CHAPTER THREE

Portuguese and South African interaction between 1965 and 1970.

Introduction

This chapter deals with Portugal’s counter-insurgency effort in Angola, Mozambique and Guinea Bissau from 1965 until 1970 and the extent to which the South African authorities were prepared to support Portugal’s efforts in Africa. It also provides an insight into the reasons why South Africa decided to grant support to the Portuguese military in south-eastern Angola. The chapter also mentions Portugal’s difficulties in the three operational theatres and how the South African authorities viewed the Portuguese counter-insurgency effort. The final section of the chapter examines South African public support for the Portuguese soldiers in Mozambique and Angola and how such support was viewed by the Portuguese authorities.

a) Portugal’s military activities on the African continent since the mid-1960s

Portugal’s military commitment to its three main African territories continued to grow from the mid-1960s onwards. By this time, the main armed movements that challenged Portuguese control in Angola, Mozambique and Guinea Bissau had entrenched their positions on the ground quite firmly. The insurgent wars in the three territories increasingly began to drain Portuguese resources.

The two main movements that fought Portuguese rule in Angola were the Frente National de Libertação de Angola (FNLA) that grew out of the UPA as well as the Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (MPLA), which had been founded in 1956. There was also the União Nacional para a Independência de Angola (UNITA), which was set up in 1966. At the end of 1965 and the beginning of
1966, the MPLA was conducting operations along the route that linked Luanda and Carmona in northern Angola. In addition, at the beginning of 1966, the MPLA also transferred part of its human and material assets to Zambia in order to operate in Angola’s eastern regions, especially the Cazombo salient. The FNLA and the MPLA also began to operate on a smaller scale in the most remote border regions of the Cabinda enclave. In the meantime, in February 1966, UNITA opened the so-called ‘Eastern Front’ against the Portuguese authorities in the Moxico District. At the end of 1967, UNITA began to operate in the central Bié District.¹

In Mozambique, FRELIMO launched its first major offensive in the Cabo Delgado Province on the 25 September 1964.² At the time, FRELIMO only had 250 fully trained men in its ranks.³ However, by 1967 FRELIMO claimed to have 8,000 trained men in its ranks.⁴ In that same year, the movement began to operate with large units in the Cabo Delgado District. The larger groups comprised between 60 and 100 men.⁵ The most common activity carried out by the FRELIMO insurgents was the laying of landmines along various routes.⁶ FRELIMO was also active in the Niassa District and in September 1967, a large group of FRELIMO insurgents infiltrated the Tete District.⁷

In Guinea Bissau, the PAIGC insurgents extended their operations from the south of the territory to Guinea Bissau's eastern regions⁸. This happened from the end of 1964. In 1964 the PAIGC was operating close to the border between Guinea Bissau and Guinea Conakry. However, in 1965, the PAIGC was already active in Pirada, Canquelifá and Beli in Guinea Bissau's eastern region. At the end of that same year, the PAIGC began to operate near São Domingo in the northern part of the territory.⁹ In 1963 the PAIGC made contact with Cuban Embassies located in Algeria, Guinea Conakry and Ghana.¹⁰ The aim of these contacts was to obtain support from Cuba. The PAIGC leader, Amilcar Cabral, made his first trip to Cuba in January 1966. In June 1966, thirty-one Cuban volunteers – including 11 artillery experts – arrived in Conakry in order to provide
support for the PAIGC. Portuguese military communiqués began mentioning the presence of Cuban advisers among the PAIGC forces at the beginning of 1967. It is clear then that during the mid-1960s, the PAIGC began to receive advice from Cuban military experts. Cuban support lasted until the end of the war in 1974. The presence of Cuban military personnel was given a face when Portuguese forces captured a senior Cuban officer in November 1969. The officer was captured by a group of 35 Portuguese paratroopers who laid an ambush in the Guileje trail near the border with Guinea Conakry. The captured Cuban officer was Captain Pedro Rodriguez Peralta.

There were also numerous pressing problems displaying Portugal’s logistical difficulties in military operations. At the beginning of 1966 the Portuguese military authorities became aware that most of the vehicles that comprised the military transport system in Angola, Mozambique and Guinea Bissau were close to collapse because of excessive use and the very harsh nature of the terrain in the three operational theatres. Many of these vehicles had been running continuously for over a decade. The demanding nature of the military operations in the three operational theatres effectively meant that the cost of maintaining these vehicles rose steadily. The military authorities soon decided that in order to reduce maintenance costs, a military vehicle should not be used for more than five years in any operational context. However, the existing vehicles were used for a much longer period of time because of a shortage of military vehicles. In 1967 it was estimated that 12 000 vehicles were used by the Portuguese military in the three operational theatres. In the meantime, the Portuguese authorities concluded that the exact number of vehicles that was needed to maintain an efficient military transport system in the three operational theatres was 16 000.

Portugal’s logistical difficulties also encompassed the equipment that was used by its soldiers on a daily basis. In respect of the most basic military equipment – such as the automatic rifles used by Portuguese soldiers – the situation was also considered to be somewhat critical. In 1967, the military authorities in Angola
issued a warning about the need to substitute most automatic rifles, which were only expected to last an additional two years. Some weapons such as the FN automatic rifle had been used continuously since 1961. The military authorities in Guinea Bissau also issued a warning in March 1968 about the high number of Breda and Dreyse machine guns that jammed frequently at critical moments during combat operations. The machine guns jammed because their normal lifespan had already ended.

There were other serious problems that affected Portugal’s military capacity in the three operational theatres. These problems had to do with the insurgents’ ability to obtain modern military equipment that provided deadly firepower. In some cases, the insurgents also had access to better quality equipment than the equipment that was made available to the Portuguese soldiers who had been deployed in Africa. This was especially the case with the weapons that were used by the Portuguese forces in Guinea Bissau. A report issued by the General Command of the Portuguese Armed Forces in Guinea Bissau in 1968 indicated that some of the weapons used by the insurgents were technically superior to the weapons that had been distributed among the Portuguese troops in that territory. The two most obvious examples were the RPG-7 grenade launcher and the T-21 recoilless cannon that had been handed over to the PAIGC insurgents by the Warsaw Pact countries. The availability of these weapons effectively meant that the insurgent groups operating in Guinea Bissau were able to increase their firepower on the battlefield. The report also mentioned that many weapons used by the Portuguese forces broke down because they were old.

Greater firepower meant that a smaller insurgent force was able to have more impact when dealing with a larger military force during combat operations. At the end of 1968 it became clear that the most common PAIGC fighting unit that operated with up to 40 men on the battlefield had a greater degree of firepower when compared with the Portuguese Ranger Companies that comprised 120
men. While the PAIGC units operated with between two and four 83 mm mortars, the Portuguese Ranger Companies only used two 60 mm mortars. Moreover, the PAIGC units also went into combat with between two and four heavy machine guns while the Portuguese only operated with three light machine guns.

All of these problems had a cumulative effect since they served to drain the effectiveness of the Portuguese ground operations. In 1968, the Portuguese military in Guinea Bissau decided that in order to achieve a higher degree of aggressiveness on the battlefield the military units on the ground would have to be small. A smaller unit would achieve a higher degree of mobility on the ground and more precision during a firefight than a larger and heavier unit. The smaller unit would comprise an infantry group of around 30 men that conducted patrols in a certain area over a five-day period. The patrolling activities were conducted on foot and they could reach a range of between 50 and 100 kilometres. The five-day period could also be doubled in case it was necessary. It should be pointed out that despite the willingness of the Portuguese to change tactics in order to achieve a higher degree of success in the battlefield, it was never possible to destroy the insurgents’ capacity to regroup and continue with their attacks. The small territory of Guinea Bissau remained the most difficult operational theatre for the Portuguese military and a continuous major drain of vital resources that could be used in the larger operational theatres of Angola and Mozambique.

The Portuguese soon learned that successful ground operations were dependent on the use of the appropriate equipment at the right moment. The Portuguese military became aware that the use of helicopters was very important in any counter-insurgency effort since it allowed the rapid deployment of ground forces without having the need to use aircraft runways. In addition, helicopters could be used in reconnaissance missions and the delivery of supplies in remote areas as well as to establish contact with combat troops on the ground and to withdraw wounded personnel during combat operations. Helicopters could also provide fire
cover for ground troops as long as they were armed with heavy weapons such as rocket launchers. One of the most common helicopters used by the Portuguese military was the French manufactured Alouette III, which was armed with a 20 mm cannon. These helicopters were used not only for the deployment of troops during combat operations but also to protect other helicopters, especially those that were used for transport duties. As it will be mentioned later, helicopters were some of the main items that the Portuguese were most keen to obtain from the South African authorities as part of South Africa’s support package.

In general terms, however, during the late 1960s it became clear that the Portuguese Army was experiencing serious problems when it came to the acquisition and distribution of equipment that was needed to fight the insurgents in Angola, Mozambique and Guinea Bissau. Excessive bureaucracy and continuous delays in the acquisition process created major problems for the Portuguese Army. It took a full three years for all of the military equipment that had been requested by the military in 1967 to reach the troops on the ground in the three operational theatres. Moreover, in July 1969, only 12.5% of the equipment that had been requested in the Army’s 1968 acquisition plan had reached the Army troops on the ground. According to a study carried out by the Portuguese military in July 1969, it was not possible to make an accurate forecast about the acquisition and distribution of at least 44% of the equipment that had been requested by the Army for use in the three operational theatres. This was despite the fact that most of the equipment that had been in use in the Portuguese Army since 1961 and 1962 had reached or was reaching the end of its effective durability.

The shortage of certain types of equipment affected the performance of military operations on the ground. In July 1967, the Portuguese Ministry of National Defence acknowledged that the command structures in charge of army operations in the three operational theatres were dissatisfied with the acute shortage of landmines. The landmines were seen as an effective barrier to
prevent the infiltration of insurgents along certain routes. The army believed that landmines would be quite effective in border areas that could not be monitored by the military on a permanent basis.\(^{39}\)

As the war progressed, the Portuguese military also became concerned about the permanent availability of manpower in the three operational theatres. One of the major issues that affected conscription was widespread Portuguese emigration from mainland Portugal. Portuguese emigration took place at an ever-increasing pace throughout the 1960s and early 1970s since many people wanted to improve their standard of living. In 1973, the average Portuguese salary in mainland Portugal was 25% of the average salary in Germany and 29% of the average salary in France.\(^{40}\) It is estimated that from 1960 until 1973 at least 1.5 million Portuguese nationals left Portugal in search of a better life elsewhere.\(^{41}\) Most of the Portuguese citizens who left their home country were not really interested in moving to Portugal’s African territories. The large majority of Portuguese emigrants chose France and Germany as their host countries instead of moving to Portugal’s African territories.\(^{42}\) Only 4% of the Portuguese citizens who emigrated from mainland Portugal decided to begin a new life in Africa.\(^{43}\) This means that a substantial portion Portugal’s available manpower that could have been used in its African territories was lost to other countries.

As a result of the need to strengthen manpower in the three operational theatres, there was a marked tendency on the part of the Portuguese military to increase the number of locally recruited personnel gradually. This happened from the start of the outbreak of violence in Angola in 1961 until 1973 and in all three operational theatres.

In 1961 there were 5 000 locally recruited troops in Angola, which comprised 14.9% of the total number of troops.\(^{44}\) However, by 1968 the number of locally recruited troops had reached 20 683, which comprised 35.5% of the total number of troops in Angola.\(^{45}\) In the meantime, in Mozambique the number of locally
recruited troops increased from 3,000 in 1961 to 13,898 in 1968, which comprised 38% of the total number of troops in that territory. The use of local troops, especially black troops, made it easier for the Portuguese military to engage in special covert operations from the mid-1960s onwards. In 1965, the Portuguese made use of the defection of a senior UPA official, Alexandre Taty, to set up a contingent of Special Troops whose main purpose was to carry out covert operations across the border that separated Angola as well as the Cabinda enclave from the Congo. Taty, who was born in the Cabinda enclave, persuaded several hundred insurgents to change sides and serve in the Portuguese Army. These troops used the same uniforms and the same soviet bloc weapons as the insurgents during their operations inside Congolese territory and they did not carry any Portuguese identity documents. The cross-border operations were usually carried out by groups of 31 men and their aim was to cause confusion and reduce the morale of the insurgents who took refuge in neighbouring Congo.

