

Bush War

The Use of Surrogates in Southern Africa (1975-1989)

**A Monograph
by
MAJ Joseph E. Escandon
U.S. Army**



**School of Advanced Military Studies
United States Army Command and General Staff College
Fort Leavenworth, Kansas**

AY 2008-2009

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

Form Approved
OMB No. 0704-0188

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing this collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. **PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.**

1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 21-05-2009		2. REPORT TYPE SAMS Monograph		3. DATES COVERED (From - To) July 2008 – May 2009	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Bush War: The Use of Surrogates in Southern Africa (1975-1989)				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S) Major Joseph E. Escandon (U.S. Army)				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMS) 250 Gibbon Avenue Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-2134				8. PERFORMING ORG REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for Public Release; Distribution is Unlimited					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT The purpose of this monograph is to examine the use of indigenous surrogates by both the Republic of South Africa and Rhodesia in Southern Africa's Bush Wars from 1975 to 1989. The Bush Wars are of significance because the use of surrogates in each case represents policy and doctrine that is outside of the United States military's traditional understanding and employment of surrogates. The methodology of this paper is to analyze two unique surrogate forces to determine if they significantly contributed to the accomplishment of strategic aims and operational objectives. Such an examination is relevant because current U.S. policy and strategy advocates building the capacity of foreign security forces, as well as the use of irregular surrogate forces, to achieve U.S. foreign policy objectives. Given the political and military challenges of Iraq and Afghanistan, policymakers believe that the United States can ill afford another long-duration, resource intensive, politically charged counterinsurgency campaign. The use of surrogates offers the promise of low-visibility, economy of force operations. Nonetheless, enthusiasm for the use of surrogates must be tempered by the reality that surrogates are not a substitute for effective operational art and strategy.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS Surrogate warfare, unconventional warfare, irregular warfare, pseudo operations, counterinsurgency, 32 Battalion, Selous Scouts, South African Defense Force, Rhodesian Army, Bush Wars.					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF: (U)			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT (U)	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 84	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON Stefan J. Banach COL, U.S. Army
a. REPORT (U)	b. ABSTRACT (U)	c. THIS PAGE (U)			19b. PHONE NUMBER (include area code) 913-758-3302

Standard Form 298 (Rev. 8-98)
Prescribed by ANSI Std. Z39.18

SCHOOL OF ADVANCED MILITARY STUDIES

MONOGRAPH APPROVAL

MAJ Joseph E. Escandon

Title of Monograph: Bush War: The Use of Surrogates in Southern Africa (1975-1989)

This monograph was defended by the degree candidate on 25 March 2009 and approved by the monograph director and reader named below.

Approved by:

Andrew Johnson, LTC, SF

Monograph Director

Jacob Kipp, Ph.D.

Monograph Reader

Thomas A. Langowski, COL, LG

Monograph Reader

Stefan J. Banach, COL, IN

Director,
School of Advanced
Military Studies

Robert F. Baumann, Ph.D.

Director,
Graduate Degree
Programs

Abstract

BUSH WAR: THE USE OF SURROGATES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA (1975-1989), by MAJOR Joseph E. Escandon, U.S. Army, 84 pages.

The purpose of this monograph is to examine the use of indigenous surrogates by both the Republic of South Africa and Rhodesia in Southern Africa's Bush Wars from 1975 to 1989. The Bush Wars are of significance because the use of surrogates in each case represents policy and doctrine that is outside of the United States military's traditional understanding and employment of surrogates.

The methodology of this paper is to analyze two unique surrogate forces to determine if they significantly contributed to the accomplishment of strategic aims and operational objectives. Such an examination is relevant because current U.S. policy and strategy advocates building the capacity of foreign security forces, as well as the use of irregular surrogate forces, to achieve U.S. foreign policy objectives.

Given the political and military challenges of Iraq and Afghanistan, policymakers believe that the United States can ill afford another long-duration, resource intensive, politically charged counterinsurgency campaign. The use of surrogates offers the promise of low-visibility, economy of force operations. Nonetheless, enthusiasm for the use of surrogates must be tempered by the reality that surrogates are not a substitute for effective operational art and strategy.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE	1
INTRODUCTION.....	2
Challenges of the Strategic Environment	2
The Use of Surrogates: Intellectual, Doctrinal, and Organizational Challenge	6
Two Cases: Southern Africa’s Bush Wars	12
32 BATTALION – SOUTH AFRICA’S SURROGATE FORCE	15
Historical Background and Strategic Setting.....	16
The Beginning: Operation Savannah.....	22
Operation Askari: The Changed Operational Environment	27
Cuito Cuanavale and the End of the Bush War	35
SELOUS SCOUTS – RHODESIA’S SURROGATE FORCE	42
Historical Background and Strategic Setting.....	43
Pseudo Operations	51
External Operations	57
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	66
South Africa and 32 Battalion	66
Rhodesia and the Selous Scouts	68
Recommendations	71
Appendix 1: Terms and Definitions	73
Appendix 2: Key Acronyms	75
Bibliography	77

PREFACE

The “Bush” is to Southern Africa what the “Outback” is to Australia. It is not only a physical setting, but also has a human dimension. Simply put, the bush is no-man’s land, geographic space that is dominated by untamed wilderness. Unsited to human civilization, the bush is the domain of the animal world, a place where only “bushmen,” both aboriginals and adventurers, dare to tread. The bush is where the brutal wars of Southern Africa, the “bush wars,” were fought between 1966 and 1989. These wars encompassed the full spectrum of conflict from counterinsurgency to conventional, and involved a wide array of unique units and tactics. The bush wars are significant because they provide valuable lessons for contemporary and future American conflicts. The most important lessons relate to South Africa’s and Rhodesia’s use of indigenous surrogate forces¹ to overcome the challenges posed by war in the bush. Given the political and military challenges of Iraq and Afghanistan, U.S. policymakers believe that the United States can ill afford another long-duration, resource intensive, politically charged counterinsurgency campaign. The use of surrogates offers the promise of low-visibility, economy of force operations.² Nonetheless, enthusiasm for the use of surrogates must be tempered by the reality that surrogates are not a substitute for effective operational art and strategy.

¹Kelly H. Smith, “Surrogate Warfare for the Twenty-First Century” (Monograph, School of Advanced Military Studies, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 2006), 24. According to Smith “A surrogate, in its simplest sense, takes the place of something or someone. The surrogate is also a proxy for a particular function or set of functions.” See Appendix 1 for a further discussion of terms.

²The scope of this monograph is limited to the military (Title 10, U.S. Code) employment of surrogates. The use of surrogates by the intelligence community (Title 50, U.S. Code), as well as “plausible deniability,” is not germane to this discussion and will not be addressed, given that the subject is adequately covered in numerous other works.

INTRODUCTION

As we look to the future, national security experts are virtually unanimous in predicting that the next several decades will be ones of Persistent Conflict--protracted confrontation among state, non-state and individual actors that are increasingly willing to use violence to achieve political and ideological ends. . . . In the years ahead, we face two major challenges to ensuring our continued success in this era of persistent conflict--restoring balance to a force feeling the cumulative effects of seven years of war and setting conditions for the future to fulfill our strategic role as an integral element of Landpower.³

General George W. Casey Jr., Army Chief of Staff

Challenges of the Strategic Environment

General Casey's statement illuminates two vital shifts in U.S. strategic thinking. The first is that the conclusion of American military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan will not be followed by a strategic pause. Persistent conflict entails living in a world where Islamic extremism, genocide in Africa, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and global lawlessness will threaten peace and prosperity for the foreseeable future. This means that the U.S. military must be capable of sustaining operations of undetermined duration, especially in counterinsurgency environments. Casey's second salient point is that seven years of war have significantly reduced the Army's overall readiness and ability to meet other contingencies, implying that economy of force solutions will be required. Amplifying this assessment is British General Rupert Smith's discussion of the utility of military force. Smith believes that industrial age warfare is dead as the result of a paradigm shift towards "war among populations." Traditionally, the U.S. public and policymakers have tended to focus on the moral and legal aspects of

³George W. Casey, "America's Army in an Era of Persistent Conflict," *Army* 58, no. 10 (October 2008): 20.

war instead of the actual utility of force.⁴ In other words, the use of force, as exemplified by the U.S. military in Iraq during the initial stages of the insurgency, has vast limitations in wars among populations.⁵ In discussing war among the people, Smith identifies several major trends, one of which resonates with General Casey's outlook--"Our conflicts tend to be timeless, since we are seeking a condition, which then must be maintained until an agreement on a definitive outcome, which may take years or decades."⁶ Another trend stipulates that "we must fight so as not to lose the force."⁷ In other words, the U.S. cannot continue to become mired in conflicts that exhaust its military forces.

New methods must be found to meet the challenges posed by multiple adversaries. In his examination of *hybrid warfare*, Frank Hoffman provides insights to the methods of America's current and future adversaries.

Hybrid threats incorporate a full range of different modes of warfare including conventional capabilities, irregular tactics and formations, terrorist acts including indiscriminate violence and coercion, and criminal disorder. Hybrid wars can be conducted by both states and a variety of non-state actors. . . . Future challenges will present a more complex array of alternative structures and strategies, as seen in the summer of 2006 in the battle between Israel and Hezbollah.⁸

⁴Rupert Smith, *The Utility of Force: The Art of War in The Modern World* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2007), 11.

⁵Rupert Smith, 14. "The Coalition forces in Iraq were a classic example of this situation: their effectiveness as a military force ended once the fighting between military forces was completed in May 2003. And though they went on to score a series of victories in local skirmishes, they had greatly diminished-if any-effect as an occupation and reconstruction force, which had become their main mandate. They were neither trained nor equipped for the task, and therefore could not fulfill it . . . there was little utility to the force."

⁶Ibid., 19.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Frank G. Hoffman, *Conflict in the 21st Century: The Rise of Hybrid Wars* (Arlington, VA: Potomac Institute for Policy Studies, 2007), 8.

The result is that America's adversaries will continue to adapt, so as to attack U.S. vulnerabilities and wear down the nation's will over the long-term.

Hybrid wars will require unique solutions, such as those employed during the opening phases of Operation Enduring Freedom. Toppling the Taliban and Al Qaeda in Afghanistan transcended conventional thinking.⁹ One example often cited is the use of American Special Forces teams to advise the indigenous irregular forces of the Northern Alliance, and more importantly supply them with U.S. air support.¹⁰ "The actions in 2001 in Afghanistan reinforced the principles of adaptability, economy of force, and the value of working with and through indigenous forces to achieve common goals."¹¹

Nonetheless, this approach was not without problems. For instance, the use of indigenous Afghans at Tora Bora, as surrogates,¹² or substitutes, for American conventional forces, directly contributed to the failure to capture or kill Usama bin Laden.¹³ In this particular case, the use of surrogate forces did not support U.S. operational or strategic objectives,

⁹Tommy Franks, *American Soldier* (New York: Harper-Collins Publishers, 2004), 251.

¹⁰U.S. Department of Defense, Joint Publication (JP) 1-02, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2001 (As amended through October 17, 2008), 282. JP 1-02 defines irregular forces as "Armed individuals or groups who are not members of the regular armed forces, police, or other internal security forces."

¹¹Office of the Secretary of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2006), 9.

¹²Kelly Smith, 24. According to Smith "A surrogate, in its simplest sense, takes the place of something or someone. The surrogate is also a proxy for a particular function or set of functions." See Appendix 1 for a further discussion of terms.

¹³CBS News, *60 Minutes Interview*, "Elite Officer Recalls Bin Laden Hunt," 5 October 2008, <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2008/10/02/60minutes/main4494937.shtml> (accessed January 17, 2009). Writing in the *New York Times*, Michael Gordon commented on the Tora Bora situation. "The United States' heavy dependence on proxy forces in the Afghan war has been a calculated decision that has generally worked well. But as the war enters its final phase, the limitations of this policy seem clear. The war aims of the United States and anti-Taliban opposition do not always neatly coincide. Here at Tora Bora, Afghan forces were concerned principally with recovering territory while the United States was intent on the capture or killing of Osama bin Laden, who has eluded his pursuers." Michael R. Gordon, "A Nation Challenged: War Goals; One War, Different Aims," *New York Times* (December 18, 2001).

unlike when the U.S. used the Northern Alliance to remove the Taliban from power. At Tora Bora, the interests of the surrogates were in recovering territory, not capturing bin Laden.¹⁴

In recent years, U.S. policymakers have begun to critically examine the strategic and operational environment and develop new approaches. The U.S. *National Security Strategy*, as well as numerous supporting strategic documents, to include the *National Defense Strategy (NDS)*, *National Military Strategy*, and the *Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR)*, prescribes a strategy of building the capacity of U.S. allies and partners to enable them to confront current and future adversaries. According to the 2008 *NDS*, “working with and through local actors when possible to confront common security challenges is the best and most sustainable approach to combat violent extremism.”¹⁵ While most of the emphasis is on building the capacity of state controlled foreign security forces,¹⁶ there is a need to further develop the capability to use surrogate forces. Surrogates can provide the U.S. with low-visibility and asymmetric means for achieving policy goals. At the same time, surrogates are an economy of force asset that is familiar with the human and geographic terrain of the area of operations; something that the U.S. military cannot replicate. Nonetheless, using surrogates entails numerous challenges. It is

¹⁴Ibid. Ethnic considerations played a key role in the Northern Alliance’s acceptance of U.S. support. The Northern Alliance was composed of ethnic Tajiks and Uzbeks, who before 9-11 were fighting the Pashtun dominated Taliban and Al Qaeda. Hence, the goals of the Northern Alliance and the U.S. were compatible – remove the Taliban from power and rid Afghanistan of Al Qaeda. In the case of Tora Bora, the U.S. relied on Pashtun militias, which had no desire to wage a war of annihilation against their Pashtun brothers.

¹⁵Office of the Secretary of Defense, *The National Defense Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2008), 8. See Appendix 1 for a discussion concerning “Through, With, and By.”

¹⁶Foreign security forces include military, paramilitary, and police.

clear that the use of surrogate forces must be aligned with strategic aims and operational objectives to be effective. In order to understand the possibilities and pitfalls of using surrogates, the U.S. must learn not only from its past experiences, but from those of other nations. The purpose of this monograph is to examine the use of surrogate forces by both the Republic of South Africa (RSA)¹⁷ and Rhodesia to determine if surrogate forces significantly contributed to the accomplishment of each country's operational objectives and strategic aims. Southern Africa's "Bush Wars" (1965 to 1989) provide two unique case studies which illustrate approaches for the use of surrogates not readily recognized in U.S. policy and doctrine. The premise of this monograph is that South Africa effectively used surrogates to accomplish operational goals and strategic aims, while Rhodesia did not.

The Use of Surrogates: Intellectual, Doctrinal, and Organizational Challenge

The U.S. has a long tradition of using surrogate forces.¹⁸ It is this body of experience, as well as operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, that shapes current U.S. policy and doctrine concerning the use of surrogates. Fortunately, the policy and doctrine associated with the use of surrogate forces is being scrutinized and revised.¹⁹ One of the

¹⁷This monograph will use the acronym RSA, or the term South Africa, when referring to the Republic of South Africa.

¹⁸Since the time of the French and Indian War, European Americans utilized Native American tribes to wage guerilla warfare against their opponents, as well as against other Native Americans. During the so-called "small wars" of the early 1900s the United States used indigenous forces in places such as the Philippines, Haiti, and Nicaragua in order to accomplish American foreign policy goals. This practice was continued in Vietnam, where the U.S. Army Special Forces employed various ethnic tribes, known as Montagnards, to interdict Viet Cong and North Vietnamese operations in the Central Highlands.

¹⁹Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 3-05.130, *Army Special Operations Forces Unconventional Warfare* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2008), iv. FM 3-05.130 "establishes keystone doctrine for Army special operations forces (ARSOF) operations in unconventional

2006 *QDR*'s key outcomes was the development of the Irregular Warfare (IW) concept. The intent of developing IW was to force an “intellectual rebalancing” of the Department of Defense (DoD) as a whole, and the conventionally focused military Services, in particular.²⁰ The IW concept is really an umbrella concept that recognizes the asymmetric nature of America's adversaries and places operations and activities such as unconventional warfare (UW), counterinsurgency (COIN), and foreign internal defense (FID) on par with conventional warfare.²¹ DoD defines IW as “a violent struggle among states and non-state actors for legitimacy and influence over the relevant populations. IW favors indirect and asymmetric approaches, though it may employ the full range of military and other capabilities, in order to erode an adversary's power, influence, and will.”²² According to the IW Joint Operating Concept (JOC), “Direct applications of military power are often counterproductive in IW. The joint force will conduct protracted regional and global campaigns against state and non-state adversaries to subvert, coerce, attrite, and exhaust adversaries rather than defeating them through direct military confrontation.”²³ While IW has initiated a paradigm shift, it has also initiated debate with regard to doctrine, as well as roles and missions.

warfare (UW). It is based on lessons learned from both historical and contemporary UW operations. It is also based on existing, long-standing Army Special Forces (SF) UW doctrine; recently developed doctrine, such as counterinsurgency (COIN); and emerging affiliated concepts, such as irregular warfare (IW).”

²⁰As the Army Staff's lead action officer for the DoD *Irregular Warfare Execution Roadmap*, the author has firsthand knowledge of the intellectual underpinnings of the IW concept.

²¹Office of the Secretary of Defense, Department of Defense Directive 3000.07, *Irregular Warfare* (Washington, DC: Office of the Secretary of Defense, 2008), 2. “It is DoD policy to: Recognize that IW is as strategically important as traditional warfare.”

²²JP 1-02, 282.

²³U.S. Department of Defense, *Irregular Warfare Joint Operating Concept (JOC), Version 1* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2007), 2 and 19.

One of IW's indirect approaches is UW, a capability that was solidified in U.S. military doctrine during the Cold War, and is the primary vehicle for the use of surrogates.²⁴ The U.S. DoD defines UW as:

a broad spectrum of military and paramilitary operations, normally of long duration, predominately conducted through, with, or by indigenous or surrogate forces that are organized, trained, equipped, supported, and directed in varying degrees by an external source. It includes, but is not limited to, guerilla warfare, subversion, sabotage, intelligence activities, and unconventional assisted recovery.²⁵

This definition has recently been challenged by the introduction of Army Field Manual (FM) 3-05.130, *Army Special Operations Forces Unconventional Warfare*.²⁶ FM 3-05.130 defines UW as “Operations conducted by, with, or through irregular forces in support of a resistance movement, an insurgency, or conventional military operations.”²⁷ The manual reflects lessons learned from the GWOT, as well as IW policy and doctrine. FM 3-05.130 also states that “UW must be conducted by, with, or through surrogates; and such surrogates must be irregular forces.”²⁸ Defining UW in terms of the use of

²⁴FM 3-05.130, 1-2.

