

“DANGLING CARROTS BEFORE MARXISTS”:¹ U.S.-MOZAMBICAN RELATIONS SINCE 1981

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One of the more controversial developments in recent U.S. foreign policy is the adoption of the “Reagan Doctrine,” a policy that includes support for guerrilla movements opposed to Soviet-backed states in Central America, Asia, and Africa. Yet in an apparent reversal of its own doctrine, the Reagan administration has sought closer relations with the avowedly Marxist-Leninist government of Mozambique. Philip Nash examines the origins and development of this relationship from both the American and Mozambican viewpoints, and introduces a more general question: how can a government, while seeking to enlist support for the broad themes of its foreign policy, retain the flexibility to deal with local issues in a way that, on the surface, runs counter to those themes?

In January 1985, the Reagan administration requested \$1.2 million in nonlethal military aid for the Marxist government of Mozambique. The request formed the climax of a rapid and substantial improvement in U.S.-Mozambican relations that began during Reagan’s first term. This development has been an astonishing contradiction of the “Reagan Doctrine,” a pillar of the administration’s foreign policy.

The doctrine, which calls for the active support of rebel movements against Marxist/leftist governments throughout the developing world, has been implemented in Nicaragua, Angola, Afghanistan, and Kampuchea. It apparently has claimed a large portion of the administration’s resources, both overt and covert, and — judging from the Iran-contra scandal — is a policy for which President Reagan may have risked a great deal. Mozambique represented a similar opportunity to implement the Reagan Doctrine, but the administration deliberately pursued an opposite policy. This led to anomalies such as liberal Democrats defending the administration in congressional debates and conservative Republicans disagreeing with “their president.”

The warmer relations were not the result of unilateral overtures by Washington, but rather of mutual efforts. Under the leadership of President Samora Machel, the Mozambican government came to assign top priority to the establishment of closer ties with the United States. The irony here is mutual

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1. *Washington Post*, 22 September 1985, p. C6.

as well, for it is rare for a young, Soviet-backed, Marxist-Leninist regime to seek military and economic aid and private investment from any U.S. administration, much less from the staunchly anticommunist Reagan government.

This dual irony warrants an exploration of recent U.S. Mozambican relations.

BACKGROUND

Samora Machel's Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO) came to power in 1975 after fighting a long and bloody war for independence against the Portuguese. During the war, the Soviet Union provided the Marxist-Leninist FRELIMO with most of its backing, while Portugal enjoyed the support of its NATO allies, among them the United States. FRELIMO's triumph understandably precipitated a break with the Western powers and close alignment with the USSR. The Carter administration discontinued all direct (non-food) economic assistance to Mozambique because of its alleged human rights abuses, and U.S.-Mozambican relations remained rocky through 1980.

Mozambique's relations with the new Reagan administration got off to a rough start. Reagan based his foreign policy on a preference to view events in East-West terms, a mission to counter Soviet "expansionism," and a desire to reassert American power in general. Thus, when Mozambique expelled six alleged CIA agents working at the U.S. Embassy in the capital city of Maputo in March 1981, the United States retaliated by suspending one of its food assistance programs and refusing to fill the vacant post of U.S. ambassador. These developments, together with the "clear ideological chasm" between the new administration and FRELIMO, did not bode well for the future of U.S.-Mozambican relations.²

SOURCES OF RAPPROCHEMENT: MOZAMBIQUE

But it was not long before the breakdown was reversed. By mid-1982, it was clear that the Mozambicans were seriously interested in closer relations with the West, in particular with the United States. One observer traces this trend back to 1979, citing FRELIMO's active cooperation in settling the Rhodesian civil war and its frequently stated interest in improved economic relations with the West.³

By 1982, however, two harsh realities clearly dominated Mozambique's policy: its threatened national security and its shattered economy. The crises

2. Michael Clough, "Mozambique: American Policy Options," *Africa Report*, November-December 1982, p. 16.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16.

in both these areas influence FRELIMO policymaking to this day, and both largely explain Machel's turn to the United States.

Mozambique's national security faced external and internal challenges. Internally, the rebel opposition, the Mozambican National Resistance (MNR or RENAMO), had grown steadily stronger. Shortly after independence, Machel had lent assistance to insurgents in neighboring Rhodesia, whose white minority government responded in 1976 by creating RENAMO to harass Mozambique. When a black majority government gained control of Rhodesia in 1980, sponsorship of RENAMO passed to the Republic of South Africa, Mozambique's powerful neighbor to the southwest. South Africa was more than willing to back RENAMO, a relatively low-cost means of keeping Marxist Mozambique off balance. RENAMO soon operated at will throughout most of the country, inflicting severe damage upon a variety of primarily economic targets. By 1982, RENAMO represented a serious threat to FRELIMO control, largely because of its solid South African support.

