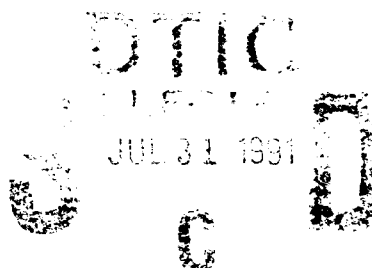


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# **Lessons for Contemporary Counterinsurgencies**

## **The Rhodesian Experience**

Bruce Hoffman, Jennifer M. Taw, David Arnold

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## The Rhodesian Experience

Bruce Hoffman, Jennifer M. Taw, David Arnold

Prepared for the  
United States Army



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# RAND

## **PREFACE**

The research presented here was undertaken as part of a project entitled "Counterinsurgency Campaigning: The Rhodesian Experience," carried out within the Policy and Strategy Research Program of the Arroyo Center at RAND for the Commandant, the U.S. Army Command and General Staff School and the Deputy Chief of Staff for Doctrine, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC).

This report examines the counterinsurgency campaign waged by Rhodesia between 1965 and 1980. Its purpose is to analyze the lessons learned from the Rhodesian conflict and assess the relevance of these lessons both to United States low intensity conflict training and doctrine and to the insurgencies occurring at this time in Central America. The research concentrated on the four areas common to most insurgencies: (1) security force organization and attendant C3 issues; (2) countermeasures to suppress urban terrorism; (3) rural pacification and security; and (4) intelligence collection, collation, and dissemination.

### **The Arroyo Center**

The Arroyo Center is the U.S. Army's federally funded research and development center for studies and analysis operated by RAND. The Arroyo Center provides the Army with objective, independent analytic research on major policy and management concerns, emphasizing mid-to long-term problems. Its research is carried out in five programs: Policy and Strategy; Force Development and Employment; Readiness and Sustainability; Manpower, Training, and Performance; and Applied Technology.

Army Regulation 5-21 contains basic policy for the conduct of the Arroyo Center. The Army provides continuing guidance and oversight through the Arroyo Center Policy Committee, which is co-chaired by the Vice Chief of Staff and by the Assistant Secretary for Research, Development, and Acquisition. Arroyo Center work is performed under contract MDA903-91-C-0006.

The Arroyo Center is housed in RAND's Army Research Division. RAND is a private, nonprofit institution that conducts analytic research on a wide range of public policy matters affecting the nation's security and welfare.

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## **SUMMARY**

### **BACKGROUND**

Today, virtually all the conflicts in the world are what can be defined as low-intensity conflicts (LICs).<sup>1</sup> Despite the prevalence of LICs (and the potential for U.S. involvement in them), the U.S. military is overwhelmingly high tech and geared toward fighting high-intensity conventional war. In particular, U.S. training and advisory personnel reflect a conventional war-fighting orientation, and Third World armies are trained in our own image. As a result, the U.S. military needs to sharpen its approach to dealing with LICs.

The Rhodesian conflict, which ran from 1965 to 1980, is a particularly good case study. Although the Rhodesians ultimately lost the war, they were extremely successful in fighting it at the tactical level; hence, we can learn a great deal from the "lessons" they learned. The Rhodesian campaign had many similarities to current U.S. counterinsurgency efforts in Central America, which enhances the relevance of the lessons. Like most of the insurgent movements in Central America, the two principal black nationalist movements in Rhodesia—the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) and the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU)—had a strong Marxist orientation and were trained and armed primarily by Soviet and Soviet-bloc countries. Like insurgents in contemporary Central American conflicts, those in Rhodesia a decade ago operated in the countryside as traditional guerrilla bands and in the cities as urban terrorists. Moreover, the Rhodesian insurgents used surrounding countries as sanctuaries and bases from which to launch cross-border attacks and infiltrations. Finally, much like the financially hard-pressed Rhodesian security forces, the military and police in many Central American countries function under severe financial constraints, limiting their access to late-model, "high-tech" weapons and to substantial quantities of materiel.

### **LESSONS LEARNED**

#### **Security Force Organization and Attendant C3 Issues**

Because counterinsurgencies are often joint military-civil efforts, the institutional barriers both among the military services and between the military and civilian coordinating agencies must be broken down. This

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<sup>1</sup>Operation Desert Shield is, of course, the main exception.

is especially important at the operational, or tactical, level. In Rhodesia, at least five separate entities—the uniformed police, the police plainclothes Special Branch, the Army, the Air Force, and the government internal affairs department—were directly involved in the counterinsurgency campaign. Accordingly, the Rhodesians adopted a unique command structure, first devised by the British in Malaya, known as the Joint Operations Centre (JOC), which was composed of equally or similarly ranked local commanders and head civil officers for each of the six entities above. The JOC held daily meetings to discuss operations and arrive at consensual command decisions. Although JOCs worked well at the tactical level, the Rhodesians discovered that the system was not effective at the senior command level, where ultimate authority had to be exercised by a single “supreme” commander.

### **Countermeasures Against Urban Terrorism**

Countering urban terrorism, as the Rhodesian case demonstrated, is best handled by the police, who are trained to interact with the public and who therefore typically have better access to human intelligence (HUMINT) sources than the military. Rhodesia was able to suppress urban terrorism mostly because of the information obtained by police from an extensive informer network. Because armies are traditionally uncomfortable with urban operations, the Rhodesian example suggests that a division of labor could be most effective whereby effective policing of the cities frees the military for operations in rural areas. Accordingly, we concluded that the police forces in countries fighting insurgencies should be improved commensurately with the military and that, therefore, Section 660D of the U.S. Congressional Foreign Assistance Act (1974) should be appropriately amended to facilitate U.S. aid to indigenous police.

### **Rural Pacification and Security**

We concluded that low-tech and improvisational solutions can be effective in LICs and that, moreover, the successful prosecution of LICs need not entail huge expenditures. The Rhodesians, for example, made innovative and inexpensive modifications to ordinary military and commercial vehicles that dramatically reduced the deaths and injuries suffered by passengers traveling in vehicles that struck land mines (e.g., filling tires with water and air to dissipate the explosive force). Such modifications had the additional benefit of instilling confidence in the troops and enabled the security forces to retain control over the countryside by defeating the guerrillas' attempts to force the army into

a "garrison mentality" by making road travel dangerous (if not impossible).

The Rhodesians were less successful with civic action programs, such as protective villages and self-defense militias, largely because they were treated as adjuncts to the counterinsurgency and not given the attention and resources that these programs require to be effective. Specifically, the Rhodesians did not spend enough money on government-built villages and did not pay enough attention to the concerns of psychological warfare. And in terms of the self-defense militias, they provided inadequate training and relied on castoff weapons.

### **Intelligence Collection, Collation, and Dissemination**

One of the key lessons that emerged was that HUMINT must be given the highest priority in a counterinsurgency. The Rhodesians successfully targeted both the insurgent infrastructure and its units. In this respect, police intelligence assets, particularly sources and agents developed by Special Branch, were extensively used alongside elite, special operations units, like the Selous Scouts, whose primary mission was intelligence gathering. The Selous Scouts, in fact, were credited with 68 percent of all insurgent kills and captures in their area of operations. Thus, special operations can be valuable not only for hostage rescue or hit-and-run raids, but also for intelligence acquisition.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

The greatest challenge facing the U.S. Army in evolving a credible and coherent LIC doctrine today is overcoming the institutional barriers that inhibit change and adaptation. Certainly, the lessons presented here are neither new nor unique to the Rhodesian conflict. Moreover, the attendant changes required in the U.S. Army training and doctrine to successfully fight LICs have been repeatedly voiced and documented. As demonstrated by the unresolved conflict in El Salvador—and, indeed, the continued inability of the U.S. trained and assisted Salvadoran armed forces to win a complete victory over rebel guerrilla forces—the Army has not absorbed these lessons nor adjusted its dominant conventional war-fighting mindset to the vagaries and complexities of warfare at the low end of the conflict spectrum. The Rhodesian case, accordingly, provides an opportunity not only to "relearn" some of the basic lessons on waging effective counterinsurgencies but also some practical examples of how changes in training, doctrine, tactics, and mindset can be implemented.



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The patience, enthusiasm and unflagging support of the RAND Arroyo Center's communications analyst, Paul Steinberg, contributed immensely both to the project's principal briefing and to this document as well. In the course of many briefing dry runs, RAND colleagues Benjamin Schwarz, Kenneth Watman, Louis Finch, and Mary Morris made many helpful observations and suggestions that further improved this report. We benefitted especially from the very helpful comments made by both Mary Morris and Dr. David Charters of the Centre for Conflict Studies, University of New Brunswick, Canada, who provided technical reviews. Sandy Dougharty and Valerie Bernstein struggled valiantly to text process an unwieldy typescript and Helen Turin brought her considerable editorial skills to bear in polishing the manuscript.

Many former Rhodesian police, army, air force, and intelligence officers currently living in South Africa, Great Britain, Canada, and the United States consented to be interviewed for this study. Many have requested to remain anonymous, but the following can be acknowledged. Dr. Richard Wood, Professor of History at the University of Natal, Durban, South Africa, and a former Rhodesian Intelligence Corps officer, provided considerable vital information drawn from the history of Rhodesia he is writing, particularly from the official papers in his possession of the Rt. Hon. Ian Smith, Rhodesia's Prime Minister during most of the conflict. General Peter Walls, the last commander of Rhodesian forces, consented to be interviewed, and his detailed knowledge greatly enhanced this study. Former Wing Commander Peter Briscoe of the Rhodesian Air Force lent his expertise concerning ground and air force operational tactics.

A final debt of gratitude is owed to the U.S. Army officers and civilian analysts at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff School at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas; the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) Headquarters at Fort Monroe, Virginia; the Strategic Studies Institute of the Army War College at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania; the Department of the Army Headquarters in Washington, D.C.; and, the military officers and civilian analysts in the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low-Intensity Conflict, Washington, D.C., whose comments during various briefings of this project were invaluable in documenting its research results. We are particularly grateful to Mr. Don Vought of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff School at Fort

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None of the people who have helped us, acknowledged or not, are responsible for any errors that may remain.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

### BACKGROUND

The United States today faces a revolution in warfare for which it is unprepared. For more than 40 years, American defense planning has been oriented primarily toward fighting a conventional war along the central front in Europe against the Soviet Union. Recent events in both the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe make this perhaps the least likely conflict that the United States will face in the future. Instead, U.S. security concerns and overseas interests in the coming decades will be increasingly affected by a multiplicity of small-scale, low-intensity conflicts (LICs) occurring throughout the globe that will require a variety of different resources and an array of innovative, flexible policy responses.

The U.S. Army, however, arguably lacks many of the specific skills and capabilities required for low-intensity conflicts. Because of the American military's long preoccupation with the Soviet threat, our forces are overwhelmingly "high-tech" and trained primarily to fight conventional wars. Army planners, therefore, have paid scant attention to the essentially "low-tech" requirements of LICs, assuming as a matter of course that by preparing for the largest (even though it may be the least likely) contingency, a range of responses could be sized downward to fit any lesser contingencies. The American experience in Vietnam further vitiated any interest in LIC, refocusing the Army's attention on its conventional European defense role while firmly relegating LIC to a secondary priority.<sup>1</sup>

The consequences of this pattern of institutional noninterest and neglect are already apparent in El Salvador, the largest recipient of U.S. economic and military aid in Central America, the proclaimed "test case" for the application of U.S. post-Vietnam LIC doctrine,<sup>2</sup> and the country where President Reagan vowed nearly a decade ago to "draw the line" against communist revolution and subversion in the

---

<sup>1</sup>Many of these points form the basis of arguments made by serving or retired U.S. Army officers in Bacevich et al., 1988, *passim*; Lane and Weisenbloom, 1990, pp. 35-39; Hackworth, 1988, pp. 27-32; Hackworth and Sherman, 1989 pp. 612-783; Krepinevich, Jr., 1986, pp. 258-275; and Waghelstein, 1985, pp. vii-ix, among others. An article about the U.S. Army War College's curriculum makes many of these points as well. See Massing, 1990, pp. 28-34.

<sup>2</sup>Waghelstein, Military Group Commander in El Salvador between 1982 and 1983, quoted in Kraus and Carrington, 1986.

Third World. Accordingly, since 1980 the United States has poured more than \$4.5 billion into El Salvador (\$1.3 billion in the form of either direct military assistance or unsubsidized credits)<sup>3</sup> in an effort to defeat the FMLN (Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front). American training teams and advisory personnel have superintended the five-fold expansion, equipping, and training of the 57,000-man Salvadoran armed forces. Yet despite this profusion of aid and expenditure and a reduction in insurgent strength from the mid-1980s high of 12,500 fighters to some 6000-7000 today, General Maxwell R. Thurman, the head of the U.S. Southern Command, recently told Congress that he did not believe the Salvadoran military will ever be able to defeat the FMLN and that the only way to end the conflict was through negotiations.<sup>4</sup> This admission of failure after a decade of intensive U.S. military aid, economic assistance, and civic development provides the clearest illustration of the need for a reassessment of the Army's approach to LICs in general and to counterinsurgencies in particular.<sup>5</sup>

The counterinsurgency campaign waged by Rhodesia between 1965 and 1980 is a good case study for beginning this process because of its many similarities to current U.S. counterinsurgency efforts in Latin America, especially in El Salvador. For example, one of the two principal black nationalist movements in Rhodesia, the Zimbabwe African Peoples' Union (ZAPU), had a strong Marxist orientation and, like the FMLN guerrillas in El Salvador, its insurgents were trained and armed primarily by Soviet and Soviet-bloc countries.<sup>6</sup> In both Rhodesia and El Salvador, the insurgents used surrounding countries as sanctuaries, establishing training camps and logistics bases from which to launch cross-border attacks. General Thurman, in fact, specifically cited the FMLN's use of Honduras as one of the main reasons that the

<sup>3</sup>Lane, 1989, p. 23.

<sup>4</sup>Thurman, 1990, p. 59 (hereafter referred to as Thurman testimony). See also Gordon, 1990.

<sup>5</sup>Compared with the extraordinary costs of the war in El Salvador, the counterinsurgency campaign in Rhodesia was inexpensive. As Beckett describes in Beckett and Pimlott, 1985, p. 185: "By December 1978 the war was costing a million dollars a day, defense expenditure having risen by a staggering 610 percent between 1971-72 and 1977-78. . . . [I]t has been argued that the war was relatively cheap, Rhodesia spending less in 1978 and 1979 than the sum spent on the annual administration of the University of Berkeley, California but, of course, it did not appear to be so to those experiencing it."

<sup>6</sup>Members of the other black nationalist movement, the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), were trained in insurgent tactics primarily by the communist Chinese. Beckett and Pimlott, 1985, pp. 168-169. The insurgents were, of course, also supported by other communist bloc countries as well as such organizations as the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the World Council of Churches, and the Third World lobby in the United Nations.

Salvadoran armed forces would be unable to win a complete victory over the guerrillas.<sup>7</sup> The sanctuary problem was even more acute for Rhodesia, since the insurgents operated from bases in three neighboring countries—Zambia, Mozambique and Botswana. Moreover, in Rhodesia, as well as in El Salvador, the insurgents employed a dual-prong strategy of traditional rural guerrilla warfare alongside a concerted urban terrorism campaign.

The Rhodesian conflict is also among the most recently concluded counterinsurgencies, thus allowing for retrospective and scholarly analysis. Throughout the past decade a growing body of literature, both anecdotal and scholarly, has emerged as many of the principal Rhodesian government and security officials involved in the conflict have published memoirs and journalists and scholars have written studies and analyses of the conflict.<sup>8</sup> In addition, Rhodesia, though geographically a Third World country, possessed an essentially western military establishment and organization based on the British model. Finally, like many financially hard-pressed Third World countries confronted by insurgencies,<sup>9</sup> the Rhodesian security forces functioned under severe financial constraints that limited their access to late model, sophisticated "high-tech" weapons and to large quantities of materiel. The Rhodesians' ability to overcome these constraints by embracing innovative strategies and tactics, including novel techniques in road security, tracking and reconnaissance, small unit tactics, special operations, and intelligence gathering, suggests that the successful prosecution of counterinsurgency need not entail huge expenditure. This point is particularly germane to El Salvador, where the emphasis on conventional weaponry and conventional war-fighting tactics may be misplaced, thus limiting the Salvadorans' effectiveness while increasing their costs.<sup>10</sup>

Admittedly, the Rhodesian conflict is a somewhat problematic case study of a successful counterinsurgency, given that Rhodesia lost the

<sup>7</sup>Thurman testimony, p. 59.

<sup>8</sup>See, for example, Reid-Daly and Stiff, 1982; Flower, 1987; Cilliers, 1985; Cowderoy and Nesbit, 1987; Stiff, 1986; Stiff, 1985; Cole, 1984; Martin and Johnson, 1981.

<sup>9</sup>U.S. aid to El Salvador in 1987, for example, for the first time in the history of the U.S. foreign aid program exceeded a country's own contribution to its budget. The 1987 U.S. aid figure of \$608 million is equal to 105 percent of El Salvador's \$582 million contribution to its own budget. See Hatfield et al., 1987, p. 1.

<sup>10</sup>For example, Rhodesia, with a 1:1 troop/insurgent ratio, spent approximately \$4975 (1987 US) per insurgent in 1979, while El Salvador, with an 8.6:1 troop/insurgent ratio, spent \$21,499 (1987 US) per insurgent in 1987. In other words, El Salvador's expenditure per insurgent in one year was \$16,524 (1987 US) more than Rhodesia's. See Congressional Research Service, 1989, pp. 28-60; Bacevich et al., 1988, p. 5; Cilliers, 1985, pp. 54-55. The equivalent 1987 dollars were derived using the GNP deflator from the 1990 *Economic Report of the President*, p. 298.



war and ceased to exist as a country. The combined effects of international pressure and sanctions, an increasing number of recruits swelling the insurgent ranks toward the end of the conflict, and an anachronistic post-colonial era political system ensured the demise of the Rhodesian white-minority government and the creation of majority-ruled Zimbabwe. Nonetheless, repeated security force tactical successes bought the Rhodesian government the time and leverage that prevented the insurgent forces from ever winning an outright victory. This tactical achievement is all the more impressive given that the balance of government forces to insurgents was roughly 1:1—a ratio far below the 10:1 balance commonly cited as necessary for the effective prosecution of a counterinsurgency.<sup>11</sup>

## RESEARCH APPROACH AND ORGANIZATION

Our research approach was two-fold. We began by examining the wealth of literature, both anecdotal and academic, now emerging from the conflict and then conducted extensive interviews with many of the principals involved in the Rhodesian counterinsurgency effort now living in South Africa, the United States, and Canada. We also interviewed U.S. military officers, intelligence analysts, and diplomatic personnel who have been involved in U.S. counterinsurgency efforts in Central America to obtain their perspective and thoughts on the “lessons” that can be drawn from the Rhodesian conflict.

This report focuses on the four categories of operation common to most counterinsurgencies:

- Security force organization and attendant C3 issues.
- Countermeasures to suppress urban terrorism.
- Rural pacification and security.
- Intelligence collection, collation, and dissemination.

Section II discusses the historical background of the conflict and the two principal insurgent movements. Section III briefly describes the organization and command structure of the Rhodesian security forces and goes on to analyze both urban terrorism countermeasures and rural security operations (including civic action and self-defense measures). Section IV examines intelligence-gathering techniques used by the Rhodesian security forces and the disinformation and destabilization operations. Section V discusses the security legislation enacted by the

<sup>11</sup>See Cilliers, 1985, pp. 54–55; Bacevich et al., p. 5.; Beckett and Pimlott, 1985, p. 186.

Rhodesian government to strengthen its judicial power. The conclusions of this study and lessons learned that may be pertinent to contemporary U.S.-supported counterinsurgency campaigns in Central America and elsewhere are presented in Sec. VI. The various Rhodesian security forces, the measures that the Rhodesian security forces developed to counter insurgent mine warfare, and the cross-border raids carried out by Rhodesian special forces units are further described in the appendixes.

## **II. THE INSURGENCY AND THE BLACK NATIONALIST ORGANIZATIONS**

### **BACKGROUND OF THE CONFLICT**

Although Rhodesia was a British crown-colony before 1965, its constitution, unlike those of the neighboring British colonies, afforded it control over domestic affairs, with Great Britain retaining only the right to intervene in matters involving foreign governments. Even when the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland was formed in 1953, the government of Rhodesia<sup>1</sup> retained control over its own internal affairs, limiting the federal government's responsibility to such matters as defense and foreign affairs.

After the 1956 Suez crisis led the British government to accelerate the granting of independence to its other African colonies, black nationalists in the Federation's three territories began to step up their own demands for an end to colonial rule. As Britain had done in its other African colonies, it granted independence to the two northern territories of the Federation<sup>2</sup> only after assuring, through constitutional legislation, that political power would revert to the black majorities. Britain could take no similar steps in Rhodesia because of that colony's tradition of self-rule. Nonetheless, the British refused to grant Rhodesia its independence until the white-minority government formally began to transfer power to the country's black majority. While in office, the moderate Rhodesian United Federal Party (UFP) had sought to ease tensions with both Britain and domestic black nationalists by agreeing to a new constitution that reserved 15 parliamentary seats for blacks. The blacks, however, rejected the UFP overture as insufficient, arguing that progress toward majority rule would be too slow. Mounting civil unrest, accompanied by increasingly strident black nationalist demands for immediate majority rule, caused the whites to replace the UFP in the 1962 general election with the conservative Rhodesian Front Party, which promised to decelerate the drift toward majority rule and restore law and order in the country. By 1965, talks between Rhodesia and Britain on majority rule and the related constitutional issue had stalled. The Rhodesian government accordingly unilaterally

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<sup>1</sup>Rhodesia at that time was called Southern Rhodesia, while the two colonies to the north were Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland. After the two northern colonies became independent in 1963, Southern Rhodesia was renamed "Rhodesia."

<sup>2</sup>Later, Zambia and Malawi.

declared the country independent of Great Britain (an action popularly referred to as UDI). Britain responded by immediately imposing trade sanctions against Rhodesia, including an oil embargo, that were subsequently embraced by much of the international community as well.

## STRATEGY AND TACTICS

When it became clear that the Rhodesian government was not going to enfranchise blacks nor allow them to organize for political power, the two principal black nationalist groups, the ZAPU and its offshoot the ZANU, began gradually to abandon their reliance on urban riots and demonstrations as a means of pressuring the government and instead directed their efforts toward organizing a rural guerrilla insurgency. 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 and restore order, thereby paving the way for black majority rule. With training, uniforms, and weapons provided by several communist countries, both ZAPU and ZANU began to infiltrate heavily armed groups of guerrillas into Rhodesia from Zambia between 1965 and 1969 (see Fig. 1).

The entire campaign was a complete failure. After crossing into Rhodesia, the insurgents attempted to establish bases in sparsely populated areas. The security forces, however, were able to track them easily and capture or kill the poorly trained insurgent bands before they were able to mount any attacks. The guerrillas were also exposed by Rhodesian police Special Branch agents who had penetrated the nationalist movements and kept Salisbury informed of infiltration plans and guerrilla movement. Finally, the local tribal population either feared the insurgents or were indifferent to their cause and therefore were reluctant to assist them. Thus, the security forces were frequently able to intercept insurgent bands before they even crossed the border and often captured them without a struggle. When the insurgents did attempt to fight, they were devastated time and again.

ZANU recognized the inadequacy of both this strategy and the penalties of poor training and ill-preparedness sooner than ZAPU. As early as 1965, ZANLA (Zimbabwean National Liberation Army) troops (ZANU's army) were withdrawn from the field to be retrained by communist Chinese advisers in Maoist rural guerrilla warfare techniques. ZIPRA (the Zimbabwean Peoples' Revolutionary Army, ZAPU's army), however, stubbornly clung to this strategy of blind rural insurgency until 1969, by which time it had been decimated by the Rhodesians and had to suspend operations for a year to regroup.