In 1968 the Portuguese military set up the Special Groups in eastern Angola. These groups also comprised former insurgents who had been captured by the Portuguese military and who decided to change sides. They were mainly used in eastern Angola but sometimes they also operated in other parts of the territory. Similar groups were set up in Mozambique in 1970. In Guinea-Bissau, the Portuguese set up the first black paramilitary groups – the so-called Militias – at the end of 1964. The Militias were divided into Normal Militias and Special Militias. While the first ones played a localized protective role the second ones were used in wider counter-insurgency operations. The other major black units that the Portuguese used were the ‘Katangese Faithful’. These troops were former ‘gendarmes’ from Katanga who fled from the Congo two years after Prime Minister Moise Tshombe was ousted by General Joseph Mobutu in 1965. A least 4,600 Congolese ‘gendarmes’ – who were considered to be Tshombe’s supporters – crossed into Angola in 1967. The Portuguese selected 2,300 former ‘gendarmes’ who began to operate in eastern Angola near
the Congolese border. Their main role was to protect construction teams in charge of building roads in eastern Angola.55

The Portuguese military also made use of a specific tactic that had already been used in Algeria and Vietnam, which was to make it more difficult for the insurgents to move around with ease.56 In order to prevent rural communities from coming into contact with the insurgents the Portuguese military built protected settlements – the so-called ‘aldeamentos’ – which were used to congregate large numbers of rural dwellers. The ‘aldeamentos’ had the dual purpose of not allowing the insurgents to spread their political message among the rural population as well as preventing these same insurgents from receiving support from civilians in more remote areas. Basic infrastructure was built in each one of the ‘aldeamentos’ in order to promote acceptance on the part of the rural population. The basic infrastructure was a school, a first aid centre and a well with fresh water.57 Local militias were responsible for protecting the ‘aldeamentos’.58 However, despite the existence of basic services in the ‘aldeamentos’ sometimes there was strong opposition from the local population who rejected orders to move away from their land.59 Despite such opposition, the ‘aldeamentos’ were built throughout the war in both Angola and Mozambique as well as in Guinea Bissau.

It is clear then that from the mid-1960s onwards the Portuguese military was facing a number of difficult challenges in Africa. These challenges ranged from delays in the acquisition and distribution of equipment to the quality of some of the weapons used by the Portuguese troops. In some cases, the weapons used by the insurgents appeared to be of a higher quality than the weapons that were being used by regular Portuguese troops. This certainly had an impact on the Portuguese troops operating on the ground, especially in Guinea Bissau where insurgent units displayed the ability to operate with much firepower. Some weapons that were used by the Portuguese military – such as the FN automatic rifles as well as the Breda and Dreyse machine guns – were used long beyond
their normal usage period. This situation also applied to military transport vehicles.

Moreover, there was the issue of how to maintain adequate levels of manpower in the three operational theatres over a long period of time. The Portuguese authorities had to deploy sufficient military manpower in the three operational theatres in order to conduct successful counter-insurgency campaigns. However, the continuous and ongoing Portuguese emigration from mainland Portugal to other European countries or to other parts of the world effectively meant that the available pool of recruits would dwindle at some point in the future. Although in official government circles there was little mention of a shortage of manpower, there was probably a growing realization that Portugal's counter-insurgency effort would certainly be affected by a reduction in the number of available recruits.

Another crucial issue was the need to devise specific counter-insurgency tactics for each one of the three operational theatres in Africa. Each operational theatre had its own characteristics and its own specific problems and challenges. While the insurgency in Angola posed its own challenges because of the territory's enormous size, the much smaller territory of Guinea Bissau was quite difficult to control because of numerous swamps and rivers that hindered the movement of ground troops. In addition, it was probably during the mid-1960s that the Portuguese authorities became aware that it would not be possible to defeat the insurgents in Angola, Mozambique and Guinea Bissau within a specific timeframe. The insurgents were receiving external support from the Eastern bloc countries and China as well as Cuba. At the level of the African continent, the insurgents also received political support from other African nationalist groups and the Organization of African Unity. Moreover, the nature and size of the terrain where the insurgencies were taking place as well as the inability to find an immediate short term political solution effectively meant that the conflict in Angola, Mozambique and Guinea Bissau would last for a long period of time.
b) South Africa’s view of the Portuguese military effort in Africa

During the mid 1960s South African officials continued to express concern about the performance of the Portuguese counter-insurgency campaigns in Africa. There were several issues that caused apprehension in South African circles regarding Portugal’s military position on the African continent.

In April 1965, Consul General Malone believed that the Portuguese army had already overextended its military capabilities. In a report written in Luanda, Malone said the Portuguese army had close to one hundred thousand men in its ranks but well over half this number had already been sent to Angola and Mozambique. He explained that 85% of the army had been deployed in Angola, Mozambique and Guinea Bissau. In addition, he expected the Portuguese economy to experience a heavy strain if the insurgent pressure on both Angola and Mozambique took place at the same time and on a continual basis. Malone indicated that he did not really believe in the effectiveness of the black troops that had been recruited into the Portuguese army and that other Portuguese army units had not really developed an adequate combat capacity. He explained that if Portugal lost Angola and Mozambique the consequences of such a loss would be “disastrous” for South Africa. In his report, Malone questioned whether it would be possible for the Portuguese to maintain control over their African possessions without economic support from South Africa.

In January of the same year, Consul General Malone and Vice Consul B de W Roos traveled 180 km north of Luanda to the Ambriz region to make an assessment of the insurgency threat in the area. During the trip the two South African diplomats visited a local military camp where he noticed what he called a “general air of bored apathy among the troops”. Malone explained that he believed that the Portuguese army in Angola had a serious weakness. This weakness was the fact that junior officers who had been conscripted did not display a great deal of enthusiasm for “their temporary military careers.”
Moreover, these junior officers also lacked aggressiveness and developed what the Consul General termed a “defensive” posture. Malone pointed out that the officers who served permanently and who had made a career in the Portuguese Armed Forces were much more efficient than the personnel who had been conscripted. He observed, however, that the number of permanent force members was insufficient to fill all the gaps. In September 1965 Malone indicated that there had been no reduction in the intensity of insurgent activity in northern Angola, which was characterized by ambushes and the laying of landmines. Early in 1966, Malone once again visited northern Angola with the newly arrived South African Vice Consul, J Geldenhuys. Malone was informed that most white farmers in northern Angola were living in barns and outhouses that could be protected more easily than normal houses in case of an attack because of the reduced number of doors and windows. Such security concerns point to the fact that the situation was far from being stabilized.

In addition to the views expressed by South African diplomatic representatives, the South African government also received information referring to Portugal’s military efforts from other sources. One of these sources was a member of the British Conservative Party, Major Patrick Wall, who was also a member of Parliament. Major Patrick Wall visited Angola and Mozambique in May and June 1966. As soon as he returned to the United Kingdom he wrote a confidential report about the situation in the two Portuguese territories. The report was submitted to the South African Ambassador in London, CPC de Wet. Although Wall’s report cannot be considered to be a South African perspective on the security situation in Portugal’s African territories it certainly gave an overview of the most recent events in Angola and Mozambique.

According to Wall’s report, five years after the first outbreak of violence in Angola the security situation had stabilized despite the fact that small rebel groups still infiltrated Angola’s northern regions. The Portuguese troops – both white and black – appeared to be both motivated and well trained, and the Army had
initiated several development projects in the areas that had been previously affected by the insurgency. These projects were later handed over to the control of local civilian authorities and it included the building of schools and the creation of co-operative agricultural projects. Wall also noted that in Mozambique the insurgents were well trained and armed with the latest Soviet and Chinese weapons and they appeared to have an efficient leadership. The insurgents received training from Chinese and Cuban instructors who lived in camps located inside Tanzania. The training was given before the insurgents entered Mozambican territory. Once trained, the insurgents could operate as far as 150 kilometres deep inside Mozambican territory. Wall highlighted the fact that Mozambique’s border with Tanzania was 800 kilometres long while the border with Malawi was 300 kilometres long. The insurgents had also begun to operate in the Tete District further south. Wall believed the major problem the Portuguese faced in the Tete District was the length of the border. In terms of race relations, Wall explained that schools in Mozambique were non-racial and fully integrated. However, the promotion of blacks into senior positions was moving forward at a slow pace due to the absence of blacks with senior or graduate qualifications.74 Despite a generally positive overview of the situation in Mozambique, Wall noted that from January 1964 until April 1966 at least 117 Portuguese troops had been killed in action in Mozambique.75

The South African authorities, however, did not share Wall’s optimism with regard to the situation in Mozambique. In his annual review of the situation in Portugal and the Portuguese territories in Africa, the South African Ambassador in Lisbon, AJF Viljoen, indicated that the level of insurgent infiltration in northern Mozambique in 1966 was taking place on a larger scale than in 1965.76 Moreover, in 1966 the insurgents were also operating much deeper inside Mozambique than in the previous year.77 At the end of 1966 it was not yet clear what would be the “ultimate fate of the Portuguese Provinces” and “how long metropolitan Portugal would be able successfully to resist increasing pressures – both external and internal – to relinquish her hold on what the world at large
regarded as colonial possessions". Such comments indicated that the South African authorities did not really have full confidence that the ongoing counter-insurgency efforts would be enough to prevent the loss of Portugal’s African territories.

In September 1966, Consul General Malone discussed the military situation in Angola with his German diplomatic counterpart in Luanda, Dr Klaus Terflöfh. According to Dr Terflöfh, the morale among the Portuguese troops in Angola was quite high. However, the Portuguese military did not have sufficient equipment such as helicopters, aircraft and vehicles. The Portuguese forces also faced mobility problems since many muddy roads in remote areas of the country could not be used during the rainy season. The lack of mobility on the part of the Portuguese forces allowed the insurgents freedom of movement in the countryside.

While Consul General Malone sometimes expressed reservations about the efficiency of certain Portuguese Army units he had a very firm opinion about the Portuguese civilians who were living in Angola. In November 1966 Malone said that he had not noticed any “marked signs of apathy” among the Portuguese civilians in Angola. In addition, he was impressed with the enthusiasm displayed by the civilians who wanted to join civil defence groups as volunteers. Despite his optimism, the Consul General believed that South Africa would have to provide support to the Portuguese security forces at some stage. In May 1967, Malone held talks in Luanda with a journalist of the Argus Africa News Service in Johannesburg, Mr W Nussey, who spent some time in Angola to find out more about Portugal’s military capabilities. Nussey told Malone that the security situation in Angola had deteriorated as a result of UNITA’s infiltration from across the Zambian border in the south east of the country and that the Portuguese did not have sufficient equipment – especially helicopters – to conduct their counter-insurgency campaign. Nussey also asked Malone why the South African government had not yet assisted the Portuguese
in building proper roads in eastern Angola where the roads network was very poor. Nussey believed that Portugal could not possibly hold on to Angola and Mozambique indefinitely without South African support.  

According to Malone, it was a shock “to hear the views that I have myself been expressing in secret reports conveyed to me openly by a journalist who, independently, has apparently come to exactly the same conclusions”. Malone said he was concerned with the possibility that the Argus Africa News Service would publish articles implying that Portugal was slowly losing the counter insurgency war in Angola as well as question the reasons why South Africa was doing nothing to assist the Portuguese. If such articles were published it would make it more difficult for South Africa “to go to Portugal’s aid secretly, should we decide it is in our interest to do so”. Malone was also concerned that Nussey had obtained information about a group of South African officers who had recently visited Angola to participate secretly in the Portuguese Army’s commando training. In fact, the South Africans had become interested in the way the Portuguese trained their special forces in August the previous year. This happened when a South African military delegation visited a few Portuguese military installations in Luanda in August 1966. The South African delegation was given a briefing about logistics and the type of military operations that the Portuguese were conducting in Angola before being taken to the Grafanil Military Camp and the Commando Instruction Centre in Luanda. The comments made by Consul General Malone indicate that he believed in the need to maintain military cooperation between the two countries a closely guarded secret.

