

## Chapter 3

### PROTECTED AND CONSOLIDATED VILLAGES

#### 3.1 The Concept

Recourse to the use of Protected Villages is closely aligned to the concept of a total revolutionary war. It entails the concentration and resettlement of the local population into defensible villages. The theory of insurgency divides a country into three categories: first those base areas controlled by the insurgent forces, second the areas under firm counter-insurgent control, and finally the intermediate or 'grey' areas contested by both sides. The two opposing forces each seek to expand their base areas. Such expansion not only provides visible proof of success, but forces the contestant to disperse his available manpower over increasingly threatened areas. The case for the insurgent forces is adequately summarised by John J. McCuen:

By slow, creeping expansion, the territories held by the governing power are converted into guerrilla areas, and the guerrilla areas into base areas until the entire country has been won. (1)

This is termed the 'oil spot' approach and holds true for both insurgent and counter-insurgent strategy. Specifically of importance to government forces is the consolidation of control over its own base areas as a firm foothold from whence it can encroach onto the grey areas. This governmental base normally corresponds to the more urbanized and economically active areas where counter-insurgent control is not only more evident but easier to maintain. The consolidation of this area is almost exclusively achieved by political, socio-economic, administrative and policing measures.

The second factor of importance regarding the employment of a strategy of population concentration and resettlement is closely aligned to physical control of the rural population. Sir Robert Thompson stated it thus:

The government must give priority to defeating the political subversion, not the guerrillas ... Unless communist subversive political organisation in the towns and villages is broken and eliminated, the insurgent guerrilla units will not be defeated. If the guerrillas can be isolated from the population ... then their eventual destruction becomes automatic. (2)

The emphasis is thus not towards providing depopulated areas in which Security Forces can roam freely in search of insurgents, but in denying the insurgents access to the local population. This is critical since the war is essentially waged for control of the population. If contact between the rural population and the insurgent forces is effectively cut, the latter are denied food, intelligence, recruits and access to their primary objective, people. In practical terms this leads to a number of conclusions. In the first place it is not possible for Protected Villages to be particularly successful in those areas falling within an insurgent base area. In theory it is possible for heavily armed and well trained Security Forces to enter these areas in strength with relative impunity, but they can expect to meet with little more than sullen hostility from the local population. Placing these people in Protected Villages is then akin to concentrating an already subverted population with its established clandestine insurgent organisation into select localities. 'Foreign' Security Forces, are then required as guards to prevent the inmates physically from either overt acts of subversion, support of the insurgents or simply disobedience. In such circumstances Protected Villagers are neither willing nor, in fact, able to provide intelligence or co-operation under the threat of death or punishment.

It is further imperative that the insurgent organisation within a community is broken before or concurrently with such a programme. Should this not happen and what is termed the insurgent parallel hierarchies continue to function relatively unscathed within the villages, the authorities would have partially failed in their objective.

In the third place it should be evident that

effective control of the population placed within the Protected Villages is essential if contact with the insurgents is to be broken and not restored. In practical terms this indicates strict control of movement. This can be obtained only by a foolproof identity system, the institution of no-go areas, and curfews, to name but a few of the more traditional methods of population control.

There are, however, a number of further factors that have proved enduring in the efforts towards making a Protected Village programme advantageous in the long term. In the first instance it should be recognised that, with limited exceptions, the institution of such a programme meets with at least a measure of passive resistance from the majority of the local population. In many cases even active resistance is encountered.

It is thus vitally important that such a scheme is seen to be to the personal benefit of the local population as a whole. In short, living conditions in Protected Villages should be demonstrably better than outside them. This could either entail the provision of running water, electricity, access to schools and clinics or even the private ownership of land. Failing such advantages the whole programme could easily rebound to the government's detriment. Instead of providing at least a neutral community, it results in one which is actively hostile and sympathetic to the insurgent cause. Simply herding people behind barbed wire and uprooting their traditional lifestyle with no material compensation provides an extremely fertile area for insurgent recruitment. Unfortunately, this seemed to have been the Rhodesian practice.

A further factor is protection, security and personal safety. In spite of the propaganda campaign waged by both insurgents and counter-insurgents for the capture of their 'hearts and minds', the local members of the population are less concerned with grandiose theories and promises than with personal safety and protection. This concern is largely dependent on the real physical pressure brought to bear on them by the insurgents, i.e. intimidation and on the government's capability or ability to defend the local inhabitants against these dangers. To a large extent both entail the perception, or conviction, as to who will eventually 'win'. In the context of a strategy of Protected Villages it is thus vitally important that the local population is provided with adequate protection against insurgent attacks. This should preferably entail self-defence

by means of militia type units which involve the local populace in their own security. In all cases, a quick-reaction force should be available to provide the hard muscle behind the protection of Protected Villages within any specific area. The element of involvement is of specific importance and the Security Forces should thus endeavour to obtain local participation to the maximum extent. Not only does this provide additional manpower but once committed to such a scheme, the local members are in fact committed to the government cause.

What then, should be the aim of any Protected Village strategy? According to Sir Robert Thompson it is threefold:

The first ... is the protection of the population ... the most vital aspect of protection, however, is the elimination within the hamlet of the insurgent underground organisation ... The second objective ... is to unite the people and involve them in positive action on the side of the government ... This can only be done by involving the people in a small way in national politics which both affect and benefit them, first in the defence of their community and secondly in its development ... The third objective ... is ... development in the social, economic and political fields ... It is at this stage that the regrouping of houses, which at first sight might have seemed a hardship, has compensating advantages. (3)

Let us now turn to the events in former Rhodesia.

