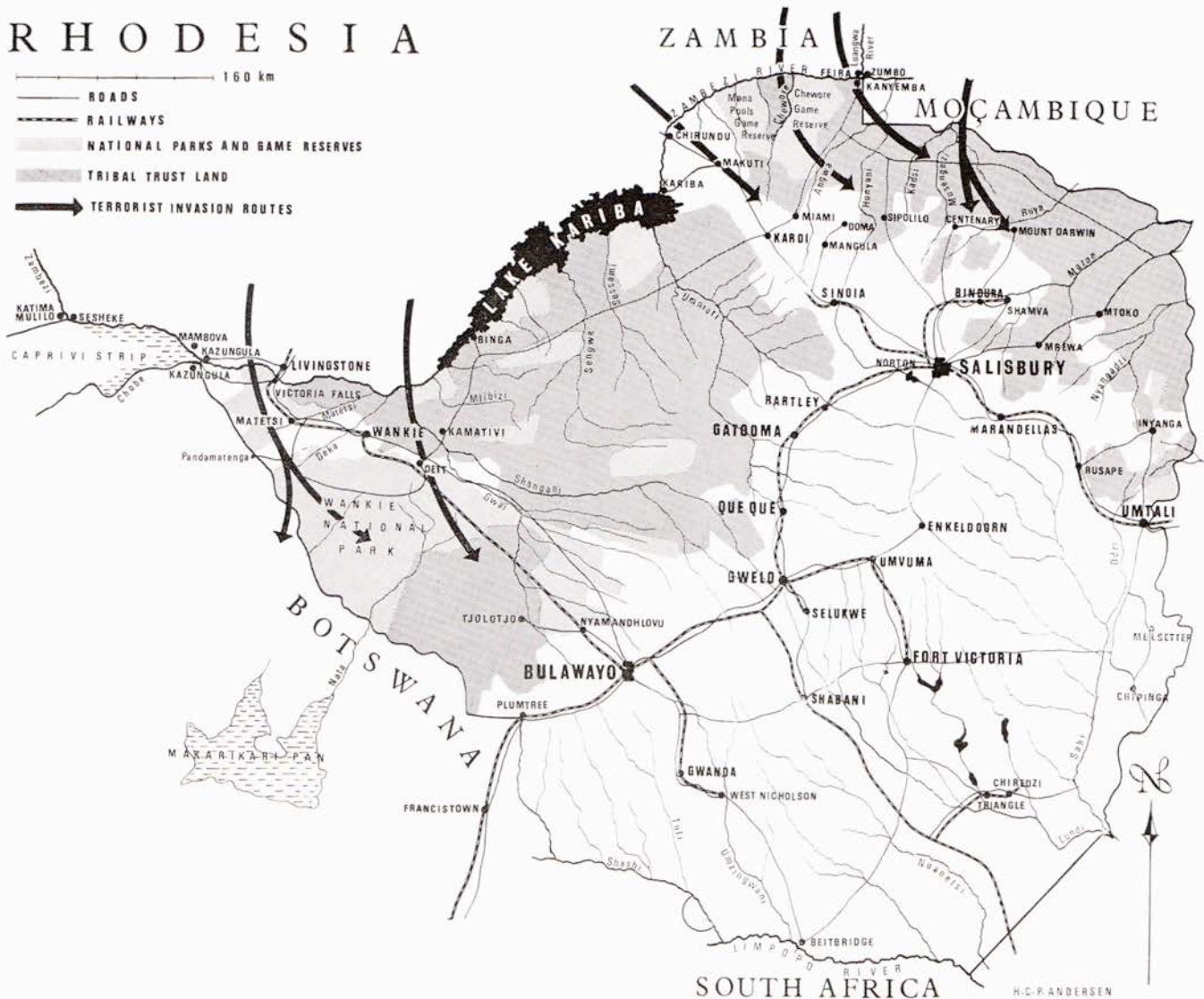


RHODESIA

- 160 km
- ROADS
- RAILWAYS
- NATIONAL PARKS AND GAME RESERVES
- TRIBAL TRUST LAND
- ➔ TERRORIST INVASION ROUTES



THE TERRORIST THREAT

FOR seven years now Rhodesia has faced the continuing threat of armed subversive activity organised by the banned nationalist parties of ZAPU and ZANU from their headquarters at Lusaka, the capital of Zambia. The evidence of Communist support is overwhelming. The weapons captured from the terrorist gangs are invariably of Russian or Chinese manufacture, and the majority of terrorists have been trained in Russia, China, Algeria, Cuba, Bulgaria or North Korea. This is no desperate campaign by oppressed people to throw off the shackles of repression; it is naked terrorism designed to intimidate the African population into supporting

the overthrow of orderly government to facilitate a Communist take-over of a prosperous and highly developed country.