At a more senior level, the issue of closer military links between the two countries was discussed when South Africa’s Defence Minister, PW Botha, visited Portugal in April 1967. On the 7 April 1967, PW Botha held talks with Portugal’s Prime Minister, António de Oliveira Salazar, and the Foreign Affairs Minister, Dr Franco Nogueira, as well as the Portuguese Minister of Defence, General Gomes de Araújo and the Overseas Minister, Silva Cunha. PW Botha’s views were
recorded in a secret report of the Portuguese Foreign Affairs Ministry. According to the report, the South African Defence Minister told his Portuguese hosts that Portugal and South Africa would have to talk in a more “intimate” manner. PW Botha made it clear that it was not necessary for the two countries to agree on a formal military alliance. Moreover, the South African government believed that senior military officers from both countries should conduct high-level talks about the common problem of how to defend Southern Africa.

In addition, PW Botha indicated that South Africa was prepared to make available any type of military supplies if it was feasible. The Portuguese would pay a “nominal price” for these supplies. PW Botha added that South Africa was prepared to provide South African military aircraft to Portugal if requested by the Portuguese government. Furthermore, the South African government had started negotiations with the French government on the manufacturing of French ground to air missiles and air to ground missiles in South Africa. If the negotiations succeeded, the missiles could be made available to the Portuguese.

It is clear that PW Botha’s visit to Portugal and his direct offer of military aid was one way of conveying to the Portuguese authorities that the South African government was concerned about the security situation in Southern Africa, especially with the growing insurgencies in Angola and Mozambique. In addition, PW Botha indicated that South Africa was prepared to provide the Portuguese authorities with direct military aid without a formal military alliance. Such an approach would enable both sides to engage in much closer military cooperation without attracting unwarranted attention from hostile powers or from African nationalist groups opposed to Portugal’s continued presence in Africa. In this manner, PW Botha gave a clear indication that South Africa was prepared to develop new avenues of cooperation in order to maintain stability in the Southern African region. It is quite obvious that the South Africans viewed stronger
cooperation in the military and security spheres as the best way to contain the insurgency threat that was beginning to develop close to South Africa’s borders.

In May 1967, the General Officer Commanding the South African Defence Force’s Joint Combat Forces, General CA Fraser, told the Portuguese Ambassador in South Africa, Francisco Menezes Rosa, that the Portuguese and South Africans authorities should consider the possibility of holding periodic joint strategic meetings.102 The focus of such meetings should not only be military affairs but also political and economic issues that might affect security in the Southern African region.103 According to Ambassador Rosa, General Fraser had made it clear that the two countries would have to cooperate more closely when it came to defence matters.104 General Fraser’s direct comments about the need for joint strategic meetings between the two countries were made soon after PW Botha’s visit to Portugal. This indicates that the South African government wanted to accelerate cooperation with the Portuguese authorities in the security sphere. It also demonstrates that the South African government viewed the insurgencies in Angola and Mozambique as a serious matter that would have to be addressed urgently.

It is important to point out that on 26 August 1966, a South African police unit led by Major Theunis Swanepoel attacked SWAPO’s Ongulumbashe camp in Ovamboland.105 This date is viewed as the start of SWAPO’s insurgency war against South African presence in South West Africa. SWAPO insurgents had begun to infiltrate South West Africa in 1965 in order to establish their network in Ovamboland.106 The South African Justice Minister, BJ Vorster, told the South African Parliament at the time that the insurgents had crossed into South West Africa from Angola.107

The maintenance of South African rule in South West Africa and the need to ensure the security of that territory was certainly the major reason behind increased cooperation in the intelligence field. By the mid-1960s the exchange of
intelligence between the security authorities in the two countries had taken off. It was during this period that PIDE began to receive information about South African counter insurgency operations close to the Angolan border from the South African authorities. There was also cooperation during specific operations conducted by the security forces of both countries. In September 1966, Portuguese military units provided direct support to a South African police operation in the Okalongo region close to the Angolan border. The task of the Portuguese units was to monitor a 30 kilometer stretch of land between beacons 12 and 15 on the Angolan side of the border. The objective was to prevent SWAPO insurgents from taking refuge in Angola. The strategy of the SWAPO insurgents in South West Africa was to hide near the border before crossing over into Angolan territory when pursued by the South African Police.

As a result of the growing insurgencies in Angola and Mozambique as well as SWAPO infiltration into South West Africa, the two countries were forced to acknowledge a new reality, which would require closer cooperation between the two sides. In respect of South West Africa this cooperation was not publicly acknowledged at the time. In October 1966, the Divisional Commander of the South African Police in South West Africa, TJ Crous, dismissed claims about cooperation between the Portuguese military and members of the South African Police, but stated that the South African police was in full control of the security situation in that territory. The dismissal was made in the South West African newspaper, The Windhoek Advertiser.
c) **South Africa’s secret support for Portugal’s military effort in Angola**

As a result of PW Botha’s agreement to allow the Portuguese to have access to South African military supplies and equipment – which South Africa's Defence Minister offered during his visit to Portugal in April 1967 – the Chief of Staff of the Portuguese Army, General Câmara Pina, compiled a list of immediate needs in September 1967 and handed it over to General CA Frazer in South Africa.\(^{113}\) The most important items that the Portuguese requested were Alouette III helicopters and Cessna aircraft, as well as road-building equipment and radio transmitters.\(^ {114}\) The Portuguese also requested several dozen Panhard armoured vehicles.\(^ {115}\) This military equipment was to be used in Angola.\(^ {116}\)

However, in November 1967, Ambassador Rosa indicated that according to officials from South Africa's Ministry of Foreign Affairs it would not be very easy to obtain Alouette helicopters and Cessna aircraft from South Africa.\(^ {117}\) The South African owned Alouette helicopters could not be used by the Portuguese military without permission from France – which was the manufacturing country – while South Africa appeared not to have been successful in the acquisition of Cessna aircraft from the United States of America.\(^ {118}\) It is important to note that in March 1967 the Portuguese Ministry of Defence in Lisbon had already authorized the Portuguese Armed Forces to use helicopters from the South African police during surveillance operations in south-eastern Angola.\(^ {119}\) The surveillance operations should cover the Angolan side of the border as well as the Luiana region opposite the Zambian border in south-eastern Angola. The official Portuguese instructions indicated that if South African helicopters were used inside Angolan territory they should not have any South African insignia although the crews could comprise of South African nationals. In addition, when such operations took place, PIDE intelligence agents or Portuguese troops had to be present. The helicopters would have to be Alouette III helicopters since those were the helicopters used by the Portuguese military in Angola. The instructions also demanded complete secrecy and the utilization of Portuguese
uniforms by South African police personnel operating inside Angola. This applied to South African pilots as well as the mechanics in charge of aircraft maintenance. Moreover, whatever the nature and aim of the operations they would always have to be carried out under Portuguese command. These instructions are a clear indication that the Portuguese wanted to maintain full control of any military operation that included the presence of South African nationals. In addition, there was to be complete secrecy surrounding the presence of South African police inside Angolan territory.

In February 1968, PW Botha told his Portuguese counterpart, General Gomes de Araújo that the South African government had agreed to grant the Portuguese Armed Forces in Angola five Alouette III helicopters and 33 Panhard armoured vehicles as well as 283 TR/28C radio sets. The equipment would be made available on a “free loan” basis. However, PW Botha also said that before the Alouette III helicopters and the Panhard armoured vehicles were sent to Angola, the Portuguese government would have to request permission from France – the manufacturing country – to make use of this South African owned military equipment. In March 1968, General Araújo wrote to PW Botha to confirm that the French Defence Minister, P Messmer, had given his permission to the Portuguese government to use the French manufactured and South African owned Alouette III helicopters as well as the Panhard armoured vehicles in Angola. The only request that P Messmer had made was that the transfer of equipment to Angola should be kept secret.

In April 1968, General Araújo met General CA Fraser and General Hendrik van den Bergh in Lisbon in the presence of senior Portuguese military officers and PIDE officials in order to discuss the situation in south-eastern Angola. General van der Bergh was the head of South Africa’s Security Branch and in 1968 he was appointed Special Adviser on State Security to the Prime Minister. It is necessary to point out that lower ranking PIDE and South African police officials had already held meetings in Rundu on the 5 and 6 February 1968.
to discuss additional collaboration between the two sides. Similar meetings were held on the 1 and 2 March 1968 in Pretoria to discuss the deployment of Portuguese troops in Angola’s Luiana region – which was located close to the Zambian border – as well as the use of South African helicopters in Angola.

In April 1968, General Araújo told General CA Fraser and General Hendrik van den Bergh that south-eastern Angola – which included the Cuando Cubango district and part of the Moxico district – was quite huge with very few roads and almost no resident white population, which made it easy for insurgents who came from Zambia to cross over into Angola. The only way to counter the advance of the insurgents was to have highly mobile forces in the region. This would imply the use of helicopters and light aircraft. However, the Portuguese military did not have sufficient helicopters and light aircraft to cover this part of Angola in an efficient manner. General Araújo’s words indicated that the Portuguese military was overstretched and it did not have the necessary resources to seal off Angola completely from insurgent infiltration. The South African government must have viewed these words with some alarm since it was preoccupied with SWAPO’s infiltration tactics in South West Africa. As it was mentioned previously, SWAPO used Angolan territory to infiltrate South West Africa.

As a result of the explanations provided by General Araújo, the South African authorities decided to grant additional support for the Portuguese military in Angola. In May 1968, PW Botha informed General Araújo that South Africa would provide spare parts free of charge for the five Alouette III helicopters and the 33 Panhard armoured vehicles. He also informed General Araújo that the South African government had approved additional measures to help the Portuguese Armed Forces in Angola. This would include air support in the shape of eight Alouette helicopters and four Cessna aircraft, which could be used during Portuguese military operations in eastern and south-eastern Angola.
PW Botha indicated that the eight Alouette helicopters and the four Cessna aircraft would be permanently stationed in South West Africa. When the aircraft were operating in Angola, the South African pilots and the respective crew would use Portuguese uniforms without insignia or badges identifying military rank. In addition, any South African aircraft operating in Angola would be marked with Portuguese Air Force markings. The aim of these measures was to maintain the secrecy of any operations that included the presence of South African aircraft and South African air crews in Angola. The South African Defence Force would be in charge of the logistics of this air support effort. The Portuguese would have to provide only fuel and lubricants when South African aircraft were operating in Angola.

In addition, PW Botha explained that South Africa could provide ammunition, explosives, medicines, and spare parts for radios if they were available in South African stocks. However, the Portuguese would have to pay for these supplies. PW Botha repeated once again the need to ensure that the assistance granted by the South African government as well as the cooperation between the two countries continued to be kept secret. PW Botha was obviously concerned about any possible information leak and the fact that a larger increase of South African aid for the Portuguese military authorities in Angola might somehow become public. PW Botha’s offer of secret military aid was accepted by the Portuguese Prime Minister, António de Oliveira Salazar. In a letter sent to PW Botha in Cape Town on 25 May 1968, the Portuguese Defence Minister indicated that Salazar was grateful for South Africa’s military assistance, especially the free loan of military equipment and the air support in southern Angola.

In May 1968, the South African authorities established a permanent air force structure in Rundu in the Caprivi Strip – the 1st Air Component – in order to coordinate air support for both the Portuguese military in south-eastern Angola and the South African police in South West Africa. The Caprivi Strip was part of the territory of South West Africa. The air force structure in Rundu was located
directly opposite the village of Calai in Angola and the entire structure fell under the control of General CA Fraser. A Joint Air Support Centre was also established in Cuito Cuanavale in Angola’s Cuando Cubango district. It was in this centre that South African aircraft and the respective pilots and aircraft maintenance technicians as well as communications personnel could be stationed temporarily when they provided assistance to the Portuguese military forces in south-eastern Angola.

