic staff component to be incorporated into the planning process. Each service in question was relied upon to do its own logistical planning. With the shortage of personnel and material, it invariably led to serious problems and to a less than optimum use of available resources. In a few select cases external operations had to be cancelled owing to the logistical problems encountered in the execution of COMOPS planning. But as the war progressed, both COMOPS and the logistical staff at Army Headquarters became more adept at meeting each others' needs.

The lack of a central body for co-ordinating intelligence at COMOPS also had a decidedly negative effect on the total intelligence effort. Initially the section consisted of a single member, providing further evidence regarding the perpetuation of general military neglect of intelligence inherited from the Joint Planning Staffs (see Chapter 9). This neglect had also led to an almost total lack of military intelligence officers capable of control and co-ordination of intelligence at top level and to the neglect of military intelligence as a serious challenge at lower levels.

Largely as a result of the lack of a Special Forces Headquarters on the one hand, and the removal of the Rhodesian Special Force units from Army control on the other, COMOPS involved itself both in the detailed planning and in the execution of external operations. It became practice towards the conclusion of the war for Lieutenant-General Walls to command external operations from his distinctive command Dakota, instead of leaving it to the field or sub-ordinate formation or unit commanders. The tradition started during the first raid on Chimoio. It almost led to disaster during the attack on Freedom Camp at Westlands Farm in Zambia during October 1978, when enemy aircraft were scrambled and in a position to attack the command Dakota. Such practices led to repeated complaints by the various Joint Operation Centres that while COMOPS involved itself to a great extent with the everyday conduct of the war, no formal war strategy ever saw the light.

After much prompting, COMOPS eventually formulated a national strategy in the period prior to the

3 March Agreement. For security reasons it was never put before the whole national executive, but approved by Ian Smith, Bishop Abel Muzorewa and the white Co-minister for Defence, Hilary Squires. The Reverend Sithole and James Chikerema only received the national objective and were not given the guidelines for execution. After his triumphant election, Prime Minister Muzorewa ratified this strategy. Internally, it revolved around the Security Force Auxiliaries and an offer of amnesty to any insurgents prepared to lay down arms now that a black majority government had been achieved. Externally it held the economies of the insurgent host countries hostage as a means of ending the war.

The final step in an attempt to co-ordinate the Rhodesian war effort was the combination of the Defence and Combined Operations portfolios under Minister of Combined Operations Roger Hawkins on 18 September 1977. Henceforth the portfolios most involved in the war were Defence and Combined Operations, Justice, Law and Order, and Internal Affairs.

Throughout the period 1972 to 1980, neither the Operations Co-ordination Committee nor COMOPS gained a free hand in the running of the war. At all stages Prime Minister Ian Smith kept a tight rein especially on external operations: this led to considerable friction between the Prime Minister and Lieutenant-General Walls and was seemingly perpetuated after Bishop Muzorewa's election to power. In his cabinet announcement of 30 May 1979, he reserved the portfolios of Combined Operations and Defence for himself. In practice, however, he had little real authority over the Armed Forces for all senior appointments were still held by whites who owed allegiance to the Rhodesian Front party rather than to a black government.

Under the Transitional Government effective control of the military was retained in white lands. On the same day that Bishop Muzorewa, the Reverend Sithole and Senator Chirau were sworn into government, Smith quietly created his own unofficial War Council. It had six permanent members, namely Walls, Chiefs of the Army and Air Force, the Commissioner of Police, the Director-General of the Central Intelligence Organisation and co-opted ministers as the need arose. After Bishop Muzorewa became Prime Minister COMOPS increasingly ran the war with decreasing reference to the politicians.

In the final months of the war and in the bitter post-Mugabe election period, many military commanders pointed to the undue limitations on external

raids into neighbouring insurgent host countries that emanated from the War Council, and, to a lesser extent, NATJOC. In both cases criticism was often directed at the influence of the Director General of the Central Intelligence Organisation, Ken Flower. As member of both bodies he played a major role in decisions and would point to the political problems involved in external operations. Yet in many cases the veto for external operations was as a result of pressure from South Africa, especially as regards Gaza, the southern province of Mozambique. Inside Rhodesia there were very few political constraints.(7)

Although this element of national strategy was very important, it tended to overshadow the more mundane and less dramatic task of consolidating internal security. Apparently the initial intelligence failures (detailed in Chapter 9) of the 1972 to 1976 period were major factors in limiting external operations and attacks on insurgent base camps.

In the final instance the smooth functioning of NATJOC was also hindered by personality clashes between the Commissioner of Police, Commander COMOPS and Secretary for Internal Affairs. This provided further evidence of the lack of forced co-operation and compliance that was a hallmark of Rhodesian counter-insurgency efforts.

#### 2.4 Special Forces

Within the Rhodesian context, Special Forces constituted what was initially known as the offensive component or cutting edge of Army troops. These units included Special Air Service, Selous Scouts, Rhodesian Light Infantry and in some cases even the Grey Scouts (a mounted unit). Initially, they owed allegiance only to the Commander of the Army. When Lieutenant-General Walls was appointed as Commander COMOPS, he retained this relation. The newly appointed Army Commander, Lieutenant-General Hickman, only retained command of black regular units such as the Rhodesia African Rifles and units of the Territorial Army.

Largely as a result of the need for absolute security in the planning and execution of Special Forces operations, planning must be centralised at the highest level, with strict limitation on the distribution of information. In the case of Rhodesia the operations section at COMOPS, and the battalion headquarters of Special Force units involved, jointly planned external and other Special Force operations.

As the war progressed, COMOPS became ever increasingly involved in the detailed planning of an increasing number of operations, particularly external operations.

Owing to the limited staff available within the operations section, the detailed planning of external operations precluded any other activity, such as the formulation of a coherent military strategy for the country as a whole. This was to become possibly the major criticism that the four brigade commanders levelled at COMOPS; the lack of overall strategy guidelines to combat the worsening internal security situation on a country-wide basis. Lieutenant-Colonel Reid-Daly would subsequently state

It was indefensibly ridiculous for General Walls or his Staff to concern themselves with which village in the bush, a three-man stick from the Special Air Service, or the Selous Scouts should be deployed, and who should release the helicopters to support them. This was, and should have stayed the sole responsibility of the Army and Air Force Commanders and their Staffs, whose plans would have been the logical follow-on from the strategical guide lines put out by COMOPS. The immediate result of COMOPS taking overall physical, as well as the detailed day to day control of the Army's running of the war, was that the Army Commander, General Hickman, lost his rightful operational command. ... The only command left to him was purely an administrative one. ... His staff at Army Headquarters, particularly the G-Staff, were allowed nothing further to do with his planning of the war and were only able to concern themselves with new organisations, amendments to staff tables and training matters. (8)

A second, and almost equally important problem regarding Special Force operations was the lack of a section that could gather and process all the relevant intelligence and information that had a bearing on external operations. This problem had been evident for a number of years as a result of the lack of intelligence fed back to brigade Joint Operation Centres prior to and after Special Force operations within a Joint Operation Centre area. In the case of the Selous Scouts this was especially significant. The latter were arguably the major source of operational intelligence inside Rhodesia, yet the flow of intelligence from the Selous Scouts to local Army

commanders was very limited. At this stage (prior to 1978) development of military intelligence as embodied by the Directorate of Military Intelligence was still in its infancy.

At various stages the establishment of a Special Forces headquarters had been proposed to NATJOC and COMOPS. It was eventually approved by the issue of Formation Order No 4: Headquarters Special Forces, which read:

AIM

1. The aim of this order is to lay down the formation and roles of Headquarters Special Forces.

TITLE

2. This headquarters is to be known as Headquarters Special Forces. Its abbreviated title is HQ Spec Forces.

FORMATION

3. HQ Spec Forces was formed on 1 July 1978.

ROLES

4. The roles of HQ Spec Forces are as follows:

- a. To formulate Special Forces strategy
- b. The planning, execution and co-ordination of Special Forces operations
- c. The operational command and control of Special Forces
- d. Co-ordination of Special Forces training.

ESTABLISHMENT

5. The establishment for HQ Spec Forces has been issued under Establishment Table No 20/4.

As will be noted, no mention was made of intelligence co-ordination, although a Special Forces Intelligence Centre, (SFIC), started at Inkomo Barracks, had lasted a total of 4-6 months before being closed down.

When nominations were made for headquarters Special Forces posts, there were immediate difficulties. Competition and mutual dislike between the commanding officers of the Selous Scouts and the Special Air Service represented the first problems. The latter refused to shift his battalion headquarters to Inkomo Barracks where the Selous Scouts were stationed. A further problem was the appointment of a Commander, Special Forces, who proved unacceptable to both the Selous Scouts and the Special Air Service. Finally, the concept did not have the support of the Commander, COMOPS, who would consequently have lost his direct control over these forces.



Special Forces Intelligence Centre, the brainchild of the Commander of the Selous Scouts, also floundered. The Director General of the Central Intelligence Organisation was thus threatened with the eventual loss of the Scouts, who were one of his prime sources of operational intelligence. In the second place, the Special Forces Intelligence Centre would have been in direct competition to the fledgling Directorate of Military Intelligence which had a lack of suitable personnel. It was only after the collapse of the Centre and the transfer of its officers to Military Intelligence that the latter developed into an intelligence section of real value. (Also see Chapter 9)

After only seven weeks in total, headquarters Special Forces became the headquarters of the Security Force Auxiliaries. No satisfactory solution was found for the planning and co-operation of Special Force operations, nor for long term strategic planning.

## 2.5 Conclusion

A number of officers who attained key positions within the Rhodesian Security Forces had served in Malaya during the Emergency. When insurgency reared its head in Rhodesia after UDI, the isolated terrorism experienced prior to 1975 did not seem to constitute a comparable revolutionary threat. In the years to follow the Malaya clique belatedly realized that the threat was essentially the same.

But lower ranking men in the field and those not experienced in the subtleties of a coherent counter-insurgency campaign, did not come to this realization at all. History and combat experience in a different continent hardly seemed applicable to Black Africa. The majority of whites refused to believe that 'their' black populace was capable of a general nationalism and political awareness. A communication gap developed between high command in Harare, and men in the field. Equally important was the fact that experience before 1972 led to an over emphasis of the role of the military. This became ingrained in the thinking of Security Force members and influenced their political superiors who were dependant on the former's advice for policy decisions regarding the conduct of the war.

The foregoing approach to a problem that is essentially not military, but rather socio-economic and political, had a decisive influence on the Rhodesian military strategy. Some of these effects have been dealt with, but the major one is the lack of a coherent total national strategy. Without a viable political objective and at least rudimentary policy guidelines a vast number of counter-insurgency measures become difficult to execute coherently. Two specific examples discussed at length are psychological operations (Chapter 6) and the recruitment and training of an own politically orientated local militia for defence purposes (Chapter 8).

Possibly the major shortcoming within the Rhodesian structure of command was the lack of firm, decisive command at the highest level. This was not limited to the military, but also included the Police and Department of Internal Affairs. The lack of a unified high level command that could enforce compliance over the total range of counter-insurgency activities was a severe limitation indeed. The Rhodesian Front politicians who took the decisions regarding the employment of existing resources can hardly be blamed for this deficiency. Yet the rather informal approach adopted to the war was merely a product of the preceding years. From the start of incursions in the sixties, no formalised co-ordinating machine was established. Local commanders and officials were left to 'sort out' co-ordination between themselves on an informal basis, which often led to inter-service clashes and personal animosity. In effect, the Joint Operations Centre system as employed relied heavily on the personal rapport that was established between its members, and it is to Rhodesia's credit that there was close co-ordination and support in the majority of areas.

## NOTES

1. Rhodesian Army, Military Support to the Civil Power (MCP), (restricted, as amended, dated 1 May 1976), p. xvi.
2. Later to become the Director General of the Central Intelligence Organisation.
3. Special Branch had reported a build up of FRELIMO and ZANLA insurgents in the area.
4. See, for example, the report on the Committee of Supply debate in the revenue vote for defence Rhodesia Herald (25 Aug. 1976) and the editorial comment of the same newspaper dated the 26 Aug. 1976.



5. Africa Research Bulletin (1-31 Mar. 1977), p. 4372.
6. Rhodesia Herald (18 May 1977).
7. With little exception, senior and middle ranking military officers remain convinced that a serious security leak existed at COMOPS, and, most possibly, within NATJOC itself.
8. P. Stiff and R. Reid-Daly, Selous Scouts: Top Secret War (Galago, Alberton, 1982), pp. 272-273.

## Chapter 3

### PROTECTED AND CONSOLIDATED VILLAGES

#### 3.1 The Concept

Recourse to the use of Protected Villages is closely aligned to the concept of a total revolutionary war. It entails the concentration and resettlement of the local population into defensible villages. The theory of insurgency divides a country into three categories: first those base areas controlled by the insurgent forces, second the areas under firm counter-insurgent control, and finally the intermediate or 'grey' areas contested by both sides. The two opposing forces each seek to expand their base areas. Such expansion not only provides visible proof of success, but forces the contestant to disperse his available manpower over increasingly threatened areas. The case for the insurgent forces is adequately summarised by John J. McCuen:

By slow, creeping expansion, the territories held by the governing power are converted into guerrilla areas, and the guerrilla areas into base areas until the entire country has been won. (1)

This is termed the 'oil spot' approach and holds true for both insurgent and counter-insurgent strategy. Specifically of importance to government forces is the consolidation of control over its own base areas as a firm foothold from whence it can encroach onto the grey areas. This governmental base normally corresponds to the more urbanized and economically active areas where counter-insurgent control is not only more evident but easier to maintain. The consolidation of this area is almost exclusively achieved by political, socio-economic, administrative and policing measures.

The second factor of importance regarding the employment of a strategy of population concentration and resettlement is closely aligned to physical control of the rural population. Sir Robert Thompson stated it thus:

The government must give priority to defeating the political subversion, not the guerrillas ... Unless communist subversive political organisation in the towns and villages is broken and eliminated, the insurgent guerrilla units will not be defeated. If the guerrillas can be isolated from the population ... then their eventual destruction becomes automatic. (2)

The emphasis is thus not towards providing depopulated areas in which Security Forces can roam freely in search of insurgents, but in denying the insurgents access to the local population. This is critical since the war is essentially waged for control of the population. If contact between the rural population and the insurgent forces is effectively cut, the latter are denied food, intelligence, recruits and access to their primary objective, people. In practical terms this leads to a number of conclusions. In the first place it is not possible for Protected Villages to be particularly successful in those areas falling within an insurgent base area. In theory it is possible for heavily armed and well trained Security Forces to enter these areas in strength with relative impunity, but they can expect to meet with little more than sullen hostility from the local population. Placing these people in Protected Villages is then akin to concentrating an already subverted population with its established clandestine insurgent organisation into select localities. 'Foreign' Security Forces, are then required as guards to prevent the inmates physically from either overt acts of subversion, support of the insurgents or simply disobedience. In such circumstances Protected Villagers are neither willing nor, in fact, able to provide intelligence or co-operation under the threat of death or punishment.

It is further imperative that the insurgent organisation within a community is broken before or concurrently with such a programme. Should this not happen and what is termed the insurgent parallel hierarchies continue to function relatively unscathed within the villages, the authorities would have partially failed in their objective.

In the third place it should be evident that

effective control of the population placed within the Protected Villages is essential if contact with the insurgents is to be broken and not restored. In practical terms this indicates strict control of movement. This can be obtained only by a foolproof identity system, the institution of no-go areas, and curfews, to name but a few of the more traditional methods of population control.

There are, however, a number of further factors that have proved enduring in the efforts towards making a Protected Village programme advantageous in the long term. In the first instance it should be recognised that, with limited exceptions, the institution of such a programme meets with at least a measure of passive resistance from the majority of the local population. In many cases even active resistance is encountered.

It is thus vitally important that such a scheme is seen to be to the personal benefit of the local population as a whole. In short, living conditions in Protected Villages should be demonstrably better than outside them. This could either entail the provision of running water, electricity, access to schools and clinics or even the private ownership of land. Failing such advantages the whole programme could easily rebound to the government's detriment. Instead of providing at least a neutral community, it results in one which is actively hostile and sympathetic to the insurgent cause. Simply herding people behind barbed wire and uprooting their traditional lifestyle with no material compensation provides an extremely fertile area for insurgent recruitment. Unfortunately, this seemed to have been the Rhodesian practice.

A further factor is protection, security and personal safety. In spite of the propaganda campaign waged by both insurgents and counter-insurgents for the capture of their 'hearts and minds', the local members of the population are less concerned with grandiose theories and promises than with personal safety and protection. This concern is largely dependent on the real physical pressure brought to bear on them by the insurgents, i.e. intimidation and on the government's capability or ability to defend the local inhabitants against these dangers. To a large extent both entail the perception, or conviction, as to who will eventually 'win'. In the context of a strategy of Protected Villages it is thus vitally important that the local population is provided with adequate protection against insurgent attacks. This should preferably entail self-defence

by means of militia type units which involve the local populace in their own security. In all cases, a quick-reaction force should be available to provide the hard muscle behind the protection of Protected Villages within any specific area. The element of involvement is of specific importance and the Security Forces should thus endeavour to obtain local participation to the maximum extent. Not only does this provide additional manpower but once committed to such a scheme, the local members are in fact committed to the government cause.

What then, should be the aim of any Protected Village strategy? According to Sir Robert Thompson it is threefold:

The first ... is the protection of the population ... the most vital aspect of protection, however, is the elimination within the hamlet of the insurgent underground organisation ... The second objective ... is to unite the people and involve them in positive action on the side of the government ... This can only be done by involving the people in a small way in national politics which both affect and benefit them, first in the defence of their community and secondly in its development ... The third objective ... is ... development in the social, economic and political fields ... It is at this stage that the regrouping of houses, which at first sight might have seemed a hardship, has compensating advantages. (3)

Let us now turn to the events in former Rhodesia.

### 3.2 Initial attempts at creating Protected Areas

The first official public indication of a strategy of Protected Villages in Rhodesia was given by Deputy Minister of Law and Order Wickus de Kock during December 1973. Significantly, the need for the establishment of these villages was given as arising out of the policy of creating 'no-go' areas. (4) The proclamation of the first such area was promulgated on 17 May 1973. It ran along 300 km of Rhodesia's northern border with Mozambique in the Centenary and Mount Darwin districts. The majority of the local population living in these areas were to be evacuated, screened and resettled in other areas. A number of people were also moved to a new area as punishment for assisting insurgents. In the nearby

Mzarabani area, however, the local population were allowed to stay in their traditional villages. Following the evacuation, the Commissioner of Police had the power to confiscate, seize or destroy any property in these areas that could possibly be of use to the insurgent forces. Within such designated no-go areas, Security Forces were empowered to shoot on sight. Bulldozed strips of clear ground were used as aids to demarcation. Regular patrols along these strips searched for indications of tracks leading into or out of the no-go zones.

Four protected areas were established from October 1973 onwards in Gudza and Mukumbura Tribal Trust Lands in the Zambezi Valley. By 10 January 1974, it was reported that more than 8 000 people had been moved, of whom 1 607 were resettled in protected areas. The rest of the valley became a no-go area. These first protected areas were not constituted as proper Protected Villages, but entailed the concentration of the local population around the main centres of each reserve to facilitate freedom of movement for the Security Forces.

The armed forces were not involved in these schemes, as it was the Department of Internal Affairs which first proposed the concept of concentrating the local population in specific areas for ease of control and protection.

### 3.3 Operations Overload and Overload Two

The military justification given for both Operation Overload in Chiweshe Tribal Trust Land and Operation Overload Two which followed in Madziwa Tribal Trust Land, was that the insurgent threat seemed to be approaching Harare itself. Chiweshe Tribal Trust Land specifically thrusts deep into the white farming areas of the Umvukwes, Centenary and Mount Darwin.

ZANLA forces had succeeded in establishing themselves solidly to the north of Bindura. From this base they were increasingly subverting the areas southwards into Msana and Masembura Tribal Trust Lands and from there to Chinamore Tribal Trust Land just north of Harare. Drastic action was apparently required to block this thrust. The major ZANLA infiltration route ran directly through the Madziwa and Chiweshe Tribal Trust Lands which lay to the north and north-west of Bindura. The local population in these areas were known to be actively assisting the insurgent effort. During March 1974 the situation in Chiweshe was already serious enough to

prompt Lieutenant Colonel Reid-Daly to write later

The apparent support for the ZANLA cause in Chiweshe though was, without doubt, overwhelming and while this made things easy for Selous Scouts pseudo operations, it was very disturbing in a broader sense. (5)

Previously, a large scale attempt to punish the local population and dissuade them from aiding the insurgents had failed in 1973.

Largely on Rhodesian Army insistence, the first major operation towards the establishment of Protected Villages, code named Operation Overload, was officially announced on 25 July 1974. Four weeks of planning preceded the simultaneous movement of 49 960 people into 21 Protected Villages in Chiweshe Tribal Trust Land within a period of six weeks. According to an official statement the intention of the operation was

to deprive terrorists of their vital contact with the civilian population, particularly at night, when they force tribesmen to accommodate and feed them as they move through the area. (6)

Particular emphasis was placed on the retention of tribal groupings during the resettlement of the local population into Protected Villages. As far as possible, villages were sited near to existing agricultural fields. Each family was allocated a plot of fifteen square metres on which to construct a home. Rhodesian Army and Police units supplied transport to the new villages. (7) Families had to construct their new homes from those materials that they had removed from their old ones. Following their movement Security Forces destroyed all remaining huts in the Tribal Trust Land. (8) As the people living in the northern part of Chiweshe Tribal Trust Land had been subject to a considerable degree of intimidation by insurgent forces, many moved into Protected Villages voluntarily. This was not the case to the south, however, where resistance to the move was encountered.

The resettlement of Chiweshe Tribal Trust Land was preceded by a High Density Force operation lasting 4 to 5 days. About 17 companies of troops were deployed clandestinely through the adjacent white commercial farming lands to seal off the Tribal Trust Land. Although the operation was not an unqualified success, it was an attempt to saturate

Chiweshe with Security Forces, thus either eliminating or forcing the flight of all insurgent forces in the area. Following this, 21 construction teams were moved in to construct the villages. They were followed by transportation, intelligence and fencing teams that enabled the total resettlement to be executed simultaneously. This was concluded on 15 August 1974, according to schedule.

Deputy Secretary of Internal Affairs Louis de Bruin, subsequently admitted that the speed of the operation had caused many problems. At first the Protected Villages merely consisted of security fencing around an area that had been marked out in smaller plots, one per family. At the centre of the Protected Village was a second security fence and sheltered housing for armed guards. This was the 'keep' upon which the defence of the village was based. Some of the 21 villages were, however, too big and lack of sanitation and facilities led to disease. De Bruin also said that conditions had sometimes been hard, which he explained as follows: 'All I can say is that the operation was extremely urgent.' (9) In fact the Department of Internal Affairs had provided no sanitation facilities. The local population had to rely on open latrines which proved an obvious health hazard. An adequate supply of fresh water had been provided in only one or two villages prior to completion of the resettlement. (10) Little aid had been extended by the government towards the building of new homes except for the transportation already mentioned.

Although criticism regarding Operation Overload must have been both foreseen and expected, the majority of this criticism tended to be emotional rather than based on counter-insurgency theory. A black member of Parliament, Aaron Mungate did, however, point to a number of valid shortcomings in the execution of the operation. His major objections were as follows:

1. The only people who were protected were those in the keep itself (i.e. the guards).
2. In the majority of Protected Villages no timely and adequate water supply had been installed.
3. People had been forced from their traditional, and in some instances, substantial homes with no compensation and no aid towards buying materials to erect new ones.
4. Because only the gates of the Protected Villages were guarded, the fences around the village did not prevent communication between the villagers and the insurgents.

To a number of Security Force personnel the operation seemed an immediate panic reaction to insurgent success in 1973. In the short term, benefits seemed substantial as insurgent activities were severely disrupted in Chiweshe for the following six months. In the medium and long term the lack of emphasis on concurrent socio-economic conditions within the Protected Villages proved a decisively negative factor.

Based on the experience gained during Operation Overload, Operation Overload Two in Madziwa Tribal Trust Land, some weeks later proved to be an improvement in a number of respects. Instead of the massed movement of the total population into Protected Villages, the movement was extended over several weeks. The operation consisted of four phases. Phase one entailed a High Density Force operation, during which a single contact resulted in the elimination of virtually the total insurgent presence (16 insurgent casualties out of a total group of about 18). Phase two ensured that the local population could move about freely and thus accomplish the resettlement with little insurgent harassment. To this end roads were patrolled and cleared of mines. Phase three entailed the provision of rudimentary shelters and amenities within the envisaged Protected Villages. Phase four covered the period 9 September 1974, to 31 October 1974, which was the compulsory moving period.

A total of 13 500 people had to be moved into 8 Protected Villages. Two villages had already been voluntarily completed by the local population while the Salvation Army's educational centre, the Bradley Institute, became the eleventh Protected Village. The total number of people in Protected Villages was about 16 500, with an average village population of between 1 300 and 1 900 (in Chiweshe a Protected Village contained as many as 5 000 inhabitants). Madziwa Tribal Trust Land was, however, smaller than Chiweshe and had its population already concentrated around developing centres. These conditions facilitated the execution of the project as a whole. In place of those schools that had to be closed, 10 new schools, one each in or adjacent to a Protected Village were opened. In contrast to Chiweshe, 23 000 head of cattle were also moved into protected pens outside each village. At the time reports also surfaced regarding blacks obtaining title to residential stands and permanent right of occupation within and adjacent to Protected Villages. This idea had specifically been forwarded by the so-called Shepard group who were the fore-runners of the later

1 Psychological Operations Unit as detailed in Chapter 6. In a scheme presented to the Deputy Minister in the Department to the Prime Minister they called for the division of Chiweshe, Madziwa and all subsequent Protected Village areas into acre or even half-acre plots to which a family could obtain freehold title. Any such scheme was strongly resisted by the traditional black chiefs as it would have eroded their main source of authority, the allocation and distribution of land. Since Rhodesian Front policy placed great emphasis on the role of the chief in rural black life, this resistance proved a crucial factor. Eventually very little came of these attempts that could have contributed significantly towards making Protected Villages more acceptable to the local black population.

For its part the Department of Internal Affairs seemed unable to adjust from a rural administration to the increased demands being made by a suddenly urban situation. In both cases finance remained a severe limitation. By the end of the war, however, Chiweshe and Madziwa had both stabilized and provided facilities of a generally higher standard than was to be the case elsewhere. In broad strategic terms Operations Overload and Overload Two did provide a number of precedents. The first was the emphasis on the physical isolation of the local population from the insurgents as an end in itself. The second was the establishment of Protected Villages in areas that had already been subverted as an impediment to insurgent logistics. The third was the lack of sustained development projects to better living conditions within Protected Villages and to promote these as viable growth centres. Lastly, the lack of attempts to involve the local population in their own defence and developments, including attempts to counter the negative influences that crowded urban existence, had a negative effect on the social cohesion of formerly rural black African communities.

Partly as a result of the initial success of both operations, Security Forces could claim that a mere 70 insurgents were still active inside Rhodesia by early 1974. Since these Protected Villages were constructed at a time when maximum military and other public sector resources could be directed towards their implementation, they were to be the most successful and effective in the country.

### 3.4 Extension of the Protected Village scheme

In the year following the execution of Operations Overload and Overload Two, Consolidated Villages, that were to form a second line of defence to Protected Villages were introduced. Consolidated Villages were formed by simply grouping 4 to 8 kraals together. No security fence, lighting, control of movement or armed detachments were provided. Curfews were only enforced where necessary. The financial burden imposed by the Protected Village programme seems to be the major motivation for the introduction of this concept.

Movement of about 4 500 permanent residents and 3 000 occasional residents in Maramba Tribal Trust Land, Mrewa district officially began on 2 June 1975 as a first experiment. Although Consolidated Villages were only to be established in areas of 'incipient insurrection' continuity planning entailed their conversion to Protected Villages should this be warranted by the security situation. (11) In many cases, in fact, the first phase in the establishment of Protected Villages entailed the concentration of the people into Consolidated Villages. Following this, protective measures were added thus converting the Consolidated Villages into Protected Villages.

By May 1976, Consolidated Villages had, amongst others, been established in Uzumba and Pfungwe Tribal Trust Lands as well as near Chipinga.

Having no protection, Consolidated Villages were prime targets for insurgents. Both ZANLA and ZPRA forces burnt huts and forced the local population to abandon the new villages. One such act occurred on New Year's Eve, 1977, when about 20 insurgents burned 212 of the 380 huts of Kandeya Consolidated Village in the North-east. Forcing the local population to resettle in these unprotected areas could only have resulted in extremely negative reactions on their part since the move entailed the disruption of an established community with no material or security benefit.

Apparently the policy of establishing Consolidated Villages was discontinued in the following year. Although heralded as a 'new concept' these villages were very similar in the final analysis to the 'protected areas' that had been established by the Department of Internal Affairs in 1973.

On 9 March 1976, Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Office Ted Sutton-Pryce stated that between 175 000 and 200 000 members of the local population had been resettled in Protected and

Consolidated Villages. Throughout the eastern operational areas the extension of Protected Villages continued unabated. The entire population of Honde Valley was placed in Protected Villages early in 1977. On 30 May 1977, the Rhodesia Herald reported that since the beginning of that year there had been more than 70 insurgent attacks on Protected Villages. The number of villages were claimed to be in the region of 200, housing 250 000 people. Each Protected Village was reported to cost between Rh\$ 35 000 and Rh\$ 45 000 to construct. Further reports indicated that the population of Kandeya, Chiswito Tribal Trust Lands and Karuyana Purchase Area as well as Chiredzi and Makoni had been placed in Protected Villages.

At this time the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace published Rhodesia: the Propaganda War which contained a detailed but inaccurate breakdown of Protected Villages in Rhodesia, claiming the existence of 203 villages housing 580 832 people. Replying to the publication, the Minister of Internal Affairs stated that there were, in fact, 178 villages housing 260 000 people.

A report in the Sunday Mail of 9 October 1977, provided an indication as to the effectiveness of both Protected and Consolidated Villages. It stated that about ten percent of all such villages had been burnt down by insurgent forces. The main areas affected were Mrewa and Mtoko with a few cases in the Mount Darwin area. The majority of burnings had taken place in the preceding ten months as a result of which thousands of former inhabitants fled into the bush. Insurgent forces actively attempted to prevent the local population from being placed in Protected Villages as in Sengwe Trust Tribal Land where only 60% of the 12 000 people had moved into the six villages designated. The Chiredzi District Commissioner stated at the time

There is a strong terrorist presence in this area. The people are being intimidated against going into the villages. (12)

When fully extended, the introduction of both Protected and Consolidated Villages represented the basic approach to the strategy already mentioned, i.e. aimed at disrupting insurgent logistics. Protected Villages were established in those populated areas as near to Rhodesian borders as possible through which insurgent infiltration routes ran. Large stretches of the border were eventually

covered by means of border minefield obstacles (see Chapter 4); the object being that insurgents entering Rhodesia would first have to negotiate these and then cross no-go areas where Security Forces had absolute freedom of movement and action to pursue and eliminate them. In those areas bordering on no-go zones, the local population would be placed in Protected Villages thus still affording Security Forces a large degree of freedom. Insurgent forces would in this way be denied food, water and information, forcing them to be continually on the move and facilitating their location.

This broad strategic approach was put to best effect in the Operation Repulse area. Entering Rhodesia from the Gaza Province in Mozambique, ZANLA forces had to cross the Gona Re Zhou game park and the border minefield obstacles erected along the south-eastern border. In this relatively arid area the local population in the Tribal Trust Lands surrounding the game park had all been placed in Protected Villages (Diti, Chipese, Sengwe, Matibi No 2, and Sangwe Tribal Trust Lands). The majority of the sources of water outside the Protected Villages were destroyed. Insurgent forces wanting to penetrate to the populated areas around Masvingo (formerly Fort Victoria) were thus faced with a formidable physical obstacle consisting of depopulated and semi-depopulated areas with little access to food and water.

Eventually about three quarters of a million blacks were concentrated in Protected Villages. A list of all planned and existing Protected and Consolidated Villages as on 6 January 1978, amounted to a total of 234 villages. (13) The salient points mentioned above regarding the geographical distribution of Protected Villages are illustrated in Figure 3.1.

### 3.5 Opening of Protected Villages

Since the strategy of Protected Villages was introduced in 1973 it had been a particular point of contention between black leaders and the Rhodesian Front government. The social disruption resulting from forced resettlement led to highly emotional reactions to the strategy on the part of moderate black nationalist leaders. This attitude changed radically when, as members of the Transitional Government, they came to grips with the counter-insurgency problems facing Rhodesia.

Once Bishop Muzorewa, Chief Chirau and the Reverend Sithole had reached agreement with Prime

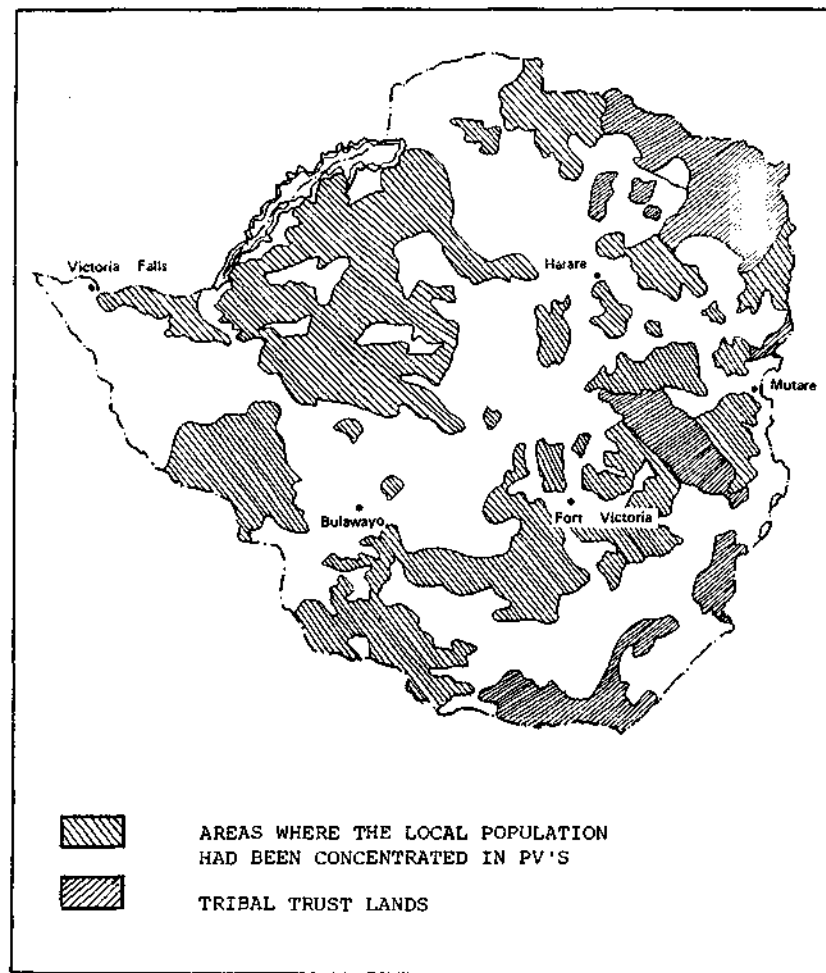


Figure 3.1 Existing and Planned Protected Villages:  
6 Jan. 1978

Minister Smith on an internal settlement in March 1978, substantive proof had to be provided to both the black people at large and the insurgent forces in the country that majority rule had been achieved. The president of the Chiweshe Residents' Association, Mathias Chitauro, made this quite clear when he stated that

Unless the Transitional Government quickly dismantled protected villages, residents of keeps would never take the internal settlement seriously. (14)

The black members of the Executive Council were convinced of their majority support amongst the rural population. They were adamant that substantive proof had only to be provided that the war was over to induce numerous insurgents to lay down their weapons. Although the war was still continuing unabated in the rural areas, it was judged that the symbolic reopening of Protected Villages could provide just the 'substantive proof' needed. It was also judged that it would influence the attitude of the local population to support moderate black nationalist leaders. Thus, on 8 September 1978, the first three Protected Villages were declared open in Mutoko Tribal Trust Land. The inhabitants were free to leave and return to their previous locations.

The opening of Protected Villages, however, also reflected the failure of the socio-economic development of these villages. Chief Mutoko had told the co-Minister of Finance, Commerce and Industry, Ernest Bulle, that 'More of us are dying inside the villages than outside.' (15) This was a sentiment that had also been expressed by Mr Chitauro some months earlier when he stated that people in the Protected Villages were poorer than they were before the establishment of the villages. By 11 September 1978, 70 Protected Villages had been opened in the North-east.

By October it was clear that the opening of Protected Villages had failed to achieve the objectives set. Opening a further 9 Protected Villages in Mount Darwin area, Bishop Muzorewa encountered sulen resentment. The attitude was well reflected by an elderly male inhabitant as reported in the Rhodesia Herald who stated that

... The government had forced the people into the PV's in the first place, and now turned around and expected them to return to their

homes where the terrorist threat was still a real thing. (16)

Reports indicated that insurgents were fining people returning from Protected Villages R\$20 for deserting the struggle. By 8 December 1978, all Protected Villages in the Murewra, Mutoko and Mudzi districts and 20 villages in the Mount Darwin district had been opened.

By October of the following year Herbert Zimuto, Minister of Home Affairs (formerly known as Internal Affairs) said the following in reply to questions put to him by The National Observer

In the early part of last year there was much criticism of the protected villages which had resulted in the Government agreeing to dismantle PV's in the Mtoko area. But a sad lesson was learnt at Mtoko (now Mutoko) ... a lot of people lost their lives because of that decision. They fell victim to terrorism because they were no longer protected. (17)

The opening of Protected Villages had been stopped some months earlier, but had resulted in a deteriorating security situation in those areas affected, as well as in public humiliation of the vaunted Internal Settlement. In some cases Protected Villages were opened after having functioned for only 15 months; hardly enough time to become established as potential growth points. Such practices could only have led to the total alienation of the rural population affected.

In fact, admitting their failure to consolidate the support of the local population, Security Forces lifted all restrictions on the movement of inhabitants in those Protected Villages where they had previously proved least successful. (This was generally termed as 'opening PV's') This was in contrast to the normal practice of relaxing population control measures in white or government base areas. A feasibility study conducted by Joint Operation Centre Hurricane prior to the opening of Protected Villages had in fact recommended the relaxation of measures in Madziwa and Chiweshe Tribal Trust Lands as a first step.

### 3.6 Guarding Forces

At the start of the Protected Village scheme, the



Department of Internal Affairs was given the responsibility of defending these villages. At this stage the department had no military or paramilitary function and had to draw personnel from other areas to assist in manning Protected Villages. Villages in Chiweshe Tribal Trust Land were in some instances also manned by members of the South African Police. To meet this new commitment, the Department of Internal Affairs established a new category of official termed District Security Assistants who were distinct from the career District Assistants that performed normal administrative duties. Furthermore, the Department was ill-prepared to train District Security Assistants. Early training programmes were thus carried out by the British South Africa Police and the Prison Service. In time the Army took over the training of District Security Assistants at the Department of Internal Affairs training depot at Chikurubi near Salisbury. The first intake of District Security Assistants concluded their training at Chikurubi in July 1975 and were subsequently deployed in Protected Villages.

