

5.1 The Concept

The concept of 'pseudo' insurgents, i.e. members of the counter-insurgency forces posing as insurgents, is a well established, if lesser known, method of gathering intelligence and one often used by police units involved in crime detection.

In practice select members of the Security Forces are trained in the habits and modus operandi of their enemy down to the smallest detail. Groups then infiltrate known insurgent areas, attempting to establish themselves as genuine insurgents. In counter-insurgency terminology this phase of the operation is known as 'validation' and is aimed both at convincing insurgents and members of the local population of the authenticity of the group.

Once a pseudo team has established its credentials as insurgent forces, the focus shifts to gathering all available information on insurgents and local support for them in the area. In this way pseudo operations can contribute substantially to the total Security Force intelligence picture. In an area where insurgent presence has already been established, as was the case in north-eastern Rhodesia in 1973, and where traditional Security Force intelligence sources have been eliminated through popular support for the insurgent cause, pseudo operations may prove to be the only reliable source of intelligence.

Within the cycle of any pseudo operation, validation and the acceptance of both local population and insurgents of the pseudo team, invariably proves to be the most difficult. To succeed, pseudo teams need to emulate insurgent forces in every respect. Furthermore, the insertion of these teams into an area is in itself a very delicate operation.

In most cases success is only possible if the pseudo team contains a number of former insurgents, recently captured by Security Forces and persuaded to change sides ('turned', in counter-insurgency jargon).

Again, this need not go hand-in-hand with physical intimidation as might seem necessary. Numerous studies on the motivation of 'revolutionary' forces indicate that ideological commitment to the cause of 'liberation' plays a far less important role in motivation than is generally believed.(1)

Research has substantiated that there is a willingness among captured insurgent personnel to change sides in the traumatic post-contact and initial period of capture. Should a captured insurgent not be presented with obvious means of escape and be physically involved in counter-insurgency operations on the side of Government forces he, in effect, becomes committed to the latter cause.

With the aid of these former insurgents, pseudo teams are able to establish contact with the established insurgent support structures within local communities. Through the local population, further contact with insurgent groups could also follow. Information gleaned in this way is passed on to the traditional elements of the Security Forces for action. Only in very exceptional circumstances would a pseudo team itself use intelligence obtained to eliminate insurgent forces. For, if in the latter case, the operation is not entirely successful, the pseudo team would immediately risk being exposed as government forces and thus lose all prospect of gaining intelligence.

But pseudo operations are not exclusively aimed at obtaining intelligence leading to insurgent casualties. The aim of these operations can also be much less subtle. By passing themselves off as insurgents, pseudo teams could sow distrust between the local population and insurgent forces in general. Such actions could include acts of indiscretion towards property, women and cattle, or local customs and tribal beliefs. If, as was the case in Rhodesia, competing insurgent forces (ZANLA and ZPRA) are vying for local support, pseudo practices could fan any friction between such forces into open armed hostility. Ethnic affiliation could aid in this regard.

However, if the strategy is to survive, it needs to be tightly controlled and limited in practice. Once members of the local population and insurgents become aware of the strategy, their

security becomes stricter and further validation and establishment of pseudo teams becomes increasingly difficult. There is the danger, also, that pseudo operations may be used as licence for transgression of the law. If the two factors are combined and members of the local population become aware of Security Forces posing as insurgents and committing crimes in this guise, the real insurgent forces are presented with an ideal propaganda weapon. At such time both Security Forces and the Government are likely to lose some of their claim to legitimacy that seems a natural product of their position as enforcers of, and compliers with, the law.

In recent counter-insurgency history, pseudo operations were first conducted by Special Branch in Malaya. Since the concept was only introduced towards the latter stages of the campaign, the impact was limited. The idea was, however, regenerated and expanded during the Mau-Mau emergency in Kenya under the driving leadership of Capt (later General Sir) Frank Kitson. (2) It was from these experiences that Rhodesian pseudo operations were born.

5.2 The Formation of the Selous Scouts

In the period after the Unilateral Declaration of Independence Special Branch was the first to employ methods of gathering intelligence that could be termed as pseudo operations. These were first conducted in the Zwimba and Chirau Tribal Trust Lands during 1966 and were continued in these areas on an informal basis up to 1973. These first attempts were unsophisticated and mainly aimed at determining the loyalties of members of the local population.