General Fraser and the Commander-in-Chief of the Portuguese Armed Forces in Angola, General João de Almeida Viana, held a meeting in Luanda on 3 June 1968 to discuss the implementation and coordination of South Africa’s air support operations in south-eastern Angola. General Fraser and General Viana agreed that a Portuguese Air Force liaison officer would be deployed in the South African air force base in Rundu. The Portuguese liaison officer in Rundu would wear a South African uniform while the South African liaison officer who was deployed in the Joint Air Support Centre in Cuito Cuanavale had to wear a Portuguese uniform. Once again, the aim of these measures was to guarantee the secrecy of the operations that took place in south-eastern Angola. The two sides also agreed on the formula that would be used in terms of guaranteeing air support for the Portuguese security forces in Angola. The Joint Air Support Centre in Cuito Cuanavale in Angola would send the requests for air support to the Air Force Command in Rundu, which was in charge of determining the immediate operational priorities in south-eastern Angola and the Caprivi Strip as well as the Ovamboland region in South West Africa. On 14 June 1968, General Viana ordered the Portuguese military in south-eastern Angola to make available the necessary cartographic materials to the South African Air Force Command in Rundu in order to enable the South African pilots to perform their missions in Angolan territory.

What is clear from the available declassified documentation is that by mid-1968 senior military officers from both countries had agreed on a joint strategy to
tackle the threat posed by the infiltration of insurgents into south-eastern Angola and the Caprivi Strip in South West Africa. The two areas were contiguous with each other and with the exception of a border fence there was nothing else that could serve as a solid barrier between the two territories. This is why it was easy for the insurgents to move between the two territories with relative ease. What must be pointed out is that relations between the military establishments of the two countries were sufficiently close to allow both sides to identify common threats and to facilitate the implementation of specific tactics in order to achieve a common objective, which was to prevent the infiltration of insurgents in south-eastern Angola and northern Namibia. Although the initial intention might have been to provide the Portuguese security forces with some air support in south-eastern Angola this soon developed into joint operations since a number of South African military personnel – such as liaison officers and aircraft pilots as well as other air crew members and aircraft maintenance technicians – had to be stationed in Angolan territory or to be constantly moving between Angola and South West Africa. It should be emphasized that the implementation of such a joint strategy did not cover the whole of Angola but only the south-eastern portion of the territory.

The efforts to improve the above-mentioned strategy continued during 1968. In August 1968, a senior South African liaison officer was deployed in the town of Serpa Pinto in southern Angola in order to improve the coordination of air to ground operations. This referred to operations that involved Portuguese troops and South African aircraft with South African aircrews. The South African officer appointed for this task was Commandant B de W Roos and his area of responsibility included a large portion of the Cuando Cubango and the Moxico districts.

Commandant Roos reported directly to General Fraser and his mission was to monitor and evaluate the Portuguese war effort in south-eastern Angola as well as make recommendations of additional measures that could be implemented by
the South African authorities to help the Portuguese achieve their military aims. At the time, General Fraser explained that the Portuguese objective “in the area of our joint operations is to defeat the insurgents, win back the confidence of the people and establish good civilian administration”. General Frazer’s comment indicates that the South African military establishment identified itself with the Portuguese military objectives in Angola. Moreover, Commandant Roos was authorized to attend meetings where the Portuguese authorities discussed counter-subversion tactics and he was given control over a small South African intelligence and signals staff component to help him perform his duties in southern Angola. The fact that Commander Roos was authorized to attend restricted meetings where the Portuguese discussed their operational tactics also shows that the South African military authorities were now able to have a clearer picture of the Portuguese counter-insurgency efforts in Angola.

The use of South African helicopters during operations that entailed the participation of military personnel from both countries was confined to reconnaissance flights and the transportation of security and intelligence agents in charge of collecting information as well as the evacuation of Portuguese military personnel. The South African helicopters were also used to drop off Portuguese troops who were going to attack specific targets on the ground or to deploy these same troops in inaccessible areas that could not be reached by road. In addition, such operations also included the transportation of Portuguese troops who were deployed in certain areas to provide support to local military garrisons and to protect isolated villages under attack in south-eastern Angola. South African helicopters were also used in the pursuit of groups of insurgents who were fleeing from the security forces. Portuguese helicopters and aircraft provided protection for the South African aircraft operating in Angola. In addition, the Portuguese aircraft were responsible for directing fire onto the assigned targets that were being attacked.
According to the available declassified documentation, in July 1969 the South African Air Force used a few T-6 aircraft as well as one Alouette III helicopter armed with a canon to carry out protection duties and to direct fire onto the assigned targets.\textsuperscript{161} Despite the fact that this was not the primary mission of the South African helicopters and the South African aircraft in south-eastern Angola, it is clear that they could be used for offensive purposes if there was a need for more active involvement. From the perspective of the South African Defence Force, the operations in south-eastern Angola – which included the participation of both Portuguese and South African military personnel – were beneficial in several ways. These operations served not only to disrupt SWAPO’S efforts to infiltrate South West Africa but they also enabled a large number of South African pilots and air crews to gain valuable combat experience in a real operational theatre.\textsuperscript{162} Between 1968 and early 1970 at least 80 South African pilots had participated in operations inside Angola.\textsuperscript{163} The pilots worked in a rotation system. Although the number of South African pilots and air crews who participated in these operations was not huge, they facilitated the acquisition of tactical knowledge of targets on the ground, which was quite useful from a South African perspective when the South African Defence Force became directly involved in the Angolan conflict from the mid-1970s onwards.

The use of South African aircraft and South African military personnel also benefited the Portuguese counter-insurgency effort in southern Angola. In 1968, most of the operations that included the participation of both South African and Portuguese military personnel took place in areas surrounding Cuito Cuanavale, Mavinga, Neriquinha, Mucusso, Luenge and Luiana in Angola’s Cuango Cubango district.\textsuperscript{164} In the Moxico district the focus of these operations was the areas surrounding the towns of Gago Coutinho and Ninda. In 1969, the operations that included the participation of military personnel from both countries were further expanded into the Moxico district, including the areas located around Muie, Cangamba and Alto Cuito. In addition, a few South African aircraft also began to be used near the town of Luso and the Cazombo salient,
which were part of the Moxico district but much further up north than what had been initially agreed to between the two sides.\textsuperscript{165} The available declassified documentation does not really provide any details about these operations and why South African aircraft were used outside the agreed area of operations. It is not entirely clear from the available documentation whether these were just a few isolated incidents or whether they took place more regularly from 1969.

What is clear is that from 1968, senior Portuguese military officers appeared to be more willing to accept South African support in southern Angola. In November 1968, the General Chief of Staff of the Portuguese Armed Forces, General Venâncio Augusto Deslandes, instructed the Portuguese security forces in Angola to allow the South African police to conduct rapid ‘hot pursuit’ operations in Angolan territory if there was a need to stop groups of insurgents that might threaten South West Africa.\textsuperscript{166} The only condition was that the South African police had to inform the Portuguese military authorities about its intention to pursue insurgents in Angolan territory.\textsuperscript{167} The instructions also mention that South African police units could not be stationed inside Angolan territory and they could only operate close to the border that separated the two territories.\textsuperscript{168} Such a posture highlights the fact that although the Portuguese authorities were prepared to allow some units of the South African police to conduct ‘hot pursuit’ operations in Angola they still had reservations about the presence of South African ground forces inside Angolan territory. Such reservations probably had more to do with concerns about the political implications that could arise if the public became aware that South African police personnel were operating in Angola.

Despite the fact that cooperation between the security forces of both countries disrupted the flow of insurgents into Angola’s Cuando Cubango district and the northern regions of South West Africa, it soon became clear that it would not be possible to stop the insurgents completely from moving around in such vast and sparsely inhabited areas. This was of particular concern to the South African
military establishment. In December 1968, General Fraser explained in a memorandum that SWAPO insurgents continued to cross over from Zambia into Angola’s Rivungo and Luiana regions. The insurgents then moved from south-eastern Angola into the Caprivi Strip in South West Africa. It was also possible that some SWAPO insurgents were moving directly from Zambia into South West Africa via the Katima Mulilo region before moving up into Angolan territory at a point located somewhere between the border villages of Bwabwata and Mucusso.

Furthermore, it was also clear that South Africa’s military establishment was concerned with how the Portuguese Armed Forces were handling the counter-insurgency in south-eastern Angola. General Frazer explained that while the Portuguese had deployed 22 battalions in Northern Angola and six battalions in Eastern Angola, they had deployed only one battalion in south-eastern Angola. This indicated that the Portuguese did not view the insurgent threat in south-eastern Angola in the same way as the South Africans in South West Africa. He added the following: “from a South African standpoint the fact that the insurgents are being granted unhindered opportunity to establish sanctuaries and lines of communication within a few days march from our very borders can only be regarded as one fraught with danger to us”. It is clear that General Frazer believed the Portuguese security forces were not doing enough to prevent SWAPO infiltration in Angolan territory. Although he gave no indication that such a perception would affect relations between the two sides, it certainly created additional anxiety on the South African side. It should be pointed out, however, that the main reason why the Portuguese gave less attention to the infiltration of insurgents in south-eastern Angola was the fact that they had overextended their military capacity in Angola, Mozambique and Guinea Bissau. Furthermore, the protection of northern Angola was viewed as a priority because that is where most of Angola’s largest towns – including the territory’s capital – were located. There was also a psychological dimension that helps to explain why the Portuguese preferred to deploy the majority of their ground forces in northern
Angola. The insurgency that threatened Portuguese rule in Angola started in the territory’s northern districts. As a result, Portuguese military strategists always viewed the country’s northern districts with particular concern.

General Frazer’s comments indicate that despite the secret working relationship that developed between the military establishments of both countries there was some tension about what would be the most appropriate strategy to deal with security threats. The main source of concern for South Africa’s military establishment was the infiltration of SWAPO insurgents into northern South West Africa via south-eastern Angola. In the meantime, although the Portuguese were grateful for South Africa’s support they had to deal with several immediate security threats and they could not focus all their energy in one particular area – in this case south-eastern Angola – when they had to deal with many other threats in the three operational theatres.
d) Portuguese disappointment with South Africa’s secret loan concession

The mid-1960s was the period when South African government officials began to have a better grasp of the challenges that the Portuguese faced in terms of the management of their African possessions. The defeat of the insurgents would be possible only if the Portuguese improved the efficiency of their administrative apparatus and if they managed to promote overall development in their territories. The reality was that vast areas of Angola and Mozambique – the two Portuguese-controlled territories that were geographically close to South Africa – were basically underdeveloped with limited infrastructure. Such underdevelopment presented opportunities for South African entrepreneurs who might be interested in investing in the development of basic infrastructure in the Portuguese territories. In July 1967, the new South African Consul General in Luanda, AF Drake, said that the Portuguese authorities in Angola believed in the necessity of building a proper road network in Angola’s southern and eastern regions. The existence of such a road network could help reduce the incursions of insurgents who came from Zambian territory. The information was disclosed to the South African Consul General during a meeting with Angola’s Governor General, Augusto de Rebocho Vaz.

South African businessmen and senior Portuguese officials had already discussed the issue of possible South African participation in building projects in Angola. In May 1967, Angola’s Governor General, Augusto de Rebocho Vaz, held talks with the Managing Director of a South African based construction company, Mr A de V Jordaan. The talks were held in Luanda and they focused on the construction of roads as well as medium- and low-income housing in Angola. During the talks, the Governor General and A de V Jordaan discussed the possibility of acquiring just over R60 million worth of financial loans in South Africa for these same projects. In addition, the Governor General mentioned the urgent need to build a road linking Luanda and South West Africa. It is clear that Angola’s Governor General viewed such a road as one way of
strengthening the links between the two territories. However, some senior South African military officers viewed the construction of a road linking Luanda with South West Africa with some ambiguity. In November 1967, the Commandant General of the South African Defence Force, General RC Hiemstra, expressed doubt about the construction of such a road. According to General Hiemstra, he was generally in favour of projects that could boost economic development in both Angola and Mozambique. However, from a military perspective there was the possibility that South Africa’s enemies could in future use such a road to their own benefit. This was in case the situation in Angola deteriorated further. General Hiemstra’s views indicate that during the mid-1960s South Africa’s top military leadership did not have complete confidence in Portugal’s ability to win the war in Angola and Mozambique in the long term.

Senior Portuguese officials, however, continued to express an interest in the acquisition of South African investment capital for development projects in Angola. It should be pointed out that this was also the period when the two countries were developing stronger ties in the defence and security spheres. The acquisition of any substantial investment in the development of basic infrastructures was viewed as something positive that could contribute to the defeat of the insurgency in Angola. In April 1968, Angola’s Governor General told General Fraser that there was a need to raise a R70 million loan to build roads and housing units for Angola’s black population. General Fraser told the Governor General that the request would have to be made at senior government level. This indicates that South Africa’s military establishment did not always have the power to influence ongoing events but was rather dependent on the willingness of its political masters to approve such requests. In fact, the Portuguese soon became aware that it would not be easy to obtain South African investment capital.