As the need for protection forces grew, the Department of Internal Affairs was allocated a number of National Servicemen for their normal 18 month period of service. The first intake passed out early in 1975. Known as 'vedettes' upon completion of their training, they were posted out to Protected Villages as superintendents-in-charge. In many cases a vedette was the only white official within a Protected Village. His major responsibilities entailed the welfare and discipline of his 15 to 20 District Security Assistants, and the safety and protection of the Protected Village. Youth and inexperience played a major role in the problems that these first vedettes encountered. Thus, in late 1975, it was decided to extend call-ups to those men who had no security commitment in the age group 25 to 38. Henceforth men in this category performed their call-up duties within the Department of Internal Affairs. The maturity of these men led to an improvement in the role of the first intake that graduated in November 1975.

In spite of the increased manpower made available to Internal Affairs, it was apparent that the department's primary administrative role was incompatible with protective or paramilitary activities. Furthermore, during 1975 and 1976 large areas of Rhodesia were being resettled, placing an increased strain on Internal Affairs as regards training, command and control, and logistics. Since the Army and Police were loath to perform this function as part

of their normal operations, it was eventually decided to form an autonomous force, the Guard Force. This force was to be exclusively responsible for the security of Protected Villages. First officers and senior non-commissioned officers were recruited during August/September 1975. The Guard Force was officially gazetted as an autonomous Force under the Ministry of Defence on 1 February 1976.

Half of the Department of Internal Affairs National Service allocation and the Chikurubi training base was transferred to the Guard Force. (18) Some District Security Assistants also joined the force, although Internal Affairs retained responsibility for the protection of a number of Protected Villages such as in Chiweshe Tribal Trust Land. During May 1977, the Guard Force was given a 'new look'. From a previously static and defensive role the force henceforth engaged in active patrolling, ambush and anti-ambush techniques, night patrols, etc. From 1978 the duties of the Guard Force were further extended to the protection of white farms. At a later stage the protection of key installations and lines of communication was also taken over from the Police. In May 1978, the 1st Battalion of the Guard Force was formed and committed to an infantry role. By late 1979 the total Guard Force establishment numbered 7 000 men.

Up to September 1978, the newly formed Security Force Auxiliaries (see Chapter 8) had only been deployed in areas where the local population had not been resettled. Largely as a result of the increased deployment of the Guard Force to protect railway lines and white farming areas, it was decided that the numbers of Security Force Auxiliaries would be increased to take charge of a number of Protected Villages. By early October 1978, villages were taken over in the Beit Bridge, Chiredzi, Chipinga, Mutasa and Mount Darwin areas. The success achieved differed widely from area to area, and even from village to village. Although the concept of Auxiliaries was sound, it was hampered by training and recruitment policies employed in the execution of the strategy.

When the war ended in 1979, a number of forces had thus been involved in guarding Protected Villages, South African Police, Internal Affairs, Guard Force and Security Force Auxiliaries. In the majority of cases these forces were foreign to the local population and did not involve them in their own defence on a planned basis. The short training period, calibre of manpower recruited and the static role initially accorded the Guard Force also led to

morale and disciplinary problems. Acts of lawlessness towards the local population did not endear these forces to the people. The proliferation of forces also led to personnel management problems since conditions of service differed. (19) In the case of the Guard Force that had specifically been formed to defend Protected Villages, a number of additional duties had been added. The result was widely differing standards of efficiency between villages guarded by different forces. No uniform approach existed on a countrywide basis. Proof of this is provided by the fact that Joint Operation Centre Hurricane recommended the creation of a 'protection brigade' during June 1978. This force was to comprise a combination of Rhodesia Defence Regiment (i.e territorial) troops and members of Guard Force in an effort to utilize more mature leadership in the former group to improve the standard within the Guard Force.

### 3.7 The Rhodesian Approach and Conditions in Protected Villages

The Rhodesian government approach to the resettlement of people into Protected Villages is contained in the following extracts from an interview with Internal Affairs Minister, Jack Mussett in late 1974

By taking tribesmen to protected villages we are saving their lives. I don't think we can be expected to do more than help them to help themselves. (20)

After stating that difficulties had been met regarding the implementation of farming schemes in Chiweshe Tribal Trust Land, Mussett added

But we are not going to feed these people. They must grow their own crops ... those who have had to leave permanent buildings or property will be able to move back when the terrorist threat is over. (21)

The major problem confronting Security Forces and other ministries involved in the execution of this strategy was lack of funds. Although various efforts were launched to develop Protected Villages as growth points, manpower, finance, political constraints and lack of imagination led to their early demise.

Conditions in Protected Villages differed from area to area. Malnutrition and disease had always been features in black rural life for numerous decades. The concentration of people into such villages tended to exacerbate these problems. To the blacks, resettlement into these villages entailed a move from a rural to an urban community, with a concurrent increase in prostitution, delinquency, vagrancy and malnutrition.

The physical uncertainty of turmoil upset the traditional family basis of community life. Young men carrying arms entered these villages and challenged the authority of tribal elders so disturbing the established hierarchy. Within families the local insurgent youth supporters, or mujibas, started to challenge the authority of the traditional senior members.

Commenting on the increase of malnutrition in Protected Villages, Dr Jim Watt, superintendent at the Salvation Army's Howard Hospital in Chiweshe Tribal Trust Land, stated that several factors contributed to this

The protected villages were too large to be self-supporting, the tribesmen had to walk too far to get to their fields every day, people could not keep guard on their crops because of this and cattle, rabbits and other animals were eating their crops and vegetables. (22)

As stated, Chiweshe and Madziwa Protected Villages were the most effective in the country due to the resources that initially could be allocated to their establishment and development. Yet by 1978 only 60% of the arable land in those Tribal Trust Lands was being cultivated again. (23) On the other hand, Dr Watt was also to admit that certain advantages had become apparent. Health care was much easier, while the Ministry of Education had succeeded in maintaining continuity of education.

An official classified Rhodesian Army study on the effectiveness of Protected Villages in Chiweshe and Madziwa stated that

The "growth point" concept is showing definite signs of development ... The civil population in the PV's (Protected Villages) appear reasonably adjusted. The unpopularity of the PV's is directly related to the restrictions placed on the population, eg. food control, curfews, etc.

## Protected Villages

While Chiweshe and Madziwa represented the most successful schemes, the majority of Protected Villages were in a worse state. Two case studies within Operation Hurricane serve as illustrations.

The same Army document quoted above states the following as regards Kandeya and Bushu Tribal Trust Lands, and Chesa African Purchase Area (52 villages)

Kandeya was the hub of the war (in the North-east) and major killing ground from the beginning of Hurricane ... With the implementation of the PV's (Protected Villages) and the maintenance of a reasonable force level, CT (Communist Terrorist) activity was de-escalated considerably. Because of the speed in which the PV's were erected in this area, social repercussions on the population were considerable. Again because of the speed ... manpower requirements for the programme have not kept pace and the training of INTAF staff has been minimal. Command and control has almost collapsed due to the poor standard of junior leadership. Because of the inadequate manpower and junior leadership the CT's have regained freedom of movement including easy access to the population and food. Chesa has reverted to a traditional R & R (rest and recreation) and RV (meeting) area for CT groups.

A final lengthy quotation from this study represents a typical example from the worst cases. The areas concerned were Mudzi Tribal Trust Land (15 villages), Mutoko Tribal Trust Land (22 villages) and Murewa Tribal Trust Land (23 villages).

PV's (protected Villages) in these TTL's (Tribal Trust Lands) have generally failed to achieve their objectives for the following reasons:

- i. Lack of manpower
- ii. Lack of equipment
- iii. Dissipation of effort

On average 40% of the population are living in PV's. The remainder are living in the bush, other TTL's or Salisbury (Harare). The CT's (Communist Terrorists) have total control over the population and because they have to control it is virtually impossible to move the people, who are living in the bush, back into PV's, without a major military exercise. This would be costly in manpower and equipment. To enforce

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the move back into the PV's, drastic measures would have to be taken, eg. the complete killing of isolated pockets of the population. To ensure the retention of the people in the PV's it would require a sustained military effort in the area for at least six months. The military problems of the area are magnified in that one must find the local population first before one can find the CT. Intelligence gathering is virtually impossible. The civilian population is totally alienated against the Government. Normal civil administration had collapsed with consequent breakdown of law and order.

The 'drastic measures' referred to and illustrated above bear witness not only to a basically punitive approach to the Protected Village programme, but also to a dismissive attitude amongst the white population in general towards the rural black population.

### 3.8 Conclusion

Although evidence has been presented as to the broad failure of the strategy of Protected Villages, this is not to suggest that Rhodesian officials were per se insensitive to the medium and long term goals of these villages. In a planning document issued by the Department of Internal Affairs it was concluded that

The short term objective is the removal of the African people from terrorist influence for the sake of national security, but the full attainment of this short term aim must surely result in our reaching the ultimate goal of more concentrated and more rapid development of the African people and the areas which they inhabit.

The balance of available evidence rather suggests the execution of the strategy of Protected Villages suffered two major shortcomings. First there was an over-emphasis on the short term goal of physically concentrating the local population and the freedom of action this would give the Security Forces. In the second place there was a lack of sustained effort in the allocation of resources to the development of Protected Villages and the increase of the general standard of living in them. In those areas such as Madziwa and Chiweshe Tribal Trust Lands where such a sustained effort had occurred,

the results were correspondingly better than elsewhere.

As stated in the introductory remarks to this Chapter, and borne out by an examination of the geographical distribution of Protected Villages, these villages were erected across insurgent infiltration routes as near to the border as possible. The aim was to deny insurgent forces food, intelligence and contact with the local population during the first stages of their infiltration into Rhodesia. Little evidence could be found regarding the objective of gaining the support of the local population by resettlement and development, or of involving the local population in their own defence. In the light of the acute Rhodesian manpower and budget constraints the lack of attempts to involve the locals in defence of Protected Villages is especially noteworthy.

At a time when the insurgent onslaught on Rhodesia was nearing its final intensification (mid 1977) it did appear to government officials that Protected Villages had been successful in a number of respects. In a document entitled Value of Protected and Consolidated Villages the advantages provided by the strategy were listed as follows (June 1977)

- (a) release of operational forces for use in other areas;
- (b) protection of Government supporters from terrorist attack ...
- (c) the opportunity (of) having a captive audience, to mobilise the masses on Government's side ...
- (d) the chance for planned development of the Tribal Trust Lands concerned together with the people through their tribal leaders, in order to get the economic return to help pay for the vast security bill and to speed up the move into the cash economy ...
- (e) closer contact between the people and the administration and between the people and security forces such as the Police ...
- (f) provision of facilities for the people ... within easy reach ...

Disadvantages included:

- (a) complete disruption of the normal kraal life ...
- (b) tying up of large numbers of European and

African staff on protective and administrative duties ...

- (c) great drain on Government resources financially and materially.

The document concludes

... protected villages have not been completely successful because we have not gone all the way; we have not detained the troublemakers; we do not completely control the movements of the inhabitants by day and night; we do not control agricultural activity and our protective measures are limited. The same applies even more so to consolidated villages ...

As the insurgent onslaught developed from early 1978 onwards, the effectiveness of Protected Villages declined further to the extent described in the 'worst case' example of Mudzi, Mutoko and Murewa Tribal Trust Lands.

In broad terms the strategy of Protected Villages as employed in Rhodesia was not a success. The initial results obtained by operation Overload and Overload Two were encouraging, but the subsequent execution was found wanting. The primary short-term objective, isolation of the insurgent forces, was not achieved. This was not only the result of poorly trained and unmotivated protecting forces manning the keeps, but also as a result of the fact that the insurgent parallel hierarchies mentioned previously were not broken prior to or concurrently with the resettlement of people in Protected Villages.

Although Special Branch did screen the local population during relocation, this was executed in a rudimentary fashion. As the war intensified and resettlement became widespread this limited screening was reduced even further.

In the final instance protective measures employed in Protected Villages proved inadequate. Not only were the physical security devices rudimentary, but the manpower allocated to each Protected Village was the bare minimum. In combination they could not prevent intimidation of the people by insurgent forces. Under these circumstances the support of the local population for the Security Forces could not easily be obtained.

## NOTES

1. J.J. McCuen, The Art of Counter-Revolutionary War (Faber and Faber, London, 1966), p. 53.
2. R. Thompson, Defeating Communist Insurgency (Chatto and Windus, London, 1966), p. 56.
3. Ibid., pp. 124-5.
4. According to the Rhodesian Army manual Military Support to the Civil Power (MCP) (restricted, as amended, dated 1 May 1976), p. xvi, a no-go area was
 

... one from which all civilians are excluded by an order of the Protecting Authority, in terms of Section 4(1)(b) of the Emergency Powers (Maintenance of Law and Order) regulations as published in Government Notice 739/73, as amended in order to ensure that they do not become involved in operations conducted by Security Forces against terrorists. Only authorised members of the Security Forces, on duty, will move in no-go areas and no action may be instituted against them for any death or injury caused to any persons within the area by any act performed in good faith in the course of operations conducted during the time whilst the order is in force.
5. P. Stiff and R. Reid Daly, Selous Scouts: Top Secret War (Galago, Alberton, 1982), p. 89.
6. Africa Research Bulletin (1-31 Jul. 1974), p. 3311.
7. According to District Commissioner Bill Johnstone 63 000 truckloads of personal possessions in 5 ton lorries were used. Rhodesia Herald (13 Dec. 1974).
8. It is interesting to compare the approach used by the British in Malaya, where squatter families were compensated for their movement. For building new homes, each family received a cash grant eventually totalling \$100 (US) with the timber and thatch for new huts being supplied at cost price. Transportation was free. In addition each family received a subsistence allowance. J.J. McCuen, Art of War, p. 157.
9. Rhodesia Herald (4 Oct. 1974).
10. See for example the statement made by Internal Affairs Minister Jack Mussett as reported in the Sunday Mail of 1 December 1976.
11. During 1975 the District Commissioner responsible for Kandeya Tribal Trust Land, Jim Herd, attempted a new approach. He established a system of

protected patrol bases throughout the Trust Land which would enable Department of Internal Affairs patrols to maintain contact with the local population. Patrols were made on horseback between these bases. The system was maintained until such time as Kandeya was resettled. The effectiveness of these attempts could not be ascertained.

12. Rhodesia Herald (10 Oct. 1977).
13. A breakdown of Protected Villages (PV's) and Consolidated Villages (CV's) is as follows: Maramba TTL, 3 PV's; Uzumba TTL, 17 PV's; Kandeya TTL, 39 PV's; Masoso TTL, 5 PV's; Karutana African Purchase Land, 1 PV; Mukumbura TTL, 3 PV's; Shisuiti TTL, 6 PV's; Chesa African Purchase Land, 9 PV's; Pfungwe TTL, 3 CV's and 1 PV; Mzarabani TTL, 3 PV's; Mutoko TTL, 26 PV's; Ngarwe TTL, 7 PV's; Mudzi TTL, 2 PV's; Chikuizo TTL, 2 PV's; Chiweshe TTL, 21 PV's; Madziwa TTL, 10 PV's; Bushu TTL, 4 PV's; Mtentengwe TTL, 4 PV's; Diti TTL, 2 PV's; Chipisc TTL, 2 PV's; Wankie TTL, 1 PV; Sangwe TTL, 2 PV's; Sengwe TTL, 5 PV's; Matibi No 2 TTL, 8 PV's; Holdenby TTL, 9 PV's; Mutusa North TTL, 5 PV's; Manga TTL, 1 PV; Mutema TTL, 8 PV's; Musikavanhu TTL, 4 PV's; Chikore Mission, 4 PV's and Ndpwayo TTL, 9 PV's.
14. Rhodesia Herald (24 Jun. 1978).
15. Rhodesia Herald (9 Sep. 1978).
16. Rhodesia Herald (10 Oct. 1978).
17. Sunday Mail (4 Oct. 1979).
18. The other half was used for district administrative duties.
19. The Guard Force, for example, received no pension fund benefits, while the regular Police, Army and Air Force members received better pay than their Guard Force, Auxiliary and Internal Affairs equivalents.
20. Sunday Mail (1 Dec. 1974).
21. Ibid.
22. Sunday Mail (2 Feb. 1977). Distances to fields were up to 12 km.
23. Before resettlement Chiweshe produced half of the Rhodesian Burley and 18% of the total tobacco crop. Rhodesia Herald (1 Nov. 1981).

Chapter 4

BORDER MINEFIELD OBSTACLES

In the period 1974 to 1979, Rhodesia invested nearly Rh\$ 10 million in capital expenditure alone to establish border minefield obstacles. Although the strategy was only vaguely defined at national level, it did constitute an important element of military strategy at Joint Operational Centre and Army brigade level of command. At these levels the construction of such obstacles was linked, in varying degrees, to the establishment of no-go areas, curfews and the resettlement of the local population into Protected Villages. This was specifically the case in Operations Hurricane and Repulse along Rhodesia's eastern borders with Mozambique. (2)

4.1 Cordon Sanitaire

To be effective any border control system must fulfill three related functions, namely detection, delay and neutralization.

Simply stated, border control operations should impede movement of insurgents across the area under surveillance and cause them to commit acts that will lead to detection. During the delay, firepower and intercepting forces can destroy the insurgents. (1)

Undoubtedly the creation of an impenetrable cordon sanitaire is almost impossible. More recent examples that have, however, proved effective are those dividing the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic, and along the Israeli borders with Lebanon and Syria. As was the case in Algeria with the Morice line these barriers represented a major undertaking and massive capital expenditure.

The basic characteristics of such cordons are

1. Physical obstacles that delay any breaching operation.
2. An alarm system indicating the location of any attempt at breaching the cordon.
3. Quick reaction forces that react immediately to any alarm.
4. Constant patrolling and vigilance along the total length of the cordon, day and night.
5. Finally, these cordons were typically constructed along the entire length of a border. The aim was thus to halt all cross-border movement, and not to channel or limit any such occurrences.

4.2 Rhodesian Cordons Sanitaires

The origin of the Rhodesian strategy for the creation of a cordon sanitaire remains uncertain. Even more vague is the initial concept and empirical data that the operation was based on. A single fact that is, however, self-evident can be deduced from the date of the first such attempt. During 1974 the insurgent threat to Rhodesia was confined to the North-east, and to all intents and purposes provided no evidence that suggested its rapid spread to the rest of the country. Events in far-away Portugal could, similarly, at this stage not have implied the rapid transfer of power in Mozambique. It would thus seem that when construction began on the first attempt at a cordon sanitaire, the scope planned was strictly limited to the North-eastern border.

Construction on this first Rhodesian attempt, officially termed the Cordon Sanitaire (Corsan), started during May 1974. It took 24 months to complete the 179 km of Corsan at a cost of Rh\$ 27 000 per kilometer.

According to official classified documentation:

The original Cordon Sanitaire was designed to act as an obstacle which would provide warning of people crossing in either direction, and in itself be a deterrent to crossings taking place. Timely warning would theoretically enable troops to react and eliminate the group.

The design of the Corsan is shown diagrammatically in Figure 4.1. It consists of two game fences approximately 25 metres apart within which was enclosed a minefield. Blast mines were laid in the minefield at a density of 1 to 3 mines for every meter of Corsan

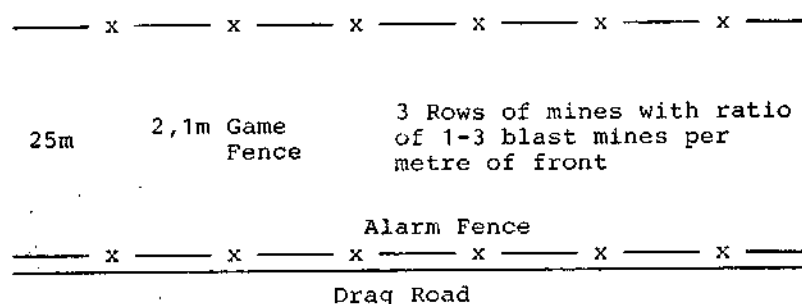


Figure 4.1: Cordon Sanitaire

length. (Blast mines rely on the force of the explosion rather than on shrapnel for their effect). A 'drag' road was constructed along the Rhodesian side of the inner fence to facilitate the location of tracks. (Drag roads are constituted by bulldozing areas of bush to create strips of cleared ground regularly swept and examined for footprints left by transgressors).

The 25 metres of minefield were treated with a defoliant known as HYVAR-X which totally destroyed all vegetation. Attempts to further defoliate strips of 150 metres each on either side of the Corsan met with lesser degrees of success, largely as a result of the cheaper herbicide used as TORDON 225.(3)

At a later stage an alarm fence was fitted to the inner fence. The original system installed was a YEAL system, but proved too sensitive and unreliable. After a high level delegation had studied both the YEAL and DTR 78 systems in Israel, the latter was chosen for further installation. Although initial planning provided for the installation of an alarm system along the total length of the Corsan, this objective was not achieved.

In theory the system was linked to control points every 10 km along the Corsan where an alarm was sounded. From here reaction forces could be directed to the point of violation. From the start inadequate force levels and the demands of other, urgent, tasks precluded the effective deployment of such reaction forces along the length of the Corsan. Even at this early stage security forces relied increasingly upon regular patrols along the Corsan in place

of highly mobile reaction forces. A variation entailed the direction of artillery fire for immediate retaliation. This was attempted for a short period in the Mjumbura area during 1975. The large number of Corsan violations that occurred, however, resulted in an inordinate expenditure of ammunition and the operation was abandoned.

Further cover of the Corsan was provided by regular patrols of mounted infantry. These forces were specifically aimed at picking up tracks and signs of interference with the Corsan.

Although the initial concept had seemingly originated from the Army, in an almost panic reaction to the insurgent threat of 1973, a Corsan committee was set up at inter-departmental level to co-ordinate all civil/military aspects of the project. Chaired by the Deputy Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister, it consisted of senior representatives from the Army, Air Force, Police, Treasury, Internal Affairs and the Department of Tsetse and Trypanosomiasis Control. This last department had wide experience in the construction of game fences and was initially made responsible for all Corsan fencing.

Within the Army the Corps of Engineers lay the minefield while the Signal Corps installed and maintained the alarm system. A civilian firm, Agricura (SA) Pty Ltd, was contracted for the defoliation.

Some initial success was achieved by the Corsan, but this came from casualties caused by blast mines and not from Security Force reaction to violations. Very few of the casualties were captured, most leaving only a blood spoor leading into Mozambique. The lack of concrete evidence regarding the effectiveness of the Corsan soon led to a loss of confidence in the obstacle and even less effective policing of it.

The configuration of the Corsan had, in effect, determined its own failure. There were several major contributing factors: the limited width of the mined strip; the ineffective type of mine used; the effects of the heavy sub-tropical rains on these mines; the placements of the alarm system on the inner fence, and the difficulty encountered in maintaining the minefield.

Since these factors constantly recurred in subsequent additions and extensions to the Corsan, each will be discussed in turn.

Within weeks of construction, the narrowness of the minefield became the first evident shortcoming

## Minefield Obstacles

in the obstacle. The Rhodesian Corps of Engineers later assessed it as follows:

The depth of 25 metres for a barrier minefield was somewhat ludicrous, as with normal breaching techniques this could be breached within two hours.

The method of breaching developed by the insurgents was in fact even less time-consuming. They simply dug holes at stride length, thus avoiding the detailed breaching of the total width of the minefield. Breaching could furthermore take place at night across a clearly demarcated, defoliated, strip. Defoliation and the heavy annual summer rains further significantly reduced the effectiveness of these mines. Heavy rains exposed mines, tumbled and shifted them. It also buried a number deep enough to avoid their detonation through the pressure exerted on the ground by the weight of a man. Furthermore, the Rhodesian Engineers were later to state:

Maintenance was impossible. The conditions described above made the minefield more dangerous to breach than to walk over.

In the final instance, placement of the alarm system on the inner fence, and the lack of depth and density of mines mentioned already ensured the ineffectiveness of the Corsan. Insurgent members leaving Rhodesia could, in the first place, trip the alarm and still have enough time to breach the minefield before the reaction force arrived. In the second place, insurgents entering Rhodesia only activated the alarm as a last obstacle. In this case the alarm merely indicated that a breach had occurred. The insurgents were thus already a distance into the country before the reaction force arrived. In the absence of sufficient and effective quick reaction forces the installation of the alarm system in itself was questionable.

The advantages mentioned above regarding the insurgents, were further increased by the slow reaction of Security Forces to any indications of breaches. Yet this was largely due to the large number of false alarms caused by wild game either activating the alarm system or detonating mines.

The lessons learnt from the Corsan led to the experimental construction of a Modified Cordon Sanitaire (Mod Corsan). Only 18 km of this version were constructed at a total cost of Rh\$ 288 000, or

## Minefield Obstacles

Rh\$ 16 000 per kilometer (see Fig 4.2). Due to various delays the Mod Corsan took 4 months to complete. It was, however, largely a further development and extension of a tract of existing Corsan.

The Mod Corsan consisted of a modified double apron fence (rows of semi-coiled barbed wire on top of each other) constructed about 300m inside the existing Corsan with a drag road on the inward side. Three rows of mines were laid in the strip between the apron fence and the Corsan at a total density of 2 mines per meter of front (ie. a lesser density than in the 25 metres of the Corsan).

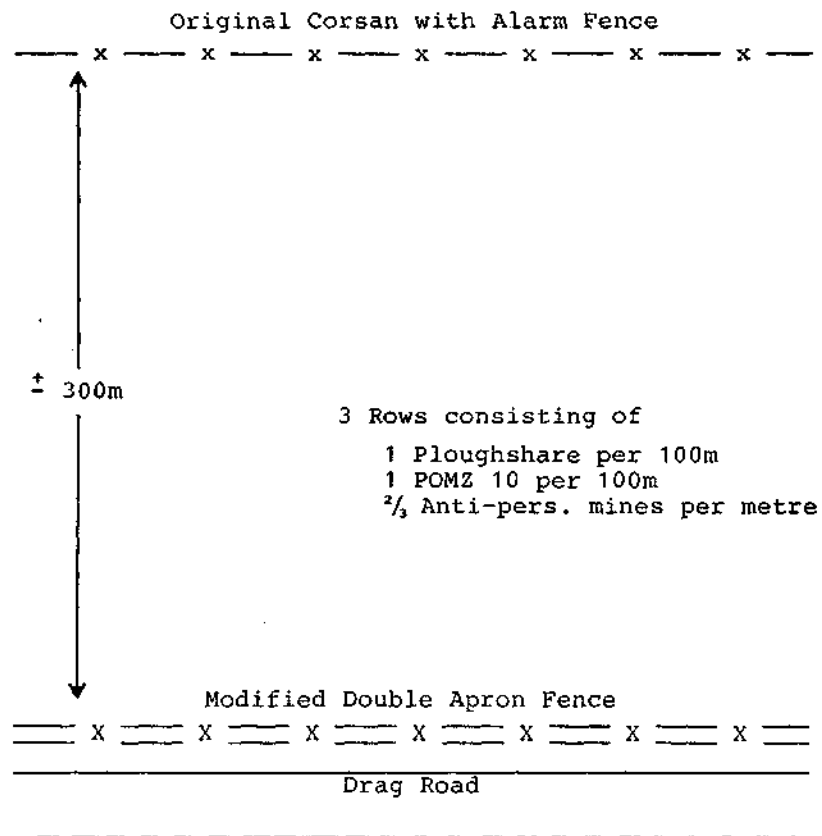


Figure 4.2: Modified Cordon Sanitaire



## Minefield Obstacles

The use of directional shrapnel mines termed ploughshares was instituted, however, as well as omni-directional POMZ 10 shrapnel mines. Both were attached to trip wires and had to be placed above ground level. To conceal these mines and to lessen the effect of rain the 300m of minefield were treated with herbicide.

The natural camouflage proved to be an advantage while also lessening the effect of rain on the pressure mines, but the devices were now susceptible to the regular veld fires that occur in the area. A further advantage was that the Corsan alarm fence was now on the enemy (ie. Mozambique) side of the minefield. On the other hand, maintenance of the alarm system, and close investigation of it, could not easily be undertaken owing to access problems. Little attention had apparently been given to the problem of maintenance during the planning stage of the obstacle.

The construction and maintenance teams that had completed the task were redeployed immediately after completion and the Mod Corsan subsequently rapidly deteriorated to ineffectiveness.

The Mod Corsan was mainly an Army project, with the Engineers responsible for construction of the modified double apron fence. After evaluating the effectiveness of this fence it was decided that the Department of Tsetse and Trypanosomiasis Control would again construct all future fences. These, in turn, were more of the conventional game fence types.

Furthermore, it once again became clear that greater emphasis had to be placed on maintenance. A final conclusion was reached concerning doubts about the cost effectiveness of the alarm system in the absence of sufficient/effective reaction forces.

At this stage 6 Composite Squadron, consisting of infantry, engineers and signallers was responsible for patrolling and maintaining both the Corsan and Mod Corsan. Owing to the ineffectiveness of the obstacles that had been erected and the concurrent lack of maintenance, the squadron was achieving very little success.

In reaction to the threat of a possible FRELIMO (Army of Mozambique) attack on Mutare (formerly Umtali), the construction and maintenance teams engaged on the Mod Corsan were hastily redeployed. It was decided to install a further improvement on the Mod Corsan, known as the Mod Mod Corsan (see Fig 4.3) in the area.

The design used entailed the construction of a

## Minefield Obstacles

game fence with a fitted alarm system parallel to the existing border fence, 300 metres in depth, on the Rhodesian side. An all-weather road was cut through the mountains surrounding Mutare, parallel to the game fence.

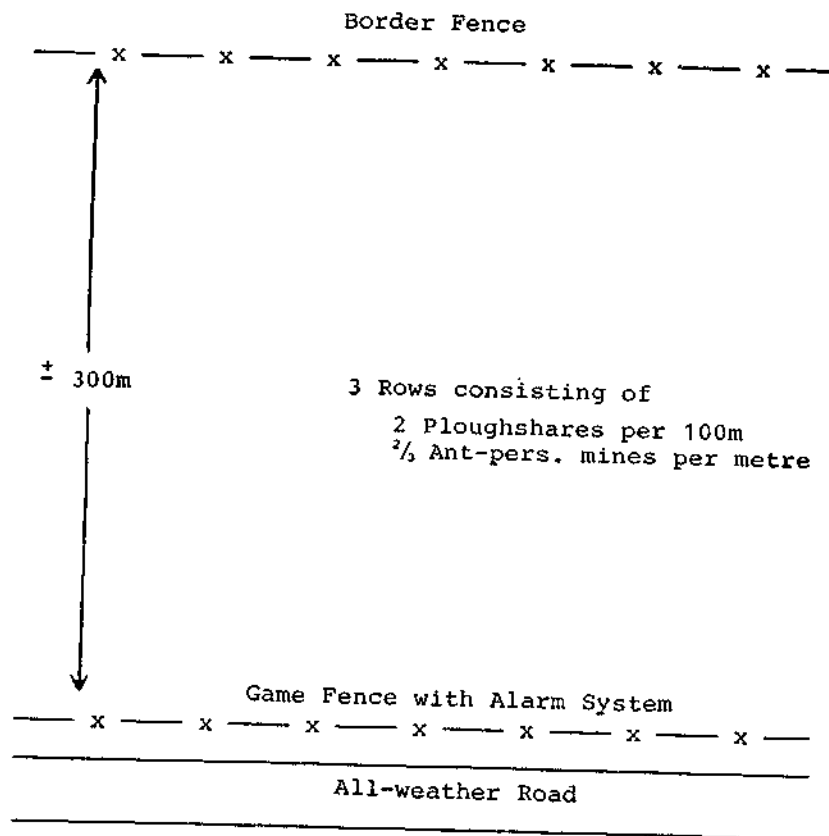


Figure 4.3: Modified Modified Cordon Sanitaire

The minefield laid between the two fences consisted of three rows. Only ploughshare and pressure mines were used to a total density of slightly over two mines per meter of frontage.

At a later stage about 50 so-called Radio Activated Devices were also installed to strengthen the

minefield. These 'devices' consisted of 44 gallon drums filled with explosives and shrapnel that could be detonated by radio link.

The Mod Mod Corsan was probably the closest that Rhodesia came to the construction of a cordons sanitaire in the accepted sense of the term. Until lack of maintenance nullified its effectiveness, it was the most successful attempt undertaken by the Security Forces. In terms of cost, however, it was also the most expensive. Only 20 km of Mod Mod Corsan were constructed, but at a total cost of approximately Rh\$ 600 000 or Rh\$ 30 000 per kilometre. The high cost was mainly due to the expense of road and fence construction.

In spite of previous expense maintenance problems were immediately apparent. This was largely the result of bad minelaying practices and, once again, the lack of a pre-planned maintenance scheme. Again an urgent request had led to hasty and ill-planned execution.

Following the construction of the Mod Mod Corsan, an analysis of the results achieved, in relation to the costs involved, was undertaken. The following conclusions were reached:

1. Local production of pressure mines would contribute meaningfully to the lowering of costs.
2. The limited effectiveness of the alarm system was not cost-beneficial.
3. The cost of constructing game fences and an all-weather road was deemed too high.

#### 4.3 Border Minefields

Following the conclusions reached regarding the Mod Mod Corsan, the following principles were officially formulated for the future construction of border obstacles:

1. The alarm system would be discarded.
2. The imported pressure mines (Rh\$ 7,00 per unit) would be replaced by a locally produced version (Rh\$ 2,60 per unit).
3. Minefields would be constructed along existing roads as far as possible to reduce costs further.
4. No further game fences would be constructed. A normal cattle fence for demarcation of the minefield would henceforth be erected on the homeward side of the minefield only.
5. Minefields would be a minimum of 300 metres wide.

6. The minefield itself would largely consist of ploughshare mines. Pressure mines would only be used to protect the more effective ploughshare mines.

When implemented, these measures reduced the cost per kilometer to Rh\$ 2 300. A total of 864 km of Border Minefield was eventually constructed at a cost of ± Rh\$ 2,298 million (ie. Rh\$ 2 660 per km).

The Border Minefield that was laid consisted of 3 rows each containing a combination of pressure and ploughshare mines. During the final stages of construction, the density of pressure mines was increased. A pull/release switch was also incorporated (ie. the mine was detonated by either an increase or a decrease in tension of the trip wire).

By August 1978, when 700 km of the total minefield had been completed, the Rhodesian Corps of Engineers stated that

... terrorists are now crossing the minefield relatively easily ...

This was in spite of the fact that the Border Minefield had again been added to the existing stretches of Corsan, Mod Corsan and Mod Mod Corsan. A factor that could have been used to Security Force advantage was that all insurgent crossings were now taking place by day. But by this stage crossings were only

... normally discovered within 24 hours of occurrence.

Border minefield obstacles were rapidly becoming expensive history lessons.

Having moved away from the concept of a traditional cordons sanitaire, the Rhodesian Security Forces were attempting to construct obstacles that in themselves would result in insurgent casualties. Again these could not be of real value since they were not patrolled and guarded effectively.

As with all previous attempts, maintenance was a further serious problem. This was most evident in those areas where the minefield bordered on game parks such as Gona Re Zhou and Hurange (formerly Wankie). Since only cattle fences were now used to demarcate the obstacle, both larger and smaller game detonated mines to the extent that a 30% replacement rate was required to prevent the rapid deterioration of the obstacle.

In belated recognition of the over-ambitious schemes that had been executed up to that stage, the

majority of funds allocated for the construction of border minefields during 1978-9 (Rh\$ 4 million) was now used for maintenance purposes. Furthermore projected extension of minefields along almost the total length of the border with Mozambique was postponed. Indifferent to the lessons of the first Corsans, the Engineer's themselves, as well as the various Joint Operation Centres were once again all calling for the further extension of these fields in varying degrees.

The official Engineer's study (referred to above) concluded during August 1978 that

Finally, the Border Minefield can be said to be the battle of Engineers in this war. Where superiority by own forces was gained in 1977 and the early part of 1978, parity now exists. In order to regain the superiority once held it is necessary to:

- a. Increase the sophistication of the existing minefield to try and eliminate their specialists.
- b. Increase the sensity (sic) of existing minefields to ensure maximum kills.
- c. To construct as many new minefields as possible to:
  - i. Further limit terrorist crossing points
  - ii. Stretch their Engineer resources as far as possible and eliminate him (sic)
  - iii. Gain further intelligence on routes used and methods of crossing.
- d. The implementation of the above can only hamper their ability to conduct the war effectively.

A single corps in the Rhodesian Army thus saw itself as fighting its own war. The corsan and minefields had by now gained a life of their own, independent of broad military strategic planning. Further efforts were all based on these dubious concepts.

Two attempts to strengthen the Border Minefield were known as the Reinforced and Superimposed Border Minefields.

The Reinforced Border Minefield entailed the addition of pressure mines to a stretch of 110 to 120 km of Border Minefield in the South-east. It was completed during April 1979, but revealed a need for even further depth in the minefield.

The Superimposed Border Minefield constituted the final addition to the system of border minefield obstacles. It was completed during November 1979 and

entailed a further extension of the Reinforced Border Minefields. The latter had been laid between two to five km inside the border. To this were added four belts of marked ploughshares and unmarked pressure mines. The total density of pressure mines per metre of minefield thus constituted four, with a ploughshare every 15m.

As clearly indicated by these final attempts, the Security Forces were now attempting to establish a barrier that in itself would be a formidable obstacle, without the addition of large numbers of policing forces. Obviously neither own lessons learnt, nor those of other countries were deemed to be valid.

#### 4.4 Conclusion

When the first Corsan was constructed Mozambique was still for most parts firmly in Portuguese hands. Geographically the Rhodesian border, across which insurgent infiltration was taking place, was thus limited to that in the North-east. It is conceivable that at that stage, Joint Operation Centre Hurricane aimed at establishing a Corsan along the whole frontage facing Tete province. As soon as Mozambique had gained its independence, however, the situation changed dramatically. The entire eastern border became a potential infiltration route.

Whereas previously, the Security Forces, with a major commitment of both material resources and manpower, could have reasonably attempted to create a cordon sanitaire in the North-east, the task now became virtually impossible given Rhodesia's limited resources.

Although the initial strategic concept was never clearly formulated, it would seem that Joint Operation Centre Hurricane did not envisage a Corsan along its total north-eastern frontier. Apparently the idea was rather to deny insurgent forces certain routes and to force them to use others, better suited to Security Forces countermeasures. Yet as insurgent infiltration spread across the eastern frontier, this rationale changed. Through successive extensions of the existing obstacles the aim eventually became totally unrealistic to seal the eastern border. Ample evidence in this regard is provided by the requests for further border minefields received from Joint Operation Centres in 1978-9.

