Chapter 9

INTELLIGENCE

9.1 Introduction

Intelligence, it is widely claimed, is the life-blood of any counter insurgency campaign. It should be apparent that Security Forces need more than chance and luck if they are to locate and eliminate their elusive foe. Since Security Forces normally have the edge on mobility and fire power, once insurgents have been located, their destruction becomes relatively simple. Thus, the insurgent kill-rate, to name but one indication of success, is a direct result of the intelligence obtained.

In this final chapter on key aspects of the Security Forces counter insurgency strategy a brief look will be taken at the Rhodesian intelligence community as a whole. The problems encountered here were vital in determining the outcome of the struggle as a whole.

9.2 Organisation and Major Characteristics of the Rhodesian Intelligence Community prior to 1973

In the years preceding the outbreak of the December 1972-1980 period of conflict, the responsibility for Rhodesian intelligence was almost exclusively that of the Central Intelligence Organisation of the Department of the Prime Minister. The Central Intelligence Organisation was divided into three branches, namely Branch One, Branch Two and the Administration Branch. Branch One, or Special Branch, was headed by the Director of Internal Affairs. For administrative and operational purposes it fell under the Commissioner of Police. Policy and all aspects related to intelligence were, however, under the control of the Director of the Central Intelligence Organisation.

Special Branch was mainly involved with internal intelligence and until the formation of a military intelligence section some years later, was also responsible for military, or operational, intelligence (in contrast to strategic intelligence of a less detailed but wider ranging economic and political nature).

The Director of External Affairs headed Branch Two. As indicated by his title, he dealt with external intelligence regarding foreign-based political activities. The Branch was almost exclusively interested in political intelligence and also responsible for a number of psychological and propaganda projects, including disinformation. For the greater part of its activities Branch Two worked independently of the rest of the intelligence community.

The third branch of the Central Intelligence Organisation was headed by the Director Administration. Duties entailed administration and logistics.

Other less directly relevant members of the intelligence community included the Criminal Investigation Department which had the normal police-supportive role in fighting crime, the Government Protective Security Department and the Government Telecommunication Agency. The latter produced the codes and cyphers used by the government as well as manufacturing telecommunication equipment.

The Department of Internal Affairs had the vital function of collecting detailed operational intelligence through its system of District Administrators. A monthly intelligence report was in fact produced by this department for internal use. As the war progressed, however, and the local population became less sympathetic to Government, Internal Affairs slowly lost contact with the local population. This was to a certain degree due to particular aspects of government policy (such as collective punishment) that Internal Affairs had to enforce. Constant friction between Special Branch and Internal Affairs further reduced any intelligence co-operation that might have existed.(1) Special Branch (and later military intelligence) even had difficulty in obtaining copies of the aforementioned intelligence reports for their own use.

The Department of Foreign Affairs also had a limited intelligence collection role through its office in the United States of America. This office was manned by a member of the Central Intelligence Organisation. It also had men in Lisbon, Mozambique, Gabon, the Ivory Coast, Greece, Spain and France.

Before 1973, Special Branch had a vast and very

effective strategic network for gathering intelligence. Little difficulty was encountered in providing relatively detailed intelligence to counter what had amounted to little more than unco-ordinated acts of terrorism. Before early 1966 counter-insurgency operations were almost exclusively Police efforts with British South Africa Police and Special Branch co-operation presenting little problem. The joint Police and Army operations that followed served to cement this relationship, while the Army grew accustomed to relying on Special Branch for its intelligence requirements. Inside Rhodesia, and even to a limited extent outside it, Special Branch relied on a system of paid informers and normal Police contact with the local population for information. In the absence of any organized attempts by either ZANLA or ZPRA to politicize and intimidate the local population, this system had proved both reliable and satisfactory.

Since both ZANLA and ZPRA resorted to press-ganging in the absence of sufficient revolutionary recruits during the above period, desertions and even surrenders to the Rhodesian Security Forces were commonplace. This presented Special Branch with sufficiently detailed information to counter the insurgent incursions prior to 1972. At this stage insurgent base-camp strategy and tactics were at an early stage of development. External bases, for example, were relatively permanent and fixed. Security Forces could thus rely on information some months old to plan external operations.

