

A PROGRAM FOR PEACE

By KARL MAIER

Although Frelimo's ideological turnaround grabbed headlines during the party's fifth congress, a mandate to seek a negotiated solution to the war against Renamo was the meeting's most significant outcome. With Presidents Mugabe and Moi acting as intermediaries, efforts are underway to find common ground with the rebels in order to end the long and brutal conflict.



Woman at closing rally of Frelimo 5th Party Congress: "Peace was the dominant theme of the July 24-31 congress"