Extension of border obstacles was undertaken on request from Joint Operation Centre within the

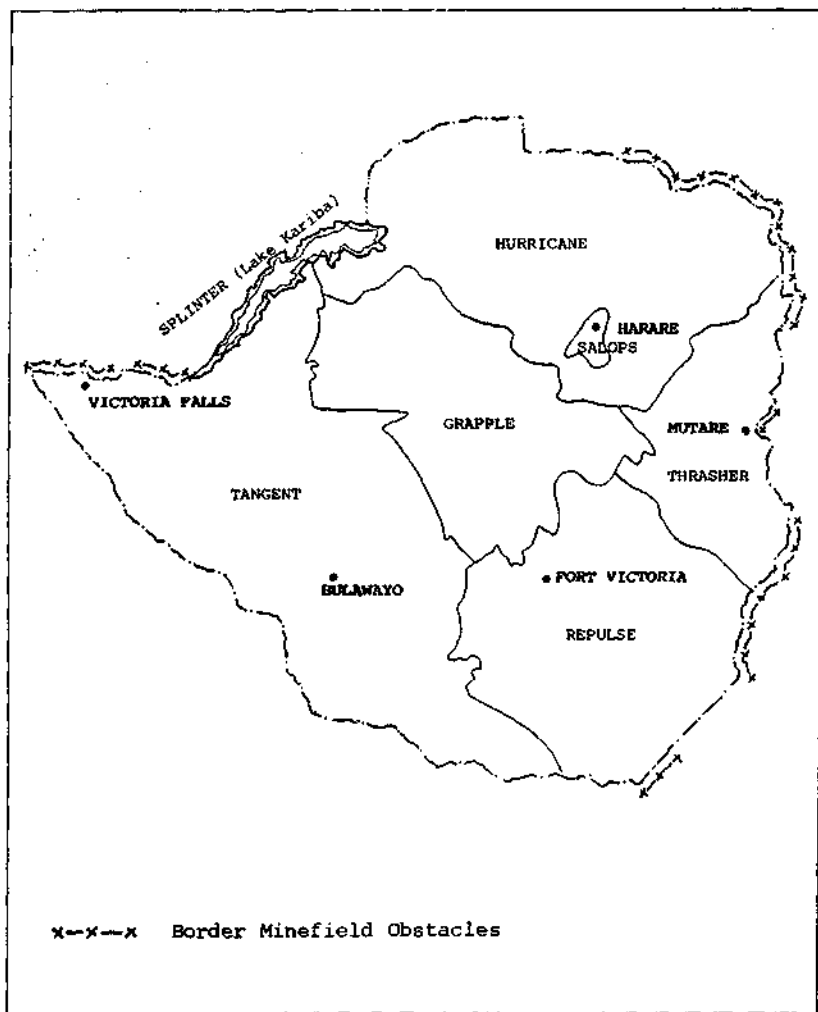


Figure 4.4 Border Minefield Obstacles

framework of available resources, and not within a broad national strategic plan. Rhodesia had neither the manpower nor material resources to institute an effective border control device along its total eastern border. As such, this strategy provides clear evidence of the lack of a clear and coherent military strategy at national level.

If we consider the concept of a cordon sanitaire as expounded in the introduction, it also becomes clear that Rhodesian planners placed higher priority on some characteristics than others. Instead of a constantly patrolled and policed obstacle, Security Force authorities emphasised an impediment along the total length of border. The limited means available further necessitated that neither an effective alarm system, nor, specifically, quick reaction forces, could be deployed along the whole length. (See Figure 4.4)

To the observer, it would seem that, once instituted, the Cordon Sanitaire gained an identity of its own, independent of sound strategic considerations. Despite the fact that the concept of a cordon sanitaire in Rhodesia proved to be ineffective at an early stage, Security Forces persisted with further refinement and extension of the scheme. The lack of broad strategic guidance resulted in the continuation of an ineffective scheme.

NOTES

1. J.D. Deiner 'Guerilla Border Sanctuaries in Counterinsurgent Warfare', The Army Quarterly, vol. 109, no. 2 (Apr. 1979), p. 170.

2. Border minefields were, as a rule, constructed in established no-go areas. The only exceptions were at Mutare, at Victoria Falls and in the Chipinga Mountains. The former two are tourist attractions, while the labourers working on the tea farms at Chipinga were commuters from Mozambique and members of a tribe hostile to the Shona insurgent.

3. This later led to a claim by the former Rhodesian government against the firm responsible. A further reason for the failure of TORDON 225 was stated as being a result of not maintaining a 90% overlap in each strip sprayed.

## Chapter 5

### PSEUDO OPERATIONS AND THE SELOUS SCOUTS

#### 5.1 The Concept

The concept of 'pseudo' insurgents, i.e. members of the counter-insurgency forces posing as insurgents, is a well established, if lesser known, method of gathering intelligence and one often used by police units involved in crime detection.

In practice select members of the Security Forces are trained in the habits and modus operandi of their enemy down to the smallest detail. Groups then infiltrate known insurgent areas, attempting to establish themselves as genuine insurgents. In counter-insurgency terminology this phase of the operation is known as 'validation' and is aimed both at convincing insurgents and members of the local population of the authenticity of the group.

Once a pseudo team has established its credentials as insurgent forces, the focus shifts to gathering all available information on insurgents and local support for them in the area. In this way pseudo operations can contribute substantially to the total Security Force intelligence picture. In an area where insurgent presence has already been established, as was the case in north-eastern Rhodesia in 1973, and where traditional Security Force intelligence sources have been eliminated through popular support for the insurgent cause, pseudo operations may prove to be the only reliable source of intelligence.

Within the cycle of any pseudo operation, validation and the acceptance of both local population and insurgents of the pseudo team, invariably proves to be the most difficult. To succeed, pseudo teams need to emulate insurgent forces in every respect. Furthermore, the insertion of these teams into an area is in itself a very delicate operation.

#### *Pseudo Operations*

In most cases success is only possible if the pseudo team contains a number of former insurgents, recently captured by Security Forces and persuaded to change sides ('turned', in counter-insurgency jargon).

Again, this need not go hand-in-hand with physical intimidation as might seem necessary. Numerous studies on the motivation of 'revolutionary' forces indicate that ideological commitment to the cause of 'liberation' plays a far less important role in motivation than is generally believed. (1)

Research has substantiated that there is a willingness among captured insurgent personnel to change sides in the traumatic post-contact and initial period of capture. Should a captured insurgent not be presented with obvious means of escape and be physically involved in counter-insurgency operations on the side of Government forces he, in effect, becomes committed to the latter cause.

With the aid of these former insurgents, pseudo teams are able to establish contact with the established insurgent support structures within local communities. Through the local population, further contact with insurgent groups could also follow. Information gleaned in this way is passed on to the traditional elements of the Security Forces for action. Only in very exceptional circumstances would a pseudo team itself use intelligence obtained to eliminate insurgent forces. For, if in the latter case, the operation is not entirely successful, the pseudo team would immediately risk being exposed as government forces and thus lose all prospect of gaining intelligence.

But pseudo operations are not exclusively aimed at obtaining intelligence leading to insurgent casualties. The aim of these operations can also be much less subtle. By passing themselves off as insurgents, pseudo teams could sow distrust between the local population and insurgent forces in general. Such actions could include acts of indiscretion towards property, women and cattle, or local customs and tribal beliefs. If, as was the case in Rhodesia, competing insurgent forces (ZANLA and ZPRA) are vying for local support, pseudo practices could fan any friction between such forces into open armed hostility. Ethnic affiliation could aid in this regard.

However, if the strategy is to survive, it needs to be tightly controlled and limited in practice. Once members of the local population and insurgents become aware of the strategy, their

security becomes stricter and further validation and establishment of pseudo teams becomes increasingly difficult. There is the danger, also, that pseudo operations may be used as licence for transgression of the law. If the two factors are combined and members of the local population become aware of Security Forces posing as insurgents and committing crimes in this guise, the real insurgent forces are presented with an ideal propaganda weapon. At such time both Security Forces and the Government are likely to lose some of their claim to legitimacy that seems a natural product of their position as enforcers of, and compliers with, the law.

In recent counter-insurgency history, pseudo operations were first conducted by Special Branch in Malaya. Since the concept was only introduced towards the latter stages of the campaign, the impact was limited. The idea was, however, regenerated and expanded during the Mau-Mau emergency in Kenya under the driving leadership of Capt (later General Sir) Frank Kitson. (2) It was from these experiences that Rhodesian pseudo operations were born.

## 5.2 The Formation of the Selous Scouts

In the period after the Unilateral Declaration of Independence Special Branch was the first to employ methods of gathering intelligence that could be termed as pseudo operations. These were first conducted in the Zwimba and Chirau Tribal Trust Lands during 1966 and were continued in these areas on an informal basis up to 1973. These first attempts were unsophisticated and mainly aimed at determining the loyalties of members of the local population.

Within Rhodesian Army circles pseudo operations were apparently first suggested by the second in command of the Rhodesian Light Infantry, Major John Hickman. Sometime before 1966 he forwarded a paper to Army headquarters outlining the possible implementation of such a scheme. Subsequently after much delay, a pilot scheme was jointly run during 1966 by the Army, Special Branch and the British South Africa Police. This met with little success, for, at the time, the vast majority of the local population could still be considered passive, if not hostile to the insurgent cause. Little intelligence could thus be gained by posing as insurgents. Moreover, pseudo modus operandi was at an early and rudimentary stage of development. For the time being

serious Army interest abated.

While the traditional sources of Security Force intelligence had been functioning adequately inside Rhodesia up to 1971, a drastic change resulted from ZANLA penetration into the North-east during 1972. Security Forces suddenly found themselves in an actively hostile environment late in 1972.

By the end of that year Rhodesian authorities were fast becoming aware that the security situation in the North-east was deteriorating rapidly. What had seemed to be an effective and sound network of informers dried up in a matter of weeks. Although aware of insurgent presence and intimidation, lack of operational intelligence forestalled effective counter-measures. This lack of detailed and accurate information now led to the regeneration of the concept of pseudo insurgents.

The former second-in-command of the Rhodesian Light Infantry was by this stage Officer Commanding 2 Brigade. Against the background of an almost total lack of operational intelligence and declining Army morale, Brigadier Hickman obtained permission to restart a pilot pseudo scheme. Similar interest had been revived in Special Branch.

With the approval of Joint Operation Centre Hurricane, Superintendent Peterson of Special Branch Harare formed an all-black pseudo team on 26 January 1973. The team of six men, two African Detective Constables and four former insurgents were placed under the command of the Special Branch officer at Bindura. Following rudimentary training the team was alternatively deployed in Bushu and Madziwa Tribal Trust Lands, near Saint Albert's Mission and in Chinamora Tribal Trust Land near Harare. While some useful information was gathered, these operations led to no insurgent casualties. At the time the lack of white leadership and expertise in the team was identified as the major problem. For a few months the team was disbanded, but eventually reorganized - this time to include white members.

A few weeks after the formation of the Special Branch team, the Army commenced with two pseudo teams of their own. These consisted of two Special Air Service non-commissioned officers who had been attached to the Army Tracking Wing at Lake Kariba and a number of black soldiers from the Rhodesia African Rifles. Finally, former insurgents were added to the teams.

With the benefit of some weeks of operational deployment with their own pseudo team, Special Branch could train the Army teams in much greater

detail - as well as provide them with vital and detailed intelligence.

Subsequently a third Army team was deployed with the result that operations could be conducted in the Mtepatapa farming area and in Chiweshe Tribal Trust Land. However, Army disillusionment soon reduced the number of teams to two. By this stage effective control of all teams had passed to Special Branch.

The first tangible success attributed to these teams occurred during August 1973 when a ZANLA insurgent was captured along the Ruya River. During the same operation the concept of 'frozen areas' was developed to minimize the chances of a clash between members of the Security Forces and a pseudo team. The official definition of such areas read as follows:

A Frozen Area is a clearly defined area, in which Security Forces are precluded from operating, other than along main roads. Army Security Forces already in an area to be declared "Frozen" will be withdrawn from such an area by the time stipulated in the signal intimating that such an area is to be "Frozen". This signal must be acknowledged by the recipient. The above ruling also applies to all armed members of the Services and Government Departments with the exception of:

- a. Those personnel tasked to operate exclusively along the Cordon Sanitaire.
- b. Those personnel stationed at Protective or Consolidated Villages and establishments provided with a permanent guard in which case they are restricted to 1 000 metres from the perimeter of such establishments.
- c. In the event of a vehicle breakdown, ambush or mine deterioration on the main road within a Frozen Area those personnel involved are to remain in close proximity of their transport. (3)

On 31 August 1973, a pseudo team effected the first ZANLA casualty to result from these operations.

Within both the Army and Special Branch these pseudo operations were being conducted under the tightest security. Co-ordination between pseudo and regular Army units was achieved on an informal basis. As a result, a map reading error led to a clash between the pseudo team and an Army patrol during which the pseudo team commander, Sergeant Rabie, was

killed. Temporarily all pseudo operations were halted.

By this stage the senior Army and Special Branch members involved were convinced of the use of pseudo operations. The death of André Rabie had, however, indicated that pseudo operations had to be conducted within a formalised structure and co-ordinated with other Security Force actions in an area.

During November 1973 a former Regimental Sergeant Major of the Rhodesian Light Infantry, Captain Ron Reid-Daly, was recruited and promoted to Major as Officer Commanding the pseudo insurgent unit to become known as the Selous Scouts. The personal involvement of Lieutenant-General Walls in this appointment suggests that pseudo operations had received official blessing. Henceforth pseudo operations fell directly under the control of Special Branch. Officially part of Army Tracker Wing, the training camp moved to a secluded venue at Makuti near Lake Kariba where a number of vigorous selection courses were conducted, eventually swelling the unit to about 25 members. The regimental base eventually came to be situated at Inkomo near Darwendale.

When the first troop of pseudo operators was ready in January 1974, they were deployed from Bindura, where their Special Branch officer was located, into Chiweshe, Madziwa and Bindura Tribal Trust Lands. By the end of February a second troop became operational and a third during March. All three troops operated in Shona-speaking areas against ZANLA. Each troop was divided into three operating sections of nine to twelve men, a number of whom were former insurgents. Depending on their number, however, sections increased in strength to twenty and thirty men strong in some cases. Although the unit was nominally under Army control, control of intelligence, deployment and in some instances training was in the hands of Special Branch. At no stage were even the military intelligence organisations allowed to exert any influence over the unit.

Security, however, remained a problem, for even at this early stage it was becoming common knowledge in the operational area that the Security Forces were masquerading as insurgents. (4)

Following operations in Omay Tribal Trust Land bordering Lake Kariba during December 1974 the need for Matabele pseudo teams to operate against ZPRA within Matabeleland became apparent. These operations co-incided with the discovery that ZPRA had

started using rubber dingies to cross the lake and enter the neighbouring areas. For the first time Security Forces also encountered insurgent forces using radio's inside Rhodesia. As a result a ZPRA orientated pseudo troop was formed and stationed near Bulawayo.

During the first half of 1974 the success of the Selous Scouts had reached such proportions that Lieutenant-General Walls instructed the unit during May to double its strength from three to six troops. By December this had been achieved with an addition of about 50 former insurgents.

Although the existence of the unit, and to a lesser extent its type of operations had by now become an open secret, official notification of the Selous Scouts was only served during 1977. During April of that year the magazine To the Point reported that:

Rhodesian army chiefs have taken the wraps off a legendary anti-terrorist unit that for two years has played a vital and almost totally secret role in the war ... According to their commanding officer, Major Ron Reid-Daly, they have been directly and indirectly responsible for the elimination of 1 203 of the 2 500 terrorists who have died in the four-year-old war. (5)

In fact, the majority of insurgent casualties inside Rhodesia were the direct result of intelligence obtained during pseudo operations.

### 5.3 Pseudo Modus Operandi

Depending on the specific circumstances that enabled a pseudo team to enter an area as insurgent forces, pseudo methods and the deception employed varied widely from one area to the next.

According to then Major Reid-Daly the role of the Selous Scouts was to infiltrate the tribal population and the terrorist networks, pinpoint the terrorist camps and bases and then direct conventional forces in to carry out the actual attacks. Then depending on the skill of the particular Selous Scouts' pseudo group concerned, their cover should remain intact which would enable them to continue operating in a particular area ... perhaps indefinitely. (6)

As already indicated, validification was a

prerequisite for success. Detailed operational intelligence was required to enable a team to enter an area without arousing suspicion. The next step was to establish contact with the local population, and specifically with the insurgent agents within local villages. As a final step these agents or contact men were used as go-betweens with the pseudo team and any other insurgent team in the area. Having made contact a meeting was arranged which would be used finally to establish the credentials of the pseudo team.

Patience is essential in almost all types of pseudo operations. Arranging a meeting with a real insurgent group could entail several weeks during which numerous letters were passed back and forth via mujibas (insurgents' youth supporters) and contact men. If successful, a meeting would be arranged between the two groups at a neutral spot in which the senior group was approached by the juniors. Following this, the members of the two groups met and mingled. Information would be exchanged, beer drunk and possibly some revolutionary songs sung. Information gleaned at such meetings, as well as from other sources was then passed back to Special Branch or directly to Fire Force, the helicopter-borne reaction force, for action. One such specific type of operation that proved to be highly effective, was termed the Observation Post tactic.

For obvious reasons white pseudo team members could not come into direct contact with members of the local population or insurgents. When a pseudo team thus entered a village, the white(s) remained outside and as close as possible. After contact had been made between village members and a pseudo team, for example, the village would be kept under close observation. The reaction of villagers very often gave a good indication of the presence and location of other insurgent groups. Upon confirmation of such suspicion, the Selous Scouts team leader would call in an air strike or Fire Force on the insurgent group. To facilitate this, observation posts were manned on high ground close to the village. Former insurgent members with a detailed knowledge of both local customs and insurgent practices proved invaluable in picking up the most minute indications of insurgent presence. The use of observation posts was especially suited to the rugged terrain in the North-east of Rhodesia and proved highly successful in these areas.

The modus operandi of the Selous Scouts was particularly well suited for engaging the services



of captured or wounded insurgents. It often happened that Fire Force attacked an insurgent group, eliminating most of them and capturing the remainder.

Immediately following capture and the traumatic memory of the preceding fire-fight, these insurgents would be 'turned' by promise and threat. Along with a number of Scouts these prisoners would adopt the identity of the former insurgent group and function as they had done in an adjacent area sufficiently far enough from the local population who could identify them. In this instance the newly-turned insurgents would introduce the group to contact men and in general establish their bona fides with the local population. This method, however, relied upon total security, specifically in the area of the contact. But even where a prisoner had become compromised he could still be used as advisor or source of detailed local information.

A further variation of pseudo work entailed what were termed 'hunter-killer' groups. In contrast to a purely defensive, intelligence-gathering role, these teams were used aggressively. Having located a specific insurgent infiltration route, pseudo teams were despatched along it on the pretext of returning from Rhodesia for resupply and retraining after an extensive operation. En route further information was collected while the group, in contrast to its normal intelligence function, eliminated all insurgents on the way.

Hunter-killer groups were first used north of Mount Darwin in the Mavuradonha area where the rugged terrain inhibited normal Security Force operations.

In relation to their numbers, the success of the Selous Scouts became an important element in Rhodesian counter-insurgency operations. Both senior Army and Special Branch officers continuously called for the further expansion of the unit. Once the Selous Scouts had two platoons trained for deployment, their tactical headquarters shifted to Bindura. As the war spread across the country, deployment of Selous Scouts was no longer limited to the North-east. The first Scouts troops moved to Inkamo Barracks on 12 July 1974, which became the regimental rear base. During January 1977 it was renamed the André Rabie Barracks.

In general, the Selous Scouts achieved less success in penetrating the tighter, more disciplined ranks of ZPRA than was the case in the unstructured command and control groupings of ZANLA. Three Group did, however, achieve considerable success in a

number of clandestine operations into Botswana and Francistown itself.

Employment of the observation post tactic which had been so successful in the North-east proved ineffective in the rolling savannah plains and less densely populated areas of Matabeleland.

Rhodesian external operations commenced on a large scale during 1976 and were mainly aimed at ZANLA bases in Mozambique. A major limitation until then had been the lack of detailed operational intelligence on the location and lay-out of such a base. As will be shown in Chapter 7, it was a Selous Scouts pseudo operation in Holdenby Tribal Trust Land which led to the capture of a ZANLA insurgent who could compensate for this need. This led to the Nyadzonza raid of August 1976.

ZPRA pseudo teams were almost constantly involved in small-unit operations along the Grove road in eastern Botswana. The group was also responsible for the capture of important ZAPU officials in Francistown. The intelligence obtained from these men led to daring Land Rover raids into Lusaka, which temporarily paralysed the ZPRA conventional threat.

In yet other instances, pseudo team members were deployed deep into Mozambique and Zambia on one- or two-man, reconnaissance missions to determine physically the exact locations of bases, or of specific installations in such bases. For this purpose a Reconnaissance Troop was formed during the latter half of 1976. With a maximum strength of twelve men they specialized in deep penetration in preparation for larger external operations.

To facilitate security, the Selous Scouts constructed prefabricated corrugated iron 'forts' at their forward deployment bases at Bindura, Bulawayo, Mount Darwin, Chiredzi, Mutoko, Rusapi, etc. When operating in an area, the fort would be occupied as forward tactical headquarters from which deployment (at night) was undertaken, and where all captured insurgents were interrogated. All captives were hooded and flown into a landing zone in the fort. If the captives were important enough, eg. a political commissar, section leader and one or two other members of a group, the group would be reconstituted with pseudo operators and returned to the area. In this way the team had a sound knowledge of the area from the start while the former insurgents knew who their contact man in each village was and how to contact other groups.

Should a pseudo team establish itself in an area as an insurgent group in its own right, the

process of validification could entail extraordinary measures. It could entail calling in an air strike by Security Forces on their own position or close to it. Alternatively it could consist of select aggression against Security Forces or civilians. One such example was documented in Africa Confidential

After a white farmstead about forty miles north-west of Salisbury had been attacked, it was discovered that one of the two groups in the assault were Selous Scouts ... (7)

In some cases attempts at validification did more harm than good, as was the case with the first attack on a Protected Village. This was carried out by a pseudo team in the Mount Darwin area in Kandeya Tribal Trust Land during 1974 and precipitated a rash of similar attacks by real insurgent groups. A second example occurred in Nyanga North where a resident pseudo team trained and briefed the local population so well in aiding them that by the time real insurgents penetrated the area, a clandestine organisation had been firmly established for them.

Especially during the initial years, many pseudo operations were conducted to sow distrust between members of the local population and the insurgents. Rudimentary attempts towards achieving this objective consisted for instance of theft or offending local customs. Numerous further refinements were added. One such practice entailed calling in an air strike or Fire Force on the insurgent group after they had left a specific kraal. After two or three such occurrences the insurgents invariably suspected the kraal members of informing Security Forces of their presence. In revenge, and to forestall any repetition, innocent kraal members were executed. This would normally put an end to any voluntary support that the insurgents could expect from the kraal. (At the same time such punishment could also intimidate the inhabitants from helping the Security Forces).

A second method used relatively widely once an insurgent contact man had been identified, was for a pseudo team to eliminate him publicly after labeling him a traitor to the insurgent cause. Since the rest of the kraal members knew the contact man to be a loyal and staunch insurgent supporter, such a death would lead to considerable disillusionment and bewilderment. This practice had become so common by the end of the war that the Rhodesian Criminal Investigation Department had opened a number of

murder dossiers on Selous Scouts and Special Branch members. Invariably poor security led to a general knowledge of these measures. As the war progressed and Selous Scouts operations increased and intensified, this knowledge also spread to the local population and insurgent forces in the field.

Although the short term benefits that were achieved by such illegal actions were substantial, once the local population became aware of these practices, it could only have had a distinctly negative effect on their attitude vis á vis the government in general. The task of government, i.e. judicious law enforcement and maintenance of law and order, is incompatible with substantial transgression of the law. Under these circumstances it becomes extremely difficult for any such regime to claim legitimacy.

Once insurgent forces and their supporters became aware of pseudo activities, various measures were instituted to identify any such teams. Specific bangles and pieces of clothing were worn which would provide positive proof of identification. On specific instruction, members of the local population changed their method of aiding insurgent forces. Instead of leaving nightly food parcels at predetermined spots, each insurgent received his food individually during daylight. Any white member of such a team would thus be identified. It was only during 1979 that the Selous Scouts succeeded in fielding all-black teams to eliminate this problem.

In reaction to these changing means of identification, the Selous Scouts launched an intensive intelligence effort to remain constantly aware of what these entailed in any specific area.

A major success that did result from these operations was the mutual suspicion and distrust between insurgent forces in the field. Contact between such groups was increasingly preceded by lengthy exchanges of oral and written messages and co-ordination of forces for a single operation presented acute problems. This was even more so in those areas where both ZANLA and ZPRA forces were operating. Within ZANLA, groups frequently attacked one another. To increase this breach even further, pseudo ZANLA teams began attacking ZPRA insurgents, thus ensuring that the next encounter between ZANLA and ZPRA would turn into an armed clash. During the period between 1976 and 1978 when ZANLA attempted to encroach on Matabeleland, the success of this method was such that a captured ZANLA commander confessed to having been shocked by the fact that his first

eight contacts were with ZPRA forces. He was captured by the Security Forces in the ninth.

A further method employed in the Mount Darwin area entailed the intimidation of known contact men to aid the Selous Scouts. Shortly after having called in Fire Force on a group of insurgents in the area, the pseudo team visited the contact man. It was made clear to him that failure to co-operate with Security Forces would lead to his death. Thereafter his kraal was kept under constant surveillance from an observation post. Each time an insurgent group entered the area, the contact man would, for example, hang up a certain blanket after which he would meet the Selous Scouts at a predetermined spot to exchange information. Fire Force would then normally eliminate the insurgent group.

The contact men recruited in this manner were code-named 'Lemon' and 'Orange' and collectively known as 'Fruit Salad'. Since they were also paid for their services, the sudden appearance of riches in both cases led to insurgent suspicion and retribution. In his book Selous Scouts - Top Secret War Lieutenant-Colonel Reid-Daly describes a similar operation code-named Market Garden with the two compromised contact men known as Apple and Banana. This incident occurred at the foot of the Mavuradonha mountains in the North-east. (8)

As stated above, the Selous Scouts eventually could claim the highest kill ratio of all Rhodesian Security Forces. Although Fire Force, and First Battalion Rhodesian Light Infantry, which constituted the quick deployment troops of Fire Force, were physically responsible for most of these insurgent casualties, the intelligence that had led them to the insurgents originated from the Selous Scouts.

Yet, the very success of pseudo operations led to constant demands for the further expansion of the unit. Originally a single platoon of highly skilled men, the Selous Scouts grew into a disproportionately large unit of 1 800 men. A substantive portion were, however, territorial soldiers and thus not permanently attached to the unit. The rapid increase in numbers in itself led to a number of problems. In the first instance the unit was forced to lower its entry standards to obtain enough personnel to comply with Combined Operation demands. This led to a general lowering of operational standards in the pseudo role as did the widespread use of the less-demanding observation post tactic. The latter did not require as high a standard of training and experience as did normal pseudo operations. On the other hand, these

recruits were not all suitable for pseudo-type operations, while their training could not be as thorough.

As a result pseudo operations again shifted in emphasis away from that of gathering intelligence to a more aggressive role where insurgent casualty figures became all-important. This process was aided initially when substantial bonuses were paid for insurgent casualties.

#### 5.4 Conclusion

The major problem touched on above, that of the widespread use of pseudo operations and the illegal nature of some of these practices, relates to a much wider problem, namely that of legitimate political authority. Without a legitimate claim to authority in the eyes of a substantial portion of its population, a government would have to rely on coercion alone to enforce compliance to its laws.

Legitimacy is a political necessity, for it reduces ... dependence on naked power by allowing (the government) ... to rely on authority. (9)

Furthermore, Claude E. Welch points to an important factor in relation to government resorting to force

inconsistent use of coercion can both speedily alienate individuals and focus their discontent upon political institutions. (10)

As a legitimate institution, authorities lay down and enforce compliance to laws that govern human activity in any country. Should this same government provide evidence of not abiding by these same laws, it stands to lose much of its legitimacy in the eyes of those affected. Such loss of legitimacy of necessity focusses on the political structures and institutions of the country. Within rural areas such dissatisfaction is aimed at the manifestations of government, i.e. local administration, the police and other government institutions and agencies.

In the following quotation Frank Kitson addresses the same problem, if more directly relevant to pseudo operations

... there is absolutely no need for special operations to be carried out in an illegal or

immoral way and indeed there is every reason to ensure that they are not, because they are just as much part of the government's programme as any of its other measures and the government must be prepared to take responsibility for them. (11)

Pseudo operations were used extensively in Rhodesia and in the long term proved to be counter-productive. In such operations the population inevitably become the battleground. If adequate protection from the insurgents is not provided, pseudo operations cause the local population to be yet further alienated from the Security Forces. In fact, the widespread use of such operations in Rhodesia trapped the local population between the two opposing sides: the insurgents on the one hand and the Security Forces posing as insurgents on the other. Both sides were ready to exact retribution should the local inhabitants assist the enemy. Yet, purely as a military measure pseudo operations were probably the most effective means of effecting insurgent casualties. According to a study by the Directorate of Military Intelligence in 1978 a full sixty eight percent of all insurgent fatalities inside Rhodesia could be attributed to the Selous Scouts.

Casualty figures in themselves, however, are not a sure indication either of success or failure in a counter-insurgency campaign. This is particularly true in pseudo operations: although numerous insurgents were killed, Security Forces failed to gain any permanent hold over rural areas. Such operations did succeed in creating distrust and confusion both amongst the insurgents themselves and between the insurgent forces and the local population. At the same time the punitive approach to subverted and potentially subverted rural people led to the simultaneous creation of distrust and confusion between the rural population and Security Forces. Security Forces completely lacked a strategy by which they could steadily gain control over increasingly subverted rural areas. Therefore, the Selous Scouts were merely the instruments of an overly aggressive and punitive strategy, simply directed at killing as many insurgents as possible and punishing the rural black population to force them to desist from support for the insurgent forces.

Security Forces should not have attempted to exert an uncertain control over all contested areas. The most seriously subverted Tribal Trust Lands should have been temporarily abandoned. Those areas

securely under government control should have been identified. Working outwards from these secure bases, Security Forces would then have been able to concentrate their resources on adjoining areas which were as yet only partially subverted. These threatened areas could have been consolidated by means of strict population control and by involving the local population in their own defence and development.

Within the structure of the Rhodesian Security Force apparatus the affiliation of the Selous Scouts presented problems of its own. Army control of the unit was initially vested in the Commander of the Army, Lieutenant-General Walls. When appointed as General Officer Commanding, Combined Operations, General Walls retained this relationship. COMOPS involvement in the planning of special force operations has been discussed in Chapter 2, 'Command and Control'. In addition friction developed between the Selous Scouts and the Special Air Service each vying for the status as primary special forces unit.

A particular problem resulting from Special Branch's control over all pseudo intelligence activities was the almost total absence of co-operation with the Directorate of Military Intelligence. The Selous Scouts were in fact under specific Special Branch instructions not to divulge any information to the Directorate of Military Intelligence. It would seem that professional jealousy and personal animosity played a major role in these co-ordination problems. When the concept of pseudo operations was initially put into practice, military intelligence organisations were by their own admission, incapable of controlling them.

Selous Scouts liaison with brigades also left much to be desired. An area would be frozen, pseudo teams would move in, complete their task and be withdrawn with very little intelligence passed on to the brigade headquarters in whose area it had taken place. Again Frank Kitson has very definite ideas on the subject

... special operations must be organised and implemented under the auspices of the normal machine for directing the campaign and the advantages to be gained from them weighed against the psychological implications of them becoming known. Furthermore normal Security Force units should be informed as to the nature and purpose of special operations as far as it is consistent with the requirements of security so that they come to regard Special Forces as

helpful colleagues and not as wild, irresponsible people whose one purpose is to steal the credit from those who carry out more humdrum, but necessary roles. (12)

In the final analysis the technique of pseudo operations in Rhodesia proved highly successful and re-emphasised its value as a method of gathering intelligence. The problems encountered and deviations from the concept were less the result of the Selous Scouts and Special Branch than they were the result of the absence of a coherent Security Force counter-insurgency strategy and a punitive approach to the whole problem of the insurgency.

#### NOTES

1. See for example A.R. Molnar et al, Human Factors Considerations of Undergrounds in Insurgencies (Department of the Army Pamphlet No 550-104, Washington DC, 1965).
  2. See F. Kitson, Gangs and Counter-gangs (Barrie and Rockcliff, London, 1960); Bunch of Five (Faber and Faber, London 1977 and Low Intensity Operations, (Faber and Faber, London, 1971).
  3. Rhodesian Army, Military Support to the Civil Power (MCP), (restricted, as amended, dated 1 May 1976), p. xvi.
  4. P. Stiff and R. Reid-Daly, Selous Scouts: Top Secret War, (Galago, Alberton, 1982), p. 84.
  5. To the Point, (1 Apr. 1977), p. 53.
  6. Stiff and Reid-Daly, Selous Scouts, p. 76.
  7. Africa Confidential (20 Oct. 1978), p. 3.
- For an earlier example see Stiff and Reid-Daly, Selous Scouts, pp. 90-94.
8. Ibid., pp. 125-129.
  9. R.M. Mombiose, Blueprint of Revolution, (Charles C. Thomas, Springfield, 1970), pp. 6-7.
  10. C.E. Welch Jr. and M.B. Taunter (eds.) Revolution and Political Change (Duxbury Press, Belmont, 1972), p. 11.
  11. F. Kitson, Bunch of Fives, p. 298.
  12. Ibid.

## Chapter 6

### INTERNAL DEFENCE AND DEVELOPMENT: PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS, POPULATION AND RESOURCE CONTROL, CIVIC ACTION

#### 6.1 The American Concept of Stability Operations

The first Western armed force in modern history to develop and employ a counter-insurgency approach directed at the political and socio-economic roots of an insurgency was the British Army, but it was left to the US Army to formalize and structure these ideas within a coherent doctrine.

Even before his presidency, John F. Kennedy held strong personal convictions concerning the world-wide threat of communist-inspired insurgency. Challenging the fundamental views held by his country's professional military establishment, President Kennedy actively intervened in the formulation of a new American military doctrine. This high level concern, together with an increasing military involvement in South Vietnam in the ensuing years, led to a rapid evolution of counter-insurgency doctrine within the US armed forces. A number of new concepts which have proved enduring in counter-insurgency theory were developed. The first of these is the use of the term 'stability operations' in place of counter-insurgency.

That type of internal defence and development operations and assistance provided by the armed forces to maintain, restore, or establish a climate of order within which responsible government can function effectively and without which progress cannot be achieved. (1)

This view was a departure from previous military conceptions which regarded the strategy to defeat insurgencies mainly, if not entirely, as a counter-guerilla problem undertaken largely by military and police actions. Viewed as part of the broader,

national problem of internal development, the prevention of insurgency came to be recognised as including measures for internal political, economic and social development. Therefore, the total counter-insurgency effort should thus entail a combination of both effective military operations and socio-economic reform comprising three primary elements.

1. Environmental improvement A program designed to eliminate the causes of popular discontent and restore confidence in the established government.
2. Resources control A program designed to isolate the guerrillas from the people and their resources.
3. Counter-guerrilla operations A program designed to neutralize and eliminate the guerrilla organisation. (2)

Stability operations combine two mutually interdependent and supportive concepts: defence and development. Internal defence is intended to create a climate of internal security and relative peace within which internal development can assure national growth through controlled social, economic and political improvement and change.

US Army doctrine identifies a number of objectives in the execution of stability operations. As regards the insurgent forces the objectives are:

1. The elimination of neutralization of the insurgent leadership and its infrastructure.
2. The defeat of the insurgent armed forces.
3. The separation of the insurgent from the population.

Regarding the population the objectives are:

1. To obtain the support of the population by, in the first instance, providing protection.
2. Removal of the conditions exploited by the insurgents to foster the threat.
3. Instilling the psychological conviction that the government will win and that it presents a better alternative to that of the insurgent forces.

A number of the objectives outlined above are also discussed in other chapters. As was the case with internal development, internal defence was, however, not executed within a broad strategic framework within Rhodesia. Strategies of internal defence that are discussed elsewhere include population resettlement and concentration discussed in Chapter 3, attempts at

providing security for the rural population discussed in Chapter 8 and operations aimed at destroying the insurgent armed forces and their logistical infrastructure in Chapter 7.

## 6.2 Population and Resources Control, Psychological Operations and Civic Action

Psychological operations (Psyop) constitute an integral part of all internal defence and development activities. They are conducted in support of the objectives outlined in the previous section and are tailored to meet the specific requirements of each area and operation. Psychological operation target groups and objectives are broadly the following:

Insurgents Psyop objectives are to create dissension, disorganisation, low morale, subversion, sabotage, and defection within insurgent forces ...

Civilian Population Psyop objectives are to gain, preserve, and strengthen civilian support for the ... government and its internal defence and internal development objectives. (3)

In their attainment of these broad objectives, psyop techniques appear not unlike those used in marketing and advertising. They involve the planned use of communications through words, symbols and actions to influence the behaviour of selected target audiences in order to promote the achievement of national objectives. The media most often used for psychological operations are face-to-face communication, radio, loudspeakers and printed material. All of these were used in Rhodesia and warrant close examination.

A further aspect of internal defence that has also been discussed in the chapter on Protected Villages is that of population and resource control. While the ultimate aim of this control is to assist in preserving or re-establishing a state of law and order within an area, its immediate objective is to deny the insurgent forces access to the population and its resources. The Rhodesian Security Forces attempted to institute a number of measures complementary to that of resettlement, particularly as regards food control, the establishment of no-go areas and enforcement of curfews. These measures, too, warrant investigation within the context of stability operations.

The remaining aspect of non-military stability operations is that of civic action. The objectives of civic action are the organisation and motivation of the local population in assisting the governmental and military forces through the elimination or reduction of political, economic and sociological problems. Civic action to a degree, aims at bringing the population and armed forces closer to each other, so enhancing civil-military relations. The active involvement of Security Forces in aiding the local population is a prerequisite in 'helping the people to help themselves'. In its broader context, civic action refers to the co-operation between military and other government agencies in development projects. (4)

Two important results desired from civic action are firstly the positive commitment to the government cause obtained by actively involving the local population in government projects. In the second place the involvement of the local population in their own development assures that the schemes jointly undertaken meet real local needs and fit into the specific environment.

... destruction of the revolutionary organisation must be followed by construction of a counter-revolutionary substitute. In other words, police action and territorial consolidation must be followed by civic action to counter-organise the population - the real goal of all other counter-revolutionary operations. (5)

The military unit established in Rhodesia and primarily concerned with the planning and execution of the measures outlined above was known as 1 Psychological Operations Unit. In the context of stability operations it is necessary first to trace the origins and history of this unit and the concurrent development of psychological operations and related measures before even a select overview of Rhodesian stability-related activities can be attempted.

Chronologically, the history is divided into three periods, the so-called Sheppard group, Branch of Special Duties and the formation of the Psychological Operations Unit, and the establishment of a Directorate of Psychological Warfare.

### 6.3 The Sheppard Group

The committee system approach adopted by the Rhodesian government at political, military and senior public official level to co-ordinate all public sector activities related to the insurgent threat has been discussed in Chapter 2. One of the senior committees formed was the National Psychological Warfare Committee (Psywar Committee) under the chairmanship of the Deputy Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister. This was the only inter-departmental organisation with psychological operations functions in the period immediately after the commencement of the insurgency in 1972.

The Psywar Committee included Commanders of the Army and Air Force, Director of the Central Intelligence Organisation, Minister or Secretary of Information and Commissioner of Police. No Psychological Operations organisation as such existed at lower levels and Psywar Committee decisions had to be executed via the normal departmental channels (as was the case with decisions of the Joint Operation Centres). Disseminating propaganda is an essential part of psychological operations. The establishment of any separate psychological operations organisation was strongly resisted by the Ministry of Information which viewed this as a departmental function to be executed by its Provincial Population Attachés. The Psywar Committee made recommendations to the Operations Co-ordinating Committee of the Joint Planning Staff (prior to the formation of Combined Operations Headquarters) and reported to the Security Council (later called the War Council). Since it was only concerned with the co-ordination of psychological operations, the Psywar Committee functioned on an ad hoc basis.

