

Parallel Diplomacy, Parallel War: The PIDE/DGS's Dealings with Rhodesia and South Africa, 1961–74

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Abstract

PIDE/DGS, Portugal's secret police during the New State (1932–74), had an important role to play in the country's colonial wars, which lasted from 1961 to 1974. Using documentation circulated at meetings held regularly with the police forces and intelligence services of UDI Rhodesia and South Africa, this article attempts to reveal the scale, and the limitations, of PIDE/DGS's ambitions in that conflict.

Keywords

decolonization, PIDE, Portugal, Rhodesia, South Africa, war

On 18 May 1974, *The Economist* published a scathing attack on the recently extinguished Portuguese political police, the DGS (Direcção Geral de Segurança, better known by its previous name, PIDE (Policia Internacional e de Defesa do Estado)), whose headquarters, in the wake of the revolution of 25 April, was now in the hands of the military. The unnamed correspondent discounted lingering fears about the PIDE agents still at large: 'I doubt whether those of its members who are still at liberty could constitute a threat to anyone but themselves'. The PIDE was portrayed as hopelessly old-fashioned. Officers were of poor quality; there were no computerized records; workshops and labs were out of date; the political indoctrination of the agents 'would have pleased someone like Marshal Pétain 40 years ago'.

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The journalist concluded, 'it seems incredible that the PIDE was one of the pillars of the regime. Yet everyone says it was'. Contrary to *The Economist's* jaundiced view, the PIDE was in fact one of the most formidable internal security organizations in twentieth-century Europe. It was as strong, or as modern, as it had to be, in order to keep Portugal loyal to António de Oliveira Salazar and his successor, Marcello Caetano. Neither of the two men, academics by training, wanted the country to be thought of as a police state but, in the final instance, it was force that kept them in power and their regime, the New State, alive. Given the New State's often difficult relationship with the armed forces, much of this force was deployed by the PIDE.

The PIDE/DGS was not bumbling and incompetent: it could be efficient, ruthless, and vindictive, as its 1965 assassination of opposition leader Humberto Delgado in Spain showed. It had also been extremely active since the late 1950s in the Portuguese colonies – by then rebranded 'Overseas Provinces' – where it played a number of crucial roles. While in Portugal the PIDE carried out a silent war against opposition forces, notably the Portuguese Communist Party, in the colonies it had its hands full repressing, with greater ferocity and openness, the local nationalist movements and their sympathizers.¹ But it had other roles to play as well, and these tended to intensify as the wars wore on, and the shortcomings of the Portuguese armed forces – and their growing estrangement from the conflict, which the PIDE charted – became ever more evident. The PIDE, which had been initially charged with policing the borders and crushing any political dissent in the colonies (including separatist sentiment among white settlers²), came to be relied on by some military commanders after the outbreak of war in 1961 as a source of reliable information about the enemy's whereabouts and intentions. From this it graduated to fighting its own war and attempting to influence Portuguese foreign policy.³ It also played an important role in the murders of two African nationalist leaders, FRELIMO's Eduardo Mondlane (killed by an exploding parcel in Dar es Salaam, in February 1969), and the PAIGC's Amílcar Cabral, (shot dead in Conakry, in January 1973), on both occasions cooperating with the murdered men's disgruntled followers.⁴ The *Sunday Times* deemed the PIDE the only efficient branch of government in Mozambique.⁵

Just as the military leadership of Portugal, Rhodesia and South Africa met regularly from 1961 onwards, and especially after the launch, in October 1970,

1 On the first phase of the PIDE's existence, see D.L. Wheeler, 'In the Service of Order: The Portuguese Political Police and the British, German and Spanish Intelligence, 1932–1945', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 18 (1983), 1–25. A general history of the corporation can be found in I. Flunser Pimentel, *A História da PIDE* (Lisbon 2007). Its actions in Africa are the subject of D. Cabrita Mateus' *A PIDE-DGS na Guerra Colonial (1961–1974)* (Lisbon 2004, 2nd edition 2011).

2 See F. Tavares Pimenta, 'Angola's Whites: Political Behaviour and National Identity', *Portuguese Journal of Social Science*, 4, 3 (2005), 169–93.

3 See Flunser Pimentel, *História da PIDE*, 499, for a description of the change of attitude towards the PIDE in military circles brought about by the colonial wars.

4 See Cabrita Mateus, *A PIDE/DGS*, 169–73, for a summary of PIDE's involvement in these assassinations.

5 *The Sunday Times* (London), (10 October 1971), 41.

of the top secret 'Exercise ALCORA',⁶ so too did their police forces and intelligence services meet to analyse the threats common to them and to coordinate responses.⁷ Inter-service rivalries in Portuguese Africa were an initial difficulty, as other agencies sought, in vain, to resist the PIDE's growth.⁸ These meetings occurred in South African, Rhodesian and Portuguese territory, in the latter case rotating between Luanda, Lourenço Marques (today's Maputo) and Lisbon. Agendas were agreed in advance and discussion papers circulated; in some cases minutes and even transcripts of the discussions survive. These provide a fascinating glimpse into the mindset of the men at the forefront of the attempt to protect the 'white redoubt' in southern Africa. The PIDE combined these police and intelligence roles, and so its director-general, Major Silva Pais, and the provincial directors in Angola and Mozambique, Aníbal São José Lopes and António Vaz respectively, held frequent meetings with their South African and Rhodesian counterparts in both the police forces and the intelligence services.⁹ This article is based on accounts and minutes of these meetings, as well as supporting material to be found in Portuguese, Rhodesian, and South African archives, and its aim is to investigate the significance of the PIDE's involvement in Portugal's war effort, as well as the scale of its ambition, as laid out before its sister services in Rhodesia and South Africa. A close examination of these minutes allows us to reach a number of conclusions about the PIDE/DGS and its part in Portugal's colonial wars. These will be considered in turn, bearing in mind always that measure of caution is necessary when handling PIDE documents: its agents boasted endlessly of their prescience, their success, and their influence to allies and enemies alike.

The first conclusion is that the PIDE/DGS was an integral part of the late Portuguese colonial system. Lisbon – like Salisbury or Pretoria – liked to present

6 On Exercise ALCORA, see F. Ribeiro de Meneses and R. McNamara, 'The Last Throw of the Dice: Portugal, Rhodesia and South Africa, 1970–1974', in *Portuguese Studies*, 28, 2 (2012), 201–15, and, by the same authors, 'The Origins of Exercise ALCORA, 1960–1971', *International History Review*, forthcoming.

7 These contacts date back to the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, the British having reluctantly allowed some intelligence liaison between the Federal Intelligence and Security Bureau (FISB), Portuguese intelligence organizations in Angola and Mozambique, and the South Africans. These contacts were continued and developed by Ken Flower's Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO), which took over from the FISB in Southern Rhodesia. See P. Murphy, 'Intelligence and Decolonization: The Life and Death of the Federal Intelligence and Security Bureau, 1954–1963', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 29, 2 (2001), 101–30, esp. 118–19, and K. Flower, *Serving Secretly: An Intelligence Chief on Record. Rhodesia into Zimbabwe, 1964 to 1981* (London 1987).

8 Ken Flower noted, 'The position of PIDE is all-powerful, but they are detested so strongly in certain quarters that any attempt to achieve coordination through PIDE, e.g. by having a PIDE representative in Salisbury looking after the interests of others is doomed from the start.' Flower, *Serving Secretly*, 36.

9 Portuguese diplomatic material held in Lisbon, Arquivo Histórico Diplomático (AHD), suggests that this function was acquired by the PIDE over the course of the early 1960s, after a power struggle with the intelligence services of each colony (known as *Serviços de Centralização e Coordenação de Informações* (SCCI) and the consulate-general in Salisbury. See AHD, file PA 1097, 'Contactos entre as autoridades policiais de Angola e da Federação', especially report 154 sent on 6 March 1963 by the consul-general at Salisbury, João Pereira Bastos, and the attached note by his vice-consul, O. Neto Valério, regarding the latter's clash with the PIDE during a meeting, in Lourenço Marques, hosted by SCCI Mozambique, at which members of the Rhodesian British South Africa Police's Special Branch were present.