²⁵JP 1-02, 574.

²⁶Changes to FM 3-05.130 reflect discourse within the U.S. Army Special Forces community concerning the need to revise UW doctrine to fit the contemporary and future operating environments. In a 2007 *Special Warfare* magazine article, retired Special Forces Lieutenant Colonel Dave Duffy argued that UW will play a vital role in IW campaigns, to include current operations, for many years to come. “Traditionally, UW has been seen as U.S. sponsorship of an indigenous resistance movement, with the intent of destabilizing or overthrowing a government or occupying power. However, UW can be conducted against non-state elements or actors that are not limited by geographic boundaries or legitimate governmental constraints . . . UW conducted against non-state elements is by, with or through irregular forces controlled by U.S. forces either directly (in permissive to uncertain environments) or indirectly (in hostile or politically sensitive regions). These irregular forces are enlisted to conduct operations in support of U.S. aims and objectives, thus multiplying forces available for operations.” Dave Duffy, “UW Support to Irregular Warfare and the Global War on Terrorism,” *Special Warfare* (May-June 2007): 13.

²⁷FM 3-05.130, 1-2. Since much of UW doctrine remains classified, FM 3-05.130 does not define “by, with, or through.” See Appendix 1 for a possible definition of this term.

²⁸FM 3-05.130, 1-2. In a 2006 monograph, Kelly Smith argued that the Army's current UW doctrine was much too narrow in scope to be useful in the post 9-11 world. At the time, the Army's field

surrogates is a definite improvement over previous doctrine, as is the manual's overall approach to UW.

Nonetheless, the use of surrogates still remains constrained by policy, doctrine, and organization. Many within the U.S. Army Special Forces community advocate for establishment of an UW command, independent of the "direct action" oriented elements of U.S. Special Operations Command.²⁹ The use of surrogates, the traditional purview of the Special Forces, and an activity confined within the realm of special operations³⁰ and intelligence activities conducted by the Central Intelligence Agency,³¹ faces further

manual for Army Special Operations Forces (FM 100-25) identified three strategic criteria for the use of UW: (1) UW is employed as a supporting effort to a large-scale war or regional conflict in which the U.S. has a concurrent conventional campaign; (2) UW is applied through an indigenous group to create a deterrent effect; and (3) UW is conducted to support an insurgency. FM 100-25 also provided three operational characteristics that refine the broad definition of UW. According to Smith, "The first relates to battlespace in that unconventional warfare is conducted in 'enemy-held, enemy-controlled or politically sensitive territory.' The second refers to the conduct of unconventional warfare as either guerilla warfare and/or supporting insurgents. The third aspect is related to the nature of the indigenous partners in unconventional warfare. The doctrine expects them to be an 'existing or potential insurgent, secessionist, or other resistance movements [sic].'" See Kelly Smith, 13.

²⁹Sean D. Naylor, "Support Grows for Standing Up an Unconventional Warfare Command," *Armed Forces Journal* (2007), <http://www.armedforcesjournal.com/2007/09/3049653> (accessed September 25, 2007).

³⁰David Tucker and Christopher J. Lamb, *United States Special Operations Forces* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 147 and 191. In this work, Tucker and Lamb explore the future of special operations and the development of conventional forces to conduct missions that were once the purview of special operations forces (SOF). First, they explore the definition of special operations, illustrating that "Pentagon policy notes that all SOF missions take place in 'hostile, denied, and politically sensitive areas,' and that 'a simple way to remember the difference between SOF and conventional forces is that SOF's unique training, capabilities, and skills' allow them to operate successfully in such an environment." Tucker and Lamb also note that many in the military establishment, to include then Army Chief of Staff Peter Schoomaker, believe that several years of overseas contingency operations have provided conventional forces with the capability to conduct tasks that were previously considered SOF specific. This opens a door for the argument that the use of surrogates cannot be solely limited to UW and special operations.

³¹The 1987 Nunn-Cohen Amendment (Title 10, Section 167, U.S. Code) to the Goldwater-Nichols Defense Reorganization Act of 1986 established the United States Special Operations Command (USSOCOM). Section (j) of the act authorizes USSOCOM to conduct numerous special operations activities, to include unconventional warfare. Title 50, U.S. Code, § 413b authorizes the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to conduct covert action. § 413b, section (e) defines covert action as "an activity or activities of the United States Government to influence political, economic, or military conditions

compartmentalization if a UW command is established. In effect, the potential that surrogates may bring to current and future conflicts will not be realized.

Fortunately, alternatives for exploring the utility of surrogates are available. In a 2006 monograph, Major Kelly Smith sought to answer the following question: “Does the framework of regular and irregular [warfare] “sufficiently facilitate the development of strategy, policy and doctrine for the United States to be effective in the contemporary environment?”³² His answer:

Unconventional warfare, and to an even greater extent, irregular warfare, are not conceptually adequate to describe the range of U.S. operations involving indigenous forces. The United States needs an updated concept that addresses the use of foreign entities, regular and irregular, in U.S. military operations.³³

To illustrate this point, Smith provided three examples, Afghanistan, Georgia, and Iraq, where various operations and activities are not easily captured by current concepts (for example: IW, UW, and FID).³⁴ The unique aspect, and one that Smith highlights, is that general purpose forces (GPF) and not just special operations forces (SOF), used indigenous surrogate forces in Iraq.³⁵ The use of Iraqi surrogates by GPF is not covered

abroad, where it is intended that the role of the United States Government will not be apparent or acknowledged publicly.”

³²Kelly Smith, 1.

³³Ibid., 23.

³⁴Ibid., 23-33. In Afghanistan the mission was balanced between both UW and foreign internal defense (FID) tasks. In Georgia, beginning in 2002, the U.S. provided training and equipment (FID) in order to enable Georgian forces to contribute to operations in Iraq. Finally, in Iraq, coalition forces conducted UW during major combat operations, until the collapse of the Hussein regime, and then relied on indigenous forces to reestablish order and begin the task of ensuring security. When an Iraqi government was established, those surrogate forces became Iraqi national forces requiring assistance with counterinsurgency (FID).

³⁵Ibid., 18-22.

by UW doctrine, or any other doctrine. As such, Smith recognizes that the use of surrogates in current and future campaigns cannot be limited to SOF.³⁶

These operations do not fit comfortably into the strategic application of surrogates previously discussed. The bottom line is that “the narrow scope of UW doctrine makes it difficult to extrapolate its conceptual contributions to other operations involving indigenous or surrogate forces, like foreign internal defense.”³⁷ The common thread in all of these operations is the use of surrogate forces, as well as a narrow reliance on SOF. Overall, U.S. doctrine and concepts continue to focus on tactics and their application to SOF.³⁸ Smith believes that a new concept--*surrogate warfare*--is a better construct than IW, UW, and FID because “the concept of surrogate warfare is not contingent upon the quantitative or qualitative value of the foreign force but rather on the relationship between the sponsor and the surrogate.”³⁹ According to Smith, surrogate warfare is defined as:

the conduct of operations by, with, or through an entity outside of the U.S. military that performs specific functions that assist in the accomplishment of U.S. military objectives by taking the place of capabilities that the U.S. military either does not have or does not desire to employ. The key to surrogate warfare is that it is defined by the inclusion of a force on behalf of the United States and not on the tactics or type of organization of one of the belligerents.⁴⁰

The value of Smith’s work is that it questions current policy and doctrine, thereby opening a cognitive door for exploring fresh approaches for the use of surrogates.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Ibid., 14.

³⁸Ibid., 28.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Ibid., 26.

Two Cases: Southern Africa's Bush Wars

While the U.S. has vast historical experience using surrogate forces, there are important lessons that can be learned from other conflicts. Two conflicts of particular interest occurred in Southern Africa. From 1966 to 1989, South Africa engaged in the so-called Bush War. The South Africans fought against multiple insurgent groups in its protectorate of Southwest Africa (present day Namibia) and neighboring Angola. From 1965 to 1980, Rhodesia (present day Zimbabwe) conducted a counterinsurgency, also referred to as a "bush war," against two separate insurgent groups operating from sanctuaries in neighboring countries. Both South Africa and Rhodesia chose to use surrogate forces as a means to achieve their objectives. This monograph examines the military lessons learned from the use of surrogate forces by both nations. The significance of these case studies is that they illustrate the kind of diverse applications of surrogates that the concept of surrogate warfare seeks to explore. Such insight is critical for U.S. policy makers and military commanders seeking alternative uses of force that expand available options.⁴¹

The research method used for this monograph consists of examining two surrogate forces--South Africa's 32 Battalion and Rhodesia's Selous Scouts.⁴² While both

⁴¹Hy S. Rothstein, *Afghanistan and the Troubled Future of Unconventional Warfare* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2006), 155.

⁴²Due to the socio-political policies of the South African and Rhodesian regimes, a limited body of literature exists concerning their internal and external conflicts. In the South African case, Willem Steenkamp's *South Africa's Border War 1966-1989* provides a comprehensive examination of South Africa's strategic challenges and why successive governments chose to intervene in Angola. Another work, *Days of the Generals* by Hilton Hamann provides insight into top level government and military decision making. In the case of Rhodesia, *Counter-Insurgency in Rhodesia* by J. K. Cilliers is the seminal examination of Rhodesia's civil war. Cilliers' work provides excellent insight into why Rhodesia's lack of a competent strategy resulted in failure. A more limited body of work concerning 32 Battalion and the Selous Scouts is available. Primary sources such as *32 Battalion* by Piet Nortje and *Forged in Battle* by Jan

nations used other forces which could be considered surrogates, 32 Battalion and the Selous Scouts provided unique capabilities not inherent in other forces. The cases will not be compared and or contrasted, but will be examined in accordance with specific criteria listed below. A complete historical examination of each unit will not be undertaken. Instead, key phases of each war will be examined to determine each unit's contribution to both operational objectives and strategic aims. In the case of South Africa, three phases of the war in Angola will be examined: (1) Operation Savannah--South Africa's 1975 invasion of Southern Angola; (2) Operation Askari--external counterguerilla operations; and (3) Cuito Cuanavale--conventional operations and South Africa's withdrawal from Namibia. For Rhodesia's counterinsurgency, two major phases also capture the use of surrogate forces: (1) internal pseudo operations⁴³ aimed at destroying insurgent capacity and command and control; and (2) external operations aimed at insurgent sanctuaries.

This monograph has various limitations. First, it is not a comprehensive examination of Southern Africa's wars or the various uses of surrogate forces. Secondly, it does not seek to limit its examination of the use of surrogate forces to the traditional context of UW and special operations. In other words, this examination will not be done within the confines of U.S. UW doctrine or understanding. Lastly, this monograph does not seek to prove the theory of surrogate warfare or evaluate U.S. doctrine and policy.

Breytenbach serve as excellent unit histories. Both of these works are firsthand accounts by former members of the unit, and as such, are focused on tactical operations and the tremendous achievements of the unit. *Selous Scouts: Top Secret War* by Ron Ried-Daly is also a firsthand account by the founder of the unit. This body of literature is invaluable for illustrating South Africa and Rhodesia's unique approach to the use of surrogate forces.

⁴³Lawrence E. Cline, "Pseudo Operations and Counterinsurgency: Lessons from Other Countries (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2005), 1. <http://www.carlisle.army.mil/ssi> (accessed July 8, 2008). Cline defines pseudo operations as: "the use of organized teams which are disguised as guerilla groups for long- or short-term penetration of insurgent-controlled areas."

This monograph will examine the relationship between surrogate forces and operational objectives and strategic aims, as well as unique approaches to the tactical employment of surrogate forces. To achieve its purpose, the monograph will examine each case study in accordance with the following criteria. First, each nation's strategic aims and operational objectives will be identified. Secondly, the reason as to why each unit was established and its specified mission will be identified. The monograph will then examine the unique capabilities that each unit contributed to achievement of those objectives, and whether or not those capabilities filled any force structure or operational gaps. The monograph will conclude by analyzing the overall effectiveness of each unit, how the unit may have been better utilized, and will extract applicable lessons for current and future military campaigns.

32 BATTALION – SOUTH AFRICA’S SURROGATE FORCE

The 32 “Buffalo” Battalion was the South African Defense Force’s (SADF) premier surrogate force during South Africa’s Bush War in Southwest Africa (Namibia) and Angola from 1976 to 1989.⁴⁴ This section will examine the battalion’s contribution to the accomplishment of South Africa’s strategic aims and operational objectives.⁴⁵ A brief historical examination of South Africa, Southwest Africa, and Angola will provide the strategic context of the conflict. Three key phases of the war are examined below: (1) Operation Savannah (October 1975 to March 1976); (2) Operation Askari (December 1983) and its aftermath; and (3) the Battle of Cuito Cuanavale (December 1987 to June 1988). Examination of these three phases provide insight into why 32 Battalion was organized and activated, what unique capabilities it provided to senior political and military leaders, and finally, how the battalion contributed to aims and objectives.

⁴⁴The men of the Buffalo Battalion were known as the “Terrible Ones” to their enemies.

⁴⁵*The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of South Africa Report*, Volume 2, October 29, 1998, 2-3. While this monograph discusses 32 Battalion operations in order to discern the unit’s contributions, this treatment in no way serves to answer allegations, whether true or false, of violations of the laws of land warfare. South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission concluded that many of the conflicts in which the SADF was involved “transgressed the ‘laws of war’ as laid down in international protocols.” In one example, the commission stated that “While few statements were been [sic] received from deponents [sic] and victims outside South Africa, it has been argued that the majority of victims of gross violations of human rights were in fact residing outside the country’s borders at the time the violations were committed. One of the biggest single incidents of gross violation which occurred during the mandate period was the assault by the SADF on a base of the South West African People’s Organisation (SWAPO) located at Kassinga [also Cassinga], Angola in 1978. More than 600 people were killed at Kassinga in one day. According to SWAPO, these were unarmed refugees. According to the South African government, Kassinga was a guerilla base and thus a legitimate military target.” As is the case with conflicts like the Bush War, both sides used significant propaganda strategies to convey the “truth.” At the conclusion of operations in Angola, 32 Battalion moved to South Africa, where it conducted pacification duties in black townships. In one incident, known as Phola Park, the battalion was accused of using excessive force, an accusation that members of the battalion deny. Although the battalion was cleared of wrongdoing, the Goldstone Commission, found that “several individuals were guilty of misconduct. . . . Given the timing and adverse publicity that accompanied the Goldstone hearings, it is entirely likely that the announcement in July 1992 that 32 Battalion was to be disbanded was hastened by the Phola Park affair.” Many members of the battalion feel that the RSA government, which was negotiating with Nelson Mandela and the African National Congress at the time, sold the battalion out, instead of defending its honor (See Piet Nortje, *32 Battalion*, 267-80).

Operation Savannah was South Africa's first major incursion into Angola, and was significant due to the SADF's use of Angolan surrogates, many of whom formed 32 Battalion later on. The operation's success validated the use of surrogates, a concept which became an important component of South Africa's strategy. Operation Askari, while not decisive, signaled a major shift in the conflict from a counter-guerilla effort to a semi-conventional conflict.⁴⁶ Examination of 32 Battalion actions before, during, and after Askari, reveal how Buffalo Battalion operations were adapted to support revised operational objectives and strategic aims. Finally, the Battle of Cuito Cuanavale marks another change in the conflict from semi-conventional to conventional warfare. Once again, 32 Battalion's operations were adapted to support a changed operational and strategic environment.

Historical Background and Strategic Setting

At the beginning of the Bush War in 1966, the Republic of South Africa faced domestic unrest and international condemnation. Its position as a rogue state was a reflection of the historical dynamics of greed, racism, tribal competition, nationalism, and European religious zealotry. Prior to the first European incursions into Southern Africa, numerous African tribes inhabited the region.⁴⁷ Their way of life was radically changed as a result of the establishment of the Cape Colony, a port of significance to global commerce at the

⁴⁶In this case the term "semi-conventional" is used to refer to a conflict somewhere between insurgency, counterinsurgency and a conventional conflict waged between traditional armies. This type of conflict can also be referred to as "hybrid warfare." However, this term will not be employed, as debate concerning the concept and definition of hybrid warfare is far from being adequately resolved.

⁴⁷Leonard Thompson, *A History of South Africa* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990), 3.

turn of the Eighteenth Century.⁴⁸ With this port came the colonization of the area by European settlers, first the Dutch Boers, or Afrikaners, and then the British. For the Afrikaners Southern Africa was God's country--a place to be conquered by the White Man for the glory of God, which meant pushing the African tribes out of the way.⁴⁹ For the British settlers, it became an area for resource exploitation, as the world's greatest diamond and gold veins were discovered in the mid-1800s.⁵⁰

Competition between these two factions led to the Boer War (1899 to 1902), that pitted Britain and the two British colonies, Cape Colony and Natal, against the two Afrikaner colonies of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State.⁵¹ Once the main Afrikaner forces were defeated the war turned into a savage insurgency, ending with a British victory that eventually resulted in the establishment of the Union of South Africa.⁵² Following World War II, white South Africans expanded and codified a system of racial segregation which became known as *apartheid*, and South Africa proclaimed itself a republic in 1961.⁵³ In the early 1950s, a reinvigorated African resistance movement led

⁴⁸Thompson, 38.

⁴⁹Martin Meredith, *Diamonds, Gold, and War: The Making of South Africa* (Johannesburg, South Africa: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2007), 171.

⁵⁰Thompson, 110-111.

⁵¹*Ibid.*, 141-43.

⁵²*Ibid.*, 143 and 152-153. The British Parliament passed the South Africa Act in 1909, making the Union of South Africa a British dominion.

⁵³*Ibid.*, 185-86. "In 1946, the National Party appointed a committee . . . to prepare a policy statement on the racial problem. . . . It recommended the rigorous segregation of the Coloured People, the consolidation of African reserves, the removal of missionary control of African education, and the abolition of the Natives Representative Council and the representation of Africans in Parliament. On several crucial matters, however, the report was an inconsistent, contradictory hybrid of two competing ideas. It set out complete economic segregation of Africans in their reserves as an ultimate goal but qualified it by stressing the need to satisfy white farming and manufacturing interests. Everything possible should be done to deter the exodus of Africans from the farm. Labor bureaus should be created to harness African labor to meet the demands of both rural and urban employers. And the migrant system should be extended, not reduced.

by Nelson Mandela, the African National Congress (ANC), began to challenge apartheid.⁵⁴ Although the ANC used peaceful means at first, by 1960 the organization employed terror, and eventually organized an insurgency, as a means of accomplishing the goal of a “one man, one vote” state, free of laws separating the races and denying the black population social and economic rights.⁵⁵

At the beginning of the Bush War, Southwest Africa (SWA), present day Namibia,⁵⁶ was considered the “fifth province” of South Africa.⁵⁷ In the late 1800s, southwestern Africa became the victim of imperial competition between Britain and Germany, primarily for control of Walvis Bay, an important deep water port on Africa’s western coast.⁵⁸ At the end of World War I, South Africa was provided a mandate to rule SWA by the League of Nations.⁵⁹ However, at the end of World War II, the nascent United Nations called for SWA to obtain self-rule and become an independent state, a move that South Africa refused to recognize. In 1957 an African resistance movement,

Urban African workers should not be accompanied by their families. The label given to this policy was *Apartheid*, a coined word that Afrikaner intellectuals had begun to use in the 1930s. It means, simply, Apartness.”