Initially no organisation aimed at psychological operations or civic action existed within the Security Forces. The need for such an approach came to be recognised by members of the Territorial Army rather than by regular soldiers. The initial idea came from an ex-regular officer and Sandhurst graduate, Ian Sheppard. At the time (1973/4) he performed his Territorial duties at 1 Brigade Headquarters at Centenary.

Sheppard approached the brigade commander, Brigadier Hickman, with the idea of applying basic marketing and advertising principles to the war situation. The aim was to enhance communication between the armed forces, in particular the Army, and the local black population. These talks led to a



presentation given to the senior Joint Operation Centre Hurricane officers on 8 May 1974, on a psychological component for Operation Overload (the resettlement of the population of Chiweshe Tribal Trust Land into Protected Villages). Although this operation was only completed during August, the Sheppard group, as it was later known, became involved in the planning for Operation Overload Two which commenced in Madziwa Tribal Trust Land during the same month.

The informal psychological operations group that had been formed consisted of six members. All six had either a marketing, public relations or public media background. The first recruit into the group was Tony Dalton, at the time employed by an advertising agency and thus having first-hand knowledge of methods suitable for schemes under the Directorate of Psychological Operations.

The senior Joint Operation Centre Hurricane members were largely convinced of the necessity for a 'softer' approach to resettlement than had been evidenced in Chiweshe Tribal Trust Land. The activities of the Sheppard group thus initially revolved around 'selling' Protected Villages in Madziwa Tribal Trust Land to the local population. Since government revenue for rural development was severely limited, the idea was to obtain commercial sector involvement in the development of resettled areas.

The group also attempted to involve the local population in their own development. A major scheme prepared for this purpose was called the African Development Bank, which was to serve as a finance house for the people in Chiweshe Tribal Trust Land. It was planned that funds should be obtained from revenue which the government had held and frozen from international companies operating in Rhodesia. (6) The African Development Bank would then have served as an institute receiving deposits to which the local population could go in groups to buy tractors, etc. The scheme was eventually presented to the Secretary for Finance, but the government refused to underwrite it. The refusal was largely the result of differing perceptions, at Joint Operation Centre Hurricane and central governmental level, of the threat that had developed in the North-east. While the brigade commander and members of his Joint Operation Centre had come to realize the extent of subversion and the nature of their problem, this had not yet permeated to other government department headquarters in Harare. A second unsuccessful scheme presented to the Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Office entailed the division of Protected

Villages into plots to which blacks could obtain free-hold title, as recounted in the chapter on Protected Villages.

The majority of schemes with which the Sheppard group involved itself were self-initiated. However, Joint Operation Centre Hurricane staff also involved the group in two specific projects in an attempt to determine the feasibility and viability of Psychological Operations in general. The first concerned Operation Needle in Masoso and Chinanda Tribal Trust Lands during May and June 1974. Both areas were known to be subverted and local administration had been disrupted to such a degree that the members of the local population no longer had their cattle inoculated. Since there was a drips problem on the area, the Department of Veterinary Services was concerned that the disease could spread further south. The Department of Internal Affairs had recommended a punitive operation to shoot all cattle in the area (possibly in line with the policy of collective punishment introduced in the North-east). The Sheppard group, however, succeeded in presenting an alternative scheme by which teams would enter the Tribal Trust Lands under armed escort in order to inoculate the cattle. Army troops would infiltrate the area beforehand in the hope that insurgent groups would attack these teams.

The operation was approved by both the new brigade commander of Operation Hurricane, Brigadier Shaw, and the Operations Co-ordinating Council, simply because it proved to be a means of inflicting insurgent casualties. The Sheppard group plan was thus executed despite strong opposition from the Department of Internal Affairs. Although the inoculation of the cattle was successfully concluded, very little contact with insurgents resulted, despite the use of pseudo teams from the unit that eventually became known as the Selous Scouts. It was, however, probably the first civic action attempt undertaken by the military since the 1972 campaign began.

The second project concerned a booklet entitled Anatomy of Terror. It had been prepared by the Ministry of Information for both internal and external distribution. The galley proofs for the booklet were sent to Joint Operation Centre Hurricane for comment which passed it on to the Sheppard group. The contents were intended to illustrate the atrocities perpetrated by insurgent forces. Although the group saw it as a sound idea, it was thought to be poorly founded, presenting only the nature and degree



of insurgent intimidation with little coverage of Security Force counter-measures and successes.

A comprehensive critique on Anatomy of Terror was prepared, presented to the Joint Operation Centre and forwarded to the Department of Information. Minister of Information P.K. van der Byl did not take kindly to this interference in his department's domain. For the first time both the Departments of Information and of Internal Affairs noted with alarm that the activities of a military group were infringing upon the functions of another government department. Internal Affairs exercised almost total control over all governmental activities within rural black areas and was loath to accept that its efforts in this regard were insufficient to gain the support of the population.

Minister Van der Byl summoned the Sheppard group to Salisbury for an interview which ended in a stalemate. The Anatomy of Terror was published in its original form on 21 May 1974. A similar publication, Harvest of Fear, was also published subsequently. (7) Following this incident, the Commander of the Army, Lieutenant-General Walls, was placed under intense pressure to ensure that the Ministry of Defence did not involve itself in an area in which other ministries were already engaged. Minister Van der Byl's attitude towards Psychological Operations was well summarized in his statement to Julie Frederickse

I wanted to step up the use of the bayonet. That's the most effective propaganda - the bayonet. (8)

Despite this, Psychological Operations had come to be accepted as a relevant factor in planning operations at Joint Operation Centre Hurricane and within the Joint Planning Staff.

By September 1974, the activities of the Sheppard group were placing an increasing strain on its members acting in a part-time capacity. An operational briefing at the headquarters of Operation Hurricane was arranged for the group members' commercial heads. This resulted in their full-time secondment to the Army with retention of company pay and benefits. The group continued to function on this basis until December.

Although the core group still consisted of only six members, a large number of experts were used on a part-time basis to aid in the preparation of about thirty-eight schemes that were forwarded to Joint

Operation Centre Hurricane for approval and then to the Deputy Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister, Ted Sutton-Pryce, in his capacity as chairman of the Psywar Committee. These schemes included papers on

- the provision of communal tobacco sheds in Chiweshe Tribal Trust Land
- a national pension plan for black farm labourers
- rabbit farms
- family unit farms
- a bakery for Chiweshe Tribal Trust Land
- use of members of the Territorial Army to train local blacks in farming and other techniques and crafts
- a Radio Chiweshe

All the proposed projects failed through vested interests and lack of finance once attempts were made to put them into practice. Since neither the Psywar Committee nor the Sheppard group had any access to funds for financing such schemes on their own these had to be obtained directly from the Treasury, Department of Internal Affairs or the Army. None was willing to provide funds. (9)

In an attempt to provide continuity and better co-ordination, the Psywar Committee had in the interim established a working committee entitled the Psychological Action Co-ordinating Committee (PACC) within the Ministry of Information.

The permanent secretary of PACC was a former District Commissioner, Dick Ploughden, who had been involved in limited attempts by the Department of Internal Affairs at Psychological Operations for some years as Director of the Branch of Internal Duties. (10) The involvement of this department was considered to be of prime importance as a result of its intimate knowledge of the black psychology, habits and fears. PACC further consisted of representatives of the Central Intelligence Organisation, Army, Police and Department of Information. It met at least once a month with the aim of co-ordinating existing Psychological Operations within the different departments.

By this time the Sheppard group had run into a number of obstacles, of which the lack of finance and resistance from the Department of Information have already been mentioned. Further resistance was encountered from Internal Affairs whose approach to the rural black population differed from that of the

Sheppard group. The general belief held by that department was that black people respected force in the first instance and that any attempt at 'winning their hearts and minds' did not take the simplistic black African mind into account. Both Department of Information and Internal Affairs officials were further suspicious of the political persuasions of Sheppard and Dalton. (The former was publicly labeled a communist by Sutton-Pryce at a Joint Operation Centre.) Indeed a number of the schemes proposed by the Sheppard group were perceived to be in direct contradiction to Rhodesian Front policies. In the final instance, the accusation was made that the group treated psychological operations as a consumer article to be sold, and not as a serious attempt at developing rural areas.

Viewed collectively, the projects put forward by the group, could have contributed a great deal towards easing acceptance of Protected Villages and government security measures in the North-east, but ran into political and bureaucratic resistance to innovation and change.

To members of the Sheppard group it was becoming increasingly apparent that their efforts were yielding few, if any, concrete results. The Rhodesian government response to the 1974 detente initiative spelt the final collapse of the group. During November 1974, at the request of the Deputy Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister, the newly appointed Minister of Information, Wickus de Kock, ordered the group to maintain a low profile henceforth. Some of the ideas propounded by the Sheppard group were considered as possible political bargaining points that could be forfeited if included in Security Force planning. With nothing to 'sell', this effectively shut down the group. Having themselves become disillusioned with the results achieved, the commercial heads withdrew their support for the individual members of the Sheppard group.

Thus ended the first attempts at civic action and psychological operations within the armed forces. Furthermore, by December 1974, the Security Forces had succeeded in stabilizing the threat, and the need for any kind of long term internal development appeared less urgent than it had done six months previously.

#### 6.4 Branch of Special Duties (BOSD) and the Formation of 1 POU

By this stage it had become evident to the Psywar Committee and PACC that they were operating in a vacuum. An executive arm was needed to execute policy at the level of the Joint Operational Centres. Such an organisation was subsequently formed within the Department of Information and eventually became known as Branch of Special Duties (BOSD). In accordance with the primary responsibility of the ministry, BOSD concentrated upon urban and semi-urban communities but initially also attempted to gain credibility within the Security Forces.

After the dissolution of the Sheppard group, the Commander of the Army had ordered Tony Dalton (at this stage a lieutenant in the Territorial Army) to attach himself to PACC and gain its confidence. (He was the only remaining member of the original group still involved with military psychological operations). The failure of military psychological operations increased the necessity for military psychological operations personnel to remain as inconspicuous as possible and so avoid objections from the Ministry of Information. During April 1975, Lieutenant Dalton joined BOSD which then launched a countrywide tour to explain its functions to Security Force commanders in the field.

BOSD was a small working group and it reported to a committee (PACC) which in turn reported to a committee (Psywar) whose functions were limited to co-ordination: it could therefore attempt little more than a change of attitude. It was clear that both Psychological Operations and civic action within the armed forces had ceased to exist even in name, while any permanent establishment of an organisation was resisted by the Department of Information. As a compromise, the Commander of the Army suggested that Dalton recruit and deploy Territorial Army soldiers. After rudimentary training these men dressed in civilian clothing could be posted to Joint Operation Centres. The first three recruits were deployed in October 1975, but could establish little more than contact with local Army, Police and Special Branch officers. The size of the informal unit slowly increased during the following months, but the reliance on part-time soldiers had a severely restrictive effect on any continuity that could be achieved.

The major activities of these 'sensors', as they were called, concerned attempts to influence

the attitude of Army personnel in particular. This proved almost impossible since the only 'influence' that could be exerted was through briefings and lectures. At senior level Security Force officers recognised the necessity for both psychological operations and civic action, but at lower level such action was regarded as unnecessary. Here insurgent casualties were considered the determinant of success. A number of leaflets were also distributed, but since the unit had no formal structure it could obtain no facilities to reproduce such material. Morale declined and the final collapse of this effort by psychological operations seemed imminent.

The extent of the establishment of Protected and Consolidated Villages provided the opportunity to revitalise both psychological operations and civic action. During 1974 Security Forces were able to concentrate both the force levels and expertise needed to plan and establish Protected Villages in the limited areas. The vastly increased operational areas that had been established by late 1976 inhibited the collection of such resources, while Joint Operation Centres at brigade level were calling for the employment of the strategy of Protected Villages in increased areas such as Uzumba and Maramba Tribal Trust Lands in the North-east.

Computer printouts of personnel records for territorial soldiers assisted in a recruitment drive launched to collect expertise within the informal psychological operations unit which in turn helped in the planning of Protected Villages. Designated Civil Action Teams (CAT), almost 90% of all Protected Villages were henceforth planned by these teams in the ensuing two years as from late 1976.

When Lieutenant-General Hickman took over as Army Chief of Staff early in 1977 the first steps were taken to formalize psychological operations and civic action in the Rhodesian Army. One Psychological Operations Unit, (1 POU), was formed on 1 July 1977 as part of the Corps of Infantry with Captain Dalton as commanding officer. Within an established structure the unit was able to obtain its own printing facilities, sky-shout equipment, vehicles, etc. The unit was stationed at the Old Cranborne Barracks in Harare.

#### 6.5 The Directorate of Psychological Warfare

Although late in the day, both Treasury and the National JOC (NATJOC) had finally recognised the

need for a central body capable of initiating and co-ordinating all aspects of psychological operations and civic action with day-to-day operations. Early in 1979, a Directorate of Psychological Warfare was thus established within the Central Intelligence Organisation. Major-General Rawlins, previously commander of Guard Force, was appointed director and became a member of NATJOC. Both 1 Psychological Operations Unit and BOSD were placed under the operational command of this directorate.

The directorate consisted of the director, a deputy director and a secretary. Attached were Captain Dalton as officer commanding 1 Psychological Operation Unit and John Lewis as Director of the Branch of Special Duties (BOSD). A major objective had thus been achieved: the involvement and participation of a psychological operations structure within COMOPS itself. Within the Central Intelligence Organisation, however, the directorate was not accepted as an integral part of the intelligence community. Furthermore, the senior Central Intelligence Organisation personnel involved with it had little knowledge or practical experience of either Psychological Operations or civic action. Friction between BOSD and 1 Psychological Operation Unit further aggravated the lack of co-operation with the result that the directorate survived as an ineffectual body.

Major-General Rawlins eventually resigned as director and at the request of the Commander, COMOPS, Tony Dalton, now a Major, attended NATJOC and Special Operations meetings. During June 1979, the Deputy Commander COMOPS, Air Marshal McLaren, was appointed as Director Psychological Warfare. In an attempt to obtain closer co-operation with BOSD, the Secretary for Information was also appointed as Deputy Director, but this attempt was not successful. It was, by now, late 1979 and not long before the Lancaster House agreement brought the war to a close.

At the time of the elections that were to lead to Mugabe's landslide victory both 1 Psychological Operations Unit and BOSD launched a massive campaign to discredit ZANU (then known as ZANU (PF)). Code-named Operation Welfare, an American presidential style campaign swung into operation, backed by numerous 'unexplained' pamphlets, bombs, newspaper reports - and even totally false newspaper issues such as in the case of the black newspaper Moto.

Both the advertising accounts for the UANC and the Transitional Government were handled by the firm of De Villiers and Shonfeldt. Although Bishop

Muzorewa's account was strictly on a cash basis and separate from the government account for the promotion of the election, both projects were co-ordinated by the Branch of Special Duties. The slogan, adopted was 'That is what the people want'.

The campaign provided clear evidence of the lack of grass-roots contact between Rhodesian psychological operations and the target population they were attempting to influence. Despite hundreds of thousands of leaflets and millions of Rhodesian dollars spent on the Bishop's campaign, it was the ZANU (PF) campaign, however poorly orchestrated, that proved victorious.

The organisation that had been established by the end of the war proved to be an improvement on that existing before the formation of the Directorate of Psychological Warfare: but the reliance on members of the Territorial Army led to a lack of continuity. This was possibly the major problem at Joint Operation Centre and sub-Joint Operation Centre level. Because 1 Psychological Operation Unit was formalised at such a late stage, the military Psychological Operations organisation was unable to obtain either the funds or the equipment necessary to execute their task before 1977. In particular, commanders and troops at lower level were not interested in either psychological operations or civic action. For at this level success was seen as a direct function of insurgent casualty rates. As indicated, Rhodesian Psychological Operations was also in general, out of touch with rural realities.

Against the above historical resumé of Psychological Operations (psyop) organisations, a number of psyop and population control operations undertaken can be discussed briefly. The aim is to provide typical examples of Rhodesian psyop and civic action projects within the theoretical framework outlined in sections 1 and 2 of this chapter. As will become evident, the projects referred to were not all executed on 1 Psychological Operations Unit initiation, nor necessarily with the major involvement of that unit.

Mention needs to be made of a number of important projects, not subsequently discussed. The major project was possibly regarding the Security Force Auxiliaries. One Psychological Operations Unit played an important role in the propaganda surrounding these forces, and in the mental orientation of the Security Force Auxiliaries themselves. (See Chapter 8)

A second major scheme involved the training of

envoys. In short, these formed the Security Force equivalent to political commissars. In a sense, it entailed the preparation of men for use in an Inter-face type role (see section 8). Envoy training commenced in 1978 and included Police, Internal Affairs and Security Force Auxiliaries.

Finally, as briefly recounted, both 1 Psychological Operations Unit and BOSD were also involved in numerous disinformation operations, especially during the build-up to the April 1980 elections.

#### 6.6 Rewards

A system of rewards for information regarding insurgent activities and equipment was instituted at a relatively early stage of the war. In accordance with a request from the Operations Co-ordinating Committee, the Psywar Committee approved a poster and leaflet outlining the system. These were distributed at intervals with the first 900 000 leaflets and 2 000 posters distributed during April and May 1974. The leaflets read as follows:

Government will pay substantial rewards to anyone who volunteers secret information which leads to the death or capture of terrorists or their supporters and the capture of their weapons.

The names of anyone giving information will remain secret.

The amounts of the rewards offered by Government are:

Five thousand dollars for a senior terrorist leader.

Two thousand five hundred dollars for a terrorist group leader.

One thousand dollars for a terrorist.

One thousand dollars for each terrorist vehicle mine.

One thousand dollars for each terrorist heavy weapon of war.

Five hundred dollars for each terrorist machine gun.

Three hundred dollars for each terrorist light personal weapon.

Three hundred dollars for each full box of terrorist ammunition.

Three hundred dollars for each full box of terrorist grenades.

Three hundred dollars for each full box of

terrorist anti-personnel mines.

The rewards will not be payable to a civil servant who is engaged on duties concerned with anti-terrorist activities or to a member of the Security Forces, unless he obtained the information while he was off-duty. (11)

Later a pictorial depiction of weaponry found replaced the earlier verbal description. In a final refinement two pictures were shown: tribesmen were thus encouraged to co-operate either by the promise of reward or the threat of punishment.

#### 6.7 Safe Returns and Amnesty Offers

A distinction should be made between an offer of 'safe return' to insurgent forces after which the normal legal process would continue, and that of amnesty. The latter entails an offer of safe return as well as a guarantee against any possible prosecution that might arise from insurgent participation. Both were instituted in Rhodesia, although that of amnesty remained a politically controversial issue for a number of years.

The Operations Co-ordinating Council recommended instituting offers of safe return during 1973. However, execution of the policy on a national basis was delayed until the 1974 South African and Zambian détente initiative, which was considered the ideal opportunity.

On 11 December 1973, Prime Minister Smith announced that he had '... received assurances to the effect that terrorist activities in Rhodesia will cease immediately ...' (12) in preparation for a constitutional conference. These assurances that had been given, in fact, implied merely a cessation of hostilities, but the opportunity seemed to have presented itself to convince insurgent forces in the field that a political settlement had been achieved. Despite furious broadcasts to the contrary by Radio Lusaka, leaflets were printed and distributed to the effect that insurgents should either leave the country in a northerly direction, or hide their weapons and report to Security Forces. Both measures would have removed the insurgents from the North-east. No reports of the latter were received, but four South African policemen were killed by insurgents pretending to make use of the offer. Following this, the Psywar Committee agreed that leaflets offering safe

return should be printed and made available to local commanders for use in support of successful military operations as the opportunity arose.

The first national offer of safe return was made during the period of December 1977 and January 1978. The idea stemmed from Operation Maxply that had been launched in the Repulse area. It was an attempt to capitalise on the successes achieved by food control (Operation Turkey) and resettlement programmes (in Sangwe, Matibi No 2, Sengwe, Chipise and Diti Tribal Trust Lands) in the South-east. Intelligence reports indicated that ZANLA morale in the area was on the verge of collapse because of their inability to obtain either food from the local population or water from points outside Protected Villages. These had largely been destroyed by Security Forces Operations. Maxply entailed, *inter alia*, the preparation and aerial distribution of two leaflets. The first described the strength of the Security Forces and the weaknesses of the insurgent forces; the second consisted of a safe return offer. From this, COMOPS decided to enlarge the scheme to a national attempt but excluding Matabeleland where ZPRA was not considered susceptible to such an offer. By January more than 1 000 000 such leaflets had been distributed.

The results were disappointing. Intelligence reports had again over-estimated the effect of Security Force operations on insurgent morale. Although the Internal Settlement talks leading to the Agreement of 3 March were already underway, concrete results had not yet been achieved. Thus the offer could only rely on Security Force pressure on ZANLA as inducement.

Following the Internal Settlement Agreement, repeated calls were made by the black members of the Executive Council for insurgents to stop fighting. In preparation for the April 1979 black majority elections, a direct amnesty offer was contained in 1 500 000 leaflets distributed from mid-March 1979, onwards. The offer was signed by the four members of the Council as well as by the Commander, COMOPS.

Any member of the ZANLA/ZPRA forces who returns home in peace before the election will be well treated. They will be fed, clothed and given proper medical treatment. They will be integrated with the Interim Government Auxiliaries (SFA) under the command of Combined Operations and will be armed for this purpose. On no account will those returning members of the

ZANLA/ZPRA forces be stopped from voting in the election in April, should they wish to do so. (13)

Of the total number, 1 150 000 leaflets were printed in Shona and 350 000 in Sindibele. A maximum of 50 insurgents availed themselves of this offer which was apparently made from a position of weakness rather than from one of strength.

An Amnesty Directorate was also set up on 7 June 1979. The amnesty call included the exhortation to phone a series of numbers across the country for information on the offer of amnesty.

While the schemes mentioned above were at national level, 1 Psychological Operations Unit was involved in a number of localised attempts at safe return. These attempts were more akin to what is known as 'instant psyop'.

When access was gained to a captured insurgent (normally via the Selous Scouts), leaflets with a picture and a message from the victim would be printed and distributed in the area where the remainder of the insurgent group was thought to be. On a few occasions a second member would also defect. This method was also used utilising skyshout equipment, with the added advantage of broadcasting a personal message from the captured insurgent which could be recognised as such. These methods attempted to capitalize on the immediate shock of contact with Security Forces and the strain of follow-up operations but results were limited.

In general the success of the defection programmes is related to long-range factors such as the insurgents' perception of the probable outcome of the insurgency. More situational factors such as being wounded or membership of a minority group also play a role. (14) The efforts at 'instant psyop' were aimed at the latter.

At no stage would the military pressure be intensified to a level at which defeat of the insurgency seemed inevitable. It was primarily as a result of this factor that Rhodesian offers of safe return and amnesty were not fully made use of. Yet it should be noted that even the limited number of insurgents who did avail themselves of these offers made the offers of safe return cost-effective in terms of the intelligence thus gained.

## 6.8 Interface and Manila Interface

Interface Operations were commenced on a trial basis in Madziwa Tribal Trust Land during April 1974. The concept was initiated by the fledgeling military intelligence organisation in an attempt to gain operational intelligence, for at this stage Special Branch controlled the full spectrum of operational intelligence sources, with no parallel military network.

The operation was based on insurgent modus operandi. Small teams of mixed black and white Security Force members moved clandestinely into an area and subsequently made unexpected nightly visits to kraals. All inhabitants of the kraal were called to these meetings which were crucial to the strategy. According to official documentation, meetings normally followed seven steps, i.e.

Step 1: An explanation was given providing the reason for the visit, viz the maintenance of a Security Force presence and concern for the local population.

Step 2: Warnings regarding the negative effects of the insurgent presence, namely curfews, food control, no-go areas, etc.

Step 3: Localised propaganda emphasising the hardships caused by the presence of insurgents, as against the harmony before their arrival.

Step 4: A comparison between the Security Forces and the insurgents, specifically regarding the material aid and services that could be/were provided by government.

Step 5: A 'message to terrorists' using local inhabitants as a communication medium to notify the cadres in the field of insurgent casualties and Security Force 'victories'.

Step 6: The offer to all present to pose questions and raise problems. Those issues that could not be explained or answered satisfactorily by the team were passed on to the local District Commissioner.

Step 7: The conclusion of the meeting with the singing of songs.

Initial attempts by the military to obtain information through closer contact with the rural black

population did not prove very successful. The attempts were subsequently superseded by the identification of the psyop potential inherent in such actions.

From mid 1975 onwards, the forerunners of 1 Psychological Operations Unit attempted to sell psyop to the military by means of Interface Operations. Little success was achieved until it was realized that Interface had to be presented as a means by which insurgents could be eliminated. Only under this guise was it believed that Security Forces could be persuaded to implement their programmes.

As officially formulated, the aim of Interface was thus twofold:

... to kill and capture terrorists and to win over the local population. The first part of the aim is achieved in two ways:

- a. Because of the method of operations the chance of contact with the ter is increased, and;
- b. Due to improved intelligence reporting from the local population.

The second aim of Interface is somewhat more difficult, and at no time should we allow ourselves to be fooled into thinking that the mere introduction of Interface will immediately win over the local population.

At various stages, and with little continuity, Interface operations were conducted by the Army, Police and Department of Internal Affairs. As a communication operation it had great potential, but on its own had a number of limitations. Firstly the local population was not presented with a viable alternative to enforced co-operation with the insurgents. Although Interface led to increased Security Force activity by night, the type of operation was best suited for use in areas in which insurgent forces were physically prevented from obtaining access to the people. Such conditions only existed in those areas in which the local population had been resettled in Protected Villages. In other areas it proved viable when used by the Security Force Auxiliaries.

A second problem encountered in the execution of Interface Operations was the lack of continuity. The allocation of troops for these operations depended mainly on the attitude of the local commander despite the fact that early in 1977, Lieutenant General Walls had personally endorsed the programme to all Army company commanders. Security Force

commanders were nevertheless loath to deploy their limited manpower resources for such operations because they did not obviously increase insurgent casualties.

In the third place, Interface Operations had failed to identify the need to aid the rural population in material terms as one of their primary aims and it could therefore do little more than improve communication. Although local grievances were reported to District Commissioners, these were not necessarily redressed. Neither did Interface teams provide immediate aid such as medical or veterinary services which were possibly within their capabilities. The general attitude of the Security Forces is amply illustrated by a further quotation from the document referred to above:

... peasant populations the world over have the same thing in common: they simply want to be left alone.

Concurrent with the Internal Settlement Agreement and the decision to open a number of Protected Villages in Operation Hurricane, Interface operations were modified. The new approach was termed Operation Manila Interface. A document compiled by 1 Psychological Operation Unit presented the general outline as follows (August 1978):

Op Manila Interface would largely be modelled on Interface Operations but would be broadened to incorporate a day-time presence on the ground at which an all-out effort would be made - on a sustained and ongoing basis - to win over the local population.

The introduction of Manila Interface in Joint Operation Centre Hurricane was in direct support of the projected opening of Protected Villages. The aim was to lessen the negative psychological effects that the opening of these villages was expected to have. The opening was planned to take place in 4 phases.

Phase 1 entailed the psychological preparation of both rural blacks and white farmers in the areas affected.

Phase 2 was the official opening which was to be conducted by black nationalist members of the transitional government.



Phase 3 comprised the introduction of Operation Manila Interface.

Phase 4 entailed what was termed 'follow-up interface operations', i.e. the long-term extension of the effort.

As a concept, Manila Interface held much promise. In a short summary of the 1 Psychological Operations Unit paper on the operation, Joint Operation Centre Hurricane stated the following:

It must be emphasised that this is essentially a broadened version of Interface, the major differences being:

- a. Carefully selected areas of operation.
- b. Resident Interface teams deploying to selected kraal heads/leaders' kraals (with shadow sticks remaining clandestine) and establishing presence on an ever-changing pattern somewhere in the vicinity of that kraal.
- c. Interface "swans" (i.e. working out from) away from the selected kraal will continue to harass, confound and confuse the terrorists, and to expand our own sphere of influence, making sure that we return each time to the selected kraal (these "swans" away (sic) and subsequent meetings might be conducted by the Shadow Sticks).
- d. "Massive" propaganda support for the terms will be forthcoming in the form of continuous supplies of new, up-dated leaflets, notes, posters, etc.
- e. Set plans must be made for the progressive re-opening of schools, clinics, etc., in our sphere of influence.
- f. Aid. Whether this simply takes the form of advice to locals or something more tangible, it must be forthcoming.
- g. Everyone must be totally committed to the need to pull out all the stops to win over the locals.

Unfortunately very little came of the two vital components contained in Manila Interface, namely permanent presence and aid. The modus operandi presented above in fact bore a number of similarities to that of the Security Force Auxiliaries (see Chapter 8). The major difference was that the Auxiliaries were (supposed to be) a local militia, armed to protect the rural population on a permanent basis.

The central reasons for the failure to implement Manila Interface were, first, the same resistance that had been encountered regarding the type of operation and manpower allocation of Interface. In the second place, as discussed in Chapter 3, opening Protected Villages proved to be counter-productive to the extent that Manila Interface operations were not sufficient to overcome the negative effects that resulted. As with Interface, but possibly even more so, Manila Interface operations were more suited to the general improvement of established Protected Villages than to the opening of these villages.

The factors complicating both Interface and Manila Interface operations within a subverted area are well illustrated in the case of Chiota Tribal Trust Land.

During 1978 1 Psychological Operations Unit started to receive regular black soldiers from the overflow of Rhodesian African Rifle recruits at Bala Bala training depot. The number obtained eventually totalled 300 men. On request, 1 Psychological Operations Unit was authorized to use Chiota Tribal Trust Land near Marandellas for intensified Interface and Manila Interface operations. Although the local population was subverted, resettlement had not been implemented.

1 Psychological Operations Unit operated in Chiota Tribal Trust Land for the remaining 15 months of the war. More than 186 insurgents were killed and by the end of 1979 intelligence reports indicated that only a single group of 30 insurgents was still active in the northern part of the Tribal Trust Land. Two members of the group had remained in the south of Chiota in an attempt to retain the logistic link through the Operation Thrasher area to Mozambique. Judged superficially it appeared that the unit had achieved considerable success. The insurgent command and control structure had been severely disrupted, large caches of weaponry had been discovered and the local population appeared to be in support of the Security Forces. As part of Manila Interface small irrigation schemes were further initiated, schools reopened and cattle dipped regularly. The role and functions of various government departments were also re-established.

However, once the Lancaster House ceasefire was implemented in December 1979, nearly 200 insurgents emerged from Chiota Tribal Trust Land to gather at the Mahusekwa Collection Point. Much weaponry was evident and the local population openly supported the insurgents. Needless to say, the change in attitude



came as an acute shock to 1 Psychological Operations Unit.

At the same time it should be stressed that the rural population could not have viewed the cease-fire as anything but an insurgency victory. Once an underground subversive group, the insurgent forces could now openly flaunt their success and their weaponry. The perception as to who will eventually control the country is in the long term an important factor in the attitude and support of the local population. The 'support' of the people of Chiota Tribal Trust Land for the insurgent forces must therefore be qualified. Despite the above two factors it still seems as if Interface and Manila Interface had not been successful in Chiota.

In retrospect Interface and Manila Interface had two further shortcomings, namely failure to redress specific local grievances, and failure to involve the people in the solution of them:

Fundamental to stability operations in the nature of cross-cultural communication itself ... it was found that the type of communication made no difference to its outcome, but that where the objective was definite rather than vague, and where the recipients were involved rather than just given aid, the communications were far more effective. (15)

#### 6.9 Food Control: Operation Turkey

On 28 January 1977, Government introduced an amendment to the Emergency Powers (Maintenance of Law and Order Regulations (no 8 of 1977)) whereby control of food supplies was instituted in certain areas. The order provided for controlling the delivery of food, growing of maize, sale and supply of food and milling of grain. It also directed that 'security devices' be fitted to places where food was stored. The regulations further made provision for the closure of beerhalls at certain hours. If persons were found contravening the order, a Police officer or any other authorised person was empowered to confiscate or destroy the food in question.

During 1976 intelligence reports indicated that ZANLA forces in the Hurricane operational area were increasingly able to obtain food from labour compounds on white commercial farms. Both the movement of the local population into Protected Villages and the general drought had reduced the available food

within the Tribal Trust Lands. The concept of food control was presented to the Joint Operation Centre by a sensor and subsequently instituted in the Mtepatapa farming area between Chiweshe and Madziwa Tribal Trust Lands at the end of the year.

Sensors had persuaded white farmers to accept the concept on the understanding that the success of the scheme depended almost entirely on the co-operation of the farmers themselves. Farmers were to ration their labourers on a day-to-day basis with only sufficient food for a particular day. No surplus would therefore be available to feed insurgent forces, even were this demanded by force of arms. Tight food control would force insurgents to spend much time seeking sustenance, which would hasten their location and eventual elimination. A further advantage could result from hostility between the local population and insurgents as demands on limited available foodstuffs increased.

When instituted, Operation Turkey, as it became known, was relatively effective. Because food control was not extended to the black rural areas, it could, however, be no more than a hindrance to insurgent forces in general. After the initiation of the effort with Operation Hurricane, Operation Turkey was extended to Mashonaland East and West and in operational areas Thrasher and Repulse. Extended cattle farming within Repulse dictated that such attempts would be very difficult to implement. Food control measures were more effective within major crop producing areas and were totally dependent on the supervision of the farmers. As the war progressed reports received from Selous Scout pseudo teams indicated that the limited results initially obtained were diminishing.

At a later stage attempts were made to enforce food control within the Tribal Trust Lands themselves by placing legal limitations on the amount of foodstuffs being held in stock by stores, as well as on the amounts sold. Ration cards were printed and issued. Store-owners had to apply for permits from District Commissioners to buy food supplies in bulk. These measures would theoretically have further reduced the availability of food supplies for insurgent forces in the rural areas.

To institute and effectively enforce such measures, however, total control over population movement was needed to prevent members of the local population from obtaining food from the nearest village or town if unavailable from the local store. Although curfews and no-go areas had been established

by this time across wide areas of Rhodesia, these measures were intended to facilitate freedom of movement for the Security Forces. The only way in which members of the local population could be prevented from visiting nearby towns and from buying unlimited amounts of food, was by total and detailed movement control of the local population. A prerequisite for any such control was an inviolable identification system. The lack of such a system had already inhibited the extent of population control that could be obtained by the institution of Protected Villages.

The single method of identification within rural areas was the situpa or registration card. These cards were carried only by adult black males. As a means of positive identification they were almost totally useless since the situpa contained no photograph, fingerprint or description of the bearer.

A registration wing was, however, set up within the Department of Internal Affairs to conduct a national registration scheme. The metallic identity card that was approved for use, was virtually unalterable and very difficult to forge, but by the end of the war completion of the project was still a number of years distant. As an interim measure mobile photographic teams were fielded in operational areas. Their task was to attach photographs to situpas, but even this measure proved to be of little real advantage. Photographs were easily falsified or exchanged. But even more important, no method of identification was extended to females and young boys.

To a large extent the mujiba network established by these adolescents was the 'eyes and ears' of the insurgent forces. The control of their movement was of cardinal importance within any system of population and resource control.

Although restriction was initially a hinderance, insurgent forces could circumvent the measures imposed in terms of Operation Turkey. Food control measures instituted in farming areas adjacent to Protected Villages were largely unsuccessful. Furthermore, as Protected Villages became less effective so did food control within and adjacent to these villages.

#### 6.10 Psyop: Operation Splitshot

Operation Splitshot was executed by 1 Psychological

Operations Unit on a larger scale than most similar attempts. At the time it also attracted both local and international attention.

From April 1977 onwards, the operation entailed the distribution of a series of one page leaflets. Typically a leaflet contained a drawing and English text on the one side with the same text in Shona and Sindibele on the reverse side. The central theme depicted was that insurgents were communist terrorists trained in Mozambique who brought only terror and death. (See Figures 6.1 to 6.3 as examples.) The pamphlets were distributed largely by Security Forces in Protected Villages, at schools, and posted in shops and public buildings in the rural areas. In some areas insurgent reaction was violent, entailing crude counter-propaganda slogans, but in most areas little visible reaction was elicited.

Although the accuracy of the sketches depicting insurgents and their ways was technically verified by captured ZANLA members beforehand, this was a relatively crude and unsuccessful propaganda attempt. The major problem was that the operation had been based on false intelligence. A senior member of 1 Psychological Operations Unit stated during an interview that the unit

... was being fed information to the effect that the terrorist was unwillingly abducted from Rhodesia, forced to undergo training in Mozambique, been given dreadfully bad training, fed badly, beaten into submission, maltreated, forced back into the country...

whilst the vast majority of insurgent trainees in fact left Rhodesia voluntarily to undergo training and returned of their own accord. Since these recruits had direct family ties with the local population in Rhodesia, it seems unlikely that the government would have been able to persuade the local population otherwise. Both the insurgents and the rural black population in effect knew that the message conveyed was false.

Within a broader context, Operation Splitshot was typical of psychological operations attempt by 1 Psychological Operations Unit. It tended to vindicate the general criticism levelled at the unit regarding its commercial approach to such attempts in general.

