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## The Origins of Exercise ALCORA, 1960–71

Filipe Ribeiro de Meneses\* and Robert McNamara

Over the course of the 1960s, Portugal, Rhodesia, and South Africa, hard-pressed by African nationalist movements and international opinion, grew closer together, realising that their common enemies could only be defeated by a common stance. The most important attempt to meet the threat to white political domination in Southern Africa was Exercise ALCORA, a military understanding negotiated, in secret, in October 1970. From then until the Portuguese Revolution in 1974, regular meetings of the representatives of the three countries' armed forces pooled intelligence and defined new strategies for the on-going conflicts in Rhodesia, Angola, and Mozambique, and put in train plans for future, larger-scale clashes. This article examines the origins of ALCORA, charting the process by which Lisbon, Salisbury, and Pretoria came together despite considerable obstacles. It highlights the importance of domestic factors, notably in South Africa, ALCORA's senior partner. There, the murder in 1966 of Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd led to a circumstance wherein leading figures of the regime enjoyed much greater freedom in the definition of policy than before. One beneficiary was Defence Minister P. W. Botha who, with the army's backing, would develop a total strategy against what was perceived as a total threat. Exercise ALCORA was a key component of this strategy.

**Keywords:** Southern Africa; decolonisation; ALCORA; counter-insurgency

### Introduction

On 29 November 1972, the South African Vice Consul and Military Attaché in Luanda, William S. 'Kaas' Van Der Waals, a paratrooper and senior South African Defence Forces (SADF) intelligence analyst, received a top-secret message from the SADF Chief of Staff directing him to act as liaison with the Portuguese military in connection with a top-secret exercise, codenamed ALCORA. ALCORA had been established to 'investigate ways and means of achieving a co-ordinated tripartite effort among Portugal, Rhodesia, and the RSA (Republic of South Africa) with a view to countering the mutual threat against their territories in Southern Africa'.<sup>1</sup> According to the document, ALCORA was structured as follows: at the summit stood the ALCORA Top-Level Committee (ATLC); below this was the ALCORA Coordinating Committee (ACOC), with a series of subcommittees dealing with key priority areas of concern. These included information, forward planning, logistics, transportation, and telecommunications. According to the message, ALCORA had

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commenced with top-level liaison between the South African and Portuguese armies in October 1970, with Rhodesia being invited to join in March 1971.<sup>2</sup>

In September 1973, formal links between the three powers would be strengthened further when their respective Ministers of Defence agreed to the establishment of the Permanent ALCORA Planning Organisation (PAPO), a replacement for ACOC and the various subcommittees. PAPO was due to commence its operations in January 1974, and was indeed at an early stage of development when the Portuguese Revolution took place in April 1974.<sup>3</sup> Despite the revolution, Exercise ALCORA would continue, though with diminishing effectiveness, until October 1974, when the final meeting of the ATLC in Lisbon formally ended Portuguese participation. Having finally accepted decolonisation as the inevitable outcome of the democratisation process taking place in Portugal and having agreed a date for Mozambican independence with the leadership of the Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (FRELIMO), the Portuguese now sought to disassociate themselves from a politically embarrassing association with the unrepentant regimes in Salisbury and Pretoria.<sup>4</sup> Some elements of the ALCORA structure may have survived for a time in Rhodesian–South African co-operation until at least 1975, namely the production of intelligence reports on threats to Southern Africa.<sup>5</sup>

Was ALCORA a formal defence pact, the military manifestation of the ‘unholy alliance’, as opponents called the suspected political, economic, and military linkages between South Africa, Portugal, and Rhodesia?<sup>6</sup> This article suggests that even if no formal mutual-assistance treaty actually existed, the nature of the co-operation constituted a commitment to joint defence should a major external threat emerge. This much is clear from recent releases in the Portuguese, South African, and Ian Smith archives.<sup>7</sup> An analogy can be drawn between ALCORA and other informal military understandings - most notably the French–British staff talks prior to the First World War, which greatly contributed to Britain’s decision to enter that conflict.<sup>8</sup> The analogy is especially apt given that there is much dispute as to how much most of the British Cabinet knew in 1914 about the moral commitment to the defence of France that Britain had made through its participation in staff talks.<sup>9</sup> Similarly, ALCORA appears not to have had any formal imprimatur from the cabinets of South Africa, Portugal, or Rhodesia. This article suggests that ALCORA was in part the offspring of the on-going power struggles within the Republic of South Africa, the ‘senior partner’, due to its wealth and military potential, of the three ALCORA countries. The SADF and the Minister of Defence from 1966–80, P. W. Botha<sup>10</sup>, had key roles in the creation of ALCORA. Indeed, the origins of the ALCORA project throw up some interesting questions about who actually ran South African foreign policy in the 1960s and early 1970s, after the accession of John Vorster in 1966.<sup>11</sup> While conflicts between the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Information were widely commented upon in the South African press from the mid 1970s, there was also a bitter struggle between the Bureau for State Security (BOSS) and military intelligence ‘over the entire thrust of security politics’.<sup>12</sup>

### **The ‘unholy alliance’**

A rapidly changing world brought about close co-operation between South Africa, Portugal, and Rhodesia in the 1960s. Enthusiasm for empire dried up among most colonial powers in the wake of the Second World War, while a significant international anti-colonial alliance developed, bringing together newly independent Asian

and African states, Communist-bloc countries, and a growing number of western European states. John F. Kennedy added the United States to this alliance, making it seemingly irresistible. As African nationalism swept across the continent, and European administrations headed home, the remaining white governments in Africa found themselves increasingly vulnerable and casting around for support, despite the differences that separated them. While South Africa and Southern Rhodesia were parliamentary democracies (albeit with obvious franchise restrictions, depending, respectively, on race and degree of 'development'), Portugal had been, since 1926, a dictatorship, being led from 1932 onwards by António de Oliveira Salazar.

In the context of the cold war, the white regimes of Southern Africa all used similar discourses about the threat posed by the Communist bloc. Indeed, they saw themselves as exemplary defenders of white Christian civilisation besieged by African nationalists directly controlled from Moscow or Beijing.<sup>13</sup> Portugal, under Salazar, had been vehemently anti-Communist since the 1930s, a circumstance which facilitated its integration into NATO in 1949. South Africa increasingly used anti-Communism after 1961 as the means to secure white unity between Afrikaners and English South Africans.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, the Nationalist Party had fused the themes of the Communist menace and a black uprising as far back as the 1930s.<sup>15</sup> And many Rhodesians saw themselves as upholding the spirit of Great Britain against the Communist menace - a stance which, according to them, had disappeared from the Harold-Wilson-led Britain of the 1960s.<sup>16</sup> The reluctance of the West, particularly Great Britain and the United States, to supply them with the necessary weaponry to defend themselves was presented by the three countries as prime evidence of the decadence of that same West. For the Portuguese, NATO restrictions on using alliance-supplied weaponry in their counter-insurgency campaigns in Africa were especially galling. Afrikaaners discerned a continuous line of British perfidy running from the Boer War, through Macmillan's 'wind of change' speech, to the renegeing on the supply of arms supposedly guaranteed by the Simonstown naval agreement of 1955.

Not all the fears of the whites regarding Soviet and Chinese intentions were completely far-fetched. The Southern African liberation movements came increasingly to rely on support and arms from the Eastern Bloc as the 1960s wore on. The building of the Tanzania-Zambia (TANZAM) railway link by thousands of Chinese labourers was designed to reduce Zambia's dependence on white-owned transport links, and represented a massive financial commitment by Beijing - one that set alarm bells ringing among the political and security elites of the self-styled 'white redoubt'.<sup>17</sup> The Cuban intervention in Angola after 1975 would further demonstrate the fears of Communist intervention were not entirely false.

However, there were differences on the issue of race. South African apartheid, underpinned by fantastical pseudo-sociological concepts, was in essence a ruthless programme of separate development, little more than a licence to ethnically cleanse huge numbers of Africans from white areas to economically barren homelands. On the surface at least, apartheid was different from Portugal's intention to create a multi-racial society and from the partnership model of Rhodesia and its predecessor, the Central African Federation, which had promised political and economic opportunity for all based on a qualitative franchise. However, in practice, particularly in the later 1960s, racial policies began to converge. Portugal's undemocratic political system, as well as the massive influx of Portuguese migrants to Angola and the deterioration in security after 1961, all contributed to growing racial distrust, while the Rhodesian Front's rise to power and desire for independence was motivated by a

desire to change the 1961 multi-racial Southern Rhodesian constitution, which sought to remove barriers to black advancement, and instead push the possibility of majority rule far into the future.<sup>18</sup> The constitution of the Republic of Rhodesia (1969) aimed at both that outcome and a new racial dispensation inspired by apartheid.