In general, the Rhodesian intelligence community was geared for peace-time operations. Although the insurgent threat was very real, and recognized by Special Branch as such, neither the organisation nor its methods of collecting information was suited to the more specific needs of operational intelligence. The result was that it missed two crucial developments involving ZANU and ZAPU. The first was the reassessment of insurgent strategy, that was to take place in the period 1969-1971. (See Chapter 1) The second was the development of ZANU links with the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO) during the same period. FRELIMO had initially supported ZAPU as the only true Rhodesian nationalist movement. When Joshua Nkomo displayed little interest upon being offered the use of the Tete province as infiltration route into Rhodesia in 1968, it turned its support to ZANU. The latter eagerly accepted the use of the Tete route.

Special Branch registered its alarm early in

1972 with regard to the build-up of forces in Tete, and the generally deteriorating security situation in the province. This followed an attack by the SAS on the Matimbe Base near Gungwa mountain in Mozambique. Although all casualties were dressed in FRELIMO uniform a vital notebook read in Shona 'Go and tell Evenesi that the Zimbabwe boys had arrived. This is a secret, don't tell anyone else'.(2) For the first time the evidence was more than circumstantial. CIO, however, was not convinced. Prior to this the general expectancy among Special Branch members was still that future infiltration would emanate directly from Zambia as had been the case in the past.

9.3 Revolutionary War and Special Branch Intelligence

With the outbreak of armed attacks in late 1972, the Special Branch network of paid informers and police patrols in the North-east came close to total collapse within a matter of weeks. The first ZANLA insurgents had already, according to the report, entered the Centenary and Mount Darwin areas on the night of 4 December 1971. In accordance with their new revolutionary strategy, they remained undetected in the area for nearly a year, engaging in intense preparatory work among the local population. Avoiding the limited Army and Police patrols in an area of more than one thousand square kilometres presented no problem. (From 1969 one platoon of either Rhodesian African Rifles or Rhodesian Light Infantry was deployed to patrol this vast area. By 1972 this had been increased to company-level. Martin Meredith describes the situation as follows:

> Eventually the local population was won over to an extent which later astonished the Rhodesian authorities. Intelligence sources, which had proved so useful to the authorities during the earlier incursions, dried up. For six months, while the guerrillas were building up an extensive network in the north-east, no word of their activities reached the administration. With local support the guerrillas located safe infiltration routes and suitable spots for arms caches; they recruited hundreds of tribesmen as porters and sent others to Tete for crash courses in guerrilla training; older men and women were enlisted to supply food. Hundreds of tons of arms and medical supplies were

> carried across the border and, until late in 1972, the supply columns, on occasions more than hundred strong, managed to avoid army patrol.(3)

The character of the war and Special Branch method of operation within this climate were incompatible. Apart from the fact that the source of paid informants dried up almost immediately owing to a spate of insurgent 'disciplinary killings', the ambushing of normal Police patrols also severely curtailed this source of information. Within a year of the activation of Operation Hurricane it had become evident that the traditional Special Branch intelligence network had run into serious trouble.

A number of other factors also contributed to what was arguably one of the major intelligence and Security Force failures of the war. As mentioned, Special Branch had noted the deteriorating situation in Tete province, and pointed to the influence this might have on the security situation in the North-east although remaining largely unaware of the extent of subversion inside the country itself. These 'alarmist' reports were sharply contradicted by assurances from the Department of Internal Affairs that all was peaceful in the area.(4) In actual fact, both Internal Affairs and Special Branch representation in the North-east was very sparse indeed. Two Special Branch offices (at Bindura and Sipolilo) and two Internal Affairs offices (at Mount Darwin and Sipolilo) were responsible for the whole area from Msengedzi right around to Nyamapanda in the North-east.

Special Branch patrols had been blaming the Department of Internal Affairs for the administrative neglect of the area even prior to UDI in 1965. But its own cover of the area had also been neglected. When Special Branch did press for the more extensive cover of the area in the early seventies, it was vetoed by the Commisioner of Police. The latter was further to follow a strict policy of rotation amongst Special Branch field officers throughout the war, resulting in a discontinuity of intelligence in some areas. During February 1973, Prime Minister Ian Smith candidly admitted

> We darn well know that tribesmen were subverted. We know, for example, that Chiefs have also been playing with the terrorists and they are going to be dealt with, but this isn't anything one can anticipate. It was the information that

> didn't come through. We have also known for some time that we haven't got good enough ground cover in some of these remote areas.(5)

It should have been quite apparent to both the military and Special Branch that while there was no lack of strategic intelligence, the counter-insurgency requirements for operational intelligence were not being met. It was some years before this need was met.

