

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.

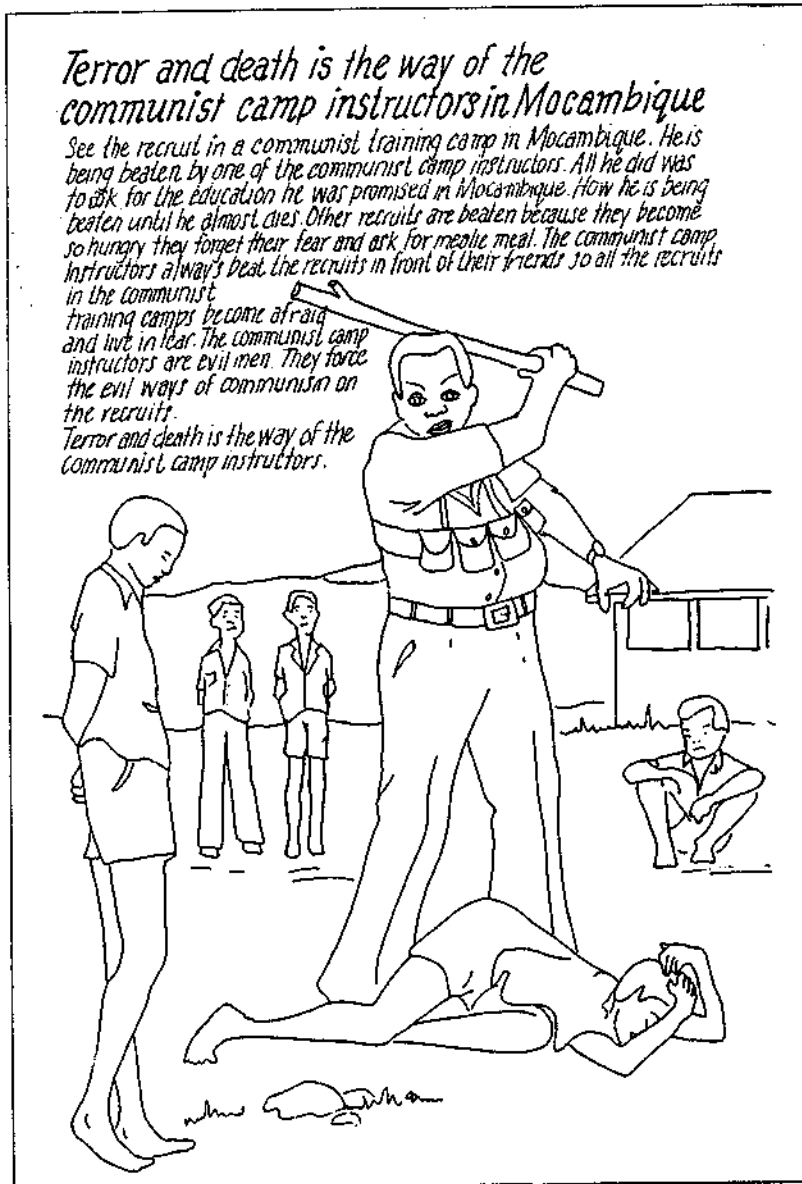


Figure 6.1 Example of Operation Splitshot Leaflet

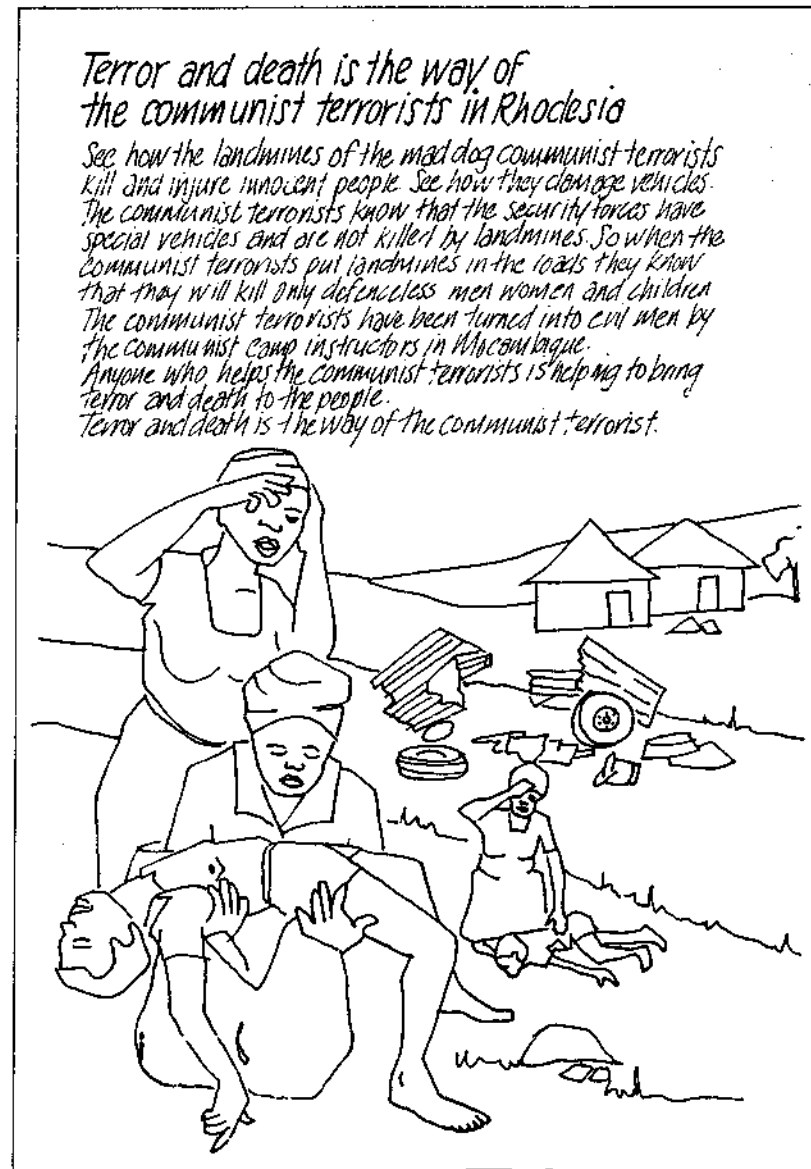


Figure 6.2 Example of Operation Splitshot Leaflet