Within Rhodesian Army circles pseudo operations were apparently first suggested by the second in command of the Rhodesian Light Infantry, Major John Hickman. Sometime before 1966 he forwarded a paper to Army headquarters outlining the possible implementation of such a scheme. Subsequently after much delay, a pilot scheme was jointly run during 1966 by the Army, Special Branch and the British South Africa Police. This met with little success, for, at the time, the vast majority of the local population could still be considered passive, if not hostile to the insurgent cause. Little intelligence could thus be gained by posing as insurgents. Moreover, pseudo modus operandi was at an early and rudimentary stage of development. For the time being

serious Army interest abated.

While the traditional sources of Security Force intelligence had been functioning adequately inside Rhodesia up to 1971, a drastic change resulted from ZANLA penetration into the North-east during 1972. Security Forces suddenly found themselves in an actively hostile environment late in 1972.

By the end of that year Rhodesian authorities were fast becoming aware that the security situation in the North-east was deteriorating rapidly. What had seemed to be an effective and sound network of informers dried up in a matter of weeks. Although aware of insurgent presence and intimidation, lack of operational intelligence forestalled effective counter-measures. This lack of detailed and accurate information now led to the regeneration of the concept of pseudo insurgents.

The former second-in-command of the Rhodesian Light Infantry was by this stage Officer Commanding 2 Brigade. Against the background of an almost total lack of operational intelligence and declining Army morale, Brigadier Hickman obtained permission to restart a pilot pseudo scheme. Similar interest had been revived in Special Branch.

With the approval of Joint Operation Centre Hurricane, Superintendent Peterson of Special Branch Harare formed an all-black pseudo team on 26 January 1973. The team of six men, two African Detective Constables and four former insurgents were placed under the command of the Special Branch officer at Bindura. Following rudimentary training the team was alternatively deployed in Bushu and Madziwa Tribal Trust Lands, near Saint Albert's Mission and in Chinamora Tribal Trust Land near Harare. While some useful information was gathered, these operations led to no insurgent casualties. At the time the lack of white leadership and expertise in the team was identified as the major problem. For a few months the team was disbanded, but eventually reorganized - this time to include white members.

A few weeks after the formation of the Special Branch team, the Army commenced with two pseudo teams of their own. These consisted of two Special Air Service non-commissioned officers who had been attached to the Army Tracking Wing at Lake Kariba and a number of black soldiers from the Rhodesia African Rifles. Finally, former insurgents were added to the teams.

With the benefit of some weeks of operational deployment with their own pseudo team, Special Branch could train the Army teams in much greater

detail - as well as provide them with vital and detailed intelligence.

Subsequently a third Army team was deployed with the result that operations could be conducted in the Mtepatapa farming area and in Chiweshe Tribal Trust Land. However, Army disillusionment soon reduced the number of teams to two. By this stage effective control of all teams had passed to Special Branch.

The first tangible success attributed to these teams occurred during August 1973 when a ZANLA insurgent was captured along the Ruya River. During the same operation the concept of 'frozen areas' was developed to minimize the chances of a clash between members of the Security Forces and a pseudo team. The official definition of such areas read as follows:

A Frozen Area is a clearly defined area, in which Security Forces are precluded from operating, other than along main roads. Army Security Forces already in an area to be declared "Frozen" will be withdrawn from such an area by the time stipulated in the signal intimating that such an area is to be "Frozen". This signal must be acknowledged by the recipient. The above ruling also applies to all armed members of the Services and Government Departments with the exception of:

- a. Those personnel tasked to operate exclusively along the Cordon Sanitaire.
- b. Those personnel stationed at Protective or Consolidated Villages and establishments provided with a permanent guard in which case they are restricted to 1 000 metres from the perimeter of such establishments.
- c. In the event of a vehicle breakdown, ambush or mine deterioration on the main road within a Frozen Area those personnel involved are to remain in close proximity of their transport. (3)

On 31 August 1973, a pseudo team effected the first ZANLA casualty to result from these operations.

Within both the Army and Special Branch these pseudo operations were being conducted under the tightest security. Co-ordination between pseudo and regular Army units was achieved on an informal basis. As a result, a map reading error led to a clash between the pseudo team and an Army patrol during which the pseudo team commander, Sergeant Rabie, was

killed. Temporarily all pseudo operations were halted.

