CHAPTER FOUR

The final years of Portuguese rule in Africa

Introduction

This chapter deals with the final years of Portugal’s presence in Africa and the increasing pressure that the country was experiencing both in its African-controlled territories and on mainland Portugal. It includes an explanation of the importance of the Portuguese military shield from a South African perspective. Moreover, this chapter provides an overview of the joint covert counter-insurgency efforts in southern Africa in the last few years before the collapse of Portuguese rule. It also provides an overview of the last phase of Portuguese-South African cooperation.

a) The Portuguese under increasing pressure in Africa and on mainland Portugal

The early years of the 1970s were characterized by an intensification of insurgency activity in Angola, Mozambique and Guinea Bissau. Although the Portuguese demonstrated a willingness to continue with the military effort in the three operational theatres it became increasingly clear that additional material and human resources were needed to maintain the status quo. Moreover, the Portuguese continued to develop specific ways to deal with the characteristics of the insurgency in the various operational areas.

In Mozambique, insurgency activity increased substantially in 1970. In 1969, FRELIMO insurgents conducted between seven and eight hostile activities per week in Mozambique’s Niassa district. However, in 1970, this number increased to an average of fourteen or fifteen hostile activities per week. This meant that the total number of hostile activities increased from 400 in 1969 to 740 in 1970. The majority of these hostile activities consisted in laying landmines or deploying explosive devices along roads and pathways, as well as carrying out ambushes.
and attacks against local villages. The Portuguese tried to stem the growing tide of insurgent activity by increasing the number of patrols and reconnaissance missions together with the pursuit of the insurgents.\textsuperscript{1}

In addition to the Niassa district, FRELIMO also continued to increase its military operations in Mozambique’s Cabo Delgado district during the first few months of 1970.\textsuperscript{2} Moreover, FRELIMO also began to focus its attention in the Tete district where the Cabora Bassa dam was being built.\textsuperscript{3}

As a result of growing insurgent aggressiveness on the battlefield, the Commander-in-Chief of the Portuguese ground forces in Mozambique, General Kaülza de Arriaga, decided to launch what became known as Portugal’s largest military operation in Africa.\textsuperscript{4} A total of eight thousand soldiers participated in this operation called ‘Gordian Knot’.\textsuperscript{5} The operation began on 1 July 1970 utilizing 40 per cent of the total number of available Portuguese troops in Mozambique.\textsuperscript{6} The operation required the use of all of the existing Special Forces as well as most of the reconnaissance, engineering and artillery units in the territory.\textsuperscript{7} ‘Gordian Knot’ lasted 36 days and it resulted in the elimination of three large FRELIMO bases and other important insurgent structures located in Mozambique’s northern Cabo Delgado district.\textsuperscript{8} Despite the disruption caused by ‘Gordian Knot’, the insurgents continued to operate in Mozambique’s Cabo Delgado and Niassa districts as well as in the Tete district.\textsuperscript{9} In fact, after ‘Gordian Knot’ FRELIMO increased its activities in the Niassa and Tete districts. General Kaülza de Arriaga believed an increasing number of Special Forces would have to be used in Mozambique if the insurgency was to be contained.\textsuperscript{10}

As a result of increasing insurgent pressure, the Portuguese soon became aware of the vulnerable position of the Cabora Bassa dam, which was located 200 kilometres from the Zambian border.\textsuperscript{11} A major concern was the possibility that foreign technicians working on the construction of the dam could be killed during an insurgent attack.\textsuperscript{12} The foreign nationals working on the dam included citizens
from Germany, Belgium, France, Italy and the United Kingdom. The concern was that the death of any foreign national would attract the attention of the international news media.

Although the Portuguese authorities initially expected some insurgent activity near the Zambian border they did not predict widespread hostilities in the Tete region. However, from 1971 onwards an increasing number of troops and equipment had to be diverted to the Tete district not only to prevent FRELIMO from attacking the dam and its surrounding areas but also to stop any insurgent movement towards southern Mozambique. In May 1971, the Portuguese authorities decided to set up a permanent military structure – the Tete Operational Zone – in order to ensure the completion of the building of the Cabora Bassa dam. One factor that accelerated FRELIMO’s redeployment in the Tete district was the military pressure exerted in the northern Cabo Delgado district by General Kaúlza de Arriaga. Large-scale operations such as ‘Gordian Knot’ merely forced the insurgents to fan out in small groups into other regions of Mozambique. FRELIMO began to smuggle weapons into the central Manica district in 1971. The next year FRELIMO was ready to start planning its expansion in Mozambique’s central Manica and Sofala districts. It became clear that once the Portuguese forces applied extreme force in one area of the territory the insurgents would merely move elsewhere in order to re-start their activities.

In the meantime, the war in Guinea Bissau was placing increasing pressure on the overextended Portuguese forces. There were very few Portuguese settlers in the territory, the majority of whom lived in the capital, Bissau. A large percentage of the white population outside Bissau was actually made up of Lebanese traders. Moreover, the majority of the officials who managed the local administrative structures were inhabitants of the Cape Verde islands. The Portuguese presence in that part of Africa had always been minimal and it did not
have the impact that it had in other regions of the continent such as Angola and Mozambique.

The insurgents in Guinea Bissau were also highly motivated and better organized than the insurgents in Angola and Mozambique. The local terrain – which comprised mostly of low and dense bush as well as muddy swamps – did not offer much protection to the Portuguese troops during combat and it made ground movement quite difficult.\(^{20}\) As a result of the nature of the terrain, the element of surprise during military operations was not very easy to achieve. The Portuguese troops were often forced to move slowly in open areas and the casualty rate was quite high. They often had to call for artillery and air support in order to overcome resistance on the ground.\(^{21}\) Another problem experienced by the Portuguese in Guinea Bissau was the prevalence of a high number of local languages, which made communication with the local population quite difficult. Up to 20 local languages could be used during ground operations.\(^{22}\) This forced the Portuguese military to include local translators in their ground units on a permanent basis.\(^{23}\)

The PAIGC was already a well-organized force at the end of the 1969. Its forces were divided into infantry and artillery groups as well as Special Forces units.\(^{24}\) In addition to mortars, the PAIGC artillery groups had cannons and anti-aircraft guns as well as heavy artillery.\(^{25}\) The PAIGC also set up a small maritime force and in 1971 several PAIGC members began to be trained as navy divers by Russian advisers in Guinea Conakry.\(^{26}\)

It was in the early 1970s that the Portuguese military launched a major offensive against the insurgents deployed in Senegal and Guinea Conakry. These activities attracted the attention of the international community. In July 1970, the United Nations Security Council condemned Portugal for the raid in Senegal’s Casamance region.\(^{27}\) Similar criticism had already been directed against Portugal in the past.\(^{28}\)
In November 1970, the Portuguese launched a much larger attack against Conakry, the capital of the Republic of Guinea – more commonly known as Guinea Conakry – where the PAIGC had deployed the majority of its forces. The major aim of this operation – which was called ‘Mar Verde’ – was to help provoke a coup d’état in Guinea Conakry. The target of the coup d’état was President Sekou Touré who provided safe refuge to the PAIGC guerrillas in the Republic of Guinea. The coup d’état would be carried out with the support of members of the Front de Libération National Guinéen (FLNG) who opposed Touré’s rule. The other aims of the operation were to ensure the release of twenty-six Portuguese prisoners-of-war who were held in Conakry as well as the capture the PAIGC leader, Amilcar Cabral. Although the Portuguese forces released the prisoners-of-war, the coup d’état failed. In addition, it was not possible to capture Amilcar Cabral since he was out of the country. The operation increased international scrutiny of Portugal’s African policies. The operation had cost the lives of three Portuguese soldiers while five hundred civilians and military personnel from Guinea Conakry were killed. The United Nations set up a commission to investigate the situation in the African territories under Portuguese control. The report of the commission – which was issued in February 1971 – criticized Portugal’s activities on the African continent.

Despite this condemnation, the Portuguese forces continued operations in both Senegal and Guinea Conakry. The majority of the operations in neighbouring countries consisted of the laying of landmines – especially along the routes that were used by the insurgents – and the destruction of basic infrastructure such as bridges. The aim was to disrupt or slow down the flow of insurgents and weapons into Guinea Bissau. It should be pointed out that Guinea Bissau was the operational theatre where the highest number of Portuguese troops was effectively involved in combat operations. This was despite the fact that Angola and Mozambique respectively had a higher total number of troops than Guinea Bissau. In 1970, 67.5% of Portuguese troops in Guinea Bissau were involved in
combat operations, in comparison with 59.4% in Mozambique and 59% in Angola. Despite annual fluctuations, the number of Portuguese troops involved in combat operations was always higher in Guinea Bissau than in Angola or Mozambique. This was because the nature of the terrain made ground operations more difficult – which placed an extra burden on Portuguese ground forces – as well as the fact that the local PAIGC insurgents were highly motivated and extremely mobile.

In Angola, the Portuguese military effort in the early 1970s was primarily directed towards the reduction of insurgent activity in eastern Angola, a vast region. Although the MPLA and the FNLA continued their activities in northern Angola, most insurgent groups shifted their focus to the eastern part of the territory. The MPLA was the strongest movement in eastern Angola while UNITA played a much smaller role. In addition to the military effort, the Portuguese implemented several socio-economic development plans in eastern Angola, especially in the districts of Lunda, Moxico and Bié. The aim of these development plans was to reduce local support for the insurgents. In addition, the Portuguese set up militias, which became responsible for local security. The Portuguese attempted to ensure close cooperation between local administrative structures and the military. However, Angola’s massive geographical size effectively meant that the Portuguese had to keep a much larger force in the territory than the forces that had been deployed in Mozambique or Guinea Bissau. In 1970, for example, there were a total of 55,233 Portuguese troops in Angola and 38,712 in Mozambique while 26,775 were deployed in Guinea Bissau. The next year there were 62,060 Portuguese troops in Angola and 44,505 in Mozambique while 29,210 were deployed in Guinea Bissau.