6.11 Use of Spirit Mediums

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

*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.*

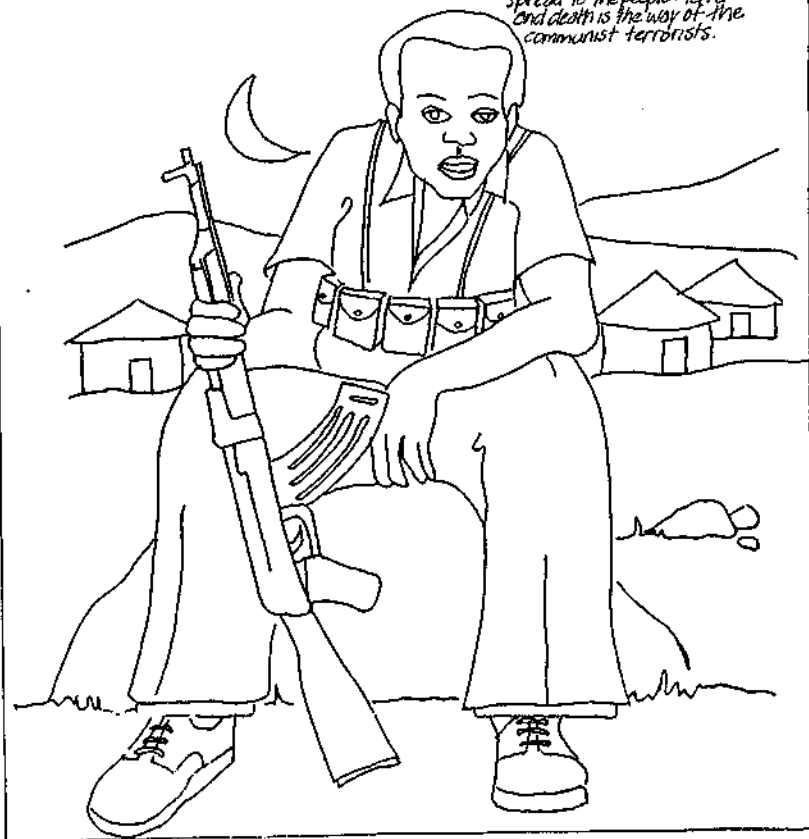


Figure 6.3 Example of Operation Splitshot Leaflet