By this stage the senior Army and Special Branch members involved were convinced of the use of pseudo operations. The death of André Rabie had, however, indicated that pseudo operations had to be conducted within a formalised structure and co-ordinated with other Security Force actions in an area.

During November 1973 a former Regimental Sergeant Major of the Rhodesian Light Infantry, Captain Ron Reid-Daly, was recruited and promoted to Major as Officer Commanding the pseudo insurgent unit to become known as the Selous Scouts. The personal involvement of Lieutenant-General Walls in this appointment suggests that pseudo operations had received official blessing. Henceforth pseudo operations fell directly under the control of Special Branch. Officially part of Army Tracker Wing, the training camp moved to a secluded venue at Makuti near Lake Kariba where a number of vigorous selection courses were conducted, eventually swelling the unit to about 25 members. The regimental base eventually came to be situated at Inkomo near Darwendale.

When the first troop of pseudo operators was ready in January 1974, they were deployed from Bindura, where their Special Branch officer was located, into Chiweshe, Madziwa and Bindura Tribal Trust Lands. By the end of February a second troop became operational and a third during March. All three troops operated in Shona-speaking areas against ZANLA. Each troop was divided into three operating sections of nine to twelve men, a number of whom were former insurgents. Depending on their number, however, sections increased in strength to twenty and thirty men strong in some cases. Although the unit was nominally under Army control, control of intelligence, deployment and in some instances training was in the hands of Special Branch. At no stage were even the military intelligence organisations allowed to exert any influence over the unit.

Security, however, remained a problem, for even at this early stage it was becoming common knowledge in the operational area that the Security Forces were masquerading as insurgents. (4)

Following operations in Omay Tribal Trust Land bordering Lake Kariba during December 1974 the need for Matabele pseudo teams to operate against ZPRAs within Matabeleland became apparent. These operations co-incided with the discovery that ZPRAs had

started using rubber dingies to cross the lake and enter the neighbouring areas. For the first time Security Forces also encountered insurgent forces using radio's inside Rhodesia. As a result a ZPRA orientated pseudo troop was formed and stationed near Bulawayo.

During the first half of 1974 the success of the Selous Scouts had reached such proportions that Lieutenant-General Walls instructed the unit during May to double its strength from three to six troops. By December this had been achieved with an addition of about 50 former insurgents.

Although the existence of the unit, and to a lesser extent its type of operations had by now become an open secret, official notification of the Selous Scouts was only served during 1977. During April of that year the magazine To the Point reported that:

Rhodesian army chiefs have taken the wraps off a legendary anti-terrorist unit that for two years has played a vital and almost totally secret role in the war ... According to their commanding officer, Major Ron Reid-Daly, they have been directly and indirectly responsible for the elimination of 1 203 of the 2 500 terrorists who have died in the four-year-old war. (5)

In fact, the majority of insurgent casualties inside Rhodesia were the direct result of intelligence obtained during pseudo operations.

3 Pseudo Modus Operandi

Depending on the specific circumstances that enabled a pseudo team to enter an area as insurgent forces, pseudo methods and the deception employed varied widely from one area to the next.

According to then Major Reid-Daly the role of the Selous Scouts was to infiltrate the tribal population and the terrorist networks, pinpoint the terrorist camps and bases and then direct conventional forces in to carry out the actual attacks. Then depending on the skill of the particular Selous Scouts' pseudo group concerned, their cover should remain intact which would enable them to continue operating in a particular area ... perhaps indefinitely. (6)

As already indicated, validation was a

prerequisite for success. Detailed operational intelligence was required to enable a team to enter an area without arousing suspicion. The next step was to establish contact with the local population, and specifically with the insurgent agents within local villages. As a final step these agents or contact men were used as go-betweens with the pseudo team and any other insurgent team in the area. Having made contact a meeting was arranged which would be used finally to establish the credentials of the pseudo team.

Patience is essential in almost all types of pseudo operations. Arranging a meeting with a real insurgent group could entail several weeks during which numerous letters were passed back and forth via mujibas (insurgents' youth supporters) and contact men. If successful, a meeting would be arranged between the two groups at a neutral spot in which the senior group was approached by the juniors. Following this, the members of the two groups met and mingled. Information would be exchanged, beer drunk and possibly some revolutionary songs sung. Information gleaned at such meetings, as well as from other sources was then passed back to Special Branch or directly to Fire Force, the helicopter-borne reaction force, for action. One such specific type of operation that proved to be highly effective, was termed the Observation Post tactic.