### 3.2 Initial attempts at creating Protected Areas

The first official public indication of a strategy of Protected Villages in Rhodesia was given by Deputy Minister of Law and Order Wickus de Kock during December 1973. Significantly, the need for the establishment of these villages was given as arising out of the policy of creating 'no-go' areas. (4) The proclamation of the first such area was promulgated on 17 May 1973. It ran along 300 km of Rhodesia's northern border with Mozambique in the Centenary and Mount Darwin districts. The majority of the local population living in these areas were to be evacuated, screened and resettled in other areas. A number of people were also moved to a new area as punishment for assisting insurgents. In the nearby

Mzarabani area, however, the local population were allowed to stay in their traditional villages. Following the evacuation, the Commissioner of Police had the power to confiscate, seize or destroy any property in these areas that could possibly be of use to the insurgent forces. Within such designated no-go areas, Security Forces were empowered to shoot on sight. Bulldozed strips of clear ground were used as aids to demarcation. Regular patrols along these strips searched for indications of tracks leading into or out of the no-go zones.

Four protected areas were established from October 1973 onwards in Gudza and Mukumbura Tribal Trust Lands in the Zambezi Valley. By 10 January 1974, it was reported that more than 8 000 people had been moved, of whom 1 607 were resettled in protected areas. The rest of the valley became a no-go area. These first protected areas were not constituted as proper Protected Villages, but entailed the concentration of the local population around the main centres of each reserve to facilitate freedom of movement for the Security Forces.

The armed forces were not involved in these schemes, as it was the Department of Internal Affairs which first proposed the concept of concentrating the local population in specific areas for ease of control and protection.

### 3.3 Operations Overload and Overload Two

The military justification given for both Operation Overload in Chiweshe Tribal Trust Land and Operation Overload Two which followed in Madziwa Tribal Trust Land, was that the insurgent threat seemed to be approaching Harare itself. Chiweshe Tribal Trust Land specifically thrusts deep into the white farming areas of the Umvukwes, Centenary and Mount Darwin.

ZANLA forces had succeeded in establishing themselves solidly to the north of Bindura. From this base they were increasingly subverting the areas southwards into Msana and Masembura Tribal Trust Lands and from there to Chinamore Tribal Trust Land just north of Harare. Drastic action was apparently required to block this thrust. The major ZANLA infiltration route ran directly through the Madziwa and Chiweshe Tribal Trust Lands which lay to the north and north-west of Bindura. The local population in these areas were known to be actively assisting the insurgent effort. During March 1974 the situation in Chiweshe was already serious enough to

prompt Lieutenant Colonel Reid-Daly to write later

The apparent support for the ZANLA cause in Chiweshe though was, without doubt, overwhelming and while this made things easy for Selous Scouts pseudo operations, it was very disturbing in a broader sense.(5)

Previously, a large scale attempt to punish the local population and dissuade them from aiding the insurgents had failed in 1973.

Largely on Rhodesian Army insistence, the first major operation towards the establishment of Protected Villages, code named Operation Overload, was officially announced on 25 July 1974. Four weeks of planning preceded the simultaneous movement of 49 960 people into 21 Protected Villages in Chiweshe Tribal Trust Land within a period of six weeks. According to an official statement the intention of the operation was

to deprive terrorists of their vital contact with the civilian population, particularly at night, when they force tribesmen to accommodate and feed them as they move through the area.(6)

Particular emphasis was placed on the retention of tribal groupings during the resettlement of the local population into Protected Villages. As far as possible, villages were sited near to existing agricultural fields. Each family was allocated a plot of fifteen square metres on which to construct a home. Rhodesian Army and Police units supplied transport to the new villages.(7) Families had to construct their new homes from those materials that they had removed from their old ones. Following their movement Security Forces destroyed all remaining huts in the Tribal Trust Land.(8) As the people living in the northern part of Chiweshe Tribal Trust Land had been subject to a considerable degree of intimidation by insurgent forces, many moved into Protected Villages voluntarily. This was not the case to the south, however, where resistance to the move was encountered.

The resettlement of Chiweshe Tribal Trust Land was preceded by a High Density Force operation lasting 4 to 5 days. About 17 companies of troops were deployed clandestinely through the adjacent white commercial farming lands to seal off the Tribal Trust Land. Although the operation was not an unqualified success, it was an attempt to saturate

Chiweshe with Security Forces, thus either eliminating or forcing the flight of all insurgent forces in the area. Following this, 21 construction teams were moved in to construct the villages. They were followed by transportation, intelligence and fencing teams that enabled the total resettlement to be executed simultaneously. This was concluded on 15 August 1974, according to schedule.

Deputy Secretary of Internal Affairs Louis de Bruin, subsequently admitted that the speed of the operation had caused many problems. At first the Protected Villages merely consisted of security fencing around an area that had been marked out in smaller plots, one per family. At the centre of the Protected Village was a second security fence and sheltered housing for armed guards. This was the 'keep' upon which the defence of the village was based. Some of the 21 villages were, however, too big and lack of sanitation and facilities led to disease. De Bruin also said that conditions had sometimes been hard, which he explained as follows: 'All I can say is that the operation was extremely urgent.'(9) In fact the Department of Internal Affairs had provided no sanitation facilities. The local population had to rely on open latrines which proved an obvious health hazard. An adequate supply of fresh water had been provided in only one or two villages prior to completion of the resettlement.(10) Little aid had been extended by the government towards the building of new homes except for the transportation already mentioned.