South African involvement was not limited to its backing of RENAMO. Rather, South Africa in its own right constitutes the main external threat confronting Mozambique. Perceiving itself surrounded by hostile states, South Africa has seldom hesitated to employ military force against its neighbors in recent times, including Mozambique. Mozambique, like other "frontline" states, had harbored elements of the African National Congress (ANC), which periodically raids South African territory. South Africa, the preeminent military power in all of sub-Saharan Africa, would then retaliate against a helpless Mozambique.

Beyond the threats from South Africa and RENAMO, Mozambique has been plagued by one of the most dismal economies in Africa. The combined effect of the Portuguese exodus at the time of independence, severe drought and famine (that persisted until 1984), a poorly developed transportation and communication infrastructure, government mismanagement, and destruction caused by RENAMO attacks has been devastating. Mozambique's currency is practically worthless; hunger and illiteracy are out of control. Lack of food and fuel has impaired even the ability of FRELIMO's troops to combat the rebels.⁴

The Machel regime's confrontation with the RENAMO/South African threat as well as with the specter of economic collapse set the stage for Mozambique's foreign policy reorientation. Soviet rejection of Mozambique's application for membership in the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON) in late 1980 only solidified FRELIMO's conviction that it could not depend on the Soviets for the economic aid it desperately needed. The industrial powers of Western Europe and the United States, however, could offer both economic

4. Jeff Trimble, "Mozambique's Marxists Turn to the West," *U.S. News & World Report*, 25 February 1985, p. 38.

aid and private investment. Even the committed Marxist Machel was willing to investigate this option after seven years of economic failure.

Moreover, FRELIMO realized that one way to restrain South Africa (and thereby RENAMO) would be via the United States. The obvious solution to Mozambique's security dilemma, a massive infusion of Cuban troops, was avoided presumably because the price would have been too high: the granting of permanent military bases to the Soviets, who highly value such assets in their challenge to Western primacy in the Indian Ocean. Also, Mozambique was dissatisfied with the quality of training its troops were receiving from East bloc advisors.⁵

Mozambique apparently was impressed from an early date by the Reagan administration's ability to influence South Africa. Maputo believed that Reagan's election and the resulting prospect of closer U.S.-South African ties had emboldened the white regime in Pretoria. One American commentator has suggested that Reagan's conciliatory approach was perceived by South Africa as a go-ahead for its first raid against Mozambique, just 10 days after Reagan's inauguration.⁶ Whatever the actual impact of the new U.S. attitude toward South Africa, the Mozambicans felt that the United States had considerable influence in Pretoria, and that if it could encourage South African aggression, it might be able to contain it as well.

SOURCES OF RAPPROCHEMENT: THE UNITED STATES

In Washington, there were also early indications that a thaw in relations with Mozambique would come, despite the serious strains of 1981. The Reagan administration's Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Chester A. Crocker, was an academic "discovered" by the administration largely because of his recommendations for a new U.S.-South Africa policy (what would be christened "constructive engagement"). Crocker's later writings, published at the time of his appointment, provide clear evidence of what he had in mind for U.S. policy in all of southern Africa. Crocker wrote:

a serious policy will restrain our tendency to stereotype local factions and will thereby broaden our options to conduct a flexible policy. Continued blacklisting of Mozambique for U.S. assistance — regardless of its professed desire for any opening to the West — is short-sighted. At the very least, Washington must have the capacity to explore the potential for fostering realignments that are in our own interest.⁷

5. Allen F. Isaacman, "Mozambique: Tugging at the Chains of Dependency," in *African Crisis Areas and U.S. Foreign Policy*, ed. Gerald J. Bender et al. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), p. 150.

6. James H. Mittelman, "Be Fair to Mozambique," *New York Times*, 27 July 1983, p. 23.

7. Chester A. Crocker, *A U.S. Policy for the 80s* (Braamfontein: South African Institute of International Affairs, 1981), p. 19.