⁵⁴Ibid., 207.

⁵⁵Ibid., 211.

⁵⁶Willem Steenkamp, *South Africa’s Border War 1966-1989* (Gibraltar: Ashanti Publishing Ltd., 1989), 22. The name Namibia, a “historically baseless but attractive appellation” was given to SWA by the UN General Assembly as a means of pressuring South Africa to grant SWA independence.

⁵⁷Hilton Hamann, *Days of the Generals: The Untold Story of South Africa’s Apartheid-Era Military Generals* (Cape Town, South Africa: Zebra Press, 2001), 63.

⁵⁸Steenkamp, 10.

⁵⁹Hamann, 63. “South African military involvement in Namibia began during World War I--on Christmas Day 1914, when Colonel Skinner of the Union Defence Force [South Africa] landed at Walvis Bay. It was the start of a campaign . . . that was to see the ill-equipped and unprepared German troops stationed in the colony quickly overrun. In 1919 the League of Nations mandated that South West Africa should fall under the control of South Africa. Once the South Africans had the country under their control they were determined not to let it go--no matter what international pressure they had to sustain or how many cases were brought before the World Court of Justice. White Afrikaner colonists were encouraged to move to the country, where they occupied huge farms on largely barren scrubland.”

the Southwest African People's Organization (SWAPO), was established to gain Namibian independence from South Africa.⁶⁰ Its military wing, known as the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN), initiated an insurgency inside SWA in 1962.⁶¹ Not able to match the power of the South African government and security forces, SWAPO transitioned its base of operations into the ungoverned space that permeated Southern Angola in the 1960s.⁶² By 1974, the situation in SWA was critical for the South African government. SWAPO's insurgency reached a level whereby neither the Southwest African police nor the Southwest African Territorial Force (SWATF) could handle the situation, and the SADF was directed to assume control of counterinsurgency efforts.⁶³

Since the Sixteenth Century, Angola had been a Portuguese colony. But by 1975, Portugal, facing domestic problems at home, precipitated by a military coup, and a growing insurgency inside Angola, agreed to grant its colony independence. The Alvor Agreement, signed by the Angolan insurgents and the Portuguese government, set November 11, 1975 as the transition date to indigenous rule.⁶⁴ The insurgency consisted of three different opposition groups that fought not only against Portuguese colonialism, but also against each other.⁶⁵ Their differences were ethnic and cultural, as well as

⁶⁰Steenkamp, 18.

⁶¹Ibid., 20.

⁶²Ibid., 22.

⁶³Ibid., 26.

⁶⁴Piet Nortje, *32 Battalion: The Inside Story of South Africa's Elite Fighting Unit* (Cape Town, South Africa: Zebra Press, 2003), 1.

⁶⁵Steenkamp, 32. Under the terms of the Alvor Agreement, Angolan independence was to take place after elections were held. Unfortunately, these elections never came to fruition, as the MPLA, Angola's strongest insurgent group, assumed control of the capital, Luanda.

ideological.⁶⁶ In the central part of the country, the Marxist based Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), and its military wing FAPLA, occupied the capital of Luanda. The MPLA was supported by the Soviet Union and numerous Warsaw Pact countries.⁶⁷ Eventually, they received substantial aid from Castro's Cuba. The northern part of the country was controlled by the National Liberation Front of Angola (FNLA), and it received its support from the People's Republic of China, the U.S., and Zaire.⁶⁸ Finally, the southern part of the country was controlled by the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA). This organization was supported by South Africa, the U.S., and various African countries.⁶⁹ In order for South Africa to maintain control of SWA, it was necessary to ensure that the MPLA did not control all of Angola. Otherwise, PLAN would possess a sanctuary from which to continue its insurgency. Hence, it became imperative for South Africa to ensure that UNITA was a viable force that could continue to threaten the MPLA's grip on power in the southeastern portion of the country.⁷⁰

⁶⁶W. Martin James III, *A Political History of the Civil War in Angola* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 1992), 28-29 and 92. The three insurgent groups were aligned with ethnic groupings. "MPLA was a Luanda-Mbundu movement, while FNLA represented the Bakongo. The Ovimbundu had no political representative in the anti-colonial war until the birth of UNITA." Additionally, several MPLA leaders and significant numbers of the rank and file consisted of mesticos ("persons of mixed Angolan-Portuguese parentage") and assimilados (Africans who abandoned their language and social customs to "climb the socioeconomic ladder of colonialism").

⁶⁷Ibid., 145.

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Ibid., 180. UNITA had thirty plus sponsors, but only South Africa, SWA, and Zaire provided moral, political, material support, and sanctuary.

⁷⁰Ibid., 152. "South African strategy in Angola entailed more than hot pursuit against SWAPO guerillas. South Africa was trying to establish a neutral buffer zone along the Namibia/Angola border. . . . A border area controlled by UNITA would ease SWAPO pressure in Namibia. For a low cost (continued supplies to UNITA) South Africa could realize the benefit (continued disruption of SWAPO) of a stalemate on the independence of Namibia."

Table 1. Belligerent Reference Chart

Political Organization	Military Wing	External Support
MPLA or MPLA-PT (Angola)	FAPLA: Controlled Luanda and central Angola	Soviet Union, Cuba
FNLA (Angola)	Base of support in various parts of Angola until disbanded in 1976	People's Republic of China, U.S., Zaire, South Africa
UNITA (Angola)	Operated in eastern and southeastern Angola	U.S., South Africa, Zaire
SWAPO (SWA/Namibia)	PLAN: Operated in southern Angola and SWA	MPLA (Angola), Soviet Union, Cuba

Source: W. Martin James III, *A Political History of the Civil War in Angola 1974-1990* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1992). This paper will not consistently use a single acronym to identify each belligerent. The use of multiple sources precludes use of a single term. Hence, this chart provides a quick reference for linking political movements with their military components.

From an international perspective this conflict had much larger implications. There was definitely a strong ideological component, as the two superpowers used proxies to wage a hot “Cold War” in Southern Africa. The USSR was using the MPLA and Cubans, and the U.S. was using UNITA and South Africa.⁷¹ By 1975, South Africa was facing the threat of terrorism and insurgency at home, as well as in SWA. This was further complicated by events in Angola. The South African government viewed the MPLA’s control of the country as not only a threat to SWA, but also as a threat to South Africa itself. In the eyes of many government officials, the ANC and SWAPO were part

⁷¹Vladimir Shubin, *The Hot “Cold War”: The USSR in Southern Africa* (South Africa: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2008), 2-3. In this book, Shubin provides the Soviet view of the Angolan conflict. “Of course the state of USSR-USA relations did play a role in Moscow’s decision-making on Southern Africa. . . . However, the Soviets did not assist liberation movements and African Frontline States only because of the ‘Cold War’. To put it in the language of the day: such actions were regarded as part of the world ‘anti-imperialist struggle’, which was waged by the ‘socialist community’, ‘the national liberation movements’, and the ‘working class of the capitalist countries’. So the Moscow-Washington confrontation was definitely not the only reason for the USSR’s involvement in Southern Africa.” The U.S. also had economic reasons for getting involved in Angola, as the U.S. Gulf Oil Company had significant investment in Angola.

of the internationalist communist conspiracy, and not nationalist groups fighting to end colonial domination.⁷² From a strategic perspective, Angola was decisive to maintaining apartheid.

The Beginning: Operation Savannah

Operation Savannah's primary operational objective was to prevent the MPLA from defeating the FNLA and UNITA, and assuming control of Angola.⁷³ Secondary objectives included protecting the Ruacana-Calque hydro-electric dam and destroying PLAN infrastructure and sanctuary in southern Angola.⁷⁴ Eventually, when South Africa

⁷²Republic of South Africa, Ministry of Defence. *White Paper on Defence 1977* (Pretoria, South Africa, 1977), 6-10. The White Paper outlined South Africa's national security situation very succinctly. "The relative proximity of Soviet influence and military aid has had its effect on terrorist activities against the northern areas of South West Africa and on the internal situation of our country." According to the South African government the goals of South Africa's enemies were: (1) "the expansion of Marxism;" (2) "the overthrow of the white regimes in Southern Africa;" and (3) "The striving after an indirect strategy in order to unleash revolutionary warfare in Southern Africa and, by means of isolation, to force the RSA to change its domestic policy in favour of Pan-Africanism." Hence one of South Africa's internal national policies was "to counter with all of our might marxism or any other form of revolutionary action by any group or movement." From an external perspective South Africa wanted to send a very clear strategic communication message "to emphasize the strategic importance of the RSA, the danger of marxist infiltration and the extent of the threat to revolutionary take-over in Southern Africa in order to prevent, through Western diplomatic action, the build-up of marxist influence and military power in neighboring states."

⁷³Steenkamp, 36. "The MPLA soon began to prevail in the struggle. With the aid of increasing numbers of Cuban instructors and advisors . . . its military wing, FAPLA, was being turned into an ever stronger conventional-warfare force which was bound to prevail in any toe-to-toe confrontation with the FNLA and UNITA, which were still basically guerilla movements equipped with a crazy assortment of light weapons and no heavy firepower at all. . . . In July the MPLA won the first round by throwing both the FNLA and the small UNITA presence out of Luanda and establishing itself in almost every sizeable population centre between the capital and the South West African Border." While UNITA could claim a sizeable base of popular support in the east and south, the organization pursued a Maoist strategy that emphasized self-sufficiency. According to W. Martin James, "Early UNITA political ideology focused upon political indoctrination of the masses rather than the development of a strong military force. The civil war forced UNITA to alter strategy and build an effective military capability" (James, 100).

⁷⁴Steenkamp, 39. "The South Africans were much concerned about the Ruacana scheme, an ambitious hydro-electric joint project which they had been building in co-operation with Portugal for some years. An enormous generating plant had been erected on the South West African side of Ruacana, and at Calque, about 25km [kilometers] inside Angola, a barrage [dam] and pumping station. The Calque barrage not only regulated the flow to the Ruacana turbines but also pumped large quantities of water directly to Ovamboland [the geographic entity of north-central SWA bordering Angola] through a 300km-long

did withdraw from Angola, the aim was to ensure that SWAPO could not establish bases in Southern Angola from which to launch attacks into SWA.⁷⁵ Several issues shaped how Operation Savannah was implemented. First, it was imperative that for international and domestic reasons, Savannah be both covert and clandestine,⁷⁶ as South Africa did not want to appear to be invading a neighboring country. Secondly, domestic considerations limited the government's options. By law "SADF members could not deploy across the country's borders, except if they volunteered to do so."⁷⁷ Even without the constraints of this law, the SADF was largely a conscript force led by a very small professional cadre and permanent force. Conscription was for a period of twelve months, most of which was taken up by training requirements. In reality, conscripts only served in an operational capacity for three months--a short window for conducting operations.⁷⁸

network of canals, so that it was an integral part of the South African hearts-and-minds effort in the homeland."

⁷⁵*White Paper on Defence 1977*, 6. According to the South Africans the primary purpose of Operation Savannah was to protect the Calueque-Ruacana facility. Further military action was taken to "deflect the effects of the Angolan civil war from the northern border of South-West Africa and to inhibit SWAPO efforts to capitalize on the unstable situation in the southern region of Angola." South African General Constand Viljoen, states that Calueque-Ruacana was simply "a handy explanation to use to the rest of the world" (See Hamann, 22-3).

⁷⁶It was important that Operation Savannah not be headline news. At the same time the government of South Africa did not want it to be known that South Africa was behind the operation. Concealment of the operation, as well as the sponsor, was a constant requirement throughout the Bush War. For a discussion of covert and clandestine operations, see Appendix 1.

⁷⁷Steenkamp, 27.

⁷⁸*White Paper on Defence 1977*, 14-18. The white paper notes that manpower was "the single most important factor" in South Africa's defense. According to the report "The following external factors, which have a direct effect on the determination, as well as on the attainment of the necessary manpower levels, must be evaluated against the demands made on a system of providing manpower: (a) By compelling white male citizens only to do military service; (b) An absolute limit to the number of young white men who annually enter the labour market (including Defence); (c) The restriction of the number that may be drawn from the labour market to be channeled into full-time or part-time service to Defence, without causing irreparable damage to the national economy." Basically, apartheid placed fiscal and organizational constraints on the SADF's force structure and capabilities.

Ultimately, a solution was required to overcome these constraints. That solution turned out to be the use of surrogates. The tactical level mission of the Operation Savannah forces was to “capture as many towns in the Southwest [of Angola] as possible by November 11, 1975.”⁷⁹ The purpose was to provide the FNLA and UNITA “a favourable negotiating position against the MPLA”⁸⁰ following elections, or in the absence of elections. In collusion with the FNLA and UNITA, the SADF formed two task forces, composed primarily of indigenous fighters and trained and led by SADF officers and non-commissioned officers. Task Force FOXBAT was composed of UNITA soldiers. Task force ZULU was composed of two battalion sized groups known as ALPHA and BRAVO. ALPHA was composed of Angolan Bushmen. BRAVO was composed of three companies of former MPLA guerillas owing allegiance to Daniel Chipenda, a former MPLA military commander who defected to the FNLA. In August of 1975, SADF Colonel Jan Breytenbach was sent to Southern Angola to train and equip this force so that it could participate in Operation Savannah. The planned phases of the operation are described below.

⁷⁹Steenkamp, 46.

⁸⁰Hamann, 15. “According to a memorandum in the military archives, the situation lent itself to a limited offensive, and a clandestine lightning strike against the MPLA could force it onto the defensive--so much so that it would welcome a political solution with it opponents, and might even be completely destroyed.”

On 24 September the South African government had approved a four-phase plan of support for the FNLA and UNITA. Phase 1 had entailed the provision of assistance to maintain control of areas already held by the opposition forces. Now it was time to launch Phase 2, aimed at gaining control of the south-eastern [south-western] corner of Angola . . . Phase 3 would be the taking of Benguela, Lobito and Novo Redondo, while the final phase would be a push against FAPLA.⁸¹

On October 14, 1975, ALPHA and BRAVO crossed the border and attacked to clear MPLA forces from Serpa Pinto, Cuvelai, and Pereira D'Eca.⁸² Successful in these attacks, BRAVO resumed the attack on October 19. The objective was the port of Moçâmedes, which was secured on October 27.⁸³ BRAVO continued with phase 3 of the plan, achieving much success and penetrating as far as Novo Redondo.⁸⁴ The unit was withdrawn from Angola at the end of 1975, by which time the MPLA was firmly in control of the central and northern parts of the country, and was internationally recognized as Angola's legitimate government.⁸⁵

⁸¹Nortje, 17.

⁸²Ibid., 18-21.

⁸³Ibid., 25.

⁸⁴Ibid., 35.

⁸⁵Hamann, 42-43.

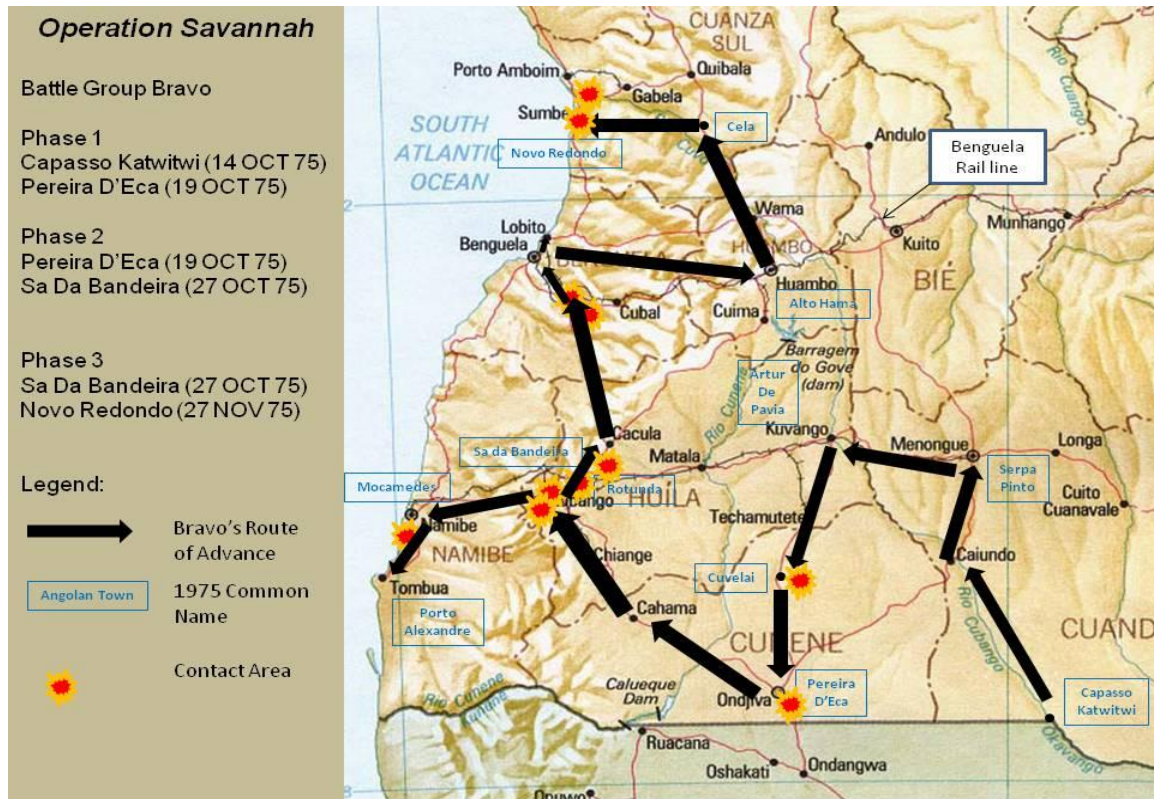


Figure 1. Battle Group Bravo's Attack into Angola (Operation Savannah)
 Source: University of Texas at Austin Library, Map of Angola, http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/africa/angola_rel90.jpg (accessed March 8, 2009). This graphic was produced by the author. The graphics for the map are derived from Piet Nortje, *32 Battalion: The Inside Story of South Africa's Elite Fighting Unit* (Cape Town, South Africa: Zebra Press, 2003) 16, 21, 25, and 35; additional information derived from 13-37.

