

MOZAMBIQUE: Soviet advisers leaving soon

THE INDIAN OCEAN NEWSLETTER

The Soviet Union and other Eastern bloc countries will pull out half of their military advisers before the end of 1990. This week the news was confirmed by military authorities in Maputo adding that British military advisers would however remain. Today, there are about a thousand Soviet military advisers and many from East Germany in Mozambique.

American daily, *The Washington Post*, was the first to announce this manoeuvre and said that the decision had been a mutual one, made after a high-level Soviet military mission visited Maputo last month. At the same time, the Soviet Union will reduce the amount of military aid to Mozambique (120 million dollars last year) while adapting to the very mobile war which the guerilla forces are leading.

I.O.N.- *After the departure last September of the Tanzanian contingent, it is now the turn of the majority of the Eastern bloc advisers to prepare to leave Mozambique. This decision seems to be related to current negotiations for a political settlement with RENAMO and South Africa in an attempt to end fighting in Mozambique. One of RENAMO's conditions has always been the departure of foreign forces, including the Zimbabwean ones. Moscow's decision to repatriate most of its advisers confirms that Mozambique, contrary to Ethiopia and Angola, has never been a Soviet priority in Africa, military aid, has, moreover, always been kept to a moderate amount. It also confirms that the USSR is ready to contribute to a negotiated settlement between FRELIMO on one hand and RENAMO and South Africa on the other. There remains the question of Zimbabwean forces deployed in Mozambique. However, the Harare government recently told the Americans that it was in favour of a negotiated settlement. However, according to our information, it is not prepared to enter into direct talks. The announcement of the majority of the Soviets' departure comes just after very strong criticism from the ranks broadcast publically on June 1 directed against certain superior officers who are accused of neglecting their troops to make business deals instead.*