In June 1968 Consul General Drake revealed that Angola’s Governor General had been unsuccessful in his one-year effort to secure South African loans for
road construction and low cost housing projects in Angola\textsuperscript{184}. During that period, General Frazer had asked a prominent South African industrialist, Dr Anton Rupert, to investigate the possibility of a R70 million loan for Angola\textsuperscript{185}. However, after a visit to Germany, Switzerland and the United States of America, Dr Rupert reached the conclusion that it would not be possible to raise the loan in the private sector either in the US or Europe or even in South Africa\textsuperscript{186}. This indicates that foreign investors and private banking institutions were not interested in providing funds for building projects in a Portuguese-controlled territory in Africa amid a full-scale insurgency.

However, the Portuguese received some support from the South African authorities. This came in the form of a small financial loan and some aid for villagers in south-eastern Angola. In December 1968, PW Botha wrote to the new Portuguese Minister of Defence in Lisbon, Horácio José de Sá Viana Rebelo, to inform him that South Africa was prepared to grant specialized equipment to build roads in Angola’s Cuando Cubango district\textsuperscript{187}. The equipment would be granted “on a financial loan basis” and it would cost R1,5 million\textsuperscript{188}. In addition, PW Botha also offered a food and medicine package worth R40 000 for needy villagers in south-eastern Angola\textsuperscript{189}. In exchange, PW Botha asked the Portuguese Minister of Defence to deploy an additional infantry battalion permanently in south-eastern Angola\textsuperscript{190}. This indicates that the small financial loan and the aid for the needy villagers would be granted as long as the Portuguese aligned themselves with the South African government’s perceptions regarding the best way to deal with the insurgency in south-eastern Angola. It is clear, however, that the small loan granted by PW Botha did not meet the expectations of the Portuguese towards development objectives. Moreover, the loan would apply to road construction equipment that was going to be used in only one part of the Angolan territory.

The issue of a substantial financial loan for the Portuguese authorities continued to dominate the dialogue between Portugal and South Africa in the next five
months. The Portuguese continued to request a substantial financial loan from South Africa. In December 1968, Angola’s Governor General told the South African Consul General in Luanda that the Portuguese Minister of Defence in Lisbon was preparing an overall request for assistance that would be delivered to the South African government. According to Consul General Drake, this package would comprise military and civil components and it would replace the piecemeal presentation of requests that had hitherto “characterized the Portuguese approach”. This effectively meant that senior Portuguese cabinet members were now responsible for preparing and presenting the financial loan request to the South African government. The fact that they went ahead with the request indicates that they felt confident enough to believe that the South African authorities were prepared to consider granting such a loan. The Ministers of Defence of both countries first discussed the issue of additional South African assistance for Portugal’s military efforts in Angola and Mozambique in February 1969, when Viana Rebelo visited Cape Town in that same month.

The negotiations referring to South African financial assistance continued when PW Botha visited Lisbon in March 1969. During the meeting in the Fort of São Julião da Barra on the outskirts of Lisbon on 24 March 1969, PW Botha indicated that his government was prepared to grant a loan to Portugal in the near future. This was after he had analyzed the Portuguese request for financial and material aid, which he estimated to be around R130 million. This was the first time that the South African government had considered the possibility of granting such a large loan to the Portuguese. However, PW Botha made it clear that in order to avoid parliamentary scrutiny the total amount of the loan could not exceed R50 million. During the meeting, the two sides agreed that the South African loan for military purposes in the Portuguese controlled territories in Africa would have to remain secret. PW Botha also indicated that South Africa was prepared to grant military equipment to the Portuguese Armed Forces for free. This equipment was worth R11 million. An additional R12.6 million worth of
equipment could also be made available but it would have to be paid back in full. This amount would have to be subtracted from the R50 million.

The next round of negotiations took place in Pretoria in May 1969. The two delegations comprised senior military personnel from both sides. General Hiemstra and General Frazer headed the South African delegation. The Portuguese Deputy Secretary for National Defence, General Paiva Brandão, was in charge of the Portuguese delegation. During the meeting, the Portuguese were informed that the R50 million had been reduced to R25 million. This was because the South African government felt that it had already granted substantial concessions to the Portuguese in respect of the Cabora Bassa project in Mozambique. This decision caused some consternation among the members of the Portuguese delegation. General Brandão expressed his profound disappointment at the South African government’s decision to cut the proposed loan by half. The estimated total amount mentioned in the initial Portuguese request for financial and material aid was around R130 million. This represented Portugal’s most urgent needs in the defence sector. General Brandão also indicated that the military equipment that had been offered by PW Botha free of charge – which was worth R11 million – was mostly old equipment that was considered to be obsolete. It is clear that General Brandão did not view South Africa’s proposal as a reasonable offer. The Portuguese military delegation held talks with PW Botha on the 9 May 1969 before leaving South Africa. Botha told the Portuguese delegation that it had never been cast in stone that South Africa’s loan would be R50 million but rather that it could not exceed R50 million in order to avoid parliamentary scrutiny.

The tone of the above-mentioned negotiations indicates that the two sides had different expectations about the benefits that could be obtained from the relationship that had been developing between the two countries during the 1960s. The two countries understood that there was an urgent need to fight what they regarded as common security threats. However, it also appears that they
could not agree on the financing of such a strategy, which would facilitate Portuguese efforts to contain the insurgencies in the Portuguese-controlled territories on the African continent. Such a strategy was dependent on sustained financial capacity that eluded the much pressed Portuguese authorities. The disappointment expressed by the Portuguese delegation during these negotiations highlights the fact that the Portuguese authorities expected more from the South African government. Botha’s statement that the loan could not exceed R50 million in order to avoid parliamentary scrutiny highlights the fact that the secret relationship between the military establishments of both countries created obstacles that might have been removed if such a relationship had developed in a more transparent and open manner.

Despite their differences, the two sides continued to negotiate the proposed financial loan. In a letter to his Portuguese counterpart, Botha explained South Africa’s position. The South African government had agreed to grant the R25 million to the Portuguese authorities subject to certain conditions. These conditions would be that the loan would exclude obsolete military equipment to the value of R8.5 million, which would be granted free of charge. However, it would include new military equipment from the South African Defence Force’s existing stocks to the value of R6.6 million. This last amount would be subtracted from the R25 million, which would leave a total amount of R18.4 million that would be payable in gold. Moreover, the R25 million would have to be repaid over a 20-year period. Repayments would commence five years after the loan was drawn. The South African authorities would charge an annual interest fee of 4%. Botha confirmed that South Africa would grant two helicopters to the Portuguese military forces in Angola, which would serve to replace two helicopters that had been lost in Angola. Botha emphasized that no more helicopters would be made available to the Portuguese military forces in future. South Africa was prepared to lend several Impala aircraft, which could be flown by Portuguese pilots. The Portuguese pilots would have to be trained
in South Africa. 221 This followed an earlier Portuguese request for six Impala aircraft on a loan basis. 222

In a letter to his South African counterpart on the 27 May 1969, the Portuguese Minister of Defence accepted the conditions put forward by PW Botha. 223 However, General Viana Rebelo indicated that he had always understood that South Africa’s response to the Portuguese request for assistance would translate itself into the cession of equipment worth R11 million plus the R50 million loan package, which would be payable in gold. 224 Part of this loan could be used to acquire military equipment. 225 General Rebelo told PW Botha that he “became surprised with the actual resolution of your Cabinet to allow only 50% of that loan because of the expenses with the Cabora Bassa project”. 226 He requested PW Botha to make some changes to the South African proposal for material and financial assistance to the Portuguese authorities. Repayment should commence only at the end of the sixth year after the date on which the loan was drawn. 227 In addition, the 4% interest rate should be reduced to 3% per annum. 228 In a letter of 18 June 1969, PW Botha agreed to these amendments. 229 These concessions were more favourable to the Portuguese. However, the Portuguese military leadership was clearly disappointed with the fact that it had not obtained from South Africa the total requested loan to be used in the acquisition of much needed military equipment. The Portuguese military establishment interpreted the South African aid – whether in the form of a secret financial loan or the free loan of military equipment – as insufficient to meet some of the most pressing operational needs.

The argument presented by the South African authorities who said the loan had been cut in half – from the initial R50 million to R25 million – because the South African government had already granted substantial concessions to the Portuguese in respect of the Cabora Bassa project in Mozambique did not really impress or convince the Portuguese officials who negotiated the acquisition of the loan. The Portuguese authorities viewed the Cabora Bassa project as an
enterprise that would provide benefits for both Mozambique and South Africa. Senior Portuguese and South African officials first discussed the Cabora Bassa project at the end of 1965. The discussion took place in Lourenço Marques during a meeting between the Chairman of South Africa's Industrial Development Corporation, Dr HJ van Eck, and the Portuguese Overseas Minister, Silva Cunha, who was in Mozambique at the time.230

According to Cunha, the South African government believed that there could be a shortage of electrical power in South Africa in future since the country had insufficient rivers to generate large hydro-electrical schemes. A large portion of South Africa’s electricity was produced in thermal power stations that used coal as a source of energy. However, coal deposits were considered to be a non-renewable mineral resource that constituted a wasting asset. As a result, the South African government requested advice from Dr Van Eck on the possibility of South Africa benefiting from a major hydro-electrical project at Cabora Bassa, in Mozambique’s Tete Province. If that was the case, South Africa would be prepared to be one of the major consumers of the electricity generated by such a project.231 As a result, from its inception, the Portuguese had always understood that one of the reasons for the construction of the Cabora Bassa dam was that South Africa would be prepared to buy the electricity generated at the dam.

At the end of March 1967, a senior team from South Africa’s Electricity Supply Commission, Escom, visited Lisbon to discuss the acquisition of electricity produced in Cabora Bassa.232 The result of the Lisbon talks was that Escom agreed in principle to buy electricity produced in Cabora Bassa.233 The talks between the two sides continued in July 1967 when the Director of Economic Affairs of the Portuguese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dr Calvert de Magalhães, visited South Africa to finalize the agreement with Escom and the South African government.234 In July 1968, the Portuguese government announced that the Zambeze Consórcio Hidro-Eléctrico (Zamco) had won the tender for the construction of the hydro-electrical project in Mozambique’s Tete Province.235
The consortium – which had been put together by South Africa’s Anglo American Corporation – would include German, French and South African companies. In September 1969, the Portuguese and the South African governments as well as the Chairman of the Zamco consortium, ETS Brown, ratified the contract to build the Cabora Bassa hydro-electrical scheme. The contract comprised four agreements – signed in Lisbon by the relevant parties on 19 September 1969 – which entailed the following:

i) An agreement between the South African and Portuguese governments;
ii) An electricity supply agreement between Portugal and Escom;
iii) An agreement between the successful party that won the tender to build the hydro-electrical scheme – the Zamco consortium – and the Portuguese government;
iv) An agreement between the above-mentioned consortium and Escom.

Since the initial income accrued as a result of the sale of electricity would not be sufficient to cover costs, South Africa agreed “to advance to the Portuguese government the annual deficits during the first four years”. The total amount disbursed by the South African government would comprise a maximum of R 35-million. Portugal agreed to be responsible for all the credit facilities used to finance the construction of the hydro-electrical scheme. The Portuguese did not expect to see any profits from the project for at least 18 and a half years since they would have to repay loans to several countries. In the meantime, Zamco took over the responsibility of “raising on behalf of the Portuguese government the finance for the capital costs of the works through short, medium and long term borrowings, through export credit facilities and from private banking sources, three of them in South Africa”.

In September 1969 the Financial Mail indicated that the total cost of the project would be R352 million. Most of the credit financing would come from France and Germany via the use of export credit. The remaining credit would come
from Portuguese banks and South Africa. South African financial support for the project would comprise a R20 million loan from the Industrial Development Corporation – which would be repayable in 13 and a half years from the completion date of phase one of the project – as well as the R35 million provided by the South African government during the initial four-year period. The agreements signed between the Portuguese and South African authorities – including the agreement that was signed by the Portuguese government and Escom – would remain valid for 35 years.