9.4 The Development of Military Intelligence Organisations

The military were, on the whole, completely unprepared for the intelligence requirements of counter-insurgency. In the tradition of reliance on Special Branch, the Army intelligence organisation was, for all practical purposes, non-existent. No intelligence corps existed and no intelligence course was presented. Senior military courses presented in Rhodesia placed little emphasis on the correct use of intelligence. Prior to the formation of the Military Intelligence Directorate (MID) in 1973, the military intelligence organisation liaising with the Central Intelligence Organisation consisted of a military liaison officer known as either the Directory Military Intelligence (DMI) or as the Military Intelligence Liaison Officer, and a Director Air Intelligence (DAI). Both were located at the Central Intelligence Organisation. Their function was solely to provide liaison and advice to Central Intelligence regarding military aspects of intelligence (as this was still a Special Branch function).

On paper the total Army intelligence organisation now consisted of a lieutenant-colonel as Director of Military Intelligence at the Central Intelligence Organisation, a G2 (major) at Army Headquarters and G3's (captain or lieutenant) at brigade levels. The G3, in theory, had an intelligence section at his disposal and was responsible for operational intelligence. The link between the Directorate of Military Intelligence and the brigade commander was supplied by a Military Intelligence Officer (MIO) at the brigades. These officers were mainly orientated towards strategic intelligence. Below brigade level some units had an intelligence officer, but in most cases only a corporal. Invariably the task of Intelligence Officer at unit level was seen as a 'soft job' to be filled by someone not

suitable for any other post. It was also considered the first ready-use pool of officers and other ranks, should a shortage of personnel occur elsewhere. At brigade level the same attitude predominated with the intelligence posts mostly filled by operations staff members on an 'over-and-above' basis.

As a result the Army was almost totally reliant on Special Branch for all its intelligence requirements. Even Army captures were interrogated by Special Branch. As they controlled all sources within an area as well as access to them, Army intelligence requirements had to be routed through Special Branch. This situation grew intolerable after the formation of Joint Operational Centre Hurricane as a permanent operational centre early in 1973, since it was the Army that was mainly involved in countering the insurgency. This eventually led to the formation of a Field Intelligence Detachment under the newly-formed Directorate of Military Intelligence, in which territorial soldiers were used on a regular basis to gather intelligence.

The simple formation of an organisation with no-one to fill the posts, and with very little support, both from the majority of middle- and lower ranking Army personnel, as well as from Special Branch, did not in itself solve the problem. Special Branch had traditionally been responsible for military intelligence in the field and saw the formation of an Army intelligence organisation as unnecessary and a threat to its own existence. It was not until 1975 that the Army was able to convince both the Central Intelligence Organisation and the treasury of the necessity for an Army intelligence organisation.(6)

The tradition that existed (in some units right throughout the war) was for the local Army commander to call on the Special Branch Officer in the area to provide intelligence for the planning of operations. The result was that Special Branch members were giving intelligence briefings up to brigade level. Even if capable, the Army Intelligence officer's job was reduced to the updating of maps and other mundane chores. Invariably these Special Branch briefings were a run-down of incidents over a given period with few military appreciations being made regarding the implications of these incidents or of expected enemy intentions. A vital element of the military planning cycle was thus overlooked. This problem was perpetuated by the fact that the Special Branch officer at provincial or district level was

without exception senior (both in rank and experience) to the unit and brigade intelligence officers. Furthermore, he exercised total control over all local sources. Extracting of relevant military information implied a rudimentary military knowledge foreign to Special Branch officers, schooled in Police tradition.

