CONCLUSION

Political relations between Portugal and South Africa from the Second World War until 1974 developed in a complex and multifaceted manner. Before the Second World War the two countries had developed certain perceptions of one another that were difficult to change. Portuguese concerns of South African territorial ambitions in Mozambique – or Portuguese East Africa as it was then known – were already a fact before the First World War. Such concerns were rooted in certain historical events such as the British ultimatum of 1890 and Jan Smuts’ apparent willingness to extend the borders of the Union of South Africa in southern Africa. In the meantime, South African leaders such as Jan Smuts had doubts about Portugal’s ability to develop its territories in Africa.

The desire to extend the Union’s territory was not a new endeavour. During the discussion of the 1907 Selborne Memorandum, the Transvaal indicated that it would prefer to see the inclusion of Mozambique in the Union of South Africa. Britain’s High Commissioner, Lord Selborne, drew up the Memorandum in order to start the debate concerning the creation of a closer union between the five British colonies in southern Africa. The focus would be the creation of a central national government that encompassed all the British colonies in the region. Such a union would include the Transvaal and the Free State as well as Natal, the Cape and Rhodesia. It is clear that the Transvaal was interested in Mozambique’s inclusion since it would provide easy access to the Indian Ocean.

Moreover, in 1915 Britain’s Colonial Secretary, Lewis Harcourt, and the Union’s Governor General, Lord Buxton, suggested that it was possible to persuade Portugal to swap Mozambique for South West Africa. However, Smuts indicated that such an offer would not be acceptable to the Portuguese. He believed that it would be better to occupy German East Africa and offer the southern portion of this territory to the Portuguese in exchange for Mozambique’s Delagoa Bay as
In the meantime, Portugal was quite aware of the Union’s interest in southern Mozambique. Portuguese awareness of the Union’s expansionist aims was one of the reasons that led Portugal to participate in the First World War.\textsuperscript{8} Portugal’s commitment to the military operational theatres in Africa was one way to affirm Portuguese interests in the continent.\textsuperscript{9} The fact that the military operations against German forces in East Africa did not take place as planned and were largely defensive did not improve Portugal’s image among senior South African officials.\textsuperscript{10}

Portuguese perceptions about the Union’s intentions did not change after the First World War. As one of Europe’s smallest countries with limited economic capacity, Portugal viewed its overseas empire as one way to assert its importance in the world. Any threat or perceived threat to the territorial integrity of its possessions in Africa and Asia had a profound impact on mainland Portugal. In addition, Portuguese officials were sometimes keen to emphasize that Portugal’s assimilation policies diverged sharply from South Africa’s racial policies. The intended message was to prove that Portugal’s assimilation policies were morally superior to any form of official racial separation. However, it is clear that such a posture did not really impress South African officials who viewed Portuguese claims of having achieved racial harmony in their territories with a heavy dose of skepticism.

After the Second World War South African officials were fully aware of Portuguese concerns and as a result they tried to dispel any notion that the Union had expansionist aims in Southern Africa. The aim was to ensure the development of amicable relations between the two countries, which at the time was called “good neighbourliness”. South Africa was also interested in the creation of a common front in Africa that could withstand any attack from military forces that came from outside the African continent. As the First and Second
World Wars demonstrated, Angola and Mozambique were viewed as possible launching pads that could be used by enemy forces trying to reach South Africa. The presence of enemy forces in any one of the two territories could endanger South Africa’s security.

During the 1950s the two sides were forced to move closer to one another as pressure against colonial control – in the case of Portugal – as well as pressure against racial discrimination – in the case of South Africa – increased in the international arena. The policy of “good neighbourliness” was proclaimed loud and clear at a time when both countries experienced increasing international criticism. It is during this period that Portuguese rule began to be actively challenged in India while in South Africa there was growing awareness of African nationalism amongst policymakers. What became evident during the 1950s was that continued European control over indigenous populations was likely to face increasing resistance from nationalist groups. It was during this period that Dr DF Malan displayed a willingness to support the Portuguese cause in India.