In his *Foreign Affairs* article, in which the term "constructive engagement" was coined, Crocker asserted that U.S. policy must be "responsive to the pragmatic instincts of regional leaders" and cannot "operate on the basis of a Marxist/non-Marxist litmus test in the choice of regional *partners*." (emphasis added)⁸

At the top of the U.S. agenda, Crocker placed resistance to Soviet/Cuban "adventurism", and the reduction of regional tensions in part to spoil Soviet opportunities. To achieve those ends, however, he repeatedly stressed the necessity of a flexible policy that would employ a variety of "tools" and search for opportunities on a case-by-case basis. Mozambique hosted a relatively small number of Soviet bloc advisors, and few if any Cuban troops. It was therefore not nearly as dependent on the East as was Angola, on the opposite side of Africa. Crocker would soon see a chance to determine if Mozambique was really as "non-aligned" as it claimed, and to see if Mozambique could be weaned away from the USSR by using carrots instead of sticks.

Crocker would choose foreign assistance to be the carrot used on Mozambique. We can understand this based on Crocker's criteria for judging aid candidates in southern Africa, which has been summarized by two observers:

1. a government's past and current attitude on issues of direct importance to the United States;
2. its posture on foreign investment and nationalization;
3. its current and potential contribution to regional and international peace keeping; and,
4. its likely durability as a governing group.⁹

FRELIMO's eventual fulfillment of these criteria to varying degrees largely explains the American opening to Mozambique.

OPENING MOVES

Crocker has probably been given much more responsibility in formulating and carrying out policy than his counterparts in other regions, owing to Africa's secondary position in U.S. policy. However, Crocker's superior, Secretary of State Alexander Haig, rejected the notion of economic or diplomatic support for Mozambique without a major withdrawal of Cuban personnel beforehand.¹⁰ Haig's stance might have posed a formidable obstacle to Crocker's policy had Haig not resigned in June, 1982. His replacement, George Shultz, proved more receptive to Crocker's initiatives in Africa.

8. Chester A. Crocker, "South Africa: Strategy for Change," *Foreign Affairs* 59 (Winter 1980-81): 345.

9. Donald Rothchild and John Ravenhill, "From Carter to Reagan: The Global Perspective on Africa Becomes Ascendant," in *Eagle Defiant: U.S. Foreign Policy in the 1980s*, ed. Kenneth A. Oye et al. (Boston: Little, Brown, 1983), pp. 347-48.

10. Caleb Rossiter, *The Bureaucratic Struggle for Control of U.S. Foreign Aid: Diplomacy vs. Development in Southern Africa* (Boulder: Westview, 1985), pp. 67-68.

The foundation of U.S.-Mozambican relations which had survived the initial chill was broadened through 1982, though still at a level that evoked little notice. American food aid, in particular emergency aid for famine relief, continued in large amounts. The amount of Mozambican exports to the United States for 1981 made the United States one of Mozambique's foremost trading partners. Most important in this early phase, however, were concrete signs that FRELIMO wanted to reduce its dependence on the USSR.

Machel's government began inching away by accepting a long-standing offer to improve relations with its former metropole, Portugal. Between late 1981 and early 1982 there were not only a number of swiftly concluded bilateral economic agreements between the two, but also agreements on military training for Mozambican officers in Portugal and large arms sales to Mozambique. By October, Portugal had become Mozambique's second largest arms supplier behind the Soviet Union. The Soviets responded by dispatching a general to Maputo to express their concern over these developments.¹¹

Machel's active diplomacy toward Portugal and other NATO members did not escape the attention of the United States, either. Rumors soon surfaced of "behind-the-scenes" meetings between Mozambican and U.S. diplomats.¹² Whereas Mozambican Foreign Minister Joaquim Chissano had "lectured" Crocker in their first meeting held in early 1981,¹³ he met with Secretary Shultz at the United Nations in October 1982 in a decidedly different atmosphere.

By the beginning of 1983, Crocker's prescription for a flexible, discerning policy for southern Africa was undergoing thorough exploration. At a time of increasing U.S. covert support of anti-Marxist guerrilla movements, the State Department was sufficiently convinced of FRELIMO's sincerity in its westward shift to come out publicly in favor of reconciliation with the Marxist government. Moreover, State Department representatives asserted in January 1983 that

[t]he United States has provided no support whatsoever to [RENAMO]; it is difficult to imagine that any U.S. interest could be served by doing so.¹⁴

RENAMO's Rhodesian origins, destructive methods, lack of popular support, lack of political program, and South African support most likely contributed to this rejection. In addition, the State Department recommended that Machel not negotiate with the rebels, in marked contrast to U.S. policy in Nicaragua. It understood both Mozambique's harboring of ANC forces and South African

11. For the best discussion of this, see Norman MacQueen, "Mozambique's Widening Foreign Policy," *The World Today* 40 (January 1984): 25.