From a Portuguese perspective, the Cabora Bassa project was a major drain on Portugal’s finances since the country would have to pay costly loans to several countries for a prolonged period. However, the Portuguese authorities felt that Cabora Bassa was a crucial project that would serve to emphasize Portugal’s commitment to the development of its African territories. The project was also an affirmation of Portugal’s determination to maintain its presence in Africa. In addition, the Portuguese also felt that this was a project that would benefit South Africa since it would provide an alternative source of energy in future when South Africa faced a shortage of electrical power. As a result, the Portuguese viewed the South African government’s argument that it could not provide the R50 million loan for military purposes because of the contribution that it had already made to the Cabora Bassa project as an unreasonable excuse. The arguments surrounding the issue of the loan for military purposes indicates that the two sides disagreed on substantial matters and they did not have a joint posture regarding the best way to deal with the most immediate security threats in the region. While the South Africans did not want to grant the initial loan requested by the Portuguese because they felt they were doing enough to support Portugal, the Portuguese authorities – especially the Portuguese military establishment – felt that their request was not unreasonable and that South Africa could provide additional assistance in the form of a larger loan.
e) Portuguese reaction to South African overt aid

As the insurgency warfare in Angola and Mozambique increased in intensity from the mid-1960s onwards, the South African public became more aware of the conflict in the two Portuguese controlled territories. In June 1967, The Star newspaper mentioned that more than 5 000 people had already died in the Mozambican operations alone. The newspaper reported that the Portuguese security forces had already suffered 378 fatalities while 3 500 troops had been injured. In the meantime, the insurgents had suffered 4 500 fatalities while many additional thousands had been wounded. An unknown number of civilians had also been killed in crossfire between the two sides.

The arduous counter-insurgency campaign that the Portuguese were forced to conduct in Mozambique soon attracted the attention of individual South Africans who wanted to alleviate the difficulties faced by the Portuguese forces in that territory. In September 1967, a wine producer in the Cape region, Bernard Podlashuk, set up the Mozambique Fighting Soldiers’ Comfort Fund. According to Podlashuk, he frequently visited Mozambique and was fully aware of the impact of the insurgency campaign in that territory. He indicated that he had received support from South African and Portuguese officials to go ahead with his project. The aim was to “make a goodwill gesture by providing those small comforts to alleviate the fighting soldiers’ endurance of terrible guerrilla warfare, which is being waged in the unbearable heat of swampy, tropical, mosquito-ridden country jungles with death lurking behind every bush”. These small comforts would comprise meat, fruit, cheese, cigarettes and tinned food which the soldiers could not afford to buy.

Two months after Podlashuk explained his intentions with the Fund, the Administrator of the Natal Province, TJA Gerdener, praised the counter-insurgency efforts of the Portuguese security forces in both Angola and Mozambique. He explained that “the pressure on Portugal could best be
gauged when it was realized that a relatively poor country had to keep five soldiers in the field for every one soldier in the whole of the South African permanent force". Gerdener made these statements during a meeting to establish the Fund in Durban in the Natal Province.

In December 1967, at least fifteen South African aircraft took more than 3,500 Christmas parcels to Portuguese soldiers who had been deployed in northern Mozambique. The private airlift was organized by a Natal resident, Pam Hanssen. The delivery of aid to the Portuguese soldiers in Mozambique continued throughout 1968. Moreover, in July 1968, surgical and air conditioning equipment was sent to Mozambique to help equip four military hospitals in Lourenço Marques, Nampula, Porto Amélia and Niassa. The Fund – which was by then known as the Mozambique Soldiers’ Comfort Fund – began to collect money to buy air ambulances for the Portuguese troops in Mozambique. The air ambulances were capable of carrying four stretchers at any one time as well as landing or taking off in short aircraft runways. Two air ambulances were handed over to the Portuguese military authorities in Lourenço Marques at the end of January 1969. The aircraft had the necessary equipment to deal with medical emergencies.

Although most of the efforts that were carried out by individual South African citizens who wanted to help Portuguese soldiers in Mozambique were generally welcomed there was also a certain degree of concern on the part of the Portuguese authorities. Such concern was caused by the fact that South African solidarity with Portuguese war aims in Mozambique and Angola had become part of the public domain. This became clear at the end of September 1968 when at least 25 specialist surgeons from Johannesburg indicated that they were willing to fly to Mozambique to help treat wounded soldiers free of charge. The person behind the scheme was a Johannesburg resident, Dr Hjalmar Reitz, who had been shocked to see the type of combat injuries inflicted on Portuguese soldiers in Mozambique. According to Dr Reitz, the Portuguese military had only
150 doctors to treat their soldiers in Mozambique.\textsuperscript{271} A high number of wounds inflicted on the Portuguese soldiers required complex surgical procedures. Moreover, there was only one physiotherapist at the Lourenço Marques military hospital responsible for attending to hundreds of injured soldiers.\textsuperscript{272} South African medical support would certainly help to alleviate the plight of many Portuguese soldiers who had been wounded during combat operations or as a result of landmines.

However, a document from the Portuguese Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Lisbon that was sent to the General Chief of Staff of the Portuguese Armed Forces dismissed any possibility of such collaboration ever taking place because of the political impact of such support.\textsuperscript{273} The document indicates that the countries that were openly hostile to Portugal in the international arena would be able to exploit the issue of South African medical support. The implication was that the opponents of Portugal’s presence in Africa would be able to argue that the main objective of South Africa’s support was to help Portugal’s military campaigns. This was contrary to the secret nature of the relationship that existed between the two countries in the military and security spheres. The document explains that such countries were making use of every opportunity to highlight existing cooperation between Portugal and South Africa in various fields.\textsuperscript{274} As a result, it would not be in Portugal’s best interests to allow such cooperation. This was despite the fact that the Portuguese military authorities in Mozambique did not have any objections in respect of South African medical support.\textsuperscript{275}

It is clear that political considerations were considered to be more important than practical measures that could be useful in helping soldiers who had been wounded in the battlefield. It also indicates that the Portuguese authorities did not really want to make public any aspects of the relationship between the two countries, especially if it had to do with the war effort in any of the Portuguese-controlled territories in Africa. There were a few exceptions to this unwritten rule. During the first few months of 1969, the Portuguese Deputy Secretary for
National Defence, General João de Paiva de Faria Leite Brandão, made it clear that the Portuguese authorities were willing to accept helicopters and aircraft from South Africa for medical purposes.\textsuperscript{276} The Portuguese authorities were also willing to accept medical supplies and to send wounded troops to South Africa for medical treatment.\textsuperscript{277} The treatment of wounded troops in South Africa would only apply to certain cases and it would be done in a restricted manner.\textsuperscript{278} It is clear that the Portuguese military authorities were keen to accept South African support in the medical sphere as long as such support did not attract too much public attention. The only way to avoid public awareness of such support was to send fewer troops for medical treatment in South Africa. If such support was kept to a minimum, there would be few claims that South Africa was helping Portugal’s counter-insurgency effort in Africa.

In addition to concerns about the possible international political impact of South African overt support, the Portuguese authorities were also not happy with how the war effort in Mozambique was being portrayed in South Africa. In February 1969, the Portuguese Consul in Durban, Guilherme Manuel de Sousa Girão, told the Portuguese Minister of Foreign Affairs that South Africans did not really understand Portugal’s problems on the African continent.\textsuperscript{279} In a letter to the Foreign Affairs Minister, Girão indicated that South Africans only had a theoretical understanding of the conflict that was taking place in Mozambique.\textsuperscript{280} He explained that part of the existing misunderstandings was due to poor communication between the two sides.\textsuperscript{281}

In March the same year, Girão again criticized the way the Portuguese war effort in Mozambique was being portrayed in South Africa. He explicitly mentioned the words of the leading member of the Mozambique Soldiers’ Comfort Fund in Natal, Pam Hanssen, who described Portuguese field hospitals in the operational area as ‘primitive’.\textsuperscript{282} He indicated that although such statements were made in good faith – as part of the campaign to obtain additional support for the Fund – they merely reflected what he called a ‘negative exaggeration’ of the situation.\textsuperscript{283}
Moreover, Girão explained that although there were a number of spontaneous initiatives in South Africa in support of the Portuguese soldiers, the objective of such initiatives was not always very clear. This was worsened by the fact that the Portuguese authorities in Mozambique did not always explain in a clear manner the real needs of the soldiers. Despite his objections, Girão fully agreed with Pam Hanssen on the need for additional helicopters in Mozambique. The helicopters were needed to help in the evacuation of wounded soldiers at the battlefront. After a visit to Mozambique in January 1969, Hanssen indicated that it would be difficult to acquire helicopters via the Fund since they were very expensive. In addition, it was necessary to ask the South African government for permission to send the helicopters to Mozambique. Once again, there were political implications to the distribution of overt aid to the Portuguese soldiers in Mozambique.

Nevertheless, in November 1969 – despite existing obstacles – the President of the Fund, Hanssen, launched a new campaign in South Africa to equip four ambulance helicopters for the Portuguese military in Mozambique. It was agreed that the Portuguese Red Cross would buy the helicopters while the South African Mozambique Soldiers’ Comfort Fund would acquire the necessary medical equipment. According to Hanssen, the use of air ambulances or ambulance helicopters was a crucial factor in the operational theatre since battlefield wounds had to be treated as soon as possible. Moreover, hospital facilities did not exist in most remote areas where the war was taking place.

The issue of overt South African aid to Portugal’s military forces in Angola and Mozambique caused some disagreement within Portuguese ranks. Consul Girão believed that any support initiatives on the part of individual South Africans were generally valid and well intentioned. He believed, however, that such initiatives should be properly coordinated in order to ensure that the real needs of the Portuguese military authorities in Mozambique – especially in the medical field – were taken into account. The aim was to avoid the duplication of efforts as
well as excessive exaggeration and sensationalist news media coverage of the situation on the ground. Such misinterpretation could eventually lead to what he called a “loss of prestige” on the part of the Portuguese authorities. Girão’s comments indicate that the Portuguese were sensitive to what they perceived to be negative reporting on the part of the South African news media.

In the meantime, the Portuguese Consul in Windhoek, Queirós de Barros, believed that the Portuguese authorities should make it clear that the Portuguese soldiers in Angola did not need any support from the public in South West Africa – a territory under South African control. He made his views known to the Portuguese Minister of Foreign Affairs in Lisbon after the South West Women’s Agricultural Association started a petition to send donations – including foodstuffs – to the Portuguese soldiers in Angola. The petition started in the town of Otjiwarongo and the aim was to thank the Portuguese soldiers for their contribution to the defence of the territory under South African control. The Consul indicated that it should be made clear to the public in South West Africa that the soldiers’ basic needs were the responsibility of the Portuguese authorities. Barros’ rejection of the aid that was being collected in South West Africa indicates that some Portuguese officials were not supportive of what they believed to be irrelevant support on the part of individual organizations in a neighbouring territory.

The Portuguese Consul in Windhoek was probably aware of the magnitude of the conflict in Angola and the fact that a few well-intentioned donations would not really make much of a difference in the operational theatre. Moreover, it soon became clear that many of the gifts that were sent to the soldiers had little practical use. In April 1970, The Natal Mercury newspaper revealed that many gifts sent to Portuguese soldiers in Mozambique were simply stored away. This was because the soldiers – who were engaged in a major counter-insurgency campaign – did not really make use of the gifts that were being collected in South Africa. The gifts included cinema projectors and musical
instruments, which were not really used by the soldiers who did not have enough
time to enjoy such luxuries.303 These gifts seemed to indicate that there was little
correlation between the needs of the soldiers in the operational theatre and the
gifts that were being collected in South Africa for the Portuguese military
personnel in Mozambique.