Africa south of the Zambezi is highly mineralized, with unlimited potential, and it contributes significantly to the prosperity of the Western world. It also controls the sea route round the Cape. If it ever falls into Communist hands the whole security and wellbeing of Western civilization would be gravely threatened. The threat to Rhodesia is the spearhead of the attack, and in resisting and containing it Rhodesia is

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safeguarding not only her own security but that of the Western world as well. And yet there are British politicians who persist in referring to the terrorists as "freedom fighters", as though they were engaged in a noble crusade instead of a terrorist campaign designed to cause chaos and disruption as part of Communism's global strategy.

The opening shots in this campaign were fired in April, 1966, when a gang of banned ZANU party members infiltrated into the Sinoia area north of Salisbury; seven of them were killed by the security forces and others captured. The following month a farmer and his wife were brutally murdered on their lonely farm some 20 miles from Hartley, and it was clear that the outrage had been committed by members of the Sinoia gang who had escaped from the earlier encounter.

There were further infiltrations in July, August and September of 1966 and again during the months of May, June, July August and December of 1967. At first the gangs were small and each one was systematically liquidated. The beginning of August, 1967, however, saw a new development in the campaign when a large force of both Rhodesian and South African National Congress saboteurs crossed the Zambezi into Rhodesia between the Victoria Falls and Kazangula to the west. The purpose of the South African nationalists was to penetrate through Rhodesia and Botswana into the Republic of South Africa, but their foray was short lived. All were killed or captured at the cost of eight members of the security forces killed and 15 wounded.

A more ambitious invasion occurred in March, 1968, when a considerable body of insurgents crossed the Zambezi from Zambia at the confluence of the Chewore and Zambezi rivers in Northern Mashonaland, again with members of the banned ZAPU party (a predominantly Ndebele organisation) combining with the South African dissidents. Most of them had been trained in Cuba and Algeria and they posed a more serious military threat than any previous group. The area they had chosen for their operation is wild, desolate country (like most of the Zambezi Valley), with relatively few human inhabitants but heavily populated by wild animals such as elephant, buffalo and rhino. They managed to penetrate some distance through the Valley towards the escarpment, establishing a series of staging camps along the way. But before they could reach the prosperous farming regions on the uplands they were detected. A series of engagements resulted in 58 terrorists (41 ZAPU and 17 S. A. National Congress) being killed and a large number captured. The force as a whole suffered a total of 111 casualties.

Further efforts were made in July and August that same year to justify President Kaunda's claim that there was "turmoil" in Rhodesia, and they ranged from extreme east to extreme west of the 600-mile river border with Zambia. The biggest threat was posed by three groups of ZAPU and one of ZANU (the mainly Shona nationalist party) who crossed the

Zambezi at four points. The ZANU group of 14 members infiltrated into Rhodesia in the vicinity of Mapata Island and was soon spotted. Within 48 hours all had been killed or captured. The ZAPU contingent of 91 men was divided into three parties who crossed at widely separated points—at the confluence of the Zambezi and Gwaai rivers in Matabeleland, in the area of Kariba in Northern Mashonaland and at the confluence of the Zambezi and Makuku rivers further east. They were all soon accounted for, and of the 91 only eight escaped the security net, 42 being killed and 41 captured.

Their efforts had been both futile and expensive and the nationalists withdrew to lick their wounds. Apart from a small incursion in the region of Kazangula in the extreme west, which also was short-lived, they left Rhodesia alone for the next two years.

If their intention was to lull the Rhodesian security forces into fatal complacency they failed. Vigilance was maintained, but it was impossible to patrol every square metre of the inhospitable country that separates the Zambezi river from the settled farming areas. On August 30, 1972, came the first hint that the terrorists were becoming active again when a motorist, with his wife and children, was blown up by a land mine near Mana Pools, a popular wild life tourist area in the Zambezi Valley. They were all injured but fortunately escaped with their lives. Near the scene a handwritten note was found saying that ZAPU was responsible. Seven weeks later an Army vehicle struck a mine in the Chete Game Reserve and the driver was killed. Tracks in the vicinity showed that those responsible had crossed from Zambia, and the next day ZAPU again admitted their culpability. Land mines also caused casualties in the Victoria Falls-Kazangula area. But worse was to come.

On December 22—three days before Christmas—Rhodesians were horrified to learn of a cowardly attack by terrorists on a farm house in the Centenary area north of Salisbury on the edge of the Zambezi escarpment. Soon after midnight they sprayed the house with bullets from automatic weapons and wounded the eight-year-old daughter of the farmer as she lay asleep. That same night they raided an African store nearby, helped themselves to food, clothing and cigarettes, and set the store alight. On a road in the vicinity security forces later unearthed a land mine.