12. Clough, p. 16.

13. "Long-Hostile Mozambique Now Supports U.S. Policy," *Washington Post*, 5 February 1984, p. 14.

14. "State Department Perspective," *Africa Report*, January-February 1983, p. 48.

military responses thereto, and saw the solution to those problems in negotiations between South Africa and Mozambique.¹⁵

THE NKOMATI ACCORD

Mozambique in fact needed no coaxing from the United States to negotiate. The Machel government had raised the issue of a nonaggression pact with South Africa on its own a month before the State Department's January 1983 pronouncement.¹⁶ By 1982, RENAMO guerrillas were active in seven of Mozambique's ten provinces, and a military solution to this problem remained hopelessly out of reach. In addition, South Africa stepped up its reprisals against Mozambique for ANC attacks in 1983, bombing Maputo in May and launching a commando raid on an ANC hideout just blocks from Machel's residence in October. The costs of granting refuge to the ANC had clearly begun to outweigh any benefits, and operations conducted against RENAMO were fruitless as long as the rebels received South African support.

While South Africa initially rejected his offer for an agreement, Machel's strategy of influencing South Africa through the United States eventually appeared successful. Crocker's "constructive engagement" increasingly risked taking the blame for Pretoria's escalating attacks. It also became unclear how long Mozambique could endure without being forced to respond with the aid of Soviet bloc forces. These considerations resulted in U.S. pressure on South Africa, which apparently did the trick. Finally, after one year, secret meetings between Mozambican and South African representatives began in Swaziland on December 20, 1983.¹⁷

The result was the historic, or at least unprecedented, treaty signed at the border town of Nkomati on March 16, 1984. This "Nkomati Accord" obliged Machel's government to cease granting aid and refuge to the ANC, and obliged Pretoria to reciprocate with regard to RENAMO. Nkomati was widely hailed as a great achievement, and both U.S. and Mozambican officials hoped it would prove to be a "Camp David" accord for southern Africa.¹⁸

In reality, Nkomati was a failure before it was signed. While Mozambique made prolonged efforts to uphold its end, dealing Mozambique-based ANC operations a serious blow, the South African regime (or at least its hardliners) never intended to comply. South Africa delivered two years' worth of equipment to RENAMO before signing the accord, and its support for the guerrillas merely became more surreptitious after March 16.¹⁹ Throughout 1984 and

15. Ibid.

16. See Isaacman, pp. 150-52.

17. Isaacman, p. 151.

18. "Long-Hostile Mozambique...", p. 14.

19. See "A Lesson in Trust from Pretoria," *New York Times*, 28 September 1985, p. 22; Isaacman, pp. 151-54.

1985, a cycle was perpetuated. South Africa was first confronted with evidence of its treaty violations, negotiations concerning a "re-implementation" of Nkomati took place, and then further South African violations followed or were obscured by Pretoria's countercharges.

Despite these disappointing results, it is difficult to underestimate the value of Nkomati to U.S. officials. After three years of constructive engagement, they were eager to have something, however marginal, to show for their efforts. It is thus not surprising that the administration seldom hesitated to mention Nkomati and U.S. "brokerage" thereof when discussing southern Africa.

Crocker and his lieutenants hoped that the pact was only step one in a regional peace process that would include Angola and the big prize, Namibia. They enlisted Machel's assistance in the latter endeavor as Nkomati was being concluded.²⁰ As these hopes too were dashed, the State Department tenaciously clung to Nkomati long after its failure was clear to all. As late as May, 1986, after two years of South African violations and escalating RENAMO activity, the *Department of State Bulletin* could still lamely begin a paragraph on Nkomati with "If it succeeds . . ."²¹

Mozambique also placed great faith in Nkomati probably longer than it should have, but was handcuffed to the accord for its own reasons. Were it to have committed its own violations, Mozambique undoubtedly would have alienated the United States. Moreover, as one senior FRELIMO official later remarked, "[t]he problem is that if we tear up the agreement the [South African] dogs of war will really be unleashed."²² South Africa would undoubtedly have resumed its aggression with zeal, considering the insincerity with which it had signed Nkomati in the first place.