The size of Angola forced the Portuguese military establishment to come up with new ways to monitor extensive rural areas with some degree of efficacy. This was especially the case in Angola’s sparsely populated eastern region. As a result, the Portuguese military introduced horses in eastern Angola for patrolling
activities. The mounted troops received supplies from helicopters or trucks every five days and they could remain on the ground for a period of twenty-five days. A riding school for military personnel was set up in Angola in 1970 and hundreds of horses were imported from Argentina and South Africa. The aim was to achieve a high degree of mobility and to have a better view of the countryside in order to locate groups of insurgents moving on foot.

During the early 1970s the Portuguese authorities also began to feel increasing pressure from opposition forces on mainland Portugal. One of the main targets of the opposition was the ongoing counter-insurgency wars on the African continent. These wars were becoming increasingly unpopular among certain sectors of the Portuguese population. The fiercest opposition came from the Partido Comunista Português or Portuguese Communist Part (PCP), as well as other leftwing groups. The PCP first engaged in an internal debate about an armed struggle against the Estado Novo at its VI Congress in the Soviet Union in 1965. However, it was only in 1970 that an armed wing of the PCP, the Acção Revolucionária Armada or Armed Revolutionary Action (ARA) began to operate with some success.

The first major operation conducted by ARA was the successful sabotage of a ship intended to take military equipment to Africa in October 1970. The sabotage operation was widely reported in Portugal and in other countries. In addition, ARA managed to conduct another much more successful sabotage operation in March 1971. This was the operation directed against the military Air Base Number 3 in Tancos in mainland Portugal. At least 16 helicopters and a further eleven military aircraft were destroyed during this operation. In addition, ARA destroyed vital telecommunication infrastructure during a NATO meeting in Lisbon in June 1971. Further attacks were carried out against NATO installations in mainland Portugal in October 1971. The last major spectacular operation carried out by ARA was the destruction of several power lines in Portugal’s three main cities – Lisbon Porto and Coimbra – in August 1972.
Another group that was actively involved in sabotage operations was the Brigadas Revolucionárias or the Revolutionary Brigades (BR). This was a dissident group whose members broke away from the PCP in 1969. This group was involved in various types of clandestine hostile activities against the Portuguese war machine. The BR was responsible for stealing 200 military cartographic maps, which were subsequently handed over to insurgent groups in Angola, Mozambique and Guinea Bissau. The maps were stolen from the Portuguese Army’s Cartographic Services and taken to Algiers in North Africa. The BR was highly successful between 1971 and 1974. The target of its clandestine operations was Portugal’s military institutions. The clandestine operations included the transfer of hard intelligence to insurgent groups and the destruction of military equipment, as well as the sabotage of military recruitment centres and military intelligence installations.

In February 1974, the BR planted a bomb inside the headquarters of the Portuguese Armed Forces in Bissau, the capital of Guinea Bissau. Two Portuguese Generals were wounded in this attack. This was the first time that the BR carried out an operation in Africa in order to support the insurgents fighting against the Portuguese authorities. The BR was a well-organized group that was able to disrupt the military capacity of the Portuguese Armed Forces effectively for almost half a decade.

It should be pointed out that the Portuguese Communist Party decided to support the claims of African nationalist groups even before the insurgent wars began in Angola, Mozambique and Guinea Bissau. This became apparent during the V Congress of the PCP in 1957. It was during this Congress that the PCP acknowledged the right of Portugal’s African territories to independence. It was also the PCP that planned the flight of the MPLA leader, Agostinho Neto, who was arrested in Portugal for his involvement in Portuguese youth organizations opposed to the Estado Novo. This took place in June 1962 when the PCP
organized a safe house for the MPLA leader in Lisbon before taking him to Morocco in a fishing boat.\textsuperscript{63}

The leftwing organizations on mainland Portugal opposed to the Portuguese presence in Africa received military training in a number of different ways. Many of the ARA members received military training in the Portuguese Armed Forces since the majority of young Portuguese males had to perform compulsory military service.\textsuperscript{64} This included training in counter-insurgency tactics as well as the handling of explosives and landmines.\textsuperscript{65} Such training would later prove useful to ARA members who directed their attention against the destruction of military targets on mainland Portugal.

The leftwing forces also utilized the clandestine radio station ‘Voz da Liberdade’ or ‘Voice of Freedom’ to attack the Estado Novo and its policies. This station commenced political transmissions to mainland Portugal in 1963.\textsuperscript{66} The radio was set up in Algiers as part of the Frente Patriótica de Libertação Nacional or National Liberation Patriotic Front (FPLN), which was also established in 1963.\textsuperscript{67} This organization comprised members of several leftwing groups including members of the PCP and the Acção Socialista Portuguesa or Portuguese Socialist Action (ASP).\textsuperscript{68} The aim of the FPLN was to unite the forces opposed to the Estado Novo. The Algiers based Voice of Freedom initially transmitted its programmes in short and medium wave twice a week. This was later extended to three times per week. This radio station later changed its name to Rádio Revolução or Revolution Radio. The PCP also had a radio station that transmitted propaganda from Romania. This was the ‘Radio Portugal Livre’ or ‘Radio Free Portugal’, established in 1962.\textsuperscript{69}

The well-known radio announcer and newsreader of Voice of Freedom, Manuel Alegre, had regular contact with the representatives of the insurgent groups operating in Angola, Mozambique and Guinea Bissau.\textsuperscript{70} Alegre – who worked in the ‘Voice of Freedom’ from 1964 until 1974 – interviewed a number of leaders of
the insurgent groups, including the leader of the PAIGC, Amílcar Cabral. In this way, he promoted the opinions of those who fought the Portuguese Armed Forces in Africa to the people of mainland Portugal. He also provided assistance to Portuguese deserters who did not want to complete their military service in the Portuguese Armed Forces.  

Gradual opposition against the Estado Novo was also growing among other sectors of the Portuguese population. This included university students who actively opposed the Portuguese government’s policies from the end of 1968. Although the initial complaints were directed against the education system in general, they quickly extended into full rejection of Portugal’s wars in Africa. In April 1969, there was a number of violent clashes between students from the University of Coimbra in central Portugal and the police, followed by several major strikes by blue-collar and white-collar workers.  

The PCP was instrumental in promoting workers’ demands from 1967. In 1970 the PCP set up a clandestine workers’ union – the Intersindical – which immediately attracted the wrath of the authorities. At the end of 1970, the Portuguese government approved new legislation authorizing the disbanding of the top structure of workers’ unions that were believed to play a role in promoting subversion. It was also during this period that the security forces were allowed to close down students’ associations opposed to the wars in Africa. The number of arrests of opposition members increased during 1970 and 1971. The arrests included not only members of the PCP but also the detention of socialist leaders. In 1970, the exiled socialist leader Mário Soares was prevented from returning to Portugal and he was forced to remain in exile. Soares was a fierce opponent of Portugal’s counter-insurgency campaigns in Africa. Soares stated that Portugal did not have the resources to fight what he called ‘a hopeless war’ in Africa. He warned that if he took over power in Portugal, he would immediately terminate the war and recognize the right of Portugal’s African territories to independence should they wish to request it. The main issue that united communist and
socialist leaders was the wars in Africa. In a joint Congress in 1973 in Aveiro, communists and socialists jointly called for an end to the wars in Africa as well as the granting of independence to the territories under Portuguese control.82

At the end of the 1960s and in the early 1970s, there was growing opposition to the wars in Angola, Mozambique and Guinea Bissau. The Portuguese authorities had to deal not only with groups such as the ARA and the BR but also with student organizations and workers' unions opposed to the wars in Africa. In order to deal with this growing opposition, the Portuguese authorities increasingly diverted resources to counter the activities of the groups and organizations opposed to the policies of the Portuguese government. Such an effort effectively meant that the Portuguese authorities were facing a fourth front on mainland Portugal in addition to the other three fronts in Africa.
b) **The importance of the Portuguese military shield for South Africa**

The Portuguese military shield became increasingly important for South Africa’s ruling elite in the early 1970s. In political terms, the Portuguese counter-insurgency effort in Southern Africa provided the National Party with additional arguments against the projected danger of international communism and the spread of USSR-inspired revolutionary ideals. In June 1970, the South African Prime Minister, BJ Vorster indicated that the two countries were being drawn closer together because of existing pressures and dangers. He mentioned the traditional dangers that presented a cause for concern to both countries, such as the insurgencies in Angola and Mozambique and the presence of Soviet ships in the Indian Ocean and the South Atlantic, as well as the need to ensure the defence of sea routes in Southern Africa.83

South Africa’s security was one issue that was always part of the South African government’s political discourse. During the opening of a National Party congress in October 1970, the South African Minister of Defence, PW Botha, mentioned the presence of Chinese cadres in East Africa as well as the existence of Russian naval forces in the Indian Ocean as part of the threats against the country.84 He expected threats against South Africa’s northern borders to increase in the future, which was an indirect reference to the insurgencies in Angola and Mozambique.85

At the beginning of the 1970s, the diplomats who informed the South African government about the security threats in Southern Africa were clear about the objectives of those whom they perceived to be South Africa’s enemies. In February 1971, the South African Consul General in Luanda, EM Malone, told his superiors in Pretoria that he believed the Portuguese were slowly losing the insurgency war in Angola. He explained that it was not necessary for the insurgents to obtain an outright military victory. The insurgents merely had to achieve a stalemate, which would force the Portuguese authorities to conclude
that it was no longer worthwhile to continue spending resources in the conflict. In addition, in order to maintain their overall control of the battlefield, the Portuguese had to ensure that both Angola and Mozambique remained in Portuguese hands. In psychological terms it would not be possible to retain control of Mozambique if Angola was lost.86

Malone also made it clear that if Angola fell into the hands of the insurgents it would be very difficult for South Africa to retain control over South West Africa in the long-term because of limited military forces and potential difficulties in holding onto the Caprivi Strip, which would be the most likely area where any future insurgent attacks would take place.87 His proposition was that should the Portuguese withdraw from Angola, South Africa would have to deal with “an extremely grave and protracted military and political struggle for South West Africa”.88 It was also possible that South Africa would have to face the loss of South West Africa, which would further threaten national security.