The terrorists struck again two nights later when they attacked a neighbouring farm house in which the farmer and his family who had been the victims of the first attack were staying with friends. They used rockets and this time the farmer and a nine-year-old daughter were injured. Near the same farm four soldiers were wounded, one fatally, in a land mine explosion.

By this time the security forces were combing the rugged country in which these farms lie and they killed and captured

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a number of terrorists. For a month, as the security forces harassed the infiltrators, all was quiet and life in the area had almost returned to normal when another Centenary farm was attacked late at night and the farmer was wounded and his wife killed. This was followed about a week later by a hand-grenade attack on still another farm in the region in which a visitor from Britain was killed while watching television. He was alone on his son's farm at the time, and his son returned that same night from a visit to Salisbury to find his father dead.

It was announced two days later that almost all the terrorists involved in the attack on the first farm had been wiped out.

It became obvious that they were active over a wide area, particularly in the planting of land mines, which claimed still more victims, including two South African policemen. In the vicinity of Mount Darwin, to the east of Centenary and on the edge of the escarpment, two Rhodesian land inspectors were murdered by a group of terrorists and a third land inspector, who was with them at the time, was taken prisoner.

The Rhodesian forces are contending with three separate organisations—ZANU, operating in the north-eastern border area; ZAPU, engaged in cowardly hit-and-run tactics from safe bases in Zambia, and FROLIZI, a group of dissidents from both the banned parties, operating into the north-east of Rhodesia by way of Mozambique, which forms the border in that area. They have been using the organisation of the Frelimo terrorists operating against the Portuguese whose main target is the giant Caborra Bassa dam, taking advantage of their lines of communication and their supply system. These latest attacks, therefore, have come from an entirely new direction.

But how had the Frolizi terrorists managed to penetrate across the desolate country between the border and the Centenary hills without their presence being reported by the local African population? Up to now, in all the areas in which infiltration had taken place, the local Africans had readily co-operated with the security forces by reporting the presence of strangers in their midst, and this had led to their swift detection and elimination before they were able to do any serious damage. But the Africans in this remote north-eastern corner of the country had obviously co-operated with the terrorists for six or seven months before the attacks were made—acting as porters of their equipment and supplies, giving them food and shelter, enabling them to get organised generally.

It was found that the invaders had managed to suborn some of the local witchdoctors, the spirit mediums in whom the Shona people have such a profound belief. It would be unthinkable for them to gainsay the utterances of the mediums and it is evident that the ordinary people were influenced in

this way to give at least their tacit support to the terrorists. So the terrorists, over a considerable period, had been able to organise themselves for infiltration further towards the European farming areas and to launch their indiscriminate attacks on isolated farm houses.

The Government took stern action. A number of mediums suspected of aiding the terrorists were arrested and other steps taken to tighten up security in the area, such as the establishment of a district commissioner's station to maintain closer contact with the people, and by the imposition of collective fines on the community as a whole.

Since Zambia had openly harboured the terrorists and given them facilities for launching their raids on Rhodesian territory—in spite of repeated warnings that retaliatory action would be taken if they continued—the Rhodesian Government closed its border posts at Victoria Falls, Kariba and Chirundu on January 9, 1973, and thus prevented traffic from South Africa and the port of Beira from reaching Zambia. Prime Minister Ian Smith told President Kaunda that the border would be reopened only when he had received an assurance that he (Kaunda) would clamp down on the terrorists operating from his soil. A month later, on February 8, Mr. Smith announced that in a formal message the Zambian Government had agreed to do all it could to prevent terrorist incursions into Rhodesia from Zambia, and the Rhodesian border posts were reopened. But Zambia immediately retaliated by closing her border posts to traffic through Rhodesia and redoubled her efforts to develop alternative routes to the sea through neighbouring countries under African rule.

On March 30, 1973, the terrorists once more attacked a farm, this time in the Wedza area, shot and killed the farmer in the vicinity of his farm compound, and later attacked a store 10 km from the farm. At the same time two coloured men said to be linked with a terrorist group which had moved into the central area of Rhodesia, were arrested near Salisbury and found in possession of Communist-made grenades, pistols, ammunition and explosives.

On April 3 a member of the Security Forces was killed and another seriously wounded in anti-terrorist operations. Both men were farmers in the Umvukwes-Centenary area, and members of the Police Reserve.

Relations between the two countries, Rhodesia and Zambia, could hardly be at a lower ebb, and the Zambezi, instead of being a link, is now a more formidable barrier than it ever was. And it is obvious that the terrorist threat will be with us for some time yet. But whatever tactics they adopt they have not the slightest chance of success against the determination of Rhodesians of all races to preserve their country and their way of life.