While the Nkomati Accord did not achieve its stated goals, it did succeed in further strengthening U.S.-Mozambican ties. In subsequent months, Mozambique allowed some privatization of its state-run economy, joined the International Monetary Fund (IMF), signed on to the Lomé Convention, and agreed to a cultural exchange program with the United States. U.S. lawmakers were satisfied enough with Nkomati to rescind the seven-year-old ban on direct (non-food) economic assistance to Mozambique, which reached a total of \$8 million for 1984 (the administration would request \$15 million the following year). FRELIMO went so far as to express its support for Reagan's reelection.²³

In this sense, Nkomati helped strengthen U.S.-Mozambican ties in the short term. Faced by opposition to the treaty from FRELIMO hard-liners, other African states, and the Soviet Union, and denied the reprieve from

20. "Long-Hostile Mozambique...", p. 14.

21. Philip R. Cook, Jr., "Feature: Sub-Saharan Africa," *Department of State Bulletin*, May 1986, p. 11.

22. "Mozambique's Pivot Toward the West Bringing Few Results," *New York Times*, 18 August 1985, p. 12.

23. "Long-Hostile Mozambique...", p. 1.

South African/RENAMO pressure that had been Mozambique's main purpose in signing it, Machel was in need of more tangible rewards if his cooperation with the United States was to continue.

MILITARY AID

It became clear to the State Department, despite its dogged hopes for Nkomati and claims that it raised the issue of compliance at every meeting with the South Africans,²⁴ that military aid to Mozambique was now necessary. RENAMO's growing strength was obvious. Mozambique consistently publicized its desire to diversify its sources of military hardware, precisely that area in which the United States needed to help break Mozambique's dependence on the USSR. Military aid was, in another sense, the next logical rung on the ladder of improved relations, owing to the limited value of economic assistance alone in Mozambique's quasi-state of siege.

The Reagan administration's military aid request that grew out of these considerations in January 1985 was modest by American standards: \$1 million in "nonlethal" military assistance (plus later an additional \$3 million for FY 1986), and \$150,000 in military training for a handful of Mozambican officers. It remains unknown whether or by how much the State Department intended to increase the military aid thereafter. When pressed to explain its initial request, it claimed that military aid was necessary to maintain its credibility with Machel's regime, but that only a small amount was required.²⁵

If the goal was to wean the Mozambicans away from the Soviets militarily, though, how would such minimal shipments suffice? Crocker offered a partial explanation in his testimony before a House subcommittee: "By providing non-lethal items" the United States would be "working in parallel with allies."²⁶ At least for the time being, in other words, the United States intended merely to join in the process that had begun with Portugal in 1982. Moreover, a modest start with military aid seemed prudent and in perfect keeping with what Secretary Shultz had described earlier as the administration's "incremental, reciprocal" approach to Mozambique.²⁷ Washington was not about to dump millions of dollars in military aid on Mozambique without first testing the waters.

More importantly, the State Department most likely recognized that military aid to a Marxist state represented a significant departure from policy

24. "Mozambique Rethinking Its Ties to the West," *Washington Post*, 15 May 1986, p. 27.

25. U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Foreign Operations and Related Agencies, *Foreign Assistance and Related Programs for 1986*, pt. 5, Hearings, 1 May 1985, African Regional Overview (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1985), p. 207.

26. *Ibid.*, p. 98.

27. U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Foreign Assistance and Related Programs, *Foreign Assistance and Related Programs, Appropriations for Fiscal Year 1985*, pt. 1, Hearings, 1 March 1984 (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1984), p. 72.

norms. This had two effects on its approach. First, the State Department was defensive about the request from the beginning. In its formal announcement of the aid proposal, the department felt the need to deny it had any "illusions" about Mozambican Marxism and to mention that the request involved no new funds but merely a shift in funds already allocated.²⁸ Second, it seemed willing to invoke any argument it could find to support the request. Crocker's testimony continued:

This assistance will bring the Mozambican armed forces into contact with the U.S. military, and through the IMET [International Military Education and Training] program expose Mozambican officers to U.S. values, ideals and human rights practices.²⁹

The congressional interviewer did not ask how the military training of 10 Mozambican officers per year would improve Mozambique's human rights situation, which according to the State Department needed no improvement anyway, nor whether the argument was relevant in the first place.