Despite existing drawbacks, the Mozambique Soldiers’ Comfort Fund played a
role in the dissemination of information about the difficult nature of the conflict
north of South Africa’s borders. In March 1969, Pam Hanssen told members of
the National Council for Women in Durban that very few South Africans had any
real appreciation of the extent of the war in Mozambique.304 She said there were
already between eight thousand and ten thousand insurgents in Mozambique
and many thousands more were being trained in Tanzania.305 She explained that
the Portuguese soldiers were very young and they were fighting a counter-
insurgency campaign in very difficult conditions, which included walking 20 to 30
miles per day while carrying their own water supplies under intense heat.306 The
dissemination of information also took place in other ways. At the beginning of
1969, the Fund together with the Portuguese Consulate in Durban helped to
organize the distribution of short films about Portugal’s military effort in Africa.307
The films focused on military operations and Portuguese military units operating
in Mozambique and Guinea Bissau.308 The films were shown in a number of local
cinemas in the Natal region.309 Consul Girão believed the films would help to
raise awareness about Portugal’s military campaigns in Africa.310 The films also
served to promote the collection of funds for the Mozambique Soldiers’ Comfort
Fund, which he viewed as a positive measure.311 The exhibition of films also
helped to give a Portuguese perspective of Portugal’s military effort in Africa.

The ongoing flow of donations led the Portuguese authorities to consider the
establishment of a permanent distribution network that would be able to deliver
the donated items to the Portuguese soldiers in Mozambique.312 As a result, in
December 1969, the military Commander in charge of Mozambique’s air space,
General Manuel Simão Portugal, agreed to send one aircraft to South Africa every three months in order to pick up the items donated by South Africans. A number of donated items also began to be sent to Portuguese soldiers in Angola and Guinea Bissau. The donations included artificial legs and disposable syringes as well as water filters and laboratory equipment. Additional medical equipment was sent to Mozambique in April 1972 and Angola in June the same year. At the beginning of 1972, a fully equipped air ambulance was given to the Portuguese Armed Forces in Mozambique. South African donations for the Portuguese troops continued to take place throughout the early 1970s. In 1973, the donations included several ambulances for the Portuguese troops in Angola and Mozambique.

Although the aid that was collected in South Africa – especially ambulances and medical aid – did provide some relief to the Portuguese soldiers in Mozambique, Angola and Guinea Bissau it is clear that such aid was much too small to have any major impact in the course of the war. There were several issues that prevented such aid efforts from having a much greater impact. In the first place there was the problem of matching the real needs of the soldiers who were fighting a difficult counter-insurgency campaign in the bush with the items that were donated by civilians in South Africa. In the second place there was the issue of Portuguese sensitivity towards the portrayal of Portugal’s counter-insurgency efforts by the news media in South Africa. If excessive attention was given to the sufferings of the soldiers in the bush, it might create the impression that Portugal’s counter-insurgency effort in Africa was a hopeless venture. In the third place there was the issue of the political impact that such overt aid could have in the international arena. The secret nature of the relationship that developed between the military establishments of both countries during the mid-1960s did not really favour a more open approach to the acquisition of aid in South Africa.
Conclusion

The Portuguese authorities had to face a difficult period from 1965 until 1970 as a result of the arduous counter-insurgency campaigns that were taking place in three territories on the African continent, which effectively meant that Portugal was now fighting a war on three different fronts. During this period, it became clear that the Portuguese Armed Forces had overextended their capacity to deal with security threats that could not possibly be contained in the short term. The huge size of the territories that had to be defended placed an increasingly heavier burden on the shoulders of the Portuguese Armed Forces, which had to deal with many logistical problems. It was during this period that South African officials became acutely aware of the logistical problems affecting the Portuguese Armed Forces. A number of comments made by South African diplomats during the mid-1960s – such as the comments made by South Africa’s Consul General in Luanda and the South African Ambassador in Lisbon – indicate that there was a certain degree of skepticism on the South African side regarding Portugal’s ability to contain the ongoing insurgencies. The South African government also became increasingly concerned with the growing confidence of African nationalist groups in the Portuguese-controlled territories as well as the expanding SWAPO insurgency in northern South West Africa. As a result, the military establishments of both countries began to interact more closely in order to deal with what they regarded as common security threats. The nature of this relationship was based on secrecy since both sides feared the political implications of a more open and public interaction.

The existing security concerns forced the military establishments of both countries to embark gradually on a joint effort to deal with the insurgents operating in south-eastern Angola and northern South West Africa. On the South African side, this joint effort comprised the provision of military aircraft and pilots as well as air crews and the respective technical personnel. Despite such cooperation, the South African authorities were not happy with what they
perceived to be a lack of commitment on the part of the Portuguese with regard to the protection of south-eastern Angola – a vast area that was being used by SWAPO insurgents to infiltrate South West Africa. In the meantime, the Portuguese military had its own reasons for placing most of its material and human resources in northern and eastern Angola. Although the Portuguese authorities allowed a few units of the South African police to carry out rapid ‘hot pursuit’ operations inside Angolan territory – as long as these operations were carried out near the Angolan-South West African border – they never considered the possibility of requesting the permanent presence of South African ground forces in south-eastern Angola. The fact that they never made such a request indicates that they did not want to allow a larger South African involvement in their counter-insurgency campaign in addition to the air support operations in south-eastern Angola.

On the South African side, the comments made by General RC Hiemstra indicate that senior South African military officers were not completely confident that the Portuguese would have the capacity to defeat the insurgents in the long term. Moreover, the fact that the South African government did not grant the initial amount of the financial loan that had been requested by the Portuguese military in order to alleviate Portugal’s needs in the military sphere indicates that there were major differences between the two sides regarding the practical approach on how to defeat the insurgents in the Portuguese-controlled territories. The fact that the South African government did not grant the initial amount that had been requested by the Portuguese military establishment – which expressed its disappointment via General Brandão – suggests that the two countries did not always agree on substantial issues. The final section of this chapter also points to a certain degree of ambiguity on the part of Portuguese officials regarding the collection of overt aid in South Africa for the Portuguese soldiers in Angola and Mozambique. Although some aid was welcomed – such as medical equipment and air ambulances – Portuguese officialdom did not always regard overt aid as the best way to support the Portuguese counter-insurgency efforts in Angola and
Mozambique. In some instances, Portuguese officials believed such aid did not correlate with the needs of the soldiers at the battlefront. In addition, overt aid attracted too much attention from the news media. Excessive public attention was not in line with the usual practice of secrecy that became the hallmark of the relationship between the military establishments of both countries over a certain period of time.

This chapter highlights the fact that both sides disagreed on substantial issues, which caused a certain level of tension. There was both a convergence of ideas regarding the need to attain certain common objectives – such as preventing the growth of insurgencies in the region and the need to disrupt the activities of African nationalist groups – and a divergence of views regarding the best way to attain these same objectives.

Endnotes


3 Ibid.

4 Ibid. The Portuguese authorities provided a lower estimate when it came to the actual number of trained FRELIMO insurgents.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid.


9 Ibid.


11 Ibid, p.189.

12 Ibid.


15 Ibid.

16 Ibid.


18 Ibid.

19 Ibid.

20 Ibid.

21 ADN, Secretariado Geral da Defesa Nacional, SGDN, File 2172.3.: Confidential letter General Gomes Araújo, 25.08.67.

22 ADN, SGDN, File 2172.3.: Secret letter Deputy Secretary for National Defence, Jacinto Neto Milheiriço, 09.03.68.

23 Ibid.


26 Ibid, p.108.

27 Ibid.

28 Ibid.


32 Ibid.


34 Ibid.

35 Ibid.

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid.

38 ADN, SGDN, File 2172.3.: Confidential letter Deputy Secretary for National Defence, Jacinto Neto Milheirício, 15.07.67.

39 Ibid.


42 Ibid.

43 Ibid.


45 Ibid. In 1968, the total number of Portuguese troops in Angola was 58.230.

46 Ibid. In 1968, the total number of Portuguese troops in Mozambique was 36.615.


48 Ibid.


51 Ibid.


53 Ibid.


55 Ibid.


57 Ibid.


61 Ibid.

62 NARS, BTS, Box 1/22/1, Vol 9, P.L. Angola: Political Situation and Developments, B.09.05.63 / E.12.10.67: Confidential letter Consul General, Luanda - Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Pretoria, 07 January 1965.

63 Ibid.

64 Ibid.

65 Ibid.

66 Ibid.

67 NARS, BTS, Box 1/22/1, Vol 9, P.L. Angola: Political Situation and Developments, B.09.05.63 / E.12.10.67: Secret letter Consul General, Luanda - Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Pretoria, 23 September 1965.
68 NARS, BTS, Box 1/22/1, Vol 9, P.L. Angola: Political Situation and Developments, B.09.05.63 / E.12.10.67: Confidential letter Consul General, Luanda - Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Pretoria, 15 February 1966.

69 Ibid.


71 Ibid.

72 Ibid.

73 NARS, BTS, Box 1/22/1, Vol 9, P.L. Angola: Political Situation and Developments, B.09.05.63 / E.12.10.67: Confidential report about Angola and Mozambique from Patrick Wall, written in May / June 1966, pp.1-6.

74 Ibid, p.6.

75 Ibid, p.4.

76 NARS, BTS, Box 1/14/20, Vol 1, Portugal: Annual Report, B.01.03.65 / E.30.08.67: Secret Annual Review by South African Ambassador, Lisbon - Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Pretoria, 30 August 1967, p.18.

77 Ibid.

78 Ibid.

79 NARS, BTS, Box 1/22/1, Vol 9, P.L. Angola: Political Situation and Developments, B.09.05.63 / E.12.10.67: Secret letter South African Consul General, Luanda - Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Pretoria, 29 September 1966.

80 Ibid.

81 NARS, BTS, Box 1/22/1, Vol 9, P.L. Angola: Political Situation and Developments, B.09.05.63 / E.12.10.67: Confidential letter South African Consul General, Luanda - Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Pretoria, 9 November 1966.

82 Ibid.

83 NARS, BTS, Box 1/22/1, Vol 9, P.L. Angola: Political Situation and Developments, B.09.05.63 / E.12.10.67: Secret letter South African Consul General, Luanda - Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Pretoria, 23 May 1967pp.1-2.

84 Ibid, p.2.

85 Ibid.
86 Ibid.


89 Ibid. The names of the South African military delegation are Brigadier Loots from Military Intelligence as well as Major Van Zyl and Major Friebus. The first names of the South African officers are not mentioned in the document. The visit took place from 21 to 27 of August 1966. The military installations that the South Africans visited were the Grafanil Military Camp and the Commando Instruction Centre in Luanda.

90 Ibid. The visit to the Grafanil Military Camp and the Commando Instruction Centre in Luanda took place on 26 August 1966.

91 The Cape Argus, 8 April, 1967.

92 The Star, 7 April, 1967.


94 Ibid, p.4.

95 Ibid.

96 Ibid. PW Botha mentions that the military officers should be ‘Generals’.

97 Ibid.

98 Ibid.

99 Ibid.

100 Ibid.

101 Ibid.

102 AHD, PAA 1132: Secret letter Director General of the Portuguese Ministry of Foreign Affairs - Portuguese Deputy Secretary of National Defence, 23 May 1967. The letter indicates that CA Fraser had the rank of ‘General’. However, a report in The Star dated the 18 December 1967 refers to CA Fraser as ‘Lieutenant General’.

103 Ibid.

104 Ibid.


106 Ibid.


109 AHD, PAA 58: Política Externa e Interna da África do Sul – Acção Desenvolvida pela SWAPO: PIDE document ‘Informação Nº 900 – SCCI (2)’, 24.09.66. The Portuguese military units that took part in this operation were the Sá da Bandeira Infantry Regiment and a Company of Rangers from Roçadas and Cuamato.

110 Ibid.


112 The Windhoek Advertiser, 3 October, 1966.


114 Ibid.

115 ADN, File 2732.2.: South African Defence Minister, Cape Town – Portuguese Defence Minister, Lisbon, 16 February 1968. The request for the Panhard armoured vehicles was included in the list that was compiled by the Chief of Staff of the Portuguese Army in September 1967.


118 Ibid.


120 Ibid.

121 ADN, File 2732.2.: Letter South African Defence Minister, Cape Town - Portuguese Defence Minister, Lisbon, 16 February 1968.

122 Ibid.

123 Ibid.


125 Ibid.


129 Ibid. The names of the PIDE and South African police officials who met in Pretoria on the 1 and 2 March 1968 are not mentioned.

130 ADN, File 2732.2.: Secret letter Portuguese Defence Minister, Lisbon – South African Defence Minister, Cape Town, 19 April 1968.