By and large, military commanders failed to appreciate the shortcomings in the intelligence reports they received. In select cases requests were, however, put for closer Special Branch liaison. In many instances this included a request for the attachment of a Special Branch officer to the unit concerned on a permanent basis. (Only in the somewhat unique case of the Selous Scouts was this allowed as the unit itself was to a large extent created by the Special Branch.) Had both the Central Intelligence Organisation and the Army chosen this solution many of the problems involved with the formation and growth of Army intelligence might have been avoided. Although the above solution had been mooted by Central Intelligence and the Army, it was rejected by the Commissioner of Police. (This would have led to the possible accommodation of operational and strategic intelligence within a single, expanded organisation.) Special Branch had, in the interim, become increasingly concerned about the extent to which its internal intelligence sources were dwindling. This led to the regeneration of the concept of pseudo operations and ultimately to the formation of the Selous Scouts as a unit as recounted in Chapter 5.

The formation of the Directorate of Military Intelligence (MID) in 1973 proved to be a step in the right direction, since operational control of the territorial element of Army headquarters intelligence was also gained. To a limited extent the Directorate was now able to provide Intelligence Officers at lower level. Since, however, these members were territorial soldiers any one unit was served by three or four officers on a rotational basis, the interrupted flow of intelligence was by no means ideal, and served to perpetuate the senior role played by Special Branch officers who were at least fully informed. A further problem was that the initial terms of reference of MID were limited to the armed forces of neighbouring states, thus excluding ZANLA and ZPRA.(7) Owing to the large degree of co-operation between ZPRA and the Zambian National Defence Force and the nearly complete integration between the Army of Mozambique, and ZANLA,

this eventually led to the Directorate being responsible for external intelligence and thus ultimately for the intelligence required for external operations. Previously this function could possibly have been seen as the task of the Joint Services Targeting Committee (JSTC) which formed part of the Joint Planning Staff which had existed prior to the formation of COMOPS. The Joint Services Targeting Committee was responsible for the compilation and updating of a central register of all strategic targets. Except for the odd Special Air Service sabotage prior to the start of the external raids in 1976, Security Force targets were insurgent training camps, holding camps, ammunition dumps, and the like, with economic, or real strategic targets, only being attacked in 1979. It thus seemed a largely irrelevant organisation during the early stages of the war, especially as the Directorate of Military Intelligence and its associated military intelligence sections were taking care of the targets being attacked. With the ever present manpower shortage the Joint Services Targeting Committee was dissolved when COMOPS was formed in 1977. All registers were passed to Military Intelligence.

On 1 July 1975, the Rhodesian Intelligence Corps (RIC) was formed and took over the limited responsibility of the Directorate of Military Intelligence for internal operational intelligence. The latter had been running both the intelligence for external operations as well as for the internal operational areas through its territorial members at brigade and unit level. However reluctantly, the Central Intelligence Organisation thus made room for military intelligence within the intelligence community, although on the clear understanding that RIC deployment would be controlled by Special Branch.

RIC was formed at a late stage and hampered by manpower shortages and the Army's dismissive attitude towards intelligence. After training, RIC members were posted to brigade headquarters and made responsible for intelligence at this level. This was in contrast to their intended task: the formation of intelligence detachments in the field for the collection and processing of operational intelligence, although limited RIC/Special Branch combined ground coverage was done at low level in some areas. Rotating Territorial (RIC) officers thus provided the military intelligence function at brigade and battalion level. Although suffering from a lack of continuity, this was an improvement on the previous situation. Owing to its formation at a late stage

and the manpower situation, RIC could never develop to its full potential.(8)

At brigade level the RIC Mapping Section did extremely good work in the updating of maps, as well as regards the production of operational maps. Originally both mapping and operational research fell under RIC. In the years immediately following the formation of RIC, a Mapping and Research Company was added to the organisation. The mapping section was established during November 1976 and by the end of the war provided a very capable service. The original maps were produced by the Surveyor General after which the RIC mapping section updated them by the use of a silk screen. By 1979 operational maps were also being produced for specific operations. Information for the updating of maps was obtained from field offices set up at Joint Operational Centres who collected it, in turn, from normal infantry patrol reports.

The RIC Research Section was formed in February 1977, and was involved in basic operational research, although none of its members had any operational research qualifications. The computor of the Department of Agriculture's Research and Special Services Section was used for this purpose. A number of the studies made included the ratio of gunships to trooping helicopters in Fire Force, the use of Rhodesia African Rifles or Rhodesia Light Infantry units for use in Fire Force, and efficiency study on external operations; camouflage of aircraft, etc. While some of the results were accepted by the military (eg. the increase of trooping versus gunship helicopters in Fire Force), others were not (eg. light grey as camouflage colour for aircraft). Other results were later proved to be incorrect (eg. that Rhodesia African Rifles were better Fire Force troops than Rhodesia Light Infantry).

