

IN SEARCH OF THE MAN WHO WOULD BE THE NEW MACHEL

TAGGING Samora Machel's likely successor, even veteran Mozambique watchers admit, is like trying to identify individual prawns in a high tide.

A complex election procedure and subterranean ideological and political tensions complicate the issue.

But this week, in the wake of the shock death of President Machel, the trouble-torn country began the potentially divisive march towards choosing the second President of Independent Mozambique.

Two front-runners are emerging from the pack.

Odds-on favourites on the eve of Tuesday's state funeral for Samora Machel in Maputo are Mr Marcelino Dos Santos, officially number two in the Frelimo hierarchy, and Foreign Affairs Minister Mr Joaquim Chissano.

Outsider

But several opposing factions are said to be jockeying for position in Mozambique's complex and intricately interwoven power structure. And the possibility of an outsider being elected to one of Southern Africa's toughest hot seats is not being ruled out.

The top policy-making echelon within Mozambique, which will choose Machel's successor, is the 130-member Frelimo Central Committee.

But within the committee itself — and spreading out from it — is a web of influential structures, all with their own favourite sons and vested interests, who are set to pressurise the front-runners.

Incorporated within the central committee are the 11-rifed Politburo and the Central Committee Secretariat, of which the latter is said to be the smaller and more significant.

Order

At the time of Machel's death, he headed the Secretariat, followed by the Secretary for Economic Affairs, Mr Dos Santos, Foreign Relations Secretary Mr Chissano and Mr George Rebelo, the Secretary for Ideological Affairs.

As things stand, this is believed to be the pecking order.

Mr Dos Santos and Mr Chissano — as leading figures in the secretariat — also hold positions on the Politburo.

But the armed forces, crucial in Mozambique's survival battle against the MNR insurgents, will also have their candidates.

Headed the military power structure are the Mozambique People's Liberation Forces (FPLM), said to be some 16 000-strong — the majority in the army, with a small navy (about 650-strong) and air force (about 1 000) to back them up.

There is another service,



CHISSANO

DOS SANTOS

MACHUNGO

GUEBUZA

The long and winding road to succession

By DAVID JACKSON

which Pretoria is said to be keeping a wary eye on, called the National Service of Popular Security (SNAST) formed in 1975 — and beneath this, a host of paramilitary units and people's militias.

And, say Africa watchers, it is the Security Service (SNAST) which could throw up a likely dark horse if Mr Dos Santos and Mr Chissano are pipped at the post.

He is the young and upwardly mobile Mr Sergio Vieira, director of the SNAST and Minister of Security, who was the first top-ranking Frelimo official to cross into South Africa after last weekend's plane crash that claimed Machel's life; in fact, he headed the delegation.

He is a man who has already had dealings at top level with South African officials and is a member of the Central Committee — but not on the key Central Committee Secretariat.

Other military outsiders are Mr Alberto Chipande, Minister of Defence, who is on the Politburo (but not the Central Committee or the Secretariat); and the Chief of Staff of the armed forces, Mr

Sebastiao Marcos Mabote.

In terms of Frelimo philosophy, the party, the army and the state are seen as one and the same — and all organs are directed by Frelimo in terms of what it calls "democratic centralism".

Says Mr Bryan Bench, Research Officer with the South African Institute of International Affairs: "There is a general tendency in Mozambican society for equity in the way people operate with each other, so position doesn't mean all that it does in the Western sense."

In practice, observers said this week, the choice of Machel's successor is likely to be thrashed out in the Central Committee.

Ideologues

Here, three groups are vying for influence. The first is what could loosely be labelled as the Ideologues — the hard-line Marxist-Leninists, reportedly the so-called "swinging group" within the Politburo. (Dos Santos has hitched his colours to this grouping.)

Then there is the military grouping, which could be la-

belled the "security force pragmatists", mainly comprising the Ministers of Defence, Security and the Chief of Staff.

Because of their action in the field with the MNR, they are said to have a greater awareness of the weaknesses within Frelimo — that, in spite of vast amounts of revenue being funnelled into the fight against the MNR, it is a no-win situation.

They are in closer touch with the problems of the troops themselves, often under-fed and under-paid (or often not paid at all) and, in some instances, disenchanted with the reasons for fighting the MNR.

The third group, harder to define, are the "African nationalists" — who are also said to be pragmatists.

According to Mr Bench: "They feel that, while the socialist revolution has had its place, the key problems remain in the peasant sector and that priority should be given to servicing the majority of the population."

"They realise the struggle against the MNR is siphoning off a tremendous amount of potential development capital and are therefore slightly more adept to coming to some arrangement with the MNR."

They, in some sense, are in tandem with the military

people and the Marxist-Leninists."

These then are some of the intertwining influences which could help shape the choice of Machel's successor.

When it comes to narrowing the field down to individuals, another less tangible ingredient comes into play.

Said Mr Bench: "The important thing is charisma because Machel kept everything bubbling through by his charisma and his heroic status in the struggle."

"The only person of similar standing is Chissano, mainly because he was an old working colleague right through with Machel and headed the transitional government between the Portuguese revolution and the handover to Frelimo."

Other factors in Mr Chissano's favour are that he has travelled widely in the region, as well as internationally, and is well known both inside and outside Mozambique.

He is said to be implacably anti-American as well as anti-South African, but is regarded as something of a "political chameleon" rather than an out-and-out Marxist.

Hardline

Mr Dos Santos, appointed Secretary of the Permanent Commission in the April reshuffle this year, was the first Frelimo official to officially respond after last week's plane crash.

He is described as a hard-line Marxist-Leninist and sits both on the Central Committee Secretariat and the Politburo.

He is listed as number two in official documents of names of both organisations.

He is married to a South African woman, Pamela Dos Santos, and is a mulatto — factors which some believe may be held against him.

Another leading Marxist candidate is Mr Mario Machungo, who is Minister of Planning as well as holding the recently-created post of Prime Minister.

The only candidate of standing among the nationalist grouping is thought to be Mr Jacinto Veloso, another to benefit from the April reshuffle and currently Minister of Co-operation. He is said to have a close empathy with the disenchantment of the peasantry.

Some observers are not discounting the chances of General Armando Guebuza, Minister in the President's office, who is high in the party hierarchy. He was one of the original Frelimo militants at independence.

Mr Bench contended: "I think the leader is more likely to come from one of the top runners because they will need a solid leadership base to face the domestic crises — economic, the MNR and South African relations. A total outsider would have to start from scratch."

Three power groups are pushing their candidates