Moreover, a Portuguese withdrawal from Mozambique would create additional pressure on both Rhodesia and South Africa. The Portuguese shield was the only thing standing between South Africa and large-scale guerrilla incursions into the country. Malone was convinced that South African interests were served better by the continuation of the Portuguese presence in Angola. South Africa would have to increase the effectiveness of its aid since such aid had not been sufficient to change the course of the war. He explained that South Africa was not yet fully aware of its perilous position. South Africans had a poor understanding of the fragile barrier that stood between South Africa and a situation that he described as a “great danger”.89

In June 1971, Malone described the huge stretch of land from the Congolese border down to Luanda as a massive jungle without a proper road network. He called Angola’s northern Zaire district an “uninhabited and trackless wilderness of green rolling hills and forest-filled valleys…one could take men in groups of one
hundred or more at a time without the possibility of detection from the air, while searching for them on the ground would be equivalent to looking for a needle in the proverbial haystack”. The lack of settlements in the district made it difficult to obtain accurate intelligence of the insurgents’ movements on the ground. Since it would not be possible for an entire Army corps to seal off and prevent insurgent penetration into the district completely, the best strategy was to guarantee the protection of the few centres of human habitation from hit-and-run attacks.

In terms of the wider South African public, some South African newspapers – such as The Star – mentioned the difficulties the Portuguese military faced in northern and eastern Angola at the beginning of the 1970s. In March 1971, The Star explained that the insurgents were well-armed with plenty of supplies and determined to achieve their military objectives, which was to infiltrate Angola from Congo and Zambia. The newspaper pointed out that the insurgents had managed to isolate several towns and villages in Angola’s most remote districts.

The South African news reports referring to the situation in Angola were not always available on a regular basis. However, to South Africa’s policymakers, Malone provided regular and updated information since he traveled widely in Angola to collect details about the ongoing counter-insurgency operations and the difficulties faced by the Portuguese military in that territory. He also did not shy away from expressing his views openly. In September 1970, Malone criticized the way in which South Africans viewed Portuguese efforts to contain the insurgents in Angola. He emphasized that South Africans spoke in a patronizing manner about the Portuguese and wrongly believed that they could do better if they were facing the same situation. He said he had had the same attitude when he arrived in the territory but had changed his mind during his stay in Angola. It was clear that Malone was permanently in contact with the
Portuguese authorities on the ground, which made him acutely aware of the difficulties of fighting a counter-insurgency campaign in a vast territory.

In February 1972, Malone once again criticized the way in which South Africans viewed the war in Angola. To him it was crucial to examine the war in Angola as a whole and resist the temptation of placing excessive attention on certain events merely because they occurred in areas close to “our own borders”. When he mentioned “our own borders” he was referring to insurgent activity near the border that separated Angola and South West Africa. He added that in terms of South Africa’s security, what happened in northern and eastern Angola was more important than what was taking place in the southern part of the territory. Malone explained that this was because the war would be lost or won in the northern and eastern part of Angola and not in the south.

Malone was not only concerned with the military effort in Angola but also with Portugal’s ability to ensure Angola’s development. In February 1971, he indicated that he was concerned with the inability of the Portuguese to consolidate their gains in the battlefield with initiatives that promoted development. He said this was due to a shortage of administrative personnel, material resources and money. He explained that if there was no consolidation on the ground it would be difficult to see how the war would end in Portugal’s favour. Malone’s insight into the problems of the Portuguese indicates that the South African government was well informed about the situation in Angola at the beginning of the 1970s.

In the early 1970s, the situation in Mozambique also caused concern in South Africa. As a result of the close proximity between South Africa and Mozambique, the security situation in Mozambique received a wider coverage in the South African press than the security situation in Angola. South Africans were also interested in the construction of the Cabora Bassa dam since a number of South African contractors were involved in the project. By mid-1971, the Portuguese military forces had already begun to focus their attention on the protection of the
Cabora Bassa dam in Mozambique’s Tete district. The first serious attempt to sabotage the dam was in February 1971. The reports coming from Mozambique indicated that by mid-1971, FRELIMO was beginning to extend its influence in the Tete district. In order to disrupt the activities of the insurgents, the Portuguese military built tarred roads in the areas affected by the insurgency. However, improved road links did not prevent the FRELIMO insurgents from carrying out their activities.

Towards the end of 1971 there was an upsurge of insurgent activity in the Tete district. In February 1972, at least nine people traveling in a convoy in the Tete district were killed by a landmine explosion. This forced the Portuguese military to create three defensive perimeters around the Cabora Bassa dam. In May of the same year, the Portuguese forces stopped a FRELIMO demolition team with sufficient explosives to cause substantial damage to the dam. The Portuguese viewed the Cabora Bassa dam as a symbol of their determination to remain in Africa in the long term, as well as an affirmation of Portugal’s willingness to maintain control over its African possessions. In political terms, the successful completion of the project would not only portray an image of strength but also demonstrate Portugal’s ability to attract foreign investment for major projects in its African territories.

The Portuguese believed that the completion of the Cabora Bassa project would demonstrate FRELIMO’s incapacity to control events on the ground. Moreover, since the dam was intended to produce electricity for South Africa, any successful sabotage operation by FRELIMO would also suggest that it was possible to damage South African interests in Southern Africa. In March 1971, the Commander-in-Chief of the Portuguese ground forces in Mozambique, General Kaúlza de Arriaga, indicated that any successful sabotage operations directed against the Cabora Bassa project would be a major propaganda coup, favouring the FRELIMO insurgents. He disclosed that there had been fifteen
unsuccessful attempts by FRELIMO to infiltrate the site where the dam was being constructed.\textsuperscript{111}

In March 1972, the Portuguese Governor General in Mozambique, Manuel Pimentel dos Santos, explained that the Cabora Bassa dam was a triumph of development over the ongoing insurgency war in Mozambique. He reiterated that the Cabora Bassa dam would be completed despite security problems.\textsuperscript{112} In the meantime, the security situation continued to deteriorate, especially after FRELIMO consolidated its positions in the Tete district in 1972.\textsuperscript{113} In the next two years, the Portuguese military establishment was forced to deploy 50\% of its forces in Mozambique in the Tete district alone.\textsuperscript{114}

The insurgencies in Angola and Mozambique caused considerable concern in South Africa. The South African military establishment clearly understood that the impossibility of inflicting a final deadly blow against the insurgents effectively meant that guerrilla warfare had become a long-term reality in the Southern African region. In January 1971, the General Officer Commanding the South African Defence Force’s Joint Combat Forces, Lieutenant General CA Fraser, disclosed that the South African military forces studied the concept of revolutionary warfare together with other government departments. The persons who planned an insurgency were concerned not only with military operations but also with other activities such as political subversion and intimidation, as well as propaganda and sabotage. As a result, in order to disrupt revolutionary warfare, counter-insurgency strategy had to focus on police and military operations as well as on administrative, economic and political issues. The aim was to persuade the people on the ground not to support the insurgents.\textsuperscript{115}

In December 1972, the Chief of the General Staff of the South African Defence Force, Admiral HH Biermann, explained his views on the existence of security threats in the Southern African region. He placed those threats within the context of the Cold War and the expansion of Soviet and Chinese influence in the
Southern hemisphere. There was the possibility that the insurgents in Mozambique might be reinforced with communist volunteers from China and other African countries. Moreover, there was also the possibility that Mozambique could experience simultaneous attacks in the northern Cabo Delgado district as well as the eastern Tete district. In the first case, the attacking forces would come from Tanzania while in the second case the attacking forces would come from Zambia. Simultaneous attacks could be supported by the disembarkation of reinforcements and supplies along Mozambique’s eastern coastline.\textsuperscript{116}

The above-mentioned analysis indicates that Admiral Biermann feared that a wider conflict could envelop Mozambique. Moreover, he believed it would be quite difficult to prevent any wide and well coordinated attack against the territory. External forces might also become involved in such a conflict. Although this was not the reality on the ground, it was nevertheless the perception that had developed at that specific point in time. When Admiral Biermann’s comments are considered in conjunction with those made by Consul General Malone about Angola, it becomes clear that in the early 1970s the South African authorities were greatly concerned with the security environment in the Southern African region. It also highlights the fact that the South African government perceived the Portuguese security shield – whatever its deficiencies – as one of the main guarantors of stability in the region.
The use of secrecy became the major tool to disguise the intentions of South African and Portuguese military planners. As a result, the two parties were always concerned with the breakdown of the rules of secrecy. In April 1970, the Portuguese Embassy in Pretoria sent a detailed report to the military authorities in Lisbon describing how several American diplomats in South Africa were trying to obtain information about the presence of South African military aircraft and South African military personnel in south-eastern Angola. The report – which was written by the Portuguese military attaché in Pretoria – emphasized that it was necessary to ensure the secrecy of the military collaboration between Portugal and South Africa in south-eastern Angola.117

In the same manner, in August 1972, Malone expressed concern about the fact that a South African freelance journalist, SJR McIntosh, had obtained highly confidential information about the presence of South African military personnel in the towns of Serpa Pinto and Cuito Cuanavale in south-eastern Angola. This included information about the death of a senior officer from South Africa’s Joint Combat Forces Command who died during a trip to Angola and whose death was reported in South African newspapers as occurring in South Africa. Moreover, McIntosh was fully aware of the frequent visits of the General Officer Commanding the South African Defence Force’s Joint Combat Forces made to Angola. According to Malone, unless McIntosh had received a security clearance from South Africa’s security structures – which apparently was not the case – it was apparent that he knew “a great deal more than he should”.118

The concern that South African and Portuguese officials displayed about the disclosure of information indicated the fear of the political impact that such disclosures could have in the public arena. However, whatever the existing fears, the level of cooperation between Portugal and South Africa in the military and security operations intensified from the late 1960s and early 1970s. According to
the available documentation that was consulted for this thesis, it appears that Rhodesian military strategists were the most eager to see the creation of a permanent security planning structure involving South Africa, Portugal and Rhodesia.