Throughout the war the Directorate of Military Intelligence was never accepted as a complete and integrated member of the intelligence community. Professional jealousy continued to hamper co-operation in that some of the desks at the Central Intelligence Organisation retained a military function while neither the Directorate of Military Intelligence nor RIC was allowed to build up its own internal network of sources. It was only after the formation of a joint interrogation team in late 1978 that the Directorate obtained direct access to captured insurgents. Prior to the formation of this team, Special Branch had compiled a standard list of Army and Air Force intelligence requirements which, upon

completion, was passed on to Military Intelligence. Central to the problem was that Special Branch considered Military Intelligence generally to be of a poor standard and incapable of undertaking in depth interrogations. As from 1978, however, the Directorate of Military Intelligence's external operational intelligence coverage grew to be superior to that of Special Branch (who concentrated on the internal security situation) due to their relatively sophisticated radio intercepts and better interpretation of military information. Yet, even by 1978 Lieutenant-Colonel Reid-Daly had the following to say about military intelligence

> Military Intelligence was a misnomer in the Rhodesian Army for, apart from the good work of a few dedicated Territorial officers at Joint Operational Command levels, they rarely produced anything intelligent to work on.(9)

At the height of the war 8 Signal Squadron obtained a monthly 12 000 radio interceptions for Mozambique alone. The figure for Zambia was, however, much lower.

The interrogation team that was now formed consisted of both Military Intelligence and Special Branch members and fell under the operational control of COMOPS. All interrogation of important captured personnel was undertaken by them. As the team was also included in external operations a distinct improvement resulted in both the extraction of relevant intelligence as well as in its dissemination.

In the final years of the war, the Directorate of Military Intelligence thus tended to accept responsibility for the intelligence needed for the planning of external operations, while Special Branch and RIC were in control of internal intelligence requirements. The nature of the war precluded a watertight distinction between military and non-military, yet in general the Directorate's opinion was accepted as regards aspects related to security. However it was rarely accepted as regards decisions with political implications. Although this was not to be faulted, Special Branch internal sources ('ground cover') had slowly been dissipated as the established administration in the Tribal Trust Lands broke down. In many areas Security Force patrols became the main source of regular and reliable intelligence, while ground cover traditionally provided by Special Branch was uncertain. That this had other than purely military implications is

probably best illustrated by the differing predictions presented by Military Intelligence and Special Branch regarding the outcome of the 1980 elections. While the latter gave Bishop Muzorewa's UANC at least a blocking vote, the Directorate of Military Intelligence predicted the possibility of a Mugabe win, although this prediction was made at a later stage. It should, however, be pointed out that Special Branch analysis of the electoral vote was made on the premise that in those areas where proof of intimidation was overwhelming, the party responsible would be disqualified. Seventeen such areas were identified, but Lord Soames informed Ken Flower, the Director General of the Central Intelligence Organisation, only 48 hours before the elections were to start that this would not be the case. At that late stage Bishop Muzorewa could no longer back out; mainly owing to lack of South African backing for any such action. A Special Branch officer later admitted that their 'ground cover had folded completely' under the weight of ZANU (Patriotic Front) intimidation. In her comprehensive account of the propaganda war, Masses vs the Media in the Making of Zimbabwe, Julie Fredrikse gives a clear account of how out of touch the Security Forces were with the black rural population.(10) Launching a massive and very slick Western style political campaign to endorse Muzorewa as Prime Minister, the Security Forces had lost all contact with rural reality.

The one military intelligence organisation that seemed to function relatively smoothly during the war was the Joint Services Photographic Interpretation Staff (JSPIS). As the name indicates, JSPIS had already been in existence during the Joint Planning Staff system and thus had the advantage of being both settled and accepted. This was clearly an advantage since most of the operational intelligence for external operations was derived from aerial photography.