Co-operation among the three countries was impossible to keep secret.<sup>19</sup> Some aspects - most notably South African and Portuguese sanctions-busting to keep Rhodesia afloat economically after its unilateral declaration of independence (UDI) in November 1965 - are well known.<sup>20</sup> Other aspects of this tripartite co-operation are perhaps less familiar. Elements of the paramilitary South African Police (SAP) were deployed in Rhodesia in 1967 after a joint incursion there by South African, African National Congress (SAANC), and Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) guerrillas.<sup>21</sup> This police detachment, which may have, at its peak, numbered some 2,000 men, remained in place until 1975, when John Vorster withdrew it, hoping to put pressure on Rhodesian Prime Minister Ian Smith to reach a compromise with African nationalists. This was a great betrayal in Smith's eyes.<sup>22</sup> The deployment of the SAP, rather than the SADF, led to resentment among senior military officers. They saw it as a usurpation of their role by the increasingly influential head of Republican Intelligence, General Hendrik van den Bergh. Later, in 1969, with the creation of the BOSS, van den Bergh established his own personal control over all intelligence gathering, greatly diminishing the role of the SADF's Military Intelligence Department (MID), again to the great annoyance of the military.<sup>23</sup>

Indeed, considerable police and intelligence co-operation and liaison existed between Rhodesia, South African, and Portuguese police and intelligence services. As far back as July 1958, Mozambique-based Portuguese and Rhodesian police agents met in Salisbury to discuss security co-operation.<sup>24</sup> The rhythm of these meetings increased throughout the 1960s as the perception of a common threat grew. From these meetings it became evident that the police forces and intelligence services (in the Portuguese case the two functions were carried out by the same entity, the *Polícia Internacional de Defesa do Estado*, PIDE) were becoming more ambitious in their goals, hoping to have a say in the elaboration and execution of foreign policy.

ALCORA, however, is the least known plank of this co-operation.<sup>25</sup> Memoirs of some of the protagonists shed only little light on the subject. Ian Smith's memoirs are notably silent on the matter as are even well informed contemporary accounts.<sup>26</sup> Hilton Hamann, who held lengthy interviews with many apartheid-era South African Generals, does not mention ALCORA, and describes South African military support to Portugal as 'small scale' with a limited supply of arms and the occasional ferrying of Portuguese troops on counter-insurgency operations by South African helicopters.<sup>27</sup> Ken Flower, Director of the Rhodesian Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO) from 1964 to 1981, while giving considerable coverage of the intelligence co-operation between the three white regimes in his memoirs, makes only one reference to military discussions. He recalls that these called for 'a common strategy of "Joint Defence of the Zambezi River Line"', but there seemed little prospect of translating theory into practice'.<sup>28</sup> And General Kaúlza de Arriaga, a hardliner who served as Commander-in-Chief in Mozambique, referred explicitly in his *Guerra e Política: Em Nome da Verdade* to an 'Alcora Alliance' which never lived up to its promise.<sup>29</sup>

Extant references to ALCORA are, for the most part, incomplete or incorrect.<sup>30</sup> More recently, Paulo Correia and Grietjie Verhoef have made a useful contribution to the literature on some of the co-operation between South Africa and Portugal in the 1960s, though there are lacunae, notably a lack of access to

some key South African defence archives and the Rhodesian perspective in their account of South African–Portuguese defence relations.<sup>31</sup> Most pertinently, extracts from some of the Portuguese minutes of the ALCORA Top-Level Committee meeting have been printed, without any indication of sources, in a recent chronology of Portugal's colonial wars.<sup>32</sup>

### The crisis of the early 1960s

The distant origins of the Exercise ALCORA lie in the tumultuous events of 1959–62, when the edifice of white-minority rule in southern Africa came under severe pressure from an increasingly confident African nationalism. Successive blows struck the white regimes: the 1959 state of emergency in the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland exposed the hollowness of the multiracial 'partnership' model there; the violent aftermath of the decolonisation of the Belgian Congo (1960) demonstrated the vulnerability of white expatriates in the newly independent states; and Harold Macmillan's 'wind of change' speech in January 1960 suggested that Britain could no longer be relied upon to defend southern Africa's whites. Subsequently, the report of the Monckton Commission severely undermined the Federation, while the Sharpeville massacre of March 1960 and the bloody 1961 insurrection in northern Angola appeared to presage a future of endless racial disharmony and conflict. The Federation itself was dissolved at the end of 1963, with Zambia (Northern Rhodesia) and Malawi (Nyasaland) becoming independent the following year. Southern Rhodesia was left with a white-minority government, autonomous in most of its affairs, but still not independent from Britain.<sup>33</sup> This was accompanied by a significant drift to the Right among the white electorate. The Rhodesian Front Party, an embodiment of this sentiment, was determined to secure independence with white rule left intact, or even extended. The failure of Winston Field, the Southern Rhodesian Prime Minister, to secure this solution led to his political demise in April 1964 and replacement by Ian Smith, an advocate of unilaterally declaring independence.

The white states proved both more resilient and intransigent than their opponents - and perhaps even they - predicted. White military and security resources remained far superior to those of their black opponents. Portugal's determination to fight for Angola, and its ability to contain the nationalist revolt, provided an important example. This determination was actually strengthened by the country's central weakness: its underdeveloped economy. Portugal, unlike Britain, France, or even Belgium, had little prospect of creating a neo-colonialist relationship should it choose to decolonise, as Salazar told US diplomat, George Ball, in August 1963.<sup>34</sup> Salazar's government opened up the colonial economies to foreign investment, which flowed quickly into resource-rich Angola and Mozambique, and this, combined with new economic opportunities, derived from the presence of a large military contingent, led to substantial emigration from the metropole to the colonies. The white population of Angola increased from 200,000 in 1960 to a 1968 estimate of 400,000, approximately 7.5% of the entire Angolan population.<sup>35</sup> It would continue to increase until 1974. Meanwhile Southern Rhodesia, with strong Portuguese backing, unilaterally declared independence from Britain on 11 November 1965. In both Angola and Rhodesia (but not so Mozambique, where FRELIMO would emerge as the sole credible challenger to Portuguese rule), the liberation movements were fractured on tribal lines, which limited their threat, though they all remained in being. South Africa, aided by its *cordon sanitaire* of white-ruled countries to the north,



ruthlessly crushed black unrest and urban-guerrilla movement; by 1965, the leadership of the SAANC and the PAC was dead, jailed or in exile.<sup>36</sup>

### **Initial moves and hesitations**

Sir Roy Welensky, Federal Prime Minister from 1956 to 1963, was a strong proponent of a mutual defence pact for Southern Africa but was stymied by Portuguese and South African indifference and British government hostility.<sup>37</sup> In the face of the growing threat to southern Africa posed by African nationalism after 1960, South African and Portuguese attitudes began to change. H. T. Taswell, the South African High Commissioner to the Federation, wrote in February 1961: 'One cannot but detect in United Kingdom policy a feeling of apathy towards the white man in Africa and a strong desire to rid Britain of its overseas colonial responsibilities as quickly as possible.'<sup>38</sup> Arguing that a 'buffer state to the North has many advantages for us - both political and economic', he requested a 'rough indication' of official South African feelings on the matter as 'it could very well come up as a practical and important political issue in the not too distant future.'<sup>39</sup> In October 1961, as tensions between the British Government and the Federation increased, there were indications from Roy Welensky that he might be willing to declare independence. Taswell, assured by the Federal Defence Minister, John Moore Caldicott, that the United Kingdom would use force to resolve the situation, suggested that military contacts with the Federation should be intensified, arms should be supplied and there should be an exchange of military intelligence on other territories. He commented: 'The longer the Federation can remain an effective buffer for us the better.' Taswell also met the Portuguese Consul-General at Salisbury, João Pereira Bastos, to discuss matters such as the possible use of Mozambique as a base for infiltration (and later attack) against South Africa, the disintegration of the Federation, and Washington's position on Africa, which, according to Pereira Bastos' report on the meetings, Pretoria had begun to fear more than the Russian threat.<sup>40</sup>

South Africa carried out an examination in 1962 of what military support it could give the whites in the Federation in the event of outbreaks of domestic unrest, foreign intervention from the north in support of domestic rebellion, or action by the United Nations at their own initiative or that of the United Kingdom, possibly by a Labour government. The means by which South Africa could help included delivery of weapons and equipment; assistance with domestic security and order to free up Rhodesian military forces; admission of South African volunteers to join the Federal forces; and direct military assistance by SADF. The problem, as the authors of the study saw it, was that such aid could itself provoke African, UN, or British intervention, and direct military aid would almost certainly lead to foreign or UN intervention unless it could be delivered on such a scale and at such speed that it was immediately successful.<sup>41</sup>

On 1 March 1963, the South African Ambassador to the United States, W.C. Maude, spoke to the Federation's representative - attached to the British Embassy in Washington - Air Vice Marshall O.B. Bennett. Bennett, according to the Ambassador's account, intimated that he desired closer co-operation between the Federation (or perhaps just Southern Rhodesia), the Republic, and Angola and Mozambique as well as the abandonment of the policy of emphasising differences with South Africa and Portugal. He argued: 'The time has come [...] to reconsider these matters with a view to establishing the "solid block of us three".' Noting the