In February 1969, the Rhodesian Ministry of Defence in Salisbury sent a detailed report referring to the possible creation of a military pact in Southern Africa to the Portuguese Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Lisbon.\textsuperscript{119} The top-secret report – ‘Contingency Planning for the Defence of Southern Africa’ – mentioned the possibility of the creation of a military pact between Portugal, South Africa and Rhodesia in the event of increasing security threats in the Southern African region. The document stated that Angola and Mozambique as well as Rhodesia and South Africa were facing an insurgency threat, which could escalate into conventional warfare.\textsuperscript{120}

Moreover, the Zimbabwe National People’s Union (ZAPU) and the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC) had already established an operational alliance, which might possibly be extended to include FRELIMO in the near future. A less effective association existed between the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) and South Africa’s Pan African Congress (PAC) as well as another Mozambican insurgent group, the Mozambican Revolutionary Committee (COREMO).\textsuperscript{121}

The Rhodesian document indicated that large groups of insurgents had found refuge along the border between Zambia and Mozambique. These insurgents were both from Rhodesia and the Portuguese-controlled territories in Africa as well as from South Africa. These developments were interpreted as a suggestion to Portugal, South Africa and Rhodesia to engage in closer cooperation and joint military planning in order to defeat the existing threats to the Southern African region in the long-term. Such a strategy would save money and benefit from joint planning and the standardization of equipment as well as the use of pooled
intelligence referring to hostile states. Rhodesia was already providing limited military assistance to the Portuguese forces in Mozambique.  

Secret meetings between Rhodesian and Portuguese military planners, senior intelligence and police officials took place in Mozambique’s Tete district in 1968 and in Mozambique’s Nampula district in 1969. The purpose of these meetings was to discuss the security situation in Rhodesia and Mozambique. The participants discussed how the insurgents acquired weapons from countries such as Yugoslavia, the number of insurgent groups in Zambia and the use of Rhodesian Air Force aircraft in Mozambique’s Tete district.

During a meeting on 2 December 1968, Rhodesia requested permission from the Portuguese to enter Mozambique’s Tete district in order to collect intelligence on the other side of the border. There was agreement on detailed planning prior to such intelligence operations. Rhodesia was also ready to provide two instructors to assist with the training of Portuguese bush trackers in Mozambique. The minutes of the meeting show that senior Rhodesian officers believed the Portuguese forces in the Tete district were making excessive use of helicopters to move troops around instead of regular patrolling, tracking and the laying of ambushes in order to eliminate the insurgent threat. The Portuguese explained that the area of insurgent activity had expanded greatly and it was therefore necessary to use helicopters to deploy troops as soon as an insurgent group was located. This also implied the need to obtain accurate intelligence before the start of any operation. At this meeting, the Rhodesian Chief of Air Staff, Air Vice-Marshal H Hawkins, suggested that the two sides should start preparing some sort of joint contingency planning to deal with common threats in Southern Africa. This would have to be done secretly as the Portuguese indicated that such a course of action could have a political impact.

At a similar meeting in Mozambique’s Nampula district in March 1969, Hawkins requested the Portuguese officers to facilitate a meeting between senior
intelligence personnel from Rhodesia and Portugal.\textsuperscript{129} At the same time, the Commander-in-Chief of the Portuguese forces in Mozambique, General António Augusto dos Santos, expressed his satisfaction with the existing arrangements, referring to what he called “inter-territorial operations” along the border between Mozambique and Rhodesia.\textsuperscript{130} He stated that “combined counter-operations” could be launched in order to deal with any insurgent activity along the common border separating the two territories.\textsuperscript{131} These statements indicate that both sides were prepared to consider the possibility of joint operations in order to deal with what they perceived to be common threats.

Further cooperation between the two sides was discussed at a meeting in the Nampula district on 4 November 1969.\textsuperscript{132} During this meeting, it was mentioned that some of the insurgents were being sent to the Soviet Union, Bulgaria and Algeria for military training. The two sides also discussed insurgent infiltration routes into Rhodesia. In addition to the few Rhodesian helicopters already operating in the Tete district, Rhodesia indicated that they were ready to collaborate with the Portuguese forces in bombing operations of insurgent targets in Mozambique’s northern Cabo Delgado district. This could be conducted by the use of Canberra aircraft of the Rhodesian Air Force. The Portuguese agreed that the Rhodesians could participate in the bombing operations as long as the Canberra aircraft were unidentified as belonging to the Rhodesian Air Force. These aircraft would remain in Mozambican territory only for a short period of time.\textsuperscript{133} The tone of these discussions indicates that the Rhodesians were keen to support the Portuguese security forces because they were concerned about the expansion of insurgent activity in Mozambique.

During the early 1970s, Rhodesian and South African military strategists were concerned about the intensity of the insurgency in Mozambique and how that could affect their security. As FRELIMO began to expand its area of operations in the Tete district from mid-1971, it was only natural that Mozambique’s two closest neighbours – Rhodesia and South Africa – began to view the security
situation in that Portuguese-controlled territory with increasing alarm. In October 1972, the South African Minister of Defence, PW Botha, and his Rhodesian counterpart, Jack Howman, met in Salisbury to discuss the security situation in Mozambique. Senior military officers from both countries attended the meeting.

The Rand Daily Mail noted at the time that Portuguese military planners had not participated in the negotiations. The newspaper pointed out that any strategy referring to the security situation in Southern Africa would have to include the Portuguese. What the Rand Daily Mail did not know at the time is that Portugal as well as South Africa and Rhodesia had already agreed secretly to expand military cooperation. Although the main body of documents referring to this military arrangement has not yet been made available to researchers, there are a few declassified documents from the Portuguese Military Archives and the Portuguese Diplomatic Historical Archives that provide a glimpse into the nature and scope of such cooperation.

In the declassified Portuguese documents, the secret military arrangement between the three countries is usually mentioned as the ‘Alcora Exercise’. In addition, an ‘Alcora Coordinating Commission’ was responsible for arranging meetings between the military personnel of the three countries. The minutes and the recommendations issued during the meetings involving military personnel from the three countries were sent to a ‘High Level Alcora Commission’ and marked as part of the ‘Alcora Exercise’.

Since there are no declassified documents that provide exact details of this agreement, it is only possible to refer to peripheral documents such as agendas of meetings. The agenda of the first meeting of the Telecommunications and Electronic Warfare Sub-commission describes the ‘Alcora Exercise’ as “the investigation of ways and means to establish a coordinated tripartite effort whose aim will be to counterbalance the common threat that is directed towards all the
Alcora participants”. The ‘High Level Alcora Commission’ was responsible for the terms of reference used in a contingency plan referring to telecommunications and electronic warfare. Such a contingency plan would have to take into account the combined war needs of Angola, Mozambique, Rhodesia and South Africa in telecommunications and electronic warfare. This would include the security of communications used in “coordinated operations”, which would take place on land, at sea and in the air.

The existence of a Telecommunications and Electronic Warfare Sub-Commission suggests that other commissions or sub-commissions dealing with other areas of military activity were possibly set up during the early 1970s. However, since the declassified documentation from the Portuguese military archives referring to the ‘Alcora Exercise’ is limited, it is not clear whether the implementation of the recommendations made by the Alcora commissions or sub-commissions went ahead as planned. What is clear is that military strategists from the three participating countries viewed the ‘Alcora Exercise’ as an opportunity to expand covert military cooperation without public exposure.

In August 1973, a top-secret telegram from the Portuguese Ministry of Defence in Lisbon sent to the Portuguese Military Attaché in Pretoria mentioned the creation of a “strategic mobile force” within the Alcora context. The telegram stated that it was necessary to discuss the creation of such a force in collaboration with the South African authorities. The ‘Alcora Exercise’ implied the existence of an ongoing debate as well as active interaction between the military establishments of the three countries. The focus of such interaction was the convergence of military and security efforts.

It must be pointed out that not all government sectors in Portugal felt comfortable with the development of closer military cooperation with South Africa. Throughout 1969 the Portuguese military establishment discussed the need to create direct military communication links with Rhodesia. While the military command
structures in Angola and Mozambique agreed that such communications could be established via the military communication lines that existed with South Africa, the Portuguese Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Lisbon took another view on the matter. The Portuguese Ministry of Foreign Affairs agreed that the establishment of military communication links with Rhodesia was desirable. However, it was necessary to avoid a situation whereby South Africa would be able “partially or totally” to dominate such communication links in future. The most practical option was for the Portuguese military to use the South African military communications circuits between South Africa and Rhodesia temporarily. This would be the case until the Portuguese and Rhodesian military authorities agreed on the nature of direct military communication circuits to be established between them. This included the frequencies and the exact location of the communication terminals in Angola, Mozambique and Rhodesia. Whatever the doubts that existed on the Portuguese side, the fact of the matter is that closer military ties between Portugal and South Africa led the Defence Ministries of both countries to agree officially in November 1973 on the creation of a permanent Portuguese military mission in Pretoria. Previously, the Portuguese had had only military representatives in South Africa. The presence of a permanent military mission would facilitate contacts between the senior structures of the military establishments of the two countries.