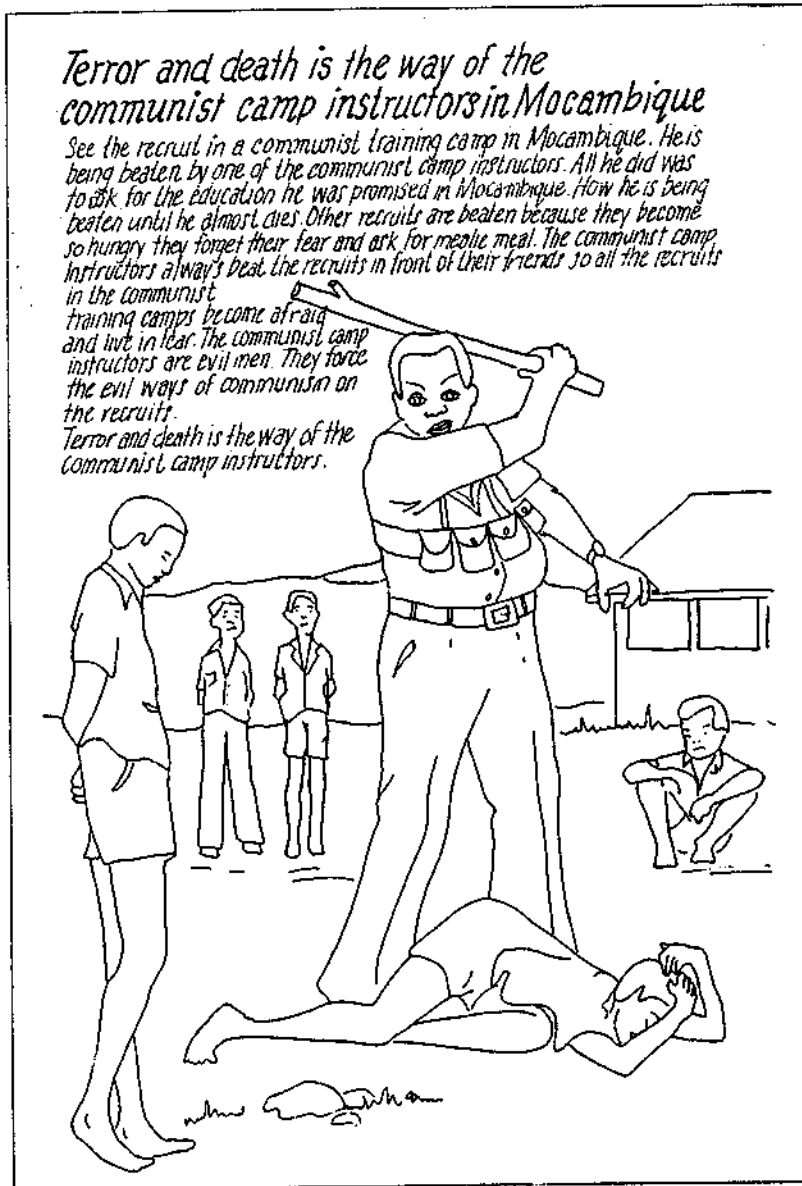


Figure 6.1 Example of Operation Splitshot Leaflet

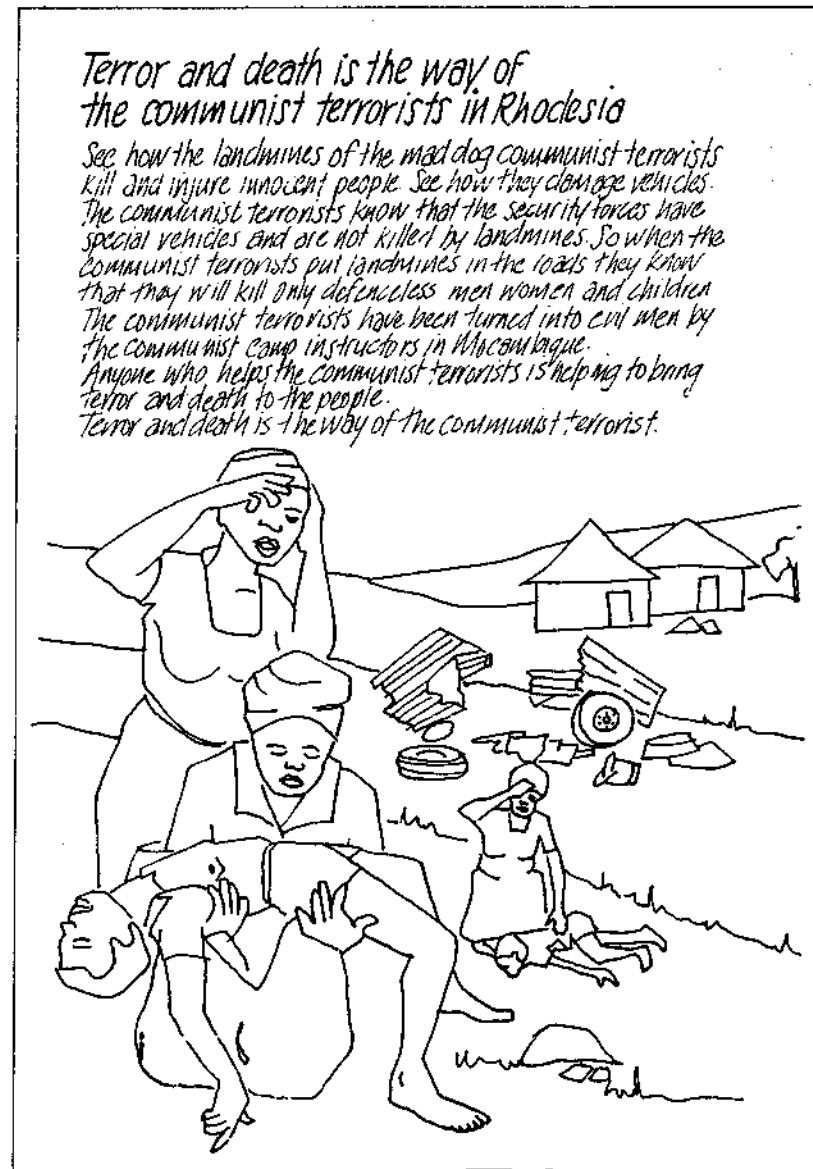


Figure 6.2 Example of Operation Splitshot Leaflet

6.11 Use of Spirit Mediums

*Do not let the communist terrorists' spokesmen deceive you with more lies and smooth talk*

*See the spokesman for the mad dog communist terrorist gang. How many promises have such evil people made to you? How many of these promises have they kept? The communist terrorists told you long ago that they would soon rule Rhodesia. This has not happened. They have burned down stores and promised to return and build better stores. This they have never done. They have said they have a special muti which makes them invisible. Yet the security forces kill hundreds of communist terrorists every month. We, who are your real friends, speak to you in truth with leaflets like these. When you show such leaflets to the communist terrorists they will try to deceive you with more lies and smooth talk. They will try to deny the truth of these leaflets. Remember the promises they have made and not kept. Do not be deceived. The communist terrorists have been turned into wild men by the communist camp instructors in Mozambique. They have been trained to deceive and to spread and death. The more you listen and believe the lies of the communist terrorists the more terror and death they will spread to the people. Terror and death is the way of the communist terrorists.*



Figure 6.3 Example of Operation Splitshot Leaflet

In large parts of rural Rhodesia tribal life had been allowed to continue unhindered. Rhodesian Front policy emphasised this reliance on the system of chiefs and the continuation of the traditional rural black way of life. In these circumstances spirit mediums continued to play an integral role in the tribal way of life.

Traditionally blacks tended to believe implicitly in the power of spirits to control life on earth. As with the tribal hierarchy, a spiritual hierarchy existed: some spirits were more powerful than others. Spirit mediums took the name of the deceased person with whom they could communicate. In effect they represented the spirit of that person who 'possessed' the medium.

Close contact between rural blacks and government local administration had led to an awareness of the continued dominance of spirit mediums within rural existence. In the execution of their duties, District Commissioners were specifically aware of this and attempted to gain the confidence of prominent mediums in the area. Consequently the potential to manipulate spirit mediums to government advantage had been recognised long before 1972. This potential for manipulation and need to gain confidence were also recognised by black nationalist organisations. With little, if any exception, all insurgent incursions that took place during the sixties entailed, *inter alia*, advice on spirits.

The Director for the Branch for Special Duties Dick Plowden in fact alerted the military in the early 1970's to the fact that African spirit mediums were moving across the north-eastern border with the insurgents. Following this a series of pamphlets, purporting to come from local spirit mediums were dropped by air over the affected area advising the local population against aid to insurgents. Having not previously received such messages from their ancestors, the rural blacks paid little attention to the advice.

During the first seven months of 1973 Internal Affairs compiled a register of all spirit mediums in Rhodesia. It contained an alphabetical index of all mediums, witchdoctors, separatist church leaders, sacred places and tribal rallying points. A paper was also completed outlining the five major cult organisations and their associates. (16) At this time the majority of mediums were still either neutral or supported the government. ZANLA insurgents had

abducted an old woman claiming to be the 'legs' of the dual spirit Nehanda from Dande Tribal Trust Land during November 1972. Various mediums claiming to represent the other half, the 'head' remained inside the country. The old woman ('legs') subsequently died in Mozambique. Government propaganda was made of her abduction and a subsequent drought, but this was abandoned as it became apparent that she was a volunteer to the insurgent cause. (17)

Military Psychological Operations regarding the influence of spirit mediums was relatively limited. The obvious agency for these operations was the Department of Internal Affairs due to their closer contact with and better knowledge of the rural black. 1 Psychological Operations Unit did, however, use a girl claiming to be possessed by the 'head' of Nehanda together with a medium claiming to be possessed by the spirit of Chaminuka. (18) A report in the Rhodesia Herald indicated that these efforts were intensified during late 1975 when the two mediums travelled through the North-east denouncing ZANLA. In some cases the talks delivered were preceded by weaponry, air force and band displays by the Security Forces.

During the existence of the Sheppard group Internal Affairs had also used a tame lion and hyena to indicate to the local population that these spiritually powerful animals were on the side of the government. Two films were also made to illustrate this, and subsequently shown countrywide by the Mobile Cinema Teams.

In general, 1 Psychological Operations Unit were more involved with the overt use of mediums such as in the case of Bushu Tribal Trust Land in 1976.

Although the insurgent penetration through Madziwa and Chiweshe Tribal Trust Lands had been slowed down, ZANLA were still infiltrating from Kandeya Tribal Trust Land through Chesa African Purchase Land, the Umfurudzi Game Park and into Bushu Tribal Trust Land. Their aim was evidently to subvert Masembura, Msana and Chinamore Tribal Trust Lands. A sensor from 1 Psychological Operations Unit and a number of Security Force members visited the dominant spirit medium in Bushu Tribal Trust Land. It was made quite clear that should insurgents move through Bushu, Security Forces would kill the medium. This proved effective for about three months. ZANLA, who were aware of the visit, eventually intimidated the medium to leave the area.

Other attempts included substantial gifts to win the favour of either the local chief, or spirit

medium. (e.g. Chief Makoni in Makoni Tribal Trust Land, was presented with a black bull which he promptly slaughtered).

A further refinement was added using ground-shout equipment. With the active involvement of Selous Scouts pseudo teams in the area, false spoor of hyena and lion were laid, while the sounds of a laughing hyena and roaring lion were broadcast by means of ground-shout. Both animals are highly esteemed in spiritual matters and purported to have magical charms. Leaflets were subsequently distributed stating that the spirits were offended at the insurgent presence. Although groups of insurgents left the area, they returned after a few weeks. Locals were later to remark that the project had little effect since spirits were not believed to have access to a printing press.

As regards 1 Psychological Operations Unit itself, the unit did not have the expertise to dabble in this very sensitive field. On the other hand, the Department of Internal Affairs tended to over-emphasise the established tribal structure that had existed during and prior to the sixties. As the war progressed these traditions were continuously being weakened until such time as a chief who did not actively support the insurgent forces found his authority usurped by the clandestine insurgent organisations.

## 6.12 Conclusion

In section 1 of this chapter, three primary elements of counter-insurgency strategy were identified, namely environmental improvement, resources control and operations aimed at the physical elimination of the insurgent forces. The above pages indicate that, as a whole, Rhodesian authorities placed greatest emphasis on the last of these. In practical terms the major counter-insurgency effort was aimed at obtaining maximum insurgent fatalities. The least attention was given to environmental improvement. In short, Rhodesia attempted to re-establish government authority by means of resources and population control and counter-insurgency operations aimed at eliminating the insurgents. Psychological operations, isolated as it was, and lacking the support of environmental improvement and local protection could under these circumstances achieve very little.

Evidence has been given that there was

organisational insecurity, lack of effective population and resource control, and a lack of civic action. Rhodesia went through the motions of a vast number of psychological operations, population and resource control measures, but with few concrete results to show for it all.

Possibly one factor that played a role is that of involvement. As A.R. Molnar wrote:

the most effective way to alter the individual's perception of the situation is to direct him into constructive action, rather than simply to lecture him. (19)

As was the case regarding the protection of Protected Villages and the resistance encountered to the formation and extension of the Security Force Auxiliaries, Security Force approach to the rural black population was a continuation of Rhodesia's colonial heritage. It was characterised by paternalism rather than by seeking involvement of the locals. This was most evident in the attitude of officials from the Department of Internal Affairs.

A second major factor pertaining specifically to psychological operations, is that these actions could only enhance Security Force actions or reduce the effectiveness of insurgent activities. It could not, however, convince a people that the government was 'winning' the war when all other indications were to the contrary. This, of course, was in contrast to population and resource control, both of which could contribute directly to the success of counter-insurgency strategy.

Stability operations can be divided into two complementary sections. On the one hand it entails internal defence, which consists of the Security Force actions necessary to defeat the insurgent forces in a specific area. On the other hand, internal development is aimed at consolidating the area under firm government control, i.e. capitalising and exploiting on the success of internal defence. Should defence thus fail, development would also fail.

Within Rhodesia the cliché that counter-insurgency in Africa entailed a 'judicious mixture of the iron fist in a velvet glove' could be heard repeatedly. Unfortunately the emphasis rather seemed to be on the fist to the exclusion of the glove.

When attempts were made to focus attention on the lessons that had been learnt in other insurgencies, the response, more often than not, was that

those wars had not been fought in the unsophisticated African environment. The vast majority of whites did in fact believe that the black African only understood and respected force. Thus proof had to be given as to who was the stronger, the government or the insurgents. Invariably the local population were caught in the middle. To a large degree, the Rhodesian approach to internal defence and development was thus a product of the racial preconceptions of white Rhodesians in general.

That the top echelon of the Rhodesian Front party failed to understand the real nature of their dilemma is well illustrated by remarks made by former Minister of Information and Defence, P.K. van der Byl after the war

South Africans will not - hopefully! - be inhibited by the ridiculous considerations that we were, of being overconsiderate about the enemy. There was far too much influence of Sandhurst and the Metropolitan Police here. The lesson of the Rhodesian war - and Vietnam showed this as well - is that you can't fight by the Queensberry rules. (20)

The lesson was, in fact, that in 15 years of armed revolution, Rhodesian whites had learnt no lesson.

#### NOTES

1. U.S. Army, Stability Operations: U.S. Army Doctrine (Field Manual No. 31-23, 1967), p. 150.
2. U.S. Marine Corps, Small Unit Leader's Counter-insurgency Handbook (NAVMC, 1972), pp. 2-2 and 2-3.
3. U.S. Army, Stability Operations, p. 69.
4. At this level civic action is termed civil affairs.
5. J.J. McCuen, The Art of Counter-Revolutionary War (Faber and Faber, London, 1966), p. 152.
6. These companies could not remit their profits during UDI and the money had been placed in a government fund at an interest rate of 2%. Rhodesian banks proved willing to form a consortium to manage the facilities. In return for access to the funds the finance houses would have offered 4½% interest.
7. Publication announced on 28 October 1976 in the Rhodesia Herald.
8. J. Fredrikse, None but Ourselves: Masses vs the Media in the Making of Zimbabwe (Ravan Press,

Johannesburg, 1982), p. 126.

9. In the case of the rabbit farms, for example, the Treasury was unwilling to supply the Rh\$ 3 000 needed to start the scheme. Further resistance was encountered from the Cold Storage Commission regarding the establishment of an abattoir for this project.

10. The Internal Duties Branch was established during 1966 'to counteract subversive propaganda' and 'to expose the false policies of so-called African nationalism'. Among other projects the Branch published a weekly newspaper aimed at black readership called The African Times. Mobile cinema teams were also deployed and supplied with suitable films for rural black viewing.

11. Catholic Institute for International Relations, Rhodesia: the Propaganda War (London, Sep. 1977), p. 42.

12. M. Meredith, The Past is Another Country, revised and extended edition, (Pan Books, London, 1980), p. 166.

13. Sunday Mail, 18 Mar. 1979.

14. See, for example, A.R. Molnar (et. al.), Human Factors Considerations of Undergrounds in Insurgencies (Special Operations Research Office, Washington D.C., 1965), p. 253.

15. U.S. Army, Operations of Army Forces in the Field, (Army Manual NO. 100-5, 1968), pp. 13-19.

16. The 5 major cult organisations are:

1. Mwari/Mlime cult in the Matopos;
2. Mutota/Nehande cult; centres in Sipolilo, Mount Darwin and Concession;
3. Musikavanhu/Chapo cult at Chipinga;
4. Dzivaguru cult at Mount Darwin;
5. Nevana cult at Gokwe.

In addition there are hundreds of ancestral spirits for the various tribes throughout the country. On average there is one major and two or three minor spirits for each chiefdom in the Mashonaland area. The Matabele chiefs do not have revered tribal ancestors who are worshipped in the specific spirit medium manner. They depend on witchdoctors for day-to-day purposes.

17. Nehanda, according to legend, was the daughter of Monopotapa. She was seduced by her half brother, and went to bed with him. Upon discovering whom he was, she ran into a rock in her anger. The impact was so great that her spirit broke in half, a 'head' and 'legs'.

18. During the uprisings of 1896, Chaminuka had prophesied that the Shona would be able to preserve

their independence only if they resisted the temptation to acquire the goods of the whites.

19. Molnar (et. al.), Human Factors, p. 275.

20. Fredrikse, None but Ourselves, p. 333.

Chapter 7

EXTERNAL OPERATIONS

7.1 Strategic Base Areas and Insurgent Sanctuaries

The father of modern rural insurgency theory, Maozedong (Mao tse Tung) identified the following six fundamental principles of insurgency:

1. The relation between offensive and defensive actions within the total revolutionary conflict.
2. Strategic defence and strategic offensive.
3. The establishment of strategic base areas.
4. The co-ordination of guerrilla warfare with conventional warfare.
5. The development of guerrilla warfare into mobile warfare.
6. The link between the various levels of command.

It is with the third of these principles namely the establishment of strategic base areas that we are concerned.

Mao defined strategic bases as those areas

... on which a guerrilla war relies for carrying out its strategic tasks as well as for achieving the goals of preserving and expanding oneself and annihilating or expelling the enemy ... (1)

While he viewed these bases within a political and ideological context, the major thrust of Mao's deliberations in this regard focusses on geographical features. His emphasis to this effect led him to state that

... guerrillas without base areas are roving insurgents and can have no connection with the

political aspirations of the indigenous population. (2)

In accordance with the above, strategic base areas may be established either within the borders of the endangered state, or adjacent to them. The latter are generally termed sanctuaries. In both cases the area should provide the insurgent forces with a degree of physical security. This can be obtained by terrain features such as inaccessability, or by political and diplomatic measures. Should the base area for an insurgency be established with an adjacent country, i.e. across an international boundary, the insurgent forces might obtain security by diplomatic means.

The necessity for the establishment of such areas is contained in the following definition by Bernard Fall:

... an active sanctuary is a territory contiguous to a rebellious area which, though ostensibly not involved in the conflict provides the rebel side with shelter, training facilities, equipment, and - if he can get away with it - troops. (3)

For the purposes of this chapter contiguous territory may be regarded as another sovereign state.

Some writers on insurgency such as Walter Lippman, Peter Paret and John Shy claim that insurgency forces with a privileged sanctuary cannot be defeated. These views are undoubtedly influenced by the important role that sanctuaries, or lack of them, have played in Vietnam, Algeria, Malaya, Greece, etc. Although the view expressed is possibly extreme, there is little doubt that

... history shows that if guerrillas are provided with the freedom to move across national borders, enabling them to receive material aid and a sanctuary privileged from attack, then their chances for overthrowing target governments seem greatly enhanced. (4)

It should be clear at this stage that the status of a sanctuary and the degree of 'privilege from attack' it affords directly influences the importance of this factor in counter-insurgency strategy. However, political constraints are the primary determinants of both.

To John D. Deiner the results of case studies



done on Algeria, Greece and Vietnam indicate the existence of two strategies as counter to active sanctuaries. The first is border control and the second armed incursions. John J. McCuen indicates a third strategy, the organisation and support of 'counter-insurgent insurgents' operating from the target country into that country serving as host to the insurgent forces; in other words, fighting fire with fire.

Physical border control on the frontier is probably exemplified by the construction of a cordon sanitaire as discussed in Chapter 4. The second strategy, that of armed incursions to destroy or dislocate insurgent sanctuaries, is the subject of this chapter.

Even in the case of a country such as Rhodesia which was, since 1975 and up to the end of the war, virtually surrounded by potential sanctuaries, care should be exercised to avoid over-emphasising the importance of a strategy of external operations. As Deiner cautioned:

... while border sanctuaries may be significant factors affecting the military aspects of guerrilla wars, they are not determinant factors of the ultimate outcomes of such struggles. (5)

Clearly such operations constitute an important element of military strategy, but only in the case of total military preponderance can external operations eliminate the external insurgent threat. Even should this be possible, the political costs involved in such actions will be the final sanction for their execution.

After UDI in 1965, Zambia was Rhodesia's only neighbour providing active assistance and succour to insurgent forces. Infiltrators from that country either had to cross the Zambezi river (or Kariba lake) to the south, or attempt to enter Rhodesia through the territories of Botswana and Mozambique. Once the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique, FRELIMO, had come to power in Mozambique during 1974, the Rhodesian strategic situation changed drastically for the worse. The whole north-eastern, eastern and south-eastern border was thrown open to penetration and infiltration. When ZPRA infiltration via Botswana increased from 1976 onwards, a similar situation developed along the western and south-western borders. The number of recruits and refugees leaving the war-torn country during those years further provided both ZANLA and ZPRA with more than an

ample supply of trainees. Therefore, by the end of the war Rhodesia had an active hostile border stretching for nearly 3 000km. Only 200km of southern border adjacent to the Republic of South Africa remained in hands not hostile to the country.

As indicated in Chapter 4 (Border Minefield Obstacles) Rhodesia had neither the manpower nor the resources to even attempt an effective system of border control. The obvious military alternative entailed a forward defence in depth. Such a strategy would imply that insurgent forces could be eliminated en masse within their strategic base areas.

A further extension of this strategy entailed punishing countries giving sanctuary for passive and/or active aid rendered to the insurgent forces. In this regard Zambia and Mozambique provided evidence of an almost unrestricted commitment to the 'decolonialisation' of Rhodesia.

Lastly, Rhodesian creation and support of the Mozambique Resistance Movement had great potential as a destabilising factor. It is, however, not directly relevant to this chapter.

The Rhodesian strategy of cross-border assaults developed rapidly in the period 1976 to 1979. The major characteristics of this strategy can only be ascertained from an account of external operations into neighbouring countries.

## 7.2 Mozambique

In spite of Prime Minister Ian Smith's public denial on 4 December 1972, Rhodesian military units had been operating continually in Mozambique since 1969. After the initiation of Operation Hurricane, co-operation with Portuguese armed forces was increased. Permission was granted for Special Air Service (SAS) and Rhodesian Light Infantry (RLI) operations in large areas north and south of the Zambezi river, to a line running North-South through the village of Carnde 100km into Mozambique.

Co-operation lasted until 1974, and even for some months after the coup in Lisbon. Operations by section and platoon size units into Mozambique continued after Portugal had handed over power to FRELIMO, for it was some months before President Samora Machel was able to consolidate power.

Co-operation between ZANLA and FRELIMO dated from 1969, when ZANLA was offered the use of the Tete province to infiltrate insurgents into north-eastern Rhodesia. This co-operation had strengthened

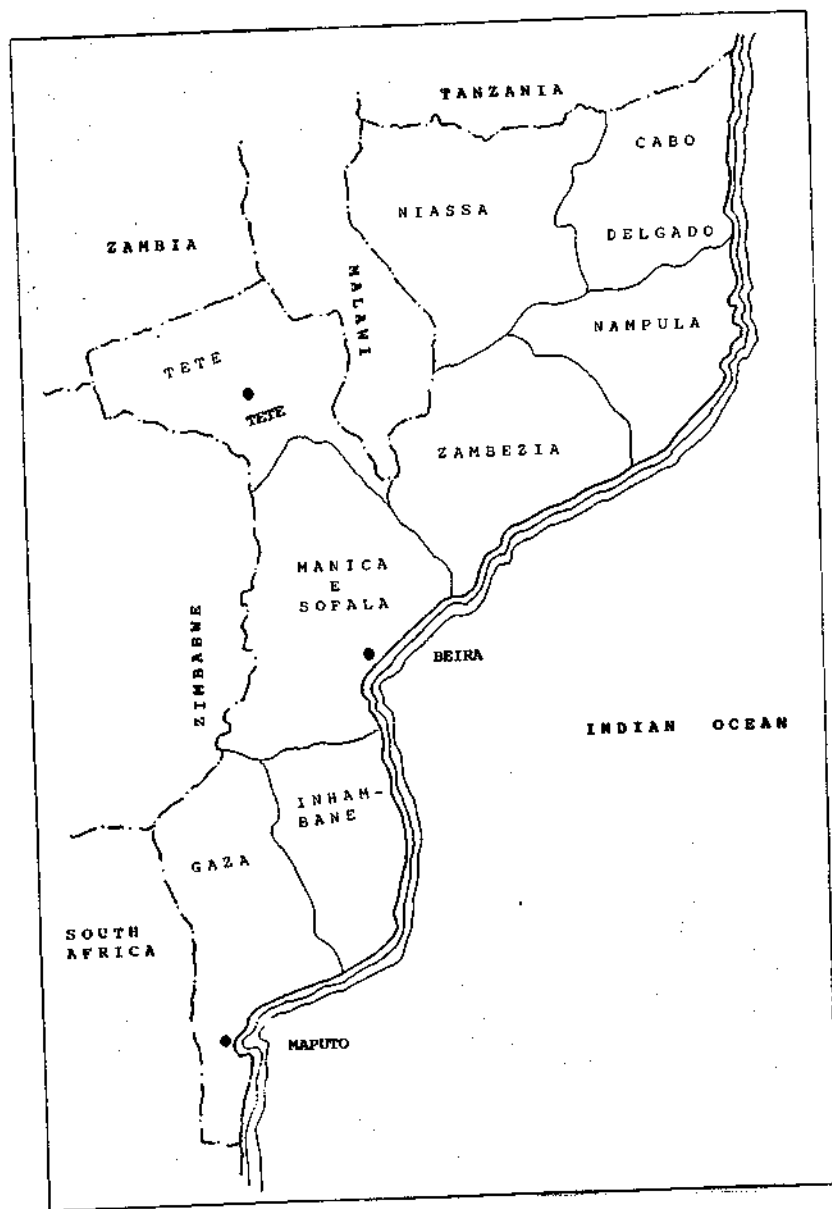


Figure 7.1 Mozambique

during the intervening years to such an extent that the two movements had a largely integrated logistics system. Once FRELIMO was in power, command, control and training were also to be integrated. President Machel's commitment to the 'liberation' of Rhodesia was total.

By 1979 the Directorate of Military Intelligence estimated that a total of 1 000 FAM (Army of Mozambique, formerly known as FPLM) troops were trained for use in support of ZANLA forces inside Rhodesia. The total number actually deployed within Rhodesia was estimated at between 150 and 300 troops.

Initially political constraints and the integration of ZANLA and FAM discouraged large Rhodesian operations into Mozambique. Strict constraints were placed on raids into that country. Only during the latter half of 1975, for example, were the Selous Scouts given permission to penetrate into Mozambique. Penetration was, however, limited to a maximum of five kilometres and attacks on FAM or camps jointly occupied by FAM and ZANLA were strictly prohibited. The first Selous Scouts operation into Mozambique was executed on 7 January 1976 when fifteen Scouts attacked a ZANLA transit camp situated near Chicombidzi. Although a number of insurgents were wounded, no fatal casualties could be confirmed.

During 1976, as the trickle of ZANLA insurgents into Rhodesia turned into a flood, Combined Headquarters, (COMOPS), was able to convince the Security Council that attacks against ZANLA training and holding camps in Mozambique was vitally important to limit the number of insurgents inside Rhodesia to manageable levels. In spite of the continuous small-unit operations that had taken place, Rhodesian intelligence concerning these bases had previously not been detailed enough to ensure success.

First use of the Selous Scouts' so-called 'Flying Column' occurred during June 1976. Code-named Operation Long John it entailed an attack on the ZANLA transit camp at Mapai and staging-post known as Chicualacuala. The operation was greatly assisted by the capture of a ZANLA liaison officer from Malvernina opposite Vila Salazar. Under cover of an artillery barrage the column of six vehicles crossed into Mozambique and in succession attacked Mapai and Chicualacuala. Although only a small number of insurgents were killed a large quantity of arms and ammunition was destroyed.

The first major success resulted from pseudo operations in Holdenby Tribal Trust Land during which a ZANLA captive gave detailed information

regarding a major base in Mozambique. According to all reports this base was the major staging area for ZANLA infiltration into Operation Thrasher. The exact location of the camp followed from a visual sighting by a Canberra pilot. Detailed preparation led to the execution of Operation Eland on 8 August 1976. Eighty-four members of the Selous Scouts, dressed as FAM soldiers, swept into the Nyadzonia camp about 40km from the Rhodesian border in Manica province with ten Unimogs and four Ferret armoured scout cars. Entering the camp via a circular route during muster parade, the Scouts killed about 300 ZANLA and 30 FAM troops according to the official Security Force communique released after the raid. At the time of the attack Nyadzonia was reported to contain about 5 000 ZANLA insurgents and 50 FAM soldiers. According to the results of an FAM board of inquiry subsequently found at Chimoio, total ZANLA deaths at Nyadzonia were estimated at over 1 000. During the raid the Pungwe river bridge linking Tete to Chimoio was also blown up to prevent any intervention by the FAM brigade stationed at Chimoio.

Although this has not been confirmed, it would seem that the Selous Scouts launched a simultaneous attack on a camp in the region of Vila Machado nearly 200km from the Rhodesian border on the Umtali-Beira railway line. FAM and ZANLA casualties were reported to be between 800 and 1 000. (6)

Code-named Operation Mardon, the Selous Scouts launched a second flying column attack into the Gaza province on 31 October 1976. The column's main objective was to disrupt the ZANLA logistical system. After the attack on the Mapai base in June 1976, ZANLA had shifted their base to Jorge do Limpopo, fourteen kilometers away, but still referred to it as Mapai. As part of the operation the railway between Jorge do Limpopo, Malvernia and Massangera was also disrupted.

At the time there was considerable doubt as to FAM reaction to such raids. As it turned out, this was less of a danger than originally feared and even after Rhodesian Security Forces launched overt attacks on FAM targets, the armed forces of Mozambique remained hesitant to close with them.

During this early stage deployment of insurgent base camps was found to assist rather than hinder Rhodesian operations. Camps were permanent establishments in which hundreds of trainees were concentrated in a very small area. Active air defence measures such as missile sites and anti-aircraft guns were very few while passive measures such as

camouflage, bunkers and track discipline were in their infancy.

These practices changed drastically, and from 1978 onwards ZANLA camps were spread over several square kilometres. Permanent sites gave way to numerous temporary camps. Locations were rotated between these sites at irregular intervals, while camouflage and concealment were highly sophisticated. By the end of the war, according to Lieutenant-Colonel Reid-Daly

To avoid detection, ZANLA transit camps had become little more than mere resting places, with stocks of ammunition, food and supplies concealed, often by burying, in wide areas of the surrounding bush. There were no huts or grass shelters and the camping areas were generally sited amongst thick bush or under large trees, to camouflage the terrorist presence from our reconnaissance aircraft. They were normally manned by a small garrison who lived, if they were fortunate, in nearby villages. Their job was to ration and resupply the groups passing through on route to the war and to provide guides to take them to the next staging post. (7)

Where the Joint Services Photographic Interpretation Staff, JSPIS, originally had little difficulty in identifying camps and their lay-out from aerial photographs, this was no longer possible. The determination of whether a camp was occupied or not became a major problem. Since final confirmation could only be obtained by physical ground reconnaissance, Special Air Service or Selous Scout teams of one to four men in strength had to be sent in. Within camps spread over large areas they were also needed to determine the precise location of key installations such as anti-aircraft sites. The nature of the task in hand led to the discovery of some of these reconnaissance teams and comprised ensuing operations.

The Mapai raid of May/June 1977, was one such attack. Official Security Force figures released claimed only 32 insurgent casualties. The camp dispersal also played a role during this raid. Co-ordinated with an external area operation by 2nd Battalion of the Rhodesia Regiment in the Vila Salazar area, elements of the Rhodesian Light Infantry were emplaced into the Rio base on the Nuanetsi river as well as into Madulo Pan. Similarly a Selous Scouts

column attacked Jorge do Limpopo, only to discover that the main ZANLA camp had shifted back to Mapai. During the ensuing attack on the latter a Rhodesian Air Force Dakota was shot down. This operation also finally destroyed what remained of the Mozambique railway system in the Gaza province. The previous large external raid into Mozambique, Operation Miracle, had encountered similar problems during October/November 1976, when the targets in Tete province received early warning as a result of the detection of the approaching vehicle column.

In spite of these problems the destruction and capture of arms, ammunition and other material increasingly played a role in Security Force strategy. Where the initial objective had always been primarily to obtain maximum insurgent casualties, it was moderated to give logistical damage an almost equal status.

The first operation aimed at destroying logistical targets, albeit for mainly military reasons, was code-named Operation Virile. It entailed the destruction of five road bridges on the road between Dombe and Espungabera during November 1977. Espungabera is located on the Mozambique side of the border to Mount Silinda. As a result, Espungabera was cut off from the main FAM and ZANLA base at Chimoio and the garrison stationed there denied all substantial means of support. As a transit base for infiltration into Rhodesia it subsequently lost much of its value.

The pattern of Security Force external operations was closely linked to seasonal fluctuations. The annual summer rainy season brought about the growth of thick, green vegetation which provided the best natural cover for insurgent infiltration and activity. Such was the case on 23 November 1977, when ZANLA suffered heavy losses of 1 200 casualties during Security Force attacks on the ZANLA headquarters north of Chimoio, and against the holding camp at Tembue. The attacks were executed by the same force of Special Air Service and Rhodesian Light Infantry troops who were air-lifted from Chimoio to Tembue. In preparing for the massed infiltration of insurgents, ZANLA had taken to concentrating them in forward holding camps at the start of the annual summer rains. Needless to say, this strategy was not repeated indefinitely.

ZANLA base camp deployment, as it had developed by 1978, presented the Rhodesian Security Forces with a number of interrelated problems. The method employed to attack an insurgent base was known as

vertical envelopment. This consisted of an air strike by bombers followed by the delivery of troops on the perimeters of the camp and across the most likely enemy escape routes by helicopters or parachute. The latter forces adopted ambush positions while the perimeter forces fought inwards, cleaning the camp progressively from one side as the battle progressed. This had originally been made possible by the development adopted by ZANLA in its base camps, as well as the absence of organised resistance to Security Forces during the operations.

While the lack of offensive action remained specifically a hallmark of ZANLA forces when faced with a conventional attack, passive counter measures such as the dispersal and extensive use of bunkers presented a serious challenge to the cost-effectiveness of such attacks. These problems were further accentuated when the insurgents resorted to building their bunkers on higher ground. As a result their anti-aircraft cover was both better placed and more effective, improving the somewhat restrictive capabilities of SA-7 missiles and the fields of fire both of missiles and other anti-aircraft weaponry. The FAM in particular were becoming more adept in the use of SA-7's. During the later Chimoio raids they positioned these missiles along the Vandusi-Catandica road, firing on all aircraft in transit.

Air strikes and close air support gradually became more costly and dangerous. Since the Rhodesian Army relied on antiquated Second World War 25 pounder field guns, artillery fire support would not dislodge insurgents from bunkers built to withstand a near miss by a 350kg bomb. (8) Artillery fire support was only used during Operation Miracle previously mentioned. During this operation FAM attempted one of its few interventions, while a ZANLA anti-aircraft machine gun company put up fierce resistance in the face of concerted Rhodesian air and ground attacks. (9)

Throughout the period in question, although the FAM never became involved against the Rhodesian forces in any meaningful way, FAM intervention was more active than that of the Zambian National Defence Force (ZPDF). The most serious Rhodesian fear was a possible attack on their Forward Administrative Areas (FAA). These were established as logistical resupply points within Mozambique (or Zambia) when deep strikes were made into enemy territory. Any attack against the FAA would endanger the entire operation. As a result many of the Rhodesian attacks on FAM forces should be viewed in the light of the

danger these forces posed vis-a-vis the FAA.

Occasionally the Rhodesian Air Force also accidentally bombed either FAM or members of the Tanzanian Peoples Defence Force (TPDF). A maximum of 2 000 TPDF troops were deployed at Massingwe in Tete province but did not actively involve themselves in the war against Rhodesia. Such accidental bombings were normally the result of faulty intelligence reports and related to the problem of distinguishing between ZANLA, FAM and TPDF forces within the various camps. Restrictions on action against FAM forces were lifted during 1978. Prior to this these forces had been engaged only in self-defence. One example of the accidental bombing of TPDF forces occurred late in 1978/early 1979. The Directorate of Military Intelligence had identified two possible area locations of a ZANLA base with the knowledge that there was also a TPDF camp in the area. When Selous Scouts teams discovered a base in the Songo area near Lake Cahora Bassa, and air strike was carried out on the location. The base subsequently proved to have been occupied by TPDF forces. As an insurgent training area Tanzania had played an active role in providing ZANLA training facilities since August 1968. These were initially situated at Itumbi in south-western Tanzania and as from 1971 at Mgagoo.

Although not as widely publicized, air strikes without ground support proved an important factor in insurgent casualties. One such raid that was never officially disclosed occurred in mid to late 1979 when a ZANLA holding camp at Nhangau, north of Beira was bombed, resulting in about 600 casualties.

As ZANLA started its build-up of conventional forces and armaments in 1978-1979, it was also becoming clear that Rhodesian weaponry could not deal with the base camp deployment that was evolving, especially as regards dispersal and the extensive use of bunkers. In terms of casualties and effort the cost of traditional vertical envelopment methods was rising, but no ready alternative seemed apparent.

During 1978 it was also becoming increasingly evident that purely as a method of inflicting insurgent casualties, external operations were not as effective as they seemed to be initially. In the period 1977 to 1978 ZANLA casualties resulting from such raids totalled 3 500, while the number of active insurgents in eastern Rhodesia had risen from 1 200 to more than 8 000. This led to a shift in emphasis from causing casualties to disrupting the ZANLA logistical system. One example of such a change

in emphasis is the air attack on combined ZANLA and FAM armouries at Chingodzi and Dendo. Henceforth, ZANLA arms were mainly stored in Maputo itself, where political considerations prevented their mass destruction by air. Alternatively they were dispersed in forward areas. ZANLA was, however, forced to stay in the vicinity of Chimoi since the latter was the main FAM administrative centre for Manica Province, and, subsequently, for ZANLA. ZANLA was thus forced to alternate their camps within an approximate radius of sixty kilometers of Chimoi. To the Security Forces this area became known as the Chimoi Circle.

As the war entered its final stages, logistics were increasingly seen as a primary factor in easing the onslaught from outside Rhodesia. A target study of the Mozambiquan communication and transport system as part of the ZANLA logistical chain was completed by the Directorate of Military Intelligence early in 1979. The result presented to NATJOC suggested the destruction of eighteen major bridges, extensive mining of certain stretches of road and sinking of dredgers in the Makuti channel off Sofala.

The War Council refused to agree to the execution of this plan in a single operation. NATJOC proceeded, however, to authorise piece-meal attacks on some of these objectives during 1979. When the Lancaster House constitutional talks began, a number of them had been attacked, but the desired result, total collapse of all traffic, and thus of ZANLA logistics, was not achieved. The operations launched were too extended in time to be effective and the only result achieved was the disruption of local movement.

During the ensuing ceasefire, ZANLA was capable of concentrating its remaining external forces and then infiltrating them into Zimbabwe-Rhodesia with little difficulty directly counter to the ceasefire agreement.

The attempts at what amounted to a limited interdiction campaign was the nearest that the Rhodesian Security Forces came to being allowed to attack strategic targets in Mozambique. At no stage did NATJOC sanction operations against economic targets that could not be justified on purely military grounds. Operation Uric (September 1979) into Gaza province bears witness to this.

Although this operation was the first to be officially admitted as purposely aimed at FAM targets (in the subsequent Security Forces communique)

the real aim of Operation Uric was to destroy five bridges and thus halt all rail and road movement north of Baragem. Military justification for the raid was provided by the arrival of large numbers of Ethiopian-trained ZANLA insurgents in Maputo in transit to holding camps near Zimbabwe-Rhodesia prior to infiltration. In view of the political negotiations underway that would eventually lead to Lancaster House, NATJOC feared that the FAM might be tempted to assist ZANLA either in seizing territory and declaring it a 'liberated' area, or in shortening ZANLA's logistical line. In an effort to halt all movement in the area as well as to counter the FAM build-up there, an FAM brigade administrative area at Mabalane near Mapai was also attacked. Only three of the five bridges were effectively destroyed. It is reasonable to assume that this operation had an effect on the pressure exerted by President Machel on Mugabe at Lancaster House, for it represented a further serious blow to the Mozambique economy.