From a tactical standpoint, the South Africans and their surrogate forces defeated the MPLA, as well as some Cuban forces, in several battles. This did equate to accomplishment of some operational objectives. The MPLA was pushed backed, thereby providing UNITA with time and space. However, the FNLA was severely degraded when it attempted to seize Luanda from the MPLA.⁸⁶ Operation Savannah did little to disrupt SWAPO. "During all this time the insurgency continued apace, even though SWAPO's

⁸⁶Steenkamp, 50. The FNLA attack on Luanda was also supported by the SADF, and it coincided with Operation Savannah.

staging areas just north of the border had been disrupted by the general confusion.”⁸⁷ As the South Africans withdrew from Angola, they decided to take their surrogates with them, as these men could not return home and had no leadership cadre with the subsequent demise of the FNLA. There were numerous advantages for their continued employment by the SADF: (1) their ethnic and language capability, as well as their relationships with the local population and knowledge of the terrain allowed them to do things that white South Africans could not do; and (2) They were a guerilla force that could be used in a covert and, or, clandestine manner by the South African government. “Since the FNLA was already the dominant force in Southern Angola and enjoyed the support of the local population, it made sense to Breytenbach . . . that they should serve as a buffer between the communist-backed FAPLA and the SADF deployed in the South West African Operational Area.”⁸⁸ This group became known as 32 Battalion, and was a constituted unit of the SADF.⁸⁹

Operation Askari: The Changed Operational Environment

From the conclusion of Operation Savannah to the beginning of Operation Askari at the end of 1983, 32 Battalion was involved in low-visibility counterguerilla operations against PLAN in SWA and across the border in Angola.⁹⁰ These operations were aimed

⁸⁷Ibid., 53.

⁸⁸Nortje, 39.

⁸⁹Ibid., 42. Thirty-Two Battalion’s base of operations, known as Buffalo Base, throughout its involvement in Angola was in the Caprivi region of SWA. The Caprivi Strip is a dagger-shaped geographic and political entity that juts out from eastern Angola and separates Angola and Botswana. The strip is dominated by the Kuvango River. Buffalo Base allowed 32 Battalion easy access to Southeastern Angola and UNITA.

⁹⁰Gert Nel (Brigadier-General, SADF), Interview (electronic correspondence) by author, January 22, 2009. According to Brigadier-General (The rank of Brigadier-General was introduced when the SADF became the South African National Defence Force. Prior to that time, the rank of Brigadier was used) Nel,

primarily at destroying PLAN infrastructure in order to degrade the organization's ability to conduct significant cross-border operations in SWA. The capability provided by 32 Battalion was a crucial enabler of South Africa's strategy. According to retired SADF Brigadier-General Gert Nel, a former commander of 32 Battalion, the Angolan soldiers allowed the SADF to counter SWAPO infiltrations clandestinely.

It would have been impossible to use RSA blacks for across border operations. They could not speak any of the languages used by the Namibians, the Angolans, or the Zambians. The South African blacks did not look like the people of the mentioned countries. They were not cognizant of the cultures and the way things were done in these countries. The Angolans [of 32 Battalion] were neighbors of both Namibia and Zambia and thus some did speak the languages and knew enough of their neighbors' cultures not to be immediately recognized as foreigners. Therefore, the black South Africans would not have lasted a day in the operational area before being spotted. The troops who became members of 32 Battalion were all from Angola and many could also speak Kwanyama (the biggest tribe in Namibia) as the Kwanyama tribe stretched over the border for over 200km and could communicate with the Angolans. Being Angolans, they knew the country.⁹¹

From 1981, with the beginning of Operation Protea, an incursion aimed at gaining "military control of central Angola and halt[ing] FAPLA's continued logistical support to SWAPO,"⁹² 32 Battalion was instrumental in conducting combat patrols in various areas to keep PLAN off-balance and disrupt their operations. In the aftermath of Protea, 32 Battalion was used to conduct Operation Handsak (October 12, 1981 to May 30, 1982), which not only targeted PLAN, but FAPLA and Cuban forces providing support and

a former commander of 32 Battalion, the battalion's "initial task was to patrol the area both South and North of the cut line with Angola and to search and destroy SWAPO. They [32 Battalion] were equipped with FAPLA uniforms and weapons and it was hoped that it would cause not only surprise but also confusion among the SWAPOs they may contact. This force could also not be easily traced back to South Africa. The existence of Angolan soldiers as part of the SADF was kept secret for nearly two years. Their deployment was very successful."

⁹¹Gert Nel.

⁹²Nortje, 170.

security to PLAN. During this period, companies from the Buffalo Battalion rotated into Angola, maintaining a permanent presence in the area of operations.⁹³

By 1983, several pressures were changing the dynamics of the Bush War. First, the civil war inside Angola between UNITA and the MPLA continued without a clear end in sight. Unlike in 1976, when it appeared UNITA would not survive, by 1983 the organization was firmly in control of the southeastern portion of the country, had expanded operations into Northern Angola, was able to seriously disrupt the Benguela railway, and even attacked Luanda.⁹⁴ The communist MPLA government, despite Soviet and Cuban assistance, was struggling to cement its hold on power, return the country to some state of normalcy, and rescue a depressed economy.⁹⁵ For South Africa, SWAPO/PLAN posed a growing problem, as the MPLA and Cubans continued to provide sanctuary and support, despite continued SADF incursions.⁹⁶ As noted below, UNITA became more important to South Africa's overall strategy.

⁹³Ibid., 176.

⁹⁴James, 114-19.

⁹⁵Ibid., 200-01. "Despite the necessity of Cuban troops, they were also an economic burden to the Angolans. For example, Angola paid \$600 a month for every Cuban school teacher, allowed the Soviet Union to keep 75 percent of the fish caught in Angolan territorial waters, provided rent and utilities for the Soviets' housing, and repaid its debt for weapons with most of its income from oil and coffee. It was estimated for every one dollar earned, Angola spent sixty cents on the military or on meeting its financial commitments to Moscow."

⁹⁶Gert Nel. "The successes the SADF achieved in the areas just north of the Owambo border, forced SWAPO to move deeper into Angola for safety. As the war in Angola expanded and FAPLA decided to interfere by giving SWAPO more support, so did the tasks given to 32BN [battalion] take them deeper into Angola. . . . Areas dominated by 32 BN were over 200km north of the cut line. Their success rate became such that the unit became more and more notorious. 32BN was also utilized more frequently to assist UNITA."

In Pretoria the advantages of a strong UNITA had long been apparent. If UNITA could be helped to dominate much of South-east Angola it would become almost impossible for SWAPO to operate in Kavango or the Caprivi to any significant degree. A strong and active UNITA also meant FAPLA forces deployed to shield SWAPO would have to be reallocated to counter UNITA activities –and, as proved later to be the case, FAPLA began to demand that SWAPO supply manpower for its campaigns against Savimbi’s forces [Jonas Savimbi was UNITA’s political and military leader], further reducing SWAPO’s ability to operate in South West Africa.⁹⁷

Given these pressures, both South Africa and the MPLA looked for ways to bring the conflict to a conclusion, or at least reduce the level of effort and expenditure of resources.⁹⁸

Operation Askari began on December 6, 1983 when “a 10,000-strong SADF force crossed the border and began attacking targets in Cunene Province.”⁹⁹ Given the strategic situation, the operation supported several strategic aims. First, deal SWAPO a decisive blow by degrading their ability to launch attacks into SWA. Secondly, Askari would serve to put pressure on the MPLA and bring them to the negotiating table. “Ostensibly, Operation Askari was a normal early rains offensive to hit SWAPO in its Angolan bases before its guerillas could begin their seasonal infiltration of northern Namibia.”¹⁰⁰ The

⁹⁷Hamann, 73-4.

⁹⁸James, 205. James notes that in December of 1982 Angolan and South African government representatives met in the Cape Verde Islands for talks aimed at achieving a diplomatic solution. South Africa wanted the MPLA to end its support of SWAPO and send Cuban forces home. The MPLA did consider concluding its relationship with SWAPO, but was not ready to end Cuban assistance due to the threat posed by UNITA. As James states, “Unable to defeat UNITA decisively by force of arms, MPLA-PT sought to negotiate UNITA out of existence.”

⁹⁹Fred Bridgland, *Jonas Savimbi: A Key to Africa* (New York: Paragon House Publishers, 1987), 424.

¹⁰⁰*Ibid.*, 424. Also see R. S. Lord, “Operation Askari, A Sub-Commander’s Retrospective View of the Operation,” *Militaria (Military History Journal of the SADF)*, 22, no. 4 (1992), 1-2. By 1983 the war in SWA/Angola had developed a predictable cyclical pattern. The seasonal variations allowed SWAPO to take up the offensive during the summer passage of the Inter-tropical Convergence zone (ITZC) across Northern South West Africa. . . . The passage of this belt gives rise to the phenomenon of the “small rains”

Operation Askari plan was divided into four phases, with phases two, three, and four, representing operational objectives. Phase 1: Reconnaissance of the SWAPO special forces bases;¹⁰¹ Phase 2: Isolation of Cahama, Mulondo, and Cuvelai--“The aim being, to cut enemy communication and logistic lines in the deep area and to terrorize and demoralize FAPLA to such an extent that they would withdraw;” Phase 3: “To establish a dominated area from west of the Cunene River, through Quiteve, Mupa, Vinticet, eastwards through Londe, by the beginning of Feb[ruary] 1984;” and Phase 4: “The final stopping of the incursion, internally if possible.”¹⁰² For Askari, 32 Battalion played an important, but not lead role. As part of the attack force for Cuvelai, the battalion established numerous blocking positions to prevent reinforcement of the FAPLA units in the town. They occupied a town called Tetchametete, where they blocked the escape of a FAPLA force fleeing Cuvelai. Askari marked a shift in the role of 32 Battalion. Not only were they to be a counterguerilla force, but from 1984 onwards the battalion assumed a

before Christmas and the “big rains” from February to April. The rainy season gave mobility to the SWAPO insurgents. It supplied the water they required for their trek to the south. The foliage on the trees and bushes provided concealment from the security forces. The very heavy rains washed out the tracks they had left, making follow-up difficult and they criss-crossed the full shonas to increase the difficulties of the trackers. Therefore, the SWAPO insurgency usually commenced in late January of every New Year and continued until the end of April, or early May, when the water started to dry up. The onset of the dry season brought a change in the tactical situation, SWAPO withdrew its forces to bases in Angola for the so-called ‘rehearsals’--the regrouping and re[t]raining of their members, prior to the next year’s incursion. With SWAPO concentrated in bases, it became cost-effective for the SADF/SWATF to launch offensive operations into Angolan territory during the dry winter months. . . . For many years, up to the spring of 1983, this had been the pattern of the conduct of the war, a summer incursion by SWAPO/PLAN and a semi-conventional/conventional offensive by Security Forces into Angola during the winter.”

¹⁰¹Lord, 12. This refers to the so-called “Typhoon/Volcano” bases. Typhoon--“The name given by SWAPO to their elite group of most highly trained troops, whose specific task was the infiltration of SWA.” Volcano--“The name given by SWAPO to the training base approximately 14 kilometers northeast of Lubango, where specialized training was conducted for their Typhoon troops.”

¹⁰²Ibid., 2.

light infantry role as the conflict became more conventional. However, their real contribution to Askari followed the conclusion of major combat operations.

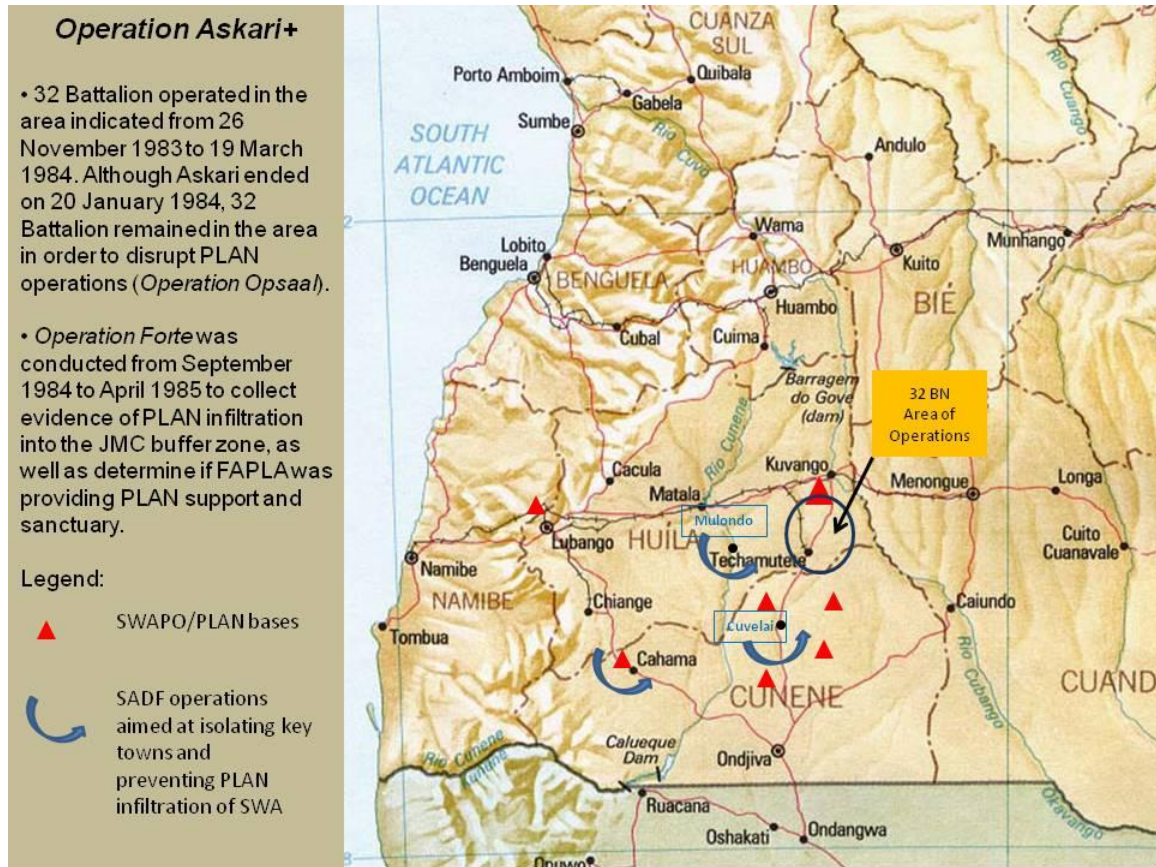


Figure 2. Operation Askari+

Source: University of Texas at Austin Library, Angola Map, http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/africa/angola_rel90.jpg (accessed March 8, 2009). Graphic was produced by the author. The graphics for the map are derived from Piet Nortje, *32 Battalion: The Inside Story of South Africa's Elite Fighting Unit* (Cape Town, South Africa: Zebra Press, 2003), 193-203.

Although 32 Battalion's mission was a success, other SADF units failed to meet their objectives, due in large part to the presence and competence of FAPLA and Cuban forces. FAPLA's possession of advanced equipment such as Soviet surface-to-air

missiles, a significant threat to the South African Air Force, helped as well, and signaled a significant shift in the nature of the war.¹⁰³ The SADF also failed to significantly disrupt PLAN.¹⁰⁴ These failures resulted in the Lusaka Accord; a U.S. brokered cease-fire agreement between Angola and South Africa.¹⁰⁵ Under the agreement, South African troops would withdraw from Angola provided that the MPLA remove PLAN and Cuban forces from the designated buffer zone.¹⁰⁶ According to Brigadier R. S. Lord, a South African participant, Askari was a “watershed” event in the war, as it created two effects: (1) “Initiatives were taken to bring the South Africans and the Angolans to the negotiating table.” The end result was a temporary cease fire and establishment of a buffer zone to be monitored by a Joint Monitoring Commission (JMC); and (2) “The second significant occurrence was the subtle change in the whole structure of the war. FAPLA gradually replaced SWAPO as our main enemy.”¹⁰⁷

The JMC called for joint MPLA-SADF patrols to monitor the withdrawal of MPLA and SADF forces, and ensure PLAN forces were not operating in the buffer zone. Once the JMC was established, 32 Battalion was the SADF’s unit of choice for the

¹⁰³James, 206.

¹⁰⁴Bridgland, 205. “Operation Askari failed in even some of its modified aims. More than 1,000 of the 1,400-strong SWAPO force it sought to destroy was able to flee northwards to safety; it failed by a long way to achieve one of its operational options of capturing Lubango, site of an important provincial military headquarters; it failed to knock out what one senior South African Air Force officer later described as ‘the real juicy targets,’ the string of advanced missile sites between Moçâmedes and Cuito Cuanavale, because South Africa’s pilots realized that they did not have the technical means to outwit the radar-guidance systems of the missiles which were manned by Soviet technicians.”

¹⁰⁵James, 159. “South Africa agreed to the pact for several reasons. One was to quell international criticism of South African destabilization efforts throughout Southern Africa. Another was to provide a small victory to the U.S. ‘Constructive Engagement’ policy. But, whatever the reason, South African officials made it clear, in private conversations, that they would not trade Savimbi [Jonas Savimbi, political and military leader of UNITA] as part of an overall settlement.”

¹⁰⁶Bridgland, 425.

¹⁰⁷Lord, 10.

mission. According to Piet Nortje, “Because of their fluency in Portuguese and intimate knowledge of the terrain, 32 Battalion’s members would play a leading role in the JMC patrols from February to June.”¹⁰⁸ In the first weeks of the JMC, joint 32 Battalion and FAPLA patrols swept the buffer zone, in many cases engaging in combat with elements of PLAN. However, this system eventually broke down as FAPLA became unable or unwilling to control SWAPO/PLAN.¹⁰⁹ This allowed the SADF representative to the JMC, General Geldenhuys, to confront the MPLA representative directly. The below notes, from a March 28, 1984 JMC meeting, indicate the SADF’s situational awareness.

Firstly, there was an alarming presence of SWAPO in the area, particularly in the regions of Cahama, near Evale and in the central region just north of the border. Secondly, it was clear that the Angolan Government had not used all the means at its disposal to ensure the withdrawal of SWAPO elements from the area in question. It was also clear from information obtained from SWAPO prisoners that they were in radio communication with their regional headquarters.¹¹⁰

This led to 32 Battalion’s next mission--Operation Forte. The purpose of Forte was to provide evidence that PLAN was using areas outside of JMC controlled territory to re-infiltrate into FAPLA controlled areas.¹¹¹ Forte, for all intents and purposes, further expanded the capabilities of the battalion and provided the SADF with a capability it would otherwise not possess. For political reasons, 32 Battalion “masqueraded as UNITA.”¹¹² During the operation elements of the battalion were sent to UNITA

¹⁰⁸Nortje, 200.

¹⁰⁹Ibid., 201.