In January 1974, the Portuguese government issued an official note indicating that a permanent Portuguese military mission would be established in Pretoria. The mission would comprise of one General and four lower ranking officers as well as a military interpreter and a military archivist. The four lower ranking officers were from the three branches of the Portuguese Armed Forces – the Army and the Air Force as well as the Navy. The decision to deploy such a large Portuguese military delegation in Pretoria caused considerable concern to Portuguese diplomats. The Portuguese Ambassador in South Africa, Francisco Menezes Rosa, warned that the arrival of
such a large military contingent in Pretoria was bound to raise questions about the relationship between the two countries. Questions would be asked should the identity of the new arrivals be included in the list of the Portuguese diplomatic mission in South Africa. If that happened, almost half of the members of Portugal’s diplomatic mission would comprise military personnel. He warned that such a course of action would attract unwanted attention at a time when there was already much speculation about a military alliance between the two countries, which had been denied in the past. Once the Ministry of Foreign Affairs published the names of the military officers in Portugal’s Government Gazette there would be excessive public interest in the military mission. The Ambassador’s comments indicate his concern with the political impact of any disclosure of information referring to military cooperation between the two countries.

As a way of addressing this risk, the Portuguese Ministry of Defence in Lisbon suggested the inclusion of the names of only four military officers in the official diplomatic list. Another three officers would also be part of the military mission and enjoy diplomatic status, but their names would not be included in the official list. In a letter describing this proposal, the Ministry of Defence referred to the new Portuguese military mission in South Africa as the ‘Alcora Mission’. A document from the Portuguese Ministry of Foreign Affairs that was written a few days earlier also referred to the new military mission as the ‘Alcora Mission’.

The above-mentioned indicates differences of opinion between senior personnel from the Portuguese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Portuguese Ministry of Defence regarding the deployment of a large high-level Portuguese military delegation in Pretoria. The core of the controversy was the issue of how to disguise the military delegation so that it would not attract the attention of prying eyes. On the Portuguese side the main preoccupation was to hide any reflection on military cooperation between the two countries as well as avoid any external scrutiny and criticism.
Both the Portuguese and the South African military establishments viewed secrecy as a strategic tool to hide traces of direct military collaboration between the two sides. Secrecy allowed the same military establishments to carry out joint covert operations. The targets of such operations were neighbouring countries offering refuge to the insurgents. Although there are very few recorded accounts of such secret operations, they did occur.

According to the Portuguese Navy Commander, Sérgio Zilhão, one such operation took place in September 1971. The operation entailed the dropping of hundreds of propaganda pamphlets – by two small unmarked Portuguese civilian aircraft – over a packed football stadium and the gardens surrounding the palace of the Tanzanian government in Dar-es-Salaam. The pamphlets criticized the policies of the Tanzanian government. The pamphlets were formulated to create the impression that they had been written in Uganda and not in Mozambique. The two small aircraft were in constant contact with two South African military aircraft that flew over Commander Zilhão’s warship, which was ordered to stop 40 miles away from the Tanzanian coastline. In case the Portuguese aircraft were damaged by hostile fire or crashed into the sea, the South African aircraft would contact Commander Zilhão who was given the task of picking up the survivors at sea.

The execution of joint covert operations testifies to a permanent and ongoing interaction between the military strategists from all three countries. Secrecy was of paramount importance in order to avoid public scrutiny and any immediate political repercussion that might have an international impact.
d) The final phase of Portuguese-South African cooperation.

The last few years of Portugal’s presence in Africa were characterized by increasing violence in two operational theatres – Guinea Bissau and Mozambique - which required the deployment of additional military resources. These difficulties were compounded by a shortage of financial resources and rising concern among senior Portuguese military personnel about the outcome of the insurgencies in Mozambique and Guinea Bissau where containment strategies no longer appeared to work.

In Guinea Bissau, the insurgents received surface-to-air missiles from the Soviet Union early in 1973. The missiles were sent to Guinea Bissau after a request made by a senior PAIGC delegation to Moscow in December 1972. The introduction of anti-aircraft missiles greatly reduced the capability of the Portuguese Air Force in providing air cover for the ground forces. It was also more difficult for helicopters to evacuate wounded military personnel from the battlefield or for any other type of aircraft to move critical supplies to the frontline. The first Portuguese military aircraft was shot down in Guinea Bissau in March 1973 and since then several other aircraft were either damaged or shot down by anti-aircraft missiles.

In May 1973, the PAIGC launched a major military operation in the South of Guinea Bissau, which included the participation of 41 Cuban military personnel who were responsible for firing artillery as well as making use of anti-aircraft missiles. From this period onwards, the Portuguese were under increasing military pressure. The PAIGC changed its usual guerrilla tactic of dispersing guerrilla forces on the ground and instead began to congregate and use massive concentration of firepower, which was directed to specific targets.

The number of PAIGC attacks also increased from the beginning of 1973. From 1969 until 1972, the PAIGC launched an average of 70 attacks per month.
However, in May 1973 the PAIGC was able to launch 220 attacks, which caused the death of 63 Portuguese military personnel. The focus of the attacks was the border garrisons of Guidaje, Guileje and Gadamael. In the attacks against these garrisons, the PAIGC made use of forward reconnaissance units that helped to regulate and improve the accuracy of long-range artillery fire over the assigned targets. The use of anti-aircraft missiles and artillery helped to isolate remote Portuguese garrisons, which were then subjected to continuous heavy artillery fire. As a result of these new tactics, the PAIGC was able to dislodge the Portuguese troops located in the southern Guileje garrison. The PAIGC strategy of directing heavy attacks onto more than one target simultaneously forced the Portuguese military to deploy their rapid intervention and reserve units around what appeared to be the most vulnerable areas. This left other targets without sufficient resources to respond to heavy and sustained attacks.

FRELIMO insurgents in Mozambique also managed to extend their operations south of the Zambezi river throughout 1973. In June 1973, it was estimated that about 400 FRELIMO insurgents had moved south towards the town of Vila Pery and the coastal city of Beira. It soon became clear that FRELIMO insurgents had moved from their remote hideouts in northern Mozambique – most of which were located in the northern Niassa and Cabo Delgado districts – into the central Tete district before moving further south in the direction of Mozambique’s coastline. In July 1973, FRELIMO insurgents attacked the Chitengo tourist camp in the Gorongosa game reserve located south of the Zambezi river. The attack against the tourist camp was the first important civilian target hit by the insurgents.

At the end of July 1973, European and South African newspapers reported that the FRELIMO insurgents had the capacity to cut off Rhodesia’s main access routes to the Indian Ocean. This included road and railway routes as well as the oil pipeline that linked Rhodesia to the Mozambican port city of Beira in the Indian ocean. In November 1972, the Portuguese Prime Minister, Marcello
Caetano, criticized Mozambique’s neighbours for being excessively concerned with the spread of the insurgency in Mozambique’s Tete district. Caetano stated “some neighbours with less experience do not hide their fears, thus playing the enemy’s game” and that “it has been explained to them more than once there is no need to be so scared”. According to the Rand Daily Mail, although Caetano had not mentioned any names, it was clear that the message was directed at Rhodesia and to a lesser extent South Africa. Rhodesian officials had earlier expressed concern at the deteriorating security situation in Mozambique.

Caetano’s comments reflected the Portuguese government’s irritation with the concerns expressed by its regional allies, especially in relation to the security situation in Mozambique. The Portuguese authorities might have felt that their regional allies were not displaying the required confidence in Portugal’s ability to contain the insurgency. Moreover, such concerns were leaked into the public arena, which indicated that the three regional allies did not always share the same views on security issues.

Whatever irritation the Portuguese government might have experienced about the opinions of its allies, the fact was that the Portuguese military establishment was facing a serious problem in Mozambique. The situation in the Tete district and FRELIMO’s ability to expand its operations into the Manica and Sofala districts south of Tete in 1973 indicated that the Portuguese would have to engage in a large-scale counter attack in order to contain the insurgency. This was not likely to happen for a number of reasons. The Portuguese military establishment deployed around 50 per cent of Mozambique’s available military personnel in the Tete District in order to ensure the completion of the Cabora Bassa dam. Such a deployment effectively meant that there was a reduction of military personnel in other parts of the territory. In addition, there was also an acute shortage of military personnel from mainland Portugal. The shortage of military personnel was mostly felt from the lower officer corps up to the rank of
captain. A number of lower ranking officers from the metropolis who completed their two-year military service in Mozambique, were asked to extend their service period for an additional six months. The shortage of sergeants and officers meant that there were a number of units operating without adequate leadership. In 1973, there were also some eyewitness accounts of poor discipline and a lack of adequate motivation to engage in combat. This referred mostly to regular infantry troops who had recently arrived from mainland Portugal. While members of the Special Forces such as the Commandos maintained a high level of discipline and combat readiness, the regular troops were not keen to move outside their quarters. This meant that patrols were not being carried out.

Throughout 1973 and during the first few months of 1974, the Portuguese military forces in Guinea Bissau and Mozambique experienced growing pressure on the battlefield. The insurgents in the two territories were well armed and were led by capable commanders. In the meantime, on the Portuguese side, the only way to undermine the capacity of the insurgents to expand their operations was to use superior firepower. This could be achieved through the acquisition of additional military hardware such as combat aircraft and artillery as well as armoured vehicles that could be used to protect military convoys. However, at that time the Portuguese authorities did not have sufficient resources to acquire such an increased quantity of military hardware.