the nationalist insurrection as a foreign-led conspiracy, masterminded from Moscow or Beijing. It was only able to do this, however, because of the secret police's ability to infiltrate and destroy opposition networks within cities such as Luanda and Lourenço Marques, whose façade of loyalty was thus preserved. The PIDE/DGS leadership routinely boasted of this achievement before its foreign counterparts, sometimes in chilling tones. In November 1968, for example, a police meeting occurred in Lourenço Marques. At the time, eastern Angola was the main preoccupation, but during the discussions the situation in Luanda was raised. São José Lopes explained that in the Angolan capital, opposition networks were routinely being dismantled, at the rate of one per month. He explained, 'we have been lucky until now, because should we ever fail we will face a general subversion, involving the 300,000 African residents of Luanda.'¹⁰ Such a bombastic statement naturally attracted the attention of his interlocutors. Brigadier P.J. 'Tiny' Venter, head of South Africa's Security Police, asked for clarification: were these networks cells of the same organization, or separate groups? São José Lopes replied that they were all MPLA (Movimento Popular para a Libertação de Angola) cells, formed during the past four years. Asked what was done with the detainees, São José Lopes simply replied '*dou muitos tiros* (I shoot a lot)'.¹¹ Not long after, at a meeting held in July 1969, São José Lopes reported again on the situation in Luanda, which he described as a 'constant preoccupation'.¹² The MPLA had hoped to stage its own Tet offensive, creating a structure within the capital to provide support for an armed incursion arriving from outside the city. The network had been dismantled, however, with 700 people arrested. The following day São José Lopes spoke once more of Luanda, stating that the city's population was potentially subverted – at the very least those whom he described as 'having the capacity to reason': all 'evolved' Africans were possible members of subversive organizations. There was no obvious remedy for the situation; a propaganda campaign was envisaged, but when Venter stated that 'the best propaganda is to give them a better life', São José Lopes replied that 'we cannot give better jobs, better houses, better salaries. The population of Luanda is almost all from the region where [MPLA leader and future President of Angola] Agostinho Neto was born. They are from the worst part of Angola'. Mozambique was no different. Radio was employed to spread nationalist propaganda, as a result of which, according to

10 Lisbon, Arquivo Nacional Torre do Tombo (ANTT), Arquivo PIDE/DGS, Serviços Centrais PR CI (2) 6341 (11), 'Reunião dos representantes das polícias da RAS, Rodésia e PIDE, Lourenço Marques, 6–7 Novembro de 1968'.

11 At an earlier meeting, in November 1967, documents referred to these groups, identifying them as 'possible saboteurs' intending to carry out attacks in public spaces such as cinemas. According to the PIDE, the real danger was that such attacks might lead to indiscriminate acts of retaliation by the white population. ANTT Arquivo PIDE/DGS Serviços Centrais PR CI (2) 6341 (9), 'Reunião dos representantes das polícias da RAS, Rodésia e PIDE, Salisbury, 27–28 de Novembro de 1967'.

12 ANTT, PIDE/DGS, Serviços Centrais, PR CI (2) 6341 (13), 'Reunião dos representantes das polícias da RAS, Rodésia e PIDE, Lisboa, 22–23 de Julho de 1969'.

António Vaz, 'educated people – people who enjoy the economic benefits or a higher standard of living, founded organizations in Lourenço Marques'¹³, endeavouring 'to stimulate political awareness, obtain funds and recruit people'. Such networks were detected, monitored and broken up: 'it boils down to a running fight between us and them'.

What is striking about these accounts is the lack of reflection, on the part of the PIDE, about the enormous gulf that separated the avowed goal of Portuguese colonialism – the creation of multi-racial societies in Africa, united by common values and aims – from its reality. All educated Africans were seen as suspect; the material developments belatedly introduced in the 'overseas provinces' served only to create wave after wave of opponents. An enormous repressive apparatus had of necessity been developed. Quite apart from the extra-judicial punishments and killings mentioned casually by São José Lopes, there was an enormous repressive apparatus put in place, which included the reactivation of the old Tarrafal concentration camp (renamed Chão Bom) in the Cape Verde islands, the creation of a new camp in the South of Angola (São Nicolau), and large facilities elsewhere, such as the Machava jail in Lourenço Marques. At times of great agitation, such as the outbreak of the fighting in Angola, in 1961, the PIDE's contempt for human life was made abundantly clear; torture was a regular fixture of its actions.¹⁴ Also unmentioned by the PIDE's leadership at these meetings, at least in the surviving records, were the murders of Eduardo Mondlane and Amílcar Cabral. But these operations' similarities with the assassination of ZANU leader Herbert Chitepo in 1975, which took place thanks to the joint action of the CIO and ZANU dissidents, are clear.¹⁵

A second conclusion to be reached on the basis of this documentation is that the PIDE/DGS believed that it held the key to victory in Angola and Mozambique, and that this lay in its taking over as much of the burden of fighting – as opposed to simple intelligence gathering, its initial military task – from the armed forces as possible. Apart from the elite units – the army's commandos and rangers, the air force's paratroopers, and the navy's marines – the Portuguese armed forces had great difficulties in utilizing conscripts and conventionally trained officers in counter-insurgency operations. Rhodesian and South African observers repeatedly criticized the static nature of the Portuguese who, shut up inside their barracks,

13 ANTT, PIDE/DGS, Serviços Centrais PR CI (2) 6341 (17), 'Reunião dos representantes das polícias da RAS, Rodésia e PIDE, Pretória, 8–9 de Fevereiro de 1971'.

14 See, for example, the testimony of Agostinho Mendes de Carvalho, an Angolan diplomat and politician, recorded by Dalila Cabrita Mateus in her *Memórias do Colonialismo e da Guerra* (Oporto 2006), 9–25, especially the references to São Pedro da Barra jail, near the port of Luanda, where untold deaths resulted from overcrowding.

15 See Flower, *Serving Secretly*, 145–7, and L. White Chitepo, *The Assassination of Herbert Chitepo: Texts and Politics in Zimbabwe* (Bloomington IN 2003), who demonstrates that Flower was selective in his recollections.

handed the initiative to the liberation movements.¹⁶ The PIDE, which kept a watching brief on the army's performance,¹⁷ noticed, and decided to act. Central to its effort were its locally raised troops, notably the *Flechas* (Arrows). At the November 1967 meeting of police forces, held in Salisbury, one of the main topics of discussion was the military situation in Angola, where the opening of a second front – on the border with Zambia – was causing serious difficulties for the Portuguese, still fixated on the border with the ex-Belgian Congo. The enemy was operating in the East in groups of 10 men, who carried out hit-and-run attacks. A solution was being worked out:

The Police has recruited local bushmen [*bosquimanos*] in the area of Gago Coutinho and further south, arming them to fight the terrorists. The bushmen, regarded as an inferior race by the other tribes, are prepared to fight and attack the terrorist camps within Zambia. They are controlled by the Police and operate with no supervision. They are paid between 550 and 600 escudos/month.¹⁸

16 An early critical report, which was passed on to the Portuguese, was JPS/72, 'Report by Joint Service Mission on Operations in Angola', dated 23 January 1974. AHD, PA 1097, attached to Confidential report, 24 March 1964, consul-general at Salisbury to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. A number of shortcomings were identified, notably in relation to specialized training for the African battlefield, which was entirely lacking: units arrived from the metropolis and were immediately sent into the line. Also criticized were the patrols of hostile territory, deemed too brief to be of use. Of special importance, given its role in the creation of Exercise ALCORA, was General Charles Fraser's 'A Review of the Campaign in East and South East Angola 1968 to end of January 1970', published by the Defence Headquarters, Pretoria, in March 1970. Paço de Arcos, Arquivo da Defesa Nacional (ADN), Secretaria Geral da Defesa Nacional (SGDN) 6967. Although Fraser pulled his punches and blamed the civil administration of Angola for the deteriorating situation in the colony, he was still critical of the army and its lack of offensive spirit. The evolution of Fraser's opinions can be traced in AHD, PA 1133, through the reports and telegrams filed by the Portuguese ambassador at Pretoria, Menezes Rosa. Roughly two years later, senior Rhodesian and South African officers (including Fraser) met in what was called the Odell Committee. Their report, 'The Tete District of Mozambique', published in December 1971, blamed the deteriorating security situation in this vital region on 'the inept measures taken by the Portuguese authorities to contain the situation'. Rhodes University, Cory Library for Historical Research, Ian Smith Papers, April 10 Deposit, Box 15, 'Relations With Other Countries'. An interesting impartial view can be found in United States National Archive (USNA), RG 59, Central Foreign Policy Files 1967–1969, Political and Defense, MOZ box 253, Secret Airgram A-28, 19 March 1969, To the Department of State from the consul-general in Lourenço Marques, in which Gossett examines in detail the insurgency in Mozambique. The American diplomat conceded that 'with the exception of the paras and a few other elite units, it seems fairly clear that the Portuguese troops are not particularly aggressive' but, having noted that the South Africans thought the same way, he added, 'we suspect that the Portuguese are better qualified to give advice to the South Africans than to receive it'. His successors continued to pick up criticism from Rhodesian and South African sources.

17 See, for example, ANTT, PIDE/DGS Delegação Angola 200.04.01 Exército Vol. 1 for examples of PIDE reports on the relative merit of different army units and concern about the army's lack of fighting spirit.