¹¹⁰Meeting of the Joint Monitoring Commission (JMC): MUPA [Angola]: 28 March 1984, 3. http://www.disa.ukzn.ac.za/index.php?option=com_displaydc&recordID=min19840328.035.017.d1.18 (accessed February 13, 2009).

¹¹¹Nortje, 201.

¹¹²Ibid.

controlled territory, given UNITA uniforms and equipment, and operated as UNITA forces. These operations provided the evidence needed to show that PLAN was still operating in the buffer zone.¹¹³ To facilitate this objective, 32 Battalion provided a permanent liaison team to UNITA.¹¹⁴ As a result, the Lusaka Accord fell apart.

Cuito Cuanavale and the End of the Bush War

By 1987, the thirteen year Angolan Civil War was coming to a head. From the standpoint of the MPLA, the time had come to hand UNITA a major defeat in order to prevent further economic decline and growth of the UNITA insurgency.¹¹⁵ From an international standpoint, both the Soviet Union and the Cubans were putting pressure on the Angolan government to destroy UNITA.¹¹⁶ It was also a difficult time for South Africa in the international arena. As Hilton Hamann points out, the Lusaka Accord had curtailed the South African ability to conduct large-scale overt operations.¹¹⁷ Due to the

¹¹³James, 158. James notes that “the cease-fire was flawed from its inception” because neither SWAPO nor UNITA were signatories; therefore, they continued to conduct business as usual. Further complicating matters was the fact that “South Africa never repudiated its support of UNITA and many felt that UNITA was so powerful it could survive, at least temporarily, the loss of South African patronage.” According to the minutes of the Meeting of the Joint Monitoring Commission (JMC): MUPA, March 28, 1984 (page 5), the Angolans were “particularly concerned about the existence of a third force in the area in question. UNITA had established itself in the area controlled by South Africa and had in addition launched actions against FAPLA in the area from which South Africa had withdrawn. It was clear that the UNITA ‘puppets’ and ‘bandits’ were supported by South Africa. Angola had for example found South African parachutes deep inside its territory, which proved that UNITA was being resupplied by South Africans.” What the MPLA did not know was that the resupply may have been for 32 Battalion.

¹¹⁴Nortje, 211.

¹¹⁵James, 214-15. “In 1985, earnings from oil production totaled \$2.2 billion. However, the military budget devoured 60-80 percent of that total. Angola imported food because only 2 percent of the arable land was under cultivation.”

¹¹⁶Steenkamp, 148; Hamann, 86.

¹¹⁷Hamann, 81.

policies of the Reagan Administration, UNITA became the beneficiary of U.S. economic and military aid with the repeal of the Clark Amendment.¹¹⁸

So, the time was ripe for FAPLA to launch a major offensive against UNITA. With a massive influx of new Soviet equipment, to include a formidable air defense system, FAPLA was confident in its ability to achieve two major operational objectives: “(1) end the war through a major offensive to capture Jamba [UNITA’s capital], and (2) to negotiate with South Africa and the United States in an attempt to separate UNITA from its allies.”¹¹⁹ The FAPLA offensive, planned and controlled by Soviet advisors and Cuban commanders, consisted of two phases. The primary objective of phase one, to begin July 10, 1987 was the destruction of UNITA’s logistics base at Mavinga, south of the Lomba River.¹²⁰ “If Mavinga could be taken, FAPLA could sit out the rainy season there and attack Jamba as soon as the 1987 wet weather was over, and if partial or total control over the Benguela line could be obtained Angola would be able to use it not only for earning foreign revenue but also for facilitating the resupply of troops.”¹²¹ The second phase would consist of an attack to capture UNITA’s headquarters at Jamba.

The South African civilian and military leadership now faced a dilemma. The FAPLA force was conventionally trained and equipped by the Soviet Union, and had the capability to annihilate UNITA. Intervention could require a significant number of SADF

¹¹⁸Ibid., 39. The Clark Amendment, passed into law in December of 1976, terminated all American involvement in Angola. In June of 1985 the U.S. Congress repealed the Clark Amendment, thereby allowing the Reagan Administration to provide aid to Angola [UNITA], as well as Nicaragua and Afghanistan (see James, 162-63).

¹¹⁹James, 215.

¹²⁰James, 215; Steenkamp, 148.

¹²¹Steenkamp, 148.

forces. Despite the fear of domestic and international condemnation, the South African government decided to take action to stop FAPLA and the Cubans. The strategic situation was clear.

If P. W. Botha [President of South Africa] and his generals simply sat on their hands and allowed Jamba to fall, the South Africans would face a belligerent force of some 50,000 Cubans sitting on the border of Namibia flushed with confidence from a successful battle. That too was an unthinkable situation and many warned that in such a case, Castro might just be tempted to look for a final solution to the problems in both Namibia and South Africa.¹²²

Given all of these pressures, the South Africans had to devise a plan that would prevent the defeat of UNITA, use the least amount of SADF troops, and not result in significant casualties.¹²³ To meet these parameters, the SADF developed three courses of action: (1) “Clandestine support, including deployment of liaison teams and Special Forces teams to monitor FAPLA’s forces, as well as one multiple rocket launcher troop protected by 32 Battalion and limited air support;” (2) As above, but with the additional deployment of 32 Battalion and 61 Mechanized Battalion to attack FAPLA brigades as they advanced, but sparing the existing infrastructure and maintaining a 30-KM [kilometers] distance from Cuito Cuanavale; (3) In the event of Mavinga falling, carrying out harassment attacks on FAPLA, and using 32 Battalion and 61 Mechanized Battalion to retake the strategically important town.”¹²⁴ In the end, the South Africans used the first two courses of action in what became known as Operation Modular.

¹²²Hamann, 88.

¹²³Ibid., 89.

¹²⁴Nortje, 234.

The 32 Battalion played a significant part in these plans, especially support to UNITA. In fact, since 1985, several operations had been planned and rehearsed, including a UNITA and 32 Battalion attack on the FAPLA base at Cuito Cuanavale.¹²⁵ However, such an attack was deemed too risky and 32 Battalion was directed to protect the multiple rocket launch and artillery units supporting UNITA. Given the covert nature of this operation, 32 Battalion was particularly suited to the task. Because of the reconnaissance that the battalion had conducted in the area over several years, they knew the terrain very well, and they knew UNITA.

On July 10, 1987, FAPLA begin its deployment and attack on Mavinga. Four well-equipped mechanized infantry brigades conducted an attack in order to seize a bridgehead over the Lomba River. During their deployment, they were constantly harassed by the South African rockets and artillery protected by 32 Battalion. Additionally, UNITA and the SADF used “hit and run” tactics to interdict supply lines and keep FAPLA off-balance.¹²⁶ As the FAPLA forces began river crossing operations, they were met by UNITA and South African forces and decisively defeated.¹²⁷ Subsequently, the FAPLA brigades withdrew towards Cuito Cuanavale, in order to protect their main supply base. As they did so, they were met by “marauding bands of UNITA and 32 Battalion members.”¹²⁸

¹²⁵Ibid., 226.

¹²⁶Hamann, 85.

¹²⁷James, 174.

¹²⁸Hamann, 95.

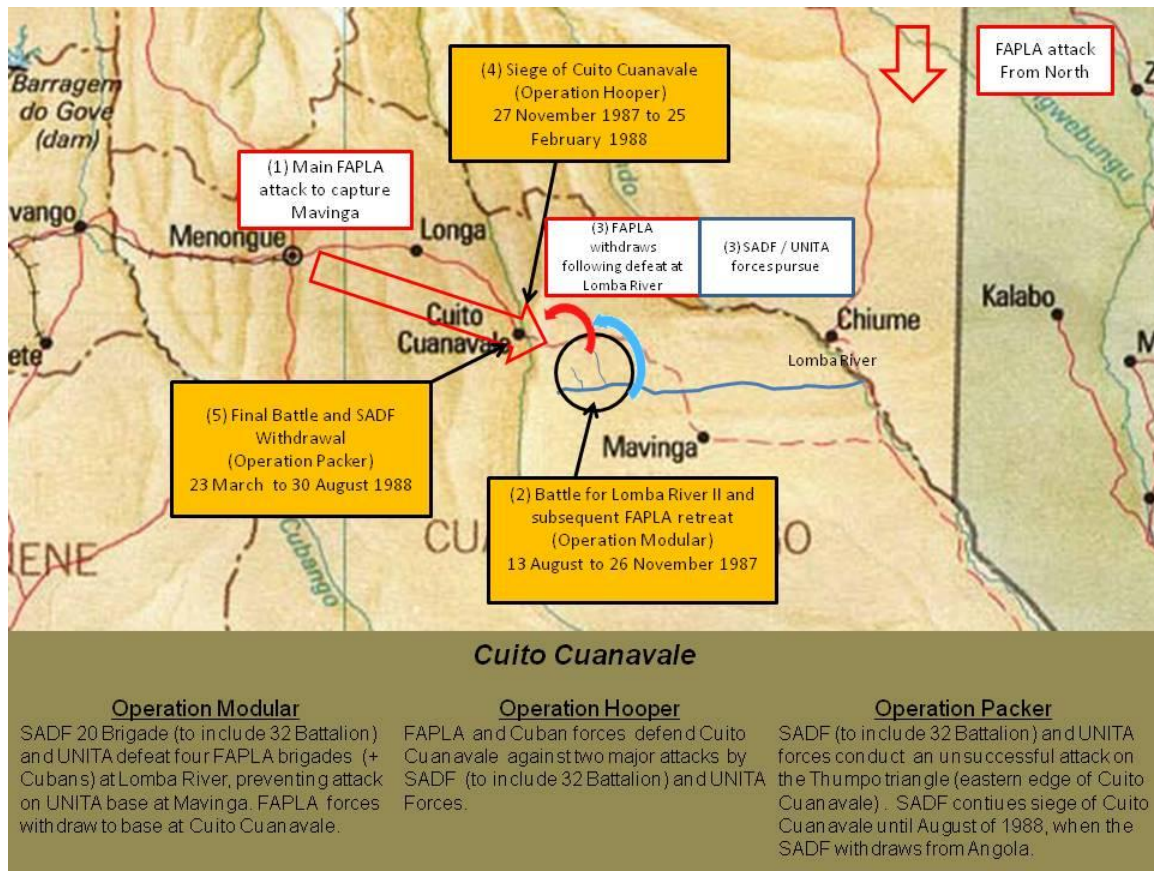


Figure 3. Cuito Cuanavale

Source: University of Texas at Austin Library, Angola Map, http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/africa/angola_rel90.jpg (accessed March 8, 2009). This graphic produced by the author. The graphics for the map are derived from Piet Nortje, *32 Battalion: The Inside Story of South Africa's Elite Fighting Unit* (Cape Town, South Africa: Zebra Press, 2003), 233-253; and South African Bushwar, Mainpage, http://www.geocities.com/sa_bushwar/mainpage.html (accessed March 8, 2009).

As FAPLA retreated to Cuito Cuanavale, the SADF re-evaluated the situation in order to determine its next move. There is much controversy concerning whether South Africa intended to capture Cuito Cuanavale, or to destroy it.¹²⁹ Whatever the case may be, Operation Hooper was aimed at assisting UNITA to destroy the logistics base and

¹²⁹James, 177.

airfield at Cuito in order to make it unusable for FAPLA.¹³⁰ This meant “clearing all FAPLA troops out of the area between Cuatir II and Chambinga Rivers” to “make it easier for UNITA to hold the area east of Cuito Cuanavale.” The 32 Battalion played a role in this operation by assisting UNITA with a failed attack on Thumpo. In the end, 32 Battalion’s operations helped UNITA to “dominate the Anhanra-Lipanda area and prevent FAPLA from carrying out reconnaissance there.”¹³¹

From a military perspective, the Lomba River battle was a huge military success for South Africa and UNITA. FAPLA was forced back to Cuito Cuanavale and forced to defend their base of supply. UNITA also gained in its goal of overthrowing the MPLA regime in Luanda. “In provinces far removed from the battlefield the insurgency had flared up again as the local UNITA contingents took advantage of the reduced FAPLA presence.”¹³² Nonetheless, the SADF and UNITA’s failure to seize Cuito Cuanavale and the MPLA’s failure to break the siege crushed the political will of all parties. Even the Soviets and Cubans began to look for a way out. As articulated below, all parties involved realized that Cuito Cuanavale must result in a negotiated settlement aimed at resolving the civil war in Angola, as well as South Africa’s future role in SWA (Namibia).

¹³⁰Steenkamp, 151.

¹³¹Ibid., 153.

¹³²Ibid.

The battle of Lomba River II [defense of Mavinga] convinced MPLA-PT that it could not militarily defeat UNITA forces as long as South Africa was determined not to allow its ally to be defeated. Cuito Cuanavale, on the other hand, convinced UNITA and South Africa that Cuba and the Soviet Union would not allow MPLA-PT to fall.¹³³

In the end, an agreement was reached whereby all Cuban forces left Angola and UN Resolution 435 was implemented.¹³⁴ That resulted in an election won by SWAPO and the withdrawal of South Africa from Namibia. That withdrawal included 32 Battalion, as well as their families, to South Africa. As a unit of the SADF, 32 Battalion conducted counterinsurgency operations against the ANC until disbanded in 1993.¹³⁵ Following disbandment, many members of the unit, white and black, found work in the private security industry. During the 1990s former members of 32 Battalion participated in conflicts throughout Africa, most notably in Sierra Leone, where they helped the government defeat a genocidal insurgency.¹³⁶

¹³³James, 218-19.

¹³⁴Ibid., 240. "On December 13 [1988], Angola, South Africa, and Cuba signed the Brazaville Protocol. Over a twenty-seven month period, Cuba would withdraw its troops from Angola, while South Africa would grant independence to Namibia under UN Resolution 435 by November 1, 1989. A joint commission of South Africa, Angola, and Cuba would resolve any disputes that arose in implementation of the agreement."

¹³⁵Nortje, 278-83.

¹³⁶P.W. Singer, *Corporate Warriors: The Rise of the Privatized Military Industry* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003), 102-03. Former members of 32 Battalion have also been involved in some highly controversial exploits, causing their detractors to label them as mercenaries. See Mercenary Town – South Africa; <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FJF4pkBn3aA&feature=related> (accessed April 7, 2009).

SELOUS SCOUTS – RHODESIA’S SURROGATE FORCE

The purpose of this section is to examine the role of the Selous Scouts, a surrogate unit, in Rhodesia’s counterinsurgency from 1973 to 1980.¹³⁷ The Selous Scouts played a pivotal, and controversial, role in Rhodesia’s overall military strategy.¹³⁸ This section will begin with a historical overview of the conflict and will be followed by an examination of the war. Two key facets of the employment of the Selous Scouts are examined in this monograph. These facets generally follow a phased view of the war.¹³⁹ From 1965 to 1975, Rhodesia’s counterinsurgency efforts were aimed at internal operations, with an emphasis on the destruction of insurgent cells.¹⁴⁰ Initially, the Scouts were established to provide a pseudo warfare capability in order to disrupt and destroy the insurgents threatening the Rhodesian government and white rule. From 1976 to 1979, these efforts

¹³⁷Some readers may question why the term “surrogate” is being applied to the Selous Scouts. There are two reasons why this paper will examine them as surrogates. The concept of pseudo operations, as described later in this work in greater detail, is for a particular government facing an insurgency, to utilize captured insurgents as dedicated counterinsurgents. These units, or “gangs” as they are sometimes called, replicate insurgent forces, but are controlled by the host nation’s security forces. Rhodesia used the Selous Scouts in much the same way. Basically, the Selous Scouts pseudo teams were usually comprised of European officers and non-commissioned officers (NCOs), African NCOs of the Rhodesian African Rifles and turned or “tame” terrorists. As in the case of 32 Battalion, the unit was built around foreign nationals. From a legal standpoint, the turned terrorists were not Rhodesian citizens, but British subjects, as Rhodesia was in a state of rebellion from Britain, and was not an internationally recognized government. The segregationist nature of the regime in Rhodesia lends credence to the fact that the white minority government did not provide black Africans with the rights due citizens. Hence, many members of the Scouts can be categorized as surrogates.

¹³⁸Many questions concerning the role of the Selous Scouts has left the unit with a tarnished image. This examination in no way serves to support or give credence to operations that may have been outside the realm of the moral and, or, ethical standards of warfare. For a discussion of this issue see Chris Vermaak, “Rhodesia’s Selous Scouts,” 1977, <http://www.rhodesia.nl/sscouts.htm> (accessed February 18, 2009).

¹³⁹For the purposes of this monograph, the war has been divided into internal and external phases. Other methods exist for phasing the Rhodesian conflict.

¹⁴⁰Peter Stiff and Ron Reid-Daly, *Selous Scouts Top Secret War* (Alberton, Republic of South Africa: Galago Publishing Ltd., 1982), 47. Both the term *insurgent* and *terrorist* will be used in this monograph. The Rhodesians referred to their opposition as *terrorists* as a way to link them to criminality and delegitimize their cause.

were directed at external operations, as the insurgent threat grew sizeable as the result of sanctuary and support provided by Rhodesia's neighbors.¹⁴¹ The success of the Scouts in pseudo operations led to their employment in the second phase of the war, which was aimed at destroying insurgent sanctuaries in the neighboring nations of Mozambique, Zambia, and Botswana.¹⁴² During this phase, the Scouts were used as a direct action force against personnel targets and bases, although they sometimes employed pseudo operations to accomplish their missions. External operations were especially important during the last two years of the war, when the multi-ethnic coalition government of Zimbabwe-Rhodesia attempted to bring the insurgency to an end.¹⁴³

Historical Background and Strategic Setting

Rhodesia is really an extension of the European settlement of South Africa. In the 1890s Cecil Rhodes, the man responsible for much of the wealth extraction in South Africa, proposed to send an expedition to the Zambezi River in the pursuit of gold and diamonds.¹⁴⁴ This led to conflict with the region's black tribal populations, resulting in

¹⁴¹Bruce Hoffman, Jennifer M. Taw, and David Arnold, "Lessons for Contemporary Counterinsurgencies: The Rhodesian Experience" (RAND: Arroyo Center, 1991), 9-11.

¹⁴²Hoffman et al., 87-90.

¹⁴³J. K. Cilliers, *Counter-Insurgency in Rhodesia* (Sydney, Australia: Croom Helm Ltd., 1985), 44-47, 57. With the signing of The Internal Settlement on March 3, 1978, an agreement between Rhodesia's white government and several black opposition groups, "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." The signatories hoped to achieve two objectives: (1) "the achievement of international recognition"; and (2) "an end to the war." Rhodesia also changed its name to Zimbabwe-Rhodesia. The transitional government ultimately failed to achieve either objective, and it was not until full implementation of the Lancaster House Agreement in April of 1980 that majority rule was achieved and "Zimbabwe became independent with Robert Mugabe as its premier."