131 Ibid.

132 Ibid.

133 Ibid.


136 Ibid.

137 Ibid, p.2.


139 Ibid, p.3.

140 Ibid, p.5.


142 Ibid.


145 Ibid.

146 Ibid.

147 ADN, SGDN, File 4216.1.: Top-secret minutes of meeting that took place in the Saint Michael Fort, Luanda, 3 June 1968, pp.1-4.

148 Ibid, p.3.

149 Ibid.
It was also agreed that communications between the South African aircraft operating in Angola and the Portuguese units deployed close to the Zambian border would have to be carried out in the Portuguese language to avoid detection. The aim was to prevent the Zambians from becoming aware that South African aircraft with South African crews were being used in Angola in case such communications were intercepted. As a result, the South African aircraft would have to operate together with Portuguese aircraft or have a Portuguese officer on board who could speak both English and Portuguese.

ADN, File 5696.3.: Top-secret Directive from Commander-in-Chief of the Portuguese Armed Forces in Angola, 14 June 1968.


Ibid, p.2.

Ibid.

Ibid, p.2. The Command Directive does not specifically indicate how many South African intelligence and signals personnel were placed under Commandant Roos.


Ibid,p.5.


Ibid.

Ibid.


Ibid.


Ibid, p.5.

ADN, SGDN, File 4216.1.: Top-secret ‘verbal note’ from General Chief of Staff of the Portuguese Armed Forces, 27 November 1968.

Ibid.

Ibid.

NARS, BTS, Box 1/22/4, Vol 1. Angola: Technical Assistance Rendered by the Republic, B.17.10.61 / E.20.05.69: Top-secret ‘Memorandum: Non-combat Military Aid to the Portuguese in the Cuando Cubango District of Angola’, by Lieutenant General CA Fraser, 10 December 1968. The information mentioned in this paragraph is located Appendix A
that is part of this memorandum. The title of Appendix A is ‘Situation in Angola with special reference to South East Angola: Districts of Moxico and Cuando Cubango’.

170 Ibid, p.4 (of Appendix A).

171 Ibid.


173 Ibid.


175 Ibid.

176 NARS, BTS, Box 1/22/4, Vol 1. Angola: Technical Assistance Rendered by the Republic, B.17.10.61 / E.20.05.69: Confidential document ‘Housing Construction Project in Angola’, Pretoria, 18 May 1967. The name of the company was James Thompson (S.A.).

177 Ibid. The Governor General mentioned that R50 million would be used in road construction. The rest of the funds would be used in the construction of middle- and low-income housing as well as public buildings.

178 Ibid.

179 Ibid.


181 Ibid.


183 Ibid.


185 Ibid.

186 Ibid.


188 Ibid.
189 Ibid.
190 Ibid.
192 Ibid.
193 AHD, PAA 1137: Cooperação Militar: Secret letter Portuguese Defence Minister - South African Defence Minister. The letter does not have a specific date but it was written soon after Viana Rebelo held talks with PW Botha in Cape Town on the 11 February 1969.
195 AHD, PAA 1137: Cooperação Militar: Top-secret document ‘Relato das Conversações Havidas em S. Julião da Barra em 24Março69 entre suas Exas, os Ministros da Defesa da R.A.A. e de Portugal’ from Portugal’s General Secretariat for National Defence, pp.3-4. The negotiations were held on 24 March 1969. The South African delegation comprised PW Botha and General Hiemstra, as well as the South African Military Attaché in Lisbon, Colonel Roos. The Portuguese delegation comprised General Viana Rebelo and the Chief of Staff of the Portuguese Armed Forces, General Venâncio Deslandes, as well as two National Defence Deputy Secretaries, General Paiva Brandão, and Rear Admiral Sequeira Araújo.
196 Ibid, p.3.
197 Ibid, p.4.
198 Ibid.
199 Ibid. During the meeting, PW Botha indicated that it would be ‘highly inconvenient’ for both South Africa and Portugal to make this matter public. The Portuguese delegation did not reject his view.
200 Ibid, p.3.
201 Ibid.
202 Ibid.
203 Ibid.
204 AHD, PAA 1137: Cooperação Militar: Top-secret document from Portugal’s Secretariat for National Defence, which describes the meeting in Pretoria on the 8 May 1969.
205 Ibid.
206 Ibid.
207 Ibid.
Ibid. An example of this obsolete equipment was several Harvard aircraft offered by the South Africans. The exact number of aircraft is not mentioned in the available documentation.

AHD, PAA 1137: Cooperação Militar: Top-secret document from Portugal’s Secretariat for National Defence, which describes the meeting that took place between the Portuguese military delegation and PW Botha on the 9 May 1969.

Ibid.


Ibid. In his letter, PW Botha does not mention the exact number of Impala aircraft that would be made available to the Portuguese military forces.

Ibid.


Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid, p.2.

Ibid, p.3.


231 Ibid.

232 Financial Mail, 23 March, 1967. On the 30 March 1967, The Star newspaper reported that the South African Ambassador in Lisbon, AJF Viljoen, accompanied the Escom team during the negotiations. In the meantime, the Portuguese team comprised six officials from the Portuguese Overseas Ministry and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.


237 Financial Mail, 12 July, 1968. The South African companies that formed part of the Consortium were LTA and Vecor Projects Construction as well as Shaft Sinkers. The German companies were Brown Boveri and Hochtief as well as Siemens and Voith. The French companies were Alsthom and Compagnie des Constructions Internationales as well as Compagnie General D'Electricite, Compagnie Generalex D'Enterprises and Neyrpic. Additional details on the construction of the dam are mentioned in the Financial Mail of 26 July 1968. The newspaper indicates that LTA and Shaft Sinkers would be responsible for 34.5% of the civil work on the giant dam while other South African companies such as Vecor Projects Construction and Powerlines Pty would share with LTA 75% of the work on the 865-mile transmission line to the Apollo sub-station near Irene.

238 Financial Mail, 26 September, 1969. Zamco’s Chairman was the Executive Director of South Africa’s Anglo American Corporation. For more details on this matter see Financial Mail, 26 July 1968.


240 Ibid.

241 Ibid. On the South African side, such monetary advances would be fully recovered by the end of the 25th year.


243 Ibid.

244 Ibid.

245 Financial Mail, 26 September, 1969.

246 Ibid. The Financial Mail mentions that France and Germany would each provide a R63 million credit line.

247 Ibid.
The last section of Chapter 3 – Portuguese reaction to South African overt aid – provides a contrast with the previous sections of the same Chapter whose focus is mainly the secret relationship between the two countries. It highlights the fact that there was public awareness in South Africa about Portugal’s military effort in Africa. This section also serves to emphasize that the Portuguese authorities sometimes reacted in an ambiguous manner in respect of aid that was collected publicly in South Africa.

The Star, 05 June, 1967.

Ibid. The newspaper mentions that 212 soldiers had been killed in action while 166 had died as a result of disease or accidents.

The Star, 14 September, 1967.


Ibid. In his undated letter, Bernard Podlashuk, indicates that he spoke with the Portuguese Ambassador in South Africa, José de Mendes Rosa, and the South African Consul General in Lourenço Marques, G Nel, as well as a senior South African military official whose name he did not mention.


Ibid.


Ibid.

Ibid.

The Daily News, 13 December, 1967. The newspaper article states that 13 aircraft were from Natal while the remaining two were from the Transkei and Johannesburg respectively.

Ibid.


Ibid.
The Natal Mercury, 27 January, 1969. The two light aircraft cost a total of R50 000. The funds to pay for the aircraft were collected in Natal and the Orange Free State.

Ibid. The aircraft were fitted with oxygen and blood plasma dispensers. In addition, they could carry four injured soldiers on stretchers as well as a doctor and a pilot. The two aircraft were handed over to a Portuguese Air Force Brigadier, Manuel Norton Brandão.

The Star, 30 September, 1968.

Ibid.

Ibid.


Ibid. The document was written in Lisbon on the 11 November 1968.

Ibid.

AHD, PAA M.1138: África do Sul – Dádivas e auxílio às Forças Armadas Portuguesas em Combate: Secret letter from Portuguese Deputy Secretary for National Defence, March 1969. The day on which the letter was written is not mentioned.

Ibid.

Ibid.


Ibid.

Ibid.


Ibid.


Ibid, p.4.

Ibid, p.2. In Consul Girão’s letter, Pam Hanssen is given the title of President of the Mozambique Soldiers’ Comfort Fund.

Ibid.
Ibid.


Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.


Ibid, p.4.

Ibid, p.5.

Ibid.


Ibid, p.2.

Ibid, p.3.

The Natal Mercury, 21 April, 1970. Mrs Venetia Edgeworth-Kelly from Natal revealed the situation regarding South African gifts for Portuguese soldiers. This occurred during a fact-finding mission to Mozambique. The newspaper said that Mrs Edgeworth-Kelly had been organizing donations to the Portuguese soldiers for some time.

Ibid.

Ibid.


Ibid.

Ibid.

AHD, PAA M.1138: África do Sul – Dádivas e auxílio às Forças Armadas Portuguesas em Combate: Three letters from Portuguese Consul, Durban - Portuguese Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lisbon. The letters were written on 05 August 1968, 30 December 1968 and 24 March 1969. The letters mention the distribution of short films about Portugal’s military effort in Africa.

AHD, PAA M.1138: África do Sul – Dádivas e auxílio às Forças Armadas Portuguesas em Combate: Letter from Portuguese Consul, Durban – Portuguese Minister of Foreign Affairs,

309 Ibid. The films were shown in small towns such as Pinetown and Vryheid as well as in certain military units such as Natal’s Military Command.

310 Ibid.

311 Ibid.


313 Ibid.


315 The Argus, 14 April, 1971 mentions that five artificial legs and 1000 disposable syringes were sent to the Portuguese soldiers in Guinea Bissau by the Western Cape Committee of the Mozambique / Angola Soldiers’ Comfort Fund. The President of the Western Cape Committee of the Mozambique / Angola Soldiers’ Comfort Fund was Mrs Doreen Jones. In addition to the artificial legs and disposable syringes, the Fund also sent cigarettes and canned fruit to the soldiers. In the meantime, The Rhodesia Herald 20 July 1971 states that the Fund had sent 50 water filters and laboratory equipment to Luanda. Several books were also sent to the Luso Military Hospital in Angola.

316 The Argus, 17 April, 1972. The Argus mentions that medical equipment worth R60 000 had been sent to the Portuguese Armed Forces in Mozambique. The Southern Cross Fund collected this donation. The President of the Southern Cross Fund was Mrs Elizabeth Albrecht.

317 The Argus, 21 June, 1972. In addition to medical equipment, recreational items for the soldiers were also sent to Angola. The Western Cape Committee of the Mozambique/Angola Soldiers’ Comfort Fund was responsible for these donations.

318 The Rhodesia Herald, 09 February, 1972.

319 The Star, 10 August, 1972. According to The Star, South African groups and individuals were donating an increasing number of gifts to the Portuguese Armed Forces in Angola and Mozambique. The gifts comprised medical supplies, radios and tape recorders. The medical equipment included a dental unit and a number of wheelchairs for the Portuguese troops in Angola.

320 The Rhodesia Herald, 12 April, 1973. The Rhodesia Herald said that eight ambulances had been donated to the Portuguese Armed Forces in Angola. Each ambulance cost R6000. The Southern Cross Fund organized the collection of the funds to pay for the ambulances. The previous year, the Southern Cross Fund also collected funds to pay for an air ambulance. The air ambulance was later used in Mozambique’s Tete District. The air ambulance cost R43 000. According to a report on The Rhodesia Herald, 09 February 1972, the air ambulance was handed over to a senior Portuguese military delegation at Wonderboom Airport in South Africa. Moreover, a letter from the Portuguese Embassy in Pretoria indicates that seven ambulances were donated to the Portuguese Armed Forces in Mozambique at the end of 1973. The Southern Cross Fund organized the donation of
the ambulances. The seven ambulances cost a total of R41 000. At the same time, medicine worth R30 000 was also sent to Mozambique. The letter can be found in AHD, PAA M.1138: África do Sul – Dádivas e auxílio às Forças Armadas Portuguesas em Combate: Letter from Portuguese Embassy in Pretoria - Portuguese Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lisbon, 7 December 1973. The signature on the letter is illegible.