Despite this seemingly rosy picture there were noticeable differences that placed the two countries far apart from one another in terms of the promotion of their personal interests in the international arena. From the 1950s onwards, the two countries increasingly used opposing arguments in order to defend their continued control over the black majorities in their respective territories. While South Africa claimed that separate development was the most appropriate solution to the country’s racial problems, the Portuguese claimed that their policy of assimilation was the most desirable way to achieve racial harmony in their African territories.

After the start of the insurgency war in Angola at the beginning of the 1960s, the Portuguese pointed to their racial integration strategy as proof that mainland Portugal as well as its African and Asian territories were part and parcel of the same nation – a nation that was united by language, history and certain cultural
traits. The objective was to try to convince the wider world that there was no racial discrimination as well as no racial antagonism in the Portuguese-controlled territories in Africa.

The Estado Novo’s official political discourse emphasized the unity of the Portuguese nation even though the nation was divided into separate geographic entities in Europe, Africa and Asia. Such an approach was seen as the best way to highlight the unity between the metropolis – in this case mainland Portugal – and the various overseas territories in Africa and Asia. The Estado Novo saw this as the appropriate path to promote Portugal’s interests in the long run although it did not have much success in convincing most of the other members of the international community that its African and Asians territories were not colonies but rather Portugal’s “overseas provinces”.

Throughout the 1960s and the early 1970s the South African authorities made it clear that separate development would continue to be the official approach towards race relations in South Africa. There was thus a major ideological gap in the official political discourse of both countries – especially in relation to the issue of race relations – that could never be bridged. The ideological divide between the two countries on race policies was insurmountable and it had an impact on the unfolding of relations between the two countries.

From a South African perspective there was the minor irritant of what to do when senior Portuguese officials who were not white were present at the same functions attended by South African officials. In May 1964, the South African Consul-in-Charge in Lourenço Marques, DV Louw, sent a letter to the Secretary for Foreign Affairs in Pretoria to complain about a senior South African military officer who apparently refused to eat lunch together with a mixed-race Portuguese national who was in charge of a telecommunications sub-station in Namaacha in Mozambican territory. The incident took place during a visit of a senior South African delegation to Mozambique. Louw explained that such
incidents caused embarrassment to the host country, especially if the senior Portuguese official was not white. He emphasized that the incident would not be forgotten by the Portuguese.\textsuperscript{13}

Although incidents such as the one mentioned above were not frequent they did expose basic differences between the two sides that could not be overcome. It should be pointed out that such incidents were not made known to the public. During the early 1960s the South African government considered the possibility of refusing permission to the wife of the Portuguese Minister of Foreign Affairs, Franco Nogueira, to enter South Africa when her husband visited the country.\textsuperscript{14} The controversy arose because she was not white.\textsuperscript{15} However, South Africa’s Prime Minister, Hendrik Verwoerd, did not approve any measures preventing her from entering South Africa.\textsuperscript{16} There is no doubt that if Franco Nogueira’s wife was prevented from entering South Africa because she was not white such a course of action could have caused a major rift between the two countries.

There was a major perceptual problem about the way the links between the two countries was perceived by other countries and the international community as a whole. Although internationally it was generally accepted that there was some sort of an alliance between the two countries this was something that was never acknowledged by policymakers from both sides. As a result of the contradictions that existed between the racial policies of both countries there could be no acknowledgement of the existence of close links in the military and security spheres, which in turn strengthened the need to maintain a high degree of secrecy.

From the early 1960s onwards the Portuguese were keen to point out in public that the racial policies of both countries were quite different. In November 1961, the South African Consul General in Luanda, CBH Fincham, explained that one of Luanda’s largest daily newspapers \textit{O Comércio} had emphasized both the links of friendship between Portugal and South Africa as well as the different approach
to the issue of race relations in the two countries. Fincham quoted part of an article in the O Comércio that pointed out how the Portuguese rejected both the ideology of black supremacy that was prevalent in some African countries as well as the ideology of white supremacy prevalent in South Africa. According to Fincham, the publication of reports in the same daily edition that emphasized both the links of friendship between the two countries as well as the different approach to the issue of race relations had the purpose of ensuring that Portuguese policies were not viewed in the same light as South African policies. The newspaper confirmed that Portugal rejected the theory of the “absolute superiority of any race or culture” and that the best option was to move forward towards the acceptance of a “multiracial and multicultural” system. This position was continuously portrayed in the international sphere as the best way to divert criticism about Portugal’s continued control over its African territories. As a result, it was necessary to reject any allegations or accusations that Portugal and South Africa were close allies.