In conclusion, Rhodesian Security Force raids into Mozambique had some distinct advantages in comparison with those into Zambia. Vehicle columns could be employed with little difficulty as a result of the absence of a barrier comparable to the Zambezi river. This made the use of artillery possible to provide close fire support, although only used during Operation Miracle. As a legacy of co-operation with the Portuguese their detailed knowledge of the terrain was a further advantage. A strange factor was the reliability of radio interceptions. Vast numbers of these were made, but the loose, uncoordinated command and control structure of ZANLA in contrast to that of ZPRA led to the interceptions being of greater use in Zambia than in the case of Mozambique.

While the general strategic posture regarding Zambia was forward and aggressive, the eastern operational area commanders attempted to institute a defence in depth, with protection of vital economic areas as a vital component. Within the three eastern operational areas such a strategy entailed establishing border minefield obstacles as impediments to cross-border movement, with little manpower back-up. The majority of forces were involved in the protection of farming areas and railway lines.

In the final year of the war an attempt was made towards a more forward strategic posture; with Rhodesian Light Infantry and Special Air Service units operating inside Mozambique on a continual basis. The Special Air Service and Corps of Engineers

laid extensive minefields in Manica, Gaza and Tete provinces in a further attempt to hamper freedom of movement. The effectiveness of these measures is extremely difficult to determine.

### 7.3 Zambia

Zambia had been the traditional base for Rhodesian nationalist movements since UDI in 1965. Although in direct political and ethnic competition, both ZANU and ZAPU had no choice but to avail themselves of the hospitality of President Kaunda. This situation continued until FRELIMO gained power in Mozambique. The third member of the Frontline states, Botswana, was economically too dependent on the Republic of South Africa and Rhodesia and militarily too weak to play any major role in the war.

President Kaunda had played an active role in numerous attempts to obtain international action against Rhodesia. These had cost Zambia dearly and culminated in the closure of the border with Rhodesia on 9 January 1973. Zambian commitment to the 'liberation' of Rhodesia is probably best illustrated in the well-known Lusaka Manifesto of April 1969 which included the following statement:

On the objective of liberation ... we can neither surrender nor compromise. We have always preferred and we still prefer, to achieve it without physical violence ... But while peaceful progress is blocked by actions of those at present in power in the states of Southern Africa, we have no choice but to give to the people of those territories all the support of which we are capable in their struggle against their oppressors. (10)

Despite having signed this, President Kaunda was not prepared to use Zambian forces to 'liberate' Rhodesia. It was to be a struggle by a people for their country. A legacy similar to that of the common struggle by ZANLA and FRELIMO in Mozambique did not exist in Zambia between the Zambian National Defence Force, ZNDF, and ZPRA. This led to a major distinction regarding the support these two countries accorded ZAPU and ZANU.

While FAM and ZANLA forces were integrated at various levels those of the ZNDF and ZPRA remained strictly separate. (11) Each had its own command and control functions as well as logistical chain. At no



Figure 7.2 Zambia

stage of the war did the ZNDF become actively involved with insurgent operations inside Rhodesia.

As regards Rhodesian Security Force operations in that country, separate bases and facilities for ZNDF and ZPRA were advantageous. Therefore attacks on insurgent bases could take place with little or no chance of ZNDF casualties. As in Mozambique, the Zambian army did not involve itself further in Rhodesian external operations. It became evident that the ZNDF was intent on preventing any confrontation with the Rhodesian armed forces. Three factors, however, hampered large scale Security Force operations into Zambia at least until 1978.

The first of these was Zambian membership of the Commonwealth and its standing as a moderate government in the eyes of the West. While Mozambique had gained independence merely as a result of the coup in Portugal, Zambia had gained its freedom peacefully from Britain during the era of de-colonisation. Large scale Rhodesian reprisals would at least have prompted Britain to adopt a harsher Rhodesian policy. The distinct prospect of direct involvement in the dispute could not be ruled out.

South Africa exercised a similar and possibly more direct restraint on Rhodesian actions against Zambia since President Kaunda was the one major black leader prepared to take part in détente in Southern Africa. The Republic of South Africa could not allow any Rhodesian actions that might endanger this relationship.

In the years preceeding 1978, Security Force external operations into Zambia consisted of small-scale clandestine activities such as sabotage and the laying of mines. The operations were conducted in close secrecy and at a relatively low level of intensity. As the war intensified, operations against ZPRA also intensified but were still limited in comparison with raids into Mozambique. Thus, for example, a combined force of Special Air Service, Rhodesian Light Infantry and Rhodesia African Rifles attacked the ZPRA staging-post in Kavalananja on 6 March 1978. The operation was code-named Operation Turmoil and the camp attacked was a mere four kilometers inside Zambia. Forty two ZPRA insurgents were killed and a quantity of equipment destroyed.

Until 1978, ZAPU leader Joshua Nkomo, had repeatedly proved ready to take part in negotiations with the Rhodesian Front government. To a large extent this willingness reflected the imbalance of strength between ZPRA and ZANLA, yet during this period Nkomo was still widely regarded as the major



nationalist leader. (During 1976 Nkomo was still inside Rhodesia as leader of the Internal ANC.) His agreement to a constitutional settlement could have been a decisive blow to the insurgent onslaught. The first Viscount disaster and the ensuing massacre of the survivors on 3 September 1978, however, halted all contact between Ian Smith and Nkomo. Following this, and in the face of reports concerning a major build-up of ZPRA forces in Zambia, the War Council sanctioned attacks on major ZPRA bases in and around Lusaka.

A final factor that tended to restrict Security Force raids was that of physical barriers such as the Zambezi river and Kariba Lake. The initial strike, emplacement of troops, fire support, logistical replenishment and evacuation of troops thus all had to be undertaken by air. As the Rhodesian Air Force had a strictly limited number of aircraft, this was a severe limitation. Only on a single occasion did Rhodesia ferry vehicles across the Zambezi to attack ZPRA targets inside Lusaka itself.

The first major external raid into Zambia took place during October 1978. During May of the previous year, Prime Minister Smith had warned President Kaunda that Harare might order pre-emptive strikes against insurgent bases in Zambia in view of the increased ZPRA forces in that country. This first raid consisted of bombing raids on several targets, *inter alia* on the ZPRA headquarters at Freedom Camp (F.C.) near Lusaka on 20 October 1978. From here half-trained insurgents were forwarded to Luso in Angola for a final four month training period. As had been the case with the first large-scale raid into Mozambique, targets that had neither active nor passive defence systems were taken entirely by surprise. This was the well-known Green Leader attack.

ZPRA quickly learned from the casualties they had suffered. As with ZANLA, they resorted to camouflage and concealment, the use of bunkers and dispersal of bases over large areas. Where ZPRA bases had initially been limited to major camps close to urban areas, they were now divided into numerous smaller bases and spread over remote areas, away from Lusaka. Within a matter of months air attacks against ZPRA bases were proving much less cost effective than was the case initially. Their training was more conventionally orientated and in general more thorough. ZPRA forces also put up more resistance when attacked than ZANLA did.

The effectiveness of ZPRA passive counter-

measures is illustrated by the air strikes against Mulungushi camp north-east of Lusaka during 1979. Subjected to twelve Canberra and eighteen Hunter sorties over a period of two days, ZPRA forces remained dug-in throughout the attack, sustaining only 7 deaths and 30-40 wounded despite the expenditure of thousands of kilograms of explosives. This was the second bombing attack on Mulungushi. It had first been bombed on 22 December 1978. At the time it contained two hundred and seventy conventionally trained ZPRA insurgents. Thirty-three died during this first attack.

As in Mozambique, it soon became clear that Rhodesian Air Force armaments could not dislodge the enemy from hardened shelters. Various experiments were conducted in an attempt to design some means of dislodging or killing personnel in their bunkers over a wide area. These experiments met with little success. In the case of Zambia specifically this was a serious limitation.

At a later stage Mulungushi base also provided proof of the effectiveness of insurgent camp routine and general security. Security Forces had planned a normal vertical envelopment operation on the camp in the belief that total ZPRA strength amounted to a single battalion. Owing to logistical problems and possible ZNDF involvement the operation was cancelled. After the war the Directorate of Military Intelligence learned that ZPRA had encamped a further three battalions in the surrounding area as counter attack force against just such an eventuality.

The preparation and strength of ZPRA forces and camps soon made it evident that attacks on main camps were becoming too costly. The alternative entailed the elimination of ZPRA communications, logistics and hierarchy. This decision was further prompted following a highly successful Selous Scouts operation into Francistown, during which a number of high-ranking ZPRA officials were captured. During interrogation they revealed the extent of the ZPRA conventional build-up in Zambia. It was planned to seize bridgeheads across the Zambezi after which either Wankie or Victoria Falls airfields would be used as air resupply points. Ground forces would establish an anti-aircraft umbrella over the two airfields.

The whole operation was intended as a severe psychological blow to white morale, as well as international proof of the extent of insurgent activities. During May 1979 Intelligence Digest had reported:



It is reliably reported from Zambia that there is a large-scale build-up of Russian military forces and equipment in the country. Up to 50 Russian transport planes daily have been seen on the Lusaka runways ... The military equipment is largely offensive ... mostly tanks, artillery and heavy machine guns. The troops are mainly East German 'instructors' and a few Yugoslav pilots ... There is much talk of an offensive against Rhodesia, spearheaded by Nkomo's terrorist forces and some elements of the Zambian Army. (12)

It can be accepted that the planned ZPRA operation was to be a concerted bid by Nkomo and his Soviet backing to forestall ZANU (ie. Chinese) political or military victory. Planning included Angola which was to provide the aircraft for a typical Warsaw Pact type operation. (Egyptian attacks across the Suez canal in the Yom Kippur war during 1973 exemplify such an operation.)

In reaction, the Security Forces launched preemptive raids by Special Air Service troops into the heart of Lusaka during April and June 1979 to disrupt ZPRA command and control structures. ZPRA central command and communication facilities were severely damaged by these operations. The first of these raids on 14 and 15 April 1979 was the only occasion during which a mobile column of seven Land Rovers was used in Zambia. During the raid an abortive attempt on the life of Joshua Nkomo was carried out.

Although large-scale external operations into Zambia had started only in 1978, two years after similar operations against Mozambique, their scope and intensity were soon to be of an equal magnitude. The same basic arguments that were used to justify attacks on strategic targets in Mozambique were used regarding Zambia.

Being a land-locked country, Zambia had limited export routes. In Angola the Union for the Total Independence of Angola, UNITA, had cut the rail link to the port of Benguela. To the south lay Zimbabwe-Rhodesia. The only viable routes remaining were along the Chinese built railway line between Tanzania and Zambia (TANZAM now called the TAZARA) and through Mozambique to the port of Beira. Himpeded by inefficient management and handling problems at the ports of Dar es Salaam and Beira, these links were hard pressed to move even the minimum of exports and imports.

As part of the limited interdiction campaign waged against Mozambique, the first raids on strategic targets in Zambia took place on 11 and 12 October 1979. Three bridges on the Beira-Moatize railway line in Mozambique were bombed. Zambian links with the port of Beira were effectively cut. At the same time Special Air Service forces destroyed the Cham-beshi railway bridge in northern Zambia. The route carrying 40% of all Zambian imports and exports was thus cut. Since the initial appreciation of objectives to be attacked was incomplete, subsequent raids had to be complemented by further attacks some weeks later. A number of other bridges were also destroyed making Zambia almost entirely dependent on its southern rail link through Zimbabwe-Rhodesia. President Kaunda was forced to re-open this route in full to avoid total economic chaos.

The military justification for these raids was towards halting the flow of military equipment to ZPRA from Dar es Salaam. The rate and extent of supply had reached alarming proportions.

As in the case of President Machel's pressure on Robert Mugabe at Lancaster House, it is difficult to gauge the resulting pressure that President Kaunda brought to bear on Joshua Nkomo.

In contrast to ZANLA, the majority of whose forces were inside Zimbabwe-Rhodesia at the time of the Lancaster House talks, the larger part of ZPRA was still in Zambia. As mentioned in the previous section, Nkomo had been planning a conventional onslaught to regain the military initiative he had lost to ZANLA in 1969-1976. When it became evident that a Lancaster House ceasefire would prevent the execution of any such plan in time, it should then have been clear to Nkomo that little doubt could exist regarding the results of an election in view of the imbalance (more ZANLA than ZPRA) of politically motivated insurgents inside Zimbabwe-Rhodesia,

Early in 1979 a high-powered Soviet military delegation arrived in Lusaka to reorganize the ZPRA strategy. They emphasised the need to go onto a conventional war footing, but in the meantime making the maximum use of the existing ZPRA insurgents to pave the way for entry into Zimbabwe-Rhodesia of the conventional forces. From then on ZPRA was divided into a conventional and an insurgent force.

The conventional plan involved having two bridgeheads across the Zambezi, one in the Chirundu/Kariba area and the other near Victoria Falls. Large numbers of conventionally trained troops would then advance in armoured vehicles to seize the airfields

at Hvange and Kariba into which they would airlift the remainder of their troops.

However, as a settlement at Lancaster House became a real possibility, it also became apparent that the number of insurgents inside Zimbabwe-Rhodesia would play a major role in the elections that were to follow. Furthermore, ZANLA encroachment into traditional ZPRA areas was causing great alarm. To bolster their insurgent forces inside Zimbabwe-Rhodesia, ZPRA began deploying regular troops into Zimbabwe-Rhodesia. These forces operated in strengths up to company level. Friction between ZPRA regulars and insurgents had a distinctly negative effect on these operations. ZPRA regulars also suffered severe reverses at the hands of the Security Forces at or near infiltration points, such as Mlibizi, Lumbimbi and Lupane.

By mid-1979 ZPRA had concentrated close to twenty thousand regular soldiers at its Central Guerrilla Training Camp No 2 (CGT-2). Further troops were stationed in Angola. Unable to tackle this force head-on, COMOPS decided on a defensive strategy. This strategy was aimed at preventing any ZPRA armoured columns from arriving at the launch points along the Kariba Lake and the Zambezi River, and to prevent a build-up of ZPRA troops and supplies for an attack into Zimbabwe-Rhodesia.

Accordingly the Special Air Service destroyed the road and rail bridges along the Great North road linking Zambia with Tanzania over which the bulk of Zambian exports and imports had flowed. Nine road bridges were also destroyed a few weeks later. This effectively cut the Great East, the Chirundu and the Livingstone roads. The latter two constituted the major two road approach routes to Zimbabwe-Rhodesia. As further counter COMOPS deployed Special Air Service Selous Scouts and Rhodesia Light Infantry forces in southern and south-western Zambia on a continual basis in operations designed to hinder disrupt and where possible, stop all ZPRA movement into Zimbabwe-Rhodesia. Pressure brought to bear on Bishop Muzorewa in London forced the withdrawal of these forces late in 1979. ZPRA was thus enabled to concentrate its forces from Luso in Angola at CGT-2 and Mulungushi. From here they were transported by road to infiltrate through bridgeheads held by five conventionally trained ZPRA battalions along Lake Kariba and eastwards to the point where the border between Zambia, Mozambique and Zimbabwe-Rhodesia meet.

In general, Security Force operations into

Zambia were influenced by a number of geographical features, the most obvious being the barrier of the Zambezi river and Lake Kariba. A second was the vulnerability of Zambia as a land-locked country whose major viable export routes ran through a country with which it was at war. It was mainly these factors that led to the use of Botswana as a ZPRA transit route.

Strategically, ZAPU had a major problem in its ethnic representation; one fifth of the Rhodesian population against the three quarters represented by ZANU. In contrast, however, Nkomo could be assured of the total support of the Matabele. Muzurewa, Sithole and Mugabe were all vying for Shona support, which led to the distinct possibility of ZAPU emerging as power-broker in any elected government.

Possibly as a result of the influence of its Soviet-block backers, ZPRA's military strategy was not as closely aligned to the politization of the rural masses as was ZANLA. ZPRA commanders believed that the better military force would eventually triumph, if only by force of arms.

#### 7.4 Botswana

During December 1972, the Rhodesian Minister of Defence had stated that

We have always had to watch the Botswana border, but now we have undoubted evidence of the existence of terrorists in Botswana. (13)

As the war spread across the rural areas of Rhodesia, three operational areas were formed and actively engaged in combating the threat from Mozambique and Zambia (Hurricane, Thrasher, Repulse). Political consideration forestalled the official declaration of 'war' against Botswana so that military commanders were hesitant to provoke an intensified struggle in the area that was eventually designated Operation TANGENT. A final factor was a mutual interest to limit the level of violence:

... in view of the fact that many guerrilla raids against Rhodesia have been mounted from Botswana the Rhodesians have responded with notable restraint. This may be related to the fact that one of Rhodesia's two remaining rail links with South Africa runs through Botswana. (14)

Possibly the first external operation of real significance mounted into Botswana was executed by a team of eight Selous Scouts on the night of 30 March 1974. As a result four high level ZPRA officials were captured. Numerous arrests were made and arms caches seized, resulting in a complete setback for both ZPRA and ZAPU in Matabeleland.

During September a fifth ZPRA official who had been attempting to reorganize the broken network in Matabeleland was also abducted by three members of the Selous Scouts. Both operations were substantial intelligence coups for the Security Forces.

Botswana had always been an unwilling partner with the other three black African countries bordering on Rhodesia and actively involved in the war against that country. Flanked on all sides by white-controlled countries her economic survival was in the hands of Rhodesia and the Republic of South Africa. Botswana's only link with any other black state was at a single point in the north where South West Africa/Namibia and Zambian territory met. The Kasangula ferry across the Zambezi river was the only external link which did not run through Rhodesian or South African territory.

Largely as a result of the natural obstacles hindering direct infiltration into Rhodesia from Zambia, ZPRA had begun to enter Matabeleland via Botswana. ZPRA forces cut across the western tip of Rhodesia, were transported down the Grove road in eastern Botswana from where they entered Rhodesia. Initially this did not occur with the active aid of the Botswana Defence Force (BDF) but Sir Seretse Khama became more sympathetic to ZPRA's use of Botswana terrain as the war in Rhodesia intensified.

Until April 1977, Botswana had a very small paramilitary Police Mobile Unit which proved totally inadequate to police the long Rhodesian and Zambian borders. The BDF was then formed, at total strength of two companies. ZPRA use of Botswana continued unabated however, and although not officially condoned, the BDF provided limited aid to ZPRA forces.

An important factor in the Rhodesian attitude towards Botswana was the absence of any armed insurgent camps, in contrast to their approach to Mozambique and Zambia. In both these countries 'refugee' camps listed as such by the resident United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees were actively being used as training bases. Listed refugee camps in Botswana were a major source of ZPRA recruits, who were flown out to Nyamapanda near Lusaka. From there

recruits were transported in batches of 2 000 to Lusaka in Angola as well as to other training camps within Zambia such as Mwembeshi, CGT and Mulungushi. Insurgents were not trained within Botswana itself. Botswana's role as a passive transit area, however, became vital in the years 1977-1978 when ZAPU launched its massive recruitment drive in western Rhodesia in an attempt to build up an army comparable to that of ZANLA.

Teams of Selous Scouts and Special Air Service troops were now operating in Botswana virtually on a permanent, if small-scale, basis. These were especially aimed at ambushes on the Grove road and met with varying degrees of success resulting in both ZPRA and BDF casualties. During 1977 Africa Confidential stated

There is now also no doubt that members of the Selous Scouts counter-insurgency unit have been operating inside Botswana, primarily to kidnap men wanted by the Smith regime and abduct them across the border. Sometimes they have posed as refugees in order to gain access to the refugee camps at Francistown and Selebi-Pikwe. (15)

Possibly one of the largest single operations into Botswana was the sinking of the Kasangula ferry during April 1979, which effectively cut Botswana's major link with Zambia, and the concurrent attack on the ZPRA headquarters in Francistown. Highly successful pseudo operations in Francistown by the Selous Scouts further provided invaluable intelligence, as documented in the previous section on Zambia. During an ambush on the Grove road by members of Three Group, Selous Scouts, Elliot Sibanda, the senior ZPRA Intelligence Officer for the South Front, was wounded and taken prisoner. The ambush team had actually been waiting for Dumiso Dabengwa on 22 March 1979 when Sibanda was captured. According to Lieutenant-Colonel Reid-Daly, 'he was the most important prisoner of the whole war', (16) Information received from him resulted in a brilliant operation by a team of Selous Scouts leading to the capture of the entire ZPRA command for the Southern Front. Under the guise of BDF soldiers, the Scouts gained entry to the ZPRA command headquarters on 13 April 1979 and 'arrested' all ZPRA insurgents present. A vast amount of documentation was also captured.

### 7.5 Angola

For the greater part of the war, Rhodesian Security Forces were largely unaware of the active role played by Angola in training ZPRA forces and supplying them logistically.

The same ZPRA high-level capture whose information led to the raids on Lusaka during the first half of 1979, also provided details of training undertaken at Luso in Angola. This was later confirmed by aerial photographs taken by the Rhodesian Air Force. On 26 February 1979, after delaying the raid for two days as a result of bad weather, an extremely successful air strike was carried out against the series of twelve camps in the area. No ground forces were involved while total surprise was achieved. ZPRA losses were considerable, not least as a result of the fact that the attack took place early in the morning. Rain had further confined the majority of the recruits to their huts. According to captured ZPRA documents total casualties amounted to 160 insurgents killed and 530 injured.

As with Tanzania, Angola played a much more active role in the war for Rhodesia than is generally recognised. Ample proof of this is provided by the plans to launch a conventional onslaught against western Rhodesia. Angola was to provide the aircraft for this operation.

### 7.6 Conclusion

Although only a selected number of the larger and more spectacular operations conducted in Mozambique, Zambia, Botswana and Angola have been mentioned, the sum total of these raids should not be underestimated. Interviewed in Cape Town during September 1978, Lieutenant-General Walls stated: 'There is no single day of the year when we are not operating beyond our borders ...' (17)

It should, of course, be emphasised that the size of external operations varied from one man reconnaissance missions to almost brigade-size operations.

External operations, however, need to be placed within a sound strategic framework, as has partially been discussed in the introduction to this chapter. Before returning to this central theme, there are a number of relevant factors that need to be mentioned to provide proper perspective.

In both planning and execution of external

operations, senior military commanders were faced with a number of severe planning restrictions. The first of these was sensitivity concerning the number of white casualties. With the singular exception of the Selous Scouts, the Rhodesian Light Infantry and the Special Air Service were exclusively white units. Repeated combat experience had indicated to the Rhodesians that in aggressive operations, white soldiers were better, while black soldiers had the edge regarding bush- and fieldcraft. Inevitably external operations involved the extensive use of the white units as attacking force. With a total community of 250 000, white casualties had a disproportionately large effect. In the words of T.E. Lawrence:

An individual death, like a pebble dropped in water, might make a brief hole; yet rings of sorrow widened out therefrom. We could not afford casualties. (18)

In practical terms this influences the type of operation that could be carried out as well as the security of the operation itself.

Initially external operations were primarily aimed at inflicting the maximum number of insurgent casualties before these forces entered Rhodesia. As pointed out, in the early stages insurgent base camp strategy assisted this role. However, evolving insurgent strategy soon had a marked effect on Rhodesian military operations. On the one hand, the targets presented were no longer as concentrated and limited in size. On the other hand the facilities constructed inside these camps proved very difficult to destroy. The emphasis thus slowly shifted to what had been termed in Vietnam 'working the system' (the motto of General Abrams). Insurgent logistics probably became the primary rationale behind Rhodesian military planning for these raids. This was, however, also the result of a realization that almost unlimited manpower resources available to both ZANLA and ZPRA prevented the long term effectiveness of a strategy simply aimed at eliminating these insurgents prior to their entry into Rhodesia.

A further related factor was the threat of significant involvement by the Zambian and Mozambique armies during such raids. This was specifically of importance regarding the physical security of the Rhodesian forces' return route to their country. Any possible involvement by national defence forces that could jeopardise this had to be eliminated at an

early stage. Equally important, Rhodesian forces could not become involved in either long drawn out or running battles with any insurgent or foreign army. Although the armed forces of Mozambique and Zambia only actively intervened on a small scale on four occasions, adequate provision had to be made for dealing with any such an eventuality.

From 1976, with the geographical spread of subverted areas and the increasing numbers of insurgents inside Rhodesia, the availability of select weaponry and weapon systems also became a severely restricting factor. Although the majority of insurgent casualties inside Rhodesia resulted from intelligence provided by the Selous Scouts, the actual killing force was the airborne Fire Force.

This consisted of Rhodesian Light Infantry troops transported in helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft, supported by helicopter gunships. Owing to the limited availability of helicopters in particular, any large-scale external operation virtually implied denuding internal operational areas of Fire Force. With the most effective weapon temporarily forfeited, the internal security situation deteriorated dramatically to the extent that during the last two years of the war, a single week proved almost the maximum period for any external operation. According to the officer commanding the Selous Scouts, Lieutenant-Colonel Reid-Daly:

Due to the small numbers of aircraft we possessed, any major attack on an external base meant that the internal scene was denuded of helicopters and consequently their Fireforce passengers for periods of up to ten days at a time and, without Fireforce around, the kill rates dropped back to almost zero and the influence of the terrorist increased. (19)

A procurement problem related to that of aircraft was also encountered as regards sophisticated air delivery weaponry. At the start of external operations the only available counter to extensive bunkers was the old 350kg (1 000 lb) bomb which only succeeded in collapsing shelters in the immediate vicinity. Various experiments and projects were initiated to develop a counter to the use of bunkers. Possible solutions included the use of heavy gasses as well as the creation of a ring of fire by means of the vortex effect. The war ended before any of these attempts could be realized. Attempts at night bombing to counter insurgent movement during the

hours of darkness had little more than a psychological effect.

The general implication was that the Security Forces were not able to counter the evolving insurgent base camp deployment strategies. The alternative to the measures discussed above was to land ground troops to clear such bases. Once on the ground, however, and fighting through bases spread over several square kilometres, Rhodesian forces ran into increasingly strong resistance.

Within a base of 30km<sup>2</sup>, such as found in the Tete Province, insurgent forces had space to regroup and break out of any possible encirclement. ZPRA in particular became increasingly aggressive as the war progressed. This was clearly illustrated during Operation Tepid in Zambia, where ZPRA forces made a conventional night withdrawal from their well-prepared battalion defensive positions: whereas, lacking supportive weaponry, the Rhodesian forces almost suffered serious casualties. Availability and procurement of both rotary and fixed-wing aircraft was limited so that ground forces airlifted into an operation could not be provided with close fire support. For reasons that have already been discussed in sections 2 and 3 this problem was more serious in the case of Zambia. If necessary, artillery could provide this support for operations into Mozambique. This support would undoubtedly have become necessary had the war continued for even a few months longer.

Two final factors worth mention are the repeated attempts to assassinate key ZANU and ZAPU leaders, as well as Rhodesian support of dissident movements such as the Mozambique National Resistance Movement, MRN, in Mozambique. The Resistencia Nacional Mocambicana (RNM) is also known as the Mozambique National Resistance Movement (MNRM), the Mozambique Resistance Movement (MRM), and the Mozambique National Resistance Front (FUMO). Following the coup in Portugal, the Rhodesian government decided to aid resistance against the Machel-regime in Mozambique. A 400 000 watt transmitter stationed at Gwero was used to transmit the 'Voice of Free Africa'. This was the same transmitter originally used from Plumtree to block BBC broadcasts from Francistown in Botswana shortly after UDI. Transmissions in support of the MNRM began early in 1976. For the first years of its existence, the MNRM had no distinct ideological stance other than the rejection of the PRELIMO regime. By the end of the war this movement had become a major factor in undermining the stability of Mozambique.

The elimination of key expatriate nationalist leaders was codenamed Operation Bouncer. In spite of repeated attempts it failed to remove leaders such as Mugabe, Nkomo, Nhongo and Dubengwa. Rex Nhongo was wounded during one attempt, while Dumisa Dubengwa escaped death by a few minutes on the Grove road. (20)

In sum, external operations had to be part of Rhodesian military strategy. Alone, they could either buy time for a political settlement or be aimed at the overthrow of the existing government to destroy that country's support for insurgent forces. If, as in the case of Rhodesia, a political strategy was lacking, only the latter option remained.

Eventually Zimbabwe-Rhodesian Security Forces engaged in limited interdiction campaigns that tended to be more punitive than preventative. The lessons to be learnt from the American strategic bombing of North Vietnam should have been heeded; Zambia and Mozambique provided evidence of an almost limitless commitment to the de-colonialisation of Rhodesia. Neither country could lay claim to democratic status and as a result could sustain their commitment far beyond that which would have been the case had the respective government been responsible to an electorate. Furthermore, with largely subsistence economies, neither country could be brought to total political chaos by economic disruption.

NOTES

1. J.J. McCuen, The Art of Counter-Revolutionary War (Faber and Faber, London, 1966), p. 52.
2. W.D. Jacobs 'Mao Tse Tung as a Guerrilla - a Second Look' in F.M. Osanka (ed.), Modern Guerrilla Warfare (Free Press of Glencoe, New York, 1962), p. 170.
3. J.D. Deiner, 'Guerrilla (sic) Border Sanctuaries and Counter-insurgent Warfare' in The Army Quarterly, vol. 109, no. 2 (Apr. 1979), pp. 163-164.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid., p. 177.
6. See the Rhodesia Herald, 18 August 1976. The Mozambique Resistance Movement (MRM) was at this stage in its infancy and could not have launched such a raid without active Rhodesian assistance.
7. P. Stiff and R. Reid-Daly, Selous Scouts: Top Secret War (Galago, Alberton, 1982), p. 248.
8. The use of artillery was further dependent on the existence of a suitable approach route for

both guns and their logistical support vehicles.

9. The FAM 'intervention' was limited to an advance during the night by one or more T34 tanks supported by infantry. Faced with artillery fire, they limited themselves to speculative fire and withdrew well before first light. During all external operations two Hunters armed with 68mm SNEP rockets were on constant standby for just this kind of eventuality.

10. M. Sithole, Zimbabwe: Struggles within the Struggle (Rujeko, Harare, 1979), pp. 130-131.

11. The only exceptions occurred at Mulungushi camp where ZPRA were trained by ZNDF instructors, and at the Kabwe officers school.

12. Intelligence Digest (16 May 1979), p. 3. Foreign Report had already referred to Cuban guarded convoys of up to 50 trucks transporting weaponry from Angola to Zambia for ZPRA during September 1977.

13. Africa Research Bulletin (1-31 Dec. 1972), p. 2702.

14. Foreign Report (3 Aug. 1977), p. 4.

15. Africa Confidential (22 Jul. 1977), p.3.

16. Stiff and Reid-Daly, Selous Scouts, p. 373.

17. Rhodesia Herald (28 Sep. 1978).

18. T.E. Lawrence, The Seven Pillars of Wisdom (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1977), p. 199.

19. Stiff and Reid-Daly, Selous Scouts, p. 302.

20. Reid-Daly provides a detailed account of one such attempt against the life of Joshua Nkomo during December 1978/January 1979 in Selous Scouts: Top Secret War. A radio-activated car bomb was to be used for the assassination, but as a result of Nkomo's studied lack of routine, the operation was aborted.

Chapter 8

OPERATION FAVOUR: SECURITY FORCE AUXILIARIES

8.1 Introduction: The Concept

Within the theory of revolutionary and counter-revolutionary warfare the dictum that the battle is in effect one for the 'hearts and minds' has been repeatedly cited. Probably the major qualification lacking, is that the Security Forces cannot 'win the hearts and minds' of the local population if they are unable to protect them from insurgent intimidation and reprisals.

On the one hand, the local population is faced with an insurgent force that strives to establish itself within certain population concentrations and extends its influence from there. If the Security Forces fail to protect the local population from insurgent intimidation and influence, however, they will be unable to retain any support they might have had. The major object of the struggle between the two opposing forces is to obtain the active participation of the majority of the uncommitted populace. This can largely be gained by demonstrating whether or not the Security Forces can provide physical security for the local population.

Within counter-insurgency doctrine, breaking the hold of the insurgent forces and re-establishing control by the authorities has generally been seen to be attempted in two stages. The first is to break contact between the insurgents and the people, while simultaneously destroying the insurgent organisation. The second stage is to obtain the active participation of the population against the insurgent forces. Strict population control including protected villages, curfews, martial law, food control, identity systems, and related measures have been traditional methods of isolating insurgents from the population. A number of these have already

been discussed in previous chapters. Local militia whereby the people are encouraged to defend themselves against insurgent forces is a further important element in the second stage of the counter-insurgency strategy. Normally these would be in the form of a local force within a protected village. The local population thus become responsible for their own defence. Mobile, quick-reaction Security Forces should back up this system. Both stages were succinctly summarized in the four objectives of the well known Briggs plan as employed in Malaya:

- a. To dominate the populated areas and to build up a feeling of complete security, which would in time result in a steady and increasing flow of information coming from all sources.
- b. To breakdown the Communist organisation within the populated areas.
- c. To isolate the bandits from their food and supply organisations in the populated areas.
- d. To destroy the bandits by forcing them to attack the Security Forces on their own grounds. (1)

The Rhodesian exercise in the establishment of a local self-protection force to consolidate and even reassert government control, was unique in a number of respects. It therefore merits closer examination, for it had great potential as a major element of the Rhodesian counter-insurgency effort.

8.2 Operation Favour

As early as 1973, the idea of a local black militia which would enable the rural population to defend themselves against insurgent attacks had been mooted both in Special Branch and Department of Internal Affairs. Within Special Branch it was known as the Impi-idea, while the District Commissioner at Sipolilo prepared a paper on the subject late in 1973. A number of members of the local population were in fact armed with old bolt-action rifles in Sipolilo Tribal Trust Land but these were stolen by insurgents, finally leading to the failure of the scheme.

From the outset the concept ran into both military and political opposition. The former resulted from doubts as to the loyalty and effectiveness of thousands of poorly trained and armed rural blacks, and the latter as result of white resistance to



'arming tribesmen'. This opposition had already led to delays in the formation of second and third battalions of the Rhodesia African Rifles. Before 1978 recruitment and arming of District Assistants and District Security Assistants by the Ministry of Internal Affairs from 1974 onwards to defend Protected and Consolidated Villages, was the sum total of any official attempts in this direction.

In January/February 1978, the idea of a local militia based on the village family unit to provide protection against all external threats was revised within Special Branch.

As a result a pilot scheme was launched in Msana Tribal Trust Land. Initially these forces were termed the Interim Government Forces. As the name indicates, the Interim Government Forces were initiated as an apolitical body in the sense that it was not linked to any one black political party. It was, however, linked with the majority rule talks being held in Harare between Prime Minister Smith, Bishop Muzorewa, the Reverend Sithole and Chief Chirau. With the active participation of the Selous Scouts, Special Branch introduced 42 blacks into Msana Tribal Trust Land. Of these, nearly half were former insurgents, but all originated from the specific area. (2) Each man had been given an extra weapon which thus enabled him to recruit in turn so effectively doubling the strength of the Interim Government Forces. By March 1978, Msana Tribal Trust Land was being permanently protected by about 90 men. From this humble beginning the programme was slowly built up in the Tribal Trust Lands surrounding Harare, until by the end of the year, some 2 000 men were in the field, living in the local villages as part of the tribal structure, for the first time permanently affording the local population protection. The idea of an apolitical force, however, soon proved impractical against the background of the tribal affiliations that dominated political affinity. As soon as it was realised that the UANC and ZANU (Sithole) were the two parties with the most internal black support, the Interim Government Force was renamed the Security Force Auxiliaries (SFA's) during June 1978.

Concurrent with the start of Operation Favour, as it was to be designated at a later stage, was the Internal Settlement Agreement of 3 March 1978. To Prime Minister Ian Smith, the major rationale for his talks with Bishop Muzorewa and the Reverend Sithole was his belief that, as the most popular nationalist leaders, these two politicians would be

in a position to call an end to the war. Muzorewa had been given a hero's welcome both on his return from self-imposed exile on 3 October 1976 and after his return from overseas early in 1978. Close on 200 000 people welcomed him at Harare airport and this left an indelible impression on the minds of Prime Minister Smith and Bishop Abel Muzorewa himself. Ndabaningi Sithole was still adamant that he was the true and popular leader of ZANU and held the allegiance of ZANLA cadres. In this regard the fledgeling Security Force Auxiliary scheme was received as evidence of the numbers of insurgents that had given up the struggle in the bush and joined the government forces. A vast amnesty programme supported the attempt to convince both ZANLA and ZPRA that real majority rule had finally been achieved. On 4 November 1978, Lieutenant-General Walls claimed that

The Transitional Government has persuaded more than 2 000 Patriotic Front terrorists to join its side and they were now fighting under the control of the Rhodesian Security Forces. (3)

This campaign reached its climax with the publicity given to 'Comrade Max' (actually a member of the Selous Scouts) who claimed authority of Msana Tribal Trust Land. Although this was the first Tribal Trust Land circumscribed for exclusive Auxiliary control, the majority of Comrade Max's men were not true former insurgents, but recently trained Security Force Auxiliaries. During November 'Commander Lloyd' claimed similar authority in Maranda Tribal Trust Land.

Both Bishop Muzorewa and Reverend Sithole claimed the allegiance of substantial numbers of insurgents, but neither had any real influence over the cadres in the field. While General Walls had claimed that 'more than 2 000' insurgents had joined the Security Forces, in fact a maximum of 50 had availed themselves of the amnesty offer. The rest were Security Force Auxiliaries. According to Lieutenant-Colonel Reid-Daly 'Muzorewa and Sithole only had a minimum of genuine terrorist support, and each was using the auxiliary concept and the money it generated from Government ... as a means of producing private armies from nothing'. (4) This vast propaganda operation could only have been aimed at international recognition, for neither the local population nor the insurgents themselves could be misled as to the true nature of the Auxiliaries. The only real insurgent forces loyal to the UANC and ZANU (Sithole) were two groups that had been trained in Libya and



Uganda and returned to Rhodesia during the latter part of 1978. In total these numbered 140 men and were subsequently included in the existing Auxiliary structure. The 42 men that Sithole obtained from Uganda in fact constituted the initial group of Security Force Auxiliaries loyal to him. (5) (They were deployed in Mphoengs Tribal Trust Land.) Reverend Sithole had, however, already told newsmen in May 1978 that

By the end of the month it will be obvious that the military situation is under control. My lieutenants are meeting with the guerrillas in the bush. Increasingly, the guerrillas are expressing their solidarity with us. (6)

Sithole was in fact trying to regain control over ZANLA cadres in the field in a continuous attempt to reassert his leadership of ZANLA over that of Robert Mugabe. This challenge only came to a head following Sithole's crushing defeat during the April 1979 elections. Casualty figures seemed to provide ample proof of both Muzorewa and Sithole's inability to initiate the ceasefire they had promised Prime Minister Smith. At the start of the year total casualties were at a daily figure of eight, rising to fifteen a day after the conclusion of the Agreement of 3 March 1978. By September 1978, it was reported that an average of thirty people were killed daily.

