

Rebels get secret Kenyan support

Paul Fauvet in Maputo

THE Mozambican army has captured documents from Renamo rebels which show that the Kenyan government has been supporting them since at least mid-1988.

The army seized the documents when it overran a secret base at Nhainagodoa, in the central province of Sofala, on April 18. Journalists were given access to the documents this week.

Many are transcripts of radio messages sent to Renamo's commander-in-chief, Afonso Dhlakama, from Malawi. A middleman, using the code-name Joseph, operated the radio link, sending the rebel leader messages from Kenya and from Renamo offices in Europe and the US.

The documents cover five years from 1986, but a large number date from 1988 and relate to relations with Kenya.

They contradict Kenyan claims not to support Renamo, and show the Nairobi government offering "financial and material" assistance to the rebels.

The documents also include copies of letters sent to conservative American politicians, including former president Ronald Reagan, who was urged to reverse US policy and back Renamo.

There is no evidence that Mr Reagan replied, but George Bush, then vice-president, did take an interest.

A letter from Professor André Thomashausen, director of the Institute of Foreign and Comparative Law at the University of South Africa in Pretoria, sent on June 29 1987, said he had been approached by an envoy from Mr Bush to invite Mr Dhlakama to visit the US.

Astonishingly, Mr Dhlakama turned down this invitation and a similar one from the then leader of the West German Christian Social Union, Franz-Josef Strauss.

Other messages are from other rebel commanders. Some speak freely of atrocities.