18 ANTT, PIDE/DGS, Serviços Centrais, PR CI (2) 6341 (9), 'Reunião dos Representantes das polícias da RAS, Rodésia e PIDE, Salisbury, 27-28 de Novembro de 1967'. See also ANTT, Arquivo Oliveira Salazar (AOS) Correspondência Oficial (CO), Ultramar (UL), 50C, Polícia Internacional, Centro de Informações n.2, Secreto, Inf n. 5/67 GAB, 24 January 1967, drawn up by São José Lopes, for an account of what was should be done in Angola to resolve the situation in the East: the first recommendation was the creation of a body of auxiliary troops, as outlined in an earlier report, 'made up of elements recruited voluntarily among the populations that remain loyal to us, within and without the affected areas, and if possible furnished by the traditional authorities'. The mission house at

At that stage, only 36 had been recruited, but it was hoped more would follow in Gago Coutinho, with another 200 further south. Not mentioned in the record of this or any other tripartite meeting was the name of the PIDE agent charged with leading the unit, and generally credited as the creator of the *Flechas*, Óscar Cardoso.¹⁹ The men operated alone – it being impractical to twin them with army units – in groups of 30, 20 armed with obsolete Mauser rifles and 10 with bows and arrows.²⁰ From this inauspicious start, the bushmen²¹ units would grow into something much more ambitious, as members of other ethnic groups were recruited. A year later, at a meeting in Lourenço Marques, from which transcripts survive, it was reported that these groups had indeed increased in size and importance, and a lot was now riding on their success. São José Lopes explained that already three or four years before – prior to the opening of the Eastern Front – the PIDE had insisted, to no avail, on creating, training and indoctrinating ‘groups’ to keep watch over the border with Zambia. Now the mission house at Luonze, in Moxico district, had been transformed into their headquarters (São José Lopes joking that it was now informally referred to, thanks to his efforts, as São José de Luonze), despite lingering opposition, presumably from the armed forces. There were 350 men at the training centre, and it was hoped to recruit another 100, or even more, in the near future. São José Lopes stated that these forces now protected the army as it moved in the area. A surprised Brigadier Venter asked, ‘so you gentlemen have become the protectors of the army?’²² Venter questioned São José Lopes on the possibility of a rebellion by these paramilitary groups against the Portuguese, or of a link-up between them and the MPLA, or UNITA (União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola). These were concerns, he

Luonze was recommended as the ideal place of assembly for the force. São José Lopes wrote, ‘We attribute such importance to the establishment of this ‘base’ that we are emboldened to suggest that to this end should be directed all the Military, Police and Administrative authorities considered indispensable to the attainment of the best results, without consideration for their numbers, expenses, or other difficulties and inconveniences that might present themselves to us at this time.’ This urgency was motivated not only by the gravity of the situation, but also by the results obtained with troops raised on an ad-hoc basis.

19 Óscar Cardoso is arguably one of the best known and, in recent years, most mediatic PIDE agents. His recruitment activities occurred in the south-eastern district of Cuando-Cubango. One of his many accounts of the birth of the *Flechas* can be found in Bruno Oliveira Santos’ collection of interviews (which, given their uncritical and often defamatory nature, must be taken with great caution) with ex-PIDE/DGS agents, *Histórias secretas da PIDE/DGS* (Lisbon 2000), 105–14.

20 Hence the unit’s eventual name. These arrows were often dipped in poison. B. de Oliveira Santos, *Histórias secretas . . .*, 107.

21 According to a PIDE report, these belonged to the Vasekele [sic] people. The report, (n.899 – SC/CI (2), of 4 September 1967) stated that that if provided with automatic weapons, the existing Vasekeles, along with another 50 to be recruited, would ‘sweep the District clean’. They were cheaper, more mobile, and more adaptable than Portuguese troops. ANTT, AOS, CO, UL 50C. Richard Lee, in his ‘The Gods Must Be Crazy, But the State Has a Plan: Government Policy Towards the San in Namibia’, *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 20, 1 (1986), 91–8, writes, ‘In 1975, the 3-I Battalion, the Pied Crow Battalion, was formed at Base Omega in the eastern Caprivi. The core of the unit was a group of Vasakela !Kung who had worked with the Portuguese army in Angola and who were recruited en masse into the South Africa armed forces.’

22 ANTT, PIDE/DGS, Serviços Centrais, PR CI (2) 6341 (11) ‘Reunião dos Representantes das Polícias da RAS, Rodésia e PIDE, Lourenço Marques, 6–7 de Novembro de 1968’.

explained, that had been raised by both the South African and the Portuguese armies. Venter was told, however, that this was impossible. The paramilitaries had been compromised, in the eyes of the population, by their collaboration with the Portuguese, and the number of losses they had inflicted on the enemy. Also compromised were their tribal leaders, who, bribed by the PIDE, named the men who would fight alongside the Portuguese. For extra insurance, the soldiers' families were housed in the rearguard. São José Lopes stated that he had slept in the bush, in the midst of these men, in the company of only two PIDE agents, while on a patrol, against the army's advice: 'I slept beautifully, for I knew that they would remain awake to protect me'. The ultimate aim, São José Lopes explained at length, was to fight a different war – the kind of war that Portugal's friends in the region had long been urging it to fight, with foot patrols lasting up to a fortnight, a war of 'black against black and not white against black'. It was now the PIDE's intention to establish groups that would not only aid the army, but would be given a permanent structure, with their own organization, and an aggressive ethic. Venter was convinced, and São José Lopes gave vent to his ambitions:

This problem was discussed over three years. But it's going to change the war. I'll maintain the situation and continue to insist. I had to convince the army that this would not diminish its responsibility, offend it or belittle it. The army would have more men at its disposal, but these would not be subject to the army, because if a white soldier has a black soldier beside him, he will turn him into a pack animal, and the black likes to have his individuality and personality.

Finally, the PIDE regional director for Angola made a plea for South African support in arming the police 'groups', as they were still referred to.

At the grandly named 'tri-monthly conference of the communal intelligence pool', in Pretoria, 8–9 February 1971, the 'groups' were already referred to by their name. With the war in the East becoming the centre of attention, the 'Arrows', as the South African minute-taker referred to them, were very much in the spotlight. The MPLA's attempt to link up the two fronts via Lunda, the colony's diamond-producing area, had failed: 'One of their important bases were attacked [*sic*] by the Arrows. We confiscated arms and killed five terrorists as well as a commandant'. It was also stated that MPLA prisoners were now being turned into *Flechas*, whose number kept growing: Another 1000 were being recruited, and 'we could recruit at least 2, 3 or 4000'.²³ This practice had in fact been extended to prisoners drawn from all nationalist groups. In August 1970, for example, the PIDE proposed that Eduardo Machai, a former UNITA political commissar, should be awarded the 'Governor-General Prize', having achieved 'brilliant successes through the capture of arms, the recovery of civilians, and the

23 Óscar Cardoso admits, in the previously cited interview, that many of these men fought in the *Flechas* against their will, in order to save their families from retaliation. B. de Oliveira Santos, *Histórias secretas* . . . , 108.

destruction of the brigands' hiding places'. He was 'intelligent, determined, and enthusiastic about his work', and an inspiration to the men under his command.²⁴

The only limiting factor to the *Flechas*' continued expansion was the number of PIDE agents on the ground. When Venter suggested that Silva Pais could be relied on to provide more, the PIDE's director confirmed that efforts were being made in this regard. February 1971 also saw the publication of the rules governing the recently created 'League of the Friends of the Flechas', whose seat was the PIDE headquarters in Luanda. This organization was designed to alert the population to the existence, role, and needs of the *Flechas*; it was a fund-raising exercise designed to improve the living conditions of the troops and their families, and their morale. Its leadership was taken from the higher echelons of the PIDE. According to the League's records, it had 3463 members by the end of 1972.²⁵

Records of some *Flechas* operations survive in the PIDE/DGS archive. One, Operation Toma Toma, took place in October 1972; according to a DGS report, a number of 'sections' were assaulted and destroyed, resulting in the death of 37 'terrorists' (some of whom were named). Many more were wounded, and 27 were captured, along with a number of weapons. Forty-two civilians were 'recovered', while five enemy fighters voluntarily presented themselves to the *Flechas*. The subsequent dissemination of propaganda leaflets also led to a number of civilians (five men, 10 women, and 20 children) presenting themselves to the troops. All this had been achieved at the cost of two wounded, one as a result of a mine, the other of a car crash.²⁶ In 1973, São José Lopes presented numbers relating to the *Flechas* campaign, which had 'greatly contributed' to the 'withdrawal of the terrorists in the East of Angola', as well as to the 'recuperation of the population that had been under Enemy control' – a psychological factor of great importance. According to these figures, which are unconfirmed, in 1972 alone 1747 *Flechas* had captured 376 light and heavy weapons, 444 grenades and 22,790 rounds of ammunition, and killed 631 enemy fighters, wounding 205 and capturing another 205. They had also 'recovered' 443 men, 469 women and 605 children from enemy controlled areas, all for the cost of 22 million escudos, some £340,000.²⁷

The last police meeting for which records were found took place in Lisbon, in September 1973. By then the focus of Portugal's military effort in southern Africa had shifted from Angola to Mozambique, where much of the north-western district of Tete had fallen under FRELIMO influence, and was being used by that movement as a point of access to the rest of the colony, and by the Zimbabwe African

24 ANTT, PIDE/DGS, Serviços Centrais, NI 7944 (1), 'Documentos referentes aos Flechas', 'Informação n. 8/70 – CF, 25 de Agosto de 1970'.