It is clear that Portuguese policymakers wanted to dissociate their country from any accusations that the policies in the Portuguese-speaking territories in Africa were similar or had anything to do with South Africa’s apartheid policies. As a result, from the mid-1960s onwards it was also necessary to discourage any overt enthusiasm for South Africa. In October 1966, the Portuguese Ministry of Foreign Affairs made it clear to the Head of the Public Information Services of the Portuguese Armed Forces in Lisbon, Lieutenant Colonel Serzedelo Coelho, that it was not advisable to express excessive enthusiasm for the close links that existed between Portugal and South Africa.

The warning was issued after a Belgian journalist who visited the Portuguese Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Lisbon in October 1966 said that he had been surprised to see widespread enthusiasm for South Africa and Rhodesia during a trip that he made to Mozambique in that same year. The Belgian journalist was surprised by the large number of propaganda stickers on vehicles with
Portuguese, South African and Rhodesian flags with the slogan ‘Together we shall win’. According to the Portuguese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, such blatant propaganda “was a serious mistake”. This indicated that the central authorities in Lisbon did not view the close links with South Africa as a “racial alliance” in the Southern African region.

Moreover, in November 1968, the Portuguese Prime Minister, Marcello Caetano, explicitly rejected the accusation made by the General Assembly of the United Nations that there was a secret alliance between Portugal and South Africa as well as Rhodesia. Caetano told the Portuguese National Assembly in Lisbon that there was no secret or open alliance between the three countries. He immediately explained that the three countries followed different racial policies and that Portugal was committed to a policy of non-discrimination.

The fact that the Portuguese distanced themselves from South Africa’s racial policies certainly pleased their closest NATO allies, especially those that did not necessarily support Portugal’s continued control over its African territories. In November 1969, the United States main representative at the United Nations, Ambassador Seymour M Finger, agreed that the African peoples under Portuguese administration had the right to self-determination. However, he pointed out that it was wrong to judge “the Portuguese people with the same brush of racism which is so richly deserved by the illegal regime of Ian Smith and by the government of South Africa”. Finger added that “the tragedy of this error is that it tends to push the government of Portugal toward the very racist regimes of Southern Africa, which it has been condemned for collaborating with”. By pointing out the differences between the racial policies of both countries, the American Ambassador was effectively saying that Portugal and South Africa should not be confused with one another. This was the type of response that Portugal wanted to hear from its allies.
In the meantime, according to the South African government the greatest sin that anybody could commit was to accept the idea that the creation of a multiracial society in South Africa could solve the country’s problems. In September 1971, the South African Prime Minister, BJ Vorster, said that anybody who believed that South Africa’s problems could be resolved by the introduction of what he called “multiracialism” was effectively “an enemy of the country and its peoples”. According to Vorster, a multiracial society would descend into chaos, which would lead to high levels of racial tension.

The lack of an ideological connection between the racial policies defended by the Portuguese and South African governments in the public arena did not bode well for the proposed informal alliance that was supposed to maintain the status quo in Southern Africa. It effectively meant the need to maintain constant secrecy in respect of the arrangements agreed to between the two countries. As a result, there was really no firm attempt to present a visible and solid joint front to the world.

Although the Portuguese viewed South Africa as a regional power that had to be taken into account – especially in relation to security matters – the fact of the matter is that they did not want to become excessively dependant on South African support. Such support posed certain grave risks, the most important of which was the possibility of the internationalization of the conflict in Angola and Mozambique. It was clear that within the context of the Cold War if such support was made public it might lead to the appearance of other players on the side of the African nationalist groups that were fighting the Portuguese in Angola, Mozambique and Guinea Bissau. Such players would most probably come from the African continent as well as the eastern bloc countries.