As the insurgents adapted to the ever-increasing frequency of external operations, however, even this source proved to have its limitations. On more than one occasion external attacks were launched on unoccupied bases. This meant Security Forces had to rely on physial reconnaissance as final confirmation in select instances. While this had certain distinct intelligence advantages it also tended to place the whole operation in jeopardy, should the advance reconnaissance party be detected.

9.5 The Role of COMOPS

Probably the single most decisive factor as regards intelligence inside the military was the lack of a central intelligence co-ordination body at COMOPS. To a large degree this could be seen as a further product of the military neglect of intelligence.

Since little allowance had been made within the Joint Planning Staffs for intelligence control and co-ordination, the same situation was perpetuated within COMOPS, although to a lesser degree.(11) Yet it should also be added that at the time of COMOPS formation, March 1977, there seemed to be no senior intelligence officer available to fill the post. Provision had been made in COMOPS Operations Staff for both operations and intelligence sections, but the incumbent initially was a single Army captain with no intelligence training or experience, later to be replaced by an Air Force squadron leader. Their major task was the preparation of COMOPS maps while the intelligence co-ordination that took place consisted in most instances of passing responsibility to Military Intelligence.

There was a need at COMOPS level for an intelligence section with enough background to co-ordinate the work of the other Army and Air Force intelligence sections. At this level all the relevant intelligence from the total intelligence community should have been collated and on the basis of it an appreciation made for presentation to COMOPS at the start of the planning cycle. In an attempt to achieve this, the COMOPS section was enlarged to two officers with the rank of major, one responsible for Zambia and the other for Mozambique. Since neither of these had any background knowledge of the countries concerned, and Special Branch control of sources and general co-operation again proved an obstacle, COMOPS reverted to working directly with MID in the latter stages of the war. One example of the lack of central military intelligence co-ordination is provided by the intelligence process that preceded the attack on the Mozambique bridges (Operation Uric) during September 1979: at various stages, JSPIS, Military Intelligence, Special Air Service, Selous Scouts and finally the planning team at COMOPS carried out duplicating analyses with no central co-ordination of the effort. Had co-ordination existed, a single organisation could have tasked all sources and after completion of the analysis distributed the result to all concerned.

As the war intensified, and especially from

1978 onwards, the Directorate of Military Intelligence began to meet the needs of COMOPS more effectively. A major criticism levelled at the operations planning section at COMOPS, was for shortening the planning cycle that was followed to external operations. This led to the repeated use of set-piece plans which insurgent forces were quick to comprehend and to counter.

9.6 Special Air Service, Selous Scouts and the Special Forces Intelligence Centre (SFIC)

Due to the singular nature of their operations, the Special Air Service and the Selous Scouts each had their own intelligence sections at unit level. As discussed in Chapter 2, Special Forces operations suffered from a lack of central co-ordination. This situation was also evident as regards intelligence co-ordination. The latter was arguably the major incentive towards the formation of a Special Forces headquarters.

The major problem concerned the exchange of operational intelligence between Special Force units and Joint Operational Centres. The Selous Scouts were initially established to gather such intelligence and proved the most important source of this vital material. Their type of operation, and the ever-present fear of compromising themselves, led to the minimum exchange of intelligence between this unit and the Joint Operational Centre in whose area they were operating. An area would be 'frozen' for a Selous Scouts operation (ie. all other Security Forces removed from it) the pseudo teams would move in, complete their operations, and withdraw with little if any co-ordinated exchange of intelligence taking place with local Joint Operational Centre. Even the preceding operation of gathering intelligence in preparation for either a Selous Scouts or Special Air Service operation led to problems since security instructions normally precluded the disclosure of the operational plan.

At the suggestion of the Commander of the Selous Scouts a Special Forces Intelligence Centre (SFIC) was established at Inkomo barracks (headquarters of the Selous Scouts) during August 1978. For the seven weeks of its duration, SFIC was largely involved with its own internal organisation. This culminated in a presentation to, inter alia, the Commander, COMOPS and Director General of the Central Intelligence Organisation in an attempt to establish SFIC

as the prime co-ordinator of operational intelligence.