OPPOSITION TO MILITARY AID

In any case, Crocker's resourcefulness and circumspection did prove justified, for outside the State Department the aid request sparked a widespread examination of relations with Mozambique. Within one month, conservative hard-liners in particular (both inside and outside the Reagan administration) were devoting attention to the issue for the first time.³⁰ When they learned that the administration intended to support an unabashedly Marxist government — indeed, at the expense of an anticommunist guerrilla movement — many were plainly shocked.

The more influential elements of the right-wing press reacted in two ways. First, finding itself in an awkward position, the conservative press separated Reagan from his "liberal" State Department, which it then subjected to vigorous attacks. And second, it began to glorify RENAMO as a group of "freedom fighters" worthy of another application of the Reagan Doctrine, which by that time was coming into its own. This publicity raised the awareness of and served as ammunition for conservative opponents of military aid.³¹

The congressional debate, conducted between May and July of 1985, was cursory. It was dominated by a few key conservatives, content repeatedly to

28. "U.S. Plans to Aid Mozambique Army," *New York Times*, 17 January 1985, p. 8.

29. U.S. Congress, House, p. 98.

30. For example, there is little if any mention of Mozambique in Heritage Foundation literature prior to February, 1985, and substantial coverage thereafter; see the Foundation's *National Security Record*.

31. See *Congressional Record*, 99th Cong., 1st sess., 15 May 1985, S6199-6202; 22 May 1985, H3606-3610; 9 July 1985, H5287- 5292; 11 July 1985, H5459-5460; 18 September 1985, H7525; 19 September 1985, S11813-11815.

disparage FRELIMO and praise RENAMO. House Democrats, siding with the administration, offered little in the way of a defense. There is no evidence that the administration did anything more than make routine appearances at committee hearings.

Republicans introduced amendments to the foreign aid bill in the House and Senate that would prohibit military aid and restrict the \$15 million in economic aid requested by the administration. The prohibition, ultimately approved by substantial margins, could only be lifted if Mozambique were to hold free elections, receive presidential certification of progress in human rights, and implement plans by September 1986 to reduce its number of East bloc advisors to 55. Mozambique could obviously not be expected to fulfill these conditions.

The 55-advisor ceiling was not arbitrary; it was the same limit on the number of U.S. advisors Congress had placed on El Salvador previously. The appeal of this condition to conservatives and some liberals was clear: why tie our hands without tying theirs? But in a broader sense, the defeat of the military aid package (and near-defeat of economic aid) reflected a temporary triumph for the East-West view of southern Africa. The prohibition was seen as a "get tough" measure in the wake of the Beirut TWA hijacking, the killing of four U.S. Marines in San Salvador, and the Walker spy case. It had an anti-Soviet flavor attractive to those legislators unfamiliar with the issue.³²

SIGNS OF DECLINE

Machel's trip to Washington in September of 1985, while itself significant and an indication of Reagan's personal approval of rapprochement, must be seen as an anticlimax. Token military aid had already been voted down, and more substantial quantities were now out of the question. Anti-FRELIMO, pro-RENAMO sentiment among conservatives had gained a momentum of its own, in step with repeal of the Clark Amendment preventing aid to anticommunist UNITA guerrillas in Angola. In fact, during Machel's visit, those lawmakers who had led the charge against military aid introduced legislation to provide \$5 million in military assistance to RENAMO (which did not pass).

The effect of the congressional opposition was compounded by evidence of the administration's lack of commitment to its own policy. The restrictions on aid to Mozambique had not been "actively resisted by the administration." While Machel was in Washington, representatives of RENAMO were granted visas to the United States, and President Reagan was no more than "distressed" by news that South Africa had admitted violating the Nkomati Accord.³³

32. Salih Booker, "The Other Engagement," *Africa Report*, January-February 1986, pp. 50-52.

33. *Ibid.*, pp. 51, 52; "South Africa Admits to Breaking Nkomati," *New York Times*, 20 September 1985, p.

Upon hearing of South Africa's admission, one senior administration official who just days earlier had termed Nkomati a "major milestone," immediately tried to distance the United States from Nkomati:

I wouldn't look at that agreement . . . as a great U.S. accomplishment. We weren't even in the room when it was signed.³⁴

The *New York Times* then noted that the "agreement was signed in an open air ceremony attended by American officials."³⁵ When asked what the administration would do regarding South Africa's violations, another senior official replied:

We will do what we can to encourage the parties to get to the bottom of this, and to encourage the South Africans to clear up the allegations and to get to the bottom of the thing.³⁶

This weak response is particularly unconvincing because there was nothing to get to the bottom of, nor any allegations to clear up: Pretoria had admitted its violations, and the Reagan administration's reluctance even to criticize South Africa on behalf of Mozambique was now clear to Machel.

