STUDY PROJECT

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AD-A220 626

THE ARMY OF ZIMBABWE: A ROLE MODEL FOR NAMIBIA?

BY

MR. DAVID C. BENNETT

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90 04 16 026

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

READ INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE COMPLETING FORM

1. REPORT NUMBER	2. GOVT ACCESSION NO. / RECIPIENT'S CATALOG NUMBER
4. TITLE (and Subtitle): The Army of Zimbabwe: A Role Model for Namibia?	TYPE OF REPORT & PERIOD COVERED: Study Project
	6. PERFORMING ORG. REPORT NUMBER
7. AUTHOR(s): Mr. David Bennett	8. CONTRACT OR GRANT NUMBER(s)
9. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME AND ADDRESS: U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA 17013	10. PROGRAM ELEMENT, PROJECT, TASK AREA & WORK UNIT NUMBERS
11. CONTROLLING OFFICE NAME AND ADDRESS: Same	12. REPORT DATE: March 2, 1990
	13. NUMBER OF PAGES: 76
14. MONITORING AGENCY NAME & ADDRESS(if different from Controlling Office)	15. SECURITY CLASS. (of this report): Unclassified
	15a. DECLASSIFICATION DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE

16. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT (of this Report)

Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.

17. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT (of the abstract entered in Block 20, if different from Report)

18. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

19. KEY WORDS (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number)

20. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number)

In the months following independence in April 1980 the government of Zimbabwe was faced with the dual tasks of disarming and demobilizing vast numbers of former Rhodesian soldiers and Popular Front guerrillas as well as creating a new national army. In the months following independence in March 1990 the government of Namibia will be faced with identical tasks. The success of the Zimbabwe experiment would argue strongly that similar methods should be used in Namibia. While certain conditions prevalent in Zimbabwe may not exist in—

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NOTE: At the time this study is being printed information is slowly emerging that a British military team is in Namibia, and that the BMATT concept for Namibia is being considered by high level British military authorities. I regret that I was unable to publish this study when I first reached similar conclusions in September 1989. The paper would have been more timely.

USAWC MILITARY STUDIES PROGRAM PAPER

THE ARMY OF ZIMBABWE: A ROLE MODEL FOR NAMIBIA ?

AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

by

Mr. David C. Bennett

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DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A: Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.

U.S. Army War College
Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania 17103
2 March 1990

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DATE: 2 March 1990 PAGES: 74 CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

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CHAPTER I

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND - ZIMBABWE

About a thousand years ago a Bantu-speaking people migrated from central Africa to an area about the same size as today's France, stretching between the Limpopo and Zambezi rivers. A confederacy of subgroups generally known as the Shona came under the loose domination of the Karanga clan.[1] The center of royal power, commerce and religion was in a large and spectacular stone structure called Great Zimbabwe (or great stone enclosure)[2]; this was one of many such enclosures built by the Shona over several centuries, demonstrating a high level of technical achievement.

The growing confederation remained loosely governed, where local chiefs retained important powers. The Shona culture became homogeneous and was not significantly affected by the arrival of the Portuguese in the 16th and 17th centuries. A limited sense of nationhood started to exist.

Further south on the African continent Zulu dissidents broke from the main empire and in the early 19th century moved away from Natal. One group moved north and destroyed the seat of Shona power at Great Zimbabwe in 1835 before establishing a kingdom near Lake Nyasa. Another group, under the leadership of Mzilikazi, moved into the Transvaal and became known as the people with the long shields, the Ndebele.[3] The movements of the Ndebele brought them into contact with Afrikaner pioneers, who themselves were dissidents moving away from the Cape Colony.

Avoiding confrontation with the armed whites, the Ndebele moved further north, into what is today called Matabeleland.

Under King Mzilikazi at first and under King Lobengula later the Ndebele gradually took over much of Mashonaland (land of the Shona), where they imposed their strict hierarchy and military domination. Unlike the Shona society, the Ndebele government was highly centralized, with autocratic leaders and a firm and well established societal class system. The Ndebele dominated the Shona and are said to have referred to them as "maswina", meaning rabble or dog.[4]

The century of the white-settler (1890s-1980) started with the arrival of hunters, traders and missionaries. A variety of treaties and agreements were signed between the Ndebele and the whites, but the thirst for land, minerals and wealth of the latter continued to force concessions from the former. The discovery of gold in Matabeleland and the influence of Cecil Rhodes would have profound effects on the life of the black populations.

In 1888 King Lobengula brought Matabeleland and Mashonaland under British influence, and Rhodes formed the British South Africa Company (BSAC) with significant powers over the entire area. These powers were extended after the Ndebele war of 1893-94, and increasing numbers of white settlers arrived in the area. In 1894 the First Native Reserves were established, providing land for the black population. Much of the choice land had been set aside for the white population, in what was now being called Rhodesia.

By the turn of the century the influence of the white settlers reached into government, and challenges to BSAC rule began. During all these efforts, culminating in 1923 when Rhodesia became a Crown Colony, the black population remained excluded from any form of political participation. The social, political and economic alienation which had started with the arrival of the Ndebele continued under the growing influence of white power. Following the model in the Union of South Africa (which after World War II would be called apartheid), the government of Rhodesia passed the Land Apportionment Act in 1930, creating areas for exclusive racial occupancy. This enforced segregation was continued in the early 1950s when much of the black population was assigned to Native Reserves.

Although nationalist political parties were most often banned and leaders jailed or exiled, a limited form of political activity existed among the blacks. In 1957 Joshua Nkomo, a lay preacher from Matabeleland, formed the Southern Rhodesian African National Congress (SRANC). The party was banned and Nkomo arrested in 1959. A new black political party was created, the National Democratic Party (NDP) and Nkomo, still in prison, was elected president. Political participation by blacks remained impossible, but party politics started to appear. In 1961 Nkomo's leadership of the NDP was challenged, a split occurred, and the Zimbabwe National Party (ZNP) was formed.[5] The NDP was banned but reappeared with Nkomo at the head, as the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU). By 1963 major challenges to Nkomo split ZAPU once again. The Zimbabwe African National Union

(ZANU) was created as an opposition party and as the biggest challenge to Nkomo's leadership. The leader of ZANU was Robert Mugabe, a Shona, who had been publicity secretary of the NDP. The political split was to widen, and gradually form itself along ethnic lines.

The three major elements included the Shona speaking groups (77% of the population), who increasingly supported Robert Mugabe and ZANU, the Ndebele speaking groups (19% of the population), who increasingly supported Joshua Nkomo and ZAPU, and whites, who closed ranks behind the Rhodesian Front (RF) of Ian Smith, holder of all political power in Rhodesia.

Outlawed in Rhodesia, the leadership of ZANU and ZAPU sought sanctuaries in nearby countries. Released from prison, Robert Mugabe moved to Mozambique in 1974 to establish guerrilla bases and formed the military arm of ZANU, the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA).[6] Joshua Nkomo, also released from prison, moved to Zambia and formed ZIPRA, the (Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army). As guerrilla hit and run raids increased, the polarization of each ethnic group was accentuated, and the political split between ZANU and ZAPU continued to widen. The long history of ethnic confrontation and mistrust between Shona and Ndebele continued.[7] Mugabe obtained assistance from the People's Republic of China, while Nkomo received help from the Soviet Union. Nkomo maintained some fairly extensive contacts with western business interests and held secret talks with Ian Smith.[8] This further alienated the two black nationalist leaders, as did the appearance that ZIPRA spent more

time in Zambia than it did fighting the Rhodesian forces. Mugabe's military leaders suspected that ZIPRA was saving its strength to take over after independence.[9]

The civil war was almost seven years old when the Smith government attempted to form a government which gave the appearances of power sharing. Elections were held in 1979, but neither ZAPU nor ZANU could participate. A Methodist Bishop, Abel Muzorewa took over as head of a black majority government which failed to gain world acceptance. Additional pressures were applied on all parties and the economy continued to decline due to a trade embargo and the effects of the war.

It is against that background that the British government took control once again, called for a conference which was held at Lancaster House in the United Kingdom, imposed a written constitution on the new country, gathered and disarmed the waring factions, and supervised free elections which were held during the last three days of February 1980. The Popular Front (PF) that Mugabe and Nkomo had created in 1977 did not hold; ZANU and ZAPU ran against each other.[10] The clear winner, Mugabe and ZANU, came to power with a strong majority of 57 seats in the House of Assembly, while Nkomo and ZAPU received 20, Abel Muzorewa and the UANC received 3, and Smith and the RF gained all 20 seats reserved for whites.[11] Voter turnout was significantly greater than during the election which had brought Muzorewa to power; the British and Commonwealth supervised cease-fire encouraged almost 1,000,000 additional voters to cast ballots.[12]

On April 18, 1980 the freely elected government of Zimbabwe assumed power, ending 100 years of white rule. Canaan Banana was the first President, Robert Mugabe the first Prime Minister. One of the formidable tasks facing the new government was to forge national unity and loyalty in a country where ethnic and regional differences had always played an important role.[13] One of the manifestations of this unity would emerge in the creation of the new Zimbabwe Defense Forces.