For obvious reasons white pseudo team members could not come into direct contact with members of the local population or insurgents. When a pseudo team thus entered a village, the white(s) remained outside and as close as possible. After contact had been made between village members and a pseudo team, for example, the village would be kept under close observation. The reaction of villagers very often gave a good indication of the presence and location of other insurgent groups. Upon confirmation of such suspicion, the Selous Scouts team leader would call in an air strike or Fire Force on the insurgent group. To facilitate this, observation posts were manned on high ground close to the village. Former insurgent members with a detailed knowledge of both local customs and insurgent practices proved invaluable in picking up the most minute indications of insurgent presence. The use of observation posts was especially suited to the rugged terrain in the North-east of Rhodesia and proved highly successful in these areas.

The modus operandi of the Selous Scouts was particularly well suited for engaging the services

of captured or wounded insurgents. It often happened that Fire Force attacked an insurgent group, eliminating most of them and capturing the remainder.

Immediately following capture and the traumatic memory of the preceding fire-fight, these insurgents would be 'turned' by promise and threat. Along with a number of Scouts these prisoners would adopt the identity of the former insurgent group and function as they had done in an adjacent area sufficiently far enough from the local population who could identify them. In this instance the newly-turned insurgents would introduce the group to contact men and in general establish their bona fides with the local population. This method, however, relied upon total security, specifically in the area of the contact. But even where a prisoner had become compromised he could still be used as advisor or source of detailed local information.

A further variation of pseudo work entailed what were termed 'hunter-killer' groups. In contrast to a purely defensive, intelligence-gathering role, these teams were used aggressively. Having located a specific insurgent infiltration route, pseudo teams were despatched along it on the pretext of returning from Rhodesia for resupply and retraining after an extensive operation. En route further information was collected while the group, in contrast to its normal intelligence function, eliminated all insurgents on the way.

Hunter-killer groups were first used north of Mount Darwin in the Mavuradonha area where the rugged terrain inhibited normal Security Force operations.

In relation to their numbers, the success of the Selous Scouts became an important element in Rhodesian counter-insurgency operations. Both senior Army and Special Branch officers continuously called for the further expansion of the unit. Once the Selous Scouts had two platoons trained for deployment, their tactical headquarters shifted to Bindura. As the war spread across the country, deployment of Selous Scouts was no longer limited to the North-east. The first Scouts troops moved to Inkamo Barracks on 12 July 1974, which became the regimental rear base. During January 1977 it was renamed the André Rabie Barracks.

In general, the Selous Scouts achieved less success in penetrating the tighter, more disciplined ranks of ZPRA than was the case in the unstructured command and control groupings of ZANLA. Three Group did, however, achieve considerable success in a

number of clandestine operations into Botswana and Francistown itself.

Employment of the observation post tactic which had been so successful in the North-east proved ineffective in the rolling savannah plains and less densely populated areas of Matabeleland.

Rhodesian external operations commenced on a large scale during 1976 and were mainly aimed at ZANLA bases in Mozambique. A major limitation until then had been the lack of detailed operational intelligence on the location and lay-out of such a base. As will be shown in Chapter 7, it was a Selous Scouts pseudo operation in Holdenby Tribal Trust Land which led to the capture of a ZANLA insurgent who could compensate for this need. This led to the Nyadzonja raid of August 1976.

ZPRA pseudo teams were almost constantly involved in small-unit operations along the Grove road in eastern Botswana. The group was also responsible for the capture of important ZAPU officials in Francistown. The intelligence obtained from these men led to daring Land Rover raids into Lusaka, which temporarily paralysed the ZPRA conventional threat.

In yet other instances, pseudo team members were deployed deep into Mozambique and Zambia on one- or two-man, reconnaissance missions to determine physically the exact locations of bases, or of specific installations in such bases. For this purpose a Reconnaissance Troop was formed during the latter half of 1976. With a maximum strength of twelve men they specialized in deep penetration in preparation for larger external operations.