The concept was that the Selous Scouts and Special Branch would supply all available internal operational intelligence, while the Special Air Service and aerial photography would provide the same for those countries affording shelter and aid to the insurgent forces. Special Forces Intelligence Centre was to be divided into two wings; an external wing manned principally by the Special Air Service, and an internal one manned by the Selous Scouts. Each wing would be divided into ZPRA and ZANLA sections and these again would be subdivided to suit the insurgent operational areas. The Directorate of Military Intelligence would thus have lost its major function, external operational intelligence, to SFIC. But little came of the proposals, as neither General Walls nor Mr Flower saw the need for the Selous Scouts to gain effective control of all operational intelligence at a location removed from Security Force headquarters in Harare. SFIC was thus disbanded and most of its intelligence personnel seconded to the Directorate of Military Intelligence.(12)

Suitable manpower having been its critical limitation, the demise of SFIC led to a drastic improvement of the Directorate of Military Intelligence as military intelligence organisation. Henceforth Military Intelligence was called on almost exclusively to provide intelligence for external operations. This led to the formation of the joint interrogation team (Military Intelligence/Special Branch) mentioned previously.

While SFIC itself had thus proved to be stillborn, its demise was to the distinct advantage of the Rhodesian intelligence community as a whole.

9.7 Security and Counter-Intelligence

As a result of the limited number of aircraft available, the security of external raids presented a great problem. Any relatively large external operation necessitated denuding all internal operational areas of aircraft some two days before the raid for maintenance purposes. These aircraft would be concentrated at either Thornhill or New Sarum, which were used jointly by both civilian and military aircraft. Owing to the standard method of attack by vertical envelopment, the majority of external operations were conducted by air and the concentration

of aircraft was thus a sure indication of a pending attack.

A fact that never ceased to intrigue intelligence officers was that the defence forces of the insurgent host countries were invariably put on alert before an external raid by Rhodesia, indicating at least prior knowledge of an impending attack, even if not of the target itself.(13) While various decoys were attempted, the aircraft problem remained a sure indication throughout the war.

Within the small white Rhodesian community rumours spread quickly and it was extremely difficult to maintain security since all white families had some connection with the war effort. The general attitude prevailing was that a white face was secure and a black one not. With this credulous attitude, senior Army and other commanders exercised little caution in distributing classified information within the white community. With the influx of foreigners into the Security Forces, Special Branch, which was responsible for the security clearance of personnel, was literally swamped and in any case found it impossible to clear 'personnel' from the United States of America, Portugal or elsewhere. Up to the formation of Army Counter Intelligence (ACI) in 1975, Special Branch was solely responsible for counter-intelligence. Owing to the continuing lack of manpower as well as the lack of importance attached to counter-intelligence and security in general, Army Counter Intelligence never really became fully operational but was limited to the investigation of small scale security breaches.

Throughout the war security as an element of planning was never taken into serious consideration, while it continued to be weakened by the employment and placement of foreigners, some of whom were later to be identified as CIA agents (in the Air Force, for example). One example of this ignorance of security was the failure to conceal the concentration of decision makers at COMOPS prior to an external operation. A second example was the call-up of Special Air Service territorial members some days before an external operation.

It is difficult to determine the effect of the obvious lack of security, but little doubt exists that the success of at least some operations was compromised by it.

9.8 Conclusion

The central problems surrounding the intelligence services of the Rhodesian Security Forces may be summarized in the following quotation:

> The central purpose of the various control and intelligence activities must be directed towards the destruction of the clandestine organisation, and towards nothing else. Thus it is absolutely essential that all the intelligence-gathering agencies should be co-ordinated and centrally controlled in such a way that the political objective never becomes subordinated to the military.(14)

Although the formation of the Directorate of Military Intelligence and RIC was the result of an alarming deficiency in operational intelligence, this tended to divide and weaken the unity of central co-ordination. Since the number of skilled men in Rhodesia was limited, it might have been more cost-effective to attempt to adapt Special Branch to the challenges of a Revolutionary War and the requirements of operational intelligence.

The second, and fundamental problem was related to the lack of a national, mainly political, strategy and thus also of a coherent military one. This aspect has already been discussed in Chapter 2.