It was in Angola that the Portuguese achieved a greater degree of success and were able to disrupt the insurgent networks inside the country effectively. According to Consul General Malone, the security situation in eastern Angola gradually improved in 1972 because the Portuguese military inflicted heavy losses on the insurgent forces. In October 1972, Malone explained that the Portuguese military had killed 2000 insurgents during the previous 24 months reducing them to about half of the armed and trained insurgents in eastern Angola in 1970.
In May 1973, Malone observed that the Portuguese military had regained the initiative on the battlefield after an “all round improvement in the military situation in Angola”. This reverse had become noticeable in 1972 already.\(^\text{187}\) As a result of the aggressive Portuguese positioning in the battlefield, the number of MPLA insurgents was reduced to around 500-armed men in eastern Angola with a further 2000 “sitting inactively inside Zambia”.\(^\text{188}\) Moreover, MPLA insurgents in northern Angola had shrunk to around 200 men as a result of a large Portuguese offensive in that part of the territory. The FNLA appeared to be quite ineffective despite the fact that it still had around 2500 men in northern Angola. Not all of the FNLA insurgents were armed, a situation that also applied to the 200 MPLA men in northern Angola who had to share about eighty firearms among themselves. In addition, UNITA insurgents who were operating in only a few areas in eastern Angola had clashed with both FNLA and MPLA insurgents. The clashes were known to have been quite bloody – a fact that assisted the work of the Portuguese military in eastern Angola.\(^\text{189}\)

By October 1973, Malone observed an improvement in the security situation in Angola in comparison with what had been the norm in 1970.\(^\text{190}\) He explained that although war was an uncertain endeavour, it was clear that the Portuguese had “demonstrated that, so far from being a spent force they are, in fact, under certain circumstances, capable of recovering the initiative from an active and ruthless enemy and converting what looked very much like approaching defeat into a severe setback for their opponents”.\(^\text{191}\)

In February 1974, Malone’s perception was that the war in Angola was continuing to move in Portugal’s favour.\(^\text{192}\) Despite a few serious incidents in the Cabinda enclave and north eastern Angola, the Portuguese military was pursuing both the MPLA and FNLA insurgents in a relentless manner.\(^\text{193}\) Malone’s positive overview of the counter-insurgency efforts in Angola certainly helped the Portuguese to negotiate a secret loan agreement with the South African Reserve Bank. The loan agreement was negotiated between the Portuguese Ministry of
Finance and the South African Reserve Bank and it was signed by the Portuguese Ambassador Menezes Rosa in March 1974. The total amount of the loan was R150 million.

It must be pointed out that the Portuguese had already begun to discuss the acquisition of a major South African loan in 1972. The Portuguese Minister of Defence, General Sá Viana Rebelo, first discussed the possibility of obtaining the South African loan with his South African counterpart, PW Botha, in July 1972. According to General Rebelo, Portugal’s military establishment had drawn up two lists of much needed military equipment. The first list referred to some equipment that could be granted by the South Africans for free. However, the second list comprised of military equipment that had to be acquired via a substantial financial loan. The loan would be used to buy ammunition, radios, weapons and vehicles for the Portuguese Army, as well as 20 Mirage V combat aircraft for the Portuguese Air Force. General Rebelo motivated the loan by explaining to PW Botha that the acquisition of additional military equipment would reinforce Portugal’s military capacity in southern Angola and Mozambique and indirectly protect South Africa’s borders.

The agreement that was signed in March 1974 marked a substantial increase in South Africa’s financial exposure in relation to Portugal, especially when compared to the R25 million loan that had clearly disappointed the Portuguese military leadership in 1969. The fact that the Portuguese military establishment had managed to asphyxiate the insurgency in Angola certainly played a part in the concession of the loan. From the perspective of the South African government at the time, the Portuguese military shield in Southern Africa was still viewed as an instrument of regional stability. Otherwise, the loan would not have been granted.

It is important to point out, however, that the new South African loan arrived too late to make any difference to the final outcome of the war in Angola and
Mozambique. Although the Portuguese authorities were successful in their attempts to obtain a substantial loan from South Africa, they received only the first instalment of R5 million.\textsuperscript{202} The reason for this was that the South African Reserve Bank informally suspended the delivery of the remaining instalments after April 1974.\textsuperscript{203} The suspension was caused by the Portuguese revolution of 25 of April 1974, which threw Portugal’s immediate political future into a state of confusion and uncertainty.

In addition to the above-mentioned loan that failed to have the desired impact, the Portuguese equipped a few of their military units with South African support. This refers to the weapons and supplies that were granted to indigenous trackers – the so-called Bushmen – in south-eastern Angola. The bush trackers were armed with semi-automatic rifles from South Africa.\textsuperscript{204} They were given the name of ‘Flechas’ or ‘Arrows’. The person responsible for setting up the ‘Flechas’ was the Portuguese PIDE Inspector, Óscar de Castro Cardoso.\textsuperscript{205} Cardoso who was trained in internal security and counter-intelligence set up the first ‘Flechas’ units in 1967.\textsuperscript{206} The ‘Flechas’ were trained in the Missombo camp in Angola’s south-eastern Cuando Cubango District.\textsuperscript{207} By mid-1971, the ‘Flechas’ that totalled 700 men by then, proved themselves to be effective counter-insurgency fighters.\textsuperscript{208} They were also issued with combat uniforms made in South Africa.\textsuperscript{209} The declassified Portuguese military documents indicate that South Africa was prepared to continue to finance the acquisition of automatic rifles for the ‘Flechas’ even after the Portuguese revolution in April 1974.\textsuperscript{210}

The use of South African funds to acquire firearms for the ‘Flechas’ was a closely guarded secret as were all the other military dealings between the Portuguese and South African security and military establishments. The military links between the two countries could not be disclosed because of a number of contradictions in the political arena. The differences between the official race policies of the two countries and the image that each country wanted to portray to
the outside world were just too divergent to permit the disclosure of details about
the existing military alliance.

The editor of The Star's Africa News Service, W Nussey, noticed the
contradictions between the official race policies and the opposing political
systems of the two countries in 1970. Nussey pointed out that countries such
as the United States of America were ready to deal with the Portuguese
authorities in a much more flexible manner than with the Rhodesian or South
African governments because of Portugal's declared policy of racial integration in
its African territories. The main contradiction was that while democracy in
Rhodesia and South Africa was accessible to whites only, the dictatorship
prevailing in the Portuguese territories in Africa applied to everyone regardless of
race. Nussey explained that in Angola and Mozambique people of all races used
the same buses, public lavatories, cinemas, hotels and churches. In Angola
some 40 per cent of the security forces were black. Minimum wages were
applicable to everybody and there was nothing to stop blacks from reaching the
highest posts in the civil service. An example was the fact that Guinea Bissau
had already had a black Governor while many people of mixed race descent
occupied key positions in Angola and Mozambique. Nussey stated that although
Portugal was often lumped together with Rhodesia and South Africa as part of
the “white racist bloc”, the differences between the racial policies in Angola and
Mozambique on the one hand and the racial policies in Rhodesia and South
Africa on the other hand were like “chalk to cheese”.

Nussey's comments were made a few days after the United States Secretary of
State, William Rogers, issued a statement referring to the political situation in
Southern Africa: ‘U.S. and Africa in the 70's'. In his statement, Rogers explained
that the U.S. would continue to oppose South Africa's apartheid system and its
racially discriminatory legislation. He also said the U.S. believed that the people
in the Portuguese-controlled territories in Africa had the right to self-
determination. In this regard, he believed that Portugal's policy of racial tolerance
held genuine hope for the future. Although Rogers indirectly condemned Portugal’s willingness to hold onto its African territories, he subtly emphasized the differences between the racial policies of the two countries.

The United States Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, David Newsom, made a similar statement in September 1970. Newsom stated that Portugal’s policy of racial equality provided “some basis for hope that a peaceful and equitable settlement” would be found in terms of moving forward towards self-determination in the Portuguese-controlled territories. However, in relation to the situation in South Africa he said that the United States would continue to reject the apartheid system and “to press for practical measures in protection of the legal and human rights of all South Africans”. The words of the two senior US officials indicated that the United States of America differentiated between Portugal’s stated aims of creating multiracial societies in Africa and South Africa’s apartheid system.

These positive sentiments did little to alleviate Portugal’s difficult position internationally or to stop the continuous condemnation of its colonial designs. However, they provided Portugal with some degree of leverage that placed it apart from South Africa’s racially discriminatory legislation. The United States was Portugal’s strongest ally within NATO. Moreover, despite its opposition to Portugal’s continued control over its African territories, the United States continued to maintain an important Air Force base in the Azores islands. It was thus in the interests of the Caetano government to maintain a fairly efficient working relationship with the US authorities. The same could be said of the United States government, which wanted to continue using the strategic Air Force base in the Azores.

The Star pointed out in November 1970 that the Nixon administration had in contrast with previous US administrations “consistently cultivated relations with Portugal” by emphasizing the fundamental difference between the nature of the
racial policies of Portugal on the one hand and of Rhodesia and South Africa on the other hand. Portugal never lost the hope of obtaining NATO support for its counter insurgency efforts in Africa. In October 1970, Portugal's Minister of Defence, General Horácio Rebelo, told NATO's Defence Chiefs in Lisbon that Portugal's military bases in the South Atlantic were at the disposal of the organization. He told the NATO Chiefs that “South of the Tropic of Cancer, Portugal possesses naval and air bases stretching from the islands of Cape Verde to Guinea and Angola, which by the use of modern equipment could help control the vast area of the whole Atlantic”. He thus implied that Portugal's military efforts in Africa were of vital interest to the organization.

The Portuguese authorities realized that it would be far more difficult to sell the idea that NATO should support Portugal's counter-insurgency campaigns in Africa if Portugal was perceived to be a country that openly condoned South Africa's racial policies. The different race policies followed by Portugal and South Africa were the main reason that led the Portuguese government to declare in public – albeit in a fairly mild manner – its distance from South Africa. In July 1970, the Portuguese Minister of Foreign Affairs, Rui Patrício, denied that South Africa's involvement in the construction of the Cabora Bassa dam in Mozambique's Tete District should be interpreted as the “maintenance of white domination in Southern Africa”. He explained that South Africa’s role in the project was that of the main consumer that would pay for the energy produced by the dam. He denied South African involvement in the physical protection of the dam.

