

Pointers

MOZAMBIQUE: COSTA'S EXIT. Three senior Mozambican officials and several minor ones have now recently defected. **Jorge Manuel Antunes da Costa**, a national security director, asked for asylum in South Africa on 7 June while on a routine visit to discuss drug smuggling. Two colleagues refused his entreaties to defect as well, and returned to Maputo as planned. **Antonio Andre da Rocha**, first secretary at the Mozambican embassy in Harare since it opened in April 1980, disappeared to Europe with a substantial sum of money two weeks before. A trusted member of the foreign ministry's southern Africa section before his appointment, Rocha had apparently taken part in

many discussions between Zimbabwe and Mozambique about how to counter South African destabilisation. Thus he would have been an important catch for Pretoria. The third senior official to defect was **Zulificar Tricamegy**, finance director in the president's office.

One distinguishing point is that none of the above three fought in the war of independence. They all came from the educated Lourenco Marques colonial middle-class, and clearly saw Frelimo as the only way to gain power and prestige.

When Mozambique uncovered part of the CIA spy ring in February 1981, Jorge Costa was national director of security,

and was responsible for the subsequent arrests and interrogations. Costa will now be able to tell Pretoria how much Frelimo knows about US and South African agents inside Mozambique. It was feared initially that he might have been a US or South African agent for some time, especially since as a student in Portugal in the early 1970s he had been a member of *Movimento para Reconstrucao do Partido do Proletariado* MRPP, an ultra-left anti-Moscow party heavily infiltrated and influenced by the CIA. Costa's anti-Soviet views, stated so vociferously at press conferences in South Africa, date from that time. But it now appears that Costa defected because of growing pressure against him inside Mozambique, and that he had no prior links with foreign intelligence services.

Until independence, Costa had been a law student in Lisbon with close links to Frelimo militants there. He came back to Maputo to set up a new criminal investigation section of the police. He quickly became known for his ruthlessness, and for his association with criminals freed along with other prisoners from the colonial jails. Some shortcuts were clearly acceptable because of the need to clean up an unusually corrupt and violent city, whose main function has been to serve as brothel and port to Johannesburg. Unquestionably the crime rate dropped dramatically and Maputo became one of the more tranquil cities in Africa.

He was partly protected however, because his violence was directed at fellow whites. Many Portuguese were arbitrarily arrested in the period just after independence. Costa clearly played an important part in the climate of fear that caused many Portuguese to flee. Ironically this protected him: the first people to denounce him were linked themselves to the colonial structure, and thus were not believed.

Eventually he moved on to the security police, SNASP, and his notoriety grew. At the time of the investigation into the CIA, his targets were again white, and several innocent foreigners and white Mozambicans were held for several weeks. At the same time, however, protests were growing about abuses of power, brutality, and even torture on the part of police, army, and security forces. People increasingly sent letters of complaint directly to President Samora Machel.

So in 1981 Machel launched his "legality offensive" which stressed that the security and police were themselves subject to the law, and especially to public control. Public meetings were held in which people were encouraged to denounce corrupt members of defence and security, and were promised protection if they did so. Many did. Special "offices of discipline and control" were set up to accept public complaints, bypassing normal procedures. More than 400 security officials were dismissed in February as a result.

In a speech to a mass rally on 5 November 1981, Machel left nobody in any doubt when he said: "the white of humble origin, who at school was humiliated by the doctor's son, today, if he is in security, takes satisfaction in arresting and humiliating the one who humiliated him as a child." Costa meanwhile argued strongly against the legality campaign, saying it was diminishing the authority and prestige of the security services. He argued particularly strongly against proposals to make SNASP publicly accountable. Whereas the security minister, Jacinto Veloso, argued in a recent interview that virtually all security actions should involve public mobilisation against infiltrators, and that thus secrecy works against the interests of SNASP, Costa continued to argue that SNASP should be a secret police. Costa took an increasingly outspoken anti-white line, arguing publicly that there were too many whites in the Frelimo leadership. This seems to have been particularly directed at his own minister, Veloso, a white Portuguese air force pilot who flew his plane to Tanzania in 1963 and joined Frelimo in the fight against the Portuguese.

No official statements were issued, but Costa was apparently demoted, probably at the end of last year. Since then, no longer

the immediate post-independence period. Costa's name doubtless figured prominently in these complaints, and he may have feared that with the new mood against abuse of power, the accusations would be taken more seriously than they were in 1977.

Although Costa was thus under growing pressure he was able to retain his position through a mutual protection network of senior police and security officers, so that people became afraid to complain. It appears to have required the intervention of Veloso and Machel to break the clique and convince people that they could safely complain about abuses in high places. Further defections to South Africa, probably lower level security officers, along with a number of dismissals, can be expected. ●