¹⁴⁴Martin Meredith, *Diamonds, Gold and War: The Making of South Africa* (Johannesburg, South Africa: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2007), 207, 247 and 279. Cecil Rhodes, the Prime Minister of South Africa's Cape Colony, chairman of De Beers, and managing director of the British South Africa Company, played a critical role in the 1890s conquest of what became known as Rhodesia. However, it was a British hunter named Fred Selous that inspired the invasion of Matabeleland in search of precious metals in

the first struggle, known as Chimurenga, against European domination.¹⁴⁵ Although not much was found in the way of mineral wealth, the farm lands south of the Zambezi River were fertile and resulted in European settlement of the land under British control.¹⁴⁶ After World War II, the Britain sought to collapse its empire and began to grant independence to most of its dominions. Nonetheless, this process was not without difficulties, as two opposing forces in Rhodesia vied for power. Charles Melson explains the roots of this conflict.

With the retreat from Empire after the World Wars, Rhodesia was one of the last colonies to be granted independence due to efforts to ‘retain’ responsible government in European hands. This began with federalization in 1953 and continued until breaking with Great Britain over the constitutional basis for independence after 1961. The actors were the colonial government in revolt from Great Britain over the issue of independence under minority rule. This was opposed by the Zimbabwean nationalists in the name of majority rule operating domestically or from nearby countries.¹⁴⁷

Great Britain’s plan for independence included a much grander scheme. “During 1963 an attempted federation with Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) and Nyasaland (now Malawi) ended in failure. Its failure can largely be ascribed to the internal racial policies of Southern Rhodesia and the realization that these policies were incompatible with a closer relationship to neighboring black states.”¹⁴⁸

Zambesia. Selous was the model for Allan Quartermain in Rider Haggard’s novel *King Solomon’s Mines*. According to Martin Meredith “Rhodes regarded war with Matabeleland as inevitable. An independent military power, it remained not only a potential threat to the company’s control of Mashonaland; it stood in the way of Rhodes’ plan for a federation of British territories in Southern Africa--the Cape Colony, Natal, the Bechuanaland Protectorate, Mashonaland and Manicaland.”

¹⁴⁵Cilliers, 1.

¹⁴⁶Meredith, 284-86.

¹⁴⁷Charles D. Melson, “Top Secret War: Rhodesian Special Operations,” *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 16, no. 1 (March 2005): 57.

¹⁴⁸Cilliers, 3.

In 1965, the National Front Party of Prime Minister Ian Smith issued the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) from Great Britain.¹⁴⁹ This led to the expansion of the various African (Zimbabwean)¹⁵⁰ nationalist movements, whose grievances stemmed from the colonial rule of Britain, as well as the racist policies of the white minority that controlled the government and owned all of the best farmland.¹⁵¹ To protect this farmland, the government had designated a number of areas as tribal trust lands (TTLs), which were lands available to the numerous tribal groupings, but was not premium farmland.¹⁵²

The Smith government was faced with two critical problems. First was the issue of having the manpower required to secure the country against the Black Nationalist groups.¹⁵³ Rhodesia's population of 6.2 million persons was composed of only three percent Europeans, with the remainder primarily black African (77 percent Shona and 19 percent Ndebele representing the major ethno linguistic division).¹⁵⁴ While Rhodesia did employ black Africans in segregated Army units and in the police, the majority of the

¹⁴⁹Government of Rhodesian, *Unilateral Declaration of Independence* (UDI), November 11, 1965. UDI was proclaimed following several years of negotiation with Britain. The document states "That the people [white minority] of Rhodesia fully support the requests of their government for sovereign independence but have witnessed the consistent refusal of the Government of the United Kingdom to accede to their entreaties; That the government of the United Kingdom have thus demonstrated that they are not prepared to grant sovereign independence to Rhodesia on terms acceptable to the people of Rhodesia [meaning white rule], thereby maintaining an unwarrantable jurisdiction over Rhodesia, obstructing laws and treaties with other states and the conduct of affairs with other nations and refusing assent to laws necessary for the public good, all of this to the detriment of the future peace, prosperity and good government of Rhodesia."

¹⁵⁰"Zimbabwe/Zimbabwean" were the terms adopted by black nationalists to replace "Rhodesia/Rhodesian."

¹⁵¹Cilliers, 1.

¹⁵²Ibid.

¹⁵³Hoffman et al., 11-12.

¹⁵⁴Melson, 57.

security force was of European origin.¹⁵⁵ The second problem was the goal--fighting to maintain a segregated state that favored Europeans at the expense of black Africans, who were gaining political awareness and a sense of nationalism.

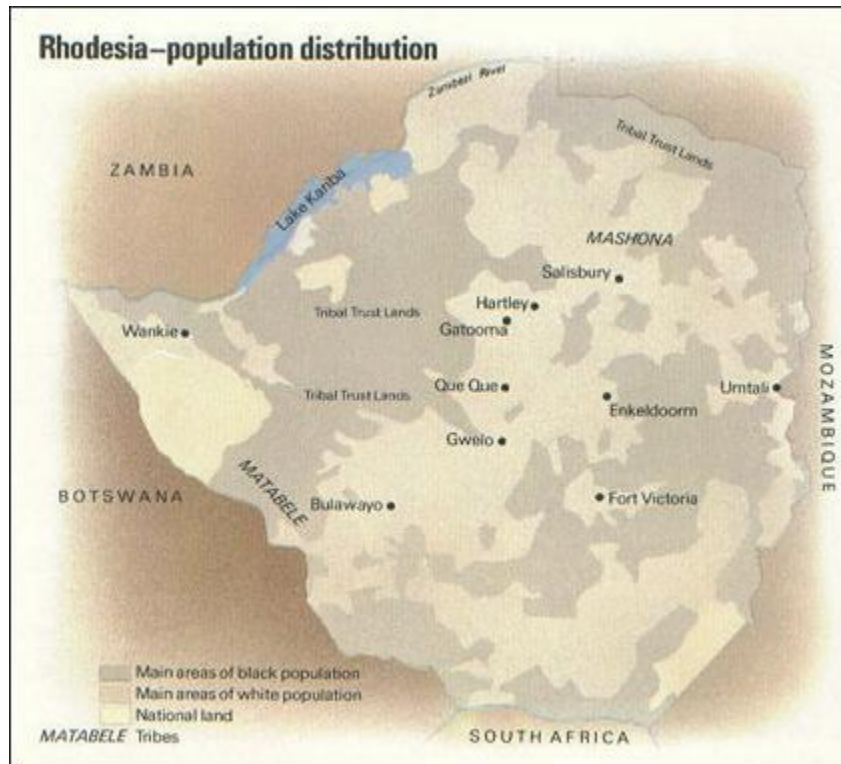


Figure 4. Rhodesia – Population Distribution

Source: Selous Scouts website, <http://www.members.tripod.com/selousscouts> (accessed February 12, 2009). This map provides an overview of Rhodesia’s population density. The white controlled areas are surrounded by black areas, thereby complicating COIN operations. The TTLs bordered nations hostile to Rhodesia and facilitated insurgent infiltration and re-supply from sanctuaries.

The African nationalists were divided along ethnic lines and into two primary political factions. The Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) was a predominately Shona enterprise led by Reverend Sithole and Robert Mugabe, the present-day leader of

¹⁵⁵Hoffman et al., 11-12.

Zimbabwe. ZANU's insurgent force was known as the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA). Opposite ZANU was the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), a predominately Ndebele organization led by the father of Zimbabwean nationalism, Joshua Nkomo. ZAPU's military arm was known as the Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZPRA or ZIPRA).¹⁵⁶ Although there were attempts to create an umbrella organization in order to unify the nationalist cause against the Smith government, no serious attempt ever succeeded in doing so.

Both organizations had an ideological bent toward Marxism.¹⁵⁷ As such, Rhodesia became a theater in the Cold War, with ZANLA supported by North Korea and China, and ZPRA supported by East Germany and the Soviet Union. South Africa, and to a limited extent the U.S., provided Rhodesia with some support. Nonetheless, with international condemnation due to its policies of white domination, Rhodesia was almost completely isolated and under sanctions which strangled its economy and severely restricted its military capabilities and capacity.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁶Cilliers, 3-11.

¹⁵⁷While both groups professed Marxist ideology, the extent of their adherence to the ideology is questionable. More instructive for this monograph is their means of support. ZAPU/ZPRA received support from the Soviet Union and, like the MPLA in Angola, developed a conventional army for an eventual invasion of Rhodesia (see Hoffman et al., 9). ZANU/ZANLA, on the other hand, received support from the People's Republic of China and adopted a Maoist strategy of revolutionary war. However, this strategy was undertaken only after it became clear that a strategy of guerilla warfare and terrorism was not succeeding. According to Hoffman, et al., "The initial strategies of both organizations were very similar and fairly simple. Their plan was to foment sufficient violence and unrest in Rhodesia to compel the British and other Western countries to intervene militarily to restore order, thereby paving the way for black majority rule" (Hoffman et al., 7). This strategy left them vulnerable to the Rhodesian security forces, as they failed to generate any popular support among the black population. In 1965, "ZANLA troops were withdrawn from the field to be retrained by communist Chinese advisers in Maoist rural guerilla warfare techniques" (Hoffman et al., 7).

¹⁵⁸*United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 232*, December 16, 1966. UNSCR 232 placed severe economic sanctions on Rhodesia, denying the country the import of weapons and military equipment. UNSCR 232 was but one of many UN resolutions concerning Rhodesia's domestic and foreign

Table 2. Zimbabwe Insurgent Group Reference Chart

Political Organization	Military Wing	Sanctuary	External Support
ZANU	ZANLA	Mozambique	Mozambique, Tanzania, North Korea, People's Republic of China
ZAPU	ZPRA	Zambia, Botswana (primarily infiltration routes into Rhodesia)	Zambia, Botswana (limited), Angola, East Germany, Soviet Union

Source: This information is derived from sources used in this section of the monograph, especially J. K. Cilliers and Stiff and Reid-Daly.

Classifying the Rhodesian War as either an insurgency or a civil war is difficult to do. Nonetheless, for the purposes of this paper it will be classified as an insurgency, as there was a constituted government which a rebel group(s) was attempting to overthrow.¹⁵⁹ The insurgency began as so many others do, with the use of terrorism. From 1964 to 1973 both insurgent groups targeted white farmers and the government. By the end of this period, both ZANU and ZAPU were operating from safe havens in the countries surrounding Rhodesia. Additionally, their military wings, ZANLA and ZPRA, were growing in size and sophistication, with guerillas being sent to places such as Tanzania, China, and the Soviet Union to receive military training.¹⁶⁰ By 1973, serious infiltration of Rhodesia was occurring, with the TTLs becoming a battlefield to win the hearts and minds of the black population.

policies and actions. These resolutions in effect further strangled the Smith government's ability to wage an effective counterinsurgency.

¹⁵⁹JP 1-02. See Appendix 1 for the U.S. DoD definition of counterinsurgency.

¹⁶⁰Cilliers, 5 and 182; Shubin, 154-55.

As J.K. Cilliers, a leading authority of the Rhodesian conflict notes, the Rhodesian government never established a serious strategy for winning the war. Although the Army had numerous veterans of the Malayan and Kenyan conflicts, insurgency was not something that the security forces understood well.¹⁶¹ A fatal flaw was Rhodesia's lack of a modern intelligence corps. The Rhodesians thought that strategic and operational-level intelligence was not critical to success.¹⁶² Like the Americans during the Vietnam War, success was measured by body count, and the war was seen as one of attrition.¹⁶³ Nonetheless, the government, army, and police did use several counterinsurgency methods aimed at stopping the insurgency. One scheme included protected villages, similar to the strategic hamlet concept used in Vietnam and Malaya, which consolidated villages for mutual defense. Another major project was creating a series of minefield obstacles along Rhodesia's borders aimed at preventing insurgent infiltration.¹⁶⁴ The problem with both of these projects was that Rhodesia did not possess the numbers of security forces required for success. While villages were consolidated, they were not provided with adequate defense against insurgent penetration until much later in the war.¹⁶⁵ If anything, this program assisted the insurgents by massing their target audience in easily accessible locations. The minefield belt was absolutely ineffective, as any obstacle must be under observation in order for it to be

¹⁶¹Cilliers, 243-49.

¹⁶²Ibid., 218-37.

¹⁶³Ibid., 244.

¹⁶⁴Ibid., 105.

¹⁶⁵Ibid., 100.

effective.¹⁶⁶ Rhodesia simply did not have the manpower. Nonetheless, one program that proved highly successful was the implementation of pseudo operations.

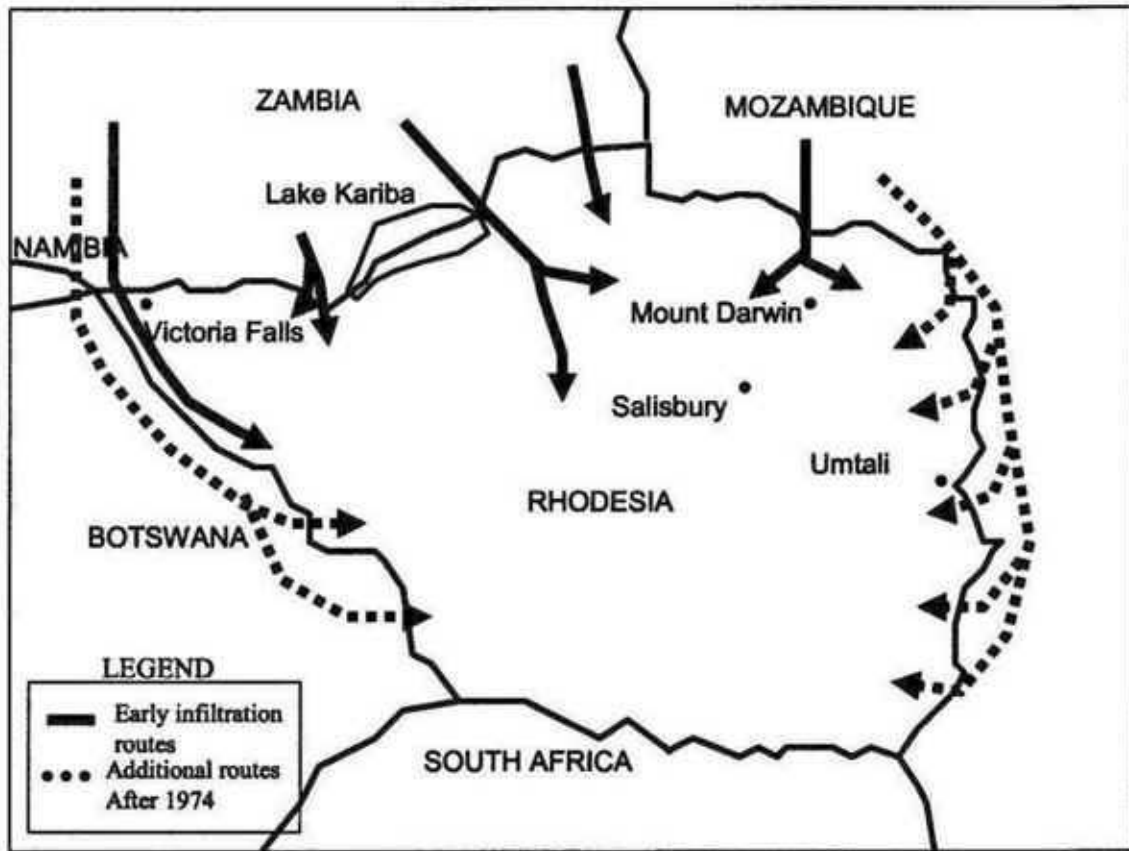


Figure 5. Insurgent Infiltration Routes into Rhodesia

Source: Psywarrior.com website, <http://www.psywarrior.com/RhodesianPSYOP.html> (accessed February 18, 2009). This map shows the various infiltration routes that insurgents used to penetrate Rhodesia from sanctuaries inside Mozambique and Zambia. Botswana served as a means for infiltration and not sanctuary. Rhodesia's only secure border was its shared border with the RSA.

¹⁶⁶Ibid., 115.

Pseudo Operations

It must be stated from the beginning of this discussion that Rhodesia's use of the Selous Scouts was significant because it shows a level of creative thinking concerning counterinsurgency efforts. Nonetheless, while Rhodesia's security forces used unique methods and tactics, these tools rarely overcome a flawed or non-existent strategy.¹⁶⁷ Rhodesia's use of pseudo operations was the result of two factors. First, and most important, was that as insurgent infiltration began to reach significant numbers in the TTLs, the British South African Police lost a significant amount of its informant network aimed at gathering tactical intelligence.¹⁶⁸ Secondly, the Army, due to its small numbers was having trouble finding the enemy, due as much to a lack of intelligence collection, as to the vastness of Rhodesia's interior.¹⁶⁹ The solution seemed to be pseudo operations. In the early 1970s, the police and the Army cooperated in an endeavor to field several pseudo teams.¹⁷⁰ This concept proved successful and it was decided that the program should be expanded.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁷Cilliers, 243-49.

¹⁶⁸Melson, 62. The *British South African Police* (BSAP) was Britain's colonial law enforcement organization for all of South Africa. After the 1965 UDI Rhodesia retained the name *British South African Police*.

¹⁶⁹Melson, 62.

¹⁷⁰Cilliers, 120-21. "In the period after the Unilateral Declaration of Independence Special Branch [of the British South African Police] 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." In early 1973, after intelligence sources began to significantly deteriorate, the Rhodesian Special Air Service provided two sergeants to form pseudo teams. The BSAP provided training and support.

¹⁷¹Stiff and Daly, 45. "The Prime Minister, Ian Smith, who had followed the activities of the experimental groups, was totally sold on the idea, and he had ordered a regiment be formed specifically to carry out pseudo work. Moreover, it was to be formed as quickly as possible and would have priority rating over any other unit or matter pending in the Rhodesian Army."

Hence, the commander of the Rhodesian Army, General Peter Walls assigned the task of establishing a pseudo unit to Major Ron Reid-Daly, a veteran of the Rhodesian Special Air Service (SAS) and counterinsurgency operations in Malaya.¹⁷² The unit, which became known as the Selous Scouts Regiment, had the personal backing and support of General Walls, and as such was given priority status for personnel and equipment.¹⁷³ While the Army was responsible for administration, it was the police who were responsible for operations.¹⁷⁴ A contingent of police was assigned to the unit to provide support and collect, analyze, and disseminate the intelligence gained.¹⁷⁵ The Scouts were Rhodesia's first racially integrated unit, although all of the officers and many of the NCOs were white. Eventually, NCOs and soldiers of the Rhodesian African Rifles were brought into the unit.¹⁷⁶ However, the most important personnel were "turned," or "tame," terrorists.¹⁷⁷ After being captured, select insurgents were given the opportunity to join the Selous Scouts. The alternative was a death sentence for being in revolt against Rhodesia.¹⁷⁸ The mission of the Scouts is articulated below.