At this time, and on the recommendation of 1 Psychological Operations Unit, the Security Force Auxiliaries were given the name 'Pfumo re Vanhu' or 'Spear of the People' (Shona), and 'Umkonto wa Bantu' (Ndebele)

In an attempt to obtain COMOPS approval for the SFA scheme, Special Branch arranged an unauthorized well-reported visit by Bishop Muzorewa to Msana Tribal Trust Land on 12 August 1978. Neither the Chairman of the Rhodesian Broadcasting Corporation nor the Minister of Information knew of the intended meeting. Special Branch had in fact broken into COMOPS and using official stamps, etc, falsified COMOPS approval of the intended visit. Although the press coverage of 'Commander Max' led to some resistance within the white community, and a hot debate in Parliament, the obvious success of the pilot scheme led to official COMOPS approval soon afterwards. In preparing for the April 1979 elections, COMOPS recognised the potential of the Auxiliary scheme in securing block votes for its favoured candidate, Bishop Muzorewa.

By this stage the Army was involved with Operation Favour to a far greater extent than Special Branch who had originated the scheme. General Walls had in fact, personally ordered the Selous Scouts to undertake the training, administration and feeding of all insurgents who handed themselves over and were prepared to join the Auxiliary forces. While this task was to take precedence over all operational responsibilities, the very limited numbers of insurgents so disposed reduced the scope of the foreseen task dramatically. The two services involved, hold differing views on the concept: to the military the Auxiliaries represented a distasteful method of regaining rural control, while Special Branch tended to view the project as a political weapon to regain the support of the subverted rural black population. To COMOPS it was directly linked to the April elections. When briefing the responsible Special Branch officers early in 1979, the Director General of the Central Intelligence Organisation expounded the 'Ground of Tactical Importance' concept whereby the Security Force Auxiliaries would be used first to consolidate the economic heartland. The accent later shifted towards ensuring key block votes, especially for Bishop Muzorewa. The numbers of ZANU (Sithole) Auxiliaries were constantly limited by Special Branch as it became clear that it was the Bishop and not Sithole who had majority support. (See Chapter 11 for further detail on 'Ground of Tactical Importance')

In view of the proven success of the small Security Force Auxiliary scheme in stabilizing the rural black areas in which they were deployed, COMOPS now demanded its immediate and vast extension in preparation for the April 1979 elections. Both the security chiefs, as well as black and white politicians now began to realize that Operation Favour was possibly the one vehicle that could re-establish control in the Tribal Trust Lands. This would ensure a high percentage poll for the election which could possibly lead to international recognition. However, instead of recruiting members of the local population from the Tribal Trust Lands and training them before returning them to their home villages, as was the original idea, Operation Favour was also seen as a solution to the large numbers of blacks unemployed in the towns and cities. These were now 'recruited' and after a rudimentary 4 week training course sent into the Tribal Trust Lands. The introduction of the 'townies' into an alien rural environment led to an increase in rape, murder

and general crime. According to official documentation

Because of the urgent necessity to deploy the SFA into the Tribal Trust Lands to ensure a good vote at the April election, few of them received more than four weeks basic training whilst their leadership was selected more by trial and error than experience. There was, on average, one white liaison officer, normally a junior NCO (Non-Commissioned Officer), to every hundred and fifty SFA.

Towards the close of 1978 attempts were also made to start an apolitical scheme in Matabeleland. The major incentive offered was financial, and detachments were started in Wankie, Belingwe, Godlwayo and Lupane Tribal Trust Lands. Results seemed promising but soon proved false by a high desertion rate and the attempt was allowed to dissipate. Yet in spite of both manpower and time limitations, by March 1979:

There is growing evidence that in some Tribal Trust Lands the irregulars known as Security Force Auxiliaries have pushed back the Patriotic Fronts' forces. (7)

UANC Auxiliaries were particularly successful in Karoi, Chinamore and Seki Tribal Trust Lands. (8)

A further problem related to recruitment was conscription to fill the ranks. Some blacks reluctantly accepted arms, and once placed in a Tribal Trust Land cohabited with the Patriotic Front forces in the areas. This was once again a side effect of the expedient of using urban blacks to protect rural blacks. Since UANC and ZANU (Sithole) had to provide recruits for Security Force Auxiliary training, both had the advantage of abetting the limited role that was accorded to Auxiliaries loyal to ZANU (Sithole). As a result of its limited black support, this party could not provide as many Auxiliary trainees as the UANC could. The limiting of Sithole's Auxiliaries is further to be seen in the context of intense white suspicion of his political ambitions and of the danger of presenting Sithole with a large armed force.

In contrast to these problems discussed above and seen from a security point of view, the results of the internal elections of April 1979 could largely be attributed to the role played by the more than 10 000 Auxiliaries deployed in the field. The

high number of insurgents killed during the elections and the increased Security Force levels, resulted in a considerable rise in the ratio of surrenders to kills.

After the war Mugabe in fact admitted that ZANLA had been experiencing difficulty in motivating its forces to fight against a black government, especially in those areas in which the support of the people had swung in favour of the Security Force Auxiliaries. But the Rhodesian economy was now under severe strain with the result that demobilisation followed almost immediately after the elections. Within the various Auxiliary allegiances the election results brought their own problems; as recounted in official documentation:

- a. The SFA orientated towards the UANC who numbered about 8 000 were delighted with the result, but there were immediate demands to stand down as they were now the 'Winners'. When they realised that this was not to be, as the war was continuing there was a marked drop in morale in some areas and a number of desertions.
- b. When the election results were announced there were slightly under 2 000 SFA's orientated towards ZANU (Sithole) in the field. The allegations of gross irregularities in the election made by Sithole and others of his party had a marked effect on the ZANU detachments who were convinced that they had been cheated. A mistake in the addition of the votes cast in the Gokwe district, which reversed a narrow ZANU majority into a loss of almost a thousand turned what was a model detachment at Nembudzia into virtual enemies of the Government.

The election results ultimately led to the demise of all of Sithole's Auxiliaries. Problems had already been encountered during the previous year when some of his forces began living a rapacious existence, especially in Gokwe Tribal Trust Land in central Rhodesia. Security Forces had been forced to intervene forcibly on at least two occasions (Dorowa in Sabi Tribal Trust Land and Brunapeg Mission in Mphoengs Tribal Trust Land to put an end to these practices. For some time ZANU (Sithole) Auxiliaries had also been involved in attempts to make local contact with ZANLA forces, eg. in Nyadjena Tribal Trust Land, where they sided with ZANLA forces to

combat ZPRA insurgents in the west of the Tribal Trust Land. On advice from Special Branch, Special Forces Headquarters, who were taking control of Operation Favour, began to deploy ZANU (Sithole) Auxiliaries in areas in which ZANLA and ZPRA were contending for control, such as Maramda Tribal Trust Land. This effectively limited the support that Sithole was able to draw from Shona areas in competition with Bishop Muzorewa. Security Force doubts were vindicated when efforts to round up ZANU (Sithole) Auxiliaries for 're-education' at Gokwe (Nembudzia) met with armed resistance. During the ensuing battle 183 members of the Auxiliaries were killed on 20 June 1979. The remaining ZANU (Sithole) Auxiliaries were either jailed or allowed to join UNAC Auxiliaries. No further ZANU (Sithole) Auxiliaries were deployed.

Both finance and enthusiasm for Operation Favour waned in the post-election period. The Army, which had gradually been gaining control of the scheme saw it as a military instrument whose use had diminished once Bishop Muzorewa had won the election. The total Security Force Auxiliary establishment was reduced from its maximum of 16 000, although this was also as a result of the concurrent retraining and retrenchment programme. For the first time the role, tasks and structure of the Auxiliaries were formalised. According to its standing Operating Procedures for Operation Repulse area, these were as follows

ROLE OF THE PRV (Pfumo re Vanhu)

2. The role of the PRV is to win over the local population and motivate it to support the Government of National Unity (GNU), the Government Administration and the Security Forces.

TASKS OF THE PRV

3. The PRV are responsible for carrying out the following tasks in JOC Repulse area:
  - a. Encouraging Communist Trained Terrorists (CTTs) to accept the Amnesty offer.
  - b. Protecting the local population by retaining a constant presence in areas in which they are deployed.
  - c. Maintaining or re-establishing civil administration.
  - d. Assisting Security Forces in preventing terrorists from re-establishing their domination over areas from which they have been driven.

- e. Establishing a pro-Government Mujiba system for gathering intelligence.
- f. Acting as a link between tribesmen and Security Forces.
- g. Protecting villages.
- h. Through their local knowledge assisting the Security Forces on operations in or adjacent to areas which they occupy.

More attention was paid to the political message in the intensification of 1 Psychological Training Unit's training of envoys, the insurgent equivalent of the political commissar, while all Auxiliaries were rearmed with G3 rifles (a standard NATO rifle at the time). This had two distinct advantages in that it gave the Security Forces real control in the supply of ammunition, while it also effectively cut off the Auxiliaries as a source of arms and ammunition for the cadres. For, in Rhodesia, the insurgents were never able to live off the Government forces for arms and ammunition supplies, but had to rely on supply lines back to their adjacent host countries. As a final step in this process Special Branch relinquished control over the Auxiliaries to the Army on 1 July 1979. Special Forces Headquarters, originally formed to co-ordinate the operations of the Special Air Service, Selous Scouts and Rhodesia Light Infantry, was now responsible to Army Headquarters for all aspects of Operation Favour, and not directly to COMOPS as had been the case up to this date. Each Joint Operations Centre thus gained control of the Auxiliaries forces deployed in its area. As an intelligence organisation Special Branch did not have the organisation, facilities or manpower to run the operation as it had developed by this stage.

The transfer of authority created a number of problems. The direct link with their political leader, that had proved so crucial thus far, was weakened, as the Auxiliaries were now part of the hierarchical Army command and control system. Normal Army logistics now applied, replacing the (admittedly expensive) local procurement of supplies by cash transactions. The latter had not only tended to stimulate the local economy but was a further link in Auxiliary involvement at local level.

Up to this stage Security Force Auxiliaries had only been deployed in Tribal Trust Lands where the local population had not been placed in Protected Villages. In September, COMOPS decided that the Auxiliaries should take over from Guard Force the

responsibility for 74 Protected Villages so that the latter could be deployed along railway lines and in a mobile role in the white farming areas. As a result the Auxiliary establishment was raised, and, by the beginning of October, the Protected Villages in the Beit Bridge, Chiredzi, Chipinga, Mutasa and Mount Darwin areas had been taken over, with varying degrees of success. Where possible, each Protected Village was defended by a force of 40 men. This was a logical development of the Auxiliary scheme, although it was essential that Auxiliaries used in such an environment should have come from the Protected Village itself.

On completion of the redeployment, expansion took place again but was hastened considerably at the start of the Lancaster House talks. Mr Smith in fact issued orders from Britain to the effect that the Auxiliary numbers had to be increased to 26 000 as soon as possible, while the Army had by now set an ultimate objective in the region of 60 - 70 000.

An indication of the priority that had been allocated to the extension of Operation Favour was the Rh\$ 4,3mil earmarked for the scheme during the November 1979 supplementary defence appropriations tabled in parliament for the period ending June 1980. Although the ceasefire and disbanding of the Security Force Auxiliaries cut this short, some 19 000 Auxiliaries (for a total budget outlay of Rh\$ 20 mil) were in existence at that stage. Yet funds were not the limiting factor, for these were again being channelled in from South Africa and the Middle East. In fact Operation Favour was not granted a sufficiently high priority in the period after the election in April 1979. When it was finally given this high priority subsequent effectiveness was limited by availability of Army instructors as well as continuous attempts by the Army to produce Auxiliary soldiers comparable to normal Army troops. Operation Favour had, however, been one of Ian Smith's last hopes, for during February 1980, Financial Mail had reported:

... when government forces went into an affected TTL and "cleaned it out" the local populace was grateful. However, once the hardpressed Security Forces left, the "terrs" would return. Now the Auxiliary Forces ... are staying in the countryside. Allegations that they use their position to intimidate the rural folk to vote for the Bishop are probably true, but the auxiliaries do represent a degree of stability

which the TTL's have not known for some years. One way or another, they are bringing whole sections of the youth 'on sides'. (9)

However, when the ceasefire agreed to at Lancaster House restricted the Security Forces to their bases, the Auxiliaries were not yet strong enough to face the brunt of the ZANLA and ZPRA onslaught on the local population which followed. Their political motivation had also been weakened, leading to increased acts of terrorism and thus losing support amongst the local population.

### 8.3 Conclusion

In the final months of the war, many members of the Security Forces saw the military solution in building up the Security Force Auxiliaries to dominate and stabilize the rural black areas, while directing the full attention of the Security Forces firstly on Mozambique and then on Zambia after President Machel had effectively been removed from the war. The Mozambique economy and general security situation was precarious at this stage, with the FRELIMO leadership increasingly desperate for an end to the Rhodesian war that was threatening to engulf the whole of the former Portuguese colony. Yet it is hardly conceivable that the aims set for the Auxiliaries could possibly have been realised before the institution of black majority rule. Rhodesia had been experiencing the classic 'mobilization of the masses' and although probably very few members of the rural black population fully understood the concept of 'one man one vote', it had become a national objective for them. To obtain local active participation against the 'boys in the bush', substantial proof had to be delivered that the political objectives that were being fought about had been achieved by Muzorewa's government.

The essential difference between regular black troops, as in the various Rhodesia African Rifles (RAR) battalions, and a local self-defence militia should be emphasised, for although there were to be some instances of disloyalty to the government within the ranks of the Rhodesia African Rifles, these were few. On the whole the RAR were as keen as any other fighting force in 'killing terrs', yet in the final 1980 elections, black Rhodesia African Rifles soldiers apparently voted overwhelmingly for Mugabe and were encouraging black civilians to do

the same. The essential difference was that, as is the case, though to a lesser degree, with white units, the primary loyalty of the black soldiers lay towards his unit, for it represented status, money and job security in an immensely over-supplied unskilled labour-force. But the most important fact was that, in spite of being overwhelmingly black, the Rhodesia African Rifles were led by whites, who had a very good relationship with their black subordinates. To a black 'troopie' it was very difficult to see his platoon leader as symbol and a part of the white regime that both ZANLA and ZAPU were fighting against. Yet in general, he still identified with the political aspirations of his black kin. Furthermore, in contrast, the Auxiliaries were politically motivated. In the present rural African context, in which ethnic bonds are still primary in determining political support, the two are closely linked. Thus any militia-type force had to be a political and an ethnic representation. This was, of course, not the case as regards the regular black soldiers of the Rhodesia African Rifles battalions.

From this it may be concluded that although Rhodesia had no lack of volunteers to swell the ranks of their regular black units in the fight against both ZANLA and ZPRA, this did not represent black support, or even condonation of the Smith-regime. Once efforts were made to involve the general mass of rural people into a self-defence scheme, the political quid pro quo had to be present. When this was achieved by means of the 3 March Agreement, external political momentum had overtaken events. By delaying any major political concession until such time as his military bargaining power had been drastically curtailed, Prime Minister Smith was forced to compromise from a position of weakness, instead of making concessions from one of strength and thus retaining or even regaining political initiative. Thus, by the time the Auxiliaries were proving a viable scheme, the whites in Rhodesia had run out of time.

As regards Operation Favour itself, a number of mistakes were made, not least of which was the resort to conscript urban blacks to protect rural tribesmen. This was a serious deviation from the principles that should govern any such attempts, and held the seeds of a complete breakdown of law and order in view of the limited availability of controlling personnel. To a degree, as a result of the use of urban blacks, but possibly more as a result of the political taint that clung to the Auxiliaries as

'private armies', serious resistance was encountered within the ranks of the military who refused to accept these informal soldiers as allies in the war. This attitude was as common at the highest level of command as it was among the regular soldiers of the armed forces and was largely the result of doubts as to the loyalty of these forces.

To the armed forces of Rhodesia, the security that the Security Force Auxiliaries afforded the locals was only a means to an end, for once an area had come under a semblance of control by the auxiliaries there was a resurgence of intelligence: the lifeblood of any counter-insurgency campaign. In certain instances in which Selous Scouts teams operated in conjunction with Auxiliaries good co-operation was achieved.

The Army should have viewed the Auxiliary project within its broader political framework and not restricted it to a limited military context. This broader view would have enabled the Army to identify the military advantages of self-defence schemes and benefit from them at an earlier stage.

An important part - possibly the most important part - of counter-organisation of the population (as first phase of counter-insurgency) is the organisation of its self-defence against revolutionary intimidation and exactions. Unless the people themselves have the means and commitment to resist, their desire for personal security is likely to overcome their loyalty to the government or neutrality. (10)

For this single reason alone the history of the Security Force Auxiliaries is closely linked to that of stability operations (Chapter 6). Neither project held immediate and direct security advantages apparent to the hard-pressed military forces. Both rather seemed to place yet a further drain on an already over-extended Security Force. In contrast external operations into neighbouring insurgent host countries and the employment of a helicopter borne Fire Force inside Rhodesian borders presented a measurable tally of insurgent fatalities. Neither the number of poorly trained armed black Auxiliaries within the Tribal Trust Lands nor the aid diverted to the development of rural black areas under government control could provide any such measurable record of success. Consequently both Auxiliaries and aid were accorded lower priority in terms of manpower and resources: had they been given greater

priority they in fact should and could have been crucial determinants in regaining control over subverted areas, for expounded by 1 Psychological Training Unit, the basic concept was sound. The following extract from an official document lists the characteristics of the Pfumo re Vanhu

- a. Unsophisticated personnel in an unsophisticated organisation.
- b. Reliance on the population for:
  - (i) Security through the passage of information
  - (ii) Material assistance in terms of facilities such as (indistinguishable) and cooking offered by the people
- c. Total identification with the population
- d. Strength through:
  - (i) Physical numbers in small areas
  - (ii) Permanent and close contact with a population base

The characteristics dictate that the Pfumo re Vanhu is not viewed as a soldier but as a counter-guerrilla. In essence he should exhibit the same basic characteristics as the terrorist with the notable exceptions that:

- a. Once he has secured his population base he is not at liberty to abandon it even temporarily as is the terrorist.
- b. Because he is an adjunct to the Security Forces, he is governed by the same code of conduct which does not allow him to coerce or terrorise.

However brief, the considerations discussed above point to a number of critical shortcomings in the conduct of the counter-insurgency campaign within both the Security Forces in general and the Rhodesian authorities.

#### NOTES

1. J.J. McCuen, The Art of Counter-revolutionary War (Faber and Faber, London, 1966), p. 145.
2. Although the operation was not controlled by the Selous Scouts, it was run by their Special Branch officer from Bindura. The latter had built up a vast network of informers and intelligence sources as well as having access to considerable financial resources. The Selous Scouts supplied weaponry, military expertise and a number of former insurgents

as members of the Interim Government Forces. They used two farms as base camps, one near Beit Bridge, the other was Blackwater Farm in Plumtree area. Later a third camp was established at Mangula.

3. Sunday Mail (5 Nov. 1978).
4. P. Stiff and R. Reid-Daly, Selous Scouts: Top Secret War (Galagom Alberton, 1982), p. 315.
5. The UANC forces from Libya stemmed from the period when Bishop Muzorewa had led the external wing of the ANC and Nkomo led the internal wing.
6. Newsweek (8 May, 1978), p. 18.
7. Africa Research Bulletin (1-31 Mar. 1979), p. 5202.
8. ZANU (Sithole) Auxiliary circumscribed areas were Mphoengs, Maranda, Nyajena, Gokwe, Sabi, Nyamaropa and Muwushu Tribal Trust Lands.
9. Financial Mail (29 Feb. 1980), p. 814.
10. McCuen, Counter Revolutionary War, p. 107.

Chapter 9

INTELLIGENCE

9.1 Introduction

Intelligence, it is widely claimed, is the life-blood of any counter insurgency campaign. It should be apparent that Security Forces need more than chance and luck if they are to locate and eliminate their elusive foe. Since Security Forces normally have the edge on mobility and fire power, once insurgents have been located, their destruction becomes relatively simple. Thus, the insurgent kill-rate, to name but one indication of success, is a direct result of the intelligence obtained.

In this final chapter on key aspects of the Security Forces counter insurgency strategy a brief look will be taken at the Rhodesian intelligence community as a whole. The problems encountered here were vital in determining the outcome of the struggle as a whole.

9.2 Organisation and Major Characteristics of the Rhodesian Intelligence Community prior to 1973

In the years preceding the outbreak of the December 1972-1980 period of conflict, the responsibility for Rhodesian intelligence was almost exclusively that of the Central Intelligence Organisation of the Department of the Prime Minister. The Central Intelligence Organisation was divided into three branches, namely Branch One, Branch Two and the Administration Branch. Branch One, or Special Branch, was headed by the Director of Internal Affairs. For administrative and operational purposes it fell under the Commissioner of Police. Policy and all aspects related to intelligence were, however, under the control of the Director of the Central Intelligence Organisation.

Special Branch was mainly involved with internal intelligence and until the formation of a military intelligence section some years later, was also responsible for military, or operational, intelligence (in contrast to strategic intelligence of a less detailed but wider ranging economic and political nature).

The Director of External Affairs headed Branch Two. As indicated by his title, he dealt with external intelligence regarding foreign-based political activities. The Branch was almost exclusively interested in political intelligence and also responsible for a number of psychological and propaganda projects, including disinformation. For the greater part of its activities Branch Two worked independently of the rest of the intelligence community.

The third branch of the Central Intelligence Organisation was headed by the Director Administration. Duties entailed administration and logistics.

Other less directly relevant members of the intelligence community included the Criminal Investigation Department which had the normal police-supportive role in fighting crime, the Government Protective Security Department and the Government Telecommunication Agency. The latter produced the codes and cyphers used by the government as well as manufacturing telecommunication equipment.

The Department of Internal Affairs had the vital function of collecting detailed operational intelligence through its system of District Administrators. A monthly intelligence report was in fact produced by this department for internal use. As the war progressed, however, and the local population became less sympathetic to Government, Internal Affairs slowly lost contact with the local population. This was to a certain degree due to particular aspects of government policy (such as collective punishment) that Internal Affairs had to enforce. Constant friction between Special Branch and Internal Affairs further reduced any intelligence co-operation that might have existed. (1) Special Branch (and later military intelligence) even had difficulty in obtaining copies of the aforementioned intelligence reports for their own use.

The Department of Foreign Affairs also had a limited intelligence collection role through its office in the United States of America. This office was manned by a member of the Central Intelligence Organisation. It also had men in Lisbon, Mozambique, Gabon, the Ivory Coast, Greece, Spain and France.

Before 1973, Special Branch had a vast and very



effective strategic network for gathering intelligence. Little difficulty was encountered in providing relatively detailed intelligence to counter what had amounted to little more than unco-ordinated acts of terrorism. Before early 1966 counter-insurgency operations were almost exclusively Police efforts with British South Africa Police and Special Branch co-operation presenting little problem. The joint Police and Army operations that followed served to cement this relationship, while the Army grew accustomed to relying on Special Branch for its intelligence requirements. Inside Rhodesia, and even to a limited extent outside it, Special Branch relied on a system of paid informers and normal Police contact with the local population for information. In the absence of any organized attempts by either ZANLA or ZPRA to politicize and intimidate the local population, this system had proved both reliable and satisfactory.

Since both ZANLA and ZPRA resorted to press-ganging in the absence of sufficient revolutionary recruits during the above period, desertions and even surrenders to the Rhodesian Security Forces were commonplace. This presented Special Branch with sufficiently detailed information to counter the insurgent incursions prior to 1972. At this stage insurgent base-camp strategy and tactics were at an early stage of development. External bases, for example, were relatively permanent and fixed. Security Forces could thus rely on information some months old to plan external operations.

In general, the Rhodesian intelligence community was geared for peace-time operations. Although the insurgent threat was very real, and recognized by Special Branch as such, neither the organisation nor its methods of collecting information was suited to the more specific needs of operational intelligence. The result was that it missed two crucial developments involving ZANU and ZAPU. The first was the reassessment of insurgent strategy, that was to take place in the period 1969-1971. (See Chapter 1) The second was the development of ZANU links with the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO) during the same period. FRELIMO had initially supported ZAPU as the only true Rhodesian nationalist movement. When Joshua Nkomo displayed little interest upon being offered the use of the Tete province as infiltration route into Rhodesia in 1968, it turned its support to ZANU. The latter eagerly accepted the use of the Tete route.

Special Branch registered its alarm early in

1972 with regard to the build-up of forces in Tete, and the generally deteriorating security situation in the province. This followed an attack by the SAS on the Matimbe Base near Gungwa mountain in Mozambique. Although all casualties were dressed in FRELIMO uniform a vital notebook read in Shona 'Go and tell Evenesi that the Zimbabwe boys had arrived. This is a secret, don't tell anyone else'. (2) For the first time the evidence was more than circumstantial. CIO, however, was not convinced. Prior to this the general expectancy among Special Branch members was still that future infiltration would emanate directly from Zambia as had been the case in the past.

### 9.3 Revolutionary War and Special Branch Intelligence

With the outbreak of armed attacks in late 1972, the Special Branch network of paid informers and police patrols in the North-east came close to total collapse within a matter of weeks. The first ZANLA insurgents had already, according to the report, entered the Centenary and Mount Darwin areas on the night of 4 December 1971. In accordance with their new revolutionary strategy, they remained undetected in the area for nearly a year, engaging in intense preparatory work among the local population. Avoiding the limited Army and Police patrols in an area of more than one thousand square kilometres presented no problem. (From 1969 one platoon of either Rhodesian African Rifles or Rhodesian Light Infantry was deployed to patrol this vast area. By 1972 this had been increased to company-level. Martin Meredith describes the situation as follows:

Eventually the local population was won over to an extent which later astonished the Rhodesian authorities. Intelligence sources, which had proved so useful to the authorities during the earlier incursions, dried up. For six months, while the guerrillas were building up an extensive network in the north-east, no word of their activities reached the administration. With local support the guerrillas located safe infiltration routes and suitable spots for arms caches; they recruited hundreds of tribesmen as porters and sent others to Tete for crash courses in guerrilla training; older men and women were enlisted to supply food. Hundreds of tons of arms and medical supplies were



carried across the border and, until late in 1972, the supply columns, on occasions more than hundred strong, managed to avoid army patrol. (3)

The character of the war and Special Branch method of operation within this climate were incompatible. Apart from the fact that the source of paid informants dried up almost immediately owing to a spate of insurgent 'disciplinary killings', the ambushing of normal Police patrols also severely curtailed this source of information. Within a year of the activation of Operation Hurricane it had become evident that the traditional Special Branch intelligence network had run into serious trouble.

A number of other factors also contributed to what was arguably one of the major intelligence and Security Force failures of the war. As mentioned, Special Branch had noted the deteriorating situation in Tete province, and pointed to the influence this might have on the security situation in the North-east although remaining largely unaware of the extent of subversion inside the country itself. These 'alarmist' reports were sharply contradicted by assurances from the Department of Internal Affairs that all was peaceful in the area. (4) In actual fact, both Internal Affairs and Special Branch representation in the North-east was very sparse indeed. Two Special Branch offices (at Bindura and Sipolilo) and two Internal Affairs offices (at Mount Darwin and Sipolilo) were responsible for the whole area from Msengedzi right around to Nyamapanda in the North-east.

Special Branch patrols had been blaming the Department of Internal Affairs for the administrative neglect of the area even prior to UDI in 1965. But its own cover of the area had also been neglected. When Special Branch did press for the more extensive cover of the area in the early seventies, it was vetoed by the Commissioner of Police. The latter was further to follow a strict policy of rotation amongst Special Branch field officers throughout the war, resulting in a discontinuity of intelligence in some areas. During February 1973, Prime Minister Ian Smith candidly admitted

We darn well know that tribesmen were subverted. We know, for example, that Chiefs have also been playing with the terrorists and they are going to be dealt with, but this isn't anything one can anticipate. It was the information that

didn't come through. We have also known for some time that we haven't got good enough ground cover in some of these remote areas. (5)

It should have been quite apparent to both the military and Special Branch that while there was no lack of strategic intelligence, the counter-insurgency requirements for operational intelligence were not being met. It was some years before this need was met.

#### 9.4 The Development of Military Intelligence Organisations

The military were, on the whole, completely unprepared for the intelligence requirements of counter-insurgency. In the tradition of reliance on Special Branch, the Army intelligence organisation was, for all practical purposes, non-existent. No intelligence corps existed and no intelligence course was presented. Senior military courses presented in Rhodesia placed little emphasis on the correct use of intelligence. Prior to the formation of the Military Intelligence Directorate (MID) in 1973, the military intelligence organisation liaising with the Central Intelligence Organisation consisted of a military liaison officer known as either the Directory Military Intelligence (DMI) or as the Military Intelligence Liaison Officer, and a Director Air Intelligence (DAI). Both were located at the Central Intelligence Organisation. Their function was solely to provide liaison and advice to Central Intelligence regarding military aspects of intelligence (as this was still a Special Branch function).

On paper the total Army intelligence organisation now consisted of a lieutenant-colonel as Director of Military Intelligence at the Central Intelligence Organisation, a G2 (major) at Army Headquarters and G3's (captain or lieutenant) at brigade levels. The G3, in theory, had an intelligence section at his disposal and was responsible for operational intelligence. The link between the Directorate of Military Intelligence and the brigade commander was supplied by a Military Intelligence Officer (MIO) at the brigades. These officers were mainly orientated towards strategic intelligence. Below brigade level some units had an intelligence officer, but in most cases only a corporal. Invariably the task of Intelligence Officer at unit level was seen as a 'soft job' to be filled by someone not

suitable for any other post. It was also considered the first ready-use pool of officers and other ranks, should a shortage of personnel occur elsewhere. At brigade level the same attitude predominated with the intelligence posts mostly filled by operations staff members on an 'over-and-above' basis.

As a result the Army was almost totally reliant on Special Branch for all its intelligence requirements. Even Army captures were interrogated by Special Branch. As they controlled all sources within an area as well as access to them, Army intelligence requirements had to be routed through Special Branch. This situation grew intolerable after the formation of Joint Operational Centre Hurricane as a permanent operational centre early in 1973, since it was the Army that was mainly involved in countering the insurgency. This eventually led to the formation of a Field Intelligence Detachment under the newly-formed Directorate of Military Intelligence, in which territorial soldiers were used on a regular basis to gather intelligence.

The simple formation of an organisation with no-one to fill the posts, and with very little support, both from the majority of middle- and lower ranking Army personnel, as well as from Special Branch, did not in itself solve the problem. Special Branch had traditionally been responsible for military intelligence in the field and saw the formation of an Army intelligence organisation as unnecessary and a threat to its own existence. It was not until 1975 that the Army was able to convince both the Central Intelligence Organisation and the treasury of the necessity for an Army intelligence organisation. (6)

The tradition that existed (in some units right throughout the war) was for the local Army commander to call on the Special Branch Officer in the area to provide intelligence for the planning of operations. The result was that Special Branch members were giving intelligence briefings up to brigade level. Even if capable, the Army Intelligence officer's job was reduced to the updating of maps and other mundane chores. Invariably these Special Branch briefings were a run-down of incidents over a given period with few military appreciations being made regarding the implications of these incidents or of expected enemy intentions. A vital element of the military planning cycle was thus overlooked. This problem was perpetuated by the fact that the Special Branch officer at provincial or district level was

without exception senior (both in rank and experience) to the unit and brigade intelligence officers. Furthermore, he exercised total control over all local sources. Extracting of relevant military information implied a rudimentary military knowledge foreign to Special Branch officers, schooled in Police tradition.

By and large, military commanders failed to appreciate the shortcomings in the intelligence reports they received. In select cases requests were, however, put for closer Special Branch liaison. In many instances this included a request for the attachment of a Special Branch officer to the unit concerned on a permanent basis. (Only in the somewhat unique case of the Selous Scouts was this allowed as the unit itself was to a large extent created by the Special Branch.) Had both the Central Intelligence Organisation and the Army chosen this solution many of the problems involved with the formation and growth of Army intelligence might have been avoided. Although the above solution had been mooted by Central Intelligence and the Army, it was rejected by the Commissioner of Police. (This would have led to the possible accommodation of operational and strategic intelligence within a single, expanded organisation.) Special Branch had, in the interim, become increasingly concerned about the extent to which its internal intelligence sources were dwindling. This led to the regeneration of the concept of pseudo operations and ultimately to the formation of the Selous Scouts as a unit as recounted in Chapter 5.

The formation of the Directorate of Military Intelligence (MID) in 1973 proved to be a step in the right direction, since operational control of the territorial element of Army headquarters intelligence was also gained. To a limited extent the Directorate was now able to provide Intelligence Officers at lower level. Since, however, these members were territorial soldiers any one unit was served by three or four officers on a rotational basis, the interrupted flow of intelligence was by no means ideal, and served to perpetuate the senior role played by Special Branch officers who were at least fully informed. A further problem was that the initial terms of reference of MID were limited to the armed forces of neighbouring states, thus excluding ZANLA and ZPRA. (7) Owing to the large degree of co-operation between ZPRA and the Zambian National Defence Force and the nearly complete integration between the Army of Mozambique, and ZANLA,

this eventually led to the Directorate being responsible for external intelligence and thus ultimately for the intelligence required for external operations. Previously this function could possibly have been seen as the task of the Joint Services Targeting Committee (JSTC) which formed part of the Joint Planning Staff which had existed prior to the formation of COMOPS. The Joint Services Targeting Committee was responsible for the compilation and updating of a central register of all strategic targets. Except for the odd Special Air Service sabotage prior to the start of the external raids in 1976, Security Force targets were insurgent training camps, holding camps, ammunition dumps, and the like, with economic, or real strategic targets, only being attacked in 1979. It thus seemed a largely irrelevant organisation during the early stages of the war, especially as the Directorate of Military Intelligence and its associated military intelligence sections were taking care of the targets being attacked. With the ever present manpower shortage the Joint Services Targeting Committee was dissolved when COMOPS was formed in 1977. All registers were passed to Military Intelligence.

On 1 July 1975, the Rhodesian Intelligence Corps (RIC) was formed and took over the limited responsibility of the Directorate of Military Intelligence for internal operational intelligence. The latter had been running both the intelligence for external operations as well as for the internal operational areas through its territorial members at brigade and unit level. However reluctantly, the Central Intelligence Organisation thus made room for military intelligence within the intelligence community, although on the clear understanding that RIC deployment would be controlled by Special Branch.

RIC was formed at a late stage and hampered by manpower shortages and the Army's dismissive attitude towards intelligence. After training, RIC members were posted to brigade headquarters and made responsible for intelligence at this level. This was in contrast to their intended task: the formation of intelligence detachments in the field for the collection and processing of operational intelligence, although limited RIC/Special Branch combined ground coverage was done at low level in some areas. Rotating Territorial (RIC) officers thus provided the military intelligence function at brigade and battalion level. Although suffering from a lack of continuity, this was an improvement on the previous situation. Owing to its formation at a late stage

and the manpower situation, RIC could never develop to its full potential. (8)

At brigade level the RIC Mapping Section did extremely good work in the updating of maps, as well as regards the production of operational maps. Originally both mapping and operational research fell under RIC. In the years immediately following the formation of RIC, a Mapping and Research Company was added to the organisation. The mapping section was established during November 1976 and by the end of the war provided a very capable service. The original maps were produced by the Surveyor General after which the RIC mapping section updated them by the use of a silk screen. By 1979 operational maps were also being produced for specific operations. Information for the updating of maps was obtained from field offices set up at Joint Operational Centres who collected it, in turn, from normal infantry patrol reports.

The RIC Research Section was formed in February 1977, and was involved in basic operational research, although none of its members had any operational research qualifications. The computer of the Department of Agriculture's Research and Special Services Section was used for this purpose. A number of the studies made included the ratio of gunships to trooping helicopters in Fire Force, the use of Rhodesia African Rifles or Rhodesia Light Infantry units for use in Fire Force, and efficiency study on external operations; camouflage of aircraft, etc. While some of the results were accepted by the military (eg. the increase of trooping versus gunship helicopters in Fire Force), others were not (eg. light grey as camouflage colour for aircraft). Other results were later proved to be incorrect (eg. that Rhodesia African Rifles were better Fire Force troops than Rhodesia Light Infantry).

Throughout the war the Directorate of Military Intelligence was never accepted as a complete and integrated member of the intelligence community. Professional jealousy continued to hamper co-operation in that some of the desks at the Central Intelligence Organisation retained a military function while neither the Directorate of Military Intelligence nor RIC was allowed to build up its own internal network of sources. It was only after the formation of a joint interrogation team in late 1978 that the Directorate obtained direct access to captured insurgents. Prior to the formation of this team, Special Branch had compiled a standard list of Army and Air Force intelligence requirements which, upon

completion, was passed on to Military Intelligence. Central to the problem was that Special Branch considered Military Intelligence generally to be of a poor standard and incapable of undertaking in depth interrogations. As from 1978, however, the Directorate of Military Intelligence's external operational intelligence coverage grew to be superior to that of Special Branch (who concentrated on the internal security situation) due to their relatively sophisticated radio intercepts and better interpretation of military information. Yet, even by 1978 Lieutenant-Colonel Reid-Daly had the following to say about military intelligence

Military Intelligence was a misnomer in the Rhodesian Army for, apart from the good work of a few dedicated Territorial officers at Joint Operational Command levels, they rarely produced anything intelligent to work on. (9)

At the height of the war 8 Signal Squadron obtained a monthly 12 000 radio interceptions for Mozambique alone. The figure for Zambia was, however, much lower.

The interrogation team that was now formed consisted of both Military Intelligence and Special Branch members and fell under the operational control of COMOPS. All interrogation of important captured personnel was undertaken by them. As the team was also included in external operations a distinct improvement resulted in both the extraction of relevant intelligence as well as in its dissemination.

In the final years of the war, the Directorate of Military Intelligence thus tended to accept responsibility for the intelligence needed for the planning of external operations, while Special Branch and RIC were in control of internal intelligence requirements. The nature of the war precluded a watertight distinction between military and non-military, yet in general the Directorate's opinion was accepted as regards aspects related to security. However it was rarely accepted as regards decisions with political implications. Although this was not to be faulted, Special Branch internal sources ('ground cover') had slowly been dissipated as the established administration in the Tribal Trust Lands broke down. In many areas Security Force patrols became the main source of regular and reliable intelligence, while ground cover traditionally provided by Special Branch was uncertain. That this had other than purely military implications is

probably best illustrated by the differing predictions presented by Military Intelligence and Special Branch regarding the outcome of the 1980 elections. While the latter gave Bishop Muzorewa's UANC at least a blocking vote, the Directorate of Military Intelligence predicted the possibility of a Mugabe win, although this prediction was made at a later stage. It should, however, be pointed out that Special Branch analysis of the electoral vote was made on the premise that in those areas where proof of intimidation was overwhelming, the party responsible would be disqualified. Seventeen such areas were identified, but Lord Soames informed Ken Flower, the Director General of the Central Intelligence Organisation, only 48 hours before the elections were to start that this would not be the case. At that late stage Bishop Muzorewa could no longer back out; mainly owing to lack of South African backing for any such action. A Special Branch officer later admitted that their 'ground cover had folded completely' under the weight of ZANU (Patriotic Front) intimidation. In her comprehensive account of the propaganda war, Masses vs the Media in the Making of Zimbabwe, Julie Fredrikse gives a clear account of how out of touch the Security Forces were with the black rural population. (10) Launching a massive and very slick Western style political campaign to endorse Muzorewa as Prime Minister, the Security Forces had lost all contact with rural reality.

