

MOZAMBIQUE: SPY STORY

Some bizarre stories are surfacing concerning the alleged murder on 30 November of Mateus Lopes and João da Silva Ataide, senior leaders of the Mozambican Resistance Movement (RENAMO).

Sources close to RENAMO in the United States claim that Lopes was in fact a spy working for the FRELIMO government in Maputo, and that he and Ataide were shot and killed by Malawian security officers while travelling from RENAMO's Shire camp to Lilongwe. Their murderers are alleged then to have bulldozed their car to make the deaths appear a traffic accident. Lopes is said by the same sources also to have been working for a pro-RENAMO radio station based in Malawi and run by Thomas Schaaf, leader of the RENAMO lobby in the USA (AC Vol 28 No 25).

However, another version of Lopes' death has it that he was in fact murdered by FRELIMO agents while taking Ataide into Mozambique for a meeting with the uncontested RENAMO war-leader, Afonso Dhlakama. Still another version has it that he was a victim of intrigues within RENAMO. The movement is undergoing a serious internal struggle at present. In the past, hostile factions within RENAMO have accused one another of spying for FRELIMO or for Soviet bloc countries.

Whoever was behind Lopes' death, it affects the dispute in Washington over who represents RENAMO. Schaaf himself is mistrusted by some Washington ideologues, who consider him too close to the State Department and even to the British multinational Lonrho. Schaaf, his enemies say, is behind a campaign to denigrate RENAMO external relations secretary Arturo da Fonseca, whose enemies within RENAMO at one time accused him of being an East German agent.

Lopes' death may herald the removal of Luis Serapião as RENAMO's Washington representative. Sources say he is soon to be replaced by his brother Simon, a medical doctor working in the USA. Luis Serapião is considered in some US circles to have been tainted by his closeness to Lopes and to Schaaf.