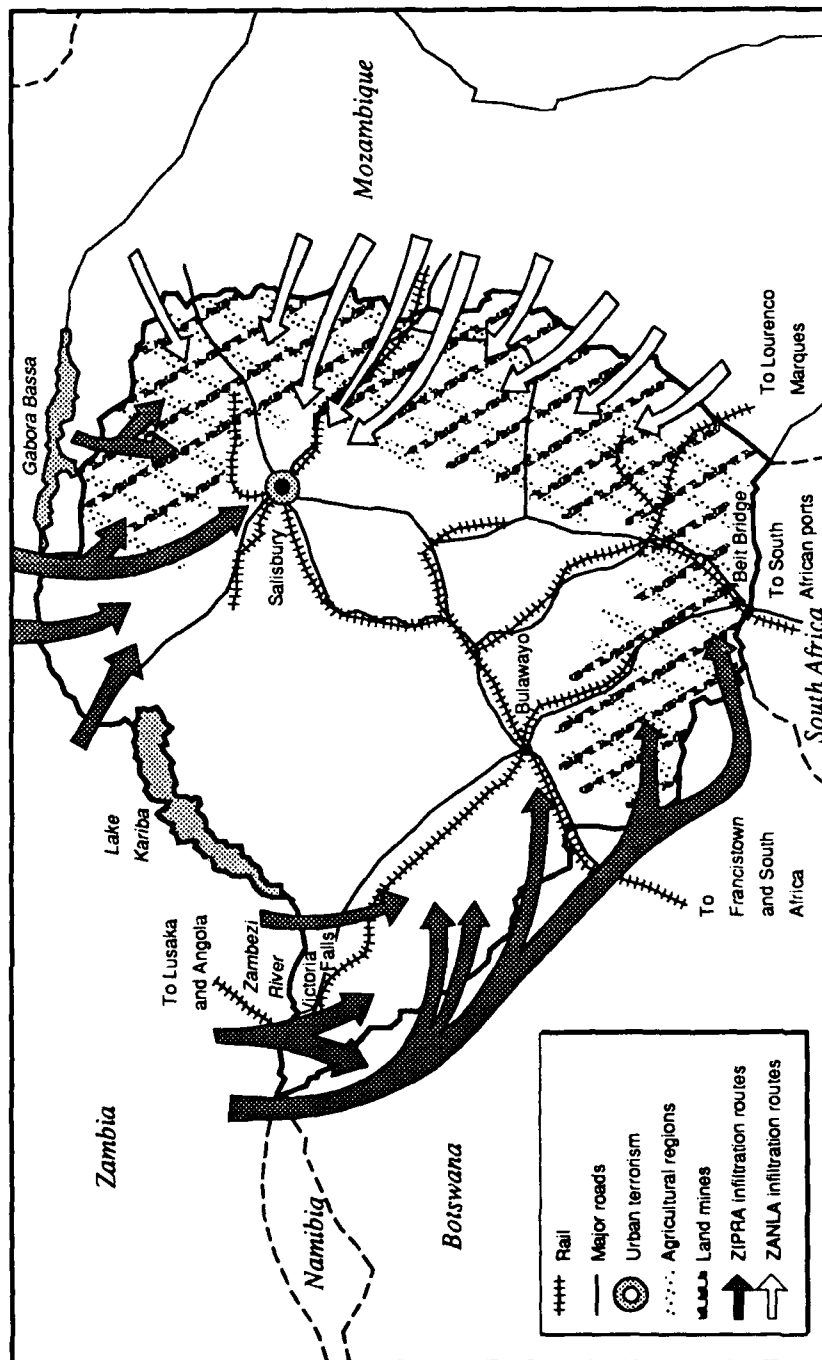


Fig. 1—The war against Rhodesia

By 1970, however, ZIPRA was forced to change its strategy. With the Soviet Union's support and encouragement, ZIPRA began to concentrate on developing a conventional army, while deemphasizing the use of the guerrilla units that hitherto had spearheaded the struggle.<sup>3</sup> Instead of waging the kind of extensive guerrilla campaign inside Rhodesia that ZANLA planned to implement, ZIPRA's goal was to invade Rhodesia with the conventional army it was building and then, after consolidating its control over the country, wipe out its rivals in ZANLA. The invasion plan envisioned two motorized columns, supported by tanks and jet aircraft, entering Rhodesia from Chirundu and Victoria Falls and then converging on Salisbury. Rhodesian intelligence, however, learned of ZIPRA's intentions and preempted the invasion by destroying ZIPRA's staging bases in Zambia. ZIPRA, accordingly, was forced to recommence its infiltration tactics, seeking to obtain support from the Matabele tribal territories as a means of offsetting ZANU's strong popular support in other parts of Rhodesia. ZIPRA also increased pressure on the Rhodesian government by escalating its attacks on white Rhodesian civilian targets. It was responsible, for example, for shooting down two Rhodesian civilian airliners with SAM-7 missiles in 1978 and 1979, killing a total of 107 persons.

In contrast to the Soviet revolutionary warfare doctrine embraced by ZIPRA, ZANLA (as previously noted) was heavily influenced by Mao Zedong's teachings, emphasizing the need to win the loyalty and support of the local population as a prerequisite to a successful rural insurgency. ZANLA, however, was not in a position to implement this strategy until 1971, when it established an alliance with FRELIMO, the black nationalist guerrilla movement then fighting the Portuguese in Mozambique. As FRELIMO already controlled the Tete district bordering northeastern Rhodesia, it was from there that ZANLA inaugurated its offensive operations.

The first ZANLA incursion from Mozambique took place in December 1971, and its fighters were able to operate along the border area for almost a year before the Rhodesian forces learned of their presence.<sup>4</sup> Their success was a direct reflection of how thoroughly and completely the organization's cadres had subverted the tribal territories

<sup>3</sup>ZIPRA did not altogether abandon guerrilla warfare, and until 1972, its insurgents conducted hit-and-run raids across the Zambezi River to mine roads in the game reserves frequented by tourists. Rhodesia retaliated, however, by closing the border with Zambia. Zambia, in turn, closed down the ZIPRA camps. In 1974, ZIPRA opened up new routes into Rhodesia through Botswana. These brought the insurgents directly into the tribal territory of their Matabele brethren who, in addition to providing support, helped ZIPRA elude the security forces. ZIPRA operations, however, continued to be disrupted by Rhodesian security force cross-border raids.

<sup>4</sup>Martin and Johnson, 1981, p. xiv; Cilliers, 1985, p. 221.

adjoining the Mozambican border before moving any fighters into the area. These advance teams spent time and effort in cultivating the local populace, becoming familiar with their traditions and beliefs while gently establishing ZANLA's influence over the tribespeople. Particular attention was devoted to learning about local grievances and then offering practical solutions to these problems. The ZANLA cadres were respectful and tried to interfere as little as possible with tribal routines. Soon, tribespeople were not only helping the insurgents to conceal themselves from the security forces but were providing assistance transporting arms and materiel across the border into Rhodesia.

The greatest dividends, however, were paid in the intelligence network that ZANLA was able to develop among the local populace. The guerrillas were thus able to identify police ground coverage personnel and district commissioner staff, as well as suspected government informers and sympathizers within tribes. The insurgents dealt with the latter in a summary and brutal manner to dissuade others from cooperating with the authorities. In this respect, ZANLA was much more violent in its relations with civilians than ZIPRA. Nevertheless, by fostering this powerful combination of fear and support, ZANLA effectively limited the number of tribespeople willing to inform on the organization.

Although ZANLA began to attack white farms after December 1972, the organization's main emphasis was on mine-laying, both to disrupt rural commercial traffic and to inhibit security force mobility and patrolling (see Fig. 1 for the principal areas of Rhodesian agriculture and insurgent mine-laying). Because Rhodesia's economy was largely based on exports of farm produce from the northeastern border area, ZANLA's mine-laying strategy was a particularly effective form of economic warfare. It was also easy to implement given the combined ease of insurgent infiltration from Mozambique and ZANLA's subversion of the local population. Supporters within the local population, in fact, were often trained by ZANLA to lay the mines themselves.

ZANLA, however, suffered a series of reversals in 1974. Improved Rhodesian rural countermeasures, coupled with a power struggle within the ZANLA high command—engineered by Special Branch—that culminated in the assassination of ZANU's external leader in Zambia, Herbert Chitepo<sup>5</sup> and led to the arrest of ZANLA leaders in Zambia dealt a serious blow to the organization. Nevertheless, the 1973 coup in Portugal that prompted Lisbon's decision to grant independence to Mozambique and Angola assured FRELIMO's eventual control of Mozambique. This unexpected development, combined with a South

<sup>5</sup>This is discussed in greater detail in Sec. IV.

African-imposed cease-fire in Rhodesia, tilted the balance back in ZANLA's favor.

Following the release in 1976 of the leaders imprisoned after Chitepo's assassination, ZANLA renewed its offensive. FRELIMO now governed Mozambique; and during 1977-1978, ZANLA forces were able to expand their area of operations from Tete province to the entire length of the eastern border with Rhodesia. Floods of recruits from Rhodesia joining the insurgent movement were hastily trained and sent back across the border where their sheer numbers began to overwhelm the already hard-pressed and over-stretched security forces. Despite suffering heavy casualties, the ZANLA guerrillas were effective in disrupting Rhodesia's economy by targeting road and rail links with South Africa. Although traffic was never completely stopped, the insurgents were able to overextend the security forces while subverting new tribal areas.

Although ZANLA failed to disrupt the 1979 elections that brought Bishop Abel Muzorewa to power, the insurgents were nevertheless in the ascendancy. Despite agreeing at the British-hosted Lancaster House Constitutional Settlement in 1979 to cease activities and remain in specified assembly points until new elections could be held in Rhodesia, ZANLA sent tribesmen to take the insurgents' places in these areas and thus were able to continue offensive operations. Through both voluntary and coerced tribal support, Robert Mugabe, ZANLA's leader, was accordingly assured electoral victory and in 1980 became Zimbabwe's first Prime Minister.

While the Rhodesian security forces were successful in controlling the insurgency until 1969, by the mid-1970s the situation had changed dramatically. Clearly, several factors were responsible for the insurgents' change of fortunes, not the least of which was the reassessment of strategy and tactics that followed their initial failures. Key, however, was the insurgents' ability to operate from bases in countries bordering Rhodesia. When Zambia shut down ZANLA's bases in that country following Chitepo's assassination, for example, the organization suffered a severe setback. When ZANLA gained access to the Tete district of Mozambique and later to the entire eastern border area, however, its position with regard to Rhodesia was strengthened immeasurably. Internationally, the insurgents were also at an advantage. While Rhodesia functioned under international trade sanctions and was forced to make political and military concessions because of its dependence on South Africa's rail lines and ports, the insurgents did not operate under similar constraints and indeed received advisory and material support from Communist bloc countries. Moreover, while the security forces suffered domestically from a chronic manpower



shortage,<sup>6</sup> the insurgents could draw strength and support from the majority black population and therefore ensure a steady flow of recruits. The insurgents were also generally more familiar with the bush, had a better appreciation of local customs, and were less readily identifiable than most members of the security forces.

Of the two insurgent groups, ZANLA was clearly the more successful. Its form of Maoist rural guerrilla warfare took full advantage of the local population through patience and preparation, blunting the security forces' ability to gather the kind of intelligence on ZANLA that the Rhodesians used so effectively against ZIPRA's conventional force build-up. Instead of emphasizing direct combat, as ZIPRA had intended with its Soviet-trained and influenced standing army, ZANLA avoided engaging the security forces directly and instead sought to win through a strategy of attrition by overextending the Rhodesian forces and by attacking economic targets. Finally, ZANLA's emphasis on gaining the loyalty of the population paid off when national elections were held in Rhodesia in 1980 and Robert Mugabe was voted into office.

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<sup>6</sup>The manpower shortage was in part the result of the Rhodesian authorities' view that the effective ceiling on manpower was the available white male population. Almost 70 percent of the armed forces were black, and 75 percent of the police force was black. But because of the rank structure, its size was constrained by the numbers of available white officers. Also, of the principal strike formations, the Rhodesian Light Infantry and the Special Air Service were all white, and the Selous Scouts were biracial, but led by white officers, imposing further demands for the limited number of white men in the country. See Beckett and Pimlott (eds.), 1985, pp. 173-175.

### **III. SECURITY FORCE ORGANIZATION AND OPERATIONS**

The history of the Rhodesian counterinsurgency is one of constant security force adaptation to new insurgent tactics. At the outset of the conflict, the security forces' excellent intelligence network allowed them to curb insurgent infiltration from Zambia into Rhodesia. Then, as the numbers of insurgents crossing into Rhodesia burgeoned, the security forces formed special tracking teams and emphasized "track and kill" operations to intercept the infiltrators before they could stage any attacks. Although these operations were extremely successful, after the insurgents changed their tactics in 1970, the Rhodesians found that they in turn needed to readjust their countermeasures. Drawing on Britain's experiences in Malaya and Kenya during the 1950s, they developed effective mine-countermeasures,<sup>1</sup> created special units to gather intelligence, penetrated both black nationalist armies, skillfully exploited the rift between ZANLA and ZIPRA, began their own external operations, and developed quick-reaction attack units. The flexibility that the security forces demonstrated in developing these countermeasures was directly responsible for their tactical successes and stands in stark contrast to the counterinsurgencies fought by the Portuguese in Mozambique and, arguably, by the government in El Salvador, where security forces have shown themselves to be more rigidly wedded to inappropriate or ineffective tactics and doctrine.

#### **SECURITY FORCE ORGANIZATION AND ATTENDANT C3 ISSUES**

In 1965, the Rhodesian police still ran virtually all Rhodesian internal defense operations. ZANU and ZAPU were just beginning to supplement their tactics of urban unrest with more serious rural insurgent operations, infiltrating armed groups of communist-trained guerrillas over the Zambian border into Rhodesia. But because Special Branch had so thoroughly infiltrated ZANU and ZAPU, the police were able to stop most incoming insurgents at the border. Aided by the element of surprise, police interdiction was simple and fairly nonviolent. On April 28, 1966, however, the police, supported by Air Force helicopters,

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<sup>1</sup>These are discussed in detail in App. B.

fought the first battle of the war against seven ZANLA insurgents outside the town of Sinoia. The Battle of Sinoia clearly demonstrated the need for cooperation among the various branches of the security forces. The police won the battle decisively, but not without luck. They failed to call in the Army, despite the scope of the action, and did not communicate effectively with the helicopters overhead. Nor were the police themselves adequately armed or trained for military encounters. Accordingly, following the engagement, cooperation among the Air Force, Army, and police was formally institutionalized.<sup>2</sup> The government outlined a system of responses to insurgent actions whereby incidents that progressed beyond the control of a single service would be handled by a special joint operational force representing the police, Army, and Air Force. Thus, the institutional barriers among the military services themselves as well as between the military and civilian coordinating agencies were mitigated.

Accordingly, "Joint Operation Centers" (JOCs)<sup>3</sup> were established throughout the country (see Fig. 2), composed of local commanders of equal or similar rank from each of the armed services who met on a daily basis to determine tactical operation decisions through a process of consensus. The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) and/or Special Branch (and thus the CIO, to which Special Branch was responsible) were also represented on the JOCs, as was the Internal Affairs Department. This was especially important at the tactical level where the lack of any organizational structure to guide joint operations or direct the flow of intelligence from other services could seriously undermine operational performance and success. The JOC system was thus effective in integrating all five entities responsible for Rhodesian defense: the police, the Special Branch, the Army (and its special forces), the Air Force, and the Internal Affairs Department.

<sup>2</sup>The security forces remained subordinate to the government, and thus civil authority, throughout the conflict. In 1965, defense policy was determined by the Security Council, composed of the Prime Minister (as Chairman); leading government ministers of cabinet rank; the commanders of the police, Army, and Air Force; the Director General of the Central Intelligence Organization (CIO); and the Head of the Internal Affairs Department. However, through their direct access to the Prime Minister at council meetings, the various police and military commanders enjoyed virtually the same powers as their civilian counterparts in the cabinet.

<sup>3</sup>The British, under different names, used a system similar to the JOC with considerable success in Malaya, Kenya, and Cyprus during the 1950s. In order to institutionalize this approach, in 1955 the British established a special Joint Army-Police Staff School in Cyprus, which was later replaced by the Internal Security Training Centre. As British counterinsurgency expert Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Julian Paget observes: "These schools did excellent work in developing a joint approach to the campaign, and in training both military and police officers in the operational and staff techniques of counter-insurgency warfare; they also provided a centre for the pooling of ideas and the development of new methods for what was largely a new form of warfare." See Paget, 1967, p. 151.

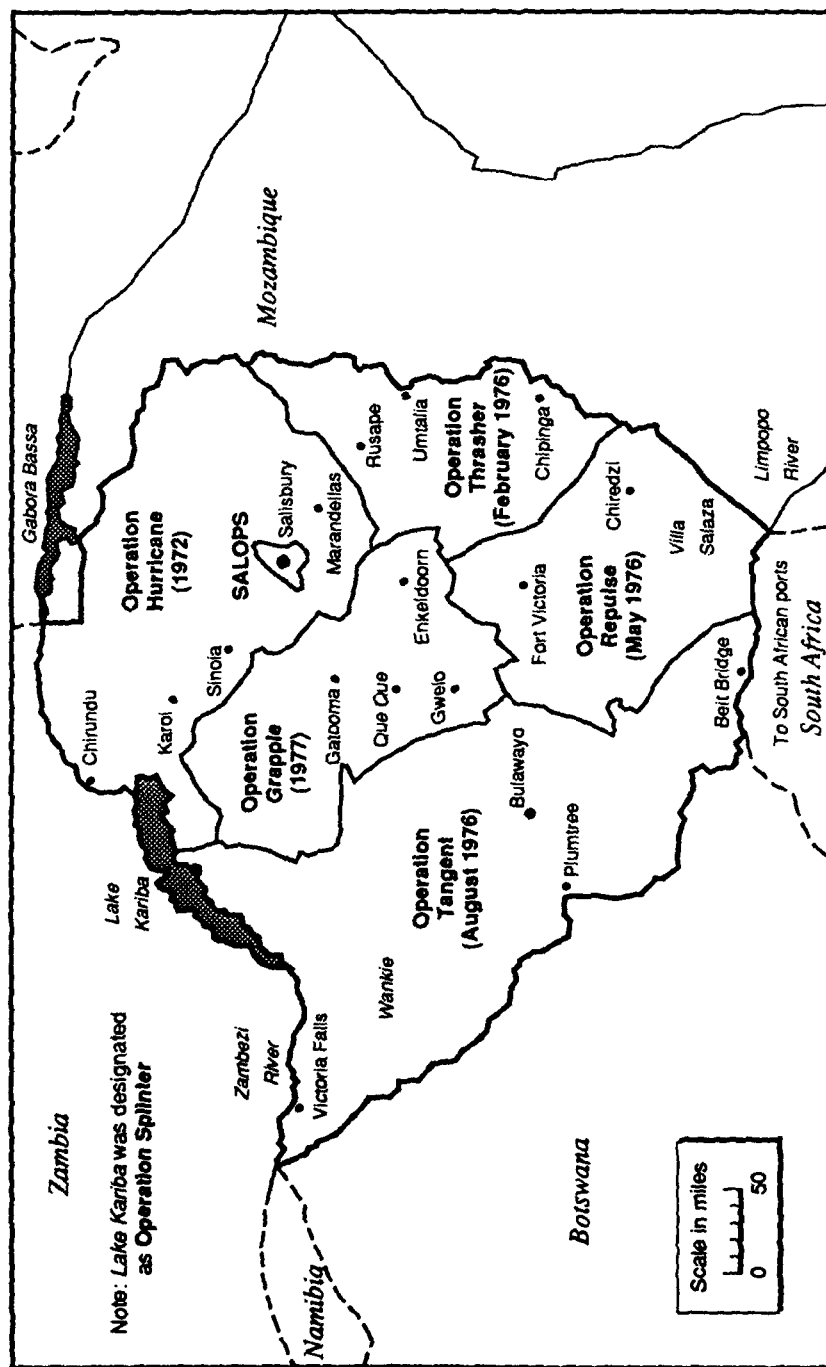


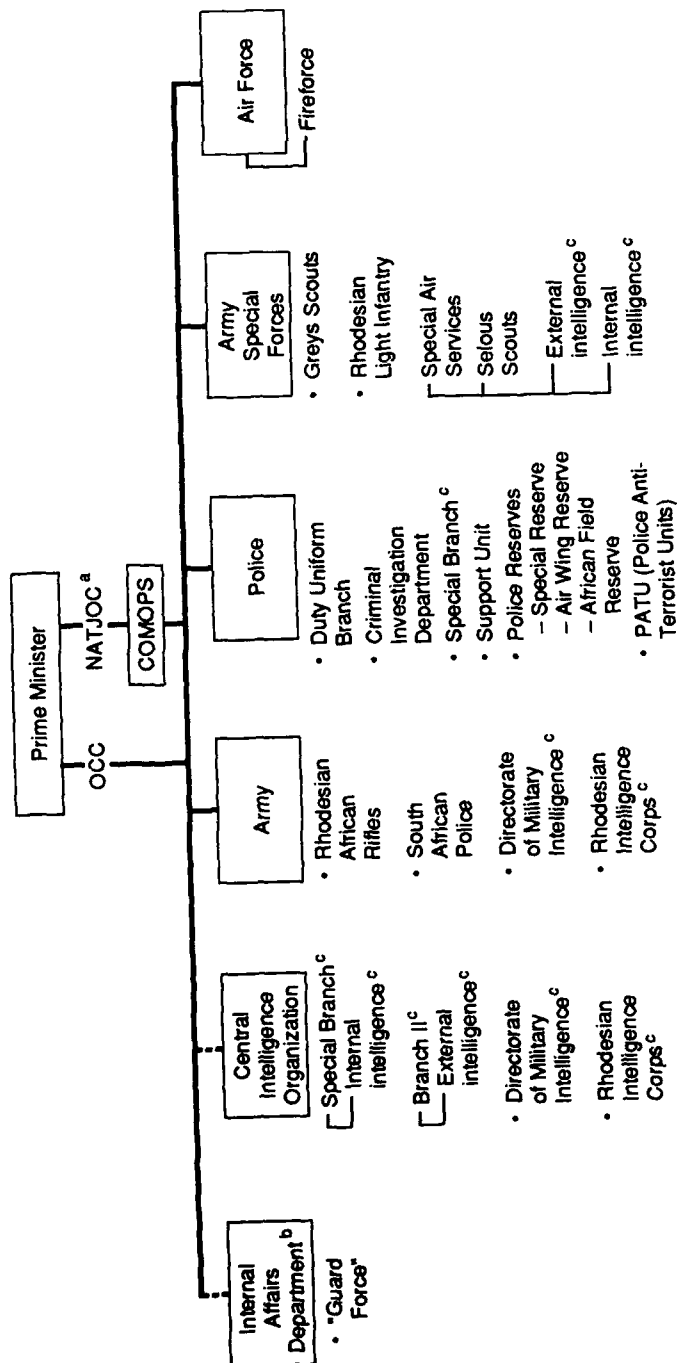
Fig. 2—JOC operational areas, 1972-1979

Until 1977, the Operational Coordinating Committee (OCC) stood at the apex of the JOC system. The OCC was responsible for the planning and execution of all combined security force operations, and its members included the national commanders of the police, Army, and Air Force, as well as the CIO Director General. The problem, apparent through the entire JOC system but especially acute at the most senior level, was that no single commander had overall authority or seniority over fellow committee members. Accordingly, all decisions had to be reached through an arduous system of consensus, with each member retaining the responsibility for ensuring that his service carried out agreed-upon command decisions. Issues that could not be decided in the JOCs and sub-JOCs were thus referred up the command structure to the OCC, where top commanders debated their forces' appropriate role in each operation. Those issues not resolved by the OCC were referred further up the line to the Prime Minister. This resulted in critical tactical delays and meant that security forces were driven by no overall national strategy (see Fig. 3).

In response to this situation and to the tension it engendered between the Army and police in particular, the various services began calling for a "supremo": a single supreme commander with the authority to direct the entire security force structure under a unified strategy.<sup>4</sup> The Prime Minister, Ian Smith, was initially opposed to the idea, arguing that he served as the supreme commander and that the OCC already referred controversial matters to him for policy decisions and subsequent enforcement. Eventually, however, after the services' demands intensified, Smith agreed to establish a more coordinated system of command, eventually creating the Combined Operations Command (COMOPS) in 1977 and appointing Lieutenant General Peter Walls, the Army commander, as its head.

Walls, as head of both COMOPS and the National Joint Operations Center (NATJOC), which replaced the OCC and to which COMOPS reported, was ostensibly endowed with the authority to exercise command over all the security forces and relevant civil agencies. In practice, however, the appointment of a Supreme Commander did little to improve the command situation, since he still lacked any real authority over the other NATJOC members, most of whom had been members of the OCC. For the most part, Walls functioned as little more than a

<sup>4</sup>In their own experiences with the JOC system in Malaya during the early 1950s the British had encountered the same problem. Thus, in 1951, General Sir Gerald Templer was made such a "supremo" with his appointment as both High Commissioner and Director of Operations. Templer is credited with reversing the deteriorating situation in Malaya and ultimately defeating the insurgents. This lesson of the need to have a single individual in overall authority was inexplicably later ignored by the British in Kenya and Cyprus and by the Rhodesians in their own country more than a decade later.



<sup>a</sup> OCC (1972-1977), COMOPS/NATJOC (1977-1980).

<sup>b</sup> The Department of Internal Affairs operated independently after the establishment of COMOPS—the various intelligence services were never unified under either OCC or COMOPS.

<sup>c</sup> Performed by or operated under more than one arm of the security forces.

Fig. 3—Rhodesian security forces

chairman and NATJOC was little more than a looser version of the OCC. Moreover, NATJOC proved itself even less capable of meeting the demands of war than its predecessor organization. To ensure compliance with any directive, the order had to be approved through NATJOC rather than through COMOPS. In other words, directives had to be approved not only by the Supreme Commander but by the relevant security force commanders as well. War by high-level committee continued. The situation was further complicated by the fact that in the reorganization, COMOPS obtained control over the operational planning functions of the various services but did not incorporate their planning staffs. Without the logistical staff necessary for detailed planning, COMOPS should have limited itself to coordinating the overall war effort along broad strategic guidelines. Instead, it became directly involved in the planning and execution of individual operations. The results were a spate of logistical and intelligence problems, animosity between the various security force commanders and the Supreme Commander, and continued neglect of the need for a unified strategic plan.<sup>5</sup>

In the final result, COMOPS did not meet the expectations of the security forces or the government. No doubt the Rhodesians had expected the appointment of a Supreme Commander to yield the success of the similar command structure in Malaya under General Sir Gerald Templer. The fact is that Templer, as High Commissioner in a British colony, had enjoyed an absolute power that could never have been given to a Rhodesian commander. Ian Smith never relinquished his control over the counterinsurgency campaign, and he refused to give free reign to the "supremo." He therefore should have provided more leadership in developing an overall strategy. As it was, the tedious decisionmaking problems of OCC were compounded by the continued degeneration of interservice relations and a further fracturing of the command structure that occurred even after COMOPS was created.

### COUNTERMEASURES AGAINST URBAN TERRORISM

The British South Africa Police (BSAP) was Rhodesia's national as well as metropolitan police force and, like the Rhodesian military, was based on the British model. Its principal units and departments were the Duty Uniform Branch; the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), which was responsible for serious or specialized crimes; Special Branch (SB), which handled all internal political intelligence; a

<sup>5</sup>Cilliers, 1985, pp. 70-71; Reid-Daly and Stiff, 1982, pp. 264, 273.

paramilitary support unit; and the Police Reserve. In addition to the usual police duties of maintaining law and order, the Rhodesian police force was responsible for investigating crimes of subversion and for gathering intelligence on subversive groups and activities.