¹⁷²Stiff and Daly, 44-45.

¹⁷³Ibid., 48.

¹⁷⁴Ibid., 47. For external operations, the Special Operations Co-coordinating Committee approved all missions.

¹⁷⁵Ibid., 47.

¹⁷⁶Ibid., 52-53. The Rhodesian African Rifles Regiment was composed of black African soldiers, but led by white officers.

¹⁷⁷Cilliers, 119. "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 the Government forces he, in effect, becomes committed to the latter cause."

¹⁷⁸Hoffman et al., 38-39. In accordance with the Law and Order Maintenance Act (1961) the death sentence was employed to deter subversive activities. Captured terrorists were treated as criminals and tried in the civil justice system. While the threat of the death penalty had mixed results with regard to deterrence, "the threat of this penalty, however, was a useful tool in persuading captured insurgents to become government agents."

The Regiment's task was to carry out operations of a clandestine nature when and wherever it might be called upon to serve, drawing its manpower from the combined Security Forces and other less obvious channels . . . captured turned terrorists in other words . . . while receiving instructions from the Overall Co-ordinating Committee, the Director of the Central Intelligence Organisation, the Service Commanders and the Joint Operational Commands . . . the unit was run in accordance with the conceptual purpose laid down upon its inauguration, which was: the clandestine elimination of terrorism and terrorists both within and outside the country.¹⁷⁹

The operational method used by the Selous Scouts was to “infiltrate the tribal population and the terrorist networks, pinpoint the terrorist camps and bases and then direct quick reaction 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.”¹⁸⁰

Pseudo operations were first used in Operation Hurricane in 1973, and continued throughout the war.¹⁸¹ Following the Rhodesian war, Reid-Dailey and Peter Stiff wrote a book describing the history and exploits of the Scouts. *Selous Scouts Top Secret War* details numerous operations involving pseudo operations. This paper will not attempt to replicate them here, but instead provide an overview and analysis of Selous Scouts

¹⁷⁹Stiff and Reid-Daly, 47.

¹⁸⁰Norma J. Kriger, *Zimbabwe's Guerilla War: Peasant Voices* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 112.

¹⁸¹Cilliers, 60-65. Operation Hurricane represented a geographical area of responsibility, in this case a significant portion of northeast Rhodesia (bordering both Zambia and Mozambique). Within an operational area, a joint operations center (JOC) provided command and control and coordinated joint and interagency actions. Throughout the war, additional operational areas were established. According to Cilliers, “Were an insurgent threat to develop . . . Joint Operations Centers 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 African Police, Special Branch and Air Force officers, and the appropriate Commissioner of the Department of Internal Affairs.”

operations. As previously stated, pseudo teams were usually commanded by white officers or NCOs and composed of Africans, both soldiers and tame terrorists. The tame terrorists were a critical component because, having once been terrorists themselves, they knew the enemy--their training, methods of operations, and especially their communication and validation procedures.¹⁸²

A typical operation usually consisted of a pseudo team infiltrating into an operational area.¹⁸³ That sector would be “frozen,” meaning that other Rhodesian security forces were not allowed to operate in the area unless given permission by the Selous Scouts.¹⁸⁴ When deployed into the operational area, the team conducted a reconnaissance of the area or moved directly to a targeted village. The white members of the team, who blackened their faces and wore shaggy beards to disguise their Caucasian features, established a patrol base and communications with higher headquarters. The African members then moved forward and attempted to make contact with local civilians in order to gain information concerning terrorists that had infiltrated the area. At first, this was very easy. However, as with any tactic, the enemy adapted.¹⁸⁵

Eventually, terrorist groups used a system of contact men in the villages to establish the bona fides of groups attempting to make contact. Passwords and symbols

¹⁸²Stiff and Daly, 127.

¹⁸³Most of the information concerning the *modus operandi* of the Selous Scouts is derived from Stiff and Reid-Daly's book *Selous Scouts Top Secret War*.

¹⁸⁴Cilliers, 122. “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 the 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.’”

¹⁸⁵Hoffman et al., 13. Hoffmann, as well as other observers of the Rhodesian conflict, notes that “The history of the Rhodesian counterinsurgency is one of constant security force adaptation to new insurgent tactics.” Ron Reid-Daly's experiences as the commander of the Selous Scouts confirm this statement.

were used to screen for possible Selous Scout infiltration. The Scouts were able to keep up to date with the latest information by using the knowledge of recently captured terrorists, as a pseudo team had to be able to answer questions concerning insurgent training camps, songs, and identification markings on clothing. This work was increasingly dangerous as tactics, techniques, and procedures constantly changed. Once a terrorist force was identified, the pseudo team would usually call in a heliborne “fire force” from the Rhodesian Light Infantry to make contact with the terrorists.¹⁸⁶ This resulted in a high number of killed, wounded, and captured terrorists. According to the Rhodesian government, 68 percent of all terrorists killed were the result of Selous Scouts action.¹⁸⁷

As Cilliers notes below, pseudo operations, although effective from a purely tactical point of view, were another element of poor strategy and non-existent operational goals.

¹⁸⁶Hoffman et al., 21-22. “Perhaps the most successful counterinsurgency tactic used by the Rhodesians was the joint Air Force and Army ‘Fireforce’, a heliborne reaction team developed in the early stages of Operation Hurricane. . . . The Fireforce was used most successfully in tandem with information on insurgent locations obtained from static observation posts, Selous Scouts ‘pseudo operations,’ and other ground intelligence sources. . . . Demands on the Fireforce continued to increase during the closing years of the conflict, to the point where it was not unusual for it to be deployed as often as three times a day in certain heavily contested areas.”

¹⁸⁷Cilliers, 132.

Pseudo operations were used extensively in Rhodesia and in the long term proved to be counter-productive. In such operations the population inevitably becomes 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 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.¹⁸⁸

The passage above highlights a significant problem concerning the intellectual underpinnings of the Rhodesian approach to the war. Neither the Rhodesian government, nor the security forces, pursued a strategy aimed at controlling the population.¹⁸⁹ Pseudo operations only aggravated the problem. In his examination of pseudo operations Paul Melshen analyzes two cases, Rhodesia and Kenya. One of his conclusions is that pseudo operations in Kenya were conducted against an insurgent force in its base areas, well away from the population, thereby eliminating the problem encountered by Rhodesia.¹⁹⁰ Then there is the legitimacy issue involved. As Cilliers highlights above, the population is caught in the middle and cannot trust either side. Hence, the government and its cause have little legitimacy. While pseudo operations were causing mayhem in some areas, they never had a significant impact on the growth of the insurgency. In fact, the insurgency was rapidly increasing as well as gaining control of the population, which initially opposed them.¹⁹¹ This led to a change in the Rhodesian government's strategy in the next

¹⁸⁸Ibid.

¹⁸⁹Ibid., 99. Cilliers' analysis is that Rhodesian population control measures were more about clearing civilians out of designated areas in order to create free fire zones instead of protecting the population from the insurgents.

¹⁹⁰Paul Melshen, "Pseudo Operations" (Research Report, Naval War College, 1986), 19-20.

¹⁹¹Hoffman et al., 11-12.

phase of the war.¹⁹² As Melshen observes, “ultimately, pseudo operations are a tactic, not a strategy.”¹⁹³

External Operations

In *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice*, written in 1964, David Galula states that “In South Africa (with 11 million Negroes and 4 million whites) the successful chances of an insurgency were good.”¹⁹⁴ Although pseudo operations were effective at disrupting the insurgents in Rhodesia, the various insurgencies had the capability, given their population base, to continue to regenerate.¹⁹⁵ A primary facet of Galula’s work is the discussion of the importance of sanctuary for insurgent groups. As he points out “the ideal situation for the insurgent would be a large land-locked country shaped like a blunt-tipped star, with jungle-covered mountains along the borders and scattered swamps in the plains, in a temperate zone and dispersed rural population and a primitive economy.”¹⁹⁶ This is a pretty close description of Rhodesia, especially with

¹⁹²Stiff and Daly, 156. According to Ron Reid-Daly, “At this time [the end of 1975], somewhat belatedly, but because of the large-scale incursions of terrorists which were taking place and the intelligence which indicated many more were about to take place, we were finally given reluctant permission to take out and generally harass known ZANLA staging posts within Mozambique.”

¹⁹³Melshen, 71.

¹⁹⁴David A. Galula, *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2006), 13.

¹⁹⁵Cilliers, 239-242. Cilliers provides insurgent casualty figures from 1973 to 1978. Each year the security forces were significantly increasing the number of insurgents killed. Nonetheless, by 1979 ZANLA had an estimated 13,500 insurgents and ZPRA had 20,000. The security forces consisted of 3,900 personnel. “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.”

¹⁹⁶Galula, 25.

regard to being land-locked. In a best case scenario, sanctuary(ies) provides moral support, political support, technical support, financial support, and military support.¹⁹⁷

As in Vietnam, sanctuaries were plentiful for ZPRA and ZANLA. Rhodesia is bordered by Zambia in the north, Botswana in the west, Mozambique in the east, and South Africa in the south. Landlocked, Rhodesia had 3,000 kilometers of border to defend.¹⁹⁸ The small portion of the border with South Africa was never in jeopardy, as the two nations were allies. However, the other three countries provided ample opportunity for the insurgent groups to establish sanctuaries, which provided them with logistics support, training facilities, command and control centers, as well as access to allies and support.¹⁹⁹ From an ideological perspective, two of the states, Zambia and Mozambique (after 1975), were not only supportive of the insurgents, but were also dedicated to the de-colonization of Rhodesia, meaning the establishment of black African rule.²⁰⁰ Botswana, while providing land and some support, was limited due to the fact that it was flanked by white controlled countries (Rhodesia, South Africa, and South West Africa) and was economically dependent on them.²⁰¹ Zambia and Mozambique did not have this problem, and therefore actively supported the insurgents. As such, Zambia was used extensively by ZPRA, while Mozambique was used by ZANLA. When the Marxist Liberation Front of Mozambique (FRELIMO) came to power in Mozambique, they

¹⁹⁷Ibid.

¹⁹⁸Cilliers, 175.

¹⁹⁹Ibid., 172-201.

²⁰⁰Ibid., 174.

²⁰¹Ibid., 194. "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."

provided ZANLA with everything required by the group.²⁰² This also meant providing them with a pipeline to Tanzania, where ZANLA troops were trained.²⁰³ In the case of ZPRA, Zambia was used as a pipeline to Angola, where ZPRA troops were trained and Soviet equipment and technical support was received.²⁰⁴

This situation provided Rhodesia with significant challenges. When Mozambique fell to FRELIMO in 1975, Rhodesia effectively lost access to vital seaports and was further isolated.²⁰⁵ Its only railways out of the country were those into Botswana and South Africa. Geography also played an important role in Rhodesian external strategy. In the case of Mozambique, many avenues of approach existed through which ZANLA could infiltrate Rhodesia. At the same time, Rhodesian security forces had access to the same routes, thereby allowing them to strike insurgent base camps and FRELIMO targets. Zambia was another story. The border between Rhodesia and Zambia is the Zambezi River and Kariba Lake complex. This obstacle prevents large scale infiltration of insurgents, and at the same time prevented Rhodesia, given its lack of military resources, the ability to mount the same level of incursions that it was able to do in Mozambique.²⁰⁶ “The need for more forceful cross-border operations became apparent

²⁰²Ibid., 177.

²⁰³Stiff and Daly, 109.

²⁰⁴Cilliers, 196.

²⁰⁵William Minter, *Apartheid's Contras: An Inquiry Into the Roots of War in Angola and Mozambique* (South Africa: Booksurge Publishing, 2008) [Orig. pub. Zed Books and Witwatersrand University Press, 1994], 13 and 32. “In central Mozambique, Beira served as the port for Southern Rhodesia.” According to Minter FRELIMO “regarded its commitment to Zimbabwean liberation as unavoidable . . . Mozambique also chose, in March 1976, to implement United Nations sanctions against Rhodesia . . . the cost of sanctions over four years was estimated at \$500 million, more than double Mozambique’s annual exports during these years.”

²⁰⁶Cilliers, 184-185.

with the collapse of Portugal's African provinces and the reality of the Marxist regime in Mozambique." Nonetheless, the Rhodesian government failed to act in a timely manner to deal ZANU a critical blow.²⁰⁷

Cilliers provides an excellent analysis of Rhodesia's strategic and operational goals with regard to external operations. From a strategic standpoint, Rhodesia had to seriously disrupt insurgent infiltration, as well as punish Mozambique, Zambia, and Botswana for supporting the insurgents. There were two options, either border control or armed incursions. Given the Rhodesians' lack of understanding of the conflict and manpower situation, they chose the latter.²⁰⁸ The operational goals associated with this strategy became more nuanced over time. In the initial phases of cross border operations, the purpose was to inflict the largest number of insurgent casualties possible in order to prevent them from infiltrating into Rhodesia. The second phase of external operations, which saw a migration in strategy, focused on destroying insurgent and host nation infrastructure to degrade capability.²⁰⁹

Cross border operations into Mozambique were conducted from the outset of the war. Prior to 1975, the Portuguese allowed Rhodesian units, to include the Selous Scouts, to conduct operations inside Mozambique against ZANLA.²¹⁰ This also helped the

²⁰⁷Melson, 64-5. Melson notes Ron Reid-Daly's assessment of the government's lack of action-- "They 'gave FRELIMO (Front for the Liberation of Mozambique) a two-year respite to get their house in order', felt the Selous Scouts commander."

²⁰⁸Cilliers, 174. "To John D. Deiner the results of case studies done in Algeria, Greece and Vietnam indicate the existence of two strategies to counter active sanctuaries. The first is border control and the second armed incursions. John J. McCuen indicates a third strategy, the organization and support of 'counter-insurgent insurgents' operating from the target country into that country serving as host to the insurgent force; in other words, fighting fire with fire."

²⁰⁹Cilliers, 180.

²¹⁰Ibid., 175.

Portuguese with their fight against FRELIMO. After 1975, Rhodesia began to conduct large-scale operations aimed at eliminating ZANLA, which had established several large training and holding camps.

Probably the most famous raid conducted by the Selous Scouts was Operation Eland on August 8, 1976 against the Nyadzania camp in Mozambique. Intelligence reports from captured insurgents indicated that Nyadzania was a large training camp and holding area containing some one thousand or so insurgents.²¹¹ The extent of the camp was determined through aerial photographic reconnaissance that indicated a much larger camp, containing even more personnel.²¹² Further human intelligence sources indicated that as many as five thousand personnel could be in the camp. The camp also contained a FRELIMO garrison. Although it was believed that the camp could not be successfully attacked, Selous Scouts commander Reid-Dailey put together a plan and convinced the Special Operations Coordinating Committee that an attack was feasible.²¹³ Unlike other units in the security forces, the Scouts were capable of infiltrating into the camp because they possessed black Africans who spoke the language and more importantly knew ZANLA. The plan called for a “flying column” of several vehicles loaded with both

²¹¹Stiff and Daly, 178-190.

²¹²Ibid., 190. Aerial photographic reconnaissance captured a ZANLA parade formation of 800 insurgents.

²¹³Ibid., 179. Both Reid-Daly and the commander of the Rhodesian SAS were asked to prepare plans for an attack on the base. The Special Operations Coordinating Committee imposed limitations on the operation in accordance with political constraints--the attack could not be attributed to Rhodesia, and hence the only air support available would be for casualty evacuation. The SAS commander insisted that the only feasible course of action was a parachute drop for insertion, and the use of helicopters for extraction. When asked about the feasibility of using the Selous Scouts, Reid-Daly believed that “the fact that I had black as well as white troops, made my chance of getting on the target a little better than the Special Air Service, but I didn’t believe we stood much hope of getting over the border and to the base . . . then getting back home after the attack without the benefit of air support.” Eventually, the Scouts solved these problems and their plan was approved.

white and black Scouts to move along a little known track to get to the camp, which was some 60 miles inside Mozambique.²¹⁴ The vehicles were painted in FRELIMO colors, and the Scouts wore FRELIMO uniforms.²¹⁵

The plan called for the vehicle column to drive into the camp the day after a major celebration, at a time when all of the insurgents would be present on the parade ground for the morning muster formation.²¹⁶ The plan went according to schedule, with the Scouts column passing through the camp's front gates, which were not guarded by the usual FRELIMO guards, at 8:20 a.m. in the morning.²¹⁷ At no time was the Scouts column challenged. They drove right onto the parade square and parked. One Scout, a former insurgent, told the ZANLA insurgents to gather around for important news, which they did with enthusiasm.²¹⁸ The Selous Scouts then opened fire, killing many of the insurgents on the parade ground.²¹⁹ The scouts then returned to Rhodesia after destroying the Pungwe Bridge to prevent FRELIMO pursuit.²²⁰ Later intelligence reports indicated that the Scouts killed 1,028 insurgents, captured fourteen "important ZANLA insurgents," and killed six senior ZANLA officers.²²¹ This is a clear example of how pseudo operations and direct action can be mixed together to produce a successful result.

²¹⁴Hoffman et al., 89. The term "flying column" is used to denote a ground assault convoy composed of vehicles.

²¹⁵Ibid.

²¹⁶Stiff and Daly, 205.

²¹⁷Ibid.

²¹⁸Ibid.

²¹⁹Ibid.

²²⁰Hoffman et al., 89.

²²¹Ibid. Also see Stiff and Reid-Daly, 216-18. Oddly, the United Nations reported that 675 persons were found dead in the camp and another 675 were wounded. According to a captured ZANU document, approximately 5,250 insurgents and supporters were in the camp at the time of the attack.

The Scouts, as well as the SAS and the Rhodesian Light Infantry continued to conduct raids into Mozambique; however, none were ever as successful, as both ZANLA and FRELIMO began to build smaller camps and disperse troops and cache equipment and supplies. They also built well-fortified defenses around their smaller camps and established air defenses.²²²

The next stage of external operations shifted from the destruction of insurgents to the destruction of ZANLA's logistics system. The Rhodesian government authorized external operations on infrastructure that was military in nature, but not purely economic.²²³ This included Scouts operations to destroy railways used by ZANLA and FRELIMO. The destruction of a railroad was even able to isolate one ZANLA sector from reinforcement, thereby seriously degrading ZANLA's ability to infiltrate into parts of Rhodesia.²²⁴ On another mission the Scouts came across several pieces of heavy construction and earth moving equipment which they either destroyed or moved back to Rhodesia, thereby preventing their use by FRELIMO, as well as ZANLA.²²⁵

The Scouts also conducted numerous operations in Zambia and Botswana, many of which were aimed at disrupting command and control and, or, capturing ZPRA leadership. Nonetheless, none of these operations achieved the success of the Nyadzania operation, where the Scouts were able to use all their attributes. Although they still

²²²Cilliers, 180-81.