'remarkable manner' in which formerly pariah powers such as Franco's Spain, 'with the passage of time', had been rehabilitated, Bennett concluded that Washington might rethink its policies when faced with a unified white Southern Africa. Maude assumed that these matters (an alliance) were being studied at home.<sup>42</sup> A month later, Taswell reported on conversations with Roy Welensky and the Southern Rhodesian Prime Minister, Winston Field. He noted that there was an impending constitutional struggle 'which could conceivably have serious and far-reaching repercussions'. He warned: 'If Southern Rhodesia falls, our bastion to the North goes and the attack on us can start. As Sir Roy put it when I saw him on April 4, the breakup of the Federation is part of the march to Pretoria. This is the start of the second Boer War.'<sup>43</sup> However, in May 1963, Verwoerd made clear to Welensky that he 'would not entertain a political link with Southern Rhodesia' but would provide economic aid.<sup>44</sup> Furthermore, when Ian Smith, the Rhodesian Treasury Minister, attempted to ascertain South African views on a unilateral declaration of independence in November 1963, just one month before the Federation's dissolution, he was told that there was no prospect of South African support should Britain intervene militarily.<sup>45</sup>

South Africa, while hardly indifferent to the fate of its white neighbours to the north, appears to have been unsure what could be done to help. There was a considerable degree of ambivalence about the racial policies of the Portuguese and Rhodesian governments in South African circles. South African politicians, in public, and diplomats, in private, were not above sneering at the attempts of both to contrive, through publicity and lip-service legislation, that they were better than South Africa. Some white South Africans were openly contemptuous of the Portuguese.<sup>46</sup> Verwoerd, a survey of the documentary evidence would suggest was, at heart, an isolationist. As the Portuguese themselves noted, the South Africans (or the Afrikaners at least) considered that they had much deeper roots in Africa - and nowhere else to retreat to.<sup>47</sup> In June 1961 the South African Defence Minister, Jacobus Johannes Fouché, announced that in a forthcoming visit to Europe in July he would like to stop off in Portugal, 'to exchange information of common concern to our countries'. He did so, accompanied by Secretary General of the Defence Ministry, and General Pieter Grobbelaar, Commandant-General of the SADF. While the *Pretoria News* seemed to hope for the establishment of a defensive pact against 'black aggression' from the north, the *Star*, in an editorial on 6 July, warned: 'We hope he is not contemplating anything in the nature of a military alliance with the Portuguese.'

Ken Flower noted that the Rhodesian Front government was unable to comprehend that South African and Portuguese interests did not necessarily always coincide with Rhodesia's. South African intelligence personnel made clear that they were sceptical about UDI. On the other hand, the Portuguese explicitly stated that they would support the Rhodesians, though Flower doubted the value of such help.<sup>48</sup> Portuguese-Southern Rhodesian military and intelligence contacts intensified between 1961 and 1965 and an arms deal, strongly supported by Portuguese diplomats, was signed prior to UDI. By then, Salazar had met Ian Smith in Lisbon. Smith later recounted that he was most taken with the Portuguese dictator<sup>49</sup>, and wrote him afterwards: 'I was particularly impressed with the frankness of our exchanges, and am now absolutely certain of a deep and understanding friendship between our two countries.'<sup>50</sup> Not long after this meeting, on 31 October 1964, Franco Nogueira, Portugal's Foreign Minister, instructed the Consul-General at Salisbury to present a message of support to the South Rhodesian government.<sup>51</sup>



**South Africa and Portugal: common interests, reciprocal fears**

South African doubts regarding the Portuguese military and political administration of their territories certainly shaped Pretoria's initial response to the very violent insurrection in northern Angola in March 1961. The immediate verdict of the South African Consul-General at Luanda, C. B. H. Fincham, was that Angola would become an independent country within one or two years.<sup>52</sup> However, the Portuguese proved more resolute than anyone expected. Salazar, having rid himself of General Botelho Moniz, an US-leaning Minister of Defence who had tried to remove him from power, took over that same portfolio and began to despatch troops to Africa in ever-greater numbers.<sup>53</sup> The secretary of the Department of External Affairs in South Africa, G. P. Jooste, reported the Portuguese Ambassador in April 1961 telling him: 'The battle for Africa had begun.' The Portuguese diplomat bemoaned the fact that Britain and the United States had badly let them down in Angola and they could no longer trust their own blacks: 'The Portuguese in Angola were experiencing a complete disillusionment in this connection. "You (South Africa) were right and we were wrong," he added.'<sup>54</sup>

Despite the tide of violent and non-violent African nationalist pressure washing over the 'white redoubt', and increasing economic contacts between South Africa and the Portuguese colonies, a military understanding between South Africans and Portuguese was not easy to achieve. Portugal had long feared the expansionist tendencies of South Africa towards Mozambique, most notably given public expression at the 1919 Paris Peace conference. The outbreak of violence in Angola, and the resulting settler unrest there, gave new life to these fears.<sup>55</sup> Portugal was also anxious to continue to play up the positive aspect of the racial dispensation in its overseas territories: an alliance with South Africa was incompatible with this, since apartheid and Portugal's 'multi-racialism' were, in theory, poles apart. Nevertheless, once Portugal had made the decision to fight in Africa, closer ties with Pretoria became inevitable. Portugal was not allowed to use NATO-supplied weaponry in its colonies; South Africa was an obvious alternative supplier. Verwoerd was not unsympathetic to Portuguese weapons requests, as he explained in a letter to Salazar in 1963, given the dangers which threatened 'Western civilization in Africa'.<sup>56</sup> When he met H. T. Taswell in August 1964, Salazar pointed out that if a generalised war broke out in southern Africa, it would be in Pretoria's interest to fight it 2,000 kms beyond its boundaries. Consequently, by necessity it must be interested in the continuance of stability in the wider region.<sup>57</sup>

Pretoria was certainly preparing for conflict: the South African defence budget went from \$100 million in 1961/62 to \$358 million in 1966/67 and one year's military service was introduced for all able-bodied young white men in 1966.<sup>58</sup> It made little sense to invest so much in defence to then watch potential allies fall by the wayside. Sometime prior to Taswell's August 1964 meeting with Salazar, the South African military gave consideration to a mutual defence pact with Portugal in the aftermath of the break-up of the Federation. An SADF memorandum<sup>59</sup>, which was read by General Grobbelaar, the Commandant General of SADF, advocated an alliance with Portugal. Starting from the assumption that the final goal of black African nationalism, supported by Communism, was the destruction of South Africa, it concluded that the Portuguese territories gave important depth to the defence of South Africa. It was, in other words, a precursor of the 'Total Onslaught' geopolitical theory that came to dominate South African strategic thinking from 1970 to 1994. The

break-up of the Federation had aided South Africa's enemies and, consequently, it was of vital importance that the remaining white-held areas to the North remained in friendly hands, although the constitutional position of Southern Rhodesia precluded its inclusion in any alliance. It was also assumed that Portugal, while capable of suppressing domestic guerrilla operations in its territories, would not be able to resist an external attack; preventing this should be the aim of a mutual defence pact. The paper considered that it would be necessary to establish common structures to cover all facets of combined military operations by Portugal and South Africa as such action required joint planning in normal times.<sup>60</sup>

The memorandum acknowledged that South Africa would have to provide weapons and support for Portugal, despite the latter country's policy of racial integration, which Pretoria could not support. The advantages outweighed this and other drawbacks: Southern Rhodesia would be encouraged to maintain white rule, while the protection of Mozambique would reassure the Rhodesians that their communications, particularly their exports and oil supplies, could be maintained. Lastly, it was considered that openness or secrecy was a finally balanced issue: a secret treaty would provoke less international criticism but a public pact would serve as a deterrent to military adventures against the Portuguese territories. The document concluded that it was imperative for South Africa's security that the two Portuguese territories remain in friendly hands and that Pretoria must be prepared to contribute actively to their defence. To this end a military treaty with Portugal was regarded as an essential step.<sup>61</sup>

Among South African diplomats, the Consul-General at Luanda, Emmet Malone, was the most persistent advocate of providing increased military and financial aid to Portugal. In April 1965 he warned of the urgency of the situation in Angola and the ominous consequences for South Africa. Malone pointed out that Portugal had 53,000 troops deployed in Angola, another 25,000 in Mozambique and some 7,000 in Guinea, and was spending 40% of its total budget on military expenditure, along with another 15% on basic strategic-development aid such as communications, at a time when the insurrections were at a relatively low ebb. How, then, would Portugal cope with a simultaneous escalation in Angola and Mozambique?<sup>62</sup> Malone's anxieties about the Portuguese position, conveyed to the military authorities, appear to have contributed to the MID producing a report on the subject. However, some nineteen months later, Malone was still writing on the subject, since little had apparently been done. Noting that the Ambassador at Lisbon supported the idea of assistance to Portugal, he urged that the MID report be dusted down as it 'contained some very well thought out proposals as to how, precisely, we could best help Portugal'.<sup>63</sup> His conviction was 'that it is vital to our long-term survival that Angola and Mozambique must be held. I am equally convinced that, unless we afford massive financial and (possibly) material assistance the Portuguese will be unable indefinitely to bear the strain.' Malone warned that it is 'later than we think. But not yet too late.'<sup>64</sup>

If Malone was enthusiastic about increased co-operation, Verwoerd and his Foreign Minister, Dr Hilgard Muller, remained sceptics. When the Portuguese sent an alarmist message in May 1966 claiming that the British planned an attack on Beira to block Rhodesian oil supplies, and intimated that they wanted enhanced defence co-operation, Muller was emphatic that South Africa should not enter into any alliance with Portugal or Rhodesia. Salazar's proposal, it was assessed, should be diplomatically rebuffed in such a way as not to damage Portuguese morale, leaving the door open for talks. Verwoerd's reply accordingly played down the likelihood

of a British strike attack and rejected the co-ordination of military forces with South Africa and Rhodesia. Verwoerd thought that any military co-ordination would only endanger South Africa's interests.<sup>65</sup> Within months, however, he was dead, the victim of an insane assassin. His successor, John Vorster, would not enjoy the same prestige or dominance over his colleagues that Verwoerd had done and the road to greater co-operation opened.