The fear of the internationalization of the conflict in Angola and Mozambique strengthened the belief in the continued need for secrecy as well as the need to maintain an opaque aura surrounding the nature of the relationship between the
two countries. The use of secrecy did nothing in terms of the affirmation of a proposed alliance that was supposed to be the solution to the perceived external threats affecting Southern Africa. It is important to point out that the deterrence value of such an alliance was greatly diminished since it could never have the public exposure that was attributed to other military alliances such as NATO or the Warsaw Pact countries. Countries that were part of NATO accepted that public exposure was part of the ongoing propaganda strategy, which increased the deterrence capacity of the alliance as a whole. The same could not be said of the secretive alliance between South Africa and Portugal, which was always subjected to political considerations.

What became clear throughout the late 1960s and early 1970s was that the use of secrecy did little to prevent the constant accusations of collaboration directed at the governments of both countries. These accusations were leveled against Portugal and South Africa in international forums such as the United Nations. It is clear that the constant denials of a close partnership did not really achieve its intended objective, which was to reject any suggestion that the two countries were somehow cooperating in the military and security spheres. In fact, the constant denials of an alliance merely increased the suspicion of those who suspected that the two sides collaborated in the defence and security spheres.

In practical terms, the close ties between the two countries always followed a convoluted path. In May 1969, the Portuguese Minister of Defence, General Viana Rebelo, expressed Portugal’s disappointment with the loan offered by South Africa for the Portuguese military at the end of the 1960s. It is clear that General Viana expected South Africa to provide a much larger loan to help the efforts of the Portuguese war machine in Angola and Mozambique at the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s. This indicates that there were substantial differences between the two countries regarding the best way to fight the insurgents in the Portuguese-controlled territories, which created tension between the two sides. Although a much larger loan was negotiated between the
two sides in 1974\textsuperscript{31} this loan did not make much of a difference\textsuperscript{32} since it was granted just before the Portuguese revolution of 1974 that effectively put an end to Portugal’s continued presence in the African continent.

It could also be said that the Portuguese authorities gave confusing messages to their South African counterparts. Section e) of chapter three of this thesis clearly indicates that there was some degree of apprehension among Portuguese diplomatic personnel about what to do with the gifts that were collected among the South African public for the Portuguese troops in Angola and Mozambique. While some Portuguese diplomats such as the Portuguese Consul in Durban, Guilherme Manuel de Sousa Girão, generally viewed such efforts in a positive light there were others such as the Portuguese Consul in Windhoek, Queirós de Barros, who believed South African overt aid should not be accepted. The confusion highlights the much deeper problem of how to deal with South African public support.

The perceptions that the South African authorities had of their Portuguese counterparts also indicates that the alliance between the two sides was not always a clear and well-defined situation. In November 1971, an unsigned document from South Africa’s Bureau of State Security (BOSS) claimed that the policy of the Portuguese government was to keep contact between Angola and South Africa to a minimum.\textsuperscript{33} The aim of such an approach would be to prevent excessive South African influence in Angola. The document explained that some policymakers in Lisbon still believed that South Africa had territorial ambitions in both Angola and Mozambique. Moreover, although official relations between the two countries “could not be better”, the Portuguese military authorities did not really welcome the idea of South African troops aiding the Portuguese Army in Angola.\textsuperscript{34} In contrast, the presence of large contingent of South African policemen in Rhodesia was publicly acknowledged by both South Africa and Rhodesia.\textsuperscript{35}
Although it is difficult to make a precise assessment of the impact of South African support for the Portuguese military effort in Angola and Mozambique, it is clear that such support was by far never sufficient or broad enough to help change to course of the war in the former Portuguese territories. In 1974 the Portuguese had accumulated a total of 93 helicopters in Africa.36 The vast majority of these were Alouette III helicopters.37 If we compare this number to the small number of helicopters that the South African military made available to the Portuguese forces in south-eastern Angola since the end of the 1960s, it is clear that the South African aircraft were not really sufficient to have a significant impact in the overall course of the war in that Portuguese-controlled territory.