When the network of agents and informers of Special Branch was found to be disappearing, local administration had also collapsed with the affected areas. Julie Frederikse correctly states

> While Internal Affairs had little control over the military situation on the ground, it had near total control of the information flow from the rural areas.(15)

This removed all official permanent representation and contact with the local population. 'Security comes first, voluntary information comes later.'(16)

Without permanent protection at local level, insurgent forces were free to organise and intimidate the local inhabitants at will. Security Force patrols provided little more than an immediate presence. It was only with the introduction of Security Force Auxiliaries in 1978 that the Security Forces could maintain any such presence. Had a general strategic concept been followed according to which areas under government control were slowly extended

by the use of massive population control measures, and the involvement of the local population in their own defence and development, intelligence 'ground cover' would have been extended concurrently. Although military patrols within the Tribal Trust Lands were numerous and maintained limited contact with the local population, the existing military forces lacked the manpower, inclination and time to maintain a permanent presence within these areas. Increasingly, therefore, Security Forces tended to extract information by force which could only be counter-productive in the medium and long term.

> It is too seldom understood that an unwillingness to supply information to the government on the part of villagers is not necessarily a sign of political support of the guerrillas, as ideologically or emotionally 'motivated' sympathizers in the West are apt to assume. It may of course be the result of the success of the Communist 'violence programme'; or it may be a sign of a generalized local support for the guerrillas. But it may be much more basic and apolitical; an unwillingness to betray local boys ... to a central administration viewed as alien to the village community. Hence the enormous importance in counter-insurgency of involving the locals in their own self-defence units.(17)

In spite of the criticism noted above, however, the establishment of a single effective intelligence organisation able to meet the challenges of counter-insurgency warfare is no easy task. Not only are problems of method and structure encountered, but also more established ones of vested interest and an inability to grasp the complexities of revolutionary war at an early enough stage.

NOTES

1. To an extent the friction between Internal Affairs and Special Branch was due to Branch One's warning that the revolutionary potential in the Tribal Trust Lands was rising rapidly. Special Branch viewed this, in part, as a result of administrative neglect.

2. P. Stiff and R. Reid Daly, Selous Scouts: Top Secret War (Galago, Alberton, 1982), p. 18.

3. M. Meredith, The Past is Another Country,

revised and extended edition (Pan Books, London, 1980), p. 109.

4. To a large extent the blame for the situation that had developed was placed on the shoulders of Internal Affairs, see for example the Rhodesia Herald of 12 Feb. and 5 Apr. 1973.

5. D. Martin and P. Johnson, The Struggle for Zimbabwe (Faber and Faber, London, 1981), p. 8.

6. The extent to which Special Branch was prepared to go in order to forestall the formation of RIC provides substantive evidence to this effect. During 1973 Special Branch broke into offices to obtain copies of a presentation prepared by a senior Army officer towards the formation of RIC. This information enabled Special Branch to counter all arguments in detail the following day when the presentation was given.

7. MID fell under the Army for administrative purposes, but was responsible to CIO for all intelligence-related activities. DMI was the military intelligence adviser to both DG CIO and Commander of the Army.

8. A further factor that had a negative effect on the work done by RIC was the extension of operational areas during 1977. Existing RIC personnel in Operation Hurricane were further thinned out to obtain candidates for service in Repulse and Thrasher.

9. Stiff and Reid-Daly, Selous Scouts, p. 330.

10. J. Fredrikse, None but Ourselves: Masses vs the Media in the Making of Zimbabwe. (Ravan Press, Johannesburg, 1982).

11. The DG CIO appointed an intelligence liaison officer of the rank of chief superintendant at COMOPS (equivalent to Army rank of lieutenant-colonel) but since his was only a liaison function, he could play no effective role within COMOPS itself. As a 'civilian' among military there also tended to be a communication gap.

12. Functionally a further problem related to the formation of SFIC was the addition of yet another intelligence organisation to the total intelligence community. CIO had increasingly come to accept MID as a member of this community, if not wholeheartedly. It was, however, hesitant to extend its co-operation to yet another military intelligence organisation.

13. This was more the case with operations into Zambia than was the case with Mozambique. The FAM were on almost continual standby, presumably due to faulty analysis of Russian signal interceptions.

14. G. Fairburn, Revolutionary Guerrilla Warfare (Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1974), p. 316.

15. Fredrikse, None but Ourselves, p. 87.

16. Fairburn, Revolutionary Guerrilla Warfare, p. 315.

17. Ibid., p. 304.