### **The transformation of South Africa's attitude, 1966–70**

It is clear from Portuguese records, and the account given by Correia and Verhoef, that the change in the leadership in South Africa in 1966 made a considerable difference to the situation. When P. W. Botha, the new Minister of Defence, visited Portugal in April 1967, he argued that there should be senior military liaison to address common security problems. He also displayed a new generosity when it came to military supplies, making it clear that South Africa would charge only 'nominal prices' for weapons, including aircraft. Over the next 18 months, Botha agreed to provide five Alouette III helicopters and the thirty-three Panhard armoured vehicles. Meeting Franco Nogueira, Botha stated that 'South Africa would only with the greatest difficulty survive a Portuguese collapse in those provinces,' as a result of which it was 'ready to intervene militarily, with its own forces, to restore the situation, should this become grave and should we [Portugal] request it'.<sup>66</sup> A formal alliance was ruled out; as Botha put it: 'We were too good friends to need it.' Later, in May 1968, Botha agreed to provide the spare parts for this equipment on a free-loan basis.<sup>67</sup>

Malone's replacement as Luanda Consul-General, A. F. Drake, took the view that South African aid should be decisive in nature, but wondered whether success was possible.<sup>68</sup> Matters, however, were coming to a head, thanks to the army, which was taking centre stage in the process. Senior South African General Alan 'Pop' Fraser began regular visits to Angola, where he liaised with Portuguese officers engaged in the fight against the FNLA, MPLA, and UNITA guerrilla forces attacking the territory from the North and East. Fraser was an enthusiastic student of French military strategist André Beaufre, and became a leading exponent of the embedding of counter-insurgency (COIN) doctrine in the South African Defence Forces. A Second World War veteran, he had risen to the position of General Officer Command Joint Combat Force by the late 1960s. He can be regarded as the father of the 'Total Strategy' which became official South African defence policy from 1973.<sup>69</sup> Fraser's visit to Angola coincided with increased Portuguese requests for weaponry from South Africa, addressed to Fraser himself, to Botha, and to Muller.<sup>70</sup> Botha, soon after his appointment as Minister of Defence in 1966, became a convert to strategy and Fraser's thinking. The total onslaught faced by South Africa was being waged, Botha came to believe, in the psychological, political, economic, and social spheres as well as on the military front. Most importantly, it was driven by Soviet and Chinese machinations and had little to do with indigenous African nationalism. As disciples of Beaufre, Fraser and Botha advocated the extension of military security considerations into all areas of national policy-making.<sup>71</sup> This would not reach full fruition until Botha formed his own government in 1978, but by then Botha and the military had entered into what Grundy describes as a 'classic patron-client relationship'.<sup>72</sup>

From the early 1960s, as South Africa's military ties with the West declined, there developed a relationship between the civilian and military spheres not unlike the

*kommando* format of the Boer States at the end of the nineteenth century. South Africa was developing 'a strong coincidence in the personnel occupying elite civil and military positions'.<sup>73</sup> Botha's power base in Defence 'created the platform from which he could grasp the leadership'.<sup>74</sup> The institutionalisation of a 'garrison state', the virtual displacement of the South African Cabinet by the State Security Council, and the increasing dominance of the SADF in policy-making after 1978 all stemmed from Botha's rise.<sup>75</sup> Botha was a bureaucratic empire-builder who benefited from changes in the governmental structure brought about by John Vorster, who encouraged competition among ministers in the related areas of foreign, security, and defence policy. For instance, the establishment in 1969 of BOSS, under the control of Botha's key rival for influence, General van den Bergh, resulted in a marked improvement in intelligence liaison between Portugal, Rhodesia, and South Africa. Botha, who came to despise van den Bergh and his influence over Vorster, may well have seen the growing military partnership with Portugal as a means for enhancing his own position. Other government departments were simply left out of the loop as is evident from the notes on a conversation between Foreign Minister Muller and his Portuguese counterpart, Rui Patrício, which make only the briefest allusion to staff talks, suggesting that they were not being kept entirely in the picture.<sup>76</sup>

As early as April 1967 Botha, judging by his visit to Lisbon, had become an advocate of much greater defence co-ordination between Pretoria and Lisbon - a considerable departure from the views of Verwoerd and Muller. From mid-1968, the South Africans began to explore the issue of financial aid in greater detail. But here too there were problems to be overcome. Many in Pretoria were concerned that Portugal might not be able to repay a loan and South Africa did not want to give a grant. Doubts were eased by the beginning of the flow of oil from the Cabinda fields: a loan became a means of seeing Portugal through a difficult period until oil revenues commenced.<sup>77</sup> Defence Minister Sá Viana Rebelo led a Portuguese delegation which met Botha and senior SADF officer in Cape Town in February 1969. Botha proposed the establishment of a permanent liaison between the two militaries, adding that the Rhodesians were also interested. The Portuguese were open to the idea but reluctant to openly acknowledge Rhodesian participation as it might damage their alliance with Britain, the inference being that secret Rhodesian participation was acceptable.<sup>78</sup> The South African loan terms were considered ungenerous in Portuguese military circles.<sup>79</sup> Moreover, the price of the loan was not simply repayment. There was to be much greater military co-operation and greater South African oversight of Portugal's colonial wars. To this end, explicit military conditions to be attached to the loan were drafted in the Department of Defence, which noted that previous aid had 'not been large enough to be regarded as our having a stake in their military operations'. However, further aid would allow the SADF to 'feel more justified in offering military advice and insisting upon particular actions, as it is often advisable for us to have a say in Portuguese operations'.<sup>80</sup> This financial aid, and the additional leverage it gave South Africa, would be a key catalyst in the development of ALCORA.

### **The Rhodesian problem**

Rhodesia, on the other hand, despite being the strongest advocate of a defence pact, had been left temporarily on the sidelines. Ian Smith, both before and after UDI, had advocated just such an initiative, but to no avail.<sup>81</sup> One barrier to deepening

military links was the great fear of the internationalisation of the conflict in southern Africa, which might provoke the military intervention of the United States, as Vorster explained to the Rhodesians in October 1966<sup>82</sup> and again in March 1967, when he and Smith met in Cape Town.<sup>83</sup> This meeting followed on from the failed attempt of Smith and Harold Wilson to agree a settlement during talks on HMS Tiger in November 1966. Vorster endorsed Smith's rejection of Wilson's proposals. Smith stressed 'how meticulous' he had been all along 'to avoid unnecessarily implicating and embarrassing our two great friends, South Africa and Portugal'. In his account of the encounter, Smith wrote that Vorster 'promised that South Africa would try to stand by us come what may, but what was important was that they should not be seen to be doing this'. He emphasised the importance of aid being 'under the counter' or 'otherwise there was a danger of dragging South Africa into a full sanctions war, even then we could find ourselves in a position where even if they wished to help they would have no help to give'.

Smith then made two counter-proposals. The first was closer economic and trade relations, with the ultimate aim of establishing a common market in Southern Africa, including not only Rhodesia and South Africa but also Mozambique, Angola, Malawi, Zambia ('if sanity returned there'), and the Congo ('if Tshombe returned there'). The second was a defence pact between both countries and Portugal. Smith hastened to add his realisation 'that the present time was inopportune for anything to be said or done in public, but that there would be no harm in starting to think'. Vorster appeared uninterested and Smith did not press the matter further.<sup>84</sup>

South Africa's continued reluctance to commit to a defence pact with Rhodesia is evident from a 1969 Rhodesian file.<sup>85</sup> On 21 October 1968, the Rhodesian Minister of Defence wrote to the South African Foreign Minister recommending that preliminary discussions be held in respect of covert contingency planning for the defence of Southern Africa which took place in December in Pretoria. On 3 January 1969 Ian Smith wrote to Vorster, 'saying that he felt very strongly that the question of contingency planning should be expedited and that South Africa, Portugal and Rhodesia, should meet to discuss common threats and problems in the field of defence'. Smith suggested an early meeting between respective ministers and service chiefs. Brand Fourie, the South African Secretary of Foreign Affairs, advised John Gaunt, Rhodesia's 'accredited diplomatic representative' in Pretoria, on 5 February 1969 to the effect that these matters could be discussed at leisure by the ministers concerned. The Rhodesians, however, pressed for a fixed-term military alliance. South Africa remained reluctant, and, on 3 March 1969, General Fraser handed the Rhodesian Chief of Staff, General Coster, a blunt letter which stated that South Africa was involved in forging a maritime alliance involving a number of countries in the Southern hemisphere, to be backed by the NATO powers. As a result: 'South Africa considers it unwise that there should be any closer formal links than already exist between Portugal in Africa, Rhodesia and the Republic of South Africa for the time being.' The Rhodesian view was that experience 'has shown this to be inadequate unless suitable terms of reference have been agreed at political level. This is what the South Africans appear to want to avoid.'<sup>86</sup> An attached paper noted that 'in her efforts to woo the west, South Africa would wish to avoid any implication of being involved in a black/white struggle in Africa. She will foster the impression that her concern is global rather than local, even though the latter threat is more pressing and more real.'<sup>87</sup>

