

## Naval Base Denied

*Tass* on October 14th published a categorical denial of reports that Mozambique had authorised the Soviet Union to build a naval base on an off-shore island between Beira and the capital, Maputo, in the Indian Ocean. The Soviet news agency strongly attacked a **West German** weekly, *Bild Am Sonntag*, for carrying what it called a "calumnious commentary, affirming that the Soviet Union is creating military bases in Mozambique, with the aim of establishing control over the sea lanes around the Cape of Good Hope". It said: "Such inventions about the supposed 'Soviet Threat' are not new, and would deserve no attention, except that this new anti-Soviet fabrication has been taken up by the press in other **NATO** (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation) member-countries".

The *Tass* commentary also followed a report in the *Star* (Johannesburg) on October 13th, that Mozambique had authorised the Soviet Union to establish an air and naval support base on Bazaruto Island, within striking range of the Witwatersrand industrial belt around Johannesburg, and the West's oil route through the Mozambique Channel. Quoting diplomatic sources in Washington, and at the United Nations in New York, the *Star* said the base, 600 kms. (350 miles) north-east of Maputo, and a few miles from the mouth of the Save River, would enable Soviet units to strike at targets in the Mozambique Channel, or around Johannesburg. The Mozambique Channel, between Madagascar and the African mainland, is used by super-tankers bound for Western ports from the Gulf.  
(See p. 4205) (TASS 14/10)