25 See ANTT, PIDE/DGS, Serviços Centrais, NI 7944 (5), 'Documentos referentes aos Flechas', for information on the 'Liga dos Amigos dos Flechas'.

26 ANTT, PIDE/DGS, Serviços Centrais, NI 7944 (1), 'Documentos referentes aos Flechas', 'DGS, Delegação em Luanda, Relatório Imediato Confidencial n. 2178/72-Dinf-2^a'. Situation reports of other *Flecha* missions can be found in Lisbon, Arquivo Histórico Militar (AHM), FO 032/3/402 (35–36), 'Sitreps de Operações Conjuntas do Exército Português e Exército Sul-Africano'.

27 ANTT, PIDE/DGS, Serviços Centrais, PR CI(2) 6341 (23 'Reunião dos representantes das polícias da RAS, Rodésia e PIDE Luanda 1–2 de Março de 1973'.

National Union (ZANU) as the easiest route into Rhodesia. Tete was also the site of the giant Cabora Bassa dam, being built by the Portuguese as a demonstration of their commitment to Africa; it was designed to provide electricity to a number of neighbouring countries, including South Africa, which was providing much of the project's financing. Protecting it became one of the priorities of the Portuguese High Command. The stakes were high, therefore, in Tete, which was the scene of a number of civilian massacres perpetrated by Portuguese and Rhodesian forces. Thanks to the determination of Catholic missionaries living in the area, these were reported internationally, to the great embarrassment of the Portuguese authorities.²⁸ The meeting's conclusions, unsurprisingly, expressed concern with the situation in the Tete province, and deemed it 'necessary to increase the building up of armed groups in the "flechas" pattern'.²⁹ Significantly, another of the conclusions stated:

The South African delegation once again pointed out the great advantage of the South African material support to the Angola and Mozambique "DGS", being sent directly from the Bureau for State Security to the "Direcção Geral de Segurança" without interference of the respective Ministries of Defence. This is only meant to speed up and make the delivery of that material easier. The "DGS" has accepted this point of view.³⁰

The situation in Mozambique was then analyzed district by district, with the PIDE/DGS stating that in Vila Pery, to the southeast of Tete and increasingly affected by

28 For a contemporary account of the situation in Tete, see International Defence Air Fund, *Terror in Tete: A Documentary Report of Portuguese Atrocities in Tete District, Mozambique, 1971–1972* (London 1973). For a contemporary scholarly treatment of the most serious of these incidents, the Wiriyamu massacre, see B.C. Reis and P.A. Oliveira, 'Cutting Heads or Losing Hearts: Late Colonial Portuguese Counter-Insurgency and the Wiriyamu Massacre of 1972', in *Civil Wars*, 14, 1 (March 2012), 80–103. The presence of Rhodesian forces in Tete was a source of great embarrassment for the Portuguese, who sought to curb it, especially after the massacre of civilians by Rhodesian troops near Mucumbura. The resulting tension between the two countries was considerable. See, for example, ADN ADN, Fundo 3, Série 25, UI 570CC/1 JPS/14, 'Minutes of a meeting between representatives of the Operations Co-ordinating Committee and the C in C Mocambique held at Nampula on the 4th August, 1972, at 1640 hours'. The already cited Odell Report provides a clear indication of the seriousness with which the deteriorating situation in Tete was being followed in Salisbury and Pretoria. See also P.A. Oliveira, *Os Despojos da Aliança: A Grã Bretanha e a Questão Colonial Portuguesa, 1945–1975* (Lisbon 2007), 392–5, for a discussion of the impact of the Wiriyamu massacre on Anglo-Portuguese relations. News of Wiriyamu overshadowed Marcello Caetano's visit to London to celebrate the 600th anniversary of the alliance between the two countries.

29 ANTT, PIDE/DGS, Serviços Centrais, PR CI (2) 6431 (24), 'Reunião dos representantes das polícias da RAS, Rodésia e PIDE, Lisboa, 10–11 de Setembro de 1973'.

30 The securing of weapons for the *Flechas* was indeed an important task. A letter from the diamond-prospecting company CONSÓRCIO MINEIRO DE DIAMANTES (CONDIAMA) S.A.R.L., dated 29 August 1972, to the DGS's Office in Angola, noted that the company, owned by the larger DIAMANG combine, was importing 40 Heckler & Koch G-3 rifles (the standard infantry weapon in the Portuguese army) from London, in order to equip the *Flechas* allocated to its working parties in the Cuango-Cubango region. ANTT, PIDE/DGS Serviços Centrais, NI 7944 (3), 'Documentos referentes aos Flechas', letter, Salvador d'Orey to the Director da Delegação em Angola da DGS, Luanda, 29 August 1972.

the conflict, there was enormous expectation regarding the forthcoming arrival of the *Flechas* in the battlefield.

Some five days before this meeting was held, the Governor-General of Angola visited a *Flechas* military encampment, in the city of Luso, in Moxico district. He was presented with a Kalashnikov rifle apprehended from a nationalist fighter, and spoke to the assembled troops:

We are all defending, in the same manner, the future of this land, but you who were born here and have, like many of us, your future here, have more reason to defend it side by side with your comrades who, having arrived from other territories, bear witness and sacrifice their own blood.³¹

The internal DGS document which recounted the visit gushed with pride at the impression made on the visiting party by the store of weapons seized by the *Flechas* from the enemy; much praise was heard for the soldiers 'who have contributed greatly to the DGS's increased prestige in this State'.³² Surviving documents make clear the secret police's ardent desire for validation and recognition of its efforts in the conflict. In May 1972, for example, Silva Pais addressed a ministerial party, whose members were present at the unveiling of a plaque in Lisbon marking the secret police's most recent casualties in the war. Two were Portuguese-born agents, two were *Flechas*; all received fulsome praise. Both *Flechas* had been awarded the *Cruz de Guerra*, having been killed leading an assault on an MPLA encampment:

These are the men, Ministers, whose names are carved into the plaques you are about to unveil. The DGS thanks you for the brilliance which your presence has conferred on this ceremony, and assures the Government, through your illustrious persons, and the Nation, that it will continue to carry out, with the spirit of sacrifice acknowledged by all, the missions with which it is entrusted, Overseas and in the Metropole.³³

The *Flechas* were the best known of the PIDE-run groups in the colonial war, but they were not alone.³⁴ The Cabinda enclave was in part defended by the *Tropas Especiais* (Special Troops) led by UPA (União das Populações de Angola) deserter Alexandre Taty, a Cabinda nationalist who wanted to cut all ties to Angola. His men carried out raids against MPLA camps in Congo Brazzaville.³⁵

31 A copy of the speech can be found in ANTT, PIDE/DGS Serviços Centrais, NI 7944 (3), 'Documentos referentes aos Flechas'.

32 Angola and Mozambique had in the meantime been promoted to the rank of 'States' within the Portuguese constitutional framework.

33 ANTT, PIDE/DGS Serviços Centrais, NI 7944 (4), 'Documentos referentes aos Flechas', 'Palavras do Director-Geral de Segurança, Major Silva Pais'.

34 A useful survey of African participation in the Portuguese war effort can be found in J.P. Borges Coelho, 'African Troops in the Portuguese Colonial Army, 1961–1974: Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique', *Portuguese Studies Review*, 10, 1 (2002), 129–50.

35 See ANTT, AOS CO UL 50B, Informação N. 183 – SC/CI (2), Secret, for an account of these troops, their actions, and the political concerns that surrounded them, with the Governor-General of Angola being especially worried. Mention is made of 'Operation MARQUEZ', which took place on 19

Exiled Katangan *gendarmes* were recruited and trained by PIDE at facilities provided by DIAMANG, the Portuguese-Belgian diamond mining concern which acted as a state within a state in the Lunda district. Camussombo was the assembly point for the men, who by January 1968 numbered 150, with plans in motion to bring them up to 500.³⁶ By February 1968, their number had mushroomed to 1500, and more were expected. A Portuguese lieutenant-colonel, accompanied by a second lieutenant and eight soldiers, was on hand to provide instruction to the troops, divided into three battalions. According to DIAMANG reports, however, there were UNITA supporters among them.³⁷ Eventually dubbed the *Fiéis* (Faithful), they remained in place until 1974 as a deterrent against Zaire, whose relationship with Portugal was fraught with difficulty, its desire to absorb oil-rich Cabinda being hard to disguise.³⁸ As we will see, a similar body, the *Leais* (Loyal) was established to conduct operations in Zambia. According to a recent study, by 1974 there were 2270 *Flechas*, 800 *Tropas Especiais*, 2400 *Fiéis*, and 127 *Leais* operating in Angola.³⁹

One of the striking features of the PIDE/DGS's own war effort was the enthusiasm that, once initial doubts had been overcome, it generated among Portugal's southern African partners. In June 1968, the Portuguese Minister of Defence and senior military officers met the increasingly influential South African general, Charles Allan Fraser, at N'rriquinha, in Southeast Angola. They discussed the provision by South Africa of helicopters and other materiel to Portuguese operations, as well as the limits of the special South African zone of operations in the area – an area that the Portuguese wanted to see increased. Fraser was clearly worried by the evolving situation, but nevertheless 'praised the PIDE's action in the anti-terrorist struggle and declared that he had the best of relations with it'.⁴⁰ There was no doubt among foreign observers that the failure to establish *Flechas* units in Mozambique was one of the reasons behind the Portuguese failure to

January 1966, and in which 12 men attacked MPLA installations in Kimpese, in the Congo. Taty has become well known the previous year, when he had led an attack on UPA's headquarters in Leopoldville, which his men occupied for a time.