In sum, reasons for Mozambican disappointment with the results of rapprochement have continually multiplied. American economic aid, while growing, has not been nearly substantial enough to redress Mozambique's grievous economic circumstances. U.S. corporate investment has failed to materialize because of the guerrilla war. Moreover, Maputo has felt that the risks of rapprochement with the U.S., particularly the risk of alienating the Soviets, have been growing compared to the questionable U.S. commitment. This has diminished Mozambican interest in American friendship.³⁷

CHANGING FACTORS, 1987

U.S.-Mozambican relations, while still as cordial as at the time of Nkomati, are now facing four major changes in the policy calculus:

1. RENAMO guerrillas, while still intensifying their attacks, have diversified their sources of support.³⁸ These reportedly include right-wing groups in Portugal and the United States, and possibly Saudi Arabia.³⁹ This devel-

34. "South Africa Admits..." p. 7.

35. Ibid.

36. "Reagan Tells Mozambique of Distress That Pretoria Violated Pact," *New York Times*, 20 September 1985, p. 7.

37. See "Mozambique Rethinking..." p. 23, 27; "Mozambique's Pivot..." p. 12.

38. Sam Levy, "U.S.-Mozambique: Broken Promises?" *Africa Report*, January-February 1986, p. 80.

39. Any Saudi role in supporting RENAMO is worthy of its own investigation, based on our knowledge of Saudi funds channeled to the Nicaraguan contras. This might tell us more about the Reagan administration's covert policies recently revealed as well as about the split within the administration regarding its Mozambican policy. See *Los Angeles Times*, 15 March 1987, Part IV, p. 4.

opment is widely overlooked but of great significance. Now, even if South Africa were magically to comply with Nkomati, the insurgency would continue. Thus, one of Mozambique's main reasons for approaching the United States at the beginning to have the South Africans restrained by "going over their heads" appears to have vanished.

2. While many conservatives continue to press for a policy turnaround and aid to RENAMO, their efforts appear for the time being to have failed. The Iran-contra scandal, the resulting staff shuffle at the National Security Council, and the resignation of CIA Director William Casey have all contributed to this setback; Casey reportedly had been RENAMO's most ardent supporter inside the Reagan administration.⁴⁰ This development should improve U.S.-Mozambican relations further, but the possibility remains of pro-RENAMO forces in Washington affecting at least an incremental shift in policy.

3. In a major about-face, the State Department has apparently abandoned its earlier stance and is now encouraging the regime to negotiate with the rebels.⁴¹ This amounts to final acceptance of Nkomati's failure and perhaps a move to forestall the major deployment of East bloc troops which FRELIMO's situation otherwise may demand. In any case, this new stance can only deepen FRELIMO's fears that the United States may abandon it.

4. The prevailing uncertainty was exacerbated by the sudden death of President Machel in a plane crash on October 19, 1986, about which questions of South African responsibility remain.⁴² The emergence of Joaquim Chissano, who as foreign minister played a leading role in Mozambique's westward shift, as the nation's new president seems at present to ensure a continuation of Machel's policies. In the long term, however, no one can know what the succession will bring for relations with Washington.

UNCHANGING REALITIES, 1987

In contrast to the marked changes outlined above, two basic facts influencing the relationship will persist at least into the near future:

1. Despite its setback vis-a-vis the United States, Mozambique's need for Western military and economic aid will continue. To a great degree, the nonlethal aid stopped by Congress in 1985 has been supplied to Mozambique by the United Kingdom. And while equipment and training themselves are insufficient to have any real impact in the guerrilla war, the West does provide better quality assistance (particularly training) than the Soviets. In short, Mozambique's need for multiple military suppliers, while at present partially satisfied without the United States, will continue.

40. "Bid to have U.S. Back Mozambique Rebels Halted," *New York Times*, 16 March 1987, p. 12.

41. "Mozambique Rethinking...", p. 27.

42. See "Mozambique Jet Crash Still a Mystery," *New York Times*, 27 January 1987, p. 6.

Economic aid remains crucial to the besieged regime as well. Indeed, South Africa's expulsion of some 50,000 Mozambican workers in late 1986 dealt yet another blow to Mozambique's ravaged economy, desperate for the foreign exchange the workers had brought home. Of course, even massive economic aid will not cure Mozambique's ills. In a sense, as long as the war continues, economic aid merely creates more targets for RENAMO to destroy. But rebel disruption of the agricultural and transportation sectors necessitates outside assistance simply to maintain the economy in its current state.