Although criticism regarding Operation Overload must have been both foreseen and expected, the majority of this criticism tended to be emotional rather than based on counter-insurgency theory. A black member of Parliament, Aaron Mungate did, however, point to a number of valid shortcomings in the execution of the operation. His major objections were as follows:

1. The only people who were protected were those in the keep itself (i.e. the guards).
2. In the majority of Protected Villages no timely and adequate water supply had been installed.
3. People had been forced from their traditional, and in some instances, substantial homes with no compensation and no aid towards buying materials to erect new ones.
4. Because only the gates of the Protected Villages were guarded, the fences around the village did not prevent communication between the villagers and the insurgents.

To a number of Security Force personnel the operation seemed an immediate panic reaction to insurgent success in 1973. In the short term, benefits seemed substantial as insurgent activities were severely disrupted in Chiweshe for the following six months. In the medium and long term the lack of emphasis on concurrent socio-economic conditions within the Protected Villages proved a decisively negative factor.

Based on the experience gained during Operation Overload, Operation Overload Two in Madziwa Tribal Trust Land, some weeks later proved to be an improvement in a number of respects. Instead of the massed movement of the total population into Protected Villages, the movement was extended over several weeks. The operation consisted of four phases. Phase one entailed a High Density Force operation, during which a single contact resulted in the elimination of virtually the total insurgent presence (16 insurgent casualties out of a total group of about 18). Phase two ensured that the local population could move about freely and thus accomplish the resettlement with little insurgent harassment. To this end roads were patrolled and cleared of mines. Phase three entailed the provision of rudimentary shelters and amenities within the envisaged Protected Villages. Phase four covered the period 9 September 1974, to 31 October 1974, which was the compulsory moving period.

A total of 13 500 people had to be moved into 8 Protected Villages. Two villages had already been voluntarily completed by the local population while the Salvation Army's educational centre, the Bradley Institute, became the eleventh Protected Village. The total number of people in Protected Villages was about 16 500, with an average village population of between 1 300 and 1 900 (in Chewishe a Protected Village contained as many as 5 000 inhabitants). Madziwa Tribal Trust Land was, however, smaller than Chiweshe and had its population already concentrated around developing centres. These conditions facilitated the execution of the project as a whole. In place of those schools that had to be closed, 10 new schools, one each in or adjacent to a Protected Village were opened. In contrast to Chiweshe, 23 000 head of cattle were also moved into protected pens outside each village. At the time reports also surfaced regarding blacks obtaining title to residential stands and permanent right of occupation within and adjacent to Protected Villages. This idea had specifically been forwarded by the so-called Shepherd group who were the fore-runners of the later

Psychological Operations Unit as detailed in Chapter 6. In a scheme presented to the Deputy Minister in the Department to the Prime Minister they called for the division of Chiweshe, Madziwa and all subsequent Protected Village areas into acre or even half-acre plots to which a family could obtain freehold title. Any such scheme was strongly resisted by the traditional black chiefs as it would have eroded their main source of authority, the allocation and distribution of land. Since Rhodesian Front policy placed great emphasis on the role of the chief in rural black life, this resistance proved a crucial factor. Eventually very little came of these attempts that could have contributed significantly towards making Protected Villages more acceptable to the local black population.

For its part the Department of Internal Affairs seemed unable to adjust from a rural administration to the increased demands being made by a suddenly urban situation. In both cases finance remained a severe limitation. By the end of the war, however, Chiweshe and Madziwa had both stabilized and provided facilities of a generally higher standard than was to be the case elsewhere. In broad strategic terms Operations Overload and Overload Two did provide a number of precedents. The first was the emphasis on the physical isolation of the local population from the insurgents as an end in itself. The second was the establishment of Protected Villages in areas that had already been subverted as an impediment to insurgent logistics. The third was the lack of sustained development projects to better living conditions within Protected Villages and to promote these as viable growth centres. Lastly, the lack of attempts to involve the local population in their own defence and developments, including attempts to counter the negative influences that crowded urban existence, had a negative effect on the social cohesion of formerly rural black African communities.

Partly as a result of the initial success of both operations, Security Forces could claim that a mere 70 insurgents were still active inside Rhodesia by early 1974. Since these Protected Villages were constructed at a time when maximum military and other public sector resources could be directed towards their implementation, they were to be the most successful and effective in the country.

### 3.4 Extension of the Protected Village scheme

In the year following the execution of Operations Overload and Overload Two, Consolidated Villages, that were to form a second line of defence to Protected Villages were introduced. Consolidated Villages were formed by simply grouping 4 to 8 kraals together. No security fence, lighting, control of movement or armed detachments were provided. Curfews were only enforced where necessary. The financial burden imposed by the Protected Village programme seems to be the major motivation for the introduction of this concept.

Movement of about 4 500 permanent residents and 3 000 occasional residents in Maramba Tribal Trust Land, Mrewa district officially began on 2 June 1975 as a first experiment. Although Consolidated Villages were only to be established in areas of 'incipient insurrection' continuity planning entailed their conversion to Protected Villages should this be warranted by the security situation.(11) In many cases, in fact, the first phase in the establishment of Protected Villages entailed the concentration of the people into Consolidated Villages. Following this, protective measures were added thus converting the Consolidated Villages into Protected Villages.

By May 1976, Consolidated Villages had, amongst others, been established in Uzumba and Pfungwe Tribal Trust Lands as well as near Chipinga.

Having no protection, Consolidated Villages were prime targets for insurgents. Both ZANLA and ZPRA forces burnt huts and forced the local population to abandon the new villages. One such act occurred on New Year's Eve, 1977, when about 20 insurgents burned 212 of the 380 huts of Kandeya Consolidated Village in the North-east. Forcing the local population to resettle in these unprotected areas could only have resulted in extremely negative reactions on their part since the move entailed the disruption of an established community with no material or security benefit.

