

Destabilisation an "Ugly Facet" in Southern Africa

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Text of commentary:

Destabilisation has long been an ugly facet of the everyday situation in southern Africa. Now an alarming new element has been identified in the destabilisation syndrome. That new element is the plotting by sovereign governments to overthrow other sovereign governments. President Kamuzu Banda of Malawi has over the past 22 years constructed a solid foundation of political stability and steady economic advancement on which his country can build her future. He has been a statesman of stature and vision who has been a moderating influence in a volatile subcontinent.

In the process he has incurred the enmity of radical and Marxist rulers in neighbouring States. Last month President Samora Machel, using as a pretext Dr Banda's supposed support for the Mozambican liberation movement [the rebel Mozambique National Resistance movement] decided to depose his brother head of State. He sought and obtained the support of the Prime Minister of Zimbabwe for the conspiracy against Dr Banda. Also involved in the conspiracy were the governments of the Soviet Union and Cuba. The reality is that African governments are willing to use sophisticated communist weapons to overthrow a brother African government.

At Nkomati two and a half years ago the late President Machel solemnly declared that he would strictly respect the sovereignty, territorial integrity, sovereign equality, political independence and inviolability of the borders of all states. Any departure from that commitment could unleash a chain reaction that could engulf the whole of southern Africa in conflict. Adherence to the commitment on the other hand would put the subcontinent on the road to stability, peace and progress. It is to be hoped that the governments of Mozambique and Zimbabwe will return to that road in sincerity and integrity.