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

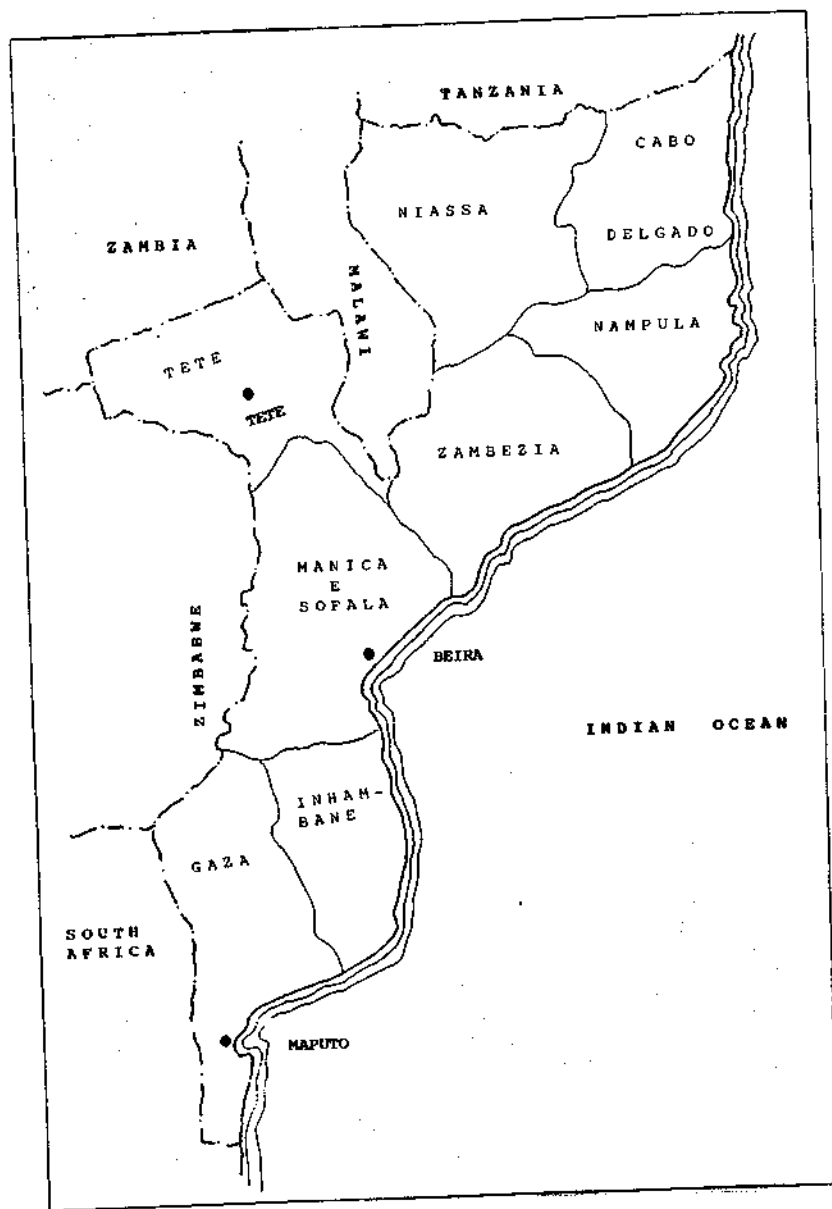


Figure 7.1 Mozambique

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 Malvernia 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