Apparently the policy of establishing Consolidated Villages was discontinued in the following year. Although heralded as a 'new concept' these villages were very similar in the final analysis to the 'protected areas' that had been established by the Department of Internal Affairs in 1973.

On 9 March 1976, Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Office Ted Sutton-Pryce stated that between 175 000 and 200 000 members of the local population had been resettled in Protected and

Consolidated Villages. Throughout the eastern operational areas the extension of Protected Villages continued unabated. The entire population of Honde Valley was placed in Protected Villages early in 1977. On 30 May 1977, the Rhodesia Herald reported that since the beginning of that year there had been more than 70 insurgent attacks on Protected Villages. The number of villages were claimed to be in the region of 200, housing 250 000 people. Each Protected Village was reported to cost between Rh\$ 35 000 and Rh\$ 45 000 to construct. Further reports indicated that the population of Kandeya, Chiswito Tribal Trust Lands and Karuyana Purchase Area as well as Chiredzi and Makoni had been placed in Protected Villages.

At this time the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace published Rhodesia: the Propaganda War which contained a detailed but inaccurate breakdown of Protected Villages in Rhodesia, claiming the existence of 203 villages housing 580 832 people. Replying to the publication, the Minister of Internal Affairs stated that there were, in fact, 178 villages housing 260 000 people.

A report in the Sunday Mail of 9 October 1977, provided an indication as to the effectiveness of both Protected and Consolidated Villages. It stated that about ten percent of all such villages had been burnt down by insurgent forces. The main areas affected were Mrewa and Mtoko with a few cases in the Mount Darwin area. The majority of burnings had taken place in the preceding ten months as a result of which thousands of former inhabitants fled into the bush. Insurgent forces actively attempted to prevent the local population from being placed in Protected Villages as in Sengwe Trust Tribal Land where only 60% of the 12 000 people had moved into the six villages designated. The Chiredzi District Commissioner stated at the time

There is a strong terrorist presence in this area. The people are being intimidated against going into the villages.(12)

When fully extended, the introduction of both Protected and Consolidated Villages represented the basic approach to the strategy already mentioned, i.e. aimed at disrupting insurgent logistics. Protected Villages were established in those populated areas as near to Rhodesian borders as possible through which insurgent infiltration routes ran. Large stretches of the border were eventually

covered by means of border minefield obstacles (see Chapter 4); the object being that insurgents entering Rhodesia would first have to negotiate these and then cross no-go areas where Security Forces had absolute freedom of movement and action to pursue and eliminate them. In those areas bordering on no-go zones, the local population would be placed in Protected Villages thus still affording Security Forces a large degree of freedom. Insurgent forces would in this way be denied food, water and information, forcing them to be continually on the move and facilitating their location.

This broad strategic approach was put to best effect in the Operation Repulse area. Entering Rhodesia from the Gaza Province in Mozambique, ZANLA forces had to cross the Gona Re Zhou game park and the border minefield obstacles erected along the south-eastern border. In this relatively arid area the local population in the Tribal Trust Lands surrounding the game park had all been placed in Protected Villages (Diti, Chipese, Sengwe, Matibi No 2, and Sangwe Tribal Trust Lands). The majority of the sources of water outside the Protected Villages were destroyed. Insurgent forces wanting to penetrate to the populated areas around Masvingo (formerly Fort Victoria) were thus faced with a formidable physical obstacle consisting of depopulated and semi-depopulated areas with little access to food and water.

Eventually about three quarters of a million blacks were concentrated in Protected Villages. A list of all planned and existing Protected and Consolidated Villages as on 6 January 1978, amounted to a total of 234 villages. (13) The salient points mentioned above regarding the geographical distribution of Protected Villages are illustrated in Figure 3.1.

### 3.5 Opening of Protected Villages

Since the strategy of Protected Villages was introduced in 1973 it had been a particular point of contention between black leaders and the Rhodesian Front government. The social disruption resulting from forced resettlement led to highly emotional reactions to the strategy on the part of moderate black nationalist leaders. This attitude changed radically when, as members of the Transitional Government, they came to grips with the counter-insurgency problems facing Rhodesia.

Once Bishop Muzorewa, Chief Chirau and the Reverend Sithole had reached agreement with Prime