As the insurgency began to spread in the late 1960s and urban unrest intensified, the police formed 24-hour riot squads: small, mobile stand-by units, manned by regular police on a rotating basis. For effective responses to more serious terrorist incidents, the police also created "Urban Emergency Units," which were widely publicized in hopes of deterring the terrorists from carrying out any attacks. These countermeasures, combined with the police force's usual preventive activities, enabled the BSAP to completely stifle insurgent operations in Rhodesia's cities. This success was mostly the result of information obtained by police from an extensive informer network, combined with effective public awareness campaigns.

Police intelligence was used to detect and apprehend terrorists and suspected terrorists, to uncover terrorist safehouses and arms caches, to undermine local support, and to disrupt terrorist communication and planning. Special Branch's network of informants and intelligence sources was so good that insurgents traveling to Salisbury merely to visit relatives and not for any operational purposes were often intercepted and arrested before they even entered the city. Bombings were effectively deterred by posting security guards to control access to shops, stores, and businesses; teaching emergency procedures and search methods to businessmen and shop clerks; and encouraging the public to report any unattended parcels or suspicious objects.<sup>6</sup>

## RURAL PACIFICATION AND SECURITY

The Rhodesian counterinsurgency campaign demonstrated that low-tech and improvisational solutions can be effective in LICs and that it is not necessary to spend huge amounts on sophisticated high-tech weaponry and materiel. Like most contemporary Third World countries confronted with the costs of fighting a protracted insurgency, Rhodesia had limited financial resources to draw upon. The international trade sanctions and arms embargo imposed on the country throughout the conflict placed an additional burden on the already financially constrained security forces. Thus, the Rhodesians were compelled to discover low-cost, adaptive, and novel solutions to a variety of logistical and operational problems.

<sup>6</sup>These methods were derived from those developed by the British in Northern Ireland.



### Countering Landmines

One of the most serious threats to Rhodesia, for example, was the landmines laid by guerrillas on roads throughout the country's principal farming areas. Like many Third World countries, Rhodesia's economy was based on agricultural exports. Hence, it was vital that the roads and communications links criss-crossing the country's farm region be kept open to both commercial traffic and security force patrols. The threat was not only economic but political and psychological as well. The Rhodesian governmental apparatus, for example, was breaking down in many areas as officials found it increasingly difficult to travel in areas with heavy insurgent activity. More serious, however, were the potential effects that the mining could have on security force mobility. The Rhodesians had been horrified to discover that similarly widespread insurgent mining of roads in Mozambique had reduced the mobility of their Portuguese counterparts in that country and had turned them virtually into a "garrison army" whose personnel feared leaving their fortified barracks and posts to go out on patrol.

Engineers in the Rhodesian police force and Army devised several innovative and inexpensive modifications to ordinary military and commercial vehicles that dramatically reduced the deaths and injuries suffered by passengers when these protected vehicles struck mines. Indeed, mine-related casualties were reduced by 90 percent and injuries by 20 percent.<sup>7</sup> These simple measures included filling tires with water and air to dissipate explosive force, designing wheels that would blow clear of the vehicle and thus not damage the axle, and mounting special, V-shaped capsules on chassis to deflect the blast. Not only were they effective in keeping the roads open to traffic and bolstering security force morale, but they also enabled the Rhodesians to take back and retain control of the countryside and thereby deprived the guerrillas of the freedom of movement essential to their operations.<sup>8</sup>

### Overcoming Tracking Problems

The security forces were similarly successful in overcoming some of the difficulties inherent in tracking small guerrilla units and bands of

<sup>7</sup>Statistics presented in Stiff, 1986, indicate 2,405 landmines had been detonated, killing 632 people and injuring another 4,029. Mine-resistant and protected vehicles were involved in 1,824 of these detonations, while transporting 12,939 occupants. Of these, only 155 were killed and 2,881 injured. By comparison, vehicles without protection detonated 581 mines while transporting 4,134 occupants: 477 persons were killed and 1,148 were injured. The majority of deaths and injuries in detonations involving mine-resistant or protected vehicles were the result of passengers not being properly strapped in or drivers exceeding the recommended 18 mph speed limit.

<sup>8</sup>See App. B.

infiltrators through rough country in harsh climatic conditions. Within the Army, special four-man tracking teams were organized and trained for extended operations in the bush. The tracking teams worked in threes: one group in pursuit of the guerrillas, one following the trail backward in hopes of encountering other guerrillas or discovering a hidden arms cache or valuable insurgent documents, and one leap-frogging ahead to try to pick up the trail more quickly. The teams were supported by a larger section of troops, who would move forward and engage the insurgents once they were located by the trackers.

Botanists, recruited from local universities, taught the trackers how to live off the land (as the guerrillas did), recognize changes in an area's natural ecology that would indicate a guerrilla presence, and identify from broken brush or faintly trampled grass the tell-tale signs of movement. Instead of fatigues and combat boots, the trackers wore tennis shoes and shorts. Increased comfort while operating in the often intense midday heat was not the only reason for this attire. Tennis shoes made less noise than boots, were lighter, and made less of an imprint on the ground, thus making it more difficult for the trackers themselves to be tracked. Similarly, by wearing shorts, the trackers were forced to walk *around the brush*, rather than through it, reducing both noise and physical signs of movement. There is perhaps no better example of the Rhodesians' commonsense approach to complex problems than the special communications gear used by the trackers to maintain contact with one another: ordinary, inexpensive dog whistles. Though inaudible to the untrained human ear, the whistles were an effective means of communication between persons attuned to its distinctive pitch.<sup>9</sup>

### **Fireforce Operations**

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. Using helicopters provided by South Africa, the Rhodesian Air Force devised this particularly effective means of vertical envelopment.<sup>10</sup> The original Fireforce typically consisted of four Alouette III helicopters, each manned by a pilot and technician/gunner. Three of the helicopters, referred to as "G-cars," were used to transport four fully equipped troops, while a fourth helicopter, called the "K (for kill)-car," carried a pilot who was the senior Air Force officer, a gunner-

<sup>9</sup>Reid-Daly, 1989, pp. 157-158.

<sup>10</sup>This section has been compiled from personal knowledge, material from Cowderoy and Nesbit, 1987, pp. 49-69, and interviews with the former Officer Commanding, RLI, and Wing Commander P. Briscoe.

technician, and the Army unit commander, who directed the operations below. The "K-car" could also be used as a gunship when required (hence, its appellation).

The four helicopters were supported by a fixed-wing aircraft equipped with rockets and machineguns. In the early stages of the conflict, this was usually a single-engine Aermacchi-Lockheed AL-60 Trojan. A particularly noisy aircraft, the AL-60 generally preceded the helicopters, effectively blotting out the noise of their engines and helping to maintain at least a modicum of surprise about the impending ground attack. The initial helicopter-deployed contingent of 12 Rhodesian Light Infantry or LRI, the Rhodesian Army's commandos, or paratroops would be supported by additional ground troops, who also carried fuel for the helicopters.

Later in the conflict, the regular Fireforce unit was expanded to six helicopters and was referred to as a "Jumbo Fireforce." This number of helicopters and troops was about as large as a single commander could effectively control. Other variations consisted of a heliborne mortar unit that would be deployed from the "G-car," which would then act as the unit's aerial spotter.<sup>11</sup> The lack of helicopters prevented the creation of more Fireforce units as the insurgents increased their area of operations. To relieve the situation, a stick of paratroopers was added to each Fireforce complement. The paratroopers were transported over the targeted area in a World War II-era DC-3 Dakota fixed-wing transport plane and then dropped to support the smaller heliborne-deployed force already on the ground.

The Fireforce was used most successfully in tandem with information on insurgent locations obtained from static observation posts, Selous Scouts "pseudo-operations,"<sup>12</sup> and other ground intelligence sources. As an immediate reaction force, it could be also scrambled whenever any ground forces required support. This was a great morale builder for the average soldier, who knew that assistance was only 30 minutes away at the most. 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.

### **Police Anti-Terrorist Units**

The increasing demands placed on the Army's limited number of combat personnel led to the formation of special Police Anti-Terrorist

<sup>11</sup>Cowderoy and Nesbit, 1987, p. 66; interview with Wing Commander P. Briscoe.

<sup>12</sup>These are discussed in detail in Sec. IV.

Units (PATU) for service in rural areas. Each PATU consisted of five policemen who were released from their routine duties for two-week operational tours in the bush. The teams lived in encampments that functioned as temporary police stations, complete with prisoner facilities. The PATU's mission was to maintain order, enforce the law, and gather intelligence. The police teams were especially effective in areas not yet subverted by the insurgents, where the local population was generally cooperative. Because they felt secure and protected, these villagers or tribespeople often readily provided information on insurgent movement and activities. Most PATU teams, however, were deployed in areas that had been thoroughly subverted by the insurgents and thus could accomplish little. If not already sympathetic to the guerrillas, the local population in these areas were nonetheless reluctant to cooperate with the authorities for fear of insurgent reprisals. The PATU were therefore relegated to carrying out trivial patrol duties rather than fulfilling the active counterinsurgent role that was their primary mission.

In addition to the PATU, police reservists performed static guard duties in rural areas as part of the "Bright Lights" program. Their task was primarily to protect isolated farms from guerrilla attacks. The program was difficult to maintain, however, as manpower demands throughout the entire security force structure intensified. As an alternative in one area, PATU sticks would conduct random night-patrols of farms, checking the black workers' compounds as well as the farmers' residences. This tactic was largely effective in deterring insurgent attacks on the farms since the guerrillas never knew where or when the PATU sticks would be patrolling. The police also regularly organized convoys to protect commercial traffic along rural roads and were responsible for developing the first mine countermeasures.<sup>13</sup> As a result of these measures, the insurgents were never able to fully close down the country's roads.

### **Small Unit Tactics and Special Operations**

The Rhodesians' emphasis on special operations for both tactical objectives and intelligence gathering<sup>14</sup> stands in stark contrast to the prevailing military view of special operations as an adjunct to conventional operations and not as a viable and independent instrument of war. The Rhodesians' heavy reliance on small, elite special operations units admittedly was dictated by manpower shortages and the overall

<sup>13</sup>See App. B.

<sup>14</sup>These are discussed in detail in Sec. IV.

strain imposed on the country's already outnumbered and overcommitted security forces. Indeed, approximately 50 percent of all regular training was in the form of small-unit tactics.<sup>15</sup> Nonetheless, the weaknesses that necessitated this approach actually proved to be a source of strength in prosecuting an effective counterinsurgency and reemphasizes the ineluctable axiom that small, lightly armed and highly mobile guerrilla bands are best fought by similarly small, lightly armed and highly mobile government forces.

Rhodesian special operations units, for example, carried out 42 cross-border raids (and provided information crucial to the success of five Rhodesian Air Force attacks) of which all but five were complete successes.<sup>16</sup> Two of the five failures resulted from poor intelligence, including the April 1979 attempt to kidnap ZIPRA leader Joshua Nkomo. More than 4,000 insurgents were killed in the 23 operations that specifically targeted the enemy units whereas total security force casualties were only 19 killed or wounded. Of the remaining 19 operations, 15 involved the destruction of insurgent assets and four the kidnapping of enemy commanders or senior political officials. The Rhodesians also used these raids as a means to exploit rivalries within insurgent organizations, upset relations between the organizations and their host governments, and dissuade those governments from providing assistance to and supporting the insurgents' struggle.<sup>17</sup> Certainly, the most successful operation was the 1975 assassination of Herbert Chitepo, head of ZANLA's political department, in Lusaka, Zambia. The former head of the Rhodesian CIO estimated that the operation set ZANLA back two years in its struggle against Rhodesia.<sup>18</sup>

### **Cordon Sanitaire**

The Rhodesians were less successful with operations that suffered more distinctly from a lack of clear and consistent military strategy at the national level. Given the Rhodesians' serious deficiencies in manpower and material, unrealistic assessments further undermined the security forces' performance. These operations seemed to develop identities independent of reasonable strategic considerations and were initiated, and often prolonged, with neither sufficient regard for resource constraints nor clearly defined, broad strategic objectives.

<sup>15</sup>Beckett, 1985, p. 176.

<sup>16</sup>For details of these raids, see App. C.

<sup>17</sup>These are discussed in detail in Sec. IV.

<sup>18</sup>Beckett, 1985, p. 179.

The "Cordon Sanitaire" (or Corsan),<sup>19</sup> for example, was originally envisioned as a physical obstacle to prevent insurgent infiltration. From the start, however, its effectiveness was problematical and little was done to modify its defects. Minefields were planted along 518 miles of the Mozambican border, with the intention of creating a depopulated, mined, fenced, and patrolled area that would either deter insurgent infiltrators or at least make it easier for intruders to be discovered and tracked from footprints left in the soft, raked earth. In practice, however, mines were often detonated by animals or uncovered by rain, rendering them ineffective.

The reason for the barrier's failure was mainly the lack of manpower devoted to patrolling it. Whereas control points were supposed to be established every six miles from which reaction forces could be deployed, too few personnel were assigned to patrol the Corsan. Thus, even when insurgents detonated mines, the remainder of their infiltration party was often able to escape back across the border before security patrols arrived. The insurgents even found ways of breaching the Corsan by digging trenches across it that similarly went undetected because of infrequent security force patrols.

### CIVIC ACTION MEASURES

The Rhodesians had less success with various rural civic action programs. Although the extremely limited finances available for these programs partly explains their failure, the Rhodesian military's tendency to treat civic action as an adjunct or afterthought and not as an integral part of the counterinsurgency campaign irrevocably undermined any prospect of their success. The protected villages program, for example, was modeled on the highly successful British system that had been implemented in Malaya 20 years before. Yet the Rhodesians ignored several important lessons of the British experience.<sup>20</sup>

The Malayan protected villages program, for example, had been the cornerstone of the British government's "hearts and minds" campaign to wean popular support from the communist guerrillas. Its success

<sup>19</sup>See Cilliers, 1965, p. 113.

<sup>20</sup>Sir Robert Thompson, one of the architects of the Malayan program, argues that the United States ignored the same lesson in Vietnam. The strategic hamlet program before 1969, he points out, concentrated on the areas of the country most heavily infiltrated by Viet Cong and North Vietnamese forces and failed miserably as security declined and the American commitment increased. When U.S. pacification efforts focused on the less-contested areas between 1969 and 1971, the local population's self defense forces were able to maintain security, thus allowing the Army to fight the insurgents in the strategically more important regions. See Thompson, 1979, p. 13.

was based on the premise that only when the people felt secure and protected from the guerrillas would they cooperate fully with the government. The British also recognized that the program had to be aggressively and effectively "sold" to persons who were being forced to leave their traditional homes and resettle in new government-built villages. Accordingly, the government embraced a two-pronged approach involving actual physical measures to improve the relocated villagers' standard of living—electricity, indoor plumbing, etc.—alongside a sophisticated psychological warfare campaign directed by an information department that the government created specifically for this purpose.

In Rhodesia, however, the "hearts and minds" dimension of the British approach seemed only an ancillary objective. Rather than providing for the security of the civilian population, the Rhodesian military saw the protected villages as a means of relocating persons from one part of the country to another to create depopulated, rural "free fire" zones where the security forces could operate with impunity. This misplaced emphasis is apparent in the minimal amount of money that the Rhodesians spent on the new villages and the attendant failures either to improve the relocated tribespeople's standard of living or to develop an organized pro-government psychological campaign. Worse still, once the tribes were settled into their new villages, the government provided little if any protection from guerrilla attack or intimidation.<sup>21</sup>

Although the Army's neglect of civic action was the inevitable consequence of inadequate finances and an overcommitted military establishment already stretched thin by an escalating insurgency, institutional inertia combined with an almost reflexive inclination to discount the importance of nonmilitary countermeasures played a considerable role as well. The same organizational apathy, for example, thwarted Operation Favor, the government-sponsored self-defense program. Local militias were armed with castoff, antiquated weapons and accorded only the most rudimentary training, rendering them incapable of defending either themselves or their villages. The militias were further disadvantaged by their personnel: unemployed men from urban areas who were recruited without regard for their lack of tribal affiliations with the people they were defending or familiarity with the bush. The militias consequently

<sup>21</sup>See Beckett, 1985, pp. 180–181; and Cilliers, 1985, p. 88. Cilliers describes "consolidated villages," a tactic used briefly after the cost of building and maintaining protected villages rose too high. The population in consolidated villages remained completely unprotected, and were simply concentrated in a single location to keep them out of the way of the security forces. Insurgents thus attacked these villages freely, burning them to the ground and sending their inhabitants fleeing into the bush, effectively negating the security forces' wishes to create free fire zones.

lost credibility with the populace, particularly after they began to harass and intimidate the tribespeople they were supposed to be protecting.

The militias also performed poorly against the insurgents. Moreover, the ease with which the guerrillas disarmed the militiamen sowed suspicion within the security forces about the militia's loyalty and dependability. Thus, rather than providing an additional layer of protection for the villages, the way in which the Rhodesians organized, equipped, and supported the militias made the villages doubly vulnerable: They were specifically targeted by the guerrillas (who saw them as a threat to their rural hegemony) and distrusted by the security forces (who regarded them as potential, if not actual, "fifth columnists") who refused to come to the militias' aid when the villages were attacked.



## IV. INTELLIGENCE

One of the greatest weaknesses of the Rhodesian counterinsurgency campaign was its lack of emphasis on military intelligence. Before 1973, Rhodesian intelligence was almost exclusively the responsibility of the Central Intelligence Organization, which was divided into 11 branches, the two most critical being internal and external intelligence. Internal intelligence fell under the domain of the Special Branch, headed by the Director of Internal Affairs, administered through the police, but ultimately controlled by the CIO. Branch II, or external intelligence, operated independently of the rest of the intelligence community and was responsible primarily for psychological and propaganda programs, including disinformation.<sup>1</sup>

The Army developed no real independent intelligence capabilities and, until 1975, relied completely on Special Branch. This accorded with the wishes of the Rhodesian Treasury Department and the CIO, neither of which saw any reason for the Army to have a separate intelligence organization: the former seeking to minimize duplication and expenditure and the latter regarding the establishment of an independent military capability as a threat to its own existence. The Army had representatives at the CIO who were responsible for providing insight and advice regarding the military's intelligence requirements. Nonetheless, all Army intelligence requests were generally routed through Special Branch, which had control over, and access to, sources in any given area of the country. Special Branch's monopoly was such that its agents were responsible for briefing the Army on relevant intelligence and even for the interrogation of insurgents captured by the Army.<sup>2</sup>

Although Special Branch had been particularly effective in blunting any concerted urban terrorist campaign through its penetration of the insurgent forces' internal infrastructure, it was considerably less successful in providing the Army with the hard tactical intelligence that its combat units required. Special Branch agents, trained in the police tradition, had too little knowledge of the military to be able to adequately tailor their processing of information and intelligence to the

<sup>1</sup>Cilliers, 1985, pp. 218-219. For a full account of the Rhodesian intelligence community, see Cilliers, 1985, pp. 218-237; Flower, 1987, and Reid-Daly and Stiff, 1982, pp. 74, 330-331.

<sup>2</sup>Military-police intelligence-sharing and cooperation would be another area where something along the lines of the Joint Army-Police Staff School/Internal Security Training Center that the British used in Cyprus would have had an application.

Army's needs.<sup>3</sup> Their external intelligence network had also dried up by 1972 (as evidenced by ZANLA's successful subversion of the northeastern border region), drastically reducing the flow of information to the military. In response to these problems, the Army created the Directorate of Military Intelligence (MID) in 1973, under the auspices of the CIO, to which the Director of MID reported. Under MID, territorial soldiers (reservists) were charged with gathering and analyzing military intelligence. This approach proved ineffective because of the reservists' general lack of training or experience in intelligence matters. The problem was further compounded by Special Branch's refusal to work with MID and the Army's continued dependence on Special Branch intelligence, which undercut support for its own intelligence staff.

In 1975, the Army made a second attempt to improve operational intelligence, creating the Rhodesian Intelligence Corps (RIC), which assumed MID's limited responsibility for internal military intelligence. RIC was also controlled by the CIO, which had acceded to its formation only on the condition that the RIC would be controlled by Special Branch. Although RIC fulfilled its purpose to some extent, deploying a small number of RIC/Special Branch personnel into the field to collect and process operational intelligence, most RIC members, once trained, were assigned to brigade headquarters. At this level, RIC members were relegated to updating maps and conducting unsophisticated research.

These problems with intelligence were further exacerbated by the lack of military coordination at a national level. When COMOPS replaced the OCC in 1977, only a small intelligence section was created that lacked the capacity or authority to collect and collate intelligence from the other intelligence organizations. This led to a great deal of redundancy among the various intelligence services, which included not only the RIC, CIO, MID, Special Branch, and the COMOPS planning team, but the intelligence sections of the special forces units (such as the Selous Scouts and Special Air Service), as well as such intelligence support organizations as the Joint Services Photographic Interpretation Staff (JSPIS, responsible for aerial reconnaissance). Although an attempt was made in the early 1970s to coordinate the intelligence sections of the special forces under a single organization, the Director General of the CIO was afraid of losing control of the internal intelligence obtained from pseudo-operations and quashed the proposal.

<sup>3</sup>This was directly responsible for the security forces' failure to recognize either the insurgents' changing tactics after 1970 or the development of the ZANLA/FRELIMO alliance—two critical turning points in the conflict. Cilliers, 1985, p. 220.

## INTERNAL SECURITY AND INTELLIGENCE GATHERING

Internal security and intelligence gathering remained the responsibility of the police Special Branch throughout the counterinsurgency campaign because of the symbiotic relationship between intelligence-gathering operations and routine police investigative work. Indeed, the police require information, whether to solve crimes or to uproot insurgencies. Both functions call for informer networks, infiltration by undercover agents, and good police-civilian relations. A great deal of intelligence in fact came from the Criminal Investigation Department and uniformed police, both of which were encouraged to report anything of even remote interest to Special Branch. The CID often obtained intelligence from criminal informants as well as from investigations of contraventions of the Law and Order Maintenance Act, which included sabotage, possessing arms of war, etc.

The police also retained responsibility for internal intelligence because of the correlation between a heavy police presence and civilian cooperation with the police. For example, it was more difficult for insurgents to penetrate those areas of Rhodesia in which there were frequent police patrols, not only because the police could readily detect unfamiliar faces and recognize unusual activity, but also because the local population was more likely in such areas to report strangers and suspicious behavior. As soon as the police presence in an area was reduced, however, civilian cooperation decreased or was lost altogether.<sup>4</sup> The neglect of much of Rhodesia's northeastern border region by the police facilitated ZANLA's complete subversion of the area. Indeed, once an area was subverted, Special Branch almost immediately lost access to all informants and thus could make little contribution to internal intelligence.

Special Branch relied on informants and other human sources to obtain intelligence. The country's rural population in particular provided a considerable amount of voluntary information concerning the presence of insurgents or persons who had committed political crimes.<sup>5</sup> But, as previously noted, this intelligence began to dry up after 1972, as insurgent infiltration increased and government control over, or influence in, the rural parts of Rhodesia receded.

Special Branch was already having problems with its informant net before 1972. Between 1962 and 1969, Special Branch agents had penetrated the highest levels of both ZANU and ZAPU.<sup>6</sup> Intelligence

<sup>4</sup>Personal experience of one of the authors during PATU border patrols in Mtoko area, 1971-1974.

<sup>5</sup>Interview with a former Special Branch Officer, September 1989.

<sup>6</sup>Flower, 1987, p. 105.

supplied by these agents initially enabled Special Branch and the police to arrest insurgent groups entering the country before they were even able to commence their operations. Special Branch also used agents of influence, who were employed to try and redirect the organizations' strategies and policies in a manner beneficial to Rhodesia. By 1969, however, Rhodesian intelligence penetration of both ZANLA and ZIPRA had virtually ceased. Moreover, in the years that followed, neither the CIO nor Special Branch managed to obtain the same level of infiltration and influence it had over the insurgent organizations during the 1960s. One of the reasons for this difficulty was ZANLA's increased recruitment activity among tribes in the northeastern border area where the police generally had less coverage and Special Branch fewer assets. At the same time, however, Special Branch was able to maintain its effective intelligence networks throughout the conflict in the country's urban areas. Informers were situated at all the nationalist parties and local community organizations and were able to provide a steady flow of information.

### SPECIAL OPERATIONS—INTELLIGENCE GATHERING

As police difficulties in obtaining information from the rural population increased in the early 1970s, the Rhodesians began to investigate alternative intelligence-gathering techniques and sources. By 1973, their attention had fastened on so-called "pseudo" (or "counter-gang") operations. This technique, whereby security force personnel posing as insurgents circulate among the population gathering information on guerrilla movement and activities as well as on local sympathies, had been pioneered by the British during the Mau Mau uprising in Kenya nearly two decades before.<sup>7</sup> The Rhodesians experimented with "pseudo" units as early as 1966, but this inchoate effort was both unsophisticated and unnecessary, given that the vast majority of rural blacks at the time were either politically indifferent or opposed to the insurgents.<sup>8</sup>

In the rapidly deteriorating security conditions of the 1970s, however, the idea was resurrected. With the encouragement of the Prime Minister and senior CIO and Special Branch officials, a new unit

<sup>7</sup>General Sir Frank Kitson, then a major in the British Army serving in Kenya, is credited with developing and implementing the pseudo-gang principle. Kitson, 1972, pp. 3-68; and 1960, *passim*. During the Vietnam War, special Vietnamese units known as "Tiger Scouts," former Viet Cong who had defected to the government side, performed a similar intelligence and reconnaissance function. See Hackworth, 1988, p. 30.

