

Renamo Denies Charges

Allegations Called 'Disinformation'

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The director of the Mozambique Research Center in Washington, Thomas W. Schaaf Jr., denied allegations of Renamo atrocities and destruction of villages made by farmers interviewed in central and northern Mozambique and said they were part of a disinformation campaign launched by the Marxist government in Maputo.

Schaaf, in a telephone interview Friday, said the Mozambican government "has conceded that they have lost militarily, and the only way they can hang on to power is to resort to a disinformation campaign. That's why we are getting all these stories about atrocities."

Schaaf has close contacts with the Mozambique National Resistance (Renamo) and spent three months in late 1986 with the rebels.

He said it is the ruling Frelimo government that is responsible for attacks on civilians in

an attempt to reduce popular support for Renamo.

"The brutal irony of what Frelimo is doing is that they go into an area and displace people, which leads to starvation. They do it because they know the people support Renamo. Then they show the results on television and say, 'See, this is the result of the war.'"

He claimed that 80 percent of Mozambique's population of 14 million lives in Renamo areas or "contested areas" and that the government has rejected Renamo efforts to reach a negotiated settlement to the conflict.

Of U.S. Ambassador Melissa F. Wells' contention that the only hope for Mozambique's development is to gain peace, Schaaf said, "This is the ultimate hypocrisy. She's been the very obstacle to peace."

Relief agencies such as CARE International, Schaaf said, have a limited view of what is happening in Mozambique because they are prevented by the government from entering many areas.