²²³Ibid., 183.

²²⁴Hoffman et al., 89. The attack on Jorge de Limpopo and Massengena, Mozambique (Operation Maradon) "disrupted communications between Jorge de Limpopo, Malvernina, and Massengena, wrecked two trains, destroyed all motor transport in the area, and sowed landmines in various spots. This operation effectively undercut ZANLA's operational capacity and weakened insurgent morale." Also see Stiff and Daly, 239.

²²⁵Ibid., 90.

masqueraded as FRELIMO, the enemy was aware of the Scouts' tactics and adapted accordingly. While the Scouts possessed language and ethnicity attributes, these became less important as the enemy adapted. This meant that the Scouts were used more for their military skills than for the skills that prompted their creation. While the Scouts were contributing to operational objectives, the objectives themselves were not linked to an effective strategy. In a written appreciation of the situation to General Walls in 1976, Reid-Daly advocated the use of the Selous Scouts "to create total havoc for unlimited periods in the hostile territories of Mozambique and Zambia." Without a doubt Reid-Daly, like many Rhodesian officers, was focused on the military, and not the political, problem.²²⁶

One of the most successful Scouts operations of the war was conducted in Botswana and led to the capture of Elliot Bibanda, ZPRA's senior intelligence officer for its southern front.²²⁷ His interrogation led to the location of the southern front's entire senior leadership.²²⁸ In an operation conducted on April 13, 1979, a team of Selous Scouts, posing as members of the Botswana Defense Force, captured the leadership of the southern front, effectively disrupting operations in the area and relieving pressure on Zimbabwe-Rhodesia's government.²²⁹ The Scouts were also instrumental in conducting operations against ZPRA in Zambia, as ZPRA was planning to conduct a large-scale

²²⁶Stiff and Daly, 246-247. In his note, Reid-Daly correctly identified that insurgent numbers were growing, and would soon overwhelm the security forces. This conclusion turned out to be correct. However, Reid-Daly's solution was to increase external operations, a course of action that would not have addressed the population's increasing support for the insurgents.

²²⁷Hoffman et al., 90.

²²⁸Stiff and Daly, 374.

²²⁹Ibid., 385.

conventional invasion of Rhodesia, given that it had to act quickly or lose the elections to ZANLA.²³⁰ Ironically, the Scouts were given the task to train black Africans, many former ZANLA supporters, to be integrated into the Zimbabwe-Rhodesian security forces. A task to which Rhodesia's best unit was ill-suited.²³¹ The Rhodesian War came to an end with the signing of the Lancaster House Agreement in December 1979, and the April 1980 election of Robert Mugabe, the leader of ZANU, as the Prime Minister of Zimbabwe. The Selous Scouts were disbanded and many fled to South Africa, where they were incorporated into the SADF.

²³⁰Hoffman et al., 12; Stiff and Daly, 404-20.

²³¹Stiff and Daly, 314.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The history of the bush wars provide an opportunity to examine many unique applications of the use of surrogates, Smith's surrogate warfare concept, and what these ideas may be able to contribute to current and future U.S. military campaigns. The purpose of this section is to provide an assessment of the use of surrogates by both South Africa and Rhodesia, as well as to provide a summary of applicable lessons learned. This assessment will use the criteria established in the introduction of this monograph. First, each nation's strategic aims and operational goals will be identified. Secondly, the raison d'être for each unit will be assessed in accordance with the unique capabilities each unit (32 Battalion or Selous Scouts) contributed to the accomplishment of goals, and whether those capabilities filled a gap. Finally, an assessment will be made concerning how each unit could have been better utilized. This will lead to harvesting lessons learned and recommendations for the U.S. military's employment of surrogates.

South Africa and 32 Battalion

South Africa's ultimate policy goal was the continued existence of the apartheid state managed by white minority rule. Secondary to this was South Africa's continued political, military, and economic domination of SWA. Accomplishment of these aims influenced operational objectives. For Operation Savannah, this meant preventing the MPLA from establishing political and military control over southern Angola. After 1976, operations were aimed at attacking PLAN sanctuaries inside southern Angola in support of counterinsurgency efforts in SWA, supporting UNITA, and maintaining a security zone between SWA and MPLA dominated Angola. By 1985, defeat of the MPLA's conventional attacks on UNITA became an operational objective as well.

Up until the last part of South Africa's war in Angola, 32 Battalion served to alleviate domestic political pressure on the South African government. The first pressure was the issue of manpower, as South Africa relied heavily on conscription. The second pressure was reducing the economic costs of the war and curtailing domestic opposition. From the very beginning, 32 Battalion served the primary goal of any surrogate force: to serve as a substitute. For Operation Savannah, this meant supporting an incursion into Angola that was politically and economically infeasible with the use of South African conscripts. In support of the counterinsurgency effort in SWA, 32 Battalion provided a low visibility, asymmetric, and economical means of fighting the Bush War. This continued until the time of Cuito Cuanavale, where 32 Battalion provided direct support to UNITA and fought as a conventional force.

There is no doubt that the Angolan members of 32 Battalion provided South Africa with numerous military capabilities. They were, for the most part, a light infantry and guerilla force expert in the use of raids and ambushes. Their physical attributes, language capability, and knowledge of Southern Angola's human and physical geography provided the SADF with a capability that could not be matched by any other South African force, white or black. As the war progressed, 32 Battalion also developed some special operations capabilities, especially in the areas of special long-range reconnaissance and pseudo operations.²³² Although their operations were conducted in the realm of covert and clandestine operations, the battalion mostly performed as light infantry.

²³²Kevin A. O'Brien, "Special Forces for Counter-Revolutionary Warfare: The South African Case," *Small Wars and Insurgencies* 12, no.2 (Summer 2001): 93-94.

In many ways, 32 Battalion filled numerous SADF capability shortfalls. In the final analysis, 32 Battalion significantly contributed to the accomplishment of South African operational objectives by providing the SADF with capabilities they otherwise did not possess. The accomplishment of strategic aims is a mixed bag. Ultimately, South Africa's government failed in SWA and at home. South Africa's grand strategy was not achieved because it was unsustainable, due largely to the rising tide of Black Nationalism and international ostracism. Nonetheless, it must be remembered that South Africa was able to prolong its demise by achieving several strategic aims. For over a decade, the MPLA was unable to control Angola, and hence, PLAN never gained a secure sanctuary, thereby preventing an appreciable penetration into SWA. These aims were accomplished through successful SADF operations, many that included significant contributions by 32 Battalion.

The South Africans fought their war in Angola within their unique political and strategic context. Given this fact, it is difficult to fairly assess how 32 Battalion may have been better employed. Given Buffalo Battalion's unique language and cultural skills, it seems obvious that they may have been better utilized to gain the support of Southern Angola's population, as opposed to direct action against PLAN and FAPLA. However, their small numbers and the existence of UNITA demanded their use as a counter-guerilla force.

Rhodesia and the Selous Scouts

Like South Africa, Rhodesia's policies and strategy were aimed at maintaining white rule. For Rhodesia's political and military leadership the strategic aim was to destroy the Chimurenga insurgency (ZANLA and ZPRA). As previously noted, waging a

war of annihilation in a predominately political conflict is a strategy doomed to failure. Given this strategy, Rhodesian security forces were fixated on body counts. There was a complete lack of operational art that linked tactical action with strategic aims.²³³ This is clearly evident in the command and control structure of Rhodesian security forces. When significant insurgent activity appeared in a sizeable geographical area, a JOC was established to control tactical activity. The operational goal, if it can be called that, was simply to make contact with the insurgents and kill them. After 1976, Rhodesia began to focus on external operations aimed at killing and or capturing insurgents and destroying their infrastructure. Once again, tactical raids served no operational objectives or strategic aims, only body count numbers. By the time the Rhodesian's began to link the destruction of insurgent logistics to operations aimed at strangling the insurgents and their regional supporters, it was too late.

The Selous Scouts were established because the Rhodesian security forces lacked effective intelligence systems and appreciable manpower. Pseudo operations were seen as a way to address these shortfalls, and without a doubt, the Selous Scouts did so. Their operations directly and indirectly contributed to 68 percent of all insurgents killed by the security forces. This was a direct result of the Scouts' ability to successfully infiltrate the tribal populations, something which no other Rhodesian security force unit could do. The Scouts' pseudo operations capability also provided Rhodesia with a means for capturing or eliminating key insurgent personnel in foreign sanctuaries. In 1976, the Selous Scouts

²³³JP 1-02, 397. Operational art is defined as "The application of creative imagination by commanders and staffs--supported by their skill, knowledge, and experience--to design strategies, campaigns, and major operations and organize and employ military forces. Operational art integrates ends, ways, and means across the levels of war."

provided a very unique capability to Rhodesia's senior leadership. This was the ability to combine pseudo operations with light infantry raids to destroy large insurgent bases. Nonetheless, the insurgents soon adapted to this technique, and the Scouts' simply became additional force structure for external raids.

As in the case of South Africa, context is extremely important when evaluating Rhodesia's bush war. Like South Africa, Rhodesia's policies were aimed at maintaining absolute white rule, which made popular support more difficult to obtain. Rhodesia was fighting an insurgency, and support of the population was absolutely essential. Given that Rhodesia's strategy was flawed, it is easy to suggest how the Selous Scouts may have been put to better use. If Rhodesia's security forces had focused on population control, then the Selous Scouts and pseudo operations could have been used to great effect against insurgents who were isolated from the population. In terms of external operations, the Scouts were better utilized in the conduct of precision raids requiring covert and, or clandestine, means. Finally, the Rhodesians should have considered using the Selous Scouts to support RENAMO insurgents, FRELIMO's adversary, inside Mozambique and develop an insurgency inside Zambia, much like South Africa did with its support of UNITA in Angola.²³⁴

²³⁴Nortje, 105. "RENAMO was established in 1977 by the Rhodesian Central Intelligence Organization. This was done to counter Mozambican President Samora Machel's growing support for the Zimbabwean National Liberation Army (ZANLA) . . . and in retaliation for his enforcement of United Nations sanctions against Rhodesia. In its early years RENAMO comprised soldiers who fought with the Portuguese, as well as FRELIMO dissidents. Its primary functions were to disrupt and destabilize the Machel government and to provide intelligence on ZANLA guerillas operating within Mozambique's borders. . . . The Rhodesians' plan was only partially successful. RENAMO enjoyed limited grassroots support but did not pose a serious military threat to the Mozambican authorities." This changed once South Africa assumed support for RENAMO from Rhodesia in 1980.

Recommendations

These case studies provide military designers and planners with several key lessons for consideration. Nonetheless, these lessons must be evaluated in context, and not be considered absolutes. First, the use of surrogate forces must support operational objectives and strategic aims. Using surrogates without an overarching plan is a recipe for disaster, especially if control over the surrogates is limited. Secondly, these cases suggest that the use of surrogates should be considered as a tactic, requiring constant adaptation. Surrogates, by themselves, are not a strategy. Therefore, it is necessary to continually adapt the employment of surrogates to the operational environment. While surrogates can supplement capabilities as well as fill capability gaps, they are likely not a complete solution to any problem. Finally, the employment of surrogates necessitates a plan for their demobilization and integration into civil society, as unemployed and idle former surrogates have the potential to create new problems.

If persistent conflict is the hallmark of the future global security environment, then the U.S. should consider revising its policies, doctrine and organizations to utilize surrogates to their maximum potential. The following recommendations are provided as a way forward.

Surrogate Warfare: The DoD should revise policy and doctrine to expand the use of surrogates. Currently, the use of surrogate forces is compartmentalized within UW and special operations. The case studies in this paper support the proposition that surrogates can be employed across the spectrum of conflict and employed by both SOF and GPF.

Surrogate Assimilation: U.S. policy should consider the assimilation of surrogate forces into the U.S. military on a limited basis. When the U.S. intervenes in a conflict it is

usually for the purposes of creating some sort of stability. This usually entails supporting some foreign entity who will assume the mantle of leadership in the country. However, given the decline of the state system, this may not always be practical. Additionally, foreign groups are difficult to control and may not share in America's desired end state. Hence, the U.S. should consider organizing units whose core is composed of "surrogates," but led by American military personnel. Depending on the level of success of the strategic aims, these surrogates can be transferred to the legitimate government or retained in the U.S. military force structure.

Design and Operational Art: Additional studies are necessary to examine the role of various surrogates in the accomplishment of operational objectives and strategic aims. Examining the historical context and strategic setting of each case is critical to understanding why surrogates were employed, and whether or not they were value added. Attempting to employ surrogates in every situation, so as to pursue an indirect approach, is a recipe for disaster. When the U.S. is able to pursue the indirect approach, then the application of design and operational art will be critical to the employment of surrogates. Understanding what motivates people to fight with or for a foreign government, as well as their potential capabilities, is critical to designing campaigns. Operational art is just as critical to linking surrogate capabilities to the accomplishment of operational objectives. Finally, the U.S. military, and in particular designers and planners, cannot continue to rely on doctrine that limits surrogates to UW and special operations.

Appendix 1: Terms and Definitions

Covert Operation: An operation that is so planned and executed as to conceal the identity of or permit plausible denial by the sponsor. A covert operation differs from a clandestine operation in that emphasis is placed on concealment of the identity of the sponsor rather than on concealment of the operation. (JP 1-02)

Clandestine Operation: An operation sponsored or conducted by governmental departments or agencies in such a way as to assure secrecy or concealment. A clandestine operation differs from a covert operation in that emphasis is placed on concealment of the operation rather than on concealment of the identity of the sponsor. In special operations, an activity may be both covert and clandestine and may focus equally on operational considerations and intelligence-related activities. (JP 1-02)

Foreign Internal Defense: Participation by civilian and military agencies of a government in any of the action programs taken by another government or other designated organization to free and protect its society from subversion, lawlessness, and insurgency. (JP 1-02)

Irregular Forces: Armed individuals or groups who are not members of the regular armed forces, police, or other internal security forces. (JP 1-02)

Irregular Warfare (IW): A violent struggle among states and non-state actors for the legitimacy and influence over the relevant populations. IW favors indirect and asymmetric approaches, though it may employ the full range of military and other capabilities, in order to erode an adversary's power, influence, and will. (JP 1-02)

Surrogate: One who takes the place of or acts on behalf of another. (JP 1-02 and FM 3-05.130). Kelly Smith states that "A surrogate, in its simplest sense, takes the place of something or someone. The surrogate is also a proxy for a particular function or set of functions."²³⁵

Surrogate Force: Allen Day defines a surrogate force as "an indigenous, non-national force."²³⁶

Surrogate Warfare: Allen Day defines surrogate warfare as "a major operation involving an ad hoc relationship between a nation-state and a surrogate force when that force takes the place of a joint force component."²³⁷ Kelly Smith defines surrogate warfare as "the conduct of operations by, with, or through an entity outside of the U.S.

²³⁵Kelly Smith, 24.

²³⁶Allen Day, "Implications of Surrogate Warfare" (Research Report, Naval War College, 2002), 2-4.

²³⁷Ibid.

military that performs specific functions that assist in the accomplishment of U.S. military objectives by taking the place of capabilities that the U.S. military either does not have or does not desire to employ. The key to surrogate warfare is that it is defined by the inclusion of a force on behalf of the United States and not on the tactics or type of organization of one of the belligerents.”

Through, With, and By: Travis Homiak, in his paper entitled “Working ‘Through, With, and By’ Non-US actors to Achieve Operational-Level Security Objectives” defines these terms separately and as a whole. **With:** “Accompanied by or accompanying,” best defines the concept of working “with” another agent. In a relationship defined as working “with,” Actor A works alongside Actor B to address a given problem while providing Actor B with the capacity, will, or both capacity and will required to act. Working “with” another actor is an on-the-scene activity where Actor A is physically present with Actor B, sharing ideas, providing advice, and combining resources.” **Through:** Working “through” refers to achieving an objective “by means of.” Working “through” implies a relationship in which Actor A works behind the scene to provide Actor B with the capacity, will, or both to take action against a given problem, the resolution of which benefits both actors. In a “through” relationship, Actor A employs Actor B as a surrogate, enabling actions intended to resolve a shared problem by precursor counsel, training, equipping, or combination thereof. **By:** “By” is the indirect context’s third and final relationship, promoting achievement of a desired outcome “through the agency or instrumentality of” another. The essence of “by” is that actor B takes action to achieve an objective desired by Actor A, without Actor A necessarily prompting Actor B to do so . . . a relationship characterized as “by” can be the result of having previously worked “through” and “with” an actor, building the capacity and will required for the future action. Thus, working “through” and “with” may be viewed as stepping stones to creating a “self-regulating” system in which actors take care of problems that affect the entire system without the prompting of direct involvement of others to do so.²³⁸

Unconventional Warfare (UW): A broad spectrum of military and paramilitary operations, normally of long duration, predominately conducted through, with, or by indigenous or surrogate forces that are organized, trained, equipped, supported, and directed in varying degrees by an external source. It includes, but is not limited to, guerilla warfare, subversion, sabotage, intelligence activities, and unconventional assisted recovery (JP 1-02). FM 3-05.130 defines unconventional warfare as “operations conducted by, with, or through irregular forces in support of a resistance movement, an insurgency, or conventional military operations.”

²³⁸Travis L. Homiak, “Working ‘Through, With, and By’ Non-US Actors to Achieve Operational-Level Security Objectives” (Thesis, School of Advanced Warfighting, Marine Corps University, 2007), 3-7.

Appendix 2: Key Acronyms

ANC	African National Congress
COIN	Counterinsurgency
DoD	Department of Defense (U.S.)
FAPLA	Armed Forces for the Liberation of Angola
FID	Foreign Internal defense
FNLA	National Liberation Front of Angola
FRELIMO	Liberation Front of Mozambique
IW	Irregular Warfare
JMC	Joint Monitoring Commission
MPLA	Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola
NCO	Non-commissioned Officer
PLAN	People's Liberation Army of Namibia
QDR	Quadrennial Defense Review
RENAMO	Mozambican National Resistance
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SADF	South African Defense Force
SOF	Special Operations Forces
SWA	Southwest Africa
SWATF	Southwest African Territorial Force
SWAPO	Southwest African People's Organization
UDI	Unilateral Declaration of Independence
UN	United Nations

TTL	Tribal Trust Lands
UNITA	National Union for the Total Independence of Angola
U.S.	United States
UW	Unconventional Warfare
ZANLA	Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army
ZANU	Zimbabwe Africa National Union
ZAPU	Zimbabwe African People's Union
ZPRA	Zimbabwean People's Revolutionary Army

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