<sup>8</sup>Pseudo gangs were also used by the Portuguese in Mozambique. These black intelligence-gathering units were called "Flechas," a proportion of whose members were former guerrillas. See Beckett and Pimlott, 1985, p. 149.

known as the Selous Scouts was established in November 1973. For administrative purposes, the Scouts were placed within the Rhodesian Army's command structure, though the Special Branch commander coordinated and directed the unit's intelligence-gathering function. Some of the original pseudo operatives joined the new force, and additional personnel were recruited from the Army and Special Branch. Captured or surrendered insurgents were also enlisted. Their inclusion provided for the constant flow of up-to-date information on insurgent operations and behavior necessary for the Scouts' successful charade.

The Rhodesians spent a great deal of time and effort on "turning" insurgents—that is, persuading them to switch allegiance and serve with the government forces. Their approach was patterned on the methods that had been used so successfully in Kenya. Prospective candidates were thoroughly screened and then given the choice of joining the Scouts or facing prosecution under Rhodesian law for terrorist crimes (conviction for which carried the death penalty or long prison terms). Those who chose to join the Scouts were formally absolved of any crimes they may have committed while serving in the insurgent ranks, were paid an attractive salary, and had their families relocated to special, protected, and comparatively luxurious Selous Scouts' encampments. Previously "turned" insurgents—who provided living proof of the benefits of service with the Scouts—were often used to persuade their recently captured or surrendered former comrades to join the unit. Selous Scouts recruiters also looked for prospective candidates among wounded insurgents. These casualties would be earmarked for special treatment. They would be quickly evacuated from the battlefield, given excellent medical care and recuperative attention, and thus encouraged to come over to the Rhodesian side.<sup>9</sup>

The first Selous Scouts unit was ready for operational duty in January 1974 and was deployed in the Operation Hurricane area. The units generally operated in eight-man sections (a number selected because it was the size of the typical insurgent unit),<sup>10</sup> dressed in insurgent uniforms or clothing, and carried the same weapons the insurgents did. The Scouts' missions, it should be emphasized, was not to engage the insurgents in combat but to determine their size and location and then report this information either to "Fireforce" teams or ground

<sup>9</sup>To facilitate the recruitment of insurgents into the Flecha ranks, the Portuguese had similarly made a point of evacuating guerrilla casualties to hospitals even before their own men and boasted a 90 percent success rate in persuading captured guerrillas to "turn" and work for the government. See Beckett and Pimlott, 1985, p. 149.

<sup>10</sup>Three sections made up a Troop, and five Troops a Company. Hence, the Scouts operated at company strength of approximately 100 men and 20 officers. The unit never had more than a total of 420 men in active service.

combat units, which would take over. To avoid confusion and prevent other government forces from mistaking the Scouts for actual insurgents, any area that they were operating in was "frozen"—that is, no other security forces were allowed in its vicinity. The Selous Scouts proved extremely effective in providing the security forces with useful and timely intelligence. According to one internal assessment undertaken by the Directorate of Military Operations, the Selous Scouts were responsible for a staggering 68 percent of all the insurgent kills and captures in their areas of operation.<sup>11</sup>

### EXTERNAL INTELLIGENCE GATHERING

The CIO's Branch II was responsible for almost all external intelligence-gathering operations. Obviously, the black front-line states surrounding Rhodesia were of considerable interest to CIO, and Branch II had an extensive network of agents supplying intelligence from Zambia, Botswana, Mozambique, and even Angola. The agents in Zambia included people living along the border, many of whom belonged to tribes hostile to the Zambian government. These agents provided considerable information on ZIPRA bases in these areas. CIO also mounted a concerted intelligence-gathering effort against the Soviet and Peoples' Republic of China embassies in Lusaka, Zambia. The success of these operations, however, was more the result of Russian and Communist Chinese underestimation of CIO's intelligence-gathering abilities, leading to lax security, than of CIO's sophistication. In addition, liaison continued throughout the conflict between Zambian intelligence and the CIO for the exchange of information of mutual interest.

The CIO also had agents in Angola and Mozambique who provided information on insurgent activities in these countries, especially in the urban centers and ports. Many of the agents were Portuguese nationals who had remained in the country after independence. While they were never able to penetrate the insurgents' bases, the agents nonetheless monitored insurgent activities in the cities and reported the arrival of arms and equipment shipments. The also kept track of FRELIMO security operations in Mozambique and of Cuban activity in Angola. Special Branch, however, did succeed in placing agents on the insurgent bases. Many, in fact, were sent with insurgent recruits for guerrilla training in Communist-bloc countries.

Information from agents was relayed to Salisbury by various means. In Zambia, blacks met with their Special Branch officers simply by

<sup>11</sup>Cited in Cilliers, 1985, p. 32.

crossing the river into Rhodesia. Special Branch also operated an extensive courier system that funneled information from Lusaka to Salisbury. White agents were able to communicate clandestinely by telephone, usually by calling contacts in South Africa on the pretext of talking about business matters.<sup>12</sup>

The Rhodesians also frequently used other countries' intelligence agencies, including the American Central Intelligence Agency and Britain's MI5 (domestic intelligence and counterintelligence) and MI6 (overseas intelligence).<sup>13</sup> One senior CIO maintains that it was not unusual for intelligence organizations to continue to maintain contact even though formal relations between their governments may have been strained or actually severed.<sup>14</sup> In fact, throughout the conflict virtually all important external intelligence on Soviet and Chinese contacts with ZIPRA and ZANLA was obtained from the CIA, MI5, and other western intelligence organizations. The animosity that existed between the Rhodesian and British governments after UDI, for example, did little to affect intelligence exchanges between the CIO and MI5 or MI6; the British services were unsympathetic toward ZANLA and ZIPRA because of their ties to various Communist countries.<sup>15</sup>

Close ties were also maintained between the CIO and the Portuguese and South African intelligence communities, as well as with France, Italy, and Greece. Many opportunities for such exchanges were opened through the course of normal business relations involving the circumvention of the international trade sanctions imposed on Rhodesia (more colloquially known as "sanction breaking"). Apparently, countries prepared to buy Rhodesian goods or supply the country with materials were also prepared to provide a considerable amount of information.<sup>16</sup>

## DESTABILIZATION AND DISINFORMATION OPERATIONS

In addition to intelligence gathering, Special Branch, Branch II, and the Selous Scouts were actively involved in covert destabilization and disinformation operations. The exact extent of these has not been fully revealed, but the few operations for which there is some information available provides some idea of their nature and success.

<sup>12</sup>Interview with former CIO Executive, October 1989.

<sup>13</sup>Flower, 1987, *passim*.

<sup>14</sup>Interview with former CIO Executive, October 1989.

<sup>15</sup>Interview with former CIO Executive, October 1989 and interview with senior CIO officer, March 1989.

<sup>16</sup>Flower, 1985, p. 74.

During the early sixties, the split between ZAPU and ZANU had an extremely detrimental effect on the nationalist struggle. It is assumed, though inconclusively proven, that Special Branch may have exploited the rivalry between these two movements whenever possible, using agents of influence strategically placed in both organizations combined with various disinformation tactics. These tactics were certainly used in Zambia after UDI to help foment the rivalry between ZANLA and ZIPRA. Peter Stiff, for example, recounts the sabotage activities in Lusaka of two British veterans of the British SAS who worked for CIO and were assisted by a white Zambian farmer and his wife.<sup>17</sup> This foursome conducted several attacks against both ZANLA and ZIPRA targets that were made to appear as if they had been staged by the rival insurgent organization.

The most successful of these operations was the assassination of the ZANU's national chairman in Zambia, Herbert Chitepo, done in such a way as to suggest that his death by a car bomb was due to factional fighting within that organization. This incident provoked the anger of Zambian president Kenneth Kaunda, who had allowed the nationalist organizations to operate in his country only on the express condition that there was no internecine violence. When Kaunda learned that dissident ZANLA elements were suspected in Chitepo's murder, he ordered the arrest of all senior ZANLA officials (including military commander Joseph Tongogara), the expulsion of the organization's fighters, and the suspension of all ZANLA activities in Zambia. The arrested officials were brutally interrogated until they falsely confessed to involvement in Chitepo's murder, while other alleged conspirators were shot. The overall result was a severe setback for ZANLA operations that, according to Ken Flower, the head of the CIO, cost ZANLA an estimated two years in its war against Rhodesia.<sup>18</sup>

Rhodesia's most ambitious external destabilization operation was the formation of the Mozambique National Resistance Movement (MNR, later to be called RENAMO).<sup>19</sup> The Rhodesians hoped in the long term to undermine and ultimately overthrow FRELIMO and replace it

<sup>17</sup>Stiff, 1985, *passim*.

<sup>18</sup>Flower, 1985, pp. 147-148; and interview, 1989, with a senior SAS officer involved in supplying the CIO cell in Zambia. One of the two CIO operators was later killed in a road accident, while the other was assigned to assassinate Robert Mugabe (although this never occurred).

<sup>19</sup>In the decade since the Rhodesian government was dissolved and its control over RENAMO ended, the rebel movement has acquired a particularly unsavory reputation for atrocities committed against Mozambican civilians (the U.S. State Department, among others, has decried RENAMO's brutal treatment of noncombatants). This development demonstrates the need for such rebel forces always to be kept under the tight control of their state patrons.



with a pro-Western government and, in the short term, simply to use the MNR both to further disrupt ZANLA operations in Mozambique and to provide intelligence about the insurgents and their bases. The genesis behind the MNR idea lay in the Mozambican population's increasing discontent with FRELIMO. That insurgent organization had been completely surprised by the Portuguese decision to withdraw from Mozambique and thus was unprepared to assume power in 1974. FRELIMO rule, accordingly, was generally inept and quickly alienated the population. As increasing numbers of Mozambicans fled their country, the CIO decided to launch a disinformation campaign using a large, powerful, and impossible to jam transmitter that the Portuguese had given to the Rhodesians when they left Mozambique. These broadcasts described the fictitious activities of a nonexistent resistance movement in Mozambique that the Rhodesians called the MNR.

The ruse worked only too well. Shortly after the broadcasts began, FRELIMO deserters began crossing in droves, seeking to join the resistance movement. The CIO was therefore forced to create a real organization to preserve its ruse. Because Rhodesia itself lacked the resources needed to supply a clandestine army, the CIO turned to other countries, primarily in Southern Africa, for the funds and weapons the MNR required. Training was provided at first by former Portuguese soldiers, but the black recruits distrusted their former colonial masters and responded better when the Portuguese trainers were replaced by former Rhodesian SAS troopers now working for the CIO. In their search for a leader for the movement, the CIO found Andre Matangaidze, a former FRELIMO platoon commander, who had fled to Rhodesia in 1978 after escaping from a FRELIMO re-education camp. The CIO tested Matangaidze's leadership ability by sending him with a small band of men to free the inmates at the camp from which he had escaped. Matangaidze succeeded and was appointed the commander of the MNR.

Subsequent MNR operations were equally successful, and support for the movement grew rapidly in both Mozambique and Rhodesia. The Rhodesian Army in particular was impressed by the MNR's successes and threw its full support behind the movement. In 1979, the MNR began to work very closely with the Rhodesian SAS. They carried out several joint raids, including the attack on an oil storage farm in Beira, Mozambique; the sinking of ships and subsequent blocking of a harbor in a Mozambican port; and the disabling of a FRELIMO tropospheric scatter station.<sup>20</sup> Unfortunately for the Rhodesians,

<sup>20</sup>This was a highly sophisticated radio transmission and telecommunications center that provided communication among all major FRELIMO bases in Mozambique.

the MNR was formed only toward the end of the war and thus had little effect on ZANLA, although it did destabilize the FRELIMO regime and later was exploited by the South Africans as a bargaining tool against Mozambican support of the African National Congress (ANC).<sup>21</sup> Although the MNR did not achieve the objectives for which it was originally established and had little effect on the outcome of the Rhodesian conflict, some of the Rhodesian intelligence officers and special operations personnel involved in the formation of the MNR and the attendant disinformation campaign in Mozambique claim that had these efforts been initiated earlier in the conflict, the FRELIMO government might well have been overthrown and the insurgents deprived of their operational bases in that country.

Disinformation operations were carried out within Rhodesia as well. Perhaps the most controversial were atrocities against civilians allegedly undertaken by the Selous Scouts disguised to appear as, and thereby to discredit, the insurgents. Among the crimes that the Scouts allegedly committed were the murders of white missionaries, attacks on tribal villages, and the murders of insurgent contacts, whom the Scouts had accused in front of witnesses of being government collaborators.<sup>22</sup> Although both Special Branch and Selous Scout officers categorically deny these allegations, some former police officers maintain that many of the Scouts' disinformation attempts were in any event amateurish and did more harm than good.

<sup>21</sup>When Rhodesia became Zimbabwe, the South Africans assumed responsibility for the MNR. Within a short period of time, the MNR's influence had grown to such an extent that Mozambique, which was supporting the ANC's battle against South Africa, was forced to seek an accord with South Africa. The two countries agreed that Mozambique would stop supporting the ANC if South Africa would stop assisting the MNR. While South Africa has been accused of renegeing on its part of the deal, former SAS and CIO operatives familiar with the organization maintain that Arab countries have replaced South Africa as the MNR's chief patrons. Interviews with former CIO Executive and former SAS officer, October 1989.

<sup>22</sup>See Martin and Johnson, 1981, numerous references; Moorcraft and McLaughlin, 1982, p. 178; Cilliers, 1985, p. 128; and interviews with various former Selous Scout, Special Branch, and CID officers, March 1989.

## **V. SECURITY LEGISLATION**

Until the imposition of martial law in certain operational areas during 1977, Rhodesia treated captured insurgents as common criminals, who were tried and sentenced in civil, not military, courts. In this manner, the government deliberately sought to avoid legitimizing the insurgents' cause or actions by treating them as prisoners of war and their crimes as political acts. This approach also enabled the government to classify the insurgency as a mere "emergency," rather than a war and thus prevent the loss of foreign investment or escalation of insurance rates.<sup>1</sup> The situation was nevertheless serious enough to warrant special legislation that gave the government and its security forces the additional powers needed to deal with the insurgency. Before 1960, this mostly took the form of special legislation, requiring the declaration of a state of emergency before the security forces were accorded additional powers of search and arrest. Once a state of emergency was declared, for example, the police were empowered to impose curfews, restrict public assembly, and detain suspects without formal charges beyond the usual 48 hours.

### **THE LAW AND ORDER MAINTENANCE ACT (1961)**

This emergency legislation soon became inadequate for coping with the increasing urban violence and unrest, and in 1961 the Rhodesian government passed the Law and Order Maintenance Act, which incorporated most of the previous emergency regulations, as well as complementary legislation, whereby the police could detain prisoners for up to 30 days without trial. Without lodging formal charges, the government could also order the restriction, or indefinite detention, of people suspected of participating in or abetting subversive activities. Political parties accused of subversion could also be banned, and public meeting and processions had to be approved in advance by senior police officers. Heavy penalties were levied against anyone who threw stones or petrol bombs, broke up political meetings, incited riots, organized illegal strikes or boycotts, or otherwise intimidated other persons or who deliberately filed false or misleading reports concerning security matters in the press.

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<sup>1</sup>The British similarly referred to the insurgencies in Malaya, Kenya, and Cyprus during the 1950s as emergencies.

As the conflict wore on, the Act was repeatedly amended to keep pace with the security forces' needs. The government, for example, approved a mandatory death penalty for petrol bombers. Although the measure was severely criticized as excessive, it effectively stopped the wave of petrol bombings that had necessitated its enactment. The death penalty was also subsequently amended to cover a broad array of crimes, including illegal possession of fire arms and explosives. This too was criticized as excessive and, unlike the petrol bombing legislation, did not have a deterrent effect. The threat of this penalty, however, was a useful tool in persuading captured insurgents to become government agents.

### **EMERGENCY REGULATIONS**

The Act also empowered certain government ministers to pass ancillary legislation in the form of regulations during a state of emergency without requiring parliamentary approval, including curfews, collective punishment, the Indemnity and Compensation Act, censorship, martial law, and exchange control.

#### **Curfews**

The government's imposition of dusk-to-dawn curfews in operational areas was intended to protect civilians from being accidentally shot by security forces laying in ambush for insurgents. The curfews were usually respected and very few people were accidentally killed.

#### **Collective Punishment**

Shortly after Operation Hurricane began in 1972, the government enacted legislation that imposed collective punishment on tribes found guilty of assisting the insurgents. District commissioners were empowered to impose summary fines, confiscate livestock, or relocate persons adjudged guilty of cooperating with the insurgents. This measure, however, bred only increased hostility toward the government by placing the local population in a no-win situation. The government punished cooperation with the insurgents with fines and banishment, but the insurgents exacted a far more serious penalty of torture or death for collaboration with the government. The government was unable to offer adequate protection against insurgent reprisals, or make cooperation with the security forces possible. Even among citizens who may have secretly sympathized with the government, the legislation did

little to improve security or gain popular support. Thus, many people were forced to collaborate with the insurgents and then face punishment from the government. In addition, these collective punishment measures were sometimes applied to persons with relatives serving in the police or military, which, in turn, had a disastrous effect on black security force morale.

### **The Indemnity and Compensation Act (1975)**

The Indemnity and Compensation Act was passed to protect from civil and criminal prosecution security force personnel who committed acts during a state of emergency that would otherwise have been illegal. The same legislation also provided immediate economic compensation to civilians who suffered losses from security force actions. This Act was strongly criticized as a means to legitimize security force excesses, despite the intended safeguards that had been built in, including review by the Director of Public Prosecutions of all complaints brought against the security forces. Charges were in fact filed against some members of the security forces for excessive brutality and murder, although it is not clear whether they were ever tried.

### **Censorship**

Under the Law and Order Maintenance Act, the imposition of a state of emergency permitted the government to censor the print and broadcast media. Critics claimed that government censorship was used more to stifle criticism than to ensure state security. In addition, critics maintained that, especially after 1972, the government used censorship to cover up security force excesses.

The government combined its use of censorship with a propaganda campaign, generating and circulating positive media reports and commentaries about governmental and security force actions. This effectively prevented the white sector of the population from panicking and leaving the country. Although rumors freely circulated among the whites, many did not know until the end of the war how close Rhodesia actually was to losing it. One white former Rhodesian who had been called up frequently for military duty recalled that he had no idea of how serious the situation was until the Lancaster House agreement.<sup>2</sup>

Although government propaganda was effective among the white population (mostly because it told them what they wanted to hear), it had little or no effect on the black population, whose limited access to

<sup>2</sup>Interview with former Rhodesian citizen, November 1988.

radio or television made them a much more difficult audience to reach. Instead, traveling government film units presented films in the tribal areas, and government forces distributed leaflets about the importance of the counterinsurgency campaign. But these efforts were ad hoc and amateurish and largely unsupported by government agencies.

### **Martial Law**

Although martial law was imposed in certain operational areas only beginning in 1977, it was eventually applied throughout Rhodesia. In view of the broad powers already available to the security forces, this extreme measure seemed superfluous, and it therefore was widely criticized as another means of legitimizing security force excesses. Even senior security force officers questioned the need for martial law, given the already generous scope of powers accorded them under the existing state of emergency legislation. Many have suggested, in fact, that martial law was enacted at the instigation of the legislature and not the security forces.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, because insurgents and collaborators could be executed under the provisions of martial law, its enactment was important.

### **Exchange Control Regulations**

Finally, to prevent white emigration and potential foreign "disinvestment" in Rhodesia, the government also imposed strict limits on the amount of money, and later goods, that people could take out of the country. Although some managed to circumvent the law (by illegally exporting their vacation allowances to foreign banks, for example), the currency regulations were generally effective.

### **THE REGULATIONS' EFFECTIVENESS**

Although the security legislation passed after 1961 in Rhodesia was severely criticized for the freedom it gave the government to circumvent constitutional law in the name of national security, such legislation was no more stringent than emergency acts imposed in other countries facing revolutions. Because the Rhodesian forces relied so heavily on "pseudo"-operations, disinformation and intelligence, it was critical that they controlled the information that might be detrimental to their operations. Moreover, to convince insurgents and the rural

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<sup>3</sup>Flower, 1987, p. 211, and interviews with various Army and police officers, March 1989.

population that they were credible, Selous Scouts and Special Branch agents posing as insurgents often had to undertake nominally illegal activities to prove their "bona fides" without fear of being subsequently prosecuted. This kind of legislation clearly had the potential to be abused, as it was when Selous Scouts, attempting to sow distrust and confusion in the rural population, allegedly murdered insurgent contact-men after accusing them in public of being government informants.

Perhaps the most unfortunate aspect of the security legislation was that it reflected the government's emphasis on punishment rather than protection, which itself was partially a reflection of the resource and manpower constraints the government faced. Government propaganda did not effectively reach the tribal areas, nor did government protection extend to the rural population. People in these areas were therefore susceptible to the insurgents' own propaganda and left unprotected against guerrilla reprisals. This situation was aggravated by the government's counterproductive policy of collective punishment and execution of persons found aiding the insurgents, especially given the government's inability to distinguish between civilians who cooperated freely with the insurgents and those who had been coerced.

That the Rhodesian government and security forces required special powers during the insurgency is undeniable. That these inherently contained the possibility for abuse is also true, as is the criticism that the potential for abuse was greater because of the racial nature of the conflict. The fact that resource constraints in the face of a one-to-one insurgent/security force-member ratio had a determining effect on government and security force policies must also be taken into account. Many of the inconsistencies in Rhodesian security legislation can, in fact, be traced directly back to the fact that a white-minority government was battling representatives of the majority population, without sufficient consideration for the need to use positive measures to prevent that population from turning against the government in favor of the insurgents. The government could have used to its advantage black rural population apathy and fear of the insurgents at the outset of the conflict had they spent resources early on in the defense of the population against the insurgents and in offering incentives for supporting the government. The very fact that these opportunities were ignored is a clear reflection of the government's least flexible and weakest position: its refusal to recognize the needs of the black population either politically or socially.

## VI. CONCLUSION AND LESSONS LEARNED

Six themes or lessons emerge from the Rhodesian counterinsurgency operations described in this study. (1) Institutional barriers must be broken down at the tactical level. (2) Countering urban terrorism must remain a police responsibility. (3) Counterinsurgency must be fought at the small unit if not the special operations level. (4) "Low-tech" and improvisational solutions can be effective in LICs. (5) Human intelligence must be given the highest priority in a counterinsurgency. (6) The political side of LICs must receive sufficient resources to succeed.

### INSTITUTIONAL BARRIERS MUST BE BROKEN DOWN AT THE TACTICAL LEVEL

The foundation of a successful counterinsurgency is a fully coordinated command, control, and communications system. Because counterinsurgencies are often joint military-civil efforts, it is essential that the institutional barriers among the military services themselves as well as between the military and civilian coordinating agencies be broken down. This is especially important at the tactical level where the lack of any organizational structure to guide joint operations or direct the flow of intelligence from other services can seriously undermine operational performance and success. In Rhodesia, for example, at least five separate entities—the uniformed police, the police plainclothes Special Branch, the Army, the Air Force, and the government internal affairs department—were directly involved on a daily basis in the counterinsurgency campaign.<sup>1</sup> The Rhodesians adopted a command structure (that under different names the British had used with considerable success in Malaya, Kenya, and Cyprus during the 1950s) known as the Joint Operation Centres (JOC). The JOC comprised the local commanders and head civil officers for each of the above who were all of equal or similar rank and held daily meetings to discuss operations and arrive at consensual command decisions.

<sup>1</sup>Lack of coordination is among the most serious deficiencies in the Salvadoran counterinsurgency effort. In El Salvador, for example, *seven* separate entities—the three military services: the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force; and four security services: the National Police, the Treasury Police, and the National Guard as well as a special civilian intelligence agency—are involved in that country's counterinsurgency campaign on a daily basis. They largely function in an uncoordinated fashion, resulting in duplication of effort and assets and hoarding rather than sharing of intelligence. Interviews conducted in Washington, D.C., with DoD and DoS officials during October and November 1989. See also Bacevich et al., 1988, pp. 24-26 and 30; and Lane, 1989 p. 25.



When it functioned properly, the JOC system proved to be a particularly effective means of integrating both the operations and intelligence sides of the counterinsurgency campaign as well as its civil and military dimensions. Although such close cooperation is often cited as prerequisite to a successful counterinsurgency campaign, it is rarely achieved. The JOC system provides a practical example of how institutional barriers can be overcome and interservice and interagency cooperation facilitated.

At the same time, the Rhodesians found that the JOC system was not effective at the senior command level. For most of the conflict an Operations Coordination Committee (OCC), whose members included the commanders of the police, Army, and Air Force and the head of the CIO, directed the counterinsurgency campaign. With no one person wielding complete authority, there was no way to ensure that the individual services or agencies actually carried out a command decision. In 1977, the government appointed a single "supreme" commander with ultimate authority over all the services.<sup>2</sup> This attempt at improving command and control came too late to make much difference in the conflict. Nonetheless, although the JOCs and the COMOPS organizations that replaced the OCC were largely inconsistent in the amount of coordination they could provide, they were enormously successful in directing both special forces and "Fireforce" operations, which were the most critical and effective tactics after 1972.

### **COUNTERING URBAN TERRORISM MUST REMAIN A POLICE RESPONSIBILITY**

The success of the British South Africa Police (BSAP) in completely stifling insurgent operations in the country's cities suggests that countering urban terrorism is best handled by the police, rather than military forces.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, the differences in training and approach between policemen and soldiers, coupled with the fact that armies are generally uncomfortable with, and not adequately prepared for, urban operations, rein-

<sup>2</sup>It is surprising that, in adopting the JOC model from the British experience, the Rhodesians ignored identical lessons from the three British counterinsurgency campaigns during the 1950s. Although the need for a single overall commander had been repeatedly (and successively) demonstrated in Malaya, Kenya, and Cyprus, in each campaign the British initially ignored or failed to appreciate this lesson.