Pretoria did not hold all the cards. Portuguese and Rhodesian officers and defence officials had been moving closer since 1961. That year, the Federation's Defence Minister travelled to Angola, where it was determined that the civilian and military authorities of both jurisdictions would meet regularly. Similar contacts quickly developed with Mozambican authorities as well. Contacts intensified as a result, in 1962, of rumours of the existence of a *Mystère Plan*, which outlined a forthcoming conventional invasion of Portuguese territory by a Pan-African force. The following year, a seven-officer liaison team from Rhodesia toured Angola, producing an extensive report which was passed on to the Portuguese Consul in Salisbury, despite the fact that it was critical of some aspects of the Portuguese handling of the campaign, notably the lack of training in Africa and the inadequate length of Portuguese patrols (which lasted one or two days rather than the many weeks needed to discover and destroy the enemy's bases).<sup>88</sup> On 23 September 1968 Portuguese and Rhodesian officials met to discuss the threat posed by the possible construction of the TANZAM railway by China.<sup>89</sup> They concluded that contingency planning to deal with the threat posed by thousands of Chinese workers needed to be considered. At the meeting it was agreed to make separate representations to Pretoria about this with a view to tripartite discussions taking place. However, the South Africans again appeared to show some reluctance.<sup>90</sup>

### **The beginning of ALCORA**

General Fraser, who had brusquely rejected the Rhodesian request for an alliance in early 1969, appeared to change his mind soon after that. As was mentioned above, Fraser was a regular visitor to Angola, studying Portuguese methods in their war against the nationalist groups and finding them wanting. In May 1969, Ambassador Menezes Rosa called on general Rudolph Hiemstra, the SADF's Chief of Staff, who was in possession of a report by Fraser after one such visit. Hiemstra was concerned that the critical tone of the report might offend the Portuguese and this 'was a very delicate question, since they in no way wanted to be seen as wanting to have any kind of interference in our problems and our conducting of operations'.<sup>91</sup> Fraser, in an October 1969 meeting with Menezes Rosa, emphasised his concerns about East and Southeast Angola, especially the lack of co-ordination between Portuguese military, intelligence, and administrative authorities. The frontline had moved 100 miles westwards in a year, while brutal Portuguese reprisals were alienating Angolan civilians.<sup>92</sup>

Fraser's preliminary findings eventually found their way into a Top Secret paper, *A Review of the Campaign in East And South East Angola 1968 to End of January 1970*, issued in March 1970.<sup>93</sup> This document was notable for its criticism of Portuguese military tactics and civil administration in Angola and for its advocacy of a COIN Strategy along the lines suggested in an earlier restricted pamphlet.<sup>94</sup> What was most striking about the review was its lurid detailing of external threats to the white states of southern Africa. It spoke of thrusts by an alliance of guerrilla groups into Rhodesia and towards the oilfields of Angola, and most improbably of all a Chinese-led invasion of white-rule southern Africa, for which the building on the TANZAM railway was a prelude. The document, which ran to thirty-six pages, was gloomy in its prognosis of the situation in Angola and the threats confronting the 'white redoubt'. It warned that South Africa and its friendly neighbours 'will ignore at our peril the increasing co-operation between the stronger liberation



movements, which together with evidence of co-ordination of action between these insurgent organisations under the auspices of the Russian-inspired Mobilisation Committee of the OAU, spells a heightening of danger for the RSA and her friends in Southern Africa'. The evident tendency to greater unity between the various guerrilla organisations placed 'the terrorist war in a completely different light and it must be emphasised that as this unity improves so will the dangers increase for Southern Africa as a whole'.<sup>95</sup>

In a final section, the document switched from an analysis of the threat to a detailed prescription for co-ordinated [white] southern African defence planning:

We have suggested what we believe this to be at the moment. We know from our recent discussions with the Rhodesians that they agree with us in principle and we feel sure that you, too, will subscribe to this view. You may now, and we all in the future may, have other information to add to what we have said. There should obviously, therefore, be a continuing joint study of the threat with particular reference now to the present deteriorating situation in Rhodesia, Angola and Mocambique (Tete) [*sic*]. From this study must come a joint assessment of its effect upon our three countries. Upon this should follow joint defence planning.<sup>96</sup>

Consequently, there was a requirement for South Africa to help Portugal and Rhodesia as it would be 'increasingly be looked to to provide at least the heavier and major portion of a balanced force for Southern African Defence'. The section on contingency planning provided the blueprint for ALCORA's eventual structure.

Some in Portugal remained suspicious of South Africa's intentions, but even they understood that co-operation had become inevitable. An unsigned briefing document prepared in advance of an unofficial visit to Lisbon by Vorster in June 1970 noted the 'growing worry in the RSA over the evolution of subversion in Angola and Mozambique', as well as Pretoria's lack of trust in Lisbon's ability to control the situation. Moreover, South Africa seemed to be pursuing a policy of hegemony over the region (developing better links with 'moderate' African states such as Malawi, Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland, and Madagascar), as well as increasing its presence in the economies of Angola, and Mozambique and reducing its dependence on Portuguese infrastructure, notably Mozambican railways and ports. The Portuguese line in the forthcoming talks should be to highlight the global character of subversion in Southern Africa and the danger to the RSA of a Portuguese defeat; to make it clear that the security situation would worsen in case of Rhodesian-style white governments in Angola and Mozambique (which the RSA would have to fund on its own); to improve the pooling of intelligence; and to emphasise the problems raised by the direct intervention of RSA in Angola and Mozambique, insisting nevertheless on greater support in military and infrastructural terms. Finally, there should be a common diplomatic approach to the wider region, especially when it came to dealing with 'extremist' African states such as Zambia, which the Portuguese blamed for the deteriorating situation in Angola but with which Pretoria seemed reluctant to clash.<sup>97</sup>

Exercise ALCORA was inaugurated at a two-way (South African and Portuguese) conference in Pretoria in October 1970, a few short months after Fraser's Review was issued. In his report on proceedings, Colonel Francisco Maria Rocha Simões noted the pace which his South African counterparts sought to impose on the proceedings, despite the fact that it was Portugal and Rhodesia who were facing the most immediate danger. He also stressed that:

During all of the meetings no unpleasant phrase or commentary was made regarding Portugal, nor was there any criticism of the way it conducts its overseas operations, as might be expected from the contents of the DEFENCE PLAN FOR SOUTHERN AFRICA, issued in March 1970.<sup>98</sup>

Fraser, whose robust views on Portuguese tactics had caused considerable annoyance in some Portuguese circles, was nowhere in sight. During the meeting ALCORA was suggested as the codeword for the exercise (no explanation being provided for its meaning), and it was stressed that Rhodesian agreement was needed before moving forward. A joint document, signed by Rocha Simões and Brigadier H.J. Greyvenstein, South African Director of Strategic Planning, outlined the areas in which ALCORA would operate, and charted the way forward: once the paper had been approved by the 'appropriate authorities of the three countries concerned', a meeting should be held, preferably, once more, in South Africa.<sup>99</sup>

The second meeting, held in Pretoria in March-April 1971, saw a senior delegation of Rhodesian officers attending. The South African delegation, led by Lieutenant General W. R. Van Der Riet (Chief of Defence Staff), now included Fraser; the Portuguese were led by General João Paiva Brandão, Vice-Chief of Staff of the Combined Armed Forces (in charge of operations); and the Rhodesians by Air Marshal A. O. G. Wilson, Chief of Air Staff. In his opening address, Van Der Riet called it 'an extremely historic conference'; this was the first time that the three countries were meeting to 'discuss their problems and decide how better to support each other in the future'. For his part, Fraser urged his colleagues not to be deterred, in the search for a 'unified southern-Africa strategy', by ALCORA's foundation document, approved in October 1970, which stated that recommendations made at ALCORA meetings should not clash with the established national policies and strategies; his point of view was unanimously accepted. From the minutes, Fraser emerges as one of the engines of the meeting, proposing regular encounters, within the ALCORA framework, between commanders-in-chief and between the 'directors of strategic planning', or similar officers. These proposed meetings were not, however, to the liking of the more cautious Portuguese.