36 AOS CO UL 50C, 'Informação', 22 January 1968.

37 ANTT, AOS, CO, UL 50C, Telegram, João Bexiga to Dr Guilherme Moreira, 24 February 1968.

38 Early in 1974, Portuguese forces in Angola were on high alert, reports abounding of an impending FNLA-Zaire invasion of northern Angola, Cabinda, or both.

39 Borges Coelho, 'African Troops', Table 4, 146.

40 ADN, SGN 6967, 'Conversa de SEXA Ministro da Defesa com o General Fraser, N'Riquinha, 19JUL68'. However, Fraser was very critical of the PIDE's units in his hugely influential 'Review of the Campaign in East and South East Angola 1968 to End of January 1970'. In this report, dated March 1970, Fraser described the 'Bushmen' as hereditary slaves of the 'Bantu' who, having been armed by the PIDE, now 'carried out acts of revenge against the Bantu population which have included the massacre of innocent people.' This had upset the 'Bantu' population straddling the border with Namibia. It was also the case, according to the local population, that although they engaged with the enemy (unlike European forces), the 'Bushmen' avoided contact with UNITA forces, firing into the air rather than pressing home their attacks. 'If there is any truth in these allegations', wrote Fraser, 'there is no purpose in them participation in [the forthcoming] Operation Zig Zag'. ADN, SGN 6967, 'A Review of the Campaign...'. This report, however, was designed to spare the army's blushes at a time when South Africa was pressing for a greater involvement in the Portuguese war effort, and in any case it was an isolated incident.

contain the subversion of the north-western Tete district. Ken Flower, director of the Rhodesian Central Intelligence Organisation, urged Marcello Caetano, in September 1971, to rely more on the indigenous population and to afford the police 'more appropriate responsibility'; otherwise, his 'peripatetic, posturing Generals in Mozambique would lose the war for him'.⁴¹ While the Rhodesian CIO had run small-scale 'pseudo gangs' into Zambia between 1966 and 1969, ZANU's increasing ability to enter Rhodesia and kill whites led the Rhodesian authorities to set up their own equivalent of the *Flechas*, the Selous Scouts. Ken Flower defended the idea, although he later came to regret it.⁴² The unit's commander, Lt. Colonel Ron Reid Daly, was sent to Mozambique to speak to the *Flechas* creator, and PIDE agent, Óscar Cardoso, described in Reid Daly's account as a special forces colonel. Cardoso complained of being hampered by the regular military, who did not like being made to look bad by his high 'kill ratios'. Reid Daly was impressed, writing of Cardoso, 'He was a man who exuded incredible drive, strength of personality... His men, be they black or white, totally worshipped him.'⁴³ Flower also wrote of his attempts in 1974 to shore up the war effort in Mozambique. Part of this rested on the creation of a secure line, along the Zambezi river, which the guerrillas could not cross. His diary entry for 26 March 1974 states, 'I've been to Lourenço Marques and managed to get agreement from the DGS to form "Flechas" for trans-border operations in Mozambique where the security situation continues to deteriorate'.⁴⁴ Discussing the issue with an increasingly despondent John Vorster, Flower was told that South Africa 'had already spent millions of Rands in helping the Portuguese', but that "'Flecha" type operations could provide the most practicable answer and that the development of such operations could be discussed with General van den Bergh'.⁴⁵

The importance attributed by all observers to the *Flechas* is reflected in foreign diplomatic correspondence. On 19 March 1973 the American consul-general in Lourenço Marques, Van Oss, informed the State Department that, according to his British counterpart, the PIDE had 'at last' been given the go ahead for the recruitment and training of a special force similar to the *Flechas*. The delay in the initiative was attributed to former Commander in Chief General Kaúlza de Arriaga, who had preferred to keep all such groups under military control (hence the creation of the army-run Grupos Especiais and Grupos Especiais Paraquedistas).⁴⁶ Van Oss explained,

41 Flower, *Serving Secretly*, 117.

42 Flower, *Serving Secretly*, 143.

43 R. Reid Daly, *Selous Scouts: Top Secret War* (Alberton, RSA, 1982), 110.

44 Flower, *Serving Secretly*, 140.

45 *Ibid.*

46 Not surprisingly, the PIDE/DGS had a very poor opinion of these units, supervised not by itself but by the army. One report, dated May 1973, stated that 'the Enemy knows perfectly well when it faces the GEs, since, with the exception of some Makuas, only our regular troops aim low'. The implication was that the GE soldiers deliberately aimed high, in order to miss their targets. ANTT, PIDE/DGS UI 7495. COE Grupos Especiais. In August 1973, DGS Mozambique reported a violent incident during which GEP soldiers in Mungári caused panic among the population: Portuguese troops had to call on the services of a helicopter gunship to restore order. The DGS related the incident to drunkenness and

Tete situation requires speediest response to hard intelligence on whereabouts of Frelimo guerrillas, which [is] difficult when intelligence is obtained by DGS on one hand and counteraction must be taken by military on other.

There were to be 10 *Flechas*-style units, each with 60 men (mostly ex-Frelimo guerrillas), six arrayed along the border with Zambia (displacing some of the military units stationed there), and four held in reserve. The American diplomat went as far as stating how much soldiers and commanders would be paid, and concluded that the move, while reducing tension between the DGS and the military, 'should eventually give Portuguese forces greater flexibility in coping with [the] tricky Tete situation'.⁴⁷

PIDE/DGS agents were openly critical of the armed forces, notably in Mozambique, before foreign observers.⁴⁸ Gossett, an earlier US consul-general in Lourenço Marques, reported how António Gomes Lopes, 'self-proclaimed number three PIDE man in Mozambique', had boasted of the PIDE's strength before an American military audience: PIDE had 'the ear of all the Ministers that count', the armed forces had 'demonstrated important failures in fighting FRELIMO', 'lousing up' a recent sweep of Cabo Delgado made possible by recently obtained information, the air force was 'incompetent', and soldiers did not take risks because of the poor medical services available.⁴⁹ It is remarkable, and indicative of the difficulties involved in studying the period, that the PIDE worked better in Angola alongside General Costa Gomes, an officer whose loyalty to the regime was known to be questionable, and who would later preside over the Portuguese revolution's most heated period, than with the ultra loyalist Kaúlza de Arriaga.⁵⁰

The third conclusion to be drawn is that the PIDE's ambitions stretched as well to the diplomatic camp, although it was here that they were least realized. Alongside its private war, waged more successfully, as we have seen, in Angola

rivalries between GEP groups based in Niassa and those from the South of Mozambique. ANTT, PIDE/DGS UI 7495, COE Grupos Especiais, DGS Moçambique, P.09.18/BR/SC, 14 August 1973.

47 Cabrita Mateus, on the basis of primary and secondary sources, attempts to reconstruct the battle fought by PIDE to extend the use of *Flechas* to Mozambique, against the will of General Kaúlza de Arriaga, which included the arrest of an initial batch by the army and its subsequent release by the PIDE. Nevertheless, by mid 1973, according to PIDE documents cited by her, 50 *Flechas* were already operating out of Vila Pery, and another 200 were in training. *A PIDE/DGS ...*, 72. Borges Coelho, in 'African Troops', was unable to provide a number for *Flechas* operating in Mozambique by 1974.

48 The situation in Angola was considerably better, despite – or because of – the existence of the *Flechas*. Of special note was the friendship between São José Lopes and General Gomes da Costa, who commanded the Portuguese forces in Angola and played a key role in post-1974 politics in Portugal, becoming President of the Republic in 1974, after the downfall of General António Spínola.

49 USNA RG 59 Central Foreign Policy Files 1967–1969, Political and Defense, MOZ Box 2353, Confidential Airgram A-128, 11 December 1969, To the Department of State from the Consulate General in Lourenço Marques.

50 In his account of the time spent as Commander in Chief in Angola, Costa Gomes is at pains both to minimize the impact of groups like the *Flechas*, and to stress their complete subordination to his overall command. This clashes directly with the PIDE's own account. See Maria Manuela Cruzeiro, *Costa Gomes: O Último Marechal* (Lisbon 1998).

than Mozambique, the PIDE/DGS attempted to shape the diplomatic efforts of the 'white redoubt', especially when it came to the country which its leaders identified as the main threat to the Portuguese 'Overseas Provinces' in southern Africa: Zambia. Of all the frontline states, only Zambia bordered both Angola and Mozambique – and President Kenneth Kaunda allowed nationalist movements to strike against the two colonies out of his country. As the years passed, the PIDE's call for action against Kaunda, or Zambia, or both, grew more strident. However, they had but little consequence: while an over-confident South Africa refused to be swayed by the PIDE's arguments, the Portuguese government, mindful of its international standing, refused to countenance overt anti-Zambian actions. This failure calls for some reflection on the PIDE's place within the political pecking order of the Portuguese New State.