<sup>3</sup>Sir Robert Thompson similarly makes this point with reference to Saigon during the Vietnam War. After the Saigon police force was reorganized in 1970, he maintains, the number of terrorist incidents in that city declined appreciably. During the 1972 North Vietnamese-Viet Cong offensive, Thompson notes, "there was not one single incident in Saigon carried out by the Viet Cong." See Marks, 1989, p. 77.

forces this point.<sup>4</sup> Policemen, for example, are specifically trained to interact with the public; soldiers are not. Policemen are trained to seek nonviolent solutions to problems and, when necessary, to use minimum force; soldiers are not. Soldiers are taught how to fight and kill. Moreover, they are taught to do so against a mostly discernible enemy on a more or less demarcated battlefield under rules of engagement where an army's might can be fully exercised. The "battlefield" in an urban area frequently is not a neatly defined, open territory where opposing armies clash, but a crowded city with narrow streets and alleyways affording readily exploitable sniper's lairs and ambush points. Moreover, the enemy typically is indistinguishable from the civilian populace and, in many cases, may be the population itself.

In addition, military forces operating in nonconventional warfare urban settings must acquire intelligence with methods different from those to which they are accustomed. Intelligence in this environment is not gleaned by discerning orders of battle, visual satellite transmissions of opposing force positions, or signals intercepts, but from human observation and knowledge, mostly gathered from the public. The police, who are specifically trained to interact with the public, typically have better access to human intelligence sources than the military.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, the suppression of urban terrorism in Rhodesia was mostly the result of information obtained by police from an extensive informer network. This information was used to detect and apprehend terrorists and suspected terrorists, to uncover terrorist safehouses and arms caches, undermine local support, and disrupt terrorist communication and planning.

The Rhodesian example demonstrates that a division of labor works best when effective policing of the cities frees the military for opera-

<sup>4</sup>This is also cited by the Selous Scouts' commander Reid-Daly, 1989, p. 149. In the wake of the U.S. invasion of Panama in December 1989, it has become a subject of attention within the U.S. Army. See Healy, 1990.

<sup>5</sup>Ineffective policing and poorly trained, abusive police forces not surprisingly result in bad relations with the community and lead—often inevitably—to established insurgent infrastructures in cities. The problems with both the Salvadoran police forces and the country's judicial system in these areas are indeed well documented. See McHugh et al., 1986, pp. 11–12. That El Salvador does not yet have a functioning, effective police force was demonstrated by the security forces' general lack of preparedness for the FMLN's November 1989 urban offensive. As one U.S. government official familiar with the law enforcement situation in El Salvador cogently observed, "If the police in San Salvador had the coverage of an urban area like that of Los Angeles or Chicago—where the police are minutes away from any call for assistance—the ability of the FMLN to infiltrate 1,000 or more fighters into the city or to move about the city once they were there, would have been much more difficult had a modern, efficient police force been in place." Interview in Washington, D.C., November 1989. Indeed, a U.S. administration official admitted that "there was a torrent of arms and ammunition into the capital. That couldn't have taken place had not a lot of people helped, or at the minimum, kept quiet." Quoted in Chivera, 1989, p. 51.

tions in rural areas.<sup>6</sup> Police forces in countries fighting insurgencies that receive U.S. security assistance should therefore be improved commensurately with the military. Congressional legislation, however, severely limits U.S. aid to foreign police. Hence, consideration might be given to amending Section 660D of the U.S. Congressional Foreign Assistance Act (1974) so that the indigenous police role in counterinsurgency could be strengthened with U.S. assistance.<sup>7</sup>

At the same time, the police approach to countering urban terrorism—specifically, interacting with the public, establishing close contact with the local people, and developing effective human intelligence sources—should be emulated by armies operating in rural areas and appropriate training programs institutionalized. This is in fact precisely what the South African Defense Forces did in Namibia after studying the Rhodesian case. The South African operational commander, General Jannie Geldenhuys, laid down a clear policy governing the army's behavior toward the local population that was printed and distributed to every soldier serving in Namibia. The guidelines covered the manner in which civilians were to be spoken to and treated, stressing that no intimidation or brutality would be tolerated under any circumstances and that individual soldiers would be disciplined and their commanders held accountable for any breach of conduct.<sup>8</sup> The Guatemalan Army's *Individual Soldier's Manual* similarly emphasizes the conduct and comportment of soldiers in dealing with the civilian populace. The manual's first 17 pages, for example, specifically address such issues as "personal appearance, courtesy, and respectful relations with the populace." By contrast, the *Salvadoran Soldiers' Manual* is described as an "adaptation of the U.S. model that is much more concerned with technical soldier tasks . . . [involving] conventional missions in virtual isolation from the civilian population, and little emphasis is put on civil-military relations for the individual soldier."<sup>9</sup>

#### COUNTERINSURGENCY MUST BE FOUGHT AT THE SMALL UNIT, SPECIAL OPERATIONS, LEVEL

Because of the unfavorable balance between the government and insurgent forces—a one-to-one ratio at the height of the Rhodesian

<sup>6</sup>This point is also made in Thompson, 1979, p. 14; and Epstein, 1968, pp. 148–151.

<sup>7</sup>The reasons why this legislation was enacted and the arguments surrounding aid to foreign police forces are cogently summarized in McHugh et al., 1986.

<sup>8</sup>Interview with South African Defense Forces officers, Cape Town, South Africa, March 1989.

<sup>9</sup>See Sheehan, 1989, p. 134.

conflict, whereas ten to one is the figure most commonly cited as essential to the prosecution of a successful counterinsurgency—the Rhodesian security forces had to rely on small unit tactics and special operations. Indeed, as previously noted, approximately 50 percent of all regular training was in the form of small-unit tactics.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, whereas special operations are often seen only in terms of lightning hit-and-run commando raids or daring hostage rescues, the Rhodesian military placed equal, if not more, stress on their intelligence potential.

Elite special operations units such as the “pseudo”-force Selous Scouts had primarily an intelligence-gathering mission. In this respect, they were specifically tasked with providing the Army and Air Force the tactical information on guerrilla movement and strength required to make contact with the enemy. After determining the guerrillas’ position, these reconnaissance units would withdraw and allow special, highly mobile commando or paratroop forces to actually engage the insurgents. In “Fireforce” operations, as this intelligence-operational concept was known, small helicopter-borne strike units were immediately airlifted to the scene of the insurgent sighting. The Rhodesians generally did not have to rely on artillery or air-delivered munitions for harassing and interdiction purposes,<sup>11</sup> since the ground intelligence or tracking units were able to fix the enemy’s precise position. Indeed, according to an internal Rhodesian military assessment, the Selous Scouts were either directly or indirectly credited with a staggering 68 percent of all insurgent kills and captures in their area of operations. Thus, special operations have a valuable role to play not only in the hostage rescue or hit-and-run commando raids that they are usually involved in, but in tactical intelligence acquisition as well.

The attention that the Rhodesians paid to special operations as an intelligence-gathering asset also reflects the emphasis that they generally gave to special operations as a tactical end in itself. This approach stands in stark contrast to the prevailing military view of special operations as an adjunct to conventional operations and not as a viable and independent instrument of war. The Rhodesians’ heavy reliance on small, elite, special operations units admittedly was dictated by manpower shortages and the strain imposed on the country’s already outnumbered and overcommitted security forces. Nonetheless,

<sup>10</sup>In El Salvador, for example, less than 10 percent of military forces are specifically trained and equipped for small unit operations and “commando-style” warfare. Lane, 1989, p. 25. See also, Bacevich et al., 1988, pp. 29–32 and 37–40.

<sup>11</sup>Thus enabling the Rhodesians to avoid inflicting collateral casualties amongst civilians or inadvertently destroying civilian property, livestock, or cultivation and further undermining popular support for the government. In fact, the Rhodesians rarely if ever employed artillery.

the weaknesses that necessitated this approach actually proved to be a source of strength in prosecuting an effective counterinsurgency.

The Rhodesian case thus reemphasizes the ineluctable axiom of counterinsurgency that small, lightly armed, and highly mobile guerrilla bands are best fought by similarly small, lightly armed, and highly mobile government forces.<sup>12</sup> The Selous Scouts, for example, operated in eight-man sections, a number chosen by the Rhodesians precisely because this was the size of the typical insurgent unit.

The Rhodesian case also demonstrated that an elite, highly efficient special operations capability can be an extremely effective weapon for cross-border raids against insurgent training camps, staging bases, infiltration routes, and lines of communication. As previously noted, these raids were critical in thwarting ZIPRA's planned conventional force invasion of Rhodesia toward the end of the conflict. Similar activities in Mozambique—especially those employing the Mozambican rebel force that the Rhodesians created, known as RENAMO—effectively disrupted ZANLA operations and logistics in that country. Some of the Rhodesian intelligence officers and special operations personnel involved in the formation of RENAMO and the attendant disinformation campaign in Mozambique claim that had these efforts been initiated earlier in the conflict, the FRELIMO government might well have been overthrown and the insurgents deprived of their operational bases in that country.

The Rhodesians also used these raids as a means of exploiting rivalries within insurgent organizations, harming relations between the organizations and their host governments, and dissuading those governments from providing assistance to and supporting the insurgents' struggle. Certainly, the most successful operation was the 1975 assassination of Herbert Chitepo, the head of ZANLA's political department, in Lusaka, Zambia. The murder was disguised to appear

<sup>12</sup>This point is also made with regard to U.S. experiences in Vietnam and El Salvador. For the discussion pertinent to Vietnam see Hackworth, 1988, *passim*; Hackworth and Sherman, 1989, pp. 614–615, 678–682, and 701–704. Indeed, on p. 767 Hackworth bluntly states: "if these Green Berets had been allowed to run the show, there's little doubt in my mind that the outcome of the war would have been quite different." For the discussion pertinent to El Salvador, see Bacevich et al., 1988, pp. 29–32 and 37–40. Bacevich et al.'s main argument in this context is that the Salvadorans are "using a conventional army and conventional tactics to fight an unconventional war. Predilections that American officers carried to El Salvador and the quasi-conventional nature of the fighting during the early 1980s combined to create a Salvadoran Army that is most comfortable operating in battalion-sized formations, that relies on helicopters and trucks for mobility, and that has become dependent upon heavy firepower: close air support, attack helicopters, indirect fire, and antitank weapons." By comparison, elite Salvadoran special forces units, such as the PRAL (*Patrulla de Reconocimiento de Alcance Largo*), Bacevich et al. (p. 37) maintain "routinely achieve successes far out of proportion to their size." See also Kelly, 1986, pp. 56–57 and 60.

as if it was the result of fighting between rival insurgent factions, prompting Zambian authorities—fearful of escalated internecine bloodshed—to close down all ZANLA and ZANU operations in the country and imprison that organization's senior military and political leaders. As previously recounted, the former head of the Rhodesian CIO estimated that the operation set ZANLA back two years in its struggle against Rhodesia.

### LOW-TECH AND IMPROVISATIONAL SOLUTIONS CAN BE EFFECTIVE IN LICs

The Rhodesian counterinsurgency campaign demonstrated that low-tech and improvisational solutions can be effective in LICs and that it is not necessary to spend huge amounts on sophisticated weaponry and materiel.<sup>13</sup> The Rhodesians' approach to the mining threat, for example, demonstrated both ingenuity and flexibility and stands in direct contrast to other countries' reactions to insurgent mining, notably El Salvador and (as previously discussed) Mozambique.<sup>14</sup> The security forces were similarly successful in overcoming some of the difficulties inherent to tracking small guerrilla units and bands of infiltrators through rough country in harsh climatic conditions.

Yet, at the same time, the Rhodesians failed to apply the same standards to the unimpressive cordon sanitaire, and they continued to obstinately pour money into the project without ever dedicating sufficient manpower to it to make it successful. This was partly a result of

<sup>13</sup>In the case of El Salvador it is worth recalling that U.S. Defense Department officials regarded the 1981 Woerner Report's (the study directed by then-SOUTHCOM commander General Fred C. Woerner) recommendation that the Salvadoran armed forces required at least \$300 million in military aid over the succeeding five years to defeat the FMLN as far too "pessimistic" (extravagant) an estimate of the costs involved. Less than a decade later, as previously noted, \$1.3 billion in U.S. military aid had still proven inadequate. Interview with DoD officials, November 1989. Rhodesia spent approximately \$4975 (1987 US) per insurgent in 1979, while El Salvador spent \$21,499 (1987 US) per insurgent in 1987.

<sup>14</sup>The FMLN's use of mines in El Salvador annually accounts for nearly half of all government security force casualties. See Arbuckle, 1989, p. 157; Miller, 1985; and Hatfield et al., 1987, pp. 14–15. Indeed, the Salvadoran military itself is frequently described as a "garrison force," unwilling or unable to venture from its protected *cuartels* (fortified barracks and posts). See Bacevich et al., 1988, pp. 28–30 and 36–38; Lane, 1989, p. 25; and Millman, 1989, p. 95. The foregoing discussion is not meant to imply that "high-tech" sophisticated weapons are inapplicable or inappropriate to the ostensibly "low-tech" requirements of counterinsurgencies; only that "high-tech" solutions must be tailored to the conflict and not seen as a panacea to other, perhaps more intractable, problems. The United States for example, has supplied the Salvadoran Army with infrared night-vision goggles. However, given that the Salvadoran military is generally hesitant to deploy on night operations and ambushes, this potentially valuable technological edge over the insurgent forces is wasted. See Bacevich et al., 1988.

inconsistent goals at the highest levels of government; where the security forces were directly involved in practical matters, as with the mine threats, tracking, etc., they took the initiative themselves to develop cheap and effective countermeasures.

### **HUMAN INTELLIGENCE MUST BE GIVEN THE HIGHEST PRIORITY IN A COUNTERINSURGENCY**

One of the most important lessons to emerge from the Rhodesian case is that human intelligence must be given the highest priority in a counterinsurgency.<sup>15</sup> This is not an especially surprising conclusion given that insurgencies are inherently "low tech" conflicts involving guerrillas bands as opposed to increasingly "high tech" conventional battlefields involving maneuver battalions.<sup>16</sup> Although electronic intelligence, signals intercepts, and aerial reconnaissance clearly have a place in counterinsurgencies, the nature of the adversary imposes a much less technologically sophisticated but nonetheless critical intelligence requirement that relies primarily on human sources.<sup>17</sup>

The emphasis in Rhodesia on the police role in counterinsurgencies paid perhaps the largest dividends in intelligence acquisition regarding planned urban terrorist operations and in thwarting insurgent infiltration before 1972. Throughout the conflict, the military relied heavily on the extensive sources, agents, and other intelligence assets that Special Branch had developed. The security forces therefore were able to direct their efforts toward uprooting both the insurgent infrastructure and its active field units. The emphasis that the Rhodesians gave to the closest possible integration of intelligence and operations through such bodies as the JOCs enabled the intelligence acquisition and

<sup>15</sup>Although this point should be self-evident, its initial neglect in El Salvador necessitates its reemphasis here. For example, a former U.S. Military Group commander in that country is quoted in Bacevich et al., 1988, pp. 31-32, as stating that: "In an insurgency the principal focus has to be on human aspects. That means agent networks. That means getting people to talk to you. It means reconnaissance patrols. . . . Early on, we were very much intent upon using [electronic intelligence gathering] platforms almost exclusively, but the effectiveness of those platforms was reduced considerably . . . simply because we didn't have the kinds of human capability that we have now. . . . The platforms are a good thing that we can provide for [the Salvadoran armed forces] during the crisis. The human capability is something that is indispensable for them before, during, and after the crisis."

<sup>16</sup>Deficiencies in the U.S. military's HUMINT capabilities were specifically cited by the three Commanders-in-Chief—General Thurman (Southern Command), General Norman Schwarzkopf (Central Command), and James Lindsay (Special Operations)—when they testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee in February 1990. See U.S. Senate, 1990, pp. 77 (Thurman), 83 (Lindsay), and 84 (Schwarzkopf).

<sup>17</sup>U.S. Senate, 1990; Krepinevich, 1986, p. 274; and Stewart, 1988, pp. 22 and 25-27.

analysis branches to communicate timely, immediately exploitable information to the operational units (although, as previously discussed, police acquisition of the *tactical* military information that the army required remained problematical).<sup>18</sup> This close liaison and contact also permitted commanders to cancel or postpone operations that might compromise agent networks or otherwise harm or disrupt clandestine intelligence-gathering missions then in progress.

After 1972, when Special Branch's HUMINT sources dried up, the Rhodesians showed characteristic ingenuity and flexibility in their approach to intelligence. They initiated the use of the "pseudo"-operations to augment the dwindling intelligence available from informants and security force penetration of insurgent groups. The Selous Scouts and other ground intelligence units, working in tandem with "Fireforce" quick-reaction teams, were responsible for an overwhelming proportion of Rhodesian successes during the conflict.

Although the Rhodesian's intelligence operations were extensive and very successful, there was nonetheless a paucity of tactical military intelligence that hindered rural operations. The Rhodesian military deemphasized intelligence and was content to rely on Special Branch, despite its inability after 1972 to meet the tactical intelligence needs of military planners. In combination with the various intelligence bodies' professional jealousies, the military's noninterest retarded the development of an independent military entity specifically charged with providing operational intelligence. This lack of appropriate support for military planning was thus a key weakness in the Rhodesian military's approach to the counterinsurgency.

The dichotomy in Rhodesian intelligence operations between the success of the Selous Scouts and the deficiency of operational intelligence is also indicative of the greater inconsistency the Rhodesians showed throughout the conflict. When the government and/or military high command relied on the enthusiasm and ingenuity of the security forces, they were extraordinarily successful. But when the situation called for a hierarchy of command and coordination of effort at the strategic command level, the Rhodesians showed themselves to be inadequate. Had the government taken the initiative early in the conflict in the redistribution of intelligence responsibilities, recognizing both the uneven concentration of responsibility for intelligence at CIO and the military's disregard for the value of operational intelligence, the Army might have been able to develop the capability to gather

<sup>18</sup>This emphasis on integration included close physical proximity of competing intelligence-gathering bodies. Early in the conflict, for example, the Special Branch offices were relocated from police headquarters to the building occupied by the CIO's analysts and agents.



operational intelligence at a point in the counterinsurgency when it would have led to more effective strategic planning.

The Rhodesians were weakest when competition among the various security forces impeded cooperation at the conflict's strategic level. The CIO's jealous domination of intelligence responsibilities, for example, detracted from the efficiency and effectiveness of the security forces, as did the rivalry between the Selous Scouts and the Special Air Service. The system worked most smoothly when cooperation was facilitated, such as was achieved when the Special Branch and the Directorate of Military Intelligence formed joint interrogation teams in 1978.

#### **THE POLITICAL SIDE OF LICs MUST RECEIVE SUFFICIENT RESOURCES TO SUCCEED**

The Rhodesian case most clearly demonstrates the need for a clear and consistent military strategy at the national level combined with a ready capability to adapt tactics and strategies to changing circumstances. Where the security forces were directly involved in practical matters—as with the mine threats, tracking, patrolling, etc.—they took the initiative themselves to develop cheap and effective countermeasures. But where security force involvement was more remote and the problems less concrete, the government's inflexibility and lack of overall planning regarding the black population was clearly reflected in strategy decisions.

The most successful civic action programs entailed limited resource requirements and the cultivation of strong relations with the local population. Yet because of the lack of a coordinated top-down strategy, and because of the government's emphasis on punitive actions rather than conciliatory behavior in dealing with the black civilian population, many civic action programs were developed on an ad hoc basis. Not only did the government show insufficient respect for resource and manpower constraints when planning strategies and tactics, thus creating situations in which shortages were guaranteed, but the government gave the security forces very little with which to induce cooperation and loyalty from the black population.<sup>19</sup> Even in those rare situations where the security forces offered adequate protection to the black populace, they could not offer the kind of political

<sup>19</sup>The same problem has been cited in El Salvador, where an estimated 70 percent of the population are indifferent to the struggle and have yet to be won over to the government's side. See Larmer, 1989; Wickham-Crawley, 1989, pp. 521 and 524-525; Hatfield et al., 1987, pp. 14-15; and LeMoyné, 1989a, p. 120, and 1989b, p. 57.

empowerment that the insurgents were holding forth as an incentive for loyalty. Thus, the protected villages were designed not to win hearts and minds but to develop free-fire zones for the security forces. The consolidated villages were initiated without sufficient foresight and had to be discontinued after they proved to deter rather than improve the government's ability to defend civilians from the insurgents. The civilian militias were neither adequately armed or trained, nor did they receive the support of the other security forces.<sup>20</sup> In each instance, the purpose of the civic action program was defeated not only by insufficient resources but by a lack of commitment and follow-through, reflecting the government's attitude toward the black population as a whole.<sup>21</sup>

### CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

The greatest challenge facing the U.S. Army in evolving a credible and coherent LIC doctrine today is overcoming the institutional barriers that inhibit change and adaptation. Certainly, the "lessons" presented here are neither new nor unique to the Rhodesian conflict. Moreover, the attendant changes required in the U.S. Army training and doctrine to successfully fight LICs have been repeatedly voiced and documented. As demonstrated by the unresolved conflict in El Salvador—and, indeed, by the continued inability of the U.S. trained and assisted Salvadoran armed forces to win a complete victory over rebel guerrilla forces—the Army has not absorbed these lessons nor has it adjusted its dominant conventional war-fighting mindset to the vagaries and complexities of warfare at the low end of the conflict spectrum. The Rhodesian case not only provides an opportunity to "relearn" some of the basic lessons on waging effective counterinsurgencies but also gives some practical examples of how changes in training, doctrine, tactics, and mindset can be implemented.

<sup>20</sup>The problems with government-sponsored civic actions programs—particularly in providing protection to the local population and adequately supporting civil defense militias—are evident in El Salvador. See, for example, Bacevich et al., 1988, pp. 40–45.

<sup>21</sup>Of all the civic countermeasures employed, those that provided for the protection of the white population were the most effective because the whites had the money and resources to spend on supplementary private security measures. Physical barriers, security fences, sandbag emplacements, and window grills were all erected at farms and houses threatened by insurgent attacks. The "Agri-Alert" system, a simple radio alarm linking farms to the local police stations, also helped a great deal, as did the aforementioned "Bright Lights" police protection program.

## **Appendix A**

### **THE RHODESIAN SECURITY FORCES**

#### **THE RHODESIAN ARMY**

The Rhodesian Army's command structure and organization were modeled directly on the British Army. A Lieutenant-General commanded the Army and was responsible to the Minister of Defense. Later in the conflict, when COMOPS (a combined operations organization) was created, its commander exercised operational control over the Army as well as independently commanding the Army's special forces.<sup>1</sup> As Rhodesia had very limited white manpower upon which to draw for professional military service, a large part of the Army consisted of national service and reserve personnel. Initially, all regular combat units were staffed with full-time career soldiers, but after 1972, when national service was increased from 18 to 24 months, inductees were drafted into some of the Army's special forces. In addition, many foreign volunteers, mostly from South Africa but also from Britain, the United States, France, Australia, and New Zealand, served in the Rhodesian military.

#### **THE RHODESIAN ARMY SPECIAL FORCES**

##### **Rhodesian African Rifles**

The Rhodesian African Rifles' (RAR) two battalions were composed of black soldiers led by white officers. The black soldiers' knowledge of tribal cultures, ability to speak various tribal languages, and bush skills enabled them to obtain local intelligence that the average white soldier could not hope to acquire and function better in Rhodesia's harsh climate and terrain than the average urban-born and raised white trooper. Although the RAR first proved themselves capable soldiers fighting with the British in Malaya more than a decade before, their initial performance in Rhodesia was poor, giving them a bad reputation among other Army units. Improved training, however, raised the

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<sup>1</sup>This created problems, for central control should have been limited to determining grand strategy and the direction of the war. Instead, the Supreme Commander became involved in operations that would have been more appropriately delegated to commanders more familiar with the day-to-day procedural requirements. See Sec. III.

RAR's performance, and by the end of the war many RAR personnel were participating in elite force operations, such as the various "Fireforces."

### **Rhodesian Light Infantry**

The Rhodesian Light Infantry (RLI) was originally conceived as a light infantry unit but later changed its tactical mission and structure to a commando organization as it became more actively involved in the counterinsurgency campaign. The battalion was made up of four commando units of about 90 men each. They were trained as paratroopers and provided the backbone of the "Fireforces." The RLI also participated in most of the major external operations and cross-border raids. Because of their proficiency, they were classified as "Special Forces" and, after 1977, came under the control of COMOPS.

### **Special Air Services (SAS)**

The SAS was modeled on the elite British unit of the same name and fought beside the British in Malaya during the 1950s. During the early stages of the Rhodesian counterinsurgency campaign, the SAS was employed mainly in tracking insurgents. Later, the unit was expanded into a regiment comprising A, B, C, and D squadrons and for the remainder of the conflict was employed in clandestine external operations. Volunteers from various units were rigorously tested for mental and physical stamina before being accepted by the SAS and then were extensively trained in parachuting, canoeing, bush craft, explosives techniques, and other special tasks. The unit maintained a high standard of efficiency and achieved a very high rate of operational success.

### **Selous Scouts**

The Selous Scouts were formed at the beginning of Operation Hurricane in 1973 and tasked with obtaining intelligence on the size and movement of insurgent groups. Like the SAS, most Selous Scout personnel were volunteers who had undergone a stringent selection course before being trained in parachuting, insurgent tactics, bush survival, and weaponry. Surrendered or captured insurgents whom the Rhodesians had "turned" were also included in the unit. Their inclusion was critical because the information these recent defectors provided kept the unit current on insurgent tactics and operating procedures. Because of their success, the Selous Scouts doubled in size over the

course of the conflict, and eventually some 420 members were deployed on active service.<sup>2</sup> Their role was similarly expanded to include external operations, and they became responsible for training and administering the combat tracking units in addition to their "pseudo" operations role.

### **Greys Scouts**

The Greys Scouts were a mounted unit trained specifically for tracking on horseback. They could thus cover more ground than trackers on foot and could more easily escape insurgent ambushes. Personnel were recruited from the regular Army and trained in equitation. The unit was also used for patrolling and occasionally on cross-border raids. Because it was classified as special forces, it was also under the control of COMOPS after 1977.