Almost two decades after the Portuguese revolution in April 1974, Rui Patrício agreed that South Africa and Rhodesia were what he called Portugal’s natural allies in the southern African region despite existing philosophical differences. However, he explained that Portugal would never allow South Africa’s direct military intervention in Angola or Mozambique despite South African pressure to allow such intervention. Patrício revealed that Portugal was fully aware that the
Portuguese were viewed in South Africa as “the weakest link” in the southern African region. In addition, the Portuguese authorities were also aware that the South Africans believed that Portugal’s defence system in Angola and Mozambique was not structured in a proper manner. He explained, however, that Portugal would never allow South Africa’s direct military intervention since the Portuguese authorities did not want to compromise their principles. Furthermore, Patrício confirmed that the Portuguese firmly believed that it was necessary to avoid what he called the “internationalization of the war”, which could become a reality if South Africa became directly involved in the counter-insurgency efforts in Angola and Mozambique. He explained that such “internationalization” could take place by means of a joint force from the Organization of African Unity (OAU), which would most probably be set up to oppose South Africa’s military presence in Portugal’s African territories.220

In other words, if South Africa became directly engaged in the military conflict in Angola and Mozambique, the OAU would certainly feel it had the necessary legitimacy to set up an opposing military force in order to deal with the explicit military alliance between the two countries. It is clear that Portugal wanted to avoid the possibility of the development of such a scenario. Patrício explained the main objective of Portugal’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs was to avoid any gesture that could lead to the escalation of the conflict in the three operational theatres in Africa.221

It is clear then that although the Portuguese authorities were quite willing to cooperate with their South African counterparts in the military and security spheres – albeit in a very secretive manner – they were not willing to allow the development of any wider and more visible political linkages. The aim was to avoid any association with South Africa’s racial policies or to create the impression that the two countries had formed an official alliance, which would be perceived as a kind of “white crusade” against the rest of the African continent. In addition, any suggestions referring to South Africa’s possible direct military
intervention in the conflict in Angola and Mozambique would create the impression that the two governments had reached a political compromise, which would effectively discredit Portugal’s claims of having been successful in its efforts to build multiracial societies in its African territories.

Conclusion

The final years of Portuguese rule in Africa were marked by an intensification of military pressure in Mozambique and Guinea Bissau, as well as fierce rejection of Portugal’s military effort in Africa amongst several opposition groups on mainland Portugal. Although the Portuguese were successful in containing the insurgency in Angola, they failed to achieve the same results in Mozambique and Guinea Bissau. Portugal was in a difficult position since it could not claim to have defeated the insurgents in Africa unless there was a clear victory in all three operational theatres. This was unlikely to happen since the Portuguese Armed Forces had neither the manpower nor the material resources to achieve military success in three different operational theatres at the same time. In the meantime, Portuguese opposition groups were becoming increasingly effective in carrying out sabotage activities in mainland Portugal. This indicates that it was gradually becoming easier to penetrate Portugal’s military and security establishments. There was also increased opposition to conscription while opposition leaders such as Mário Soares called for a political solution to disentangle Portugal from the wars in Africa. This would entail giving immediate independence to the Portuguese-controlled territories in Africa.

From a South African perspective, it is clear that South African policymakers were well aware that the Portuguese military and security forces were overextended and faced serious challenges, especially in territories such as Mozambique and Guinea Bissau. The possibility of a wider conflict was always present in the minds of senior South African officials. South African Defence
Minister, PW Botha, was clearly concerned with the presence of Chinese cadres in East Africa and Russian naval forces in the Indian Ocean. Other South African officials – such as Admiral Biermann – feared that the insurgents in Mozambique might receive direct support from Chinese cadres and nationals from other African countries, which could envelop Mozambique in a wider war. Such possible threats forced South Africa, Portugal and Rhodesia to look for practical ways to engage in closer cooperation. The establishment of what is mentioned in the declassified Portuguese documents as the ‘Alcora Exercise’ was part of this joint effort to understand and to deal with the threats that could affect the Southern African region. The ‘Alcora Exercise’ was described as the “the investigation of ways and means to establish a coordinated tripartite effort whose aim will be to counterbalance the common threat that is directed towards all the Alcora participants”.

Despite such an understanding, it took the South African authorities quite a long time to approve a substantial loan to help the hard pressed Portuguese military forces in Africa. The two sides began to negotiate the loan in 1972. However, it was only in March 1974 that a formal agreement referring to the South African loan was signed. By this time it was already too late for such a loan to make any difference to Portugal’s military effort in Africa. Although the declassified documentation does not specify whether the delay in the granting of the loan was caused by excessive bureaucracy or ongoing wrangling over the terms of the loan agreement, it appears that both sides did not fully appreciate the urgency of the situation on the ground. However, the South African authorities provided material support – in the form of automatic rifles and uniforms – to units of the Portuguese Armed Forces. These units were the ‘Flechas’, which were described as efficient counter-insurgency groups, but the support granted by South Africa to the Portuguese Armed Forces was never extensive enough to tip the scale of the counter-insurgency effort in favour of the Portuguese.
Although the Portuguese wanted to receive some South African support, such support could never be on a scale that would indicate strong and visible political links between the two countries. In addition to maintaining ties with South Africa, Portugal wanted to maintain close ties with countries such as the United States of America and organizations such as NATO whose member states were strongly critical of South Africa’s apartheid system. Portugal also tried to propagate the view that it was building multiracial societies in its African territories, which stood at odds with South Africa’s official policy of racial segregation. Despite close cooperation in the military and security spheres it is apparent that both countries wanted to sustain and promote different political agendas in the international arena. This was one of the reasons that caused tension between the two sides.

Endnotes


3 Ibid.


5 Ibid.


7 Ibid. The Special Forces comprised of marines, paratroopers and commandos.

8 Comissão para o Estudo das Campanhas de África., Subsídios para o Estudo da Doutrina Aplicada nas Campanhas de África (1961-1974). Estado-Maior do Exército. Lisboa 1990, p.184. The following FRELIMO bases were destroyed: ‘Gungunhama’, ‘Moçambique’ and ‘Nampula’. Moreover, at least 77 political-administrative structures – whose aim was subversion – were also destroyed.

10 Ibid, pp.466-467.

11 Ibid, p.468.


13 Ibid.

14 Ibid.


16 Ibid.


18 Ibid.

19 Ibid. The large majority of the inhabitants of the Cape Verde islands had mixed African and Portuguese ancestry.


21 Ibid.


23 Ibid.


25 Ibid, p.153

26 Ibid, p.154

27 Ibid, p. 301.

28 Ibid, p.300. Portugal was criticized for having conducted aggressive actions against Senegal in May 1965 and August 1967. In addition, Portugal was blamed for aggressive retaliatory actions against Congo Brazzaville in May 1965 and June 1966, as well as for interfering in the affairs of Zambia and Tanzania in August and December 1966. Similar criticism took place in March 1967 after accusations made by Guinea Conakry.

Ibid.


Ibid, p.497.


Ibid.


Ibid, p.262.

Ibid. The statistics mentioned in p.262 of the Resenha Histórico-Militar das Campanhas de África (1961-1974) refer to combat operations from 1964 until 1972. In every single year, the number of Portuguese troops involved in combat operations was always higher in Guinea Bissau than in Angola or Mozambique. In Angola, it was only in 1969 that the number of Portuguese troops involved in combat operations reached 62.6%. All the other years indicate that the number of Portuguese troops involved in combat operations in both Angola and Mozambique never went beyond the 60% mark. In the meantime, the number of Portuguese troops involved in combat operations in Guinea Bissau from 1964 until 1972 was always above 60%.

Ibid, pp.111-112. Eastern Angola was a very vast region that comprised four districts. These were the Lunda, Mexico, Bié and Cuando Cubango districts.

Ibid, p.111. The MPLA moved a sizeable portion of its men and equipment from Cabinda and northern Angola to Zambia in 1966. UNITA had been operating in eastern Angola – especially in the Mexico and Bié Districts – since 1966. The FNLA did not have a meaningful impact in eastern Angola despite having a presence in Zambia since 1964.

Ibid, p.112.


50 Ibid, p. 331. The ship was called ‘Cunene’. The sabotage comprised placing a potent explosive device next to the ship in the Alcântara dockyards in Lisbon.

51 Ibid.


53 Ibid.


57 Ibid, p.911.

58 Ibid.

59 Ibid, pp. 912-920. In addition to providing insurgent groups – such as the MPLA – with secret reports stolen from the Portuguese Armed Forces, the BR destroyed military electronic equipment and military hardware such as cannons and military transport trucks. It was also involved in a large number of bank robberies. The BR also destroyed military recruitment files in order to ensure the disruption of the Portuguese Armed Forces’ recruitment efforts. Moreover, it sabotaged some of the Portuguese Army’s intelligence structures in mainland Portugal – including structures that were responsible for transmitting ciphers. In April 1974, the BR sabotaged the ship Niassa, which was about to transport troops from Lisbon to Guinea Bissau. The aim of these activities was to cause confusion and to lower the morale of the Portuguese Armed Forces.

60 Ibid. A Portuguese soldier – who was also a member of the BR – was responsible for placing the bomb inside the headquarters of the Portuguese Armed Forces in Bissau. Carlos Antunes has not revealed the name of this soldier.


63 Ibid, pp.327-328. The PCP member who organized Agostinho Neto’s flight was Jaime Serra.

64 Ibid, p.328.

65 Ibid.


68 Ibid.


71 Ibid, p.692.


73 Ibid.

74 Ibid. The strikes included workers from the railways, textile and metalworking industries as well as bank employees and shop workers.


78 Ibid.

79 Rand Daily Mail, 30 April, 1974. The Rand Daily Mail explained that it was in 1970 that Soares gave an interview describing his thoughts on how to disentangle Portugal from the ongoing wars in Africa. After the revolution of 25 April 1974, Soares was one of the main players in the negotiations that would result in Portugal’s hasty withdrawal from Africa and East Timor.
80 Ibid.

81 Ibid.


83 Rand Daily Mail, 6 June, 1970.

84 Rand Daily Mail, 13 October, 1970. The National Party congress was held in the Cape.

85 Ibid.


87 Ibid.

88 Ibid.

89 Ibid.


91 Ibid.


93 NARS, BTS, Box 1/22/1, Vol 13. Angola: Political Situation and Developments, B.05.03.69 / E.21.12.70: Secret letter from Consul General, Luanda - Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Pretoria 30 September 1970.

