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MAPUTO ON THE RACK

Although local support for the rebels provides some clue to the continuing high level of MNR activity, this is not the only explanation. Official response to the question whether SA has honoured the Nkomati agreement are guarded and diplomatic. "We think so," is the furthest official sources are prepared to go.

It is increasingly clear that the insurgents have seemingly unlimited supplies, some of which must be assumed to have been obtained after Nkomati, although the most likely explanation is that SA helped the rebels to stock up with arms and supplies before signing the accord.

It has been suggested that SA's security agencies perceived far greater long-term gains in maintaining proxy pressure on Maputo to get rid of its pro-Soviet hardliners than the doubtful short run economic advantages that would flow from Nkomati.

Relief organisations operating in the rural areas claim there is evidence of airdrops to insurgent forces, but these may have come from Malawi.

Says the United Nations Development Programme representative in Maputo: "Somebody knows something which is not being revealed. There are some areas we can no longer fly into because other planes are flying in. There is also evidence of direct funding from ex-colonial businessmen."

Maputo believes that SA has other aims in attempting to settle conflict in Mozambique quite apart from the proclaimed one of protecting Nkomati. Officials theorise that Pretoria wants the MNR integrated into the political system — at least partially to set a precedent for the settling of the Unita/MPLA conflict in Angola along similar lines.