The first phase of the PIDE's diplomatic campaign revolved around convincing Pretoria that Zambia was a problem. At a police meeting held in Salisbury, 27–8 November 1967, the threat posed by Zambia to the Portuguese possessions in southern Africa was clearly spelled out. São José Lopes described Zambia and Congo (Kinshasa) as 'trampolines' for the attacks carried out in eastern Angola, while António Vaz explained that COREMO (Comité Revolucionário de Moçambique) had bases in Zambia, from which its guerrillas carried out 'hit-and-run' attacks and recruitment drives. At the same meeting the Rhodesian police circulated a document spelling out the existence and nature of the training and detention camps located in Zambia and Tanzania. In reply, the South African delegation explained that President Kaunda had taken measures to prevent further incursions by South African and Rhodesian 'terrorists'. All present agreed to spare no effort to identify Kaunda's true intentions, while South Africa offered to help with any increase in 'terrorist' activity, operating more widely than before in Angola. A long discussion developed on this point, since the Portuguese wanted to keep any South African military presence secret.

Irritation with Zambia was more than evident at the November 1968 meeting, held in Lourenço Marques, in which it was formally concluded that the country was 'a "base" which supports terrorist groups which carry out incursions into Angola, SWA, RSA, Rhodesia and Mozambique'. These groups received 'special protection' and even 'help' from the Zambian authorities, with the full knowledge of President Kaunda and his government, as a result of a bargain struck in March 1964 between the OAU and the 'terrorist groups', which included a subversion plan drawn up by an advisor to Egyptian President Nasser, Mohamed Fayek. This implied, of course, that there was a single command orchestrating the actions of all of these groups – and that when President Kaunda showed himself more favourable to the members of the 'white redoubt', he was doing so only for fleeting, tactical reasons. The opening of the 'Second Front' in Angola was 'proof' of this:

Kaunda seeks only to buy time, for within two or three years, Zambia will have its Chinese railway and its American road to Dar-es-Salaam, being thus able to dispense with the transit of goods via Rhodesia and Mozambique. In parallel, [Zambia's]

political/administrative structures are being reinforced and undergoing Africanization, most certainly under the influence, ever greater, of the Afro-Asian bloc...⁵¹

The meeting's conclusion was unequivocal:

We are of the opinion that no more time should be lost while waiting a favourable Zambian policy. We must instead, urgently, put into action all the means – internal and external – at our disposal to pressure and force Kaunda and his government to drive out, from their territory, all the terrorist groups that use it as a base against us.

These were strong words, but no action ensued. Halfway between these meetings, in June 1968, Silva Pais had toured southern Africa, visiting, the Portuguese colonies aside, Rhodesia and South Africa. A record of his meeting with Ian Smith and Ken Flower shows the concern the PIDE and the Rhodesian government shared over Zambia, where, given the increased Chinese presence, Kenneth Kaunda had, the two sides agreed, fallen into the hands of extremist ministers. Portugal and Rhodesia, Smith argued, were in a good position to force Kaunda to defeat his enemies and restore his personal power, by threatening him with the closure of his country's access to the sea, or stoking up separatist trouble in Barotseland.⁵²

At the February 1969 Pretoria meeting, a detailed discussion of the nature of the camps in Zambia took place. Venter, chairing the meeting, summarized the position:

1. There are 'holding camps' in Zambia.
2. Training without arms is taking place in Zambia.
3. Zambian Government knows of all terrorist activities in Zambia.

However, Venter resisted a fourth point, suggested by São José Lopes – that 'Zambia is the greatest threat to Angola, Rhodesia and South Africa' – because in Pretoria's view, Zambia did not want to offend South Africa at this stage. Afterwards, however, he conceded that 'As far as South Africa is concerned we all agree with you on the matter of Zambia', this after the Rhodesian delegate,

51 ANTT, PIDE-DGS, PR CI (2) N. 6341 (11), 'Reunião dos representantes das polícias da RAS, Rodésia e PIDE, Lourenço Marques 6-7 Novembro de 1968'. Report n.78-68-GAB, PIDE, Delegação em Angola, 17 November 1968. At the time, according to Ken Flower, director of the Rhodesian CIO, the Zimbabwe liberation movements had been defeated militarily, although this had not yet become clear. See his *Serving Secretly*... , 108.

52 ANTT, PIDE-DGS, PR CI (2) DSI/1^a Divisão, 'Visita do Exm.º Senhor Director-Geral da PIDE às províncias de Angola, Rodésia e África do Sul em Junho de 1968', 'Relatório da Conferência que o Excelentíssimo Director da PIDE teve com Sua Excelência o Primeiro Ministro da Rodésia, Yan [sic] Smith'. Ian Smith established – smiling, according to the document – a comparison between Barotseland and Biafra. The implication was that the Portuguese, who had helped the Biafran secession, could do even more in relation to Barotseland, given its proximity to Angola. Smith went on to praise the work of the police services and to call for closer cooperation between them, since they held the key to victory against 'subversion'.

Bristow, had examined the nature of Zambia's hostility to his own country: 'All they are interested in is to see black rule in Rhodesia' – even if it meant damaging their own country's economy.

Meeting in Lisbon, in July 1969, the tripartite representatives returned, as was now customary, to the issue of Zambia, which Silva Pais called 'the living flame of the attacks which the terrorists launch against us'. The situation in Angola was worsening, thanks to the developments on the Eastern Front. All present agreed that the kid gloves with which Zambia had been treated in the past by their respective governments had to come off; as Silva Pais put it at the start of what turned out to be a long discussion, 'I don't know what your Governments thought about this matter, but here in Portugal, the idea that existed among various Government members, was that Kaunda should not be badly treated.' Venter explained that it was his Government's intention to 'turn' Kaunda, but the others refused to admit that this was possible. Time was running out for economic measures against the Zambian government, as the Chinese-sponsored TANZAM railway, linking the Copper Belt to Dar-es-Salaam, took shape. When Venter sought to distance himself from his interlocutors, arguing that South Africa had no economic weapons it could bring to bear on Kaunda, and that 'he is doing nothing against us, if nothing else because he is afraid to do so', he was quickly reminded by São José Lopes that 'should Angola fall, South Africa cannot hold out'. Eventually some consensus emerged on how to put pressure on Kaunda, notably through a worldwide propaganda campaign, accusing him, as Barbieri Cardoso of the PIDE put it, 'of everything he does and inventing what he does not do . . . Creating, in other words, a bad climate which will permit a violent intervention.' By this he meant a coup against Kaunda, although no-one was quite sure that this would improve the overall picture.⁵³ All three forces agreed, eventually, to contribute to a common dossier on Zambia that might be shown to their governments and used to bring pressure to bear on Lusaka; South Africa would prepare the dossier. The Rhodesians offered to leak it to Kaunda, so as to leave him in no doubt about what was known regarding his actions.

A turning point was reached, it seemed initially, in Salisbury, in January 1970. Brigadier Venter, now convinced of the impossibility of turning the Lusaka authorities away from their present course, spoke out clearly in favour of action against Zambia. Unusually, the assembled delegations agreed on a resolution on the subject of Zambia, committing them to action before it was too late:

The delegates at the conference of the Security Services of Portugal, Rhodesia and South Africa, are all agreed, without reservation, that the policies and actions of the Government of Zambia constitute an immediate and serious threat to the security of the countries represented at the conference, and that each service must, as a matter of

53 Cabrita Mateus notes that in 1969 a plan for a massive intervention against Zambia was drawn up by the PIDE, to be carried out by a 5000-strong force of *Leais*. These would begin to be recruited that year and unleashed in 1972. *A PIDE/DGS . . .*, 179.

urgency, advise their respective Governments of these facts, and strongly recommend to their Governments that an immediate study be made to formulate a common policy by which this threat can be eliminated or minimised, by the co-ordinated use of economic, political or other retaliatory means.⁵⁴

Possible actions were explored, including the exploitation of the political opposition in Zambia and ethnic rivalries; Ken Flower, leading the discussion, noted that the time had come 'to bring Zambia to its senses either by diplomatic manoeuvres or by force or threat of force'; he reminded his interlocutors of the need for good domestic inter-service cooperation, 'so that an overall common approach could be made to each Government'. All of this was music to the PIDE's ears. The desire to intervene was also noticeable at the Lourenço Marques meeting, in November 1970: attention was focused on the domestic situation in Zambia and the difficulties endured by the Government. The price of copper had plummeted, leaving the country's economy in very bad shape and Kenneth Kaunda having to affirm himself on the international plane in order to shore up his political support, but without great success: all that remained was to redouble his attacks on 'White Africa'. A report prepared for the meeting cast doubt on the Zambian President's sanity,⁵⁵ while the continued expansion of Chinese influence was noted, not least via the presence of thousands of Chinese workers on the TANZAM railway, whose actions were beyond the Zambian authorities' control.

