

Foe Relies on Foe in Southern Africa

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MAPUTO, Mozambique, May 26 — In the view of Mozambique and other black-ruled African nations in this region, white-ruled South Africa is a focus of evil, a government that preys on its neighbors' frailties.

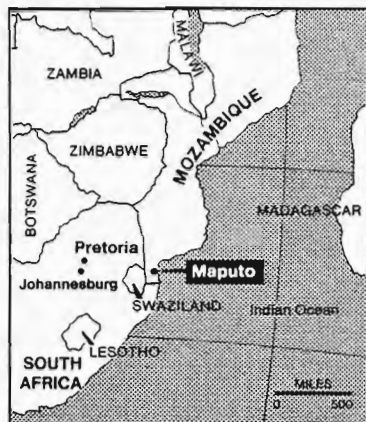
But the relationship seems to be ambivalent, for the demon is also a kind of provider. A history of colonial dependence has left Mozambique heavily reliant on a neighbor whose policies of racial separation it abhors but whose military and economic strength cannot be ignored.

The electricity here, for instance, comes from South Africa, so that, should Pretoria wish it, this city and its faltering industries could be brought to a halt. Figures are not published, but it is generally acknowledged that South Africa is Mozambique's biggest commercial partner.

Some 40,000 Mozambicans work in South African mines, and hundreds of thousands more hold down menial, illegal jobs, providing a source of hard currency. The Cabora Bassa Dam in northern Mozambique feeds South Africa and not the country in which it is situated. The dam supplied about 9 percent of South Africa's electricity in 1978; in 1979, the sale of electricity brought about \$50 million to Maputo.

Distributing Center for Hinterland

Of the trade that passes through the port here, half is South African, underscoring Mozambique's traditional role as a distributing center for a hinterland dependent on the good will or good fortune of others.



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Maputo's supply of electricity comes from South Africa.

The relationship between the two countries is complex, for mutual political antipathy is translated on the ground into backing for each other's armed enemies. Mozambique, a senior official said, will not, for instance, abandon its support of the African National Congress — the most prominent movement fighting South Africa's apartheid system of separation by skin color — yet the consequences of its commitment are unpalatable.

Last Monday, South African warplanes swept over Maputo in a reprisal raid following a car bombing in Pretoria for which the Congress claimed responsibility. The message was clear: Mozambique is vulnerable, and South

Africa can, with impunity, invade and disrupt and destroy.

During the raid, South African pilots reportedly radioed the control tower here and told flight controllers that South Africa had no quarrel with Mozambique, nor with its Marxist leadership.

The Pretoria attack, and its retaliation, followed several months during which the uneasy neighbors had sought to establish a relationship that, if not intimate, at least averted a blossoming of conflict that could involve other powers.

The United States is said by well-placed officials here to have encouraged the overtures between the two nations, which began last December when ministers from the two sides met at the South African border town of Komatiport.

They met again at the same place in early May and Mozambican officials have made it clear that, despite Monday's air raid, they would attend a further meeting.

The bargain that is sought, and which coincides with the Reagan Administration's public quest for a broad reduction of tension in this area, seems clear.

South Africa, seeking a nonaggression pact, wants Mozambique to block the transit corridor that enables African National Congress units to infiltrate through Mozambique and Swaziland into South Africa itself.

Mozambique, in turn, wants South Africa to withdraw its evident — if often denied — backing for the Mozambique National Resistance, a group of as many as 12,000 rebellious Mozambicans that is causing havoc in many areas of the country. The figure is said to include porters and helpers supporting combat troops.

Mozambique could be ruined by South Africa, and that appears to be the reason that its leaders have sought to disperse concentrations of African National Congress personnel in its capital and have moved some of them to the northern province of Nampula.



United Press International

Friends and relatives at a funeral service Thursday in Maputo, Mozambique, for victims killed during an air strike by South Africans.

camp — the Congress's military activities involve small groups of infiltrators, educated in the ways of sabotage, slipping through the enemy lines.

Mozambican officials refrain from open admissions of logistical support for the nationalist movement, but, with a shrug at their own helplessness, point to the porousness and length of their borders and say that they cannot prevent the nationalists from getting into South Africa.

Mozambique's role is thus covert, but nonetheless significant, providing the points of assembly for small groups of infiltrators to congregate and move on. It is an answer, however, that satisfies neither South Africa nor the Congress itself, whose officials complain that Mozambique does not do enough to further their cause.

In the Mozambican point of view, South Africa's own attitude to the authorities here is not without ambiguity. The activities of the resistance movement, which have led to conditions in some provinces said to resemble anarchy, have brought great instability and challenge to the regime of President Samora M. Machel.

Yet, a senior official said, South Africa does not seem to perceive an interest in engineering his overthrow.

"It makes more sense for South Africa to have an unstable Marxist re-

gime on its borders," said the Mozambican official, "than to topple Machel and replace him with a client state that would cost a lot to support."

Soviet and Cuban Allies

As the argument goes, South Africa's interests are better served by permitting its surrogates in the resistance movement to continue causing the instability that prevents the Maputo regime from presenting any viable challenge to South Africa.

So far President Machel has not called on his Soviet and Cuban allies for aid against the South Africans, and there is a strong feeling among Western diplomats and Mozambican officials here that he is loath to do so. He has called in Tanzanian training troops and over 1,000 Zimbabwean soldiers are guarding an oil pipeline and a road in the north.

But Mr. Machel's message has been that support from non-African countries will not be invoked unless there is a direct South African invasion.

In that event, the Western view is that the Russians, who are said to regard Mozambique more as a bridgehead for eventual influence in a black-ruled South Africa than as a prize in its own right, would be reluctant to embroil itself. Cuba, in this assessment, would be a more likely ally, under the banner of international Marxist solidarity.

Mozambique, too, appears to have adopted a view whereby South Africa, as an independent nation, cannot be placed in the same category as, say, Zimbabwe, where the Maputo authorities openly supported and fought in a guerrilla war against the white minority, colonial regime of what was called Rhodesia.

Thus, it is ideologically possible for Mozambique to argue that South Africa's iniquities are a matter for internal resolution, not overthrow from without, since the conflict is not one of decolonization.

While South Africa would like to be able to strike against an absolute and well-defined target — such as a training