At this meeting, the original structures devised in the 1970 meeting were tweaked; there now emerged a Top-Level ALCORA Committee, an ALCORA Coordination Committee, and ALCORA Subcommittees. A lot of the discussion was taken up with the terms of reference for the Subcommittees, although the Portuguese were informed that delegations from the other two countries had held bilateral discussions on this issue in advance, producing a project that involved twelve of these bodies. All agreed that work on the Intelligence Subcommittee would be prioritised, and that this Subcommittee would be given access to the work of all the others. In a second tier, in terms of priority, came those Subcommittees involved in the acquisition of equipment with which to wage war: the Subcommittees on Air Planning; Air Defence; Air Bases; Logistics; Telecommunications and Electronic Warfare; and Communications. Last came those involved in Strategy and Operations: the Subcommittees on a Common Counter-Insurgency Strategy; Objectives; Command and Control; Psychological Action; and, finally, Cartography. Dates for the forthcoming meetings of all of these bodies were also arrived at. Generally speaking, they would meet twice a year until 1974, when their respective remits were transferred to PAPO.

Fraser's *Review*, despite ruffling Portuguese feathers, clearly led to and set the terms of ALCORA. It also was influential in ratcheting up the rhetoric of South

African politicians, especially P. W. Botha. The exaggerated threat of a specific enemy, China (in contrast with the more imprecise threat of 'Communism', which had always been a major trope in South African Nationalist party rhetoric since the 1930s), began to appear in his speeches, echoing Fraser's words. In 1971, Botha spoke of ominous developments in the shape of Communist-bloc aircraft being deployed in some of the frontline states. Two years later, at the height of Exercise ALCORA, he spoke of the 'total onslaughts on the Free World, which mean total war in every sphere'.<sup>100</sup> This was rhetoric that would feature in much of the material generated by ALCORA. Defence-policy statements, most notably the 1973 White Paper and its 1977 iteration, used much the same apocalyptic rhetoric.

Although it falls outside the scope of this article, it is worth noting that ALCORA's limitations were clear from the start. At the end of 1971, the Odell committee, limited to South African and Rhodesian defence officials, was established to review the deteriorating situation in the Tete region of Mozambique, close to the strategically important site of the Cahora Bassa Dam and the border with Rhodesia.<sup>101</sup> Its tone and language reflected their disquiet about Portuguese tactics, the threat from the guerrilla movements, and the growing threat of Communist China. According to the report, the committee members wanted to bring to the notice of their governments, as a matter of urgency, the imminent danger to the security of southern Africa: 'The Tete district of Mozambique is rapidly emerging as a crucial pivot in the struggle for southern Africa. If the enemy should succeed in dominating the district of Tete, there will be an immediate and drastic change for the worse in the precarious balance in the conflict presently training in the whole of our strategic region. There are unmistakable signs that such an eventuality is taking place.' Tensions between Portugal and Rhodesia over Tete would mount over the coming years, despite the existence of ALCORA. Moreover, a review of ALCORA documentation suggests elements in Portugal's military maintained a less than wholehearted commitment to ALCORA, in comparison to their South African and Rhodesian counterparts.<sup>102</sup>

## **Conclusion**

ALCORA stemmed from growing apprehension about the situation in southern Africa in the late 1960s, set against the background of a cold war in which the West appeared to be hesitant, and the Communist bloc bullish. Whether or not it constituted a formal military alliance is not clear; but the topics discussed in its many committees, and its open-ended length, suggest that it was an alliance in the making, whose development was interrupted by the Portuguese Revolution of April 1974. A 'southern African Entente' might perhaps be a more apt description. ALCORA's Top-Level Committee met eight times in four years, and the numerous subcommittees met regularly, eventually being replaced by a permanent planning body. A permanent rapid-response force was also being assembled by 1974. ALCORA was not, however, without problems. It did not, in the view of the South Africans and the Rhodesians, have sufficient impact to rouse the Portuguese from their apparent torpor; it may well have been the case that it was too fixated on the ultimate threat of an all-out assault on the 'white redoubt', and was not equipped to deal with trouble spots such as Tete. Ultimately, ALCORA, kept secret, was no substitute for the political solution to the wars in Africa which increasingly many officers and soldiers in the Portuguese Army looked forward to, an aspiration that would lead to the 1974

revolution. The ultimate failure of ALCORA might be, that for all the military liaison, their Rhodesian and South African colleagues failed to register this.<sup>103</sup>

## Notes

1. Hoof Van Veredingatataf to die vise-konsul, Luanda, 29 Nov. 1972, 'Exercise ALCORA Military and Naval Attaché, Lisbon', [Pretoria,] S[outh] A[frican] N[ational] D[efence] F[orce] A[rchive], HSI Groep 8 Houer 159 LG-INT-6-1-1.
2. Ibid.
3. For the superseding of ACOC and the themed subcommittees by PAPO see Francisco Costa Gomes, Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, Top Secret Report N. 516/AU P.21, 17 Dec. 1973 [Paço de Arcos,] A[rquivo de] D[efesa] N[acional], Secretariado Geral da Defesa Nacional, U.I. 6179.
4. Minutes, 8<sup>th</sup> mtg., ALCORA A[dvanced] T[op] L[evel] C[ommittee], 14–15 Oct. 1974, SANDFA HSI ALCORA 7.
5. See for instance, 'The Military Threat to the Republic of South Africa and Rhodesia September 1975', SANDFA INT-3-2-75, which echoes many of the 'Threat Assessments to Southern Africa' documents produced under Exercise ALCORA.
6. The term was widely used by international opponents of the three white powers. See, for example, R. Ainslie, *The Unholy Alliance: Salazar, Verwoerd, Welensky* (London, 1962).
7. G. R. Berridge argues that in the 1950s the military co-operation between Pretoria and the main African colonial powers (Britain, France, Belgium, and occasionally Portugal) 'had all the trappings of a classic entente'. G. R. Berridge, *South Africa, the Colonial Powers and 'African Defence': the Rise and Fall of the White Entente, 1948–60* (London, 1992), xii. His analysis raises the question: was ALCORA an *entente* or an alliance?
8. See H. Strachan, 'The British Way in Warfare Revisited', *Historical Journal*, xxvi (1983), 447–61. See also S. R. Williamson, Jr., *The Politics of Grand Strategy* (Cambridge, MA, 1969); T. Wilson, 'Britain's Moral Commitment to France in August 1914', *History*, lxiv (1979), 380–90, and J. Joll, *The Origins of the First World War* (London, 1984), 64.
9. J. W. Coogan and P. F. Coogan, 'The British Cabinet and the Anglo-French Staff Talks, 1905–1914: Who Knew What and When Did He Know It?', *Journal of British Studies*, xxiv (1985), 110–31.
10. For a *resumé* of Botha's career see D. Welsh, *The Rise and Fall of Apartheid* (Johannesburg, 2010), 208.
11. See D. O'Meara, *Forty Lost Years: The Apartheid State and the Politics of the National Party, 1948–1994* (Randburg, 1996), 166.
12. R. H. Davies and D. O'Meara, 'Total Strategy in Southern Africa: An Analysis of South African Regional Policy Since 1978', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, cxii (1985), 183–211 (191).
13. The two classic accounts of the cold war with considerable material on Southern Africa are O. A. Westad, *The Global Cold War* (Cambridge, 2005) and P. Gleijeses, *Conflicting Missions: Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1959–1976* (Chapel Hill, 2002).
14. See the useful analysis of South African anti-Communism in N. M. Stultz, 'The Politics of Security: South Africa Under Verwoerd, 1961–6', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, vii, no. 1 (1969), 3–20 (11–12).
15. H. Giliomee, *The Afrikaners: Biography of People* (Cape Town, 2004), 499.
16. See D. Lowry, 'The Impact of Anti-Communism on White Rhodesian Political Culture, ca.1920s–1980', *Cold War History*, vii, no. 2 (2007), 169–94.
17. See for instance 'Top Secret' Defence brief for the Prime Minister, 'Security Threat Posed by the Tanzam Railway' not dated but written in 1969, Ian Smith Papers, Deposit of 16 April 2010, box 12, File 'Relations with other Countries 1 Jan. 66 to 31 Dec. 1970' and Drake to Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs, 28 March 1968, 'Die Implikasies Van Hulpverlening aan Angola', SADFA 1/22/3 Angola, Relations with South Africa, 18 Oct. 1962 to 28 May 1968.
18. Notable critics of the myth and reality of Portuguese lusotropicalism include O. Ribeiro, *A Colonização de Angola e o seu Fracasso* (Lisbon, 1981) and G. J. Bender,