This consensus, however, was only apparent. In February 1971, Pretoria provided the backdrop to a singularly ill-tempered summit, with tension over the Portuguese conduct of the war in both Angola and Mozambique setting off a number of serious arguments. The situation became heated once São José Lopes expressed his frustration with the conferences, since the undoubtedly useful pooling of information led to no results. It was time, he said, to go on the attack, destroying enemy bases and sanctuaries. A permanent group was necessary, one which continuously reviewed the situation and advanced solutions:

For a long time I have spoken about Zambia and insisted about Zambia, and I still think that with regard to Zambia, we must do something. Kaunda is not so firm or as stable as he appears, but within the next year or so Kaunda's position will be better, the political structure within Zambia will be turned towards Communist China, and we will have a second Brazzaville.

54 ANTT PIDE/DGS, PR CI (2) 6431 (14), 'Reunião dos Representantes das Polícias da RAS, Rodésia e PIDE, Salisbury, 21-22 de Janeiro de 1970'.

55 This theme would be picked up by O'Donnell, the Secretary of the Rhodesian Department of External Affairs, on 3 February 1971: 'The evidence of Dr Kaunda's pathological hatred of Whites is conclusive and becomes more evident in his public statements underlying his policy of studied non-cooperation'. Aligning himself closely with his country's intelligence community, O'Donnell called for an inter-departmental study of retaliatory action against Zambia, ahead of the conclusion of the TANZAM railway and the building of new power plants in Zambia. Rhodes University, Cory Library for Historical Research, Ian Smith Papers, April 10 Deposit, Box 15, 'Relations With Other Countries', Report for the Minister, Top Secret, 'Possible Retaliatory Measures Against Zambia'.

Venter was cautious, reminding his colleagues that 'it is our duty to point out difficulties and to inform each other, and our government', of the problems that arose, not to fight the war. He did not agree with Lopes' proposal to 'study and prepare special operations'. Lopes insisted on this point, reminding his interlocutors that the conclusions reached regarding Zambia had led to naught; as had already happened at that particular meeting, the discussion became heated. Venter argued that the mounting seriousness of the situation had been addressed, hence increased South African aid to Portugal; Lopes, however, replied that the only realistic solution was to strike against Zambia. Addressing Venter, he said, 'Not even by extending your patrols in Angola, will you be able to defend South Africa'. Venter did not agree. Lopes carried on:

The common enemy, without doubt, has a joint plan against Southern Africa. Do we have any common plan for thwarting the enemy's intentions? Why don't we effect counter-subversion, why don't we push it back? We know from experience that it is possible, as with the case of Congo Kinshasa.

Venter did not budge, and Lopes asked, 'why haven't we carried on Operation Coup?' The idea of using Zambian dissidents against Kaunda was discussed, since all three participants had some experience of the issue, but Venter remained loath to agree to coordinated action; the discussion, now with some input from Silva Pais, moved on to a higher-level conference bringing together the security services and governments. But a profound difference was visible between Portuguese and South Africans, the latter refusing to accept that the former's troubles were capable of, eventually, overwhelming Pretoria.

The Pretoria meeting seems to have represented a watershed in the relations between the three countries' police forces. Perhaps tensions escalated so noticeably because another forum was already discernible. On 29 January 1971 Hendrik van den Bergh, the director of BOSS, had written to Silva Pais. The attempted dialogue between Vorster and Kaunda, he explained, was off, Pretoria having reached the conclusion that it had all been a waste of time; van den Bergh asked, 'are we going to leave matters as they stand and allow Zambia to carry on with her undeclared war on Angola, Rhodesia, Mozambique and South Africa or are we as Intelligence Services going to do something about it?' He added, 'I think the answer is obvious!'⁵⁶ Insisting that the regular police meetings should continue, he now suggested a meeting between Silva Pais, himself and Ken Flower, with the necessary support staff, to evaluate the threat and 'submit recommendations for positive and perhaps joint action by our governments to counter whatever threat may be levelled against us'. He proposed that a meeting should be held in Pretoria, in March. Zambia was clearly identified as the threat, and both Silva Pais and Flower were asked to prepare reports on the matter.

⁵⁶ ANTT, PIDE/DGS PR CI (2) 6431 (18), 'Reunião de representantes das polícias da RAS, Rodésia e PIDE, Lisboa, 22-26 de Março de 1971'.

The meeting was eventually moved to Lisbon, and also in attendance were São José Lopes and Vaz. The conclusions could not be clearer. While a number of African countries represented 'actual and/or potential terrorist threats' to the 'White controlled target countries', only Zambia was a threat to them all, as well as to Botswana and Malawi. The final paragraph indicated that the difficulties experienced in Pretoria the month before had been seemingly overcome:

Because of Zambia's key role in the terrorist threat and the evolution thereof, it has become imperative to consider joint action to counter this threat and the developments likely to increase it. In view of the fact, however, that overt joint action would be counter-productive in that it would increase international sympathy for Zambia and vindicate Kaunda's persistent claims that our three countries are 'bent on Zambia's destruction', only concerted covert action by Portugal, Rhodesia and the Republic of South Africa is to be considered.⁵⁷

The next meeting between the police forces, with Venter and Van der Merwe representing South Africa and Braes and Esler Rhodesia, took place in the Angolan capital in October 1971, after an unusually long pause. There was increased South African apprehension about Zambia, whose influence over Botswana was growing, leading to the appearance in South Africa of 'trained terrorists', who recruited and trained the local opposition; recently a network had been broken up in the Transkei. This apprehension led to the meeting's conclusions and to its suggestion:

The three countries represented should consider, as a matter of urgency, ways and means to make the governments of ZAMBIA and TANZANIA change their attitude concerning, not only the support they are giving to the terrorist organizations, but also their hostility towards the Rep. of SOUTH AFRICA, PORTUGAL and RHODESIA.

Below the surface, however, tensions remained. Asked by Silva Pais if he considered Zambia a real threat, Venter replied that he did; this merely led São José Lopes to return to his customary theme of the need to mount a common effort against Zambia: it was almost disgraceful, he said, that groups commanded by 'semi-literate individuals' could endanger powerful and civilized countries. Venter, as usual, hid behind political considerations which lay outside the scope of the meeting. Little progress could be expected, although Silva Pais did attempt to goad Rhodesia, arguing that a joint anti-Zambia action was his preferred course of action, even if Rhodesia did not seem particularly worried about Zambia, opting instead to show its apprehension over events in Portuguese territory.

The next meeting for which there are records in the PIDE/DGS archive occurred in Luanda, 1–2 March 1973. 1972 had been an important year in

⁵⁷ This quotation is taken from the final report of the conference. Present in the file is the much longer Final Evaluation, written on the basis of the discussions, and prepared by BOSS.

Portuguese–Rhodesian diplomatic links, with the holding of a meeting between Ian Smith and Marcello Caetano in Lisbon in October, during Smith’s holiday in continental Portugal and Madeira.⁵⁸ The Portuguese representation remained unchanged, while the South African police was represented by brigadiers Prinsloo and Kruger, and the Rhodesians by Director Robinson. If in Angola the military situation had improved, the Tete district continued to be a source of worries; these were also provoked by the recent understandings reached by Tanzania, Zambia and Zaire, the latter’s increasingly visible policy of giving umbrage to communist designs in the region and the expansion of Zambia’s offensive military potential. Their recommendation stated that in the face of the increased threat from abroad, they wished to increment their exchange of information. The discussions, according to the Portuguese report on the meeting, had little to add, and the single most important fact that had occurred in relation to Zambia – Rhodesia’s closure of the common border – was not really addressed. Robinson referred that it was having a positive effect on his country’s security situation. The only drawback was the confrontational posture of the Zambian armed forces on the border, who were clearly hoping to provoke an international incident.⁵⁹

The closure of the border, however, is indicative of the limitations of the PIDE’s power when it came to influencing Portugal’s foreign policy. The manner in which it was carried out – with no advance warning given to Lisbon, not to mention prior consultation, shortly after Smith’s meeting with Caetano⁶⁰ – left a poor impression at a time when the Portuguese Government was already tiring of Rhodesian criticism over the military situation in Tete.⁶¹ Rather than applauding the action as a

58 The French ambassador at Lisbon, Jacques Tiné, wrote of the meeting, ‘il apparaît à peu près certain que m. Ian SMITH este venu s’ouvrir auprès de son collègue portugais de l’inquiétude que l’on éprouve à Salisbury sur l’évolution de la situation militaire dans le nord du Mozambique’. La Courneuve, Archives Diplomatiques, Europe 28-23-16, ‘Relations Portugal-Rhodésie’, N. 1251/AL, Tiné to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, 3 November 1972. According to Ken Flower, Smith’s briefed himself for the meeting with CIO papers, but failed to make an impression on Caetano: ‘we gathered from the de-briefing that Smith had represented matters with both fairness and strength. The only public comment Caetano offered indicated that he was not impressed with Smith’s representations: “Our timorous neighbours (the Rhodesians) were more concerned over the situation in Mozambique than the Portuguese themselves who are well used to such a state of affairs and perfectly capable of coping with it.”’ Flower, *Serving Secretly*, 119.