South African support could have helped to change the course of the war in Angola, Mozambique and Guinea Bissau only if it was made available to the Portuguese on a massive scale. This would have to include the provision of a large contingent of military equipment as well as the deployment of substantial contingents of South African ground forces alongside the Portuguese military forces in the three operational theatres. There is nothing in the available documentation in the Portuguese and South African archives to suggest that Portugal was willing to accept such large scale South Africa support or that South Africa was prepared to provide massive aid to the Portuguese military establishment in Africa. In fact, according to the Head of Rhodesia’s Central Intelligence Organization, Ken Flower, by the end of 1973 the South African Prime Minister, BJ Vorster, believed that South Africa had already spent enough money helping the Portuguese military effort in Africa.38 It must be emphasized that since the start of the insurgency wars in the Portuguese-controlled territories in Africa there were some South African officials who expressed doubts about the capacity of the Portuguese military establishment to defeat the insurgents. Some sectors of the South African media also expressed similar sentiments.

During the late 1960s and the early 1970s the South African authorities were mainly concerned with how the conflict in Angola could affect the security
situation in South West Africa’s northern regions. However, in terms of security, south-eastern Angola was not Portugal’s main priority. The main concern of the Portuguese authorities was to ensure effective control over all the geographically separate overseas territories in Africa and Asia. In the African continent, the Portuguese authorities were trying to maintain full military control over three different operational theatres. The fact that the three operational theatres were located far apart from one another created considerable logistical difficulties. Despite marked success in Angola in 1973 and 1974, it is clear that the Portuguese would always experience major difficulties in maintaining effective control over large territories in the African continent such as Angola and Mozambique.

Another problem faced by the Portuguese authorities was the growing opposition in mainland Portugal against the continuing wars in Africa. This began to impact increasingly during the late 1960s and early 1970s. The most forceful opposition manifested itself through the violent tactics used by leftwing groups in mainland Portugal. These groups wanted to see the rapid termination of Portugal’s military campaigns in Africa. The main reason for such opposition was the human cost of maintaining large military contingents in three different operational theatres. Portugal lost 8 290 men during its military campaigns in Angola, Mozambique and Guinea Bissau. The South African authorities failed to understand the depth of the growing resentment that existed in mainland Portugal against what appeared to be – from a Portuguese perspective – the never-ending military campaigns in Angola, Mozambique and Guinea Bissau. As a result, the revolution in Portugal on 25 April 1974 caught the South African authorities by surprise. The fact that South Africa was surprised by the new developments in Portugal can be regarded as either an intelligence failure on the part of the South African authorities or a blind belief in the long-term resilience of the Portuguese security shield in Southern Africa.
There were major differences between the two countries and what they wanted to achieve in the political sphere. South Africa viewed itself primarily as an independent African country whose political system had to achieve some degree of legitimacy in order to justify minority rule over the African majority. It was mainly concerned on how it could obtain a greater degree of acceptance in the African continent as well as the wider world. After the Second World War, South Africa portrayed itself as former colony that had already undergone its own struggle to achieve political independence. Although its ruling elite was of European extraction it could nevertheless claim exclusive right to determine its own future by virtue of having already attained sovereignty and being part and parcel of the African continent.

Portugal viewed itself primarily as an European country that had to justify its continued rule over what were effectively African colonies at a time when it was no longer fashionable or practical to claim possession of overseas territories in other continents. As one of the very few Western European countries that retained an authoritarian regime after the Second World War, Portugal viewed continued possession of its African territories as a question of survival and national pride. In order to justify its actions, Portugal claimed the need to respect historical rights as well as the need to ensure the spread of civilization in underdeveloped parts of the world. This was viewed as outdated concepts in much of Western Europe. The Portuguese political system had little in common with the democracies that flourished in Western Europe after the Second World War. This in itself created political tension in Portugal. There was a deep division between those members of the Portuguese elite who wanted to see a closer integration with Europe – even to the point of joining the European Economic Community – and those who believed that Portugal should rather spend its energies and its efforts to control its African possessions effectively.

It can thus be said that although Portugal’s Estado Novo and apartheid South Africa shared a number of common features – such as a conservative political
outlook as well as a deep fear of African nationalism, revolution and international communism – they diverged substantially when it came to the strategies they used to resolve their own specific problems. The two countries did not share a common political outlook and the tensions that animated political life in South Africa and Portugal were not similar. Despite the fact that South Africa and Portugal were forced to move closer to one another as a result of the spread of African nationalism and an increasingly hostile international environment, they did not really develop a common political approach that could effectively deal with the perceived threats against the status quo that the two countries wanted to maintain. There was thus an inability to walk away from the secretive tactical approach that was repeatedly used by the two countries to sort out what was perceived to be immediate security threats and move together – in a determined manner – towards the construction of a firm, visible and wider strategic alliance that would have had a greater deterrence value. The fact was that both countries had a different vision of what they wanted to achieve politically.