The one military intelligence organisation that seemed to function relatively smoothly during the war was the Joint Services Photographic Interpretation Staff (JSPIS). As the name indicates, JSPIS had already been in existence during the Joint Planning Staff system and thus had the advantage of being both settled and accepted. This was clearly an advantage since most of the operational intelligence for external operations was derived from aerial photography.

As the insurgents adapted to the ever-increasing frequency of external operations, however, even this source proved to have its limitations. On more than one occasion external attacks were launched on unoccupied bases. This meant Security Forces had to rely on physical reconnaissance as final confirmation in select instances. While this had certain distinct intelligence advantages it also tended to place the whole operation in jeopardy, should the advance reconnaissance party be detected.

### 9.5 The Role of COMOPS

Probably the single most decisive factor as regards intelligence inside the military was the lack of a central intelligence co-ordination body at COMOPS. To a large degree this could be seen as a further product of the military neglect of intelligence.

Since little allowance had been made within the Joint Planning Staffs for intelligence control and co-ordination, the same situation was perpetuated within COMOPS, although to a lesser degree. (11) Yet it should also be added that at the time of COMOPS formation, March 1977, there seemed to be no senior intelligence officer available to fill the post. Provision had been made in COMOPS Operations Staff for both operations and intelligence sections, but the incumbent initially was a single Army captain with no intelligence training or experience, later to be replaced by an Air Force squadron leader. Their major task was the preparation of COMOPS maps while the intelligence co-ordination that took place consisted in most instances of passing responsibility to Military Intelligence.

There was a need at COMOPS level for an intelligence section with enough background to co-ordinate the work of the other Army and Air Force intelligence sections. At this level all the relevant intelligence from the total intelligence community should have been collated and on the basis of it an appreciation made for presentation to COMOPS at the start of the planning cycle. In an attempt to achieve this, the COMOPS section was enlarged to two officers with the rank of major, one responsible for Zambia and the other for Mozambique. Since neither of these had any background knowledge of the countries concerned, and Special Branch control of sources and general co-operation again proved an obstacle, COMOPS reverted to working directly with MID in the latter stages of the war. One example of the lack of central military intelligence co-ordination is provided by the intelligence process that preceded the attack on the Mozambique bridges (Operation Uric) during September 1979: at various stages, JSPIS, Military Intelligence, Special Air Service, Selous Scouts and finally the planning team at COMOPS carried out duplicating analyses with no central co-ordination of the effort. Had co-ordination existed, a single organisation could have tasked all sources and after completion of the analysis distributed the result to all concerned.

As the war intensified, and especially from

1978 onwards, the Directorate of Military Intelligence began to meet the needs of COMOPS more effectively. A major criticism levelled at the operations planning section at COMOPS, was for shortening the planning cycle that was followed to external operations. This led to the repeated use of set-piece plans which insurgent forces were quick to comprehend and to counter.

### 9.6 Special Air Service, Selous Scouts and the Special Forces Intelligence Centre (SFIC)

Due to the singular nature of their operations, the Special Air Service and the Selous Scouts each had their own intelligence sections at unit level. As discussed in Chapter 2, Special Forces operations suffered from a lack of central co-ordination. This situation was also evident as regards intelligence co-ordination. The latter was arguably the major incentive towards the formation of a Special Forces headquarters.

The major problem concerned the exchange of operational intelligence between Special Force units and Joint Operational Centres. The Selous Scouts were initially established to gather such intelligence and proved the most important source of this vital material. Their type of operation, and the ever-present fear of compromising themselves, led to the minimum exchange of intelligence between this unit and the Joint Operational Centre in whose area they were operating. An area would be 'frozen' for a Selous Scouts operation (ie. all other Security Forces removed from it) the pseudo teams would move in, complete their operations, and withdraw with little if any co-ordinated exchange of intelligence taking place with local Joint Operational Centre. Even the preceding operation of gathering intelligence in preparation for either a Selous Scouts or Special Air Service operation led to problems since security instructions normally precluded the disclosure of the operational plan.

At the suggestion of the Commander of the Selous Scouts a Special Forces Intelligence Centre (SFIC) was established at Inkomo barracks (headquarters of the Selous Scouts) during August 1978. For the seven weeks of its duration, SFIC was largely involved with its own internal organisation. This culminated in a presentation to, *inter alia*, the Commander, COMOPS and Director General of the Central Intelligence Organisation in an attempt to establish SFIC

as the prime co-ordinator of operational intelligence.

The concept was that the Selous Scouts and Special Branch would supply all available internal operational intelligence, while the Special Air Service and aerial photography would provide the same for those countries affording shelter and aid to the insurgent forces. Special Forces Intelligence Centre was to be divided into two wings; an external wing manned principally by the Special Air Service, and an internal one manned by the Selous Scouts. Each wing would be divided into ZPRA and ZANLA sections and these again would be subdivided to suit the insurgent operational areas. The Directorate of Military Intelligence would thus have lost its major function, external operational intelligence, to SFIC. But little came of the proposals, as neither General Walls nor Mr Flower saw the need for the Selous Scouts to gain effective control of all operational intelligence at a location removed from Security Force headquarters in Harare. SFIC was thus disbanded and most of its intelligence personnel seconded to the Directorate of Military Intelligence. (12)

Suitable manpower having been its critical limitation, the demise of SFIC led to a drastic improvement of the Directorate of Military Intelligence as military intelligence organisation. Henceforth Military Intelligence was called on almost exclusively to provide intelligence for external operations. This led to the formation of the joint interrogation team (Military Intelligence/Special Branch) mentioned previously.

While SFIC itself had thus proved to be still-born, its demise was to the distinct advantage of the Rhodesian intelligence community as a whole.

### 9.7 Security and Counter-Intelligence

As a result of the limited number of aircraft available, the security of external raids presented a great problem. Any relatively large external operation necessitated denuding all internal operational areas of aircraft some two days before the raid for maintenance purposes. These aircraft would be concentrated at either Thornhill or New Sarum, which were used jointly by both civilian and military aircraft. Owing to the standard method of attack by vertical envelopment, the majority of external operations were conducted by air and the concentration

of aircraft was thus a sure indication of a pending attack.

A fact that never ceased to intrigue intelligence officers was that the defence forces of the insurgent host countries were invariably put on alert before an external raid by Rhodesia, indicating at least prior knowledge of an impending attack, even if not of the target itself. (13) While various decoys were attempted, the aircraft problem remained a sure indication throughout the war.

Within the small white Rhodesian community rumours spread quickly and it was extremely difficult to maintain security since all white families had some connection with the war effort. The general attitude prevailing was that a white face was secure and a black one not. With this credulous attitude, senior Army and other commanders exercised little caution in distributing classified information within the white community. With the influx of foreigners into the Security Forces, Special Branch, which was responsible for the security clearance of personnel, was literally swamped and in any case found it impossible to clear 'personnel' from the United States of America, Portugal or elsewhere. Up to the formation of Army Counter Intelligence (ACI) in 1975, Special Branch was solely responsible for counter-intelligence. Owing to the continuing lack of manpower as well as the lack of importance attached to counter-intelligence and security in general, Army Counter Intelligence never really became fully operational but was limited to the investigation of small scale security breaches.

Throughout the war security as an element of planning was never taken into serious consideration, while it continued to be weakened by the employment and placement of foreigners, some of whom were later to be identified as CIA agents (in the Air Force, for example). One example of this ignorance of security was the failure to conceal the concentration of decision makers at COMOPS prior to an external operation. A second example was the call-up of Special Air Service territorial members some days before an external operation.

It is difficult to determine the effect of the obvious lack of security, but little doubt exists that the success of at least some operations was compromised by it.

### 9.8 Conclusion

The central problems surrounding the intelligence services of the Rhodesian Security Forces may be summarized in the following quotation:

The central purpose of the various control and intelligence activities must be directed towards the destruction of the clandestine organisation, and towards nothing else. Thus it is absolutely essential that all the intelligence-gathering agencies should be co-ordinated and centrally controlled in such a way that the political objective never becomes subordinated to the military. (14)

Although the formation of the Directorate of Military Intelligence and RIC was the result of an alarming deficiency in operational intelligence, this tended to divide and weaken the unity of central co-ordination. Since the number of skilled men in Rhodesia was limited, it might have been more cost-effective to attempt to adapt Special Branch to the challenges of a Revolutionary War and the requirements of operational intelligence.

The second, and fundamental problem was related to the lack of a national, mainly political, strategy and thus also of a coherent military one. This aspect has already been discussed in Chapter 2.

When the network of agents and informers of Special Branch was found to be disappearing, local administration had also collapsed with the affected areas. Julie Frederikse correctly states

While Internal Affairs had little control over the military situation on the ground, it had near total control of the information flow from the rural areas. (15)

This removed all official permanent representation and contact with the local population. 'Security comes first, voluntary information comes later.' (16)

Without permanent protection at local level, insurgent forces were free to organise and intimidate the local inhabitants at will. Security Force patrols provided little more than an immediate presence. It was only with the introduction of Security Force Auxiliaries in 1978 that the Security Forces could maintain any such presence. Had a general strategic concept been followed according to which areas under government control were slowly extended

by the use of massive population control measures, and the involvement of the local population in their own defence and development, intelligence 'ground cover' would have been extended concurrently. Although military patrols within the Tribal Trust Lands were numerous and maintained limited contact with the local population, the existing military forces lacked the manpower, inclination and time to maintain a permanent presence within these areas. Increasingly, therefore, Security Forces tended to extract information by force which could only be counter-productive in the medium and long term.

It is too seldom understood that an unwillingness to supply information to the government on the part of villagers is not necessarily a sign of political support of the guerrillas, as ideologically or emotionally 'motivated' sympathizers in the West are apt to assume. It may of course be the result of the success of the Communist 'violence programme'; or it may be a sign of a generalized local support for the guerrillas. But it may be much more basic and apolitical; an unwillingness to betray local boys ... to a central administration viewed as alien to the village community. Hence the enormous importance in counter-insurgency of involving the locals in their own self-defence units. (17)

In spite of the criticism noted above, however, the establishment of a single effective intelligence organisation able to meet the challenges of counter-insurgency warfare is no easy task. Not only are problems of method and structure encountered, but also more established ones of vested interest and an inability to grasp the complexities of revolutionary war at an early enough stage.

### NOTES

1. To an extent the friction between Internal Affairs and Special Branch was due to Branch One's warning that the revolutionary potential in the Tribal Trust Lands was rising rapidly. Special Branch viewed this, in part, as a result of administrative neglect.

2. P. Stiff and R. Reid Daly, Selous Scouts: Top Secret War (Galago, Alberton, 1982), p. 18.

3. M. Meredith, The Past is Another Country,



revised and extended edition (Pan Books, London, 1980), p. 109.

4. To a large extent the blame for the situation that had developed was placed on the shoulders of Internal Affairs, see for example the Rhodesia Herald of 12 Feb. and 5 Apr. 1973.

5. D. Martin and P. Johnson, The Struggle for Zimbabwe (Faber and Faber, London, 1981), p. 8.

6. The extent to which Special Branch was prepared to go in order to forestall the formation of RIC provides substantive evidence to this effect. During 1973 Special Branch broke into offices to obtain copies of a presentation prepared by a senior Army officer towards the formation of RIC. This information enabled Special Branch to counter all arguments in detail the following day when the presentation was given.

7. MID fell under the Army for administrative purposes, but was responsible to CIO for all intelligence-related activities. DMI was the military intelligence adviser to both DG CIO and Commander of the Army.

8. A further factor that had a negative effect on the work done by RIC was the extension of operational areas during 1977. Existing RIC personnel in Operation Hurricane were further thinned out to obtain candidates for service in Repulse and Thrasher.

9. Stiff and Reid-Daly, Selous Scouts, p. 330.

10. J. Fredrikse, None but Ourselves: Masses vs the Media in the Making of Zimbabwe. (Ravan Press, Johannesburg, 1982).

11. The DG CIO appointed an intelligence liaison officer of the rank of chief superintendant at COMOPS (equivalent to Army rank of lieutenant-colonel) but since his was only a liaison function, he could play no effective role within COMOPS itself. As a 'civilian' among military there also tended to be a communication gap.

12. Functionally a further problem related to the formation of SFIC was the addition of yet another intelligence organisation to the total intelligence community. CIO had increasingly come to accept MID as a member of this community, if not wholeheartedly. It was, however, hesitant to extend its co-operation to yet another military intelligence organisation.

13. This was more the case with operations into Zambia than was the case with Mozambique. The FAM were on almost continual standby, presumably due to faulty analysis of Russian signal interceptions.

14. G. Fairburn, Revolutionary Guerrilla Warfare (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1974), p. 316.

15. Fredrikse, None but Ourselves, p. 87.

16. Fairburn, Revolutionary Guerrilla Warfare, p. 315.

17. Ibid., p. 304.



## Chapter 10

## THE SECURITY SITUATION BY LATE 1979

Insurgent activity had its primary material impact within the rural areas of Zimbabwe. Only the secondary results of this onslaught, such as increased urban squatting, were felt in and around towns and cities. Much of the country, formerly known as the Tribal Trust Lands (TTL's) was poorly developed by comparison with the mainly white-controlled commercial and farming areas. This is still the case today. It was within these often remote areas that ZANLA and ZPRA forces established their base areas which eventually encircled the economic heartland of Zimbabwe.

By mid 1978 increasingly large areas of Rhodesia were no longer provided with veterinary services. As a result, the spread of tsetse fly was unchecked and the situation deteriorated to that state which had existed during the previous century. Following a concerted insurgent campaign, the rural bus services which transported about 95% of the country's black population between the main urban centres and the TTL's had virtually collapsed by the end of 1978. Malaria, bilharzia and other endemic diseases, once under control, now became widespread. An increasing number of reports of malnutrition were reported by the few doctors that remained in rural areas.

After the Elim massacre of June 1978, medical services in these areas had declined further. Of the thirteen Catholic mission doctors in Rhodesia during 1975, only four remained by October 1978. Nine out of 31 Catholic clinics were closed during the same period.

During February 1979 the Financial Mail reported that administration in the Tribal Trust Lands around Mudzi and Mutoko in eastern Mashonaland, in the Fort Victoria region and in parts of Matabeleland had ceased. White farming communities were dwindling in the

Mutare region, in Cashel Valley and around Melsetter, Birchenough Bridge and Chipinga, around Rusape, Headlands, Macheke as well as to the north of Harare around Centenary and Sipolilo. Added to the economic disruption of the farming industry, which earned more than half of the country's foreign exchange, Rhodesia had suffered a negative real growth in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) since 1975. By 1979 the real per capita GDP was virtually the same as at the time of the Unilateral Declaration of Independence in 1965. In the period 1975 to 1978, employment had decreased by more than 60 000 while 80 000 jobs were needed annually to accommodate additions to the labour supply.

From the initial figure of a few hundred insurgents that had entered the country during 1973/74, intelligence estimates for late 1977 put the combined ZANLA/ZPRA figure at over five thousand. By December 1978 the figure was close to nine thousand.

The internal settlement agreement of March 1978 had been Prime Minister Smith's last real chance to obtain international recognition and relief from sanctions while retaining much of the power in white hands. Following the failure to obtain these objectives, both Bishop Muzorewa and Smith's bargaining was increasingly weakened by the sharply rising number of insurgents inside the country. At the time of the internal black majority elections in April 1979, ZANLA alone had 13 500 trained insurgents, of whom 9 500 were deployed inside Zimbabwe-Rhodesia. A further 12 000 ZANLA recruits were under training in Tanzania, Ethiopia and Libya, while the Directorate of Military Intelligence estimated that a further 15 000 recruits were available in Mozambique. ZPRA, in contrast, had about 20 000 trained personnel of whom only 2 900 were deployed in the country. The remainder were in camps in Zambia. A further 5 000 men were under training in Angola and Zambia with an additional 500 to 1 000 men undergoing advanced/specialist courses in Russia and other communist countries. Potentially ZPRA had no lack of recruits. A total of 17 000 suitable men were calculated to be available in Zambia and Botswana. Added to these figures were, according to Martin and Johnson, an estimated 50 000 mulibas inside Zimbabwe-Rhodesia.

The desperate situation facing the Security Forces by mid 1979 was aptly summarized in a classified Army briefing document:

There are at present 3 900 well trained troops ... deployed against 12 400 CTs (Communist

Terrorists): a ratio of 1:3,2. Adding of SFA (Security Force Auxiliaries) to troops, the ratio becomes 1:1,15. In classical COIN (counter-insurgency) terms, this is a no-win or rather, a sure lose equation.

Casualty figures for the period 1973-78 probably provide the clearest evidence of the sudden intensification of the war from 1976 onwards (Table 10.1). This was in spite of an overall 'kill rate' of better than 1:10 in favour of the Security Forces. (If insurgent fatalities during external raids are included:)

Further indication of the extent of insurgent activities within rural areas is provided by an extensive classified Rhodesian Intelligence Corps study entitled ZANLA and ZPRA Tactics and Modus Operandi. Selected extracts on ZANLA reads as follows:

In some areas a well organised and security conscious civil administration is working. Under this system a person is appointed who is known as the supervisor. He controls twelve kraals and collects money for CT's (Communist Terrorists) at the rate of 30 cents per head each month. In farming areas the average tax can be as high as \$2,00 while teachers can pay up to \$30,00. Under him are three chairmen who each control four kraals and under them are administrators who organize the supply of food, beer and cigarettes for the CT's. In addition there is an intelligence branch consisting of one man who controls the movement and activity of the mujibas in the area and finally there is a police system which consists of four men to every village, and whose duties entail the seeking out and killing of sellouts ... The supervisors often have such powers over the area that the Chief becomes only a figurehead. CT groups travelling through the area are required to carry a letter of introduction from the Chairman of one civilian cell to another. In some instances, the supervisors control the businessmen in order to obtain supplies as well as the war and civil administration. They also hold authority over the CT groups and direct their movements and discipline them for infringement of good behaviour ... In theory at least, every established ZANU area has a defence committee that knows the number of CTs and local

militia in the area. The committee trains the militia in the basic use of arms ... Sometimes health committees are set up which are responsible for basic sanitation ... CTs have directed that food crops, as opposed to cash crops, should be grown, and these are controlled by the committees. PV's (Protected Villages) are sometimes raided specifically to abduct locals to grow these crops for CTs in chosen areas ... Schools have been reopened in some 'liberated' areas by the committees who have been issued a new marxist syllabus by CTs ... The committee system as a whole is now called Hurunwende, which means 'government' ... Where committees are not in force, locals have been instructed to run, in some areas, when they see SF (Security Forces), so as to avoid being moved to PV's ... All secondary schools are to be closed to prevent men from becoming eligible for National Service. In some areas CTs have ordered locals to do National Service when called upon, but to desert after training to CTs and inform on SF training and tactics.

In spite of the localised success obtained by the Security Force Auxiliaries, the evidently high insurgent casualty rates resulting from external operations and the demonstrated efficiency of Fire Force inside Zimbabwe-Rhodesia, both ZANLA and ZPRA could lay claim to physically controlling the majority of the Zimbabwean population by 1980.

By the end of the war more than 30 000 people had been killed. The International Red Cross estimated that 20 per cent of the population were suffering from malnutrition. More than 80 000 people were homeless. The maimed, blinded and crippled totalled at least 10 000. According to the Salvation Army, of the 100 mission hospitals and clinics in the rural areas, 51 were closed, three destroyed and numerous others badly damaged. More than 100 000 men in the towns were unemployed. At least 250 000 refugees waited to be repatriated from camps in Botswana, Zambia and Mozambique. About 483 000 children had been displaced from their schools.

By the end of 1979 white Rhodesia had been defeated.

GROUP	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	TOTAL
<u>Insurgents</u>							
Killed <sup>+</sup>	94	263	145	1 244	1 770	2 508	6 024
Wounded <sup>+</sup> *	611	709	942	8 086	11 505	16 302	39 155
Captured	79	112	91	160	219	342	1 003
<u>Security Forces</u>							
Killed	25	26	12	112	166	345	686
Wounded	78	214	132	786	855	1 520	3 585
<u>Civilians</u>							
Killed	49	163	105	548	984	3 187	5 036
Wounded	23	217	138	769	1 107	2 111	4 365
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>959</b>	<b>2 704</b>	<b>1 565</b>	<b>11 705</b>	<b>16 606</b>	<b>26 315</b>	<b>59 854</b>

TABLE 10.1: Casualty Figures: 1973-1978

NOTES

- + These figures only refer to insurgents killed and captured inside Rhodesia
- \* No statistics for wounded insurgents exist. These figures were computed on a ratio of 6,5 wounded to every 1 killed, i.e. the same as that which can be deduced from ratios of Security Force members wounded/killed.

## Chapter 11

## CONCLUSION

Hurunwende, Shona for government, designated the new committee system already enforced by ZANLA in the 'liberated' areas. This word stands out as the clearest proof of the inexorable progress of insurgency. In their psychology, sympathy and thinking, the local population, scattered over wide tracts of the Rhodesian bush, had succumbed to the insidious advances of ZPRA from the West and ZANLA from the East. Vast areas which had once been under the close control of the white capital, were now regarded by that same administration as distant and alien quarters. Urban enclaves had remained secure in their ignorance while an assault was precisely marshalled and launched from the remote borders inwards to the very outskirts of the cities. Reduced to this beleaguered state, whites in Zimbabwe-Rhodesia saw their territory bartered piece-meal in an anxious attempt to gain time, but nothing else. There now no longer remained to them the ground to negotiate. In their concern to rid the land of insurgents they had forgotten the residents of those large reaches who had slowly but inevitably been alienated from white control. Hurunwende spelt observance to the dictates of a new regime.

When the war for Zimbabwe came to an official close at midnight, 21 December 1979, the Zimbabwe-Rhodesian Security Forces had executed the most important components of an effective counter-insurgency strategy. Despite exhaustive efforts to implement such measures, very few of these had in fact proved successful.

To the white population, the threat facing Rhodesia was an external one rather than that of black nationalism within their own borders. They failed to understand that although the initial threat originated geographically from outside Rhodesian borders,

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once these first insurgents had entered the country and begun subverting the local population in the rural areas, the insurgency gained a momentum from within the Tribal Trust Lands themselves. Security Forces continued to deal with the threat oblivious of the fact that the very fabric of government within these remote areas, the support and respect for local authorities, was disappearing. For all practical purposes, government control within the Tribal Trust Lands collapsed when the Department of Internal Affairs and Police could no longer effectively administer the area, for they were the only real link between the rural black population and Government in Harare. The restoration of government control together with the concurrent destruction of the insurgent control mechanisms within these areas should have been the real aim of Security Forces operating in the black rural area on a permanent basis. In their single-minded determination to eliminate insurgents or punish the local population for assisting insurgents, Security Forces lost sight of their essentially supportive role. The Security Forces and even more important, the white politicians, remained insensitive to the less tangible aspects of the conflict. The local population were in fact the determining factor, not the insurgents. Thomas Arbuckle addresses the same phenomenon when he writes

The real problem is that the Rhodesian military have misunderstood the nature of the war which they are fighting. They have failed to realize that the war is essentially political rather than military ... (1)

The attitude amongst middle and lower ranking Rhodesian Army officers as well as that of Internal Affairs was not conducive to an effective total counter-insurgency effort. The general belief that the insurgency problem was primarily a military threat derived from experience during the sixties remained a hallmark of the Rhodesian approach to counter-insurgency. Coupled with a sincere belief that the unsophisticated black African was incapable of choosing between alternative political systems, Rhodesian Security Forces continued a paternalistic tradition irksome to the majority of the population.

What was required was an awareness that the war could not be won only in terms of killing armed combatants, but in gaining the active support and involvement or at least neutrality of increasing

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numbers of the local black population. This could only have been achieved by first providing the black rural population with permanent protection, or enabling these people to protect themselves.

Because they lacked any sound political basis from which to argue a viable alternative, the Security Forces, in general, were unable to convince the local population that the existing order was just, fair and worth defending. Paul Moorecraft expressed it clearly when he wrote

Politicians proved more adept at explaining why Africans should not support the guerrillas than at explaining why they did ... the initial aim of the war was to prevent power passing to any black government, no matter how moderate. (2)

In fact, the excessive use of aggressive and unlawful practices rather led to loss of government legitimacy thus easing the acceptance of an alternative value-system and authority.

Possibly the most important means by which the Security Forces could have disseminated the advantages of their own form of government was by the deployment of Security Force Auxiliaries. These auxiliaries stood in direct competition to the insurgent forces, while at the same time providing local participation. Had any such scheme been attempted earlier and not been restricted by shortsighted Army attitudes regarding the loyalty and general disciplinary standards of such forces, the Auxiliaries could have secured ever-increasing rural areas for government control in the same slow invasive manner so typical of insurgent forces. At the time of the scheme's institution, however, the military and not the political advantages of such a project were evaluated and found wanting. In the light of these apparently limited Auxiliary capabilities, the scheme at best received stop-start and half-hearted support. But, most important of all, Army commanders realized too late the potential of a politically matured local militia from the people themselves.

Instead increased emphasis was placed on the elimination of insurgent forces in neighbouring countries and eventually on the punishment of these host countries for the active assistance accorded to both ZANLA and ZPRA. This tends to vindicate the argument that Security Forces perceived the threat

as being of an essentially external nature. The general viewpoint that insurgent fatalities held the key to the successful conclusion of the conflict fitted in comfortably with this perception. Operations aimed at eliminating concentrated numbers of trained insurgents prior to their entry into a target country do constitute a primary element in counter-insurgency strategy. However, these operations are no substitute for a total and balanced counter-insurgency strategy. The war for Zimbabwe was not lost in Zambia or Mozambique, but within the Tribal Trust Lands of Rhodesia. It was in these areas that the imbalance on the Rhodesian counter-insurgency programme is best illustrated when measured against the comprehensive doctrine of stability operations.

As detailed in Chapter 6, American doctrine clearly states the need for a complete and balanced combination of environmental improvement (i.e. rural development), population and resources control and counter-insurgent (i.e. military) operations. When measuring the Rhodesian performance against these, a clear assessment can be gained of the racial preconceptions that permeated all levels of white/black interaction, specifically in the rural areas. Counter-insurgent operations were conducted to the exclusion rather than the support of environmental improvement. Population and resources control, a means to the end of regaining and re-establishing government control, became an end in itself: the object simply being to facilitate counter-insurgent operations. Stability operations, and specifically civic action could have contributed immeasurably to the consolidation of government controlled areas, yet the limited Rhodesian response could be termed no more than armed propaganda. At no stage was attention at high level seriously directed towards redressing grievances exploited by the insurgents to justify their criticism of the existing white administration. Had Rhodesian authorities been sensitive to the localized and most directly relevant complaints within the Tribal Trust Lands, and had all available forces been deployed in an expanding area defence, rather than a mobile counter-offensive across the entire country, the concept of stability operations would have contributed significantly to the consolidation of government control.

Instead, by the overly aggressive use of tactics such as the purely intelligence orientated pseudo methods, Security Force actions tended rather to be aimed against the local population than in defence

of them. In the short term, pseudo operations were successful in obtaining information leading to numerous insurgent fatalities, yet in the long term the extent to which these methods were used resulted in an undeniable loss of legitimacy and credibility by the Security Forces *vis à vis* the local inhabitants. Again the aim, as in the case of Protected Villages, was to facilitate the immediate detection and elimination of armed insurgents to the exclusion of other, long term, objectives.

In the case of Protected and Consolidated Villages resources were allocated to the resettlement of rural inhabitants, but for the wrong reasons and in the wrong places. Instead of halting the further spread of subversion and thereafter slowly increasing those areas under government control, the establishment of these villages was seen as an impediment to insurgent logistical routes. Little long term emphasis was placed on the provision of improved living conditions as compensation for the disruption of a rural existence. Aimed at increasing the vulnerability of the insurgents, the strategy lost sight of the real objective, protecting and gaining the support of the local population. Instead of attempting to involve inhabitants of these villages in their own defence, the strategy was primarily seen as a method whereby depopulated areas could be created for Security Force operations.

The same confusion regarding method and object is even more readily discernable in the history of Rhodesian border minefield obstacles. The initial concept, the erection of a barrier against cross-border movement along the border between Operation Hurricane area and the Tete province of Mozambique, was itself ill-founded and fraught with problems in execution. The further extension of the scheme along several hundred kilometres of virgin bush questions the existence of sound strategic analysis at Joint Operation Centre level, and a national counter-insurgency strategy at the highest level. Particularly in view of the extremely limited resources available to Rhodesia in the defence of such extensive territories, the allocation of substantial manpower and financial priorities to the construction of these obstacles was without sound motivation. Such resources would have been far better invested in environmental improvement of government controlled areas, itself an extremely expensive programme.

Similarly, efforts were seriously misdirected within the Rhodesian intelligence community. Regret-

table errors were made in identifying both the location and intensity of the insurgent threat during the period 1972 to 1973. Much of the blame is, however, to be placed on political insensitivity to warnings pertaining to the gravity of the threat. Having determined their inability to meet the challenges of gathering intelligence in a revolutionary environment, sustained attempts were made, and resisted, to establish a new organisation that could meet these challenges. Rapid and determined increase in the functions, personnel and co-operation of Special Branch with all Services involved in combating the war, would possibly have resulted in a much higher standard of operational and strategic intelligence than resulted from the establishment of both the Directorate of Military Intelligence and RIC. In view of its broader approach to the problem of counter-insurgency Special Branch was furthermore better suited to the revolutionary environment than a more restrictive military intelligence service.

The lack of a coherent counter-insurgency strategy at national level could be cited as an important reason for the absence of a unified high level command structure. Only the latter could have enforced compliance over all government activities directly related to the counter-insurgency campaign. Even had such a national strategy been formulated, COMOPS alone could not have enforced compliance. After the war Lieutenant-Colonel Reid-Daly wrote

... there was no laid down military strategy applicable to every operational area. Brigadiers were given their operational areas to command and thereafter each one did his own thing ... as did the Police ... as did the Special Branch ... as did the Internal Affairs ... they all blamed the politicians for the disasterously developing state of affairs, and, needless to say, the politicians blamed everyone else. (3)

Despite this lack of a national strategy by which the various Joint Operation Centres could fight the war, it is, however, possible to typify the general military strategy as employed in Rhodesia.

Rhodesia had in fact opted for a mobile, counter-offensive strategy rather than one of area defence. Although large numbers of troops were deployed in static or semi-static defensive roles, these forces were generally not deployed within the Tribal Trust Lands.

The emphasis in Rhodesian Security Force

operations was placed on gaining the highest possible kill ratio.

Rhodesian Security Forces strategy is shaped by a particular constraint, the lack of troops made available for deployment on offensive operations in the bush. Consequently, the Rhodesian strategy has consisted of finding and destroying the larger guerrilla concentrations, breaking these up with small units of highly mobile troops, who, immediately after such an operation, are shifted to other lucrative target areas. (4)

The lack of Security Force consolidation of any area was a basic shortcoming in the strategy. Any strategy aimed at keeping the enemy off-balance can only be temporary, as in the case of external operations, and must ultimately be an element towards a broader goal.

... lack of a Security Force permanent presence in many Rhodesian Tribal Trust Lands is probably the most serious fault in the Security Force strategy, for it means small guerrilla groups are able to garner popular allegiance easily as there is no alternative for the local people to turn to for protection. (5)

Thus, by following a mobile counter-offensive strategy, Rhodesian Security Forces precluded the type and numbers of recruits that could be trained for this task within the strict budgetary restraints that existed throughout the war. In the second instance, the Security Forces, by own choice, could thus not compete with the insurgents for the establishment of base areas inside the country. Only with the advent of the Security Force Auxiliaries in late 1978, did this emphasis change.

In the final year of the war a number of middle ranking Army officers in fact attempted to convince COMOPS to adopt an area defence strategy. During the military preparations for the April 1979 elections, a terrain appreciation was undertaken by the Directorate of Military Intelligence with the aim of determining which areas of the country had to be held in order to ensure a victory for Bishop Muzorewa. Circulars were distributed to all interested parties, specifically the farming and mining communities, and industry. The data received was transposed on a map from which the key terrain that

## Conclusion

had to be held was determined. (See Figure 11.1)

Accordingly, Zimbabwe-Rhodesia was classified in three categories; Vital Assets/Ground (VAG), Ground of Tactical Importance (GTI) and other ground.

- a. VAG. Vital Assets are those, the capture damage or control of which by the attacker will result in, or significantly contribute to, national defeat. The ground on which the Vital Assets are situated is known as Vital Ground.
- b. GTI. GTI is Good Tactical Ground on which to fight the battle to defend the Vital Assets/Ground.
- c. Other Ground. Other Ground is those areas which are not classified as VAG or GTI. This does not include areas of GTI superimposed on VAG.

In practice VAG corresponded with the economically important terrain of the white population. All Tribal Trust Lands bordering on VAG fell into this category. The remainder of the country was not considered to be of immediate strategic importance and was temporarily to be abandoned by Security Forces.

In the run-up to the internal elections Security Forces were deployed internally as follows:

- a. Domination of GTI to enable the election to take place
- b. Protection of VAG, largely by domination of adjacent/overlying GTI
- c. Temporary abandonment/occupation of other ground, depending on the tactical situation.

Externally the following tasks were carried out

- a. Disruption of terrorist reinforcements and resupply ...
- b. Dislocation of terrorist command and control
- c. Destabilisation of host countries to weaken their support for terrorists.

The strategic concept as embodied in VAG and GTI was in actual fact the product of a number of ideas one of which was known as the corridor approach. This had envisaged the identification of insurgent infiltration routes and the subsequent step-by-step elimination of them. Instead of attempting to cut insurgent infiltration routes into the country,

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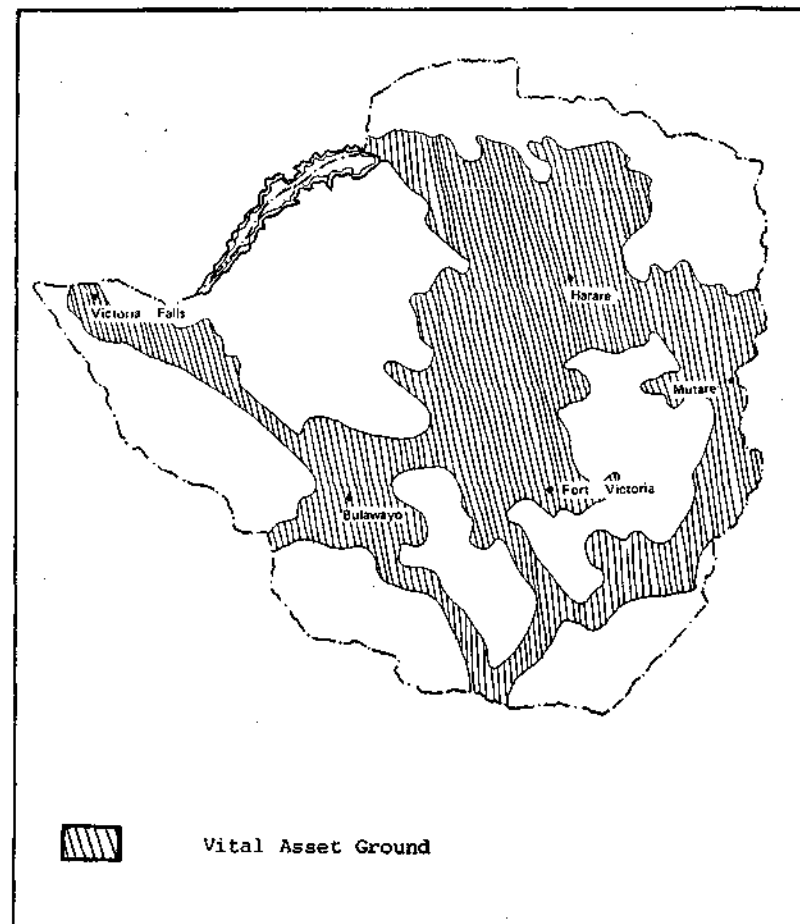


Figure 11.1 Vital Asset Ground

## Conclusion

Security Forces would have worked their way down the infiltration corridor from its deepest point in Rhodesia consolidating areas as the operation progressed.

Both VAG and GTI stood in sharp contrast to the strategy of mobile counter-offensive which had failed. Although neither strategy was accepted early enough to significantly influence deployment patterns, they marked a total reappraisal Security Force strategy. The acceptance of VAG and GTI by COMOPS in December 1979/January 1980 for the first time led to a national military strategy whereby COMOPS influenced Joint Operation Centre deployment in the broader national interest.

The same problem addressed above can be viewed from a different angle, that of relative mobility and the political/military impact of a strategy of mobile defence. Insurgent strategy, specifically that of ZANLA, was to infiltrate as many groups as possible into Rhodesia, in the knowledge that large casualties would be incurred. The aim, however, was to enable hard-core cadre members to reach the Tribal Trust Lands where two-thirds of the black Africans lived. Ultimately base areas were to be established in these areas from where the struggle would be intensified.

Once ensconced in the TTL's (Tribal Trust Lands) by means of an effective doctrine, the guerrillas use them as secure bases from which to launch attacks on neighbouring white farms, road and rail communications, schools, council offices, black owned stores and beer halls, attacks which have the political purpose of destroying government authority. This guerrilla strategy is primarily a political one as opposed to the Security Forces' mainly military strategy of search and destroy. An important element in the guerrilla strategy is utilisation of the Rhodesian Achilles Heel, poor manpower distribution to short-circuit Security Force mobility.

As mentioned above, the country had been experiencing a severe recession at the time that the war entered its most critical phase. Although the Republic of South Africa aided Rhodesia on an increasing scale, this was not enough to offset the effects of a troubled economy. Military strategies such as Protected Villages, a cordon sanitaire and external operations required vast capital investment and

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expenditure. This capital was specifically needed for socio-economic development projects in the rural areas. Denied access to the world money markets, these projects were often beyond the means of a relatively small although sophisticated, economy.

Nevertheless, even had Rhodesia retained access to these funds, had their approach to the war been more supportive than punitive, and had population and resources control measures been instituted in time, at root white Rhodesians were circumvented by their own political creed.

The whites had no strategy other than beefing the status quo and maintaining their privileged position.

Ndabaningi Sithole

By a determined refusal to effect any transfer of real power, and an inflexible assertion of white minority rule, the government of Ian Smith alienated the black majority, driving the populace to the expedience of communist subversion. The Rhodesian Front party in fact refused to accept that the threat of rural insurgency was serious enough to warrant restructuring the distribution of political power.

Rhodesian strategy was shot through with a fatal negativism. There was little real faith in positive political reform as a war-winner. (7)

Angola and Mozambique gained their independence in 1974, and were then able to host insurgents directed against Zimbabwe. Rhodesia had not initiated a meaningful transfer of power before the independence of these bordering countries precipitated the intensified onslaught from 1976. Had she done so this would have constituted a crucial initiative in presenting a defensible alternative to Marxist ideology.

Government was at first unprepared, and then too late, to take this decisive step forward so that Security Forces lacked a far-sighted political strategy that would have allowed them to formulate a central military strategy. From this, in turn, they could have defended the legitimacy of the existing order to themselves, the local population and the enemy.

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NOTE

Most of the information collected for this study was obtained by means of personal interviews with numerous members of

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COMOPS  
MID  
SB  
Branch Two  
JSPIS  
JOC's  
SAS  
Selous Scouts  
1 POU  
The Sheppard Group  
RHE  
HQ Spec Forces  
RIC  
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