94 Ibid.

95 Ibid.


97 Ibid.


100 The Star, 22 June, 1971.


103 Ibid.

104 Rand Daily Mail, 10 February, 1972.

105 Ibid.

106 Ibid.

107 Rand Daily Mail, 01 May, 1972.


109 Ibid.


111 Ibid.


114 Ibid.


116 Rand Daily Mail, 16 December, 1972. Admiral HH Biermann explained his views during an international affairs symposium in Potchefstroom. Admiral Biermann said while the Soviets maintained a naval presence in the South Atlantic and the Indian Ocean, the Chinese had gained a foothold in Tanzania, Zambia and Congo Brazzaville.


118 NARS, BTS, Box 1/22/3, Vol 3. Angola: Relations with South Africa, B.12.06.70 / E.10.08.72: Secret letter from Consul General, Luanda - Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Pretoria, 2 August 1972. Malone’s letter indicates that the name of the senior South African military officer who died in Angola was Commandant John Innes. No other details referring to his death in Angola are mentioned in Malone’s letter.

119 ADN, File 5696.21.: Letter from Portuguese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Lisbon - General Chief of Staff of the Portuguese Armed Forces, Lisbon, 4 February 1969. The letter says the Rhodesians had called for a meeting between the Defence authorities of Portugal, Rhodesia and South Africa in order to discuss the “establishment of plans for the formulation of an eventual military pact”
ADN, File 5696.21.: Top-secret document compiled by the Joint Planning Staff and approved by the Operations Coordinating Committee of the Rhodesian Ministry of Defence, 6 January 1969, pp.1-5. Only 12 copies of this document were printed.


Ibid, pp.3-5.

ADN, File 3036.2.: Top-secret document from Rhodesia’s Joint Planning Staff, signed by Lieutenant Colonel JR Shaw, 4 December 1968. The document refers to the record of the meeting held in Mozambique’s Tete District on 2 December 1968, pp.1-7.


ADN, File 3036.2.: Top-secret document from Rhodesia’s Joint Planning Staff, signed by Lieutenant Colonel JR Shaw, 4 December 1968. The document refers to the record of the meeting held in Mozambique’s Tete District on 2 December 1968, pp.1-7.

Ibid, pp.3-6. In addition, also see p.6. of record of meeting held in Mozambique’s Nampula District on the 9 March 1969.

ADN, File 3036.2.: Top-secret document from Rhodesia’s Joint Planning Staff, signed by Lieutenant Colonel JR Shaw, 4 December 1968. The document refers to the record of the meeting held in Mozambique’s Tete District on 2 December 1968, pp.1-7.

Ibid.


Ibid.

Ibid.


Ibid, pp.5-6.


Ibid. In addition to the two Ministers of Defence the Chiefs of Staff of the Armed Forces of both countries were also present during these negotiations.

Ibid.


139 Ibid, p.9. The agenda was written on the 17 August 1971. The first meeting of the Telecommunications and Electronic Warfare Sub-commission was planned for the 20-24 September 1971.

140 Ibid.

141 Ibid.

142 ADN, SGDN, File 2055.6.: Top-secret telegram 114/GB from Portuguese Ministry of National Defence, Lisbon - Portuguese Military Attaché, Pretoria, August 1973. The exact day when the telegram was written is not mentioned.

143 Ibid.


145 ADN, File 3036.2.: Document 'Problema: Apreciação do problema apresentado ao SGDN pelo Gabinete Militar do C.C.F.A. Angóla sobre Comunicações por circuitos militares com o nosso Adido Militar e Aeronáutico em Salisbury e com as autoridades militares e de informação rodesianas', which is signed by First Lieutenant Mário Jorge Santiago Baptista Coelho, 26 December 1969, pp.2-5

146 Ibid.

147 Ibid.


150 Ibid, p.2. The mission would also have a secretary and a typist, as well as a full-time driver.


154 AHD, PAA 1131: Letter from the Office of the Portuguese Minister of Defence, Lisbon - Office of the Portuguese Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lisbon, 8 February 1974.

155 Ibid. The names of the four officers who would be part of the official diplomatic list were the following: i) the Defence Attaché, Brigadier AA Brito e Melo, ii) the Military Attaché, Colonel Vasconcelos Santos, iii) the Aeronautical Attaché, Colonel F Costa Gomes, and iv) the Naval Attaché, Frigate Captain RVP Vasconcelos Castelo. The members who would not be included in the list but who would nevertheless enjoy diplomatic status were the following: i)
Colonel Silva e Sousa, ii) Lieutenant Colonel LAS Inocentes, and iii) Lieutenant Colonel Mota Martins.

156 Ibid.


159 Ibid. Commander Zilhão’s ship was the Corvette João Coutinho.


161 Ibid.


163 Ibid.


169 Ibid.


171 Rand Daily Mail, 21 July, 1973

172 Ibid.

173 Rand Daily Mail, 30 July, 1973. The Rand Daily Mail quoted London’s Sunday Telegraph to describe how FRELIMO insurgents were extending their range of operations south of the road that linked Rhodesia to the port city of Beira.

174 Ibid.

175 Rand Daily Mail, 16 November, 1972.

176 Ibid.
177 Ibid.


179 Ibid.


181 Ibid.


183 Ibid.

184 Ibid.

185 NARS, BTS, Box 1/22/1, Vol 16. Angola: Political Situation and Developments, B.12.10.72 / E.15.05.74: Secret letter from Consul General, Luanda - Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Pretoria, 18 October 1972.

186 Ibid.

187 NARS, BTS, Box 1/22/1, Vol 16. Angola: Political Situation and Developments, B.12.10.72 / E.15.05.74: Secret letter Consul General, Luanda - Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Pretoria, 10 May 1973, pp.1-3.

188 Ibid.

189 Ibid.

190 NARS, BTS, Box 1/22/1, Vol 16. Angola: Political Situation and Developments, B.12.10.72 / E.15.05.74: Secret letter Consul General, Luanda - Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Pretoria, 11 October 1973.


192 NARS, BTS, Box 1/22/1, Vol 16. Angola: Political Situation and Developments, B.12.10.72 / E.15.05.74: Secret letter from Consul General, Luanda – Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Pretoria, 4 February 1974.


194 AHD, PAA 1140: ‘Memorial’ - ‘Assunto: Acordo do empréstimo de 150 milhões de Rands firmado com a R.A.S.’ from the General Chief of Staff of the Portuguese Armed Forces, Lisbon, 18 September 1975. In addition, see Portuguese Military Archives, Carcavelos, File 833.9.: Document ‘Acordo do empréstimo de 150 milhões de Rands firmado com a RAS’ by Colonel Francisco de Macedo Magalhães referring to the loan agreement signed on 8 March 1974, as well as the unsigned and undated top-secret document ‘Draft – Loan Agreement between the South African Reserve Bank and the Government of the Republic of Portugal’. 
Ibid. Article II of the agreement specified that Portugal would use the loan to acquire military equipment. Article VI indicated that a 3% interest rate would be calculated annually on the total outstanding amount of the loan.

AHD, PAA 1140: Unsigned and undated top-secret document from Portuguese Minister of National Defence, Lisbon – South African Minister of National Defence, Pretoria. The first paragraph on the first page states: ‘In accordance with my request of material made during our meeting of July 1972, I enclose herein 2 lists of material that we would like to obtain in order to reinforce our troops in Angola and Mozambique. List I – Material to be ceded by the Republic of South Africa. List II – Material to be obtained through a financial loan of the Republic of South Africa’.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid. See annex that is attached to the above-mentioned document. The title of the annex is ‘II – List of the Material to be Financed’. This list mentions the acquisition of hundreds of jeeps and three / five tonnes trucks as well as ammunition, rocket launchers, mortars and machine guns for the Portuguese Army as well as the acquisition of 20 Mirage V aircraft for the Portuguese Air Force.

AHD, PAA 1140: Unsigned and undated top-secret document from Portuguese Minister of National Defence, Lisbon – South African Minister of National Defence, Pretoria. The first paragraph on the first page states: ‘In accordance with my request of material made during our meeting of July 1972, I enclose herein 2 lists of material that we would like to obtain in order to reinforce our troops in Angola and Mozambique. List I – Material to be ceded by the Republic of South Africa. List II – Material to be obtained through a financial loan of the Republic of South Africa’.

AHD, PAA 1140: ‘Memorial’ - ‘Assunto: Acordo do empréstimo de 150 milhões de Rands firmado com a R.A.S.’ from General Chief of Staff of the Portuguese Armed Forces, Lisbon, 18 September 1975. In addition, see Portuguese Military Archives, Carcavelos, File 833.9.: Document ‘Acordo do empréstimo de 150 milhões de Rands firmado com a RAS’ by Colonel Francisco de Macedo Magalhães referring to the loan agreement signed on 8 March 1974.

Ibid.


Ibid, pp.403- 404.

Ibid, p.405.

In later years, additional ‘Flechas’ units were set up in other parts of Angola. The ‘Flechas’ units that were formed later did not solely comprise Bushmen trackers, but also consisted of former MPLA insurgents who had defected and joined the Portuguese security forces. ‘Flechas’ units were also set up in Mozambique. This is mentioned in Ó. Cardoso, “Criador dos Flechas” in Antunes, J.F. (ed), A Guerra de África (1961-1974). Vol I. Temas e Debates Lda., Lisboa 1996, pp.403-412.

ADN, File 795.8.: Top-secret letter ‘Fornecimento de Espingardas G-3 para os Flechas de Moçambique Contra-Pagamento da RAS’ from the General Chief of Staff of the Portuguese Armed Forces, 18 May 1974. The letter mentions the acquisition of 350 G-3 automatic rifles for the ‘Flechas’ in Mozambique. The letter indicates that the automatic rifles would be paid by South Africa ‘within the ambit of the military assistance granted by that country to Portugal’.

The Star, 02 April, 1970.

Ibid.


Ibid.


Ibid.


Ibid.