## **THE BRITISH SOUTH AFRICA POLICE (BSAP)**

The BSAP was Rhodesia's national police force and was responsible for maintaining law and order throughout the country. Although it was modeled on the British police system, the BSAP was more like the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in its development, structure, and organization. It was commanded by a Commissioner of Police who, in turn, was responsible to (and appointed by) the Minister of Justice (later, Minister of Justice and Law and Order). The BSAP was organized into branches, the most important of which were the Duty Uniform Branch, Criminal Investigation Department, Special Branch, Support Unit, and Police Reserve.

### **Duty Uniform Branch**

The Duty Uniform Branch performed most of the routine police work. They were also responsible for riot and crowd control and the staffing of Police Anti-Terrorist Units (PATU). Ranks of constable and above were "de facto" reserved exclusively for white personnel until 1976, but there was nevertheless heavy recruitment of black personnel in the lower ranks.

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<sup>2</sup>This number represents actual deployment and not the unit's total strength. See Cilliers, 1985, pp. 54-55.

### **Criminal Investigation Department (CID)**

Serious crimes, or those of a more specialized nature, were handled by detectives in the Criminal Investigation Department. The CID had posts at all the major police stations, both in the urban and rural areas. It drew its personnel from the Duty Uniform Branch, and successful applicants underwent further training and probation before being granted the permanent rank of detective. As in the Duty Uniform Branch, black detectives were recruited but were confined to the lower ranks.

### **Special Branch (SB)**

Special Branch was responsible for internal political intelligence. It drew virtually all its personnel from the CID, was administered by the BSAP, headed by the Director of the Internal Affairs Department, and controlled by the CIO. In the early stages of the conflict, SB agents penetrated the highest levels of the insurgent armies. SB's role thus expanded to external intelligence as insurgent recruits, including undercover SB agents, were sent out of the country for training. Even after the Rhodesian military developed its own intelligence unit, the Army and Air Force continued to rely primarily on the Special Branch for intelligence.<sup>3</sup>

### **Support Unit**

The support unit was the BSAP's paramilitary wing, and it was organized along similar lines to the Rhodesian African Rifles. Its white personnel, who commanded the sections and platoons of the unit, were drawn from the ranks of the Duty Uniform Branch. Although the members of the support unit received extensive military and riot-control training, were organized along military lines, and were heavily armed, until the start of the rural insurgency they performed only ceremonial duties. It was not until 1976 that the unit was used to its full potential as a paramilitary force, at which time it performed successfully.

### **Police Reserve**

The police reserve was developed as one means of overcoming the manpower shortage in Rhodesia. Several specialized reserve units were formed to supplement and relieve the regular police. This enabled

<sup>3</sup>As discussed in Sec. IV, this was problematical, because SB personnel were not trained to examine intelligence for operational use and military planning. Thus, although SB had excellent intelligence networks before 1972, it was not able to provide adequate intelligence to the military.

routine police crime-prevention duties, critical in preventing urban infiltration as well, to continue to be carried out even in times of emergency. In the 1970s, Rhodesia's national service was expanded to embrace the police reserve. All white Rhodesian men were required to complete two years military service after leaving high school and, although this service was initially restricted to the Army and Air Force, it was later expanded to include the police, prison services, and Internal Affairs Department. Those who joined the police received much the same training as regulars, and then transferred to the A-Reserve or Field Reserve.

**The Field Reserve.** The Field Reserve comprised all white volunteers who, before the rural insurgency, supplemented riot squads in urban and rural areas. As the rural insurgency grew, however, the field reservists were employed on various static guard duties, convoy protection, and defending white farms in the operational areas. When Police Anti-Terrorist units were formed, many were composed entirely of field reserve volunteers. In 1977, after several bombing attempts in the urban areas, the reservists were used for cordon and search operations.

**The A-Reserve.** The A-Reserve comprised volunteers who, after receiving training in law and police duties, worked one shift a month at their local police stations. In emergencies, the reservists were expected to take over normal police duties, releasing the regulars for other assignments.

**The Special Reserve.** The Special Reserve was formed at the height of the black nationalist unrest during the early 1960s. These reservists were white homeowners who patrolled their own neighborhoods at night and were given limited powers of arrest. "Key Point Special Reservists" were employees of vital installations such as power stations, strategic factories, communication stations, and other important nonmilitary facilities who were trained specifically to protect these facilities.

**The Police Air Reserve Wing.** The Police Air Reserve Wing consisted of volunteers (usually farmers) who owned their own aircraft and assisted the regular police in emergencies for air reconnaissance and search, and, occasionally, for casualty evacuation as well.<sup>4</sup> During counterinsurgency operations in the area, the senior Air Force Commander assumed command over the local Air Reserve Wing. In these instances, the Air Reserve Wing was often used as a telstar, circling at high altitude to relay radio messages between security force units operating on the ground and their area JOCs.

<sup>4</sup>The British had formed a similar force in Kenya during the Mau Mau conflict in the 1950s. See Hoffman, 1989, pp. 60-65.

**The African Field Reserve.** The African Field Reserve was established to involve blacks in combating urban unrest during the 1960s. Although many blacks were successfully recruited in the initial drive, maintaining the reserve proved difficult. Not only were blacks reluctant to be involved because of threats made by black nationalists, but those blacks who did join were relegated to menial duties. Nonetheless, the African reservists provided the police with a large pool of manpower that could be called upon during emergencies and this was extremely valuable, especially during the first wave of urban disorder.

**Police Anti-Terrorist Units.** In 1966, following the first serious guerrilla infiltrations into Rhodesia, the police started training personnel in counterinsurgency tactics. Special Police Anti-Terrorist Units (PATU) were established, composed of five volunteers (typically, four white and one black) from the regular police. When they could be spared from their routine duties, they were assigned to two-week tours of duty in rural areas. Because of their limited firepower, the PATU sticks were initially deployed on the fringes of operational areas, primarily on reconnaissance missions. As the security forces faced mounting manpower constraints, however, the PATU sticks were deployed on combat missions, often in conjunction with the Army.

**South African Police (SAP).** The South African police served in Rhodesia between 1967 and 1974. Despite being a police unit, the SAP operated as a virtual military force in Rhodesia for most of the conflict and initially was commanded by the Rhodesian Army. The SAP provided its own air support in the form of Alouette III helicopters. Its air crews, consequently, came under the command of the Rhodesian Air Force. Most of the SAP personnel were employed on patrol duties along the northwestern border, although some were deployed in the Operation Hurricane area. SAP personnel were also seconded to the BSAP or the Rhodesian Special Branch for other duties. While the helicopter units performed well in Rhodesia, the SAP ground units had an uneven record, enjoyed few successes, and experienced a higher casualty rate than the Rhodesians largely because they operated on their own as Army units, in unfamiliar territory and against tribes with whom they were unfamiliar. To rectify these weaknesses, the Rhodesian police trained several SAP units as PATU. Operating with and under the control of Rhodesian PATU units, these enjoyed increased success.

#### **THE RHODESIAN AIR FORCE (RhAF)**

The Rhodesian Air Force command and rank structure was based on the British Royal Air Force. It was commanded by an Air Marshal



who, like his counterpart in the Army, was accountable to the Minister of Defense. The RhAF was never a large air force. In 1965, it consisted of only 1,200 regular personnel. At the peak of its strength during the insurgency, it had a maximum of 2,300 personnel of all races; but of these, only 150 were pilots actively involved in combat operations. These pilots, however, were able to fly all of the aircraft in the Air Force inventory, which gave the RhAF a considerable amount of flexibility. Pilots were rotated through the various squadrons partly to maintain their skills on all aircraft and partly to relieve fellow pilots flying more dangerous sorties.

#### **THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS**

The Department of Internal Affairs (IAD) personnel were the acknowledged experts on tribal culture and mores and therefore played a prominent role in the conflict. IAD officers served at the Joint Operational Centers and were heavily involved in implementing such civic measures as the protected villages program. The paramilitary "Guard Force," which was responsible for the security of the protected villages, also came under IAD control.

White Internal Affairs personnel received extensive training in African tribal law and customs and were required to speak at least one of the tribal languages. Despite this, it is evident that many of the senior officers failed to fully appreciate the black population's nationalist political aspirations. This became clear when IAD assessments of black political opinion were at odds with Special Branch's assessment. Unfortunately, though IAD was wrong in several of these cases, IAD senior personnel had the government's ear and IAD assessments were generally accepted over those of Special Branch.

## **Appendix B**

### **MINE COUNTERMEASURES**

#### **MINE-RESISTANT AND PROTECTED VEHICLES**

Both ZIPRA and ZANLA attempted to throttle Rhodesia's economy through mine-laying operations that were begun in 1972. Because most roads in the areas along the country's borders were unpaved, mines could easily be buried either in the soft earth along the roadside or in the harder earth in the roads' centers, making travel hazardous and interfering with both commercial and military traffic. The insurgents used mostly Soviet TM-46 anti-vehicle mines, avoiding wooden-box mines, which were frequently rendered useless by termites. To limit injuries to the local civilian population, the guerrillas also restricted themselves throughout the conflict to using only anti-vehicle mines, despite having access to Soviet-made antipersonnel mines.

At the outset of the conflict, the BSAP were more concerned about the mine threat than was the Army, which tended to view them as inevitable hazards of war. In an effort to discover solutions to the mine problem, a team of police engineers went to Mozambique to observe the Portuguese Armed Forces, then waging a bitter counterinsurgency campaign against FRELIMO. The police were appalled to learn that, rather than solving the mine problem, the Portuguese had been reduced to a "garrison force," fearful of venturing out of their defended posts. What patrolling the Portuguese did do was extremely slow and tedious, with men on foot preceding the convoys, probing the road with sharp stakes in the hopes of detecting mines.

Having found no solutions in Mozambique, the BSAP turned to South Africa, which was also studying the problem. The South Africans had already developed a prototype mine-protected vehicle based on a World War II-vintage Swedish military vehicle, called the SKPF/VKPF M/42. The hull of the vehicle was designed with a "V"-shaped bottom, intended to deflect the force of the blast. The South Africans improved this by developing a special shaped steel capsule with a 43-degree V-shaped bottom. The capsule was then mounted on a Ford F-250 truck chassis that was powered by a Ford six-cylinder in-line water-cooled engine. To further protect passengers from the explosion, they each were strapped into steel seats with shoulder harnesses. The vehicle was dubbed the "Camel" because of its high

ungainly appearance. It could accommodate four passengers and a driver, and could maintain speeds of just over 70 miles an hour. More important, it could survive a TM-46 mine detonation. The vehicle was later modified to include armor-plating, bullet-proof glass, and a hull with a 90-degree "V"; called the "Hyena," it could also carry more fully equipped passengers than the "Camel."

At the time, however, Rhodesia could not afford to purchase the South African-made vehicles and instead began to develop their own vehicles based upon the South African ones. The Rhodesian model used the Land Rover chassis instead of the Ford, mainly because the Land Rover was the more commonly used vehicle in Rhodesia. By the end of 1972, the Rhodesian police, working with a local engineering company in Salisbury, were ready to test a prototype. After various experiments, the "Rhino" (see Fig. B.1), as the Rhodesian vehicle was known, emerged. It could carry four passengers and a driver and used milled steel (armor plate was not available) and a 90-degree "V"-shaped capsule mounted onto the chassis of the long wheel-base Land Rover, much as the Ford F-250 had been modified for the Camel and Hyena. Additional protection was provided by roll bars and shoulder harnesses for the driver and passengers.

The Rhino was an unqualified success. It was involved in some 12 mine detonations while carrying a total of 45 occupants. Although 15 people sustained various injuries, the lone fatality was a passenger who was not wearing his shoulder harness. The majority of injuries were largely caused by drivers exceeding the 18 mph speed limit at which the mine-resistant vehicles were required to be driven to mitigate the landmines' explosive force. The Rhino's success was also a tremendous morale boost for the troops deployed on "Operation Hurricane."

Alongside the development of the Rhino, Rhodesian engineers sought to provide unmodified Land Rovers with some form of mine protection. After various tests, the engineers determined that the cabs could be shielded from the explosive blasts by fitting angled, milled steel deflector plates within the front wheel arches and in front of the rear wheels. The back of the cab was protected from shrapnel with old heavy-duty conveyor belting placed along the floor, while the cab was strengthened by the addition of heavy rollbars. The vehicles' floors were also reinforced, cab-doors removed, and seatbelts with shoulder harnesses installed for the driver and two passengers. These vehicles provided protection against mines, as long as no passengers were carried in the back and an 18 mph speed limit was not exceeded. Although the vehicles were completely destroyed when they hit landmines, some parts were salvageable for use as spares. Eventually, the same principles used to protect Land Rovers were also applied to the Toyota Land Cruiser and the International one-ton truck.

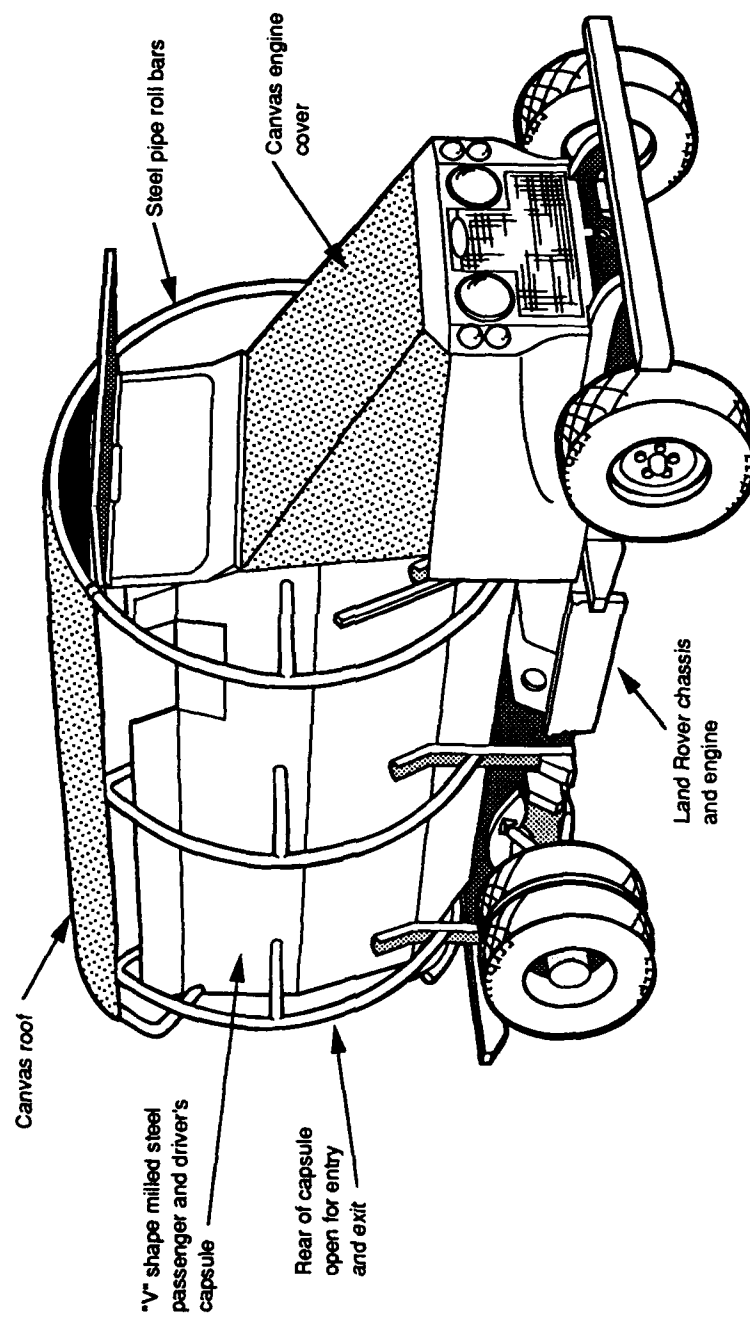


Fig. B.1—The Rhino mine-resistant vehicle

Although these mine-protected vehicles prevented fatalities in most cases, people nonetheless were still injured. A total of 162 mines were detonated by these vehicles, while transporting 573 people. Of these passengers, 8 percent were killed and 47 percent sustained some form of injury. Many of the casualties were caused by passengers riding in the back or by the vehicles traveling too fast. Because various attempts to protect passengers in the back failed, instructions were eventually issued that no passengers could travel in that section of the vehicle.

The BSAP's success prompted the Army to develop its own mine-protected vehicles. Although the Army also used Land Rovers, its primary transport vehicle was the British Bedford three-ton truck. These vehicles in fact proved much easier to protect against mines because the cab and rear carrying space were much higher off the ground than in smaller vehicles like the Land Rover. After some experimentation, the Army's engineers found that heavy-duty conveyor belting laid along the inside of the Bedford's mudguards afforded sufficient protection to the vehicles' occupants. Other simple additions, such as covering the floor of the rear carrying space with the belting on top of sandbags further protected passengers. The cab floor was strengthened with half-inch steel plating and a hatch was cut into the vehicle's roof to provide an outlet for the buildup of pressure caused by mine blasts.

The least expensive and most effective countermeasure, however, was partially filling the tires with water. This cooled the heat of the blast and dispersed its overall effect. Although the technique reduced the life of the tire by 50 percent, it reduced the blasts' effects to such an extent that damage to the vehicle was often minimal. Occasionally, new tires could simply be fitted over the rims with no other repairs required. The combination of these protective measures, which the Rhodesian Army applied to Bedfords and other heavy transports, proved very successful. These mine-protected vehicles detonated a total of 502 mines, while carrying 4,389 passengers. Of these, only 1 percent were killed and just 24 percent injured, a much better ratio than had been achieved by the BSAP's modifications to its generally lighter transports.

The continuing problems with lighter vehicles were solved by a team of civilian engineers working independently of the security forces. They obtained permission from the Army and police to examine vehicles wrecked by mines and discovered that the direction of the blasts' main force depended primarily on which part of the wheel caused the mine to detonate. The worst effects occurred when the inside of the wheel caused the detonation, because the main explosion was then channeled directly under the vehicle, rather than away from it. The

engineering team also noted that, while the mine-resistant vehicles provided some protection, they nonetheless had certain grave shortcomings. Most important was that when the rear wheels detonated the mines, the explosive effect tended to pitch the vehicles violently forward, tossing the occupants from them if they were not strapped in. Driving the vehicles at high speeds simply aggravated the problem.

The engineers therefore developed a prototype whose major components, including the engine, were scrounged from an old Volkswagen Kombi. They mounted the usual "V"-shaped capsule onto the chassis and moved the wheels along the axle, out away from the capsule's undercarriage. The wheel assemblies were attached to the chassis by shear bolts, with the intention that the explosion would cause the bolts to break, thereby avoiding the transmittal of the blast's shock into the capsule. The capsule would, of course, drop violently onto the road, but the occupants would nonetheless emerge unscathed provided they were strapped in securely. Although the vehicle was designed to remain upright after an explosion, roll bars were installed in case it did overturn. The fuel tank was also refitted to the rear wheel to minimize the likelihood of fire. The vehicle was designed for easy towing and new wheel sections could be replaced at nominal cost within a few hours.

After being tested in late 1974, the vehicle was dubbed "Leopard" and went into production in May 1975 at an assembly plant in Salisbury (see Fig. B.2). Production models were larger than the prototype and could carry five persons in addition to the driver. Although operational use revealed a few teething problems, these were easily corrected. In all, the Leopard struck 67 mines while carrying 264 people. Six passengers were killed (2 percent), and only 41 (15 percent) sustained injuries, a much better record than the Rhino.

Employing the same monocoque principles, an improved version of the Leopard, named the "Cougar," was developed that employed the more powerful Land Rover or Nissan engines and chassis. This vehicle was commonly used by government personnel and civilians and was the most successful mine-resistant vehicle. It detonated eight mines while carrying 33 passengers; none of the occupants were killed, and only 14 were injured.<sup>1</sup> The Cougar was also modified to run on rail-lines where it would precede trains, to detonate electrically operated explosive devices. It proved especially effective in preventing train derailments.

The success of the light monocoque vehicles prompted the development of similar capsules for troop carriers. Changes in the insurgents'

<sup>1</sup>After the Rhodesian conflict, a vehicle based on the Cougar, but called the Swagger, was used by civilians in Southwest Africa/Namibia.

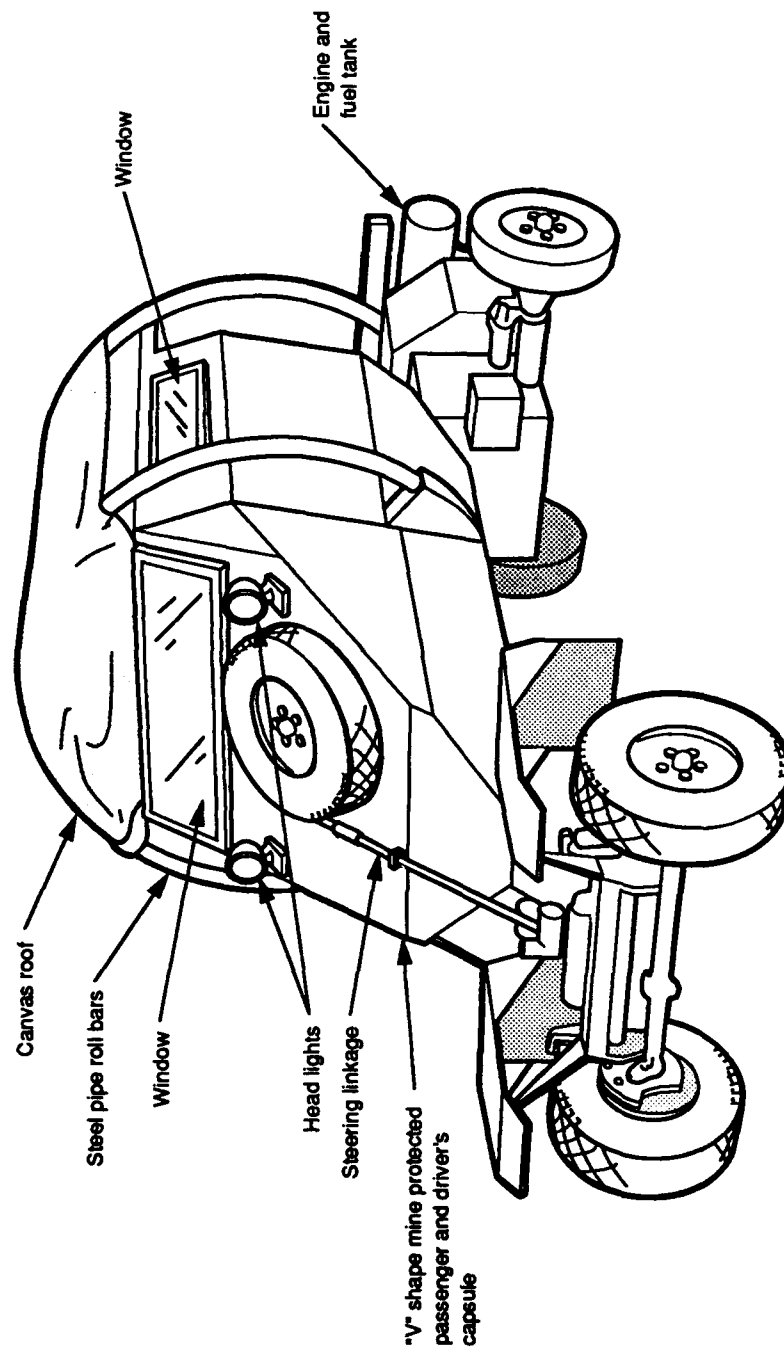


Fig. B.2—The Leopard mine-resistant vehicle

tactics and the increasing number of ambushes caused a need for vehicles that could protect against bullets as well as against mines. The first monocoque heavy vehicle was the "Puma" (see Fig. B.3), which had an armored "V"-shaped capsule fitted to the chassis of Isuzu and Nissan five-ton trucks. The capsule had sloping sides constituted of 10 mm milled steel, angled like the glacis front of a tank to deflect bullets. The sides were hinged so that they could be dropped down if occupants needed to get clear of the vehicle quickly. The driver was housed in a separate capsule fitted with bullet-proof glass. Army Pumas had two-man driver capsules with space for an observer to watch for mines and ambushes. Roll bars were fitted to the top of the main capsule, and the tires were also filled with water.

The Puma proved its worth both in ambushes and mine detonations. It was found to be very stable in blasts, with little tendency to pitch forward from rear-wheel detonations. It was also designed to be easily and inexpensively repaired by having an "H"-section steel beam rear axle instead of the differential assembly used on Bedfords.

The "Crocodile" (see Fig. B.4), an improved Puma, was mounted on the same chassis but had a single capsule housing the passengers and the driver. Its higher sides were equipped with firing ports for rifles. The drop sides were abandoned in favor of a single entry hatch located in the rear, although at the request of the Army additional hatches were placed at the sides, because of the concern that insurgents would concentrate their fire on the rear of the vehicle during an ambush. The Crocodile proved even more effective than the Puma. Between the two vehicles, a total of 3,230 people were involved in 327 mine detonations. Of these personnel, only 11 (less than a half-percent) were killed and 554 (17 percent) were injured, an even better record than that of the Army's modified Bedfords.