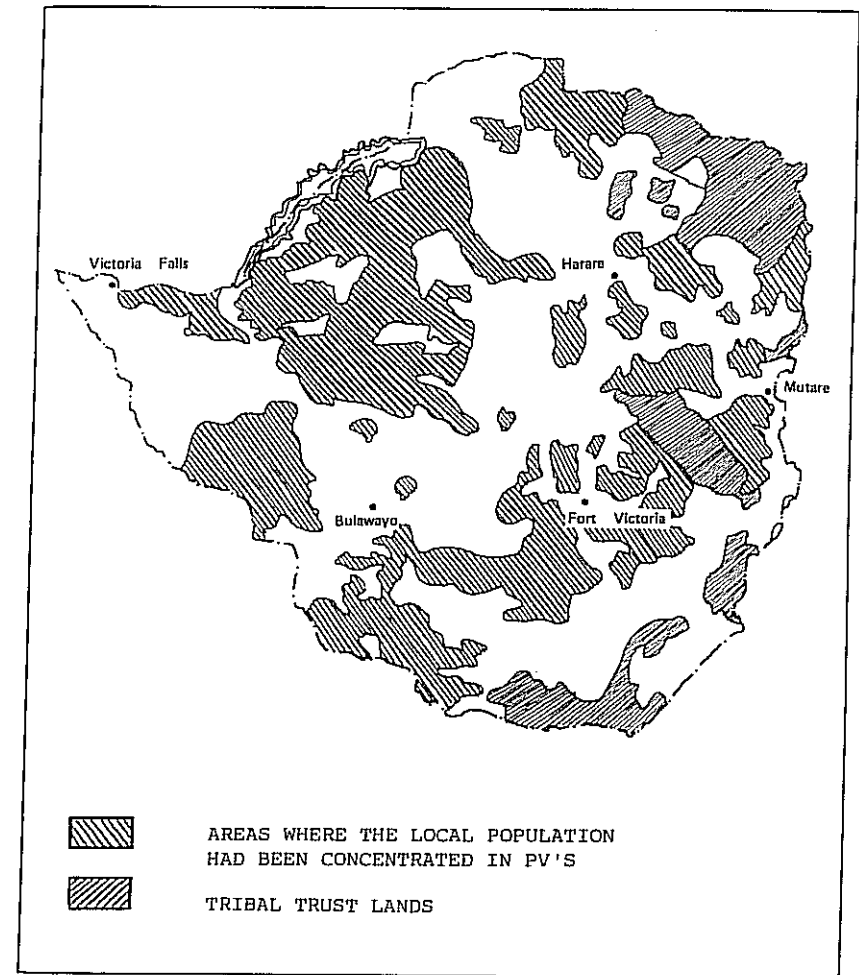


Figure 3.1 Existing and Planned Protected Villages:  
6 Jan. 1978

Minister Smith on an internal settlement in March 1978, substantive proof had to be provided to both the black people at large and the insurgent forces in the country that majority rule had been achieved. The president of the Chiweshe Residents' Association, Mathias Chitauro, made this quite clear when he stated that

Unless the Transitional Government quickly dismantled protected villages, residents of keeps would never take the internal settlement seriously. (14)

The black members of the Executive Council were convinced of their majority support amongst the rural population. They were adamant that substantive proof had only to be provided that the war was over to induce numerous insurgents to lay down their weapons. Although the war was still continuing unabated in the rural areas, it was judged that the symbolic reopening of Protected Villages could provide just the 'substantive proof' needed. It was also judged that it would influence the attitude of the local population to support moderate black nationalist leaders. Thus, on 8 September 1978, the first three Protected Villages were declared open in Mutoko Tribal Trust Land. The inhabitants were free to leave and return to their previous locations.

The opening of Protected Villages, however, also reflected the failure of the socio-economic development of these villages. Chief Mutoko had told the co-Minister of Finance, Commerce and Industry, Ernest Bulle, that 'More of us are dying inside the villages than outside.' (15) This was a sentiment that had also been expressed by Mr Chitauro some months earlier when he stated that people in the Protected Villages were poorer than they were before the establishment of the villages. By 11 September 1978, 70 Protected Villages had been opened in the North-east.

By October it was clear that the opening of Protected Villages had failed to achieve the objectives set. Opening a further 9 Protected Villages in Mount Darwin area, Bishop Muzorewa encountered sullen resentment. The attitude was well reflected by an elderly male inhabitant as reported in the Rhodesia Herald who stated that

... The government had forced the people into the PV's in the first place, and now turned around and expected them to return to their

homes where the terrorist threat was still a real thing. (16)

Reports indicated that insurgents were fining people returning from Protected Villages Rh\$20 for deserting the struggle. By 8 December 1978, all Protected Villages in the Murewra, Mutoko and Mudzi districts and 20 villages in the Mount Darwin district had been opened.

By October of the following year Herbert Zimuto, Minister of Home Affairs (formerly known as Internal Affairs) said the following in reply to questions put to him by The National Observer

In the early part of last year there was much criticism of the protected villages which had resulted in the Government agreeing to dismantle PV's in the Mtoko area. But a sad lesson was learnt at Mtoko (now Mutoko) ... a lot of people lost their lives because of that decision. They fell victim to terrorism because they were no longer protected. (17)

The opening of Protected Villages had been stopped some months earlier, but had resulted in a deteriorating security situation in those areas affected, as well as in public humiliation of the vaunted Internal Settlement. In some cases Protected Villages were opened after having functioned for only 15 months; hardly enough time to become established as potential growth points. Such practices could only have led to the total alienation of the rural population affected.

In fact, admitting their failure to consolidate the support of the local population, Security Forces lifted all restrictions on the movement of inhabitants in those Protected Villages where they had previously proved least successful. (This was generally termed as 'opening PV's') This was in contrast to the normal practice of relaxing population control measures in white or government base areas. A feasibility study conducted by Joint Operation Centre Hurricane prior to the opening of Protected Villages had in fact recommended the relaxation of measures in Madziwa and Chiweshe Tribal Trust Lands as a first step.

### 3.6 Guarding Forces

At the start of the Protected Village scheme, the

Department of Internal Affairs was given the responsibility of defending these villages. At this stage the department had no military or paramilitary function and had to draw personnel from other areas to assist in manning Protected Villages. Villages in Chiweshe Tribal Trust Land were in some instances also manned by members of the South African Police. To meet this new commitment, the Department of Internal Affairs established a new category of official termed District Security Assistants who were distinct from the career District Assistants that performed normal administrative duties. Furthermore, the Department was ill-prepared to train District Security Assistants. Early training programmes were thus carried out by the British South Africa Police and the Prison Service. In time the Army took over the training of District Security Assistants at the Department of Internal Affairs training depot at Chikurubi near Salisbury. The first intake of District Security Assistants concluded their training at Chikurubi in July 1975 and were subsequently deployed in Protected Villages.