2. Nevertheless, Mozambique's reliance on the Soviet bloc for the lion's share of its military strength will also continue. Mozambique's military equipment, including helicopters, aircraft, armor, and small arms, is largely Soviet-made. Maputo will therefore require continued Soviet shipments and advisory presence.

The question of East bloc troops in Mozambique, whose numbers are minimal at present,⁴³ is more important. Though the regime seems to be holding its own in the civil war at time of this writing,⁴⁴ President Chissano may have no choice but to ask for a Cuban presence on par with that in Angola should there be a further deterioration of his regime's security.

CONCLUSIONS

If a large East bloc deployment would not alarm Washington (not to mention Pretoria) and send its relations with Mozambique into a tailspin, the by-product, new Soviet bases on the Indian Ocean, certainly would. To avoid this, as well as to end the bloodshed and destruction, FRELIMO-RENAMO negotiations may be the only solution. American hard-liners, South Africa, and the State Department could all support such negotiations, which could also preserve some degree of Mozambican non-alignment. Chissano, however, continues to reject negotiations. The fighting continues, and were RENAMO to seize power, FRELIMO could return to the bush, thus perpetuating the chaos.⁴⁵

Speculation does not alter the fact that the United States' intriguing experiment in weaning a Marxist state away from the USSR has failed. Mozambique's alignment with the Soviets is not nearly as firm as that of Ethiopia's, but strong links between Maputo and the East bloc remain, links which the United States had hoped to weaken through the rapprochement.

43. These include 900 Cubans, 300 Soviets, 100 East Germans, and probably a handful of North Koreans. International Institute for Strategic Studies, *The Military Balance, 1986-87* (London: Garden City Press, 1986), pp. 46, 51, 160, 185.

44. See Allen Isaacman, "In Machel's Footsteps," *Africa Report*, January-February 1987, p. 27.

45. See Sam Levy, "Mozambique Isn't About to Sever Ties With Moscow," *Wall Street Journal*, 30 January 1986, p. 31.

Hopes for the experiment's success were justified at first because both an unhampered U.S. State Department and a beleaguered FRELIMO wanted the weaning-away to take place. Hopes were dampened largely because of a paradox: Mozambique was likely to be drawn away from the Soviets only through military aid, and it was precisely military aid which made the American right-wing stand up and take notice. The conservative opposition then succeeded in smothering the experiment before it had any chance to produce results.

The experiment itself, however, was flawed. No one in the United States could know or prove Mozambique's true intentions. Debate over military aid, between politicians whose minds were already made up, consisted almost solely of assertions about those intentions, with evidence available to both sides.⁴⁶ Those in favor of weaning-away, claiming Mozambique desired non-alignment, could cite its joining the IMF, refusal to grant bases to the Soviet Union, and the signing of Nkomati in their favor. Those opposed to weaning-away, claiming Mozambique intended merely to exploit the West while remaining a Soviet puppet, could cite Mozambique's votes at the United Nations, its basic continued adherence to Marxism, and the continued Soviet/Cuban presence to support their case. In the resulting vacuum of persuasiveness, existing overall policy triumphed over innovation. Indeed, the Reagan administration may have been foiled in this instance by the propagation of its own doctrine.

In this sense, the defeat of military aid to Mozambique is the victory of "globalism" over "regionalism." Supporters of the Reagan Doctrine rank global ideologies and superpower competition above country-by-country peculiarities and local issues. Crocker's intent, while certainly "global" in its framework, was too "regional" in its tactics, placing Mozambique under relatively close scrutiny and peering beneath its Marxist label. The problem is that a combination of the two approaches requires a delicate balance, too easily upset by other actors and events.

On a deeper level, the case of Mozambique provokes a fundamental American policy question: can a Marxist, developing country in fact be weaned away or "bought off"? This question was posed to Mozambique, and the result is more a comment on the inflexibility of U.S. foreign policy than an answer to the question.

46. See *Congressional Record*, 99th Cong., 1st sess., 15 May 1985, S6199-6202; 22 May 1985, H3606-3610; 9 July 1985, H5287-5292; 11 July 1985, H5459-5460; 18 September 1985, H7525; 19 September 1985, S11813-11815.