To facilitate security, the Selous Scouts constructed prefabricated corrugated iron 'forts' at their forward deployment bases at Bindura, Bulawayo, Mount Darwin, Chiredzi, Mutoko, Rusapi, etc. When operating in an area, the fort would be occupied as forward tactical headquarters from which deployment (at night) was undertaken, and where all captured insurgents were interrogated. All captives were hooded and flown into a landing zone in the fort. If the captives were important enough, eg. a political commissar, section leader and one or two other members of a group, the group would be reconstituted with pseudo operators and returned to the area. In this way the team had a sound knowledge of the area from the start while the former insurgents knew who their contact man in each village was and how to contact other groups.

Should a pseudo team establish itself in an area as an insurgent group in its own right, the

process of validification could entail extraordinary measures. It could entail calling in an air strike by Security Forces on their own position or close to it. Alternatively it could consist of select aggression against Security Forces or civilians. One such example was documented in Africa Confidential

After a white farmstead about forty miles north-west of Salisbury had been attacked, it was discovered that one of the two groups in the assault were Selous Scouts ... (7)

In some cases attempts at validification did more harm than good, as was the case with the first attack on a Protected Village. This was carried out by a pseudo team in the Mount Darwin area in Kandeya Tribal Trust Land during 1974 and precipitated a rash of similar attacks by real insurgent groups. A second example occurred in Nyanga North where a resident pseudo team trained and briefed the local population so well in aiding them that by the time real insurgents penetrated the area, a clandestine organisation had been firmly established for them.

Especially during the initial years, many pseudo operations were conducted to sow distrust between members of the local population and the insurgents. Rudimentary attempts towards achieving this objective consisted for instance of theft or offending local customs. Numerous further refinements were added. One such practice entailed calling in an air strike or Fire Force on the insurgent group after they had left a specific kraal. After two or three such occurrences the insurgents invariably suspected the kraal members of informing Security Forces of their presence. In revenge, and to forestall any repetition, innocent kraal members were executed. This would normally put an end to any voluntary support that the insurgents could expect from the kraal. (At the same time such punishment could also intimidate the inhabitants from helping the Security Forces).

A second method used relatively widely once an insurgent contact man had been identified, was for a pseudo team to eliminate him publicly after labeling him a traitor to the insurgent cause. Since the rest of the kraal members knew the contact man to be a loyal and staunch insurgent supporter, such a death would lead to considerable disillusionment and bewilderment. This practice had become so common by the end of the war that the Rhodesian Criminal Investigation Department had opened a number of

murder dossiers on Selous Scouts and Special Branch members. Invariably poor security led to a general knowledge of these measures. As the war progressed and Selous Scouts operations increased and intensified, this knowledge also spread to the local population and insurgent forces in the field.

Although the short term benefits that were achieved by such illegal actions were substantial, once the local population became aware of these practices, it could only have had a distinctly negative effect on their attitude *vis à vis* the government in general. The task of government, i.e. judicious law enforcement and maintenance of law and order, is incompatible with substantial transgression of the law. Under these circumstances it becomes extremely difficult for any such regime to claim legitimacy.

Once insurgent forces and their supporters became aware of pseudo activities, various measures were instituted to identify any such teams. Specific bangles and pieces of clothing were worn which would provide positive proof of identification. On specific instruction, members of the local population changed their method of aiding insurgent forces. Instead of leaving nightly food parcels at predetermined spots, each insurgent received his food individually during daylight. Any white member of such a team would thus be identified. It was only during 1979 that the Selous Scouts succeeded in fielding all-black teams to eliminate this problem.

In reaction to these changing means of identification, the Selous Scouts launched an intensive intelligence effort to remain constantly aware of what these entailed in any specific area.

A major success that did result from these operations was the mutual suspicion and distrust between insurgent forces in the field. Contact between such groups was increasingly preceded by lengthy exchanges of oral and written messages and co-ordination of forces for a single operation presented acute problems. This was even more so in those areas where both ZANLA and ZPRA forces were operating. Within ZANLA, groups frequently attacked one another. To increase this breach even further, pseudo ZANLA teams began attacking ZPRA insurgents, thus ensuring that the next encounter between ZANLA and ZPRA would turn into an armed clash. During the period between 1976 and 1978 when ZANLA attempted to encroach on Matabeleland, the success of this method was such that a captured ZANLA commander confessed to having been shocked by the fact that his first

eight contacts were with ZPRA forces. He was captured by the Security Forces in the ninth.