- Angola under the Portuguese: The Myth and the Reality* (Berkeley, 1980). On South Africa, useful introductions to apartheid can be found in W. Beinart, *Twentieth-Century South Africa* (Oxford, 1994), 137–63 and Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, 487–541.
19. Press reports regarding the secret alliance occur as early as the London *Daily Mail*, 25 August 1964. There was also an interesting report from Rhodesia's *Sunday Mail*, 15 April 1973, entitled 'Co-operation on Defence'.
  20. The memoirs of some of the major protagonists provided initial confirmation of what was an open secret. See, for example, I. Smith, *Bitter Harvest* (London, 2008) and K. Flower, *Serving Secretly: An Intelligence Chief on Record. Rhodesia into Zimbabwe 1964 to 1981* (London, 1987). More recent archive-based assessments include A. S. Mlambo, "'We Have Blood Relations Over the Border": South Africa and Rhodesian Sanctions, 1965–1975', *African Historical Review*, xl (2008), 1–29; C. R. W. Dietrich, "'A Climate of Collaboration": The Rhodesian Oil Embargo and Portuguese Diplomacy in Southern Africa, 1965–1967', *Itinerário – Leiden*, xxxv (2011), 97–120; and G. Stone, 'Britain and Portuguese Africa, 1961–65', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, xxviii (2000), 169–92. An excellent overview written in the 1970s is Lord Blake, *A History of Rhodesia* (New York, 1978); S. Onslow, 'A Question of Timing: South Africa and Rhodesia's Unilateral Declaration of Independence, 1964–65', *Cold War History*, v (2005), 129–59, is indispensable.
  21. J. R. T. Wood, *A Matter of Weeks Rather Than Months: The Impasse Between Harold Wilson and Ian Smith. Sanctions, Aborted Settlements and War: 1965–1969* (Victoria, BC, 2008), 355, provides a detailed account of the deployment with General Van Den Bergh, the key catalyst on the South African side.
  22. I. Smith, *Bitter Harvest*, 168–76. South African forces never fully withdrew and returned in strength in 1978–9 to buttress the Muzorewa internal settlement government.
  23. See H. Hamann, *Days of the Generals* (Cape Town, 2001), 9.
  24. Minutes, 'Reuniões realizadas em Salisbury entre os representantes das autoridades da África Oriental Portuguesa e os da Federação', 2–3 July 1958 [Lisbon, Arquivo Nacional Torre do Tombo, Lisbon], Arquivo P[olícia] I[nternacional de] D[efesa do] E[stado]-D[irecção] G[eral de] S[egurança], PIDE PR. CI 9 (2) n. 6341. Flower, *Serving Secretly*, 32 disputes there was much of an intelligence relationship until 1964.
  25. See M. Evans, 'The Frontline States, South Africa and Southern African Security: Military Prospects and Perspectives', *Zambezia*, xii (1984/5), 12 n. 39, for the only explanation so far found for the origins of the word 'ALCORA'.
  26. See B. Davidson, 'South Africa and Portugal', *Issue: A Journal of Opinion*, iv (1974), 9–20 and A. R. Wilkinson, *Insurgency in Rhodesia, 1957–1973: An Account and Assessment* (London, 1973).
  27. Hamman, *Day of the Generals*, 11–12 (although a slightly contradictory view is to be found on 50–1).
  28. Flower, *Serving Secretly*, 140. See also J. Barber and J. Barrett, *South Africa's Foreign Policy: the Search for Status and Security 1945–88* (Cambridge, 1990), 141.
  29. K. de Arriaga, *Guerra e Política: Em Nome da Verdade* (Lisbon, 1987), 246.
  30. See for instance the references to ALCORA in Wood, *Weeks Rather Than Months*.
  31. P. Correia and G. Verhoef, 'Portugal and South Africa: Close Allies or Unwilling Partners in Southern Africa During the Cold War?' *Scientia Militaria: South African Journal of Military Studies*, xxxvii (2009), 50–72.
  32. A. Afonso and C. de Matos Gomes *Os anos da guerra colonial, 1961–1975*. (Matosinhos, 2010). The same lack of notation is applicable to an early exploration of ALCORA by Afonso: See 'Guerra Colonial – Uma Aliança Escondida', *Nação e Defesa* n. 124 (2009), 217–30.
  33. Scholarly treatments of these events include: J. R. T. Wood, *The Welensky Papers*, (Durban, 1983); J. Darwin, 'The Central African Emergency, 1959', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, xxi (1993), 217–34; R. Owendale, 'Macmillan and the Wind of Change in Africa, 1957–1960', *Historical Journal*, xxxviii (1995), 455–77; M. Hughes, 'Fighting for White Rule in Africa: The Central African Federation, Katanga, and the Congo Crisis, 1958–1965', *The International History Review*, xxv (2003), 592–615; and T. Lodge, *Sharpeville* (Oxford, 2011).

34. Embassy to France to the Department of State, 31 Aug. 1963, *Foreign Relations of the United States 1961–1963* (Washington, DC, 1994), xiii. doc. 357, 970–8.
35. F[oreign and] C[ommonwealth] O[ffice] to P. J. S. Moon, 5 Aug. 1971, attachment, 'British Policy in the Light of Longer-Term Trends in Southern Africa, Annex A, Projections of Population Growth Up to AD 2000 in Certain Southern African territories' [Kew, United Kingdom National Archives], Prime Minister's Office, PREM 15-671.
36. Sheridan Johns, 'Obstacles to Guerrilla Warfare – A South African Case Study', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, xi (1973), 267–303, is a useful early assessment of the ANC's problems.
37. Hughes' 'Fighting for White Rule', *passim* and Wood, *The Welensky Papers*, 970, 1189.
38. Taswell to Secretary for External Affairs, 6 Feb. 1961 [Pretoria, National Archives of South Africa,] S[outh] A[frikan] D[e]partment of F[oreign] A[ffairs] 1/58/3 Federation of Rhodesia and Nyassaland, Relations with South Africa.
39. Ibid.
40. Pereira Bastos to M[inistério dos] N[egócios] E[strangeiros], 'Secret' report, 27 July 1962 [Lisbon] A[rquivo] H[istórico] D[iplomático], PA 1132, 'Conversa do cônsul de Portugal em Salisbury com o alto comissário da África do Sul H.L.T. Taswell'.
41. The original memo is not extant in the papers reviewed but is extensively quoted in Maude to Die Waarn Secretarie Van Verdeding, 9 Aug. 1965, 'Militere Verhoudings met Rhodesia', SADFA, 1/156/3 Vol. 2, Rhodesia, Relations with South Africa, Nov. 1964 to Oct. 1965.
42. Maude to Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs, 'Top Secret', 1 March 1963, SADFA 1/58/3.
43. Taswell to Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs, 9 April 1963, SADFA 1/158/3.
44. Wood, *The Welensky Papers*, 1197.
45. See Taswell to Acting Secretary for Foreign Affairs, 28 Nov 1963, SADFA 1/156/3 Vol. 1 9 Sept 1961 to 29 Oct 1964.
46. See for instance Taswell to Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs, 2 April 1962, 'The Campaign for Non-Racialism in Southern Rhodesia', SADFA 1/156/1 Vol. 1, Southern Rhodesia Political Situation and Developments, 7 April 1962 to 30 Nov. 1962. See also the 1965 controversy generated by a National Party member who claimed that the 'Portuguese will soil our towns. They are of no help to us. We must stop them.' Malone to Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs, 26 Aug. 1965, SADFA 1/14/3 Vol. 2 PL 1962-68, Portugal, Relations with South Africa, 2 Feb. 1962 to 7 June 1968.
47. For an excellent example of this difference of outlook, see Laborinho to MNE, 'Confidential', 11 April 1964, AHD, PA 1132, 'Eventualidade de visita de S. Eê à África do Sul quando da sua visita a Moçambique'.
48. For an extended treatment of his views, see Flower, *Serving Secretly*, 32–8.
49. Smith, *Bitter Harvest*, 73.
50. Smith to Salazar, 16 Sept. 1964 [Lisbon, Arquivo Nacional Torre do Tombo], A[rquivo] O[liveira] S[alazar], Correspondência Oficial Especial 3.
51. Franco Nogueira to Bastos, 'Secretíssimo', 31 Oct. 1964, AHD, PA 1116, 'Atitude de Portugal perante a declaração de independência da Rodésia'. The translation is the Consul's own.
52. Fincham to Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs, 'Secret', 5 April 1961, SADFA, 1/22/1, Vol. 2, Angola: Political Situation/Developments, 2 Feb. 1961–30 April 1961.
53. For Salazar's reaction to the outbreak of the war in Africa, see F. Ribeiro de Meneses, *Salazar: A Political Biography* (New York, 2009), ch. 9.
54. 'Top Secret' Aide Memoire, 19 April 1961, SANDFA, 1/14/1 Vol. 4. Portugal Politieke Situatie en Ontwikkeling, 27 July 1970 to 3 May 1984.
55. F. Ribeiro de Meneses, *Salazar*, 468.
56. Verwoerd to Salazar, 17 Sept. 1963, AHD, PA 1132, 'Carta do primeiro-ministro Verwoerd a S. Ex<sup>a</sup> o Presidente do Conselho e resposta'.
57. Taswell, 'Top Secret' Memorandum 'Onderhoud Met Dr Salazar 14 en 19 August 1964', SADFA 1/14/3 Vol. 1.
58. N. M. Stultz, 'The Politics of Security: South Africa Under Verwoerd, 1961–6', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, vii (1969), 3–20.