As the need for protection forces grew, the Department of Internal Affairs was allocated a number of National Servicemen for their normal 18 month period of service. The first intake passed out early in 1975. Known as 'vedettes' upon completion of their training, they were posted out to Protected Villages as superintendents-in-charge. In many cases a vedette was the only white official within a Protected Village. His major responsibilities entailed the welfare and discipline of his 15 to 20 District Security Assistants, and the safety and protection of the Protected Village. Youth and inexperience played a major role in the problems that these first vedettes encountered. Thus, in late 1975, it was decided to extend call-ups to those men who had no security commitment in the age group 25 to 38. Henceforth men in this category performed their call-up duties within the Department of Internal Affairs. The maturity of these men led to an improvement in the role of the first intake that graduated in November 1975.

In spite of the increased manpower made available to Internal Affairs, it was apparent that the department's primary administrative role was incompatible with protective or paramilitary activities. Furthermore, during 1975 and 1976 large areas of Rhodesia were being resettled, placing an increased strain on Internal Affairs as regards training, command and control, and logistics. Since the Army and Police were loath to perform this function as part

of their normal operations, it was eventually decided to form an autonomous force, the Guard Force. This force was to be exclusively responsible for the security of Protected Villages. First officers and senior non-commissioned officers were recruited during August/September 1975. The Guard Force was officially gazetted as an autonomous Force under the Ministry of Defence on 1 February 1976.

Half of the Department of Internal Affairs National Service allocation and the Chikurubi training base was transferred to the Guard Force. (18) Some District Security Assistants also joined the force, although Internal Affairs retained responsibility for the protection of a number of Protected Villages such as in Chiweshe Tribal Trust Land. During May 1977, the Guard Force was given a 'new look'. From a previously static and defensive role the force henceforth engaged in active patrolling, ambush and anti-ambush techniques, night patrols, etc. From 1978 the duties of the Guard Force were further extended to the protection of white farms. At a later stage the protection of key installations and lines of communication was also taken over from the Police. In May 1978, the 1st Battalion of the Guard Force was formed and committed to an infantry role. By late 1979 the total Guard Force establishment numbered 7 000 men.

Up to September 1978, the newly formed Security Force Auxiliaries (see Chapter 8) had only been deployed in areas where the local population had not been resettled. Largely as a result of the increased deployment of the Guard Force to protect railway lines and white farming areas, it was decided that the numbers of Security Force Auxiliaries would be increased to take charge of a number of Protected Villages. By early October 1978, villages were taken over in the Beit Bridge, Chiredzi, Chipinga, Mutasa and Mount Darwin areas. The success achieved differed widely from area to area, and even from village to village. Although the concept of Auxiliaries was sound, it was hampered by training and recruitment policies employed in the execution of the strategy.

When the war ended in 1979, a number of forces had thus been involved in guarding Protected Villages, South African Police, Internal Affairs, Guard Force and Security Force Auxiliaries. In the majority of cases these forces were foreign to the local population and did not involve them in their own defence on a planned basis. The short training period, calibre of manpower recruited and the static role initially accorded the Guard Force also led to

morale and disciplinary problems. Acts of lawlessness towards the local population did not endear these forces to the people. The proliferation of forces also led to personnel management problems since conditions of service differed. (19) In the case of the Guard Force that had specifically been formed to defend Protected Villages, a number of additional duties had been added. The result was widely differing standards of efficiency between villages guarded by different forces. No uniform approach existed on a countrywide basis. Proof of this is provided by the fact that Joint Operation Centre Hurricane recommended the creation of a 'protection brigade' during June 1978. This force was to comprise a combination of Rhodesia Defence Regiment (i.e territorial) troops and members of Guard Force in an effort to utilize more mature leadership in the former group to improve the standard within the Guard Force.

### 3.7 The Rhodesian Approach and Conditions in Protected Villages

The Rhodesian government approach to the resettlement of people into Protected Villages is contained in the following extracts from an interview with Internal Affairs Minister, Jack Mussett in late 1974

By taking tribesmen to protected villages we are saving their lives. I don't think we can be expected to do more than help them to help themselves. (20)

After stating that difficulties had been met regarding the implementation of farming schemes in Chiweshe Tribal Trust Land, Mussett added

But we are not going to feed these people. They must grow their own crops ... those who have had to leave permanent buildings or property will be able to move back when the terrorist threat is over. (21)

The major problem confronting Security Forces and other ministries involved in the execution of this strategy was lack of funds. Although various efforts were launched to develop Protected Villages as growth points, manpower, finance, political constraints and lack of imagination led to their early demise.

Conditions in Protected Villages differed from area to area. Malnutrition and disease had always been features in black rural life for numerous decades. The concentration of people into such villages tended to exacerbate these problems. To the blacks, resettlement into these villages entailed a move from a rural to an urban community, with a concurrent increase in prostitution, delinquency, vagrancy and malnutrition.

The physical uncertainty of turmoil upset the traditional family basis of community life. Young men carrying arms entered these villages and challenged the authority of tribal elders so disturbing the established hierarchy. Within families the local insurgent youth supporters, or mujibas, started to challenge the authority of the traditional senior members.

Commenting on the increase of malnutrition in Protected Villages, Dr Jim Watt, superintendent at the Salvation Army's Howard Hospital in Chiweshe Tribal Trust Land, stated that several factors contributed to this

The protected villages were too large to be self-supporting, the tribesmen had to walk too far to get to their fields every day, people could not keep guard on their crops because of this and cattle, rabbits and other animals were eating their crops and vegetables. (22)

As stated, Chiweshe and Madziwa Protected Villages were the most effective in the country due to the resources that initially could be allocated to their establishment and development. Yet by 1978 only 60% of the arable land in those Tribal Trust Lands was being cultivated again. (23) On the other hand, Dr Watt was also to admit that certain advantages had become apparent. Health care was much easier, while the Ministry of Education had succeeded in maintaining continuity of education.