Another private company developed a mine-resistant vehicle called the "Kudu." It had a concertina-shaped capsule fitted to either a long wheel-base Land Rover or a Datsun Nissan 4x4 Safari truck chassis. The concertina shape relied upon the closing of the rear hatch to give it the strength to resist a mine-blast. The capsule could in fact be fitted to any 4x4 chassis, or it could be extended to fit on two-and-a-half-ton trucks. A series of bullet tumbler baffles made from Bennox milled steel was fitted over the outside of the capsule, providing 90 percent protection against small arms fire. These vehicles were intended primarily for civilian use, and the company producing them also offered attractive deals to farmers to convert their existing trucks to Kudos. The Kudu was also flexible enough that even as the insurgents changed their tactics, it could be modified to retain its mine resistance. Kudos carrying 267 people detonated 59 mines, killing 17 (6 percent) of the



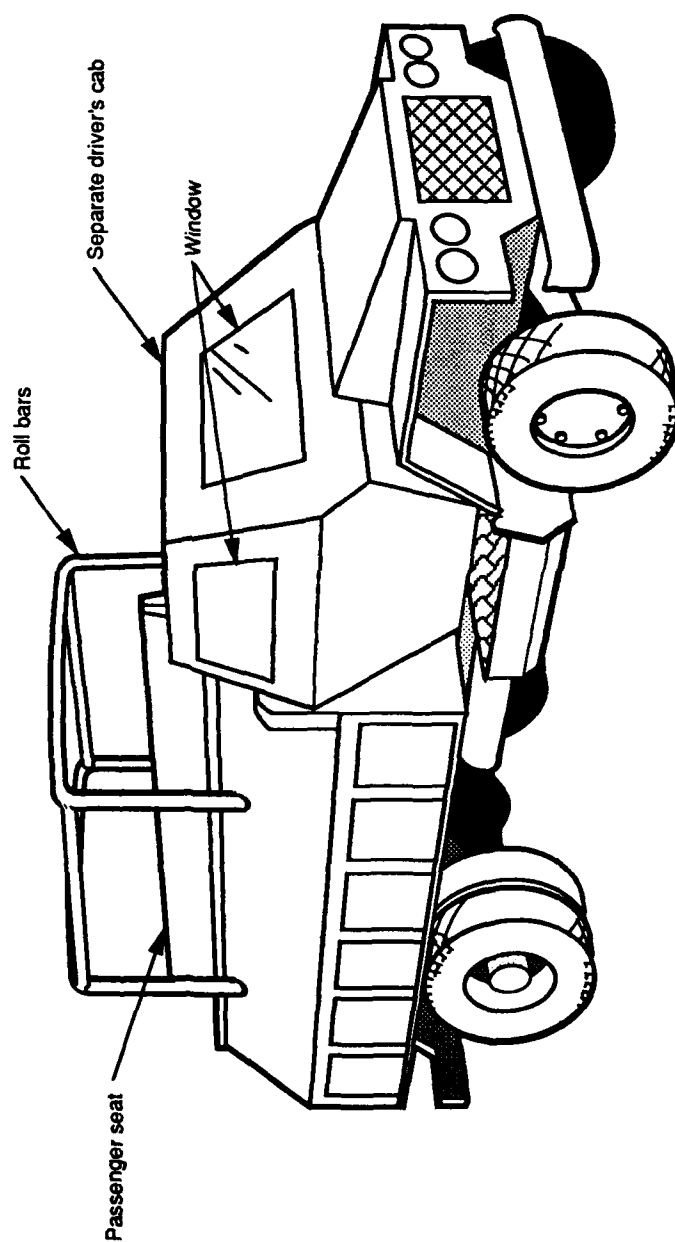


Fig. B.3—The Puma mine-resistant vehicle

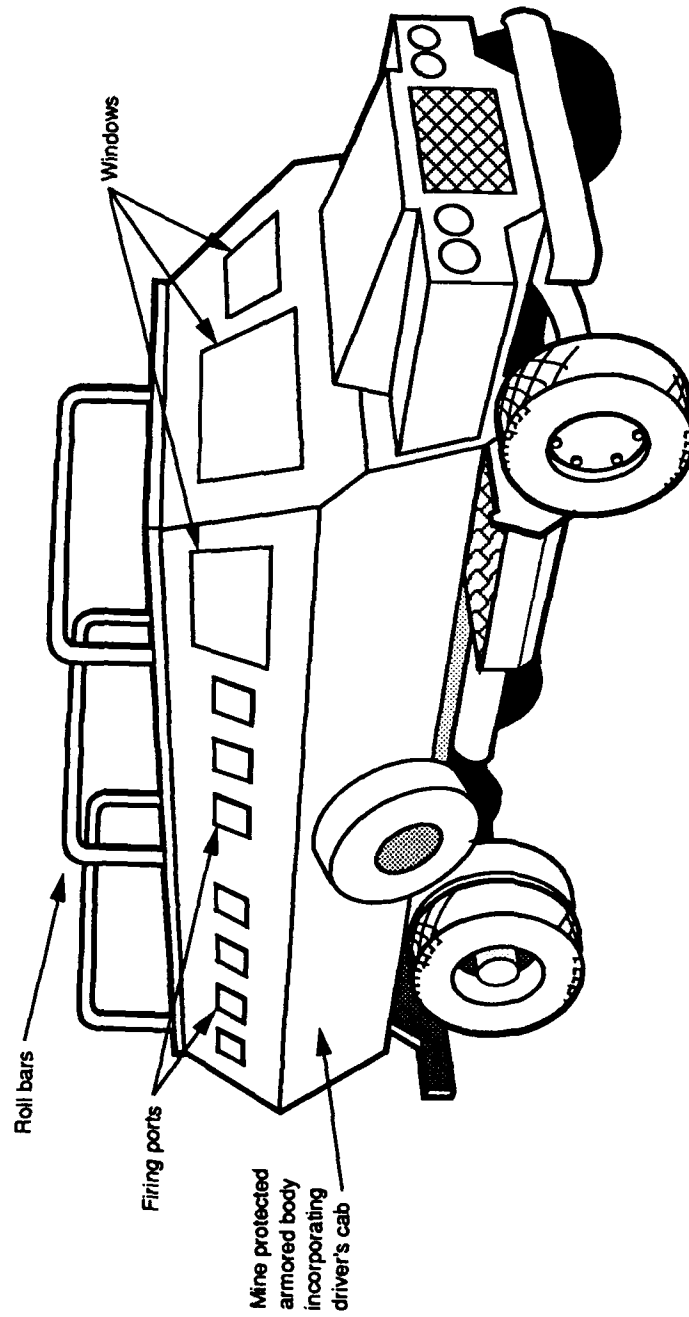


Fig. B.4—The Crocodile mine-resistant vehicle

passengers and injuring 116 (43 percent). Although the Kudu's safety record was not as good as that of the Cougar, its production increased the availability of mine-resistant vehicles to the public.

The Rhodesians also purchased some 125 South African Hyenas during the course of the conflict, and the South African Police contingent operating in Rhodesia also used them. These vehicles were especially popular because they were armored against small-arms fire, could carry more personnel, and were more comfortable to ride in than the Rhodesian Rhinos and adapted land-cruisers. In most cases, damaged Hyenas were also easy to repair. Hyenas detonated 140 land-mines while transporting 578 personnel. Only two passengers (less than a half-percent of total passengers) were killed, and 121 (20 percent) were injured, a record comparable to that of the Rhodesian Leopard. As with all the mine-resistant vehicles, the vast majority of injuries were due to excessive speed or to nonuse of shoulder straps. Excessive speed, combined with the force of mine explosions, often caused the vehicles to turn over; passengers' failure to wear their harnesses led to more deaths and injuries in these circumstances than did the blasts themselves. When the Hyena was driven within the recommended operational speed of 20 mph and all the occupants were strapped in, the chance of injury was virtually nil.<sup>2</sup>

### MINE-DETECTING VEHICLES

In the early stages of Operation Hurricane, engineers using hand-held mine detectors walked slowly in front of convoys attempting to clear the roads of mines. This was a tedious, laborious, and manpower-intensive practice that was abandoned only once mine-protected vehicles were developed. Nonetheless, the problem of unprotected vehicles having restricted access to the roads remained unsolved until Ernest Konschel, the same civilian engineer who had instigated development of the monocoque mine-resistant vehicles, designed a mine-clearing vehicle. The concept he used was not new. The Rhodesians had already tried fitting South African-made Milton detectors to the front of Bedford troop transports, but the vehicle still had to travel at an extremely slow pace to avoid running over any mines it detected. What was needed therefore was a vehicle that could safely run over a

<sup>2</sup>For example, a Hyena in Southwest Africa detonated a TM-46 mine boosted with an additional 44 lb of TNT. The front half of the vehicle, including the engine, was completely blown off, but none of the passengers were injured. Eventually, to retard speeding, a device was fitted to the engine to prevent the vehicle from being driven over 20 mph.

mine without detonating it. This meant that the pressure exerted by the vehicle's tires had to be less than 600 lb per square inch, the weight that would detonate a Soviet TM-46 mine. Konschel reasoned that the solution would be to build a small, light-weight vehicle using a beach-buggy chassis and a Volkswagen engine and body. The Volkswagen's tires, however, were too heavy and were replaced with the wide tires used by formula-one racing cars.

Konschel built a prototype of the vehicle with a small "V"-shaped capsule for the driver and his detecting equipment for protection in case the buggy detonated a mine. The detectors were initially placed in front of the vehicle, and both an audible and visual alarm were activated when a mine was discovered. Once the alarm sounded, the driver would stop, reverse his vehicle until it was located directly over the mine, locate the mine with a probe, and then remove it for disposal. Konschel's buggy was called the "Pookie" (see Fig. B.5). A special Army unit was formed both to operate the Pookie and to resolve any problems found during its trials. The unit's personnel were experts in electronics and motor engineering and were themselves able to make any modifications necessary to enhance the vehicle's reliability.

The Pookie proved to be an effective answer to the mine problem. It would typically travel at some distance in front of convoys to give the vehicles time to stop if a mine were detected. The sensors would, of course, pick up any small metal objects in the road, but as the operators gained experience, they were able to distinguish between false readings and actual mines. The result was that roads could be cleared for convoys travelling at speeds of up to 50 mph. Although there were not enough Pookies to cover all the country's roads, it was soon discovered that the insurgents would not lay mines in areas where Pookies were operating. The Pookies could thus be shifted from area to area to confuse the insurgents and provide greater ground coverage. A variant of the Pookie was even fitted to an ordinary bicycle and used to sweep forward airfields of mines after insurgent raids.

The Pookie became so effective that the insurgents began specifically to lay ambushes for it, usually by electronically detonating mines as Pookies passed over. In all, 12 such attacks were made but, because of the Pookie's design, only one operator was killed and three injured. The insurgents in turn started to lay Soviet and Chinese nonmetallic mines, which initially were able to defeat the Pookie's detectors. In response, the Pookie unit developed more sophisticated detectors that located the holes in which the mines were placed through sensors and electronic equipments that could differentiate between the hard earth around the mines and the loose gravel placed on top of it. A microprocessor was also built into the detector that was programmed to ignore

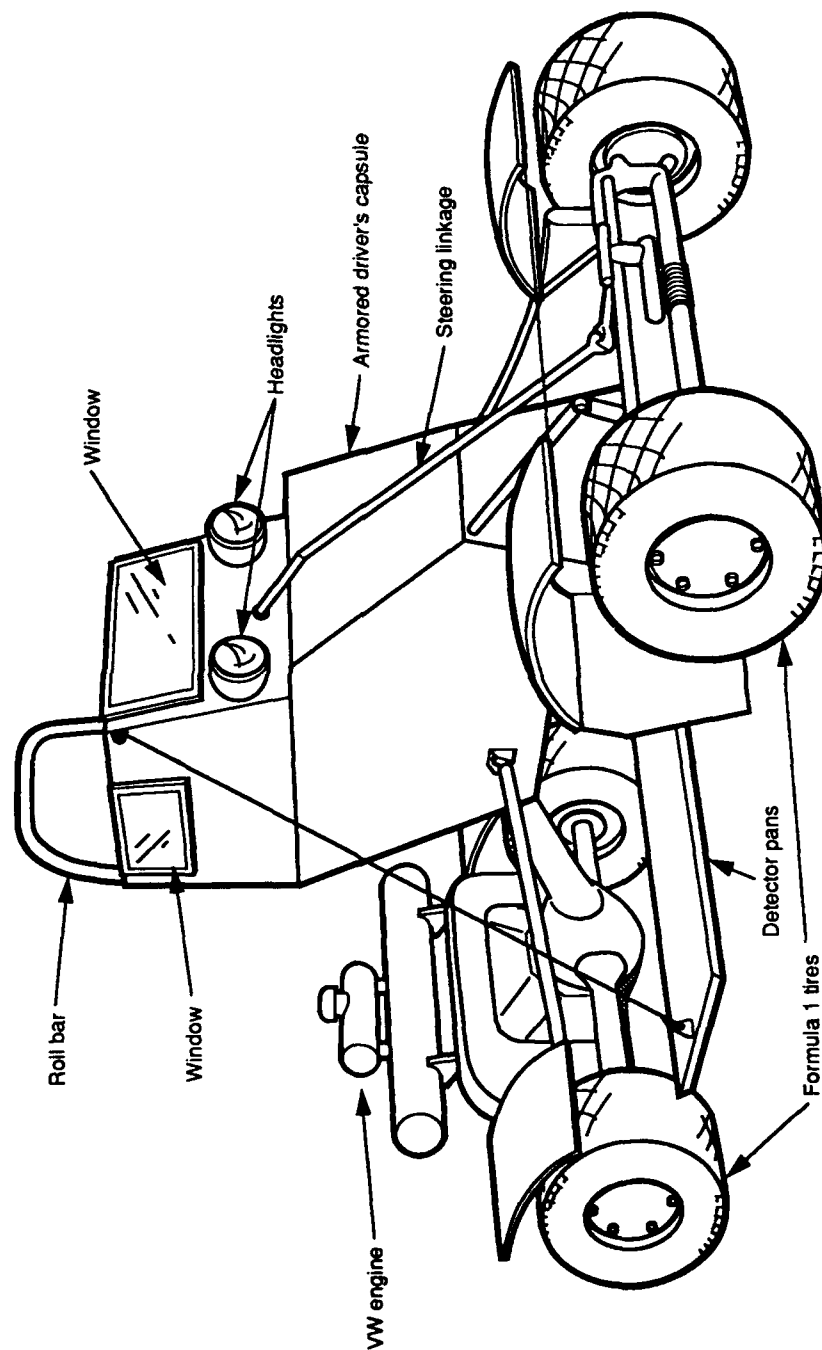


Fig. B.5—The Pookie mine-detecting vehicle

all holes not meeting the criteria of those usually containing mines. With these new detectors, the Pookie was able to remain in service until the end of the war. In its four years of service, the Pookie unit successfully located 550 landmines, 300 of them in its first year.

### **THE TOK-TOKKIE MINE-EXPLODER**

During the period that the Pookie was being redesigned to deal with the nonmetallic mines, Konschel developed a mine-exploder. The device he built weighed eight tons and was mounted on 22 wheels that rolled forward on casters. The device was designed to be pushed ahead of a heavy vehicle, following the contours of the road. The casters were used to localize the explosion's effects and, if damaged, could be replaced within 30 minutes. Two prototypes were made that had a 99 percent detection rate when tested. The project was not pursued, however, after the Pookie came back into service.

### **SEMI-AUTOMATIC BOMB LOCATING EQUIPMENT (SABLE)**

The Pookie unit's last assignment was to construct a small, tracked, bomb-locating machine similar to the British "Wheelbarrow" used in Northern Ireland. Most of the materials were scrounged, so the development costs of the SABLE, as the machine was called, were only some \$500 Rhodesian. Like the Wheelbarrow, the SABLE had hard tracks that enabled it to climb a 60 degree incline, a television monitor that allowed the operator to see what was going on, a shotgun to disrupt the explosive device, a hydraulic ram for smashing objects or breaking locks, and a water projector to dampen explosive devices. Just as the SABLE was completed, however, the war ended.

### **ANTI-AMBUSH DEVICES**

The Rhodesians also developed several devices that could be fitted to security force vehicles to counter ambushes. The objective was to provide the occupants of vehicles with some means of killing, injuring, or pinning down the ambush party until security forces could outflank them. One such measure involved mounting devices similar to Claymore mines facing outward from the sides of vehicles. The vehicles were protected by reinforced backing plates and the mines were detonated electronically from within the cabs. In one instance, this

device killed 11 insurgents during an ambush. Rhodesian engineers also developed other similar grenade dischargers, including one that used old bolt-action .303 rifles with Ballistite cartridges as a propellant to launch hand-grenades from a cup holder affixed to the barrel. The grenade's activating lever was secured by the cup until it was discharged. Care had to be taken in loading and unloading the dischargers, which were placed at various points along the vehicle to provide complete coverage. The triggers were activated by a pull cord and could be fired individually or at once. Another device involved two AK-47s mounted on the back of a Land Rover. The guns were fired from a solenoid activator located inside the cab.

All these devices required the driver to travel through the kill zone as quickly as possible once an ambush occurred. If enough occupants were available to retaliate against the attackers, the driver would stop the vehicle once it was clear of the ambush point and the security forces would determine the direction of fire by a quick examination of any bullet holes on the vehicle. Although the retaliatory devices did not actually kill many insurgents, reports indicate that they were quite successful in providing a diversion. They also did much to enhance security force morale.

In sum, mine-protected and mine-resistant vehicles were among the most successful countermeasures of the war. Although mine warfare, among other insurgent tactics, imposed a garrison-mentality on Portuguese troops in Mozambique during the early 1970s and in El Salvador more recently, the Rhodesians actively fought to regain and then retain control over the roads. The Rhodesians' commonsense approach was characterized by a flexibility in the design and constant modification of the vehicles to keep pace with the insurgents' changing tactics. They thus were able to cope not only with the initial mining threat, but with each new tactic the insurgents developed. When the insurgents began to combine small-arms fire with mining, the Rhodesians were able to overcome the new threat and remained on the roads. Similarly, when the insurgents began planting nonmetallic mines, the Rhodesians readjusted their mine-detecting devices to home in on the holes rather than the mines themselves.

Many of these countermeasures were first developed by the police. Civilians contributed as well, advancing the countermeasures through refinement and improvement. Thus, when the Army did begin to develop mine-resistant and protected vehicles, it did so from a rich base of mostly nonmilitary domestic research and experience. In addition, rather than importing a few expensive vehicles, the Rhodesians inexpensively developed and built their own, scrounging many of the parts. Again, characteristic of their approach to the entire conflict, the

Rhodesians relied on ingenuity, innovation, and close cooperation to overcome constraints placed on them by scarce resources and foreign currency shortages.



## **Appendix C**

### **CROSS-BORDER RAIDS**

Throughout the conflict, various elements of the Rhodesian Air Force and Army conducted numerous operations and raids outside of the country's borders (see Fig. C.1). The more important are summarized here by the units that conducted them. In this respect, the various so-called "hot pursuit" raids that were carried out into the northeastern border area of Mozambique during the beginning of Operation Hurricane are not covered because these operations were being conducted in a country that at that time was friendly to Rhodesia and had authorized the raids.

#### **THE RHODESIAN SPECIAL SERVICES (SAS) AND THE RHODESIAN LIGHT INFANTRY (RLI)**

The SAS was the best equipped and trained of all the Rhodesian units for clandestine operations. Like their British counterparts, this was one of their prime functions, although, as it transpired, it was only during the last years of the conflict that they were used extensively in this role. Before 1972, the CIO used small units of the SAS to conduct clandestine operations into Zambia. Of the two missions that have been reported in the open literature, neither was successful. In one, an explosive device accidentally detonated just as the group was about to cross the Zambezi River into Zambia, killing several operators and causing the mission's abandonment. In a later operation, a group of SAS were successfully flown into Lusaka, but were unable to complete their mission and left without sustaining any losses.

The RLI conducted numerous hot pursuit raids into Mozambique during the early days of Operation Hurricane after the Portuguese handed the country to FRELIMO and conducted several external operations of a conventional nature against insurgent bases in conjunction with the SAS.

1. **Operation Big Bang:** South West Zambia, August–October 1978 (Fig. C.1, target A). This operation, involving 43 SAS personnel, was to eliminate a large ZIPRA base camp just on the Zambezi River. The raiders crossed the Zambezi River by

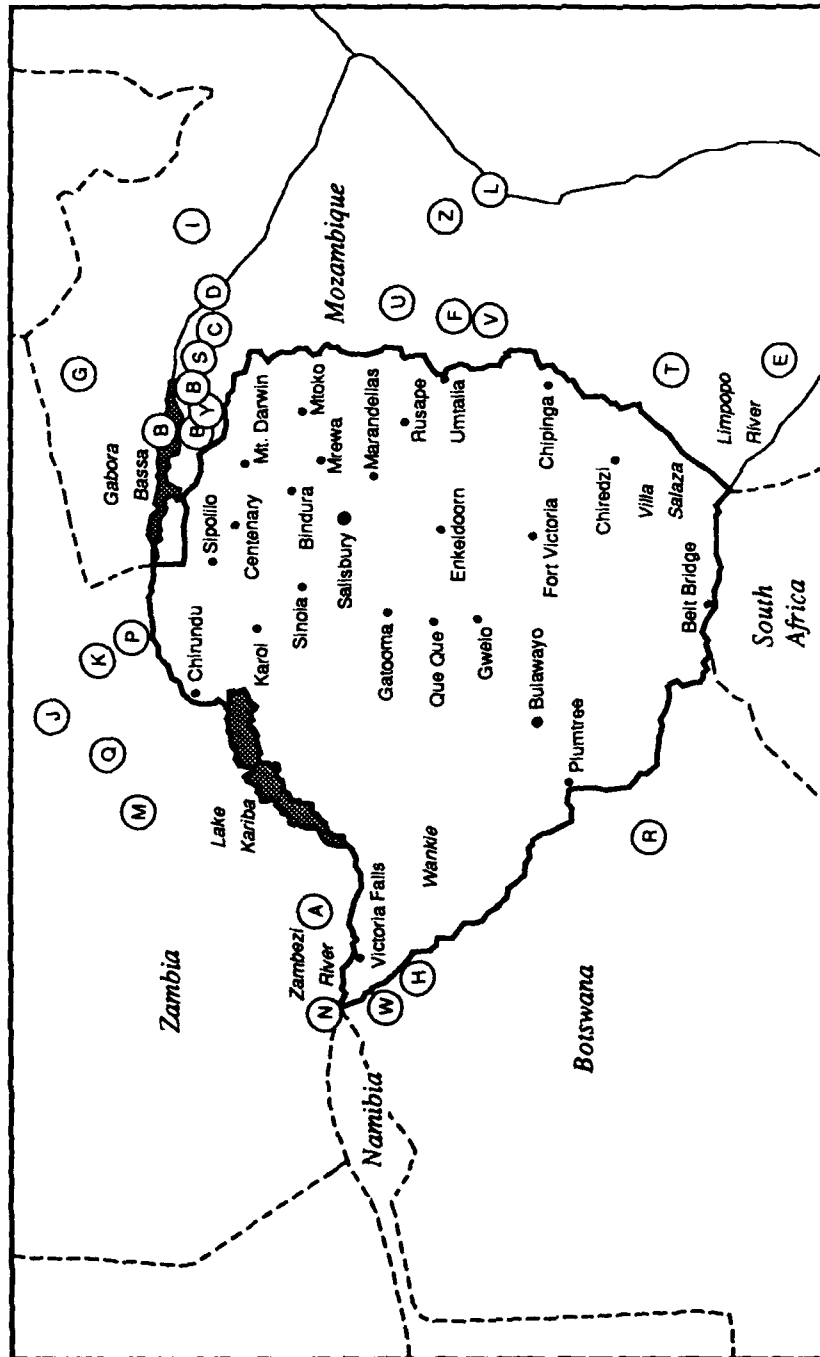


Fig. C.1—Approximate location of external targets

boat and then proceeded on foot to the camp and attacked it, killing nine insurgents and capturing or destroying vast quantities of equipment. The SAS suffered no casualties.

2. Canoe Operations: Cabora Basa Lake, Mozambique, January 1977 (Fig. C.1, target B). This operation involved 12 SAS troops who used canoes to sneak into Mozambique via the Cabora Basa Lake and conduct several hit and run raids against ZANLA and FRELIMO bases and installations. The group operated on the lake for six weeks while they mined roads, ambushed vehicles carrying FRELIMO and ZANLA forces, and attacked several insurgent camps. At the conclusion of the operation, the Rhodesian force had killed at least 20 FRELIMO guerrillas (including the commanding officer and his second in command, as well as the Political commissar of Mukumbura). The SAS sustained no casualties. At later stages during the conflict, the SAS and Selous Scouts conducted other canoe operations with similar success.
3. Attack of Chioca Garrison: Mozambique, March-May 1977 (Fig. C.1, target C). This operation involved an attack on a ZANLA camp near the town of Chioca in the northeastern border area of Mozambique by a force of 22 SAS personnel who were transported by helicopter to a point 11 miles from their target. From there, they proceeded on foot under cover of darkness to the target. The camp was attacked at first light with explosives, mortar, and automatic weapons, resulting in its complete destruction and the deaths of at least 38 insurgents. One SAS member was killed. Following this attack, ZANLA insurgents moved into the town of Chioca. A group of 16 SAS operators then returned to Mozambique to carry out a series of ambush and mine laying operations. In May, this force was supplemented by an airdrop of 12 more SAS who conducted a dawn attack on Chioca, destroying an unoccupied ZANLA camp. By the operation's conclusion, the SAS accounted for 24 enemy killed in ambushes for only two of their own, who sustained slight wounds from enemy mortar fire during the occupation of Chioca.
4. Ambush of ZANLA insurgents between Chioca and Tete: Mozambique, October 1977 (Fig. C.1, target D). This ambush was conducted by 12 SAS operators after a CIO radio intercept had revealed that 24 ZANLA insurgents would be returning to Mozambique from the Operation Hurricane area. The raiding party was air dropped at night into an area some 31 miles from the intended ambush site. After arriving at the

site, the SAS waited for 10 days until the insurgents arrived. Twenty-one insurgents were killed and only one ZANLA person escaped the ambush. The SAS suffered no casualties.