A further method employed in the Mount Darwin area entailed the intimidation of known contact men to aid the Selous Scouts. Shortly after having called in Fire Force on a group of insurgents in the area, the pseudo team visited the contact man. It was made clear to him that failure to co-operate with Security Forces would lead to his death. Thereafter his kraal was kept under constant surveillance from an observation post. Each time an insurgent group entered the area, the contact man would, for example, hang up a certain blanket after which he would meet the Selous Scouts at a predetermined spot to exchange information. Fire Force would then normally eliminate the insurgent group.

The contact men recruited in this manner were code-named 'Lemon' and 'Orange' and collectively known as 'Fruit Salad'. Since they were also paid for their services, the sudden appearance of riches in both cases led to insurgent suspicion and retribution. In his book Selous Scouts - Top Secret War Lieutenant-Colonel Reid-Daly describes a similar operation code-named Market Garden with the two compromised contact men known as Apple and Banana. This incident occurred at the foot of the Mavuradonha mountains in the North-east. (8)

As stated above, the Selous Scouts eventually could claim the highest kill ratio of all Rhodesian Security Forces. Although Fire Force, and First Battalion Rhodesian Light Infantry, which constituted the quick deployment troops of Fire Force, were physically responsible for most of these insurgent casualties, the intelligence that had led them to the insurgents originated from the Selous Scouts.

Yet, the very success of pseudo operations led to constant demands for the further expansion of the unit. Originally a single platoon of highly skilled men, the Selous Scouts grew into a disproportionately large unit of 1 800 men. A substantive portion were, however, territorial soldiers and thus not permanently attached to the unit. The rapid increase in numbers in itself led to a number of problems. In the first instance the unit was forced to lower its entry standards to obtain enough personnel to comply with Combined Operation demands. This led to a general lowering of operational standards in the pseudo role as did the widespread use of the less-demanding observation post tactic. The latter did not require as high a standard of training and experience as did normal pseudo operations. On the other hand, these

recruits were not all suitable for pseudo-type operations, while their training could not be as thorough.

As a result pseudo operations again shifted in emphasis away from that of gathering intelligence to a more aggressive role where insurgent casualty figures became all-important. This process was aided initially when substantial bonuses were paid for insurgent casualties.

5.4 Conclusion

The major problem touched on above, that of the widespread use of pseudo operations and the illegal nature of some of these practices, relates to a much wider problem, namely that of legitimate political authority. Without a legitimate claim to authority in the eyes of a substantial portion of its population, a government would have to rely on coercion alone to enforce compliance to its laws.

Legitimacy is a political necessity, for it reduces ... dependence on naked power by allowing (the government) ... to rely on authority. (9)

Furthermore, Claude E. Welch points to an important factor in relation to government resorting to force

inconsistent use of coercion can both speedily alienate individuals and focus their discontent upon political institutions. (10)

As a legitimate institution, authorities lay down and enforce compliance to laws that govern human activity in any country. Should this same government provide evidence of not abiding by these same laws, it stands to lose much of its legitimacy in the eyes of those affected. Such loss of legitimacy of necessity focusses on the political structures and institutions of the country. Within rural areas such dissatisfaction is aimed at the manifestations of government, i.e. local administration, the police and other government institutions and agencies.

In the following quotation Frank Kitson addresses the same problem, if more directly relevant to pseudo operations

... there is absolutely no need for special operations to be carried out in an illegal or

immoral way and indeed there is every reason to ensure that they are not, because they are just as much part of the government's programme as any of its other measures and the government must be prepared to take responsibility for them. (11)

Pseudo operations were used extensively in Rhodesia and in the long term proved to be counter-productive. In such operations the population inevitably become the battleground. If adequate protection from the insurgents is not provided, pseudo operations cause the local population to be yet further alienated from the Security Forces. In fact, the widespread use of such operations in Rhodesia trapped the local population between the two opposing sides: the insurgents on the one hand and the Security Forces posing as insurgents on the other. Both sides were ready to exact retribution should the local inhabitants assist the enemy. Yet, purely as a military measure pseudo operations were probably the most effective means of effecting insurgent casualties. According to a study by the Directorate of Military Intelligence in 1978 a full sixty eight percent of all insurgent fatalities inside Rhodesia could be attributed to the Selous Scouts.