An official classified Rhodesian Army study on the effectiveness of Protected Villages in Chiweshe and Madziwa stated that

The "growth point" concept is showing definite signs of development ... The civil population in the PV's (Protected Villages) appear reasonably adjusted. The unpopularity of the PV's is directly related to the restrictions placed on the population, eg. food control, curfews, etc.

While Chiweshe and Madziwa represented the most successful schemes, the majority of Protected Villages were in a worse state. Two case studies within Operation Hurricane serve as illustrations.

The same Army document quoted above states the following as regards Kandeya and Bushu Tribal Trust Lands, and Chesa African Purchase Area (52 villages)

Kandeya was the hub of the war (in the North-east) and major killing ground from the beginning of Hurricane ... With the implementation of the PV's (Protected Villages) and the maintenance of a reasonable force level, CT (Communist Terrorist) activity was de-escalated considerably. Because of the speed in which the PV's were erected in this area, social repercussions on the population were considerable. Again because of the speed ... manpower requirements for the programme have not kept pace and the training of INTAF staff has been minimal. Command and control has almost collapsed due to the poor standard of junior leadership. Because of the inadequate manpower and junior leadership the CT's have regained freedom of movement including easy access to the population and food. Chesa has reverted to a traditional R & R (rest and recreation) and RV (meeting) area for CT groups.

A final lengthy quotation from this study represents a typical example from the worst cases. The areas concerned were Mudzi Tribal Trust Land (15 villages), Mutoko Tribal Trust Land (22 villages) and Murewa Tribal Trust Land (23 villages).

PV's (protected Villages) in these TTL's (Tribal Trust Lands) have generally failed to achieve their objectives for the following reasons:

- i. Lack of manpower
- ii. Lack of equipment
- iii. Dissipation of effort

On average 40% of the population are living in PV's. The remainder are living in the bush, other TTL's or Salisbury (Harare). The CT's (Communist Terrorists) have total control over the population and because they have to control it is virtually impossible to move the people, who are living in the bush, back into PV's, without a major military exercise. This would be costly in manpower and equipment. To enforce

the move back into the PV's, drastic measures would have to be taken, eg. the complete killing of isolated pockets of the population. To ensure the retention of the people in the PV's it would require a sustained military effort in the area for at least six months. The military problems of the area are magnified in that one must find the local population first before one can find the CT. Intelligence gathering is virtually impossible. The civilian population is totally alienated against the Government. Normal civil administration had collapsed with consequent breakdown of law and order.

The 'drastic measures' referred to and illustrated above bear witness not only to a basically punitive approach to the Protected Village programme, but also to a dismissive attitude amongst the white population in general towards the rural black population.

### 3.8 Conclusion

Although evidence has been presented as to the broad failure of the strategy of Protected Villages, this is not to suggest that Rhodesian officials were per se insensitive to the medium and long term goals of these villages. In a planning document issued by the Department of Internal Affairs it was concluded that

The short term objective is the removal of the African people from terrorist influence for the sake of national security, but the full attainment of this short term aim must surely result in our reaching the ultimate goal of more concentrated and more rapid development of the African people and the areas which they inhabit.

The balance of available evidence rather suggests the execution of the strategy of Protected Villages suffered two major shortcomings. First there was an over-emphasis on the short term goal of physically concentrating the local population and the freedom of action this would give the Security Forces. In the second place there was a lack of sustained effort in the allocation of resources to the development of Protected Villages and the increase of the general standard of living in them. In those areas such as Madziwa and Chiweshe Tribal Trust Lands where such a sustained effort had occurred,

the results were correspondingly better than elsewhere.

As stated in the introductory remarks to this Chapter, and borne out by an examination of the geographical distribution of Protected Villages, these villages were erected across insurgent infiltration routes as near to the border as possible. The aim was to deny insurgent forces food, intelligence and contact with the local population during the first stages of their infiltration into Rhodesia. Little evidence could be found regarding the objective of gaining the support of the local population by resettlement and development, or of involving the local population in their own defence. In the light of the acute Rhodesian manpower and budget constraints the lack of attempts to involve the locals in defence of Protected Villages is especially noteworthy.

At a time when the insurgent onslaught on Rhodesia was nearing its final intensification (mid 1977) it did appear to government officials that Protected Villages had been successful in a number of respects. In a document entitled Value of Protected and Consolidated Villages the advantages provided by the strategy were listed as follows (June 1977)

- (a) release of operational forces for use in other areas;
- (b) protection of Government supporters from terrorist attack ...
- (c) the opportunity (of) having a captive audience, to mobilise the masses on Government's side ...
- (d) the chance for planned development of the Tribal Trust Lands concerned together with the people through their tribal leaders, in order to get the economic return to help pay for the vast security bill and to speed up the move into the cash economy ...
- (e) closer contact between the people and the administration and between the people and security forces such as the Police ...
- (f) provision of facilities for the people ... within easy reach ...

Disadvantages included:

- (a) complete disruption of the normal kraal life ...
- (b) tying up of large numbers of European and

African staff on protective and administrative duties ...

- (c) great drain on Government resources financially and materially.

The document concludes

... protected villages have not been completely successful because we have not gone all the way; we have not detained the troublemakers; we do not completely control the movements of the inhabitants by day and night; we do not control agricultural activity and our protective measures are limited. The same applies even more so to consolidated villages ...