59 ANTT PIDE/DGS PR CI (2) 6341 (23) ‘Reunião dos representantes das polícias da RAS, Rodésia e PIDE, Luanda, 1–2 de Março de 1973’.

60 See La Courneuve, Ministère des Affaires Etrangères (MAE), Europe, 18/23/16 ‘Relations Portugal-Zambie’, Telegram, embassy in Lisbon to the MAE, n. 5-13, 15 January 1973, for a description of the Portuguese government’s frustration with Rhodesia’s unilateral action. Paraphrasing the Portuguese position, the ambassador stated that ‘Le caractère des Rhodésiens les porte a manquer de mesure dans l’appréciation des dangers...’. In the same file, a telegram received from the Embassy in London on 16 January 1973, n. 216-220, stated that Pretoria felt much the same way, and that the event had highlighted the differing attitudes of the white-run countries of southern Africa.

61 See, for example, the letter sent by W.M. Knox to both Ian Smith and Jack Howman, on 22 January 1973, on the issue, relating a conversation on the subject of the border closure and rumoured increased tonnage circulating on the Benguela railway, with former Portuguese foreign minister Franco Nogueira. Franco Nogueira informed Knox that ‘the majority of members of the Portuguese Government approved of Rhodesia’s action’ – but did not mention Marcello Caetano by name. Knox wrote, ‘Since he did not volunteer any information about Dr. Caetano’s own attitude, in spite

necessary step to curb Zambian ambitions (presumably the PIDE's preferred course of action), the Portuguese showed their displeasure, and undermined the measure's impact by increasing the tonnage of goods carried in and out of Zambia on the Benguela railway. Rhodesian anger over the issue mounted, and was reflected in a letter addressed by Smith to Caetano on 15, via W.M. Knox, Rhodesia's 'accredited diplomatic representative' in Lisbon. Smith reminded Caetano of previous contacts over the issue, and explained that 'criticism of Portugal apparently condoning Zambia's action is mounting', with many saying 'that our Portuguese friends are losing sympathy for us'. Taken together with the evidence of the use of Mozambican territory by Zimbabwean liberation movements, and the near completion of the TANZAM railway, the situation was serious: time was running out in order to make Kenneth Kaunda fall into line, and Portugal should aid Rhodesia in restricting the flow of Zambian exports and imports through Angolan and Mozambican ports. Knox, who delivered the message in hand, as instructed, reported that Caetano had read it with a 'poker face' and that, while remaining courteous, the President of the Council had refused to discuss its contents, explaining only that Portugal wished to help but was restricted by its adherence to an 'open-port' policy (the same principle which it used to avoid sanctions against Rhodesia). Nevertheless, he would reply to Smith in due course.⁶²

The Portuguese and Zambian governments, linked by common economic interests, had, in the past, sought to resolve their differences through diplomatic channels, always preserving a moderate tone in their private exchanges.⁶³ This is not to say that the borders between Zambia and the Portuguese colonies was respected by the forces charged with the latter's defence. We have already seen that the *Flechas* carried out incursions into Zambia. These actions would not have been difficult to carry out, given Zambia's military weakness.⁶⁴ Similar missions continued throughout the period in question, carried out by an assortment of units. General Costa Gomes, Portugal's Commander in Chief in Angola from 1970 to 1972, recalled, in a published interview, that 'the *Leais* were forces drawn from dissidents of Kaunda's movement, who we trained in Cazombo. Whenever Zambia carried out an incursion, they would carry out a retaliatory action in its territory'.⁶⁵

of the fact that he was talking to me so candidly, I did not think it advisable to question him on this particular point'. Smith Papers, Box 15, Relations with other Countries, Knox to Smith & Howman, 22 January 1973. Flower, in his memoirs, is more explicit: The South Africans were angry over the lack of consultation, while 'Portugal was critical of the manoeuvre insofar as a border closure violated an important principle the Portuguese had sustained in Mozambique and Angola – never to transgress an international frontier'. Flower, 136.

62 Rhodes University, Cory Library for Historical Research, Ian Smith Papers, April 10 Deposit, Box 15, 'Relations With Other Countries', report, 19 June 1973, Knox to O'Donnell.

63 See, for example, the Zambian memorandum, dated 16 February 1968, part of a wider correspondence between the two governments held in the late 1960s, in ANTT AOS MNE 30A.

64 The difficulties faced in this respect were detailed by Richard Hall in his *The High Price of Principles: Kaunda and the White South* (New York 1969). Hall focused his attention on attacks carried out by Portuguese aeroplanes operating from Angola and Mozambique in pursuit of retreating guerrilla fighters.

65 Cruzeiro, *Costa Gomes*, 130.

ALCORA monthly bulletin 5/73 noted, for example, that 'On 12 April 1973 Angolese troops invaded Zambia in the Mwinilunga area. Allegedly, sixteen Zambians and twenty-three Angolese were captured and taken to Angola.' The action had been taken against 'terrorist' camps in Zambia, but the Zambian authorities had also labelled the invading forces 'terrorists'.⁶⁶ In any case, the operation was described in this bulletin, to be distributed only to highly placed staff officers, as a routine affair. In August, the American consul-general in Luanda travelled to Mozambique, visiting the troubled Tete district. He called into the main army base, at Estima; the local commander, Colonel Rodrigo da Silveira, said the time was coming when Portugal might have to resort to an "'Israeli solution" – i.e. pre-emptive strikes against rebel sanctuaries in surrounding countries', before the military situation became 'desperate' for Portugal.⁶⁷

The final intelligence meeting for which records survive in Lisbon took place in the Portuguese capital in September 1973, and was attended by the directors of BOSS and the CIO, but had little to add to the Zambia affair. The PIDE/DGS's defeat in this field had been complete. A few covert military actions aside, it had failed to deter Zambia from its intended course of action, or to bring about a much harsher line of conduct against that vulnerable front-line state. A policy such as that recommended by the PIDE might very well have been beyond the ability of the Portuguese government to implement, given the lack of diplomatic unity evident among the members of the 'white redoubt'.⁶⁸ Unlike Rhodesia and South Africa, moreover, Portugal remained, for all the official rhetoric, a European country, and a member of NATO; the pariah status earned through its steadfast refusal to decolonize was not, despite the propaganda slogan 'proudly alone', a badge of honour for the governing and administrative elite, including the military and the diplomatic corps. Taken alongside the difficulties experienced by the PIDE in

66 ADN, SGDN 5573. Frank McGovern, Principal Secretary to Kenneth Kaunda, met an official of the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) in August 1973; he mentioned a number of sabotage attacks against the TANZAM railway, carried out by South African and Portuguese 'professionals' who entered Zambia through Portuguese territory. Dublin, National Archive, DFA, 2005/145/111, minute of meeting, Keating, 9 August 1973. ALCORA intelligence documents from this year suggest that the Zambian army, increasing in size, was suffering adversely from its constant deployment to the border areas, which were wearing down its operational capability and affecting the morale of men and officers.

67 USNA, Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005, Confidential, From AMCONSUL LUANDA to SECSTATE WASHDC 2269, 31 August 1973.

68 As Silva Cunha, a long-serving Colonial Minister and, from 1973 to 1974, Defence Minister, explained in his memoirs, South Africa never stopped having, despite common security concerns, a desire to secure hegemony over the area; Pretoria's interests were always placed ahead of Lisbon's whenever the two clashed, and in this period Pretoria's interests lay in cultivating good relations with Lusaka. Silva Cunha writes, 'This was the reason why they never coordinated with us a common policy in relation to Zambia'. S. Cunha, *O Ultramar A Nação e o "25 de Abril"* (Coimbra 1977), 226. Also according to the same source, Rhodesia, when it came to Zambia, wavered between 'unjustifiable mildness' and 'excessive harshness' – with the example given to illustrate the latter stance being precisely the unilateral, and unannounced, closure of the border, which had great implications for Mozambican ports and railways. According to Silva Cunha, Zambia began to use the Benguela railway to export its copper via the Angolan port of Lobito: 'From our point of view, the respect for the principles of International Law precluded the implementation of any restrictive measure'. Cunha, *O Ultramar* . . . , 234–5.

establishing a distinct military presence in Mozambique, the failure of the secret police to influence policy in relation to Zambia suggests that for all the posturing of its leaders and agents, and all of their boasting in front of their Rhodesian and South African counterparts – and other interested foreign observers – the PIDE/DGS did not always have its own way in Africa. The armed forces, the diplomatic corps, the colonial authorities, economic interest groups: all had a role to play in the formulation of African policy, and the preservation of some consensus among these agents was the priority of the Portuguese government, which could countenance neither a withdrawal from Africa nor an all-out assault on external threats as requested by its most intransigent supporters.

Biographical Notes

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