The inability of the South African security apparatus to predict the end of Portugal’s control over its African territories would prove costly in the long term. The conflict in Angola developed into one of the Cold War’s hot spots. After Portugal’s withdrawal from Africa, South African forces engaged large contingents of Cuban troops and eastern bloc advisers, as well as SWAPO and MPLA forces in southern Angola. The South Africans were not able to avoid the internationalization of the war as the Portuguese had done. Moreover, the drawn out conflict in South West Africa did have an impact on the process that led to the end of white rule in South Africa.

Endnotes


2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.
4 Ibid.


6 Ibid.

7 Ibid.


9 Ibid.

10 Ibid.


12 Ibid. The South African delegation included two senior South African Defence Force officers as well as a representative of South Africa’s Civil Aviation structures and a senior member of South Africa’s General Post Office.

13 Ibid. The South African military officer involved in this incident later claimed that he had been “misinterpreted” and he apologized for any embarrassment that he might have caused. See the confidential reply from the officer in question, which is attached to the above-mentioned letter written by the South African Consul-in-Charge, DV Louw.


15 Ibid. Franco Nogueira’s wife was Asian.

16 Ibid.

17 NARS, BTS, Box 1/14/13, Vol 3, Portugal: Relations with SA. B: 03.08.68 / E: 10.12.69: Confidential letter from South African Consul General, Luanda – Secretary for Foreign Affairs in Pretoria, 28 November 1961.

18 Ibid.

19 Ibid.


21 Ibid.
22 Ibid.

23 NARS, BTS, Box 1/14/9, Vol 3, Portugal: Foreign Policy and Relations. B: 02.01.69 / E: 19.04.71: See document written by Marcello Caetano, which was printed by the Secretaria de Estado da Informação e Turismo in 1970. The title of the document is ‘Guidelines of Foreign Policy’. This specific information is mentioned in p.9 of the document. The statement was made in the Portuguese National Assembly on the 27 November 1968.

24 Ibid.


26 Ibid, p.2.

27 Ibid.


29 Ibid.


31 AHD, PAA 1140: Document from the General Chief of Staff of the Portuguese Armed Forces, Lisbon, 18 September 1975. The title of the document is ‘Memorial’. The first page starts with the following words ‘Assunto: Acordo do empréstimo de 150 milhões de Rands firmado com a R.A.S.’. Each page of this document contains the Crest of the Portuguese Republic. In addition, also see ADN File 833.9.: the document that mentions the 150 million Rand loan agreement is signed by Colonel Francisco de Macedo Magalhães. The title of the document is ‘Acordo do empréstimo de 150 milhões de Rands firmado com a RAS’.

32 Ibid.

33 NARS, BTS, Box 1/22/1, Vol 14, Angola: Political Situation and Developments. B: 04.01.1971 / E: 30.11.1971: See page 2 of unsigned secret document from the Bureau of State Security (BOSS), 17 November 1971. On the first page it says ‘Date of Info: 6.11.71’. The number marking the document is DOC. NO. 714345. Although this document does not have a BOSS cover letter a similar document with exactly the same type of numbering and a clear BOSS cover letter can be found in BTS, 1/22/1, Vol 16, Angola: Political Situation and Developments. B: 12.10.72 / E: 15.05.74. The number of this last BOSS document is DOC. NO. 7408627. It was written on the 4 March 1974.

34 Ibid.


Ibid.


Comissão para o Estudo das Campanhas de África., Resenha Histórico-Militar das Campanhas de África (1961-1974). Estado Maior do Exército, 1 Volume, Enquadramento Geral. 2 Edição Lisboa 1988, p.246. In addition to the 8 290 Portuguese military personnel who died in Africa, the Resenha Histórico-Militar das Campanhas de África also indicates that 26 223 Portuguese military personnel were wounded during the military campaigns in Angola, Mozambique and Guinea Bissau.