As the insurgent onslaught developed from early 1978 onwards, the effectiveness of Protected Villages declined further to the extent described in the 'worst case' example of Mudzi, Mutoko and Murewa Tribal Trust Lands.

In broad terms the strategy of Protected Villages as employed in Rhodesia was not a success. The initial results obtained by operation Overload and Overload Two were encouraging, but the subsequent execution was found wanting. The primary short-term objective, isolation of the insurgent forces, was not achieved. This was not only the result of poorly trained and unmotivated protecting forces manning the keeps, but also as a result of the fact that the insurgent parallel hierarchies mentioned previously were not broken prior to or concurrently with the resettlement of people in Protected Villages.

Although Special Branch did screen the local population during relocation, this was executed in a rudimentary fashion. As the war intensified and resettlement became widespread this limited screening was reduced even further.

In the final instance protective measures employed in Protected Villages proved inadequate. Not only were the physical security devices rudimentary, but the manpower allocated to each Protected Village was the bare minimum. In combination they could not prevent intimidation of the people by insurgent forces. Under these circumstances the support of the local population for the Security Forces could not easily be obtained.

## NOTES

1. J.J. McCuen, The Art of Counter-Revolutionary War (Faber and Faber, London, 1966), p. 53.
2. R. Thompson, Defeating Communist Insurgency (Chatto and Windus, London, 1966), p. 56.
3. Ibid., pp. 124-5.
4. According to the Rhodesian Army manual Military Support to the Civil Power (MCP) (restricted, as amended, dated 1 May 1976), p. xvi, a no-go area was  
... one from which all civilians are excluded by an order of the Protecting Authority, in terms of Section 4(1)(b) of the Emergency Powers (Maintenance of Law and Order) regulations as published in Government Notice 739/73, as amended in order to ensure that they do not become involved in operations conducted by Security Forces against terrorists. Only authorised members of the Security Forces, on duty, will move in no-go areas and no action may be instituted against them for any death or injury caused to any persons within the area by any act performed in good faith in the course of operations conducted during the time whilst the order is in force.
5. P. Stiff and R. Reid Daly, Selous Scouts: Top Secret War (Galago, Alberton, 1982), p. 89.
6. Africa Research Bulletin (1-31 Jul. 1974), p. 3311.
7. According to District Commissioner Bill Johnstone 63 000 truckloads of personal possessions in 5 ton lorries were used. Rhodesia Herald (13 Dec. 1974).
8. It is interesting to compare the approach used by the British in Malaya, where squatter families were compensated for their movement. For building new homes, each family received a cash grant eventually totalling \$100 (US) with the timber and thatch for new huts being supplied at cost price. Transportation was free. In addition each family received a subsistence allowance. J.J. McCuen, Art of War, p. 157.
9. Rhodesia Herald (4 Oct. 1974).
10. See for example the statement made by Internal Affairs Minister Jack Mussett as reported in the Sunday Mail of 1 December 1976.
11. During 1975 the District Commissioner responsible for Kandeya Tribal Trust Land, Jim Herd, attempted a new approach. He established a system of

- protected patrol bases throughout the Trust Land which would enable Department of Internal Affairs patrols to maintain contact with the local population. Patrols were made on horseback between these bases. The system was maintained until such time as Kandeya was resettled. The effectiveness of these attempts could not be ascertained.
12. Rhodesia Herald (10 Oct. 1977).
  13. A breakdown of Protected Villages (PV's) and Consolidated Villages (CV's) is as follows: Maramba TTL, 3 PV's; Uzumba TTL, 17 PV's; Kandeya TTL, 39 PV's; Masoso TTL, 5 PV's; Karutana African Purchase Land, 1 PV; Mukumbura TTL, 3 PV's; Shisuiti TTL, 6 PV's; Chesa African Purchase Land, 9 PV's; Pfungwe TTL, 3 CV's and 1 PV; Mzarabani TTL, 3 PV's; Mutoko TTL, 26 PV's; Ngarwe TTL, 7 PV's; Mudzi TTL, 2 PV's; Chikuizo TTL, 2 PV's; Chiweshe TTL, 21 PV's; Madziwa TTL, 10 PV's; Bushu TTL, 4 PV's; Mtentengwe TTL, 4 PV's; Diti TTL, 2 PV's; Chipise TTL, 2 PV's; Wankie TTL, 1 PV; Sangwe TTL, 2 PV's; Sengwe TTL, 5 PV's; Matibi No 2 TTL, 8 PV's; Holdenby TTL, 9 PV's; Mutusa North TTL, 5 PV's; Manga TTL, 1 PV; Mutema TTL, 8 PV's; Musikavanhu TTL, 4 PV's; Chikore Mission, 4 PV's and Ndpwayo TTL, 9 PV's.
  14. Rhodesia Herald (24 Jun. 1978).
  15. Rhodesia Herald (9 Sep. 1978).
  16. Rhodesia Herald (10 Oct. 1978).
  17. Sunday Mail (4 Oct. 1979).
  18. The other half was used for district administrative duties.
  19. The Guard Force, for example, received no pension fund benefits, while the regular Police, Army and Air Force members received better pay than their Guard Force, Auxiliary and Internal Affairs equivalents.
  20. Sunday Mail (1 Dec. 1974).
  21. Ibid.
  22. Sunday Mail (2 Feb. 1977). Distances to fields were up to 12 km.
  23. Before resettlement Chiweshe produced half of the Rhodesian Burley and 18% of the total tobacco crop. Rhodesia Herald (1 Nov. 1981).