5. Operations in Southeast Mozambique: October–November 1977 (Fig. C.1, target E). In October 1977 the SAS took over external operation in southeastern Mozambique from the Selous Scouts. Their first mission was to disrupt ZANLA convoys on the road south of the town of Mapai, just over 50 miles from the Rhodesian border. Twenty-two SAS troops were dropped from an Air-Trans-Africa DC-7. Four of them sustained sprained and broken limbs during the jump and were left hidden in the bush while the remaining force ambushed a three-truck convoy, destroying one vehicle and killing 20 ZANLA insurgents. The other two trucks managed to turn around and escape but were subsequently destroyed by RhAF Hunter jet fighters. Three SAS personnel were wounded in the ambush.

In November, a stick of 16 SAS men were parachuted 75 miles inside Mozambique to ambush a motorized convoy bringing ZANLA insurgents and their equipment to Mapai from Mapute. While preparing the ambush site, they encountered a small group of FRELIMO/ZAANLA and killed three. Before they could change the ambush site, the convoy arrived and the leading truck, carrying ammunition, hit a mine and exploded. The burning truck prevented the others from continuing so the insurgent forces retreated into defensive positions for the night. The SAS requested an air strike for the next morning and, after first light, a Lynx and Hunters arrived and destroyed or damaged 21 of the remaining vehicles. ZANLA suffered over 50 casualties. The SAS sustained no losses.

6. Operation Dingo: Mozambique, November 1977 (Fig. C.1, targets F and G). This operation consisted of an attack on two large ZANLA bases in east and northeast Mozambique. The first attack was launched against the larger of the two camps, called Chimoio, which held some 11,000 insurgents and was situated about 56 miles east of the Rhodesian border city of Umtali. The attack began with a bombing run by RhAF Canberras, followed by Hunters, Vampires, and Lynxs. Virtually every available RhAF combat aircraft was used in the operation. A combined force of 97 SAS and 48 RLI paratroopers

then sealed off two sides of the camp while the third side was covered by 47 heliborne RLI troops. The fourth side was contained by helicopter gunships. For the helicopters to refuel, the Rhodesian force had to create a temporary staging base inside Mozambique. The camp was taken after a day's fighting and some 2,000 insurgents were killed. The Rhodesians suffered losses of one soldier and Vampire pilot killed and about eight other personnel wounded. Large amounts of equipment were either captured or destroyed while captured documents revealed a considerable amount of useful intelligence.

Twenty-four hours later the same Rhodesian force attacked the Tembo camp, housing about 4,000 insurgents. It was situated northeast of the Cabora Basa Lake 140 miles from the Rhodesian border and required that the Rhodesians establish two helicopter refueling bases in Mozambique. The same basic tactics were used, but as the camp was in two parts, it was not possible to envelope it as easily as at Chimoio. As a result, large numbers of insurgents were able to escape into the bush during the Rhodesian assault. Nevertheless, some 86 insurgents were killed, a large quantity of equipment was destroyed, and the Rhodesians sustained no losses.

7. Hot Pursuit: Botswana, February 1978 (Fig. C.1, target H). This operation was mounted on a ZIPRA camp just across the border with Botswana near the Kazangula ferry by a force of 28 SAS following an insurgent on an SAS patrol just inside the border with Rhodesia. The SAS force tracked the insurgents to a camp across the border and killed 17 to 24 ZIPRA insurgents and Botswana Defense Force members found there. No casualties were sustained by the SAS.
8. Attack on ZANLA Barracks: Tete, Mozambique, May 1978 (Fig. C.1, target I). This was another canoe operation on the Cabora Basa Lake involving eight SAS operators who attacked the Battariao Barracks in the town of Tete. Time-delay explosives charges destroyed the buildings after the SAS had left. An unknown number of ZANLA insurgents were also killed. The SAS team sustained no losses and was later evacuated by helicopter.
9. Operation Elbow: Southwest Zambia, January and June 1978 (Fig. C.1, target A). An SAS force attacked a ZIPRA base known as BK camp on the Zambian side of the Zambezi River

east of the Victoria Falls. They killed 27 ZIPRA insurgents and also laid land mines on surrounding roads that caused several casualties among Zambian police and military personnel. ZIPRA subsequently established another camp further inland that the SAS again successfully attacked. By June, ZIPRA had moved back 20 miles from the river and had set up a base at a mine that was assaulted by a force of 12 helicopter-borne troops who made their way on foot to the ambush site. The Rhodesian force had to remain in their ambush positions for 11 days to attack three heavy Soviet-made trucks packed with fuel, ammunition, and new ZIPRA recruits. All the vehicles were destroyed and 69 ZIPRA insurgents were killed. Several more guerrillas including a senior commander were killed shortly afterwards when their vehicle detonated a mine laid by the SAS before they left the area. The SAS suffered no casualties.

10. Operation Gatling: Central Zambia, October 19, 1978 (Fig. C.1, targets J and K). This attack was part of an operation involving three ZIPRA bases deep inside Zambia. An air strike was launched against a base called Freedom Camp and is described in the external air operations chapter. Immediately after the bombing run, a raid was mounted on the Mkushi camp situated 93 miles northeast of Lusaka. The operation consisted of an air strike by some of the same aircraft involved in the Freedom Camp attack followed up by 120 SAS paratroopers and 45 SAS heliborne troops (including an 81 mm mortar unit). Approximately 600 insurgents were killed and large quantities of arms and equipment were either captured or destroyed. One SAS member was seriously wounded. At the conclusion of this raid, the Rhodesians struck at ZIPRA's CGT-2 (Communist Guerrilla Training) camp 62 miles east of Lusaka. An air strike was similarly followed by a vertical envelopment conducted by RLI paratroopers and heliborne troops. To provide refueling for the helicopters, the Rhodesian force established a temporary staging base inside Zambia. The RLI attack on CGT-2 camp was not as successful as its predecessors since the insurgents, having heard of the other two attacks, vacated the base and only 51 were killed.
11. Operation Shovel: Tete area, Mozambique, December 1978 (Fig. C.1, target L). This attack involved the destruction of a railway bridge on the Moatiye/Biera line by 20 SAS paratroopers dropped into the area by the RhAF. Despite several

initial setbacks, the bridge was destroyed just as a train was crossing it. The SAS suffered no casualties. Shortly afterward, a group of 12 SAS ambushed a ZANLA supply convoy, destroying the lead truck with an RPG-7 rocket. Although the remaining vehicles managed to turn around and escape, most were destroyed the following day by an RhAF air strike conducted by Hunters.

12. Operation Inhibit: Southeast Mozambique, December 1978 (Fig. C.1, target E). 20 SAS paratroopers dropped into Mozambique just south of the border town of Malvernia to ambush vehicles transporting ZANLA supplies from Maputo. While the SAS were preparing their ambush position, a group of heavily armed ZANLA insurgents suddenly appeared. The Rhodesians killed 45 guerrillas; only one SAS trooper was killed.
13. Attack on the Mavuze Hydro-electric power station: East Mozambique, January 1979 (Fig. C.1, target V). This was a joint operation conducted by the SAS and MNR. The power station, located about 25 miles east of the Rhodesian border city of Umtali, was destroyed with a 75 mm recoilless rifle.
14. Operation Neutron: Mozambique, March 1979 (Fig. C.1, target F). This operation involved the infiltration of a two-man SAS team into the Chimoio area to ascertain the location of the new camp and direct an air strike on it. Upon the air strike's successful completion (described in the external air operations chapter), the SAS team was evacuated by helicopter after the insurgents discovered their presence and had wounded one of the SAS troopers in the legs. Two months later another two-man SAS team returned to the area and successfully directed another air strike on a camp of 150 ZANLA insurgents.
15. Attack on Beira Fuel Depot: Mozambique, March 1979 (Fig. C.1, target L). This ambitious operation was carried out by a joint SAS-MNR force on the fuel depot located in the port of Beira. The target was 186 miles from the Rhodesian border city of Umtali and the force was transported by helicopter under cover of darkness to a point just outside Beira. From there, the party made their way on foot to the target, which was attacked with rockets and automatic weapons. A bomb concealed in a suitcase simultaneously destroyed a nearby oil pipeline. All targets were successfully destroyed and the team left without suffering any casualties. The fire created by the attack on the fuel depot raged for days and was only extin-

guished after fire-fighting experts with special equipment were flown in from South Africa.

16. Operation Gatling: Attack on Nkomo's House, Lusaka, Zambia, April 1979 (Fig. C.1, target M). The intention of this attack was to kill ZIPRA leader Joshua Nkomo at his house in Lusaka and also destroy a large ZIPRA armory in that city. Forty-two SAS men, dressed in Zambian military uniforms and driving a Land Rover with Zambian markings, were ferried across the Kariba Lake and then drove to Lusaka. Although the Rhodesian force destroyed both the house and the armory, Nkomo was away and thus escaped an ambush. Two SAS soldiers were wounded but succeeded in returning to Rhodesia with the rest of the group.
17. Operation Dinky: North Botswana, April 13, 1979 (Fig. C.1, target N). This operation involved the destruction of the ferry across the Zambezi River at Kazangula on Botswana's main road link to Rhodesia. Twelve SAS troops conveyed a 242 lb specially prepared charge strapped to a bicycle across the border to the ferry site on foot. The charge was laid in the water in one of the ferry docking areas under cover of darkness and detonated by remote control. The ferry was completely destroyed and the SAS team returned to Rhodesia without suffering any casualties.
18. Operation Carpet: Lusaka, Zambia, June 1979 (Fig. C.1, target M). This operation was a raid on the ZIPRA intelligence headquarters in Lusaka, Zambia to destroy the facility, obtain documents, and perhaps capture some high ranking ZIPRA intelligence officers as well. It was carried out by 28 SAS troops who were transported right into the intelligence headquarters compound by recently acquired Bell helicopters, which had the range to reach the target. The attacking force, which was fired upon by ZIPRA guards as it landed, breeched the security walls with a specially made explosive device and then cleared the building of all defenders before destroying it with explosives. Only one ZIPRA intelligence officer was captured, the other two being absent at the time of the raid. A large number of documents were also captured before the building was destroyed. While the attack was being conducted, the RhAF dropped fuel for the helicopters to use on their return flight, which was carried out without incident. The SAS suffered one casualty, the commander of the raid, who was killed when one of the team's explosive devices caused a brick wall to collapse on top of him.



19. Operation Chickory: Lusaka, Zambia, June 1979 (Fig. C.1, target M). This operation involved an air strike followed by a ground operation conducted by 50 SAS men against a very large ZIPRA camp near Lusaka. The small force of ZIPRA guarding the camp put up very light resistance. The air strike destroyed large quantities of equipment. The raiding force returned to Rhodesia without suffering any casualties.
20. Operation Uric: Gaza Province, Mozambique, September 1979 (Fig. C.1, target E). This operation involved the destruction of all the major road and rail bridges from Malvernia along the Rhodesian border to Barragem, Mozambique. Its objective was to force ZANLA insurgents to walk an extra 200 miles to reach the Rhodesian border from their inland camps. In addition, the Barragem irrigation canal was to be destroyed and the town of Mapai attacked. The targets were first subjected to air strikes involving virtually every combat aircraft in the RhAF. This was followed by a ground force attack of 360 troops drawn from the RLI and SAS who destroyed the bridges with prepared explosive charges. As in previous operations, a staging area for refueling the helicopters was established in Mozambique. The attack was carried out and all the bridges were destroyed except the road one at Barragem, which was left partially in use. The assault on Mapai, however, encountered very heavy resistance from the defending forces, and the Rhodesians lost two helicopters in the attack.
21. Operation Norah: Mozambique, September 1989 (Fig. C.1, target Z). This was a combined SAS-MNR operation to destroy a tropospheric scatter station, a highly sophisticated radio communications center located on a mountain 102 miles from the Rhodesian border. The force consisted of 32 troops who were helicoptered to a remote area in Mozambique a two-day march from the target. The force carried out the attack under cover of darkness and although the center was not completely destroyed, it was heavily damaged. The force withdrew under heavy fire without sustaining any casualties but were nearly captured by FRELIMO forces reacting to the attack.
22. Sinking of Dredgers: Beira Harbor, Mozambique, September 1979 (Fig. C.1, target L). This was another combined SAS-MNR attack on the Mozambique port of Beira. Originally, several targets were to be attacked, including the telephone exchange and two dredgers. The attack on the telephone exchange had to be abandoned, but limpet mines were

successfully placed on the two dredgers and a floating dock.<sup>1</sup> Both dredgers were sunk and created problems for FRELIMO in keeping the harbor free of silt. The raiding party withdrew without sustaining any casualties.

23. Attack on Chimoio: Mozambique, September-October 1979 (Fig. C.1, target F). This operation involved another attack on the Chimoio complex involving ground troops supported by artillery, armored cars, and aircraft. The battle was conducted over two days against very heavy opposition. This time the insurgents were well trained and difficult to dislodge from their bunkers; few casualties were therefore inflicted on them. The artillery was instrumental in stopping an armored counterattack by FRELIMO using T-34 tanks. The Rhodesian forces were withdrawn after this.
24. Operation Cheese: Zambia, October 1979 (north of map in Fig. C.1). This operation involved the destruction of a road and rail bridge that linked Zambia with Tanzania. The bridges were located 200 miles north of the Rhodesian border on the Chambezi River and were destroyed by a force of 16 SAS men who parachuted into the area and then made their way to the target by canoe. The SAS team then hijacked a large removal van to make their way south to a point where they were picked up by RhAF helicopters.
25. Destruction of Rail Bridges: Tete, Mozambique, October 1979 (Fig. C.1, target I). This operation was a follow-up to the earlier destruction of the rail bridge near Tete and involved the destruction of three more bridges. Three SAS groups carried out the attack, returning to Rhodesia without sustaining any casualties except for one group that was severely stung by a swarm of bees and required hospitalization on their return.
26. Operation Tepid: Zambia, October 1979 (Fig. C.1, target P). This attack was carried out against a ZIPRA camp on the Zambezi River near Kariba by a combined force of heliborne SAS and RLI troops following an initial air strike. The operation was not a success mainly because the ZIPRA forces were well dug in and could not be dislodged. The camp was eventually abandoned by the ZIPRA forces who escaped and sustained light casualties. A Rhodesian Lynx was hit by ground fire during an earlier strike but managed to return to Rhodesia where it successfully effected an emergency landing.

<sup>1</sup>It has not been revealed how the mines were laid, but it probably was either by the use of klepper canoes or swimmers.

27. Operation Dice: Zambia, November 1979 (Fig. C.1, targets K and P and north of map). In hopes of blunting an unexpected conventional ZIPRA invasion of Rhodesia, three SAS teams destroyed three road bridges on the Chirundu/Lusaka Road, having been inserted into the area by helicopter. A few days later another team was airlifted into Zambia and destroyed a road bridge just south of Lusaka. The following day two simultaneous attacks were conducted using the same tactics against a road bridge east of Lusaka and a road and rail bridge connecting Lusaka and Tanzania to the north. All were successfully destroyed. Another double operation was carried out the next day, this time against a road bridge east of Lusaka that was the country's main communications link with Malawi. The other target was a road bridge near Kariba Lake. Both were destroyed. The SAS suffered no casualties.

### THE SELOUS SCOUTS

Although the Selous Scouts were originally asked to obtain internal intelligence on insurgents by posing as guerrillas, they became increasingly involved in external operations as the conflict escalated. Some of these operations were of a clandestine nature, to which they were suited, while others were of a more conventional type.

1. Kidnapping of (ZIPRA) terrorists from Francistown, Botswana, March 1974 (Fig. C.1, target R). An eight-man team comprising four European and four African Scouts was clandestinely infiltrated into Francistown to kidnap several terrorists and bring them back to Rhodesia for interrogation. The raiders captured four occupants of the ZIPRA headquarters and drove them back across the border to Rhodesia without incident.
2. Kidnapping of ZIPRA official from Francistown, Botswana, September 1974 (Fig. C.1, target R). Another team of Scouts (two Europeans and one African) was infiltrated into Francistown to locate and kidnap a senior ZIPRA official. After several false leads and some reconnaissance, the team finally located their man and abducted him after a fierce struggle. He was then placed in the back of a car and taken across the border to Rhodesia. However, the team left behind false passports, a radio transmitter, and weapons in a hotel room, along with an unpaid bill. One of the European members of the team had to return to the hotel where he paid the bill,

collected the weapons and radio, and departed for Rhodesia without incident.

3. Raid on Caponda, Mozambique, March 1975 (Fig. C.1, target Y). Twenty Scouts staged an assault on a ZANLA staging base 55 km north of Rhodesia. They traveled to and from the target on foot. After a 24-hour march, the unit came upon the terrorist base only to find it deserted. A cholera epidemic had broken out among the terrorists and the camp had been evacuated. The unit returned safely to Rhodesia.
4. Mozambique, January 1967 (Fig. C.1, target C). This operation involved a helicopter-borne assault by 15 Scouts against a ZANLA transit camp that was destroyed.
5. Operation Traveler: Attack on Caponda base, Mozambique, April 1976 (Fig. C.1, target Y). This operation involved another attack on the ZANLA staging camp that was plagued by a cholera epidemic. The attacking force consisted of a 20-man patrol that marched into Mozambique, attacked and destroyed the camp, killing seven terrorists and wounding 16 others. The raiding party returned to Rhodesia on foot, several of them having been injured.
6. Operation Detachment: Raid on Chigamane, Mozambique, May 1976 (Fig. C.1, target T). This operation involved an attack on a ZANLA base 108 (km) inside Mozambique. Twenty European and African Scouts dressed in FRELIMO uniforms traveled in four military vehicles disguised as FRELIMO vehicles. The ZANLA terrorist base was attacked and destroyed with rockets, mortars, and machine guns. The raiders returned to Rhodesia safely.
7. Operation Long John: Attack on Mapai, Mozambique, June 1976 (Fig. C.1, target E). This operation involved an attack on a ZANLA base in Mapai, 48 miles inside Mozambique, by 58 Scouts traveling in four trucks and two Scouts cars, all disguised as FRELIMO vehicles. Along the way, the raiders disconnected telephone lines and sabotaged the railway line. The column was allowed to enter the terrorist base by an unwitting sentry. Once inside, sappers destroyed 13 Mercedes busses used to transport terrorists to the border (one bus was spared and was taken back to Rhodesia as a souvenir). In addition, the insurgents' entire armory was seized and brought back to Rhodesia before an air strike was called in to destroy the base. Nineteen terrorists were reported killed and 18 wounded; one member of the raiding party was killed and a few were wounded.

8. Nyadzonya/Pungwe Raid, Mozambique, August 1976 (Fig. C.1, target U). This operation involved a raid on a large ZANLA base 60 miles inside of Mozambique by a Scouts column comprising ten trucks and four armored cars, again disguised as FRELIMO vehicles. The Scouts in the first four vehicles were also dressed in FRELIMO uniforms. They cut the telephone lines leading to the town where the terrorist base was located, then drove straight into the camp. They then opened fire on the unsuspecting insurgent terrorists drilling on the parade ground, killing at least 1,028. Fourteen important ZANLA insurgents were captured and taken back to Rhodesia for interrogation. On their way out of Mozambique, the raiding party blew up the Pungwe Bridge to prevent any pursuit and returned to Rhodesia safely. In a separate action, the covering team deployed to block the column's escape, ambushed a Land Rover whose six occupants were found to be senior ZANLA officers; all six were killed.
9. Operation Maradon: Attack on Jorge do Limpopo and Massengena, Mozambique, October 1976 (Fig. C.1, target E). This operation involved an attack against a ZANLA base at Jorge do Limpopo, 36 miles inside Mozambique. The strike force traveled a circuitous 350 to 400 km round-trip route, and two reconnaissance teams (one of three and one of two men) were parachuted into Mozambique in advance of the column. Upon entering Mozambique, the raiding party laid Claymore mines on roads and booby-trapped the rail line. Telegraph and telephone lines were also cut. The column then launched a succession of attacks, destroying a FRELIMO garrison, derailing a troop train (and killing 36 of the terrorists on board), and destroying a large water reservoir, along with railway switching points and several enemy military vehicles. A senior FRELIMO commander was also killed. On November 2, the Scouts returned to Rhodesia, having destroyed the terrorists' logistical base of support. They disrupted communications between Jorge de Limpopo, Malvernia, 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.
10. Operation Ignition: Attack on ZIPRA, Francistown, Botswana, November 1976 (Fig. C.1, target R). This operation involved an attack on ZIPRA's headquarters in Francistown by a team of Scouts. Its purpose was to destroy a stockpile of suitcase bombs

intended for use in Rhodesia. The raiding party used previously captured insurgent suitcase bombs to destroy the headquarters building and the stockpile of bombs, wounding five insurgents in the process.

11. Operation Aztec: Attack on Jorge do Limpopo, Mpai, and Madulo Pan, Mozambique, May-June 1977 (Fig. C.1, target E). This operation involved an attack on several ZANLA bases 138 miles inside Mozambique by a motorized column of 110 Scouts disguised as FRELIMO soldiers. A railway line, the terrorist bases' chief source of supply, was also destroyed. In addition, military vehicles and equipment were destroyed by RhAF air strikes flown in support of the raiders.
12. Operation Vodka: Raid on Mboroma ZIPRA camp, Zambia, December 1979 (location not known). This operation involved a raid on a ZIPRA prison camp 96 miles inside Zambia containing 120 opponents of the terrorist organization along with some African members of the Rhodesian security forces. A team of 42 Scouts were parachuted into the camp after it had been softened up by an air strike. Resistance was quickly overcome: 18 guards were killed and six were captured. Only 32 prisoners were freed, because the remainder were outside the camp on work details. In the evening, the raiders and freed prisoners were airlifted back to Rhodesia from a nearby airfield.
13. Operation Petal I: Botswana, March 1979 (Fig. C.1, target W). This operation involved the kidnapping of Elliot Sibanda, a senior ZIPRA intelligence operative, by a team of Scouts who crept across the border into Botswana and laid an ambush. Although badly wounded, Sibanda was captured and brought back to Rhodesia alive.
15. Operation Petal II: Francistown, Botswana, April 1979 (Fig. C.1, target R). This operation involved an ambitious raid to kidnap the ZIPRA southern command. The raiding party consisted of a small column of two armored cars and some other trucks disguised as Botswanan military vehicles and Scouts dressed in Botswana military uniforms. The column crossed the border and drove to the house being used by ZIPRA and arrested its occupants. Before the victims realized what had happened, they were back in Rhodesia.

## **RHODESIAN AIR FORCE**

The Rhodesian Air Force was actively involved in many of the cross-border raids by delivering the ground forces to the target by heli-

copter or parachute drop, extricating them at the conclusion of an operation or by means of a so-called "hot extraction" if they got into more trouble than they could handle. Most instances have been covered in the summary of the ground force external operations. On occasion, however, the air force did undertake external air attacks on their own, even though, in most instances, the best results were usually achieved by a combined air and ground force operation. Good results were also achieved by the air force being directed onto the target by small reconnaissance units operating externally. There were, however, several very successful air strikes mounted against ZIPRA camps.

1. Attack on arms dump: Tete, Mozambique, December 1978 (Fig. C.1, target I). A high-ranking ZANLA official captured by Special Branch gave information about a large arms dump of insurgent weapons stored in a hangar in the town of Tete. A single Hunter jet was dispatched and destroyed the dump, the hangar, and the surrounding buildings with a single rocket. This attack was subsequently followed by a ground operation (see SAS Operation Shovel).
2. Attack on ZANLA vehicles: Tete area, Mozambique, December 1978 (Fig. C.1, target I). Hunters were directed onto a number of ZANLA vehicles by SAS operators after they had destroyed the Moatiye/Beira bridge (see SAS Operation Shovel).
3. Operation Newton: Attack on Chimoio Camp, Mozambique, March 1979 (Fig. C.1, target F). An intensive air strike involving Canberras, Hunters, Lynxes, and helicopter gunships was directed onto the camp by a small SAS reconnaissance team operating in the area (see SAS Operation Newton). The following day RhAF Hunters returned to attack several FRELIMO armored personnel carriers that had been brought up to evacuate the wounded. As the aircraft were about to attack, one was nearly hit by a SAM-7. Both aircraft took evasive action and then swept down to destroy one armored personnel carrier and inflict casualties on FRELIMO and ZANLA personnel.
4. Operation Gatling: Lusaka, Zambia, October 1978 (Fig. C.1, target M). Two ground force operations were conducted in Lusaka. The strike was timed to occur at 8:30 a.m. during which time the camp personnel would be on parade. Taking part in the operation were eight Hunters, four Canberras, and helicopter gunships. To give the latter the necessary range, a refueling base had to be set up within Zambia. To be

successful, the timing of the aircraft over the target had to be perfect.

First in the air were the helicopters, followed by the Canberras and the Hunters. All flew at tree-top level to avoid radar. The Hunters hit the target first with bombs and rockets, followed by the Canberras which dropped bombs. Finally, the gunships came in and strafed the camp with 20 mm cannon fire. While the attack was taking place, some Hunters were dispatched to attack any Zambia Air Force MiGs that scrambled to intercept the RhAF planes. At the same time, the commander of the Canberra force contacted the Lusaka air traffic control and warned them to keep all aircraft, including the MiGs, away from the target area. The Zambians complied with this request and, after the attack was complete, all Rhodesian aircraft returned without suffering any loss. Conservative estimates put ZIPRA casualties at over 1,000 dead and many others wounded.

5. Operation Vanity: Attack on ZIPRA camp, Angola, February 1979 (north of map in Fig. C.1). This operation involved an air strike on a ZIPRA base deep inside Angola. The strike force consisted of four Canberras supported by a top cover of Hunters. As the base was at the extreme limit of the Canberra's range, ZIPRA was not expecting the attack and complete surprise was achieved. The Canberras flew at 39,000 feet, dropping down to tree-top level for the final run into the target. It had just been raining when the attack was mounted and all the insurgents were sheltering inside the barracks. As a result, there were many casualties. All aircraft returned to Rhodesia.



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