Casualty figures in themselves, however, are not a sure indication either of success or failure in a counter-insurgency campaign. This is particularly true in pseudo operations: although numerous insurgents were killed, Security Forces failed to gain any permanent hold over rural areas. Such operations did succeed in creating distrust and confusion both amongst the insurgents themselves and between the insurgent forces and the local population. At the same time the punitive approach to subverted and potentially subverted rural people led to the simultaneous creation of distrust and confusion between the rural population and Security Forces. Security Forces completely lacked a strategy by which they could steadily gain control over increasingly subverted rural areas. Therefore, the Selous Scouts were merely the instruments of an overly aggressive and punitive strategy, simply directed at killing as many insurgents as possible and punishing the rural black population to force them to desist from support for the insurgent forces.

Security Forces should not have attempted to exert an uncertain control over all contested areas. The most seriously subverted Tribal Trust Lands should have been temporarily abandoned. Those areas

securely under government control should have been identified. Working outwards from these secure bases, Security Forces would then have been able to concentrate their resources on adjoining areas which were as yet only partially subverted. These threatened areas could have been consolidated by means of strict population control and by involving the local population in their own defence and development.

Within the structure of the Rhodesian Security Force apparatus the affiliation of the Selous Scouts presented problems of its own. Army control of the unit was initially vested in the Commander of the Army, Lieutenant-General Walls. When appointed as General Officer Commanding, Combined Operations, General Walls retained this relationship. COMOPS involvement in the planning of special force operations has been discussed in Chapter 2, 'Command and Control'. In addition friction developed between the Selous Scouts and the Special Air Service each vying for the status as primary special forces unit.

A particular problem resulting from Special Branch's control over all pseudo intelligence activities was the almost total absence of co-operation with the Directorate of Military Intelligence. The Selous Scouts were in fact under specific Special Branch instructions not to divulge any information to the Directorate of Military Intelligence. It would seem that professional jealousy and personal animosity played a major role in these co-ordination problems. When the concept of pseudo operations was initially put into practice, military intelligence organisations were by their own admission, incapable of controlling them.

Selous Scouts liaison with brigades also left much to be desired. An area would be frozen, pseudo teams would move in, complete their task and be withdrawn with very little intelligence passed on to the brigade headquarters in whose area it had taken place. Again Frank Kitson has very definite ideas on the subject

... special operations must be organised and implemented under the auspices of the normal machine for directing the campaign and the advantages to be gained from them weighed against the psychological implications of them becoming known. Furthermore normal Security Force units should be informed as to the nature and purpose of special operations as far as it is consistent with the requirements of security so that they come to regard Special Forces as

helpful colleagues and not as wild, irresponsible people whose one purpose is to steal the credit from those who carry out more humdrum, but necessary roles. (12)

In the final analysis the technique of pseudo operations in Rhodesia proved highly successful and re-emphasised its value as a method of gathering intelligence. The problems encountered and deviations from the concept were less the result of the Selous Scouts and Special Branch than they were the result of the absence of a coherent Security Force counter-insurgency strategy and a punitive approach to the whole problem of the insurgency.

NOTES

1. See for example A.R. Molnar et al, Human Factors Considerations of Undergrounds in Insurgencies (Department of the Army Pamphlet No 550-104, Washington DC, 1965).
 2. See F. Kitson, Gangs and Counter-gangs (Barrie and Rockcliff, London, 1960); Bunch of Five (Faber and Faber, London 1977 and Low Intensity Operations, (Faber and Faber, London, 1971).
 3. Rhodesian Army, Military Support to the Civil Power (MCP), (restricted, as amended, dated 1 May 1976), p. xvi.
 4. P. Stiff and R. Reid-Daly, Selous Scouts: Top Secret War, (Galago, Alberton, 1982), p. 84.
 5. To the Point, (1 Apr. 1977), p. 53.
 6. Stiff and Reid-Daly, Selous Scouts, p. 76.
 7. Africa Confidential (20 Oct. 1978), p. 3.
- For an earlier example see Stiff and Reid-Daly, Selous Scouts, pp. 90-94.
8. Ibid., pp. 125-129.
 9. R.M. Momboise, Blueprint of Revolution, (Charles C. Thomas, Springfield, 1970), pp. 6-7.
 10. C.E. Welch Jr. and M.B. Taunter (eds.) Revolution and Political Change (Duxbury Press, Belmont, 1972), p. 11.
 11. F. Kitson, Bunch of Fives, p. 298.
 12. Ibid.