59. 'Considerations with Respect to an Agreement with Portugal for the Mutual Defence of South African and Portuguese Territory in Southern Africa', undated, SANDFA KG-OPS-12-8-7 Defence Cooperation with Portugal Vol. 1, 25 Nov. 1963 to 31 Jan. 1966.
60. Ibid.
61. Ibid.
62. Malone to Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs, Pretoria, 22 April 1965, 'The Question of Possible Assistance to Portugal to Enable to Retain Control of her Overseas Possessions.' SADFA 1/14/3 Vol. 2PL Portugal, Relations with South Africa 2 Feb. 1962–7 July 1968.
63. Unfortunately, this does not seem to be extant.
64. Malone to Becker, 'Personal and Secret', 21 Dec. 1966, SADFA 1/14/3 Vol. 2PL Portugal, Relations with South Africa 2 Feb 1962–7 July 1968.
65. Verwoerd to Salazar (Draft with Verwoerd's handwritten annotations), 12 May 1966, SADFA 1/14/3 Vol. 2PL Portugal, Relations with South Africa 2 Feb 1962–7 July 1968. See also Flower, *Serving Secretly*, 65.
66. 'Apontamentos sobre uma conversa entre o ministro dos Negócios Estrangeiros e o ministro da Defesa Nacional da África do Sul', 7 April 1967, AOS, Correspondência Oficial, Negócios Estrangeiros 30A.
67. Correia and Verhoef, 'Portugal and South Africa', 60.
68. Drake to Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs, 28 March 1868, 'Die Implikasies Van Hulpverlening aan Angola', SADFA 1/22/3, Angola, Relations with South Africa, 18 Oct. 1962 to 28 May 1968.
69. Fraser authored a restricted document entitled: *Revolutionary War: Basic Principles of Counter-Insurgency*, not dated but written in the late 1960s, judging by the references and content. The copy used by the authors is a facsimile of the copy of the Secretary of the Department of Foreign Affairs, Brand Fourie. It is contained in an envelope marked UITERS GEHEIM Verdediging [Defence], 1966–73, in the SADFA archives, but it contains no other references; presumably, it was a private copy belonging to Fourie.
70. Sole to Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs, 24 Jan. 1968, SADFA 1/14/3, Portugal Relations with SA, Vol. 1, 15 July 1964 to 13 Aug. 1982
71. A. Sparks, *The Mind of South Africa* (Johannesburg, 2003), 313.
72. K. W. Grundy, *The Militarization of South African Politics* (London, 1986), 36.
73. P. H. Frankel, *Pretoria's Praetorians: Civil-Military Relations in South Africa* (Cambridge, 1984), 25.
74. D. Welsh, *The Rise and Fall*, 208.
75. A. Seegers, 'South Africa's National Security Management System, 1972–9', *Journal of Modern African Studies*, xxix (1991), 253–73.
76. 'Discussions between Dr Muller and Dr Rui Patrício, 23–24 June 1971', SADFA 1/14/3 Vol. 1, 15 July 1964–13 Aug. 1982. There is no mention of ALCORA in any South African Department of Foreign Affairs document consulted so far. The very word 'ALCORA' was designated 'Top Secret'.
77. Sole to Viljoen, 6 May 1968, SADFA 1/14/3 Vol. 2PL Portugal, Relations with South Africa 2 Feb 1962–7 July 1968. The Portuguese also told General Fraser that they were convinced that the expected revenues from the Cabinda oil fields would allow them to pay back any loans. Consul-General to Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs, 28 May 1968, 'Visit to Angola of Lt. Gen. C.A. Fraser, April 1968', SADFA 1/22/3, Angola, Relations with South Africa, 18 May 1962 to 28 June 1968.
78. 'Reunião dos ministros da Defesa da República da África do Sul e de Portugal', 'Muito Secreto', 10 Feb. 1969, ADN, SGN, U.I. 6179, 10 Feb. 1969.
79. The terms of the loan can be found in 'Versoek Om Bystand: Portugal', 'Top Secret', 13 March 1969, SADFA 1/14/3 Vol. 1, 15 July 1964 to 13 Aug. 82, Top Secret. In May, Ambassador Menezes Rosa called on General Hiemstra, who mentioned the disappointment felt in South African military circles over the terms of the loan; he and Minister Botha, Hiemstra assured the Portuguese diplomat, had tried to find ways of compensating Portugal, possibly through the supply of more helicopters, along the lines of an earlier deal.

80. The Department of Defence advised that the Cabinet impose a number of security-related conditions as part of the loan. See 'Versoek Om Bystand: Portugal', 13 March 1969, SADFA, 1/14/3 Vol. 1, Appendix B: 'Proposed Military Conditions to Attach to the Granting of a Loan to Portugal'.
81. Smith to Wilson, 25 Jan. 1965, [Grahamstown, South Africa: Cory Library, Rhodes University] I[an] S[mith] P[apers], box 4-0001 M -10, Files 'Anglo-Rhodesian Relations Jan. 1963–Dec. 1965'. See also the *Star* (Johannesburg), 8 Oct. 1965.
82. In a meeting in October 1966, Vorster told John Gaunt, Rhodesia's accredited diplomatic representative in South Africa, that: 'There was every indication that United States was working up to the use of force against South Africa.' Vorster added that: 'The Pentagon fully realise the folly of trying to bring South Africa down as it would have the gravest consequences in the fight against communism but [...] the Pentagon is unable to convince the State Department, and those are the people who had the final say.' Graham to Smith, 21 Oct. 1966, with extracts from letter from John Gaunt, 18 Oct. 1966. ISP, deposit of 16 April 2010, box 12, File 'Relations with other countries 1 Jan. 1966 to 31 Dec. 1970'.
83. 'Record of meeting between the Prime Minister Ian Smith and the Prime Minister of South Africa John Vorster, 21 March 1967', ISP, deposit of 16 April 2010, box 12, File 'Relations with other countries 1 Jan. 1966 to 31 Dec. 1970'.
84. *Ibid.*
85. 'Brief for the Prime Minister', Defence, 'Top Secret', Undated but documents contained within suggest March 1969, ISP, Deposit of 16 April 2010, box 12, File 'Relations with other countries 1 Jan. 1966 to 31 Dec. 1970'.
86. *Ibid.*
87. 'Brief for the Prime Minister – Contingency Planning RSA', undated, ISP, Deposit of 16 April 2010, box 12, File 'Relations with other countries 1 Jan. 1966 to 31 Dec. 1970'.
88. 'Report by Joint Service Mission On Operations in Angola', 'Secret', Ministry of Defence, Salisbury, 23 Jan. 1964, AHD, PA 1097, 'Missões militares da Federação em Luanda'.
89. The Rhodesian CIO had already told the South Africans that it would be better if the railroad had not been built. See Drake to Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs, 28 March 1968, 'Die Implikasies Van Hulpverlening aan Angola', SADFA 1/22/3 Angola, Relations with South Africa, 18 Oct. 1962 to 28 May 1968.
90. 'Top Secret' Defence brief for the Prime Minister, 'Security Threat Posed by the Tanzam Railway', ISP, Deposit of 16 April 2010, box 12, File 'Relations with other countries 1 Jan. 66 to 31 Dec. 1970'.
91. Menezes Rosa to MNE, 23 May 1969, 'Secretíssimo', AHD, PA 1133, 'Atitude do General C. A. Fraser'.
92. Caldeira Coelho to Ministério do Ultramar, 10 Oct. 1969, 'Muito Secreto', AHD, PA 1133, 'Atitude do General C.A. Fraser'.
93. 'A Review of the Campaign in East and South East Angola 1968 to End of January 1970', SANDFA, Bgq/203/3/3/1. The authors are very grateful to Professor Gary Baines of Rhodes University for providing them with his copy of this document.
94. *Revolutionary War: Basic Principles of Counter-Insurgency* [Not Dated]. See earlier note for details of its provenance.
95. 'A Review Of The Campaign'.
96. 'A Review Of The Campaign', Part 3, paragraph 2a.
97. 'Relações com a República da África do Sul (conversações com o Primeiro Ministro Vorster)'. Undated, unsigned. AHD, PA 1133, 'Atitude do Dr. J.B. Vorster, primeiro-ministro. Sua visita à metrópole'.
98. 'Discussões Preliminares na África do Sul de 07OUT70 a 09OUT70', 14 Oct. 1970, ADN, Gabinete do C[hefe do] E[stado] M[aior] G[eneral das F[orças] A[rmadas] 1960–1977, U.I. 58.
99. 'Exercise ALCORA', 'Top Secret', 9 Oct. 1970, ADN, Gabinete do CEMGFA 1960–1977, U.I. 58, HVS/206/34/3/6/.
100. Botha is quoted in Barrat and Barber, *South Africa's Foreign Policy*, 125.

101. Top Secret MD/P/11 11 January 1972 - to be opened only by Mr Ian Smith, The Odell committee: The Tete district of Mozambique - 28 Dec. 1971. For evidence of Rhodesian military activity in Tete prior to this report see the account in D. Martin and P. Johnson, *The Struggle for Zimbabwe: The Chimurenga War* (London, 1981), 3–6.
102. See for instance ‘Parecer. Assunto: Futuro do Exercício ALCORA’, ‘Muito Secreto’, 1 March 1973, by General Costa Gomes, ADN, CEMGFA, Série 25, U.I. 58.
103. An important recent treatment is J. Miller, ‘Things Fall Apart: South Africa and the Collapse of the Portuguese Empire, 1973–74’, *Cold War History* (2012) DOI:10.1080/14682745.2011.649946