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CHAPTER II

WHY WAS LANCASTER HOUSE ACCEPTED ?

The Lancaster House Agreements, signed on 21 December 1979 by Muzorewa, Mugabe and Nkomo, brought an end to a bitter seven year civil war, returned the country to the British Crown for an interim period, and ushered in majority rule. That so many different actors could have been brought together and accommodate their various needs was a great diplomatic feat. The evolution of the Rhodesian situation since 1923 would not have suggested that ten weeks of meetings in London, under the leadership of Lord Carrington, British Foreign Minister, could resolve as many outstanding issues and bring such opponents together. A new constitution, a new country, black rule and peace came out of Lancaster House, and this chapter seeks to identify some of the forces which contributed to making the conferences a success.

It is important to bear in mind that in 1979 Margaret Thatcher was elected Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, and that the emergence of a conservative government in London raised the hopes of Ian Smith and the Rhodesian Front. These hopes were to be disappointed as early as 25 July 1979 when Mrs Thatcher announced that she was "wholly committed to genuine Black majority rule in Rhodesia."[1]

The Lusaka Commonwealth Meeting

On 5 August 1979, the British Commonwealth heads of state and heads of government conference began in Lusaka. A major

agenda item concerned Rhodesia, or Zimbabwe-Rhodesia as the Muzorewa government had named the country. In a surprising move, the British delegation made new proposals for a cease-fire, a new constitution and free elections, under British and Commonwealth supervision. While these proposals were accepted by the Popular Front (PF) consisting of ZANU and ZAPU,[2] Ian Smith and Abel Muzorewa were caught off guard. If the new conservative Thatcher government in Great Britain would not support them, who would ? A nine point agreement concerning Zimbabwe-Rhodesia emerged from the Lusaka meeting, which became the basis for the Lancaster House conferences.[3]

The Front-Line States

Leaders of some of the "Front-Line States" applied great pressure to the various factions in Zimbabwe to end the war and accept the terms and conditions set forth first in Lusaka, then at Lancaster House. Two of these states, Mozambique and Zambia, had been providing safe havens for the guerrillas and were the seats of the exiled political movements. Withdrawal of this support would be devastating for the nationalists.

In compliance with the economic sanctions which had been established by the UN Security Council, Mozambique closed its borders with Rhodesia in 1976. The results were very damaging for president Samora Machel's government in Maputo, and it was uncertain how long the government could continue to support ZANU and keep the borders closed. The loss of Rhodesian exports which would have been processed through the ports of Beira or Maputo

was estimated at approximately $556 million.[4] In addition Rhodesian Security Forces raids in Mozambique caused over 1,500 Mozambican dead and $50 million in war-related damages.[5] During the Lancaster House conference the ZANU delegation received a telegram from President Machel "Sign... we cannot go beyond July 1980"[6].

The pressure on Mugabe to reach settlement was intense, although his legal advisor, Simbi Mubako, strongly objected to several provisions of the draft British-prepared constitution, such as the 20 seats reserved for whites in the new House of Assembly. British insistence on reserving these seats was one of several conditions included in the constitution to avoid a mass white departure from Zimbabwe after independence. The exodus of technical and managerial skills from the new nation would probably bring the country's already faltering economy to its knees, as had happened previously when Guinea, Zaire, Angola and Mozambique became independent.[7]

During the Lusaka Commonwealth conference, Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere, acting as chairman of the Front-Line States, had informed Margaret Thatcher that he was willing to accept the 20 seats reserved for whites in the new Parliament.[8] Not only had Nyerere maintained pressure on Mugabe on this point, but he had also insisted that Bishop Muzorewa be included in the Lancaster House conference, to provide the broadest possible constituency.

President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia strongly pressured the PF to genuinely seek accommodation, and his target was primarily

Nkomo and ZAPU. The war in Rhodesia had blocked Zambia's access to the maize and fertilizer needed from South Africa, which had been carried over the railroad and impacted heavily on the economy; the country's foreign debt rose to over $1 billion.[9] The country was also subjected to occasional raids by the Rhodesian forces chasing ZAPU guerrillas who, instead of fighting a real war in Zimbabwe were accused of behaving like an occupying force in Zambia.[10]

In Zimbabwe-Rhodesia

The Rhodesian Security Forces no longer controlled much of the rural areas,[11] and although ZANU was confident that its military arm, ZANLA, was performing well on the ground, yet could not hope to control the urban areas. The Popular Front feared unilateral British military action, yet in retrospect this was an unlikely scenario in light of Britain's attitude since the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) in 1965.

The Government of Zimbabwe-Rhodesia could no longer afford the cost of the war (41 percent of government expenditures by 1979)[12], and the economy was declining at a rate of 3% per year.[13] Forced relocation of large numbers of blacks furthered the racial alienation and increased the support available to the guerrillas. Finally, critical support from the Republic of South Africa was being reduced. Since Portugal granted independence to Angola and Mozambique, South Africa had to face two Marxist governments on its borders. The level of support it could provide Rhodesia had to come down, and the ongoing civil war

became an unwelcomed liability. In moves that were very surprising for the times, the South African Prime Minister, John Vorster, made several attempts to bring the RF and the PF together, without success.

Lancaster House

Lord Carrington must first be admired for his ability to have the protagonists even meet in one place. The Popular Front did not want to sit at the Lancaster House conference with the delegation from Bishop Muzorewa's UANC, as this would give it an appearance of legitimacy. Ian Smith had treated Mugabe and Nkomo as terrorists and his army fought a war against their armies. Nevertheless all parties yielded, and for the better part of ten weeks, from 10 September to 21 December 1979 met, argued, walked out, threatened ... and signed an important historic document.

Part of the PF position at Lancaster House was to obtain an integrated military establishment before independence,[14] consisting of guerrillas and British troops, and excluding the Rhodesian Defense Forces. Lord Carrington did not agree, and when the new government came to power it faced a fragmented military. Fortunately, as will be explained in the next chapter, the British Foreign Office and Ministry of Defence found an excellent solution to this problem.

The PF was also bitterly opposed to all the constitutional guarantees for whites concerning property, citizenship and pensions. The PF delegates yielded on these points in the face of British insistence, Lord Carrington's ultimatums and continued

pressure from the Front Line states. While the PF yielded on significant points, one of the major concessions at Lancaster House was made by Bishop Muzorewa, the elected Prime Minister of Zimbabwe-Rhodesia, when he agreed to turn power over to a British Governor.15

British forcefulness, Front-Line State pressure and pragmatism by the leaders of the PF all contributed to the success of the Lancaster House meetings. One background factor of great significance was the lack of superpower rivalry, as Zimbabwe was not grounds for East West confrontation, as had been Mozambique and Angola.16 In the process of transition from a white government to majority rule in Zimbabwe the U.S. did not mind playing a secondary role, letting the British manage the efforts during negotiations, the cease-fire, the transition and the elections. While the U.S. was playing second fiddle, the UN was playing third.

A critical element of the Lancaster House Agreements was the assurance to all three armed factions that the cease-fire did not amount to a surrender. The authority of the new British Governor would be accepted by all factions when Zimbabwe-Rhodesia became a Crown Colony once again, even though the British did not have the military capability to enforce the cease-fire.

On 9 November 1979 the British Parliament passed the Southern Rhodesia Bill, lifted economic sanctions and prepared to assume control over its former colony.17 This further served to convince the participants at Lancaster House that the British were serious. Six weeks later the Agreements were signed when

finally the PF realized that they were facing a new British Governor, but primarily because they had become convinced that the elections would be fair under Commonwealth control, and that they would win the concessions they were unable to obtain at the bargaining table.18

After Lancaster House

Christopher Soames, the new British Governor of Zimbabwe, arrived in Salisbury on 11 December 1979, with a small civil service staff and a few military officers.19 These were the vanguard of the 1,200 strong Commonwealth Monitoring Force which would include 900 British soldiers.20 This Force would have to work hand in hand with the remaining elements of the Muzorewa government, with the commanders of ZIPRA, ZANLA and the RSF as well as with the political leaders of ZANU, ZAPU, and UANC.21 Operation "Agila" had begun.

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1. Colin Legum, The Battlefronts of Southern Africa, p. 128.

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7. Hull, p. 107.

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17. Lewis, p. 8.

18. Colin Legum, The Battlefronts of Southern Africa, p. 140.

19. Brigadier J.H. Learmont, Reflection from Rhodesia, p. 48.

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CHAPTER III

MILITARY SITUATION AT INDEPENDENCE

The Rhodesian cease-fire started on 28 December 1979.[1] "Agila" was the name of the Commonwealth Monitoring Force (CMF) operation which facilitated the movement of Popular Front guerrillas to 23 rendezvous points (RV) throughout the country, occasionally through border crossing points, and from these RV points to 16 assembly areas. Conducted from December 1979 to March 1980,[2] the operation was under the supervision of a Cease-Fire Commission, established in Salisbury (now Harare), and made up of members of the CMF, Rhodesian Security Forces (RSF) and Popular Front. The latter two groups would be represented in equal numbers, and the Chairman would be the Governor's Military Advisor.[3] The agreements signed in Lancaster House assured that the Commission would retain full independence from any existing military organization within the country, enabling it to remain impartial.

Following precise instructions, working jointly with members of the PF and dressed in Patriotic Front uniforms, members of the CMF greeted wary guerrillas slowly coming in from the bush. Neither the Rhodesian Police nor RSF were permitted to be present at the rendezvous points, providing additional assurance to the guerrillas. As the PF forces did not have access to adequate communications, the leaders of ZANLA and ZIPRA had difficulties making contact with the guerrillas; yet by the end of the first period of the cease-fire on 4 January 1980, some 9,000 fighters

had reported in.[4] Cease-fire violations occurred and local commanders often helped curb some problems when units arrived at rendezvous points but did not want to turn in their weapons.[5] From the CMF point of view, the first phase had ended well, albeit two days later than planned.[6]

Fear of military action by the RSF kept many guerrillas away from the rendezvous points. Adding to these fears was the presence in the country of some 6-7,000 South African troops.[7] Three companies of the South African Defense Force (SADF) were stationed in the vicinity of Beit Bridge, on the Rhodesian side of the border, ostensibly to guard the vital rail and road link between the two nations. These could be used to bring in massive SADF reinforcements should conditions in Zimbabwe so warrant.[8]

The second phase of Operations "Agila" concerned itself with moving the guerrilla forces to the 16 Assembly Places which were to hold these forces until demobilization or integration could take place. During January and February 1980 over 21,000 guerrillas gathered in these Assembly Places scattered around the countryside;[9] 15,000 of these were ZANLA fighters who went into 11 of the camps,[10] 6,000 were ZIPRA. An additional 6,000 came in after the elections of February 26-28 and some 5,500 more were believed to remain in Zambia (3,500 ZIPRA) and Mozambique (2,000 ZANLA).[11]

Upon arriving in Zimbabwe, the CMF had made plans for the logistical supply of its force. By mid January 1980 it found itself responsible for supplying the 21,000 strong PF former guerrillas gathered in the APs.[12] To meet the initial demands

of food, air drops were organized until the Zimbabwe Department of Social Affairs could take over, in March 1980.[13] Health conditions in the APs were of great concern, and the CMF medical staff found itself taxed to the extreme. Instead of being responsible for a self-sufficient PF force, the CMF took on important additional duties. The efficient and professional manner in which these duties were discharged would help foster the trust which was growing between former guerrillas and the Commonwealth forces. This trust can be demonstrated by a minor incident, when the Irish Guard, in charge of Assembly Place Foxtrot, convinced ZANLA troops who were turning themselves in that just 48 British soldiers could keep the Rhodesian threat away.[14] It is fortunate that this faith was not tested.

At the time of the cease-fire the RSF were made up of 15,000 regulars, 20,000 white-led territorials, 25,000 auxilliaries, 5,000 Guard Force and the Selous Scouts,[15] and a 1,500 man strong Air Force.[16] It was the potential of air strikes on the assembled guerrillas by the Air Force which prompted the early replacement of certain members of the CMF by Rhodesian forces, on the assumption that the Air Force would not bomb RSF troops.[17] In any event, the CMF was going to need the assistance of the RSF and the Rhodesian Police to insure stability during the political campaign and elections held at the end of February 1980. The CMF had never been charged with maintaining order in the country or intervening in case of cease-fire violations. The force was not large enough, nor was this type of activity in their charter. To many guerrillas turning themselves in to the rendezvous points,

however, the presence of the CMF represented their guarantee of safety. The gradual withdrawal of CMF forces from the field and their departure from Zimbabwe by the end of March 1980 was accomplished very smoothly.

Shortly after winning the elections Mugabe reaffirmed his determination to seek reconciliation with the country's white population, and named General Peter Walls, former chief of the RSF, to head the planned new national army. Mugabe added that he intended to include whites and members of the opposition in his cabinet, which he did.[18] In a widely received radio broadcast General Walls asked the white population to accept the new government, and added that the army would uphold the law.[19] A man who just weeks earlier had planned military alternatives to majority rule and had even been accused of plotting a military coup, General Walls was now trying to give the impression that he was a person with "just a job to do, serving the country".[20] This helped allay fears and stabilize the situation.

The newly elected government of Zimbabwe now faced serious problems: the CMF task was to end after the elections with the repatriation of British and Commonwealth troops, the RSF remained the most viable structured organization in the country; former ZANLA (Shona) and ZIPRA (Ndebele) guerrillas were gathered in camps where conditions were unhealthy and overcrowded, where dissidence could fester and racial tension be revived. In addition many of the ZIPRA guerrillas were not to return to Zimbabwe until after independence.[21] Their leadership had expected to integrate the new Zimbabwe Defence Force at parity

with the guerrillas from ZANLA[22] who outnumbered them, both in the population at large and in the number of fielded troops.

One of the major problems of the demobilization effort was that 7 years of guerrilla war had left many young soldiers who knew no other life than that of the bush, the AK-47 and fights against the whites,[23] and whose political education had been limited for the most part to crude pseudo-Marxist ideology. Their post-independence aspirations were usually limited to obtaining the elements necessary for "the good life"[24] which they believed their fight had earned them. What was to greet many of them was unemployment,[25] a condition affecting Ndebele proportionately more than Shona. A major priority for new government was to find effective methods to promptly disperse the guerrillas from the Assembly Places, which would reduce tensions and allow a return to normalcy.[26] Efforts to resettle former guerrillas would include some use of Tribal Trust Lands, where agricultural production needed great additional efforts to make it efficient.[27] The country had neither a well thought-out plan to merge its three armies, nor did it have resources available for a mass demobilization program. The arrival on the economy of large numbers of young undisciplined youths could have nefarious effects on the social and economic life of the new nation. A primary factor which would influence the Mugabe government in its efforts to integrate the military and demobilize was the need to reach stability after seven years of civil war. Of importance was also the feeling that an integrated military would help maintain the legitimacy of the state, and

that side benefits would be the modernization of the military and the development of manpower skills for the civilian economy.[28] Although the ends were identified, it appeared as if neither the ways nor the means were forthcoming.

By independence on 18 April 1980, Zimbabwe had already received various commitments for assistance: from the U.S. would come $15 million for economic aid and agriculture reconstruction with a plan to provide an additional $25 million the following year; from the United Kingdom came a $15.4 million reconstruction grant with $165 million planned over the next 3 years; from the UN came $5 million for refugee assistance.[29] While this assistance would be far from sufficient to turn the economic down swing around and allow for major projects, it did provide hope and encouraged the new government in its efforts.

In March 1980 Prime Minister-elect Mugabe met with Governor Soames and General Acland, chief of the CMF, where a solution was found to assist the new nation create its national army. The Commonwealth Monitoring Force would depart on schedule, but a British Military Advisory and Training Team (BMATT) would be created under Major General Palmer, and by the end of April 700 officers and men would be deployed to Zimbabwe. Their first task would be the integration of the national army.

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CHAPTER IV

ENTER BMATT

Prime Minister-elect Mugabe, who was also the Defense Minister, realized that the Rhodesian African Rifles (RAR), the main black infantry force under the previous government, had succeeded in working with a broad ethnic base which was something the guerrilla movements had not managed to do very well,[1] even during the heydays of the Popular Front. At various times during the civil war troops from ZANLA and ZIPRA had spent more time fighting each other than fighting the forces of the Smith government. The ethnic makeup of the RAR was to help focus the direction of the efforts towards reconciliation and unity.

Even prior to the arrival of BMATT the new government requested the assistance of the CMF in training 600 members of ZANLA and 600 members of ZIPRA along with Rhodesian Security Forces. The training program was called operation "Merger"[2] and was the government's first attempt at creating new integrated military units. PF faith in the British had been demonstrated throughout the period of the cease-fire, due in part to the great efforts of members of the CMF to remain impartial and show high levels of professionalism; this faith was reflected when a ZANLA commander, speaking to a majority of Shona at an assembly place, said that "we won the election and we must not become impatient but await developments. Meanwhile, listen to your British and Rhodesian instructors and everything will be all right."[3] This attitude would prove to be very helpful in the months to come,

as BMATT arrived, set up, came on line and started its difficult mission.

The creation of the first integrated battalions met with mixed success. The civil war had just ended, ethnic tensions were still high and members of the PF still distrusted Rhodesian whites. To have white instructors was one thing, to be commanded by white former RSF officers was yet quite another. It was also difficult for members of ZANLA and ZIPRA who had been politicized over the years to accommodate each other.

The combination of former members of ZIPRA, ZANLA and RSF was some 80,000 strong, far in excess of the nation's military needs. A solution had to be found if the nation was to absorb and integrate thousands of idle and restive former guerrillas; furthermore the number of white officers was shrinking, some 300 of them having left the army by April. Many of these had been working for the Muzorewa government, and elected to not renew their contracts.[4] The number of adequately trained guerrillas who could replace them was minimal.

Operation SEED (Soldiers Engaged in Economic Development) was an early attempt to place former guerrillas in agricultural camps where they could perform paramilitary service.[5] Some 10,000 members of ZANLA and ZIPRA were engaged in this operation, but its early failure caused the government to close it down and attempt outright demobilization. The lack of success was not only caused by factionalism, but by a legitimate fear by the guerrillas that they would be disarmed and prevented from joining the new Zimbabwe National Army,[6] although Prime Minister Robert

Mugabe has made several statements assuring the guerrillas that no one would be involuntarily demobilized.[7] Offering a Z$350 bonus, the government managed to release 8,000 former insurgents by May 1980.[8] The cost of this program, along with the arrival on the labor force of many unskilled workers was more than country could handle. Demobilization would have to wait but integration could not.

Although Prime Minister Mugabe had asked that the former RSF commander General Walls remain in his job, he found that he had to share power in the new Zimbabwe Joint High Command with Rex Nhongo (ZANLA) and "Lookout" Masuku (ZIPRA), both former guerilla commanders.[9] By late spring four elements were to be decisive in influencing the creation of a unified military force: as former RSF commanders had little faith in the new government they attempted to keep their old units together, so that they would be ready when the situation fell apart; a British-trained battalion was used successfully in an operational environment; there was a mutiny in the RSF-trained unit;[10] and at the end of July General Walls retired.[11]

Prime Minister Mugabe decided that all newly formed units would be ethnically balanced, and that all training would be accomplished by the BMATT. Former members of the RSF could be integrated into these units but would not serve as instructors. A major effort would begin to identify and train sufficient numbers of blacks to fill the required officer and NCO ranks.

This was to be the first phase of BMATT efforts, lasting from April 1980 to mid 1982. The primary focus was on the

creation of integrated infantry battalions, at the same time as some limited other forms of training were being provided.

The goal at first was to train three new battalions of 1,000 men each month. These battalions included equal numbers of ZIPRA and ZANLA in all ranks, as set forth in the criteria established by Prime Minister Mugabe. The leadership of both guerrilla organizations would select potential officers and NCOs in the Assembly Places and send them to the Zimbabwe Military Academy (ZMA). After the month long training the graduates were approved by the Joint High Command, became Lieutenant Colonels, Captains, Lieutenants or NCOs, and were assigned to a battalion. The senior graduate from the training course became the battalion commander, regardless of previous affiliation with either ZANLA or ZIPRA. The highest graduate from the other nationalist army became the deputy commander.[12] The battalion was inducted, moved from an RSF training depot to its own barracks, and a British Major and Warrant Officer were assigned to them for six months, acting as coordinators.

Other related efforts included sending 8 former guerrilla leaders and 4 junior white members of the RSF to the British Command and Staff College at Camberley, and 100 former guerrilla junior officers to Nigeria for similar training.[13]

By December 1980 over 15,000 guerrillas had been integrated into the new Zimbabwe National Army, and twelve infantry and one airborne infantry battalions had been formed.[14]

While the rapid pace of infantry training was going on in the "Sausage Machine" as some members of BMATT called it, other

elements were actively engaged in providing pilot training, tank and gunnery training, as well as combat support training in areas such as communications, medical, transportation, logistics; of great importance yet offering much less glamour was the staff training provided to senior officers of the new Zimbabwe National Army.

Part of the difficulties facing BMATT in creating the new integrated army was shown in November 1980, when ethnic violence erupted in Bulawayo following a ZANU political rally. Over sixty people were killed and four hundred were injured when Shona and Ndebele clashed, demonstrating the fragility of the ethnic equilibrium in the country. The government called on elements of the new army to quell the disorder; BMATT-trained units arrived on the scene and order was restored. The training of the units had held them together and allowed them to operate without regard to their ethnic composition.[15]

Another element destined to complicate BMATT's efforts was the return of former guerrillas who had been trained in Rumania, Angola, the USSR, Libya and Egypt, who brought their diverse skills with them, and who wished to be included in the new army.

Changes in the Joint High Command brought in Lieutenant General McLean as Commander of the Army and Air Marshal Mussell, Commander of the Zimbabwe National Air Force.[16] The white officers saw their power diminish gradually, and they were eventually replaced by former members of ZANLA.

While BMATT was engaged with mass-producing integrated infantry battalions, acting as facilitator and gaining the trust

of its trainees, the government of Zimbabwe called on North Korea to train and establish a Fifth Brigade made up exclusively of Shona, who would provide the current government with its own special loyal force. In light of the loyal and effective actions of BMATT-trained units at Bulawayo the need for such a unit is highly questionable, yet from August 1981 to September 1982 this training took place. That the Harare government did not call on BMATT to train this unit was probably reflecting their concern that the British would refuse to form a "racially pure" unit.

The use of the Fifth Brigade during ethnic troubles in Matabeleland in 1982 and 1983 caused widespread violence, and the government was charged with numerous violations of human rights. The desertion of 2,000 to 4,000 previous ZIPRA enlisted men from the ZNA following the discovery of arms caches in Matabeleland, the dismissal of ZAPU members of the cabinet and the sacking of Lt. General Masuku (Ndebele Deputy Commander of the ZNA) in 1982[17] continued to strain the national unity and did nothing to facilitate the ongoing tasks of BMATT.

The second phase of BMATT efforts ran from mid 1982 to mid 1983, and focused primarily on formal and traditional military training. To accomplish this a major training center at Inkomo was created and operated until 1,400 students had passed its gates by 1984, and the Zimbabwe Staff College was established, providing a 14 week intermediate staff course for officers. The course would be lengthened to 22 weeks by 1984.

The third phase of BMATT work centered on collective and large unit training. A Battalion Battle School was created in

mid 1983, where complete units could train along with armor and artillery. Both a Company Commander and a Foundation course were added to the syllabus at the Zimbabwe Military Academy, and a Battle Group Commanders Course was established for commanding officers. A Junior Staff Course was added to the curriculum at the Zimbabwe Staff College, which was eventually turned over to Zimbabwe National Army instructors.

By 1982 the ZNA was made up of four integrated brigades, a Shona fifth brigade, a commando battalion (based on the Rhodesian Light Infantry), a parachute battalion (based on the Selous Scouts), a mounted infantry battalion (based on Grey's Scouts), an artillery regiment and an armored car regiment[18] and support corps. The Air Force consisted of eight squadrons, air defence group and flight training units.[19] The BMATT had trained all these units except for the Fifth Brigade.

In 1984 the BMATT entered its fourth phase, concentrating essentially on armor, artillery and logistics training; teaching these subjects was complicated by the equipment inventory the ZNA had to work with: three different types of rifles, French and Chinese mortars, Chinese and Soviet anti tank weapons, Soviet tanks built in North Korea, French armored cars built by the South Africans; Chinese artillery and French armored personnel carriers. With a presence now reduced to approximately 60 Officers and men BMATT continues to provide the core of training to the Zimbabwe Defence Forces (ZDF).

By and large the integration of the ZDF has progressed firmly and very efficiently.[20] One of the keys to the BMATT

success (among so many) was the perception by white Rhodesians that they had not been abandoned and the perception by ZIPRA that the BMATT was insurance against ZANLA hegemony. The presence of these apolitical British officers and men prevented each of the three factions in the nation from creating its own separate army. The three groups had supported different contenders for power, had used different sanctuaries, had sought different backers, received different materiel and were tribally different. A comment from an outgoing member of BMATT aptly described the situation: "Our work was sort of like trying to create a single Irish army with all factions in Northern Ireland".

Funded from the Foreign Office and operating with a high degree of independence, the BMATT managed to create an army able to quell civil disorder or factional mutiny without having to call on outside forces, as had to be done during the post-independence army mutinies in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda.[21] BMATT's raw material was made up of former guerrillas who had no conventional tactical training, knew nothing about logistics, manpower, budget or staff work. BMATT had to build from the ground up, especially since many of the whites in the army were leaving. The tension which had existed between the three elements in Zimbabwe could only be overcome by a politically acceptable external organization demonstrating a high level of professional expertise and devoid of any favoritism or alliance. BMATT was just that organization, and the work it has accomplished over the past decade has been of the highest quality. A very deep level of trust and confidence has been

built up over a 10 year period, and BMATT continues its important contribution, helping to train the ZNA into an African army, not an army which looks like a British army in Africa. Its legacy to Zimbabwe is an army which can serve as a model for African armies.

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CHAPTER V

ZIMBABWE'S NATIONAL ARMY TODAY

At the end of 1987 the ZNA included 46,000 soldiers and the Zimbabwe National Air Force included 1,000 airmen.[1] The National Command Authority begins with President Robert Mugabe and includes Lt. General Mujuriu for the ZNA and Lt. General Tungamirai for the ZNAF. Both generals come from the former ZANLA command structure, reflecting the dominant role the Shona occupy in matters of national defense. There are few whites left in any military command positions.

The cost of this large force weighs heavily on the state budget, but due to the government's demobilization efforts it has been reduced from 25 percent of total expenditures in 1980 to 14.2 percent in 1987.[2] In addition to the army the government maintains a 20,000 strong National Militia, a Police Support Unit of 3,000 and regular police force numbering 15,000.[3] By any count Zimbabwe is a well protected state.

The integration of the armed services and the training provided by the BMATT have resulted in a dependable, motivated and effective fighting force. At any one time up to a third of the ZNA is located in Mozambique,[4] keeping the essential rail links to Maputo and Beira open against insurgents. This undeclared war serves two important purposes for the Mugabe government. On the one hand Zimbabwe's actions as a Front-Line state must continue to reduce its dependency on rail and road shipments through the Republic of South Africa; on the other

hand an army occupied at fighting a foreign war will tend to focus less on domestic difficulties, and probably not be tempted to stage a coup. The army can play an important role in the democratic evolution of Zimbabwe, such as by providing training and building basic skills which can be transferred to the civilian economy; the army manages many of its own farms in order to feed itself and reduce its dependency on the civilian market, providing many troopers with useful on-the-job training. In addition the ethnic integration process brings minority Ndebele troops into continued contact with Shona soldiers; this process of integration assists the nation-building efforts.

The success of the integration of the ZNA must also be shown against reported attempts by the South African government to destabilize the situation in Matabeleland in 1981 and 1982. The worst ethnic clash occurred in early 1981 at the holding camp of Entumbane near Bulawayo (Matabeleland), with over 300 killed.[5] South African agents were alleged to have falsified intelligence reports in the Zimbabwe Central Intelligence Organization which helped fan the ethnic strife.[6]

The vagaries of the political life in Zimbabwe also serve to destabilize the army. Nkomo's resignation from the national government, his exclusion from power and the repression in Matabeleland did little to reassure the Ndebele minority. Mugabe's reconciliation efforts resulted in the voluntary merger of the two opposing political parties in December 1987, and in January 1988, after Mugabe became Executive President Nkomo became Vice President of Zimbabwe. The ethnic and political

climates have improved, and an upswing in the country's economy would have a positive impact on the continued socialization of all ethnic groups. Future events in the Republic of South Africa and a possible cease-fire in Mozambique will have a strong impact on the military in Zimbabwe, as adjustments will have to be made.

As important as the political life in the country and the war in Mozambique is the continued contribution being made by the BMATT to the Zimbabwe National Army. The impact of British military officers and NCOs at either the Zimbabwe Military Academy or the Zimbabwe Staff College helps to maintain high standards, provides esprit de corps and increases the self-esteem of the graduates. It is reported that competition to enter the two schools is very keen, and that in the near future the courses will include foreign students from neighboring countries. The prestige which the ZNA can gain by regionalizing its training is just one of the many measures of the success of the BMATT.

What are the "lessons learned" from the BMATT experience ? A small force of professional soldiers can provide effective apolitical advice and guidance to an emerging national military force as long as it does not seek the glory for itself. BMATT did not attempt to duplicate Camberley in Zimbabwe, but rather tried to adapt to African requirements. Realizing that the first requirements were for basic training, the majority of efforts were initially thrust in that direction. To be successful BMATT required strong administrative and logistical support, yet it remained patient when this support was slow in arriving. It focused primarily on soldiering, and avoided ideology or policy.

Careful staffing of key BMATT billets also contributed to its success, and longevity paid off. Building an army is not a task which can be done overnight. After ten successful years in Zimbabwe BMATT's job is not yet done. Only when another full generation of military officers have traveled through the courses and received the training and exposure to models of military professionalism can BMATT consider leaving Zimbabwe.

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CHAPTER VI

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND - NAMIBIA

Early Years

The first inhabitants of Namibia were the San people, also called Bushmen. They were very well adapted to living in a land as inhospitable as was the combination of desert and high plateau which made up most of the territory. During the 15th Century groups of Bantu-speaking people migrated from central Africa into Namibia; they were probably cousins to those who had moved to Zimbabwe five hundred years earlier and founded the Shona nation. The Namibia group, which was to become the Ovambo, managed to live in good harmony with the San and with the Khoi. The latter had migrated from the southern tip of the continent,[1] and would become known as the Nama. These three groups met with early Portuguese explorers and navigators, but little contact was maintained during the next four centuries. The Namibians evolved into two linguistic groups: the Bantu, made up of the Ovambo, Kavango and Herero; the Khoisan, made up of the Damara, Nama and San. These peoples established areas of dominance and managed to live at peace with one another.

The Europeans

Expanding north from the Cape Province came white settlers, who joined with German missionaries in the mid nineteenth century. In 1878 the United Kingdom annexed the area around Walvis Bay and included it within the Cape Colony.[2] Shortly

thereafter Germany established a protectorate over all remaining territory under the name of South West Africa (SWA).

The white population started settling on the best land in the territory, and gradually the African population became excluded from all forms of economic, social and political life, as had happened in Zimbabwe. In 1904 the Herero rose up against the white occupant. At first German reaction was slow, but within three years brutal warfare had decimated almost 80 percent of the Herero and 50 percent of the Nama.[3]

Included in the Allied war effort, troops from South Africa invaded SWA during World War I. As part of the Versailles Treaty the League of Nations mandated the area to the United Kingdom, to be managed by the Union of South Africa. German oppression was replaced by South African rule, and the policies and practices of apartheid were continued. By 1925 South Africa had established a Legislative Assembly, open to whites only. South Africa went as far as to try to incorporate SWA as the fifth province of the Union, but this proposal was firmly rejected by the League of Nations in 1934.[4]

In 1946 the United Nations replaced the League of Nations, and UN efforts to correct the status of SWA were answered by South Africa's request to annex the territory. Although the UN officially terminated the mandate in 1966,[5] South Africa did not change its policies. The government of Pretoria maintained that the issue of SWA was an internal South African matter and refused to recognize UN jurisdiction over the territory. It is against this background that in August 1966 the People's

Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) started military operations on behalf of the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO).[6]

African Nationalism

It was in 1960 that the Ovamboland People's Organization (OPO) which had been created in Cape Town in 1957 to further black political interests was reorganized as the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO). The stated goal of the organization was the complete liberation of the territory from the RSA. Sam Nujoma, an exiled Ovambo, opened SWAPO offices in Africa and Europe.[7] Failing to obtain either independence or concessions through negotiation and constitutional changes, SWAPO announced in 1966 that it would use all means available to achieve its goal.[8] Unlike the reactions which had taken place in Rhodesia where all nationalist political parties were declared illegal and leaders imprisoned, SWAPO was never officially banned; it was subjected to a great deal of official harassment. In an effort to obtain broader popular support, SWAPO claimed to represent all Namibians, not just the Ovambo tribe, and as the major active black political organization it maintained a high level of visibility. Its support remained concentrated in Ovamboland, with minor participation by other ethnic groups. The biggest boosts to its credibility and viability were provided in 1965 when the Organization of African Unity (OAU) formally recognized SWAPO, and in 1973 when the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) accepted the organization as the true representative of the Namibian people and gave it observer status

in 1976.[9] For close to 30 years SWAPO would maintain political pressure and continue limited guerrilla war to achieve it's goal. Due more to outside events and pressures than to SWAPO's efforts, SWA moved increasingly closer toward independence, which it will obtain in March 1990.

The United Nations and the West

During a 20 year period it appeared that a charade was being played out in South West Africa. The actors included the UN, the Republic of South Africa, western powers, SWAPO and the whites in Windhoek. Repeated calls by international organizations to find a solution to the problem of SWA independence were ignored.

In August 1969 the UN passed a resolution ordering the RSA to withdraw from SWA, which was ignored.[10] In 1970 the UN passed Resolution 283 requesting that no state accept RSA authority over SWA, and the International Court of Justice ruled that the South African occupation of SWA was illegal.[11] In 1976 the UN passed Resolution 385 condemning both the occupation of SWA by RSA and its racial practices there; free elections would have to be held for the entire territory under UN control and supervision; South Africa was required to withdraw from SWA, release all political prisoners and recognize exiled SWA political parties.[12] None of this took place.

In an attempt to find a solution to the SWA problem, five members of the UN Security Council tried to deal directly with the Pretoria government and with SWAPO. These five nations, informally known as the "Contact Group" (the U.S., Great Britain,

France, Canada and the Federal Republic of Germany) made proposals in early 1978 for the establishment of majority rule in SWA, and requested that the RSA not hold elections in the territory. Both SWAPO and the Pretoria government rejected the proposals.

In September that year a new Resolution, number 435, was voted by the UN. All parties to the civil war were to agree to a cease-fire, all discrimination laws were to be repealed, and free and fair elections would create a Constituent Assembly which would draft a new constitution for implementation at the time of independence. The United Nations would provide a military and police force to supervise the cease-fire and the elections, and the Caprivi Strip and the area of SWA bordering Angola would be demilitarized.[13] It was to take another 10 years before the elements of Resolution 435 became reality.

In 1981 when the UN attempted to hold meetings in Geneva on the SWA issue, RSA intransigence on basic matters aborted the meetings. In 1982 the UN once again attempted mediation; the RSA response was to link any form of progress to UN recognition of all other political SWA parties, in the same fashion as its earlier recognition of SWAPO.[14] These political parties had been actively supported by the RSA, and UN recognition would have increased the legitimacy of Pretoria's position.

The pressure on South Africa to settle was further increased by the passage in the U.S. Congress of the 1986 Anti-Apartheid Act. In addition to its impact on the RSA, the Act also imposed economic sanctions on SWA. The territory was already suffering

from economic slowdown, reduced investment and decreased fishing revenues.[15]

Military actions continued in SWA and in neighboring Angola where Cuban troops were assisting the Luanda government, and any form of satisfactory settlement seemed far away.

South African Rule

Considering SWA to be an integral part of RSA, and firm in the belief that a military victory was attainable, the Pretoria government for years saw few reasons to respond to any UN or western pressure, or even to openly negotiate the issue; yet important changes loomed on the horizon. In faraway Portugal a change of government in 1974 would have a dramatic impact on SWA. High on the new Portuguese agenda was independence for its colonies, and by 1975 both Mozambique and Angola became free nations. SWAPO and PLAN now had access to bases adjacent to SWA where political activity could take place or from where guerrilla attacks could be launched on the SADF,[16] providing the security of the territory at that time.

In the face of this new threat Pretoria modified its rule in SWA by granting controlled independence. This was to take the form of an internal settlement, similar to the formula that Ian Smith would try in Rhodesia 4 years later, and with about the same limited level of success. The SWA National Party, a white-controlled body, had been representing the territory in the South African Parliament. Under the terms of the internal settlement plan this representation was terminated in 1977, a legislative

body established in Windhoek and elections were held under RSA supervision.[17] The white-dominate Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA) won 82 percent of the vote boycotted by SWAPO. The new government's platform called for SWA independence under military protection of RSA and the establishment of a 3 tier form of government. Apartheid policies would be retained, and SWAPO was rejected as a political force.[18] To improve the appearance of "self-rule", the RSA worked towards establishing a new multi racial army in SWA to replace troops from the SADF as they pulled out.[19] This new army, called the South West Africa Territorial Forces (SWATF), would include members of all major ethnic groups in SWA, yet each unit would be racially segregated.

Walvis Bay had been under the control of South West Africa since 1922. As the possibility of SWA independence increased, so did the danger the RSA faced of loosing this strategic port. Reversing its long standing policy, South Africa unilaterally announced its sovereignty over the port in 1977[20] on the assumption that the matter would not be challenged. It was not, and it can only be guessed that the issue of the vital port would be left for the RSA and an independent Namibia to discuss at some date in the future.[21]

In a surprising departure from its previous stands, South Africa responded to UN Secretary Waldheim's May 1980 settlement proposals. The UN Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG), which was to be created under Resolution 435, would be able to make use of Walvis Bay for logistical support; there would be no restrictions on the UNTAG forces to be deployed in SWA, and the South African

Defence Forces (SADF) military installations in the territory would be reduced by fifty percent.[22] A settlement under the terms of UN Resolution 435 seemed possible.

The major efforts by the South African government in the 1980s aimed to bolster the strength of the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance, increase the military and police posture of SWA by reinforcing the SWATF and the South West African Police (SWAPOL), and militarily weaken SWAPO's PLAN.[23] The position of the internal government of SWA should have been greatly enhanced, and free elections would have demonstrated this. Although it was firmly believed that SWAPO could never win free elections in SWA, these were not held. The DTA infrastructure supported by the RSA was most likely strongly affected by the surprising election results in Zimbabwe, when Robert Mugabe came to power in February 1980.[24] No such surprises were desired for SWA.

The pretense of internal rule in SWA was very shallow. The local Civil Service, without which the government would collapse, was made up of 15,000 South Africans,[25] and Pretoria's appointment of Louis Pienaar, a South African, as Administrator General in 1988 increased the already significant hold of the RSA over SWA.[26]

The 1988 Settlement

With the situation in SWA being dominated by Pretoria to such an extent and with the military situation on the ground not being in PLAN's favor, no progress could be expected. Yet by the end of 1988 major agreements were reached and signed; by the end

of 1989 free and fair elections were held; and by March 1990 an independent Namibia would emerge.

The rapid improvement of the situation in SWA was due primarily to four different pressures:[27] the desire of the Soviet Union to reduce its expensive overseas commitments following Gorbachev's rise to power and the desire to participate in solving regional conflicts rather than exacerbate them; the hope of achieving a notable foreign policy success by the outgoing Reagan administration; the cost of RSA's subsidies to the economy in SWA and the rising number of white casualties resulting from security operations; and the desire by the government of Cuba to extricate itself from a costly civil war in Angola when the level of military aid Havana had been receiving from the Soviets was going to diminish.

In August 1988 delegations from Cuba, Angola and South Africa met in Geneva, and agreed that the SADF would be withdrawn from Angola and that PLAN forces would remain in southern Angola during the transition to Namibian's independence. The Geneva protocol was a precursor to the agreements signed in New York on 22 December 1988 which also provide for the full withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola.[28] Resolution 435 could now be implemented.

In April 1989, violating the terms of the 1988 cease-fire settlement, PLAN forces attacked units of SWAPOL in the northern part of the country. The forces of UNTAG deployed in SWA were not prepared to handle a military operation of this scale, and the SADF offered to respond promptly. Although operating with

the permission of UNTAG Military Commander, General Prem Chand, the reaction by the SADF threatened to unravel the delicate balance. The Front-Line states, the U.S., Soviet Union, Cuba and South Africa quickly took action to resolve the crisis.[29]

The 1989 Elections

In November 1989 free elections were held in South West Africa for the first time. Namibians were asked to select 72 representatives to form a Constituent Assembly and over 97 percent of the electorate voted. Receiving 57 percent of the votes, SWAPO won 41 seats, the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance won 21 seats and 5 other minor parties took the 10 remaining seats.[30] SWAPO's leader Sam Nujoma returned from exile to campaign for his party, and his appeal seemed as strong as had been that of Joshua Nkomo in Zimbabwe ten years earlier.[31] Most observers had assumed that Nkomo would be the winner of the 1980 election; many believed that Nujoma and SWAPO would emerge with an overwhelming majority. In both cases the experts were wrong. Reports of excessive violence, mass detention and murder by PLAN, as well as the April 1989 violation of the cease-fire agreements, may have worked against the nationalist movement.

Starting on 21 March 1990 the government of Namibia will have to bring together all factions of the country and work toward national unity and reconciliation. Some of the early statements made by political leaders have sought to downplay previous differences,[32] the new Constitution promises to include democratic safeguards and important rights for all

citizens, [33] and the threat of military attack by South Africa will have been greatly reduced by the withdrawal of most elements of the SADF. South West Africa no longer will exist, Namibia will become the world's youngest independent state.

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CHAPTER VII

NAMIBIA - WILL IT WORK ?

It is very tempting to suggest that the Zimbabwe model could be exported to Namibia and implemented, and that the same success could be expected. While there are many similarities in the conditions of the two countries, there are also fundamental differences which must be taken into consideration. Both countries are coming to independence following a long period of white minority rule and after a civil war. The black population was excluded from the economic and political life of both countries, and ethnic diversity exists in both societies.

While the Ovambo (and their 7 sub groups) make up half the population in Namibia, no other single ethnic group can account for even 10 percent of the inhabitants; in Zimbabwe the ethnic breakdown is essentially limited to three main groups. The civil war in Zimbabwe, while lasting for only 7 years, was bitterly fought and had a strong impact on the country at large. The white-led RSF was made up primarily of Rhodesians, and the armies of the two guerrilla movements were staffed along ethnic lines. In Namibia the longer civil war was generally limited to the northern territories of Kaokoland, Ovamboland and Kavangoland, with some of the fighting taking place in Angola. A significant part of the government forces was made up of South Africans, who have been confined to bases and are to withdraw by independence. The local military, SWATF, was demobilized by mid-1989. In Zimbabwe the RSF still presented a formidable military threat up

to the elections which lead to independence. Namibia's nationalist movement fielded one guerrilla army, SWAPO's PLAN, mostly composed of members of the Ovambo groups; in Zimbabwe there were two opposing and viable guerrilla armies, with significantly different ethnic support.

In neither country can the nationalist movements claim to have achieved independence through guerrilla war. In both cases external events had a larger impact on the progress toward self rule, and outside negotiations provided the solution. The military success of ZANLA accounted for part of the willingness of the Zimbabwe-Rhodesia government to negotiate; no such claim can be made by SWAPO.

The text of the Zimbabwe constitution was drafted by the United Kingdom, while the Namibian constitution will be the result of local negotiations and compromises. This may provide all participants with a deeper desire to implement its contents than had been shown by Joshua Nkomo, the ZAPU party and the Ndebele nation.

Namibia faces a problem similar to that of Zimbabwe 10 years ago: some guerrillas must be demobilized, some guerrillas must be integrated into a new Namibian Army, and the army must be trained. This army must include former members of SWATF and PLAN, should include all ethnic groups and needs to be trained in unit-size operations, with the equipment available in the country. To meet this unique challenge there can only be one solution: BMATT. Once again demonstrating its apolitical and professional role, and drawing from a decade of experience in

Zimbabwe, the British army should be called on to create an integrated military force and establish sound military training programs and facilities to replace those previously operated by the SADF and SWATF.

Forces of South West Africa

Under the terms of the 1988 New York agreements the South West Africa Territorial Forces were to be disarmed and disbanded by the end of 1989. The forces of UNTAG and of the South West African Police would be used to maintain order, all troops from the SADF were to be withdrawn across the border, all PLAN guerrillas were to remain in southern Angola. As Namibia becomes independent it finds itself without an organized army, navy or air force, an undesirable position for any country. Unlike the situation in other countries achieving independence where the former colonial power can be tasked to assure order in the interim period, it is unlikely that a SWAPO-dominated government in Windhoek will ask the SADF to provide help initially.

The SWATF had numbered about 27,000, divided into several infantry battalions, an airborne company, a signal battalion, a Reaction Force and various support elements. The air component was made up of a single squadron, using the pilots' private light airplanes. All other military equipment and support had been provided by the SADF, which were the primary fighting elements in the war against PLAN.

The structure of the SWATF had been established by the Pretoria government, creating ethnic infantry battalions which

operated in traditional tribal areas. There were battalions of Herero, Ovambo, Kavango, Bushmen and Coloureds. A quick reaction battalion was based in Windhoek, made up primarily of reserves. The great majority of SWATF officers were white, a few were Ovambo or Coloureds.

The South West African Police consisted of three major elements: a 2,000 strong police force; 3,000 special guards acting as ethnic constables in the various tribal areas; and 2 to 3,000 members of a counterinsurgency unit. SWAPOL units were recruited in tribal areas, providing ethnically unified forces. This segregation appears to be more logical than that of the army, resulting in police forces competent in the local language.

SWAPO's PLAN consisted of approximately 6,000 insurgents divided up into small 20 man groups. Few of these units operated inside SWA, and none had received appropriate training for large scale operations. Their equipment was provided primarily from East Bloc sources.

As the long struggle for independence is finally over, the interest and support which had been provided to the protagonists is going to fade. Funding for revolutionary action is drying up, facilities are no longer made available, government priorities are going to shift toward making the new Constitution work and large number of unemployed guerrillas or former soldiers may roam the streets. Much of the military equipment which had been used by the SWATF was South African, and may not remain in the country. Since mid-1989 this equipment has been under the control of UNTAG.

The military needs of Namibia are fairly limited. The nation cannot expect to fully protect itself from an armed attack, yet needs to remain vigilant on its borders. Areas of concern include the Caprivi Strip with the occasional conflicts with Zambia and Zimbabwe, the border with Angola where the rebel forces of UNITA operate, and the long maritime border. The threat of an armed attack from South Africa is remote, as long as the new Windhoek government does not provide the African National Congress (ANC) with bases from which attacks could be launched on South Africa, and refrains from revolutionary exaltations. Within this framework much can be done to assist Namibia in organizing an integrated and loyal army.

Support and Recognition

As soon as independence is declared, the U.S., Great Britain, Canada, France, South Africa and the Soviet Union should open Embassies in Windhoek and assign Military Attaches. The status and prestige which the government and the Namibian High Command could derive from such policies are significant. These actions should be taken regardless of the progress on any other military support programs. The need for practical, technical and immediate military assistance and the need for the building of long term diplomatic relationships should not be combined.

Military Threat

The South African military presence in Walvis Bay has been reduced to a Battalion Group (approximately 1,500 men), a small

naval station and excellent airport facilities. While easy to reinforce, this limited military presence does not present a viable threat to Namibia. Members of the UN Security Council should obtain from the Republic of South Africa stated guarantees that Walvis Bay would not be used as a "jumping off" point for operations against Namibia. These assurances would reduce the perceived threat and permit the Windhoek government to dedicate fewer resources toward its new military.

Army Integration

The new government of Namibia must set as an immediate goal the regrouping and disarming of all dissident elements in the country and the repatriation of any remaining members of PLAN. This should be accomplished as promptly as possible, under the protection of UNTAG forces.

The former members of PLAN and SWATF who will make up the new army will need reassurance and proper support. As it is likely that General Willie Meyer, former chief of the SWATF, will return to the RSA with departing SADF forces, a new military leader needs to be identified and assume his position promptly. This should be a high ranking former member of SWATF who is acceptable to the new government, and who brings sound military experience and background; his deputy should be a high ranking former member of PLAN. Both officers should immediately make public pronouncements of loyalty to the new government and obedience to the constitution. These statements would help reassure the population, as did those of General Walls in

Zimbabwe, and the presence of a senior white officer in the new High Command would be a positive sign that various elements of society are included in building the Namibian infrastructures. Whites who are former members of SWATF have often stated that they wish to stay in Namibia and serve their country.

The Windhoek government should call on the United Kingdom to assign a British Military Advisory and Training Team (BMATT), whose first task would be to review all the "lessons learned" from Zimbabwe. The first elements of a BMATT should arrive in Namibia up to a month prior to independence.

Using procedures similar to those so successfully employed in Zimbabwe, new integrated infantry battalions would be created. These units should be composed of former black and white members of the SWATF, members of PLAN (mostly Ovambo), and include combinations of Kavangos, Damaras and Hereros. The ethnic mix of these battalions should be as similar to the population as possible. Officer and NCO candidates should be selected by the High Command and assigned to training.

All training should be given by British officers and other ranks. Former members of SWATF or SWAPOL may be integrated into the force but must not be assigned training functions. The failure of the initial training experience by members of the RSF in Zimbabwe must be remembered.

Positions of command of the new integrated battalion should be assigned in accordance with the rank order resulting from training. As was done in Zimbabwe the deputy commander should be the next highest ranking graduate from the other force, PLAN or

SWATF, Black, Coloured or White. The strong backing of the government and the absolute training independence of BMATT are two critical elements for this integration to succeed.

Military Education

It is once again to the BMATT Zimbabwe model that Namibia should turn for the greater part of its professional military education. Both a Namibian Staff College and a Namibian Military Academy should be established by the BMATT in the weeks following independence, and the facilities of the former SWATF Military School at Okanhandja should be used. All members of the faculty should be British officers until such time as a sufficient number of Namibians are available to take over. The Namibian Staff College should include junior and senior level Command and Staff courses, as well as tactical and logistics training.

This training is designed to meet long term military education objectives; candidates who are destined to assume command of Namibian units shortly after independence should be processed through a four week leadership program, separate from the College or Academy.

Training for former PLAN or SWATF leaders can also be provided overseas. Candidates could be assigned to the Zimbabwe Staff College, to the British Command and Staff College in Camberley, and to the U.S. Command and Staff College. The latter would be funded under the International Military Education and Training (IMET) category of the U.S. Security Assistance Program.

Namibian Navy

In order to protect its fishing waters and provide adequate maritime surveillance, the Namibian government needs to build up a navy. One of the country's greatest natural resources is the abundant fish along its long coast. To avoid the difficulties which have plagued other African coastal nations, Namibia must have the ability to efficiently patrol its waters and enforce fishing agreements it may have with other nations.

The port facilities at Luderitz are inadequate and too distant from Windhoek to support the naval effort. The docks and repair sheds needed are available in Walvis Bay, under the control of the SADF. The government of Namibia needs to work toward obtaining access to these facilities by engaging the RSA in negotiations which, for the time being, avoid the issue of sovereignty. Leasing arrangements could be made, whereby the United States would provide training and support for a Namibian coastal navy at Walvis Bay, under the "African Coastal Security" program of existing U.S. Security Assistance laws.

As American funding will be very limited, assistance should be requested from other nations having indicated a high level of interest in Namibian independence, such as Canada and France. These could procure limited amounts of equipment to insure that an adequate fleet is available. Training of Namibian personnel should be performed by the U.S. Navy or the U.S. Coast Guard, as has been done successfully in other African littoral states, such as Mauritania.

Namibian Military Aviation

German interest in the stability and development of Namibia should be accentuated by the presence in the country of up to 30,000 ethnic Germans. Although events in Central Europe will take German focus away from Namibia, the Bonn government should provide Namibia with funds to obtain limited but reliable aviation resources. Light helicopters and medium transports would give the new nation the ability to establish and maintain proper command and control over its forces, as well as provide them with a high degree of mobility. This equipment can be procured from the SADF, as it is best suited for operations in the area, and some of it may already be on hand in Namibia. All training for the aviation branch, such as for pilots, mechanics, logisticians or meteorologists should be provided by the BMATT.

Republic of South Africa

Namibia's largest trading partner will remain the RSA for several years. Many economic, cultural, linguistic and social ties will bind these two nations, even though they may differ on fundamental issues. Much of the existing military equipment in Namibia is of South African origin and manufacture. Military hardware procured with funds dedicated for SWA will remain in Namibia following the withdrawal of the SADF, and will have to be maintained. The best source of appropriate military equipment and spare parts for Namibia appears to be the RSA.

A climate of trust needs to be built up between the two former antagonists. South Africa is in an excellent position to

provide long-term assistance to Namibia, and both countries need to make the efforts necessary for reconciliation.

Conclusion

On March 21, 1990 Namibia will end 22 years of limited insurgency and 100 years of white domination. The transition the nation will make toward democracy depends heavily on its ability to reconcile once opposing factions, retain its available talent and expertise, improve its economy, and create a unified and loyal Defence Force. The proposals outlined above call on several nations to contribute toward building the new military, as Namibia's needs cannot be met by a single country.

The major burden and biggest responsibility in this important effort rest upon the United Kingdom. No nation is in a better position to provide the assistance that the BMATT can. Namibia will greatly benefit from the short term integration of its military and the long term influence of its military schools. Using the policies and procedures which have worked so well in Zimbabwe, BMATT can once again demonstrate the talents of the military professional and build a dependable and effective African army.

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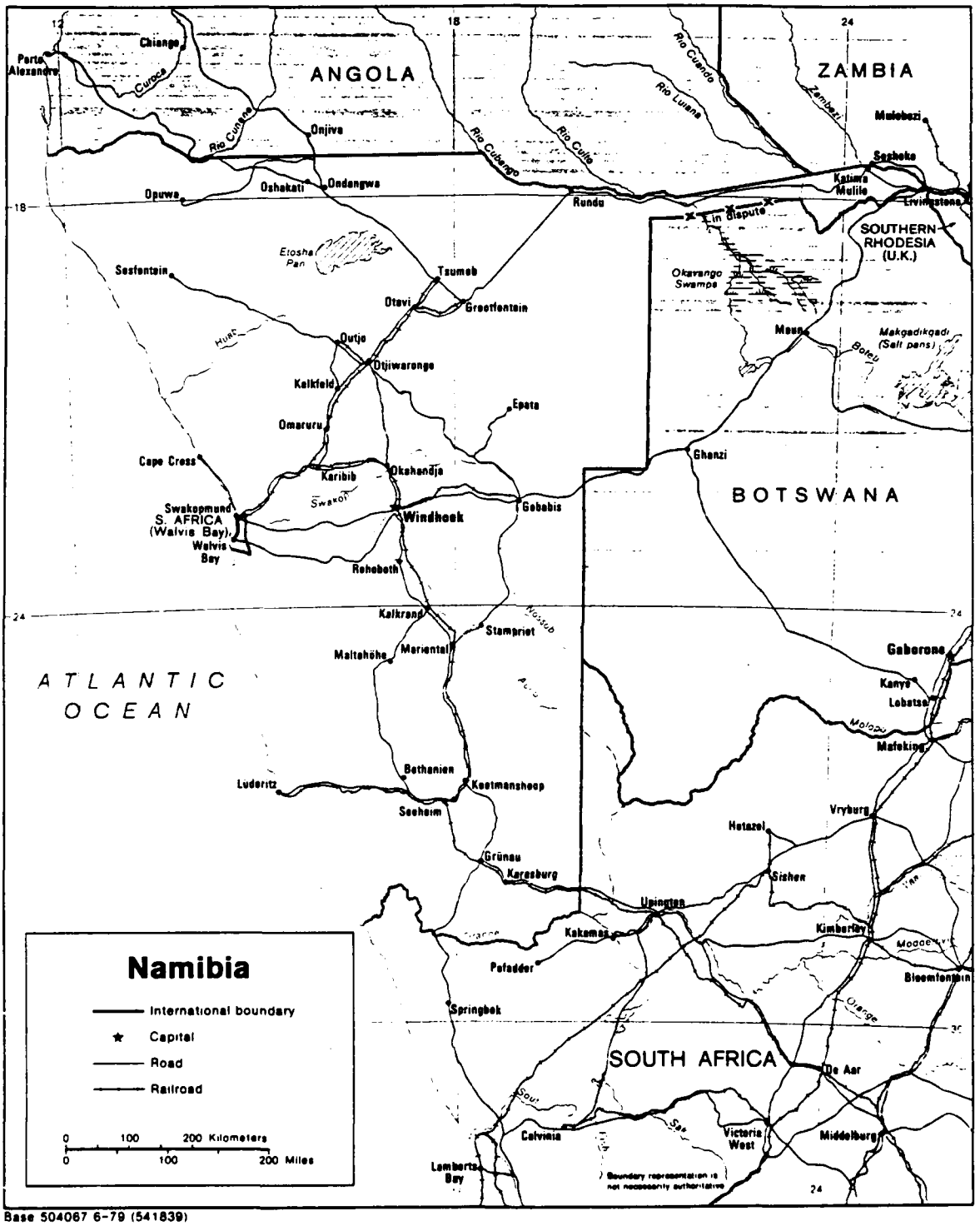
ANGOLA
ZAMBIA
BOTSWANA
SOUTH AFRICA
SOUTHERN RHODESIA (U.K.)
ATLANTIC OCEAN
Namibia
International boundary
Capital
Road
Railroad
0 100 200 Kilometers
0 100 200 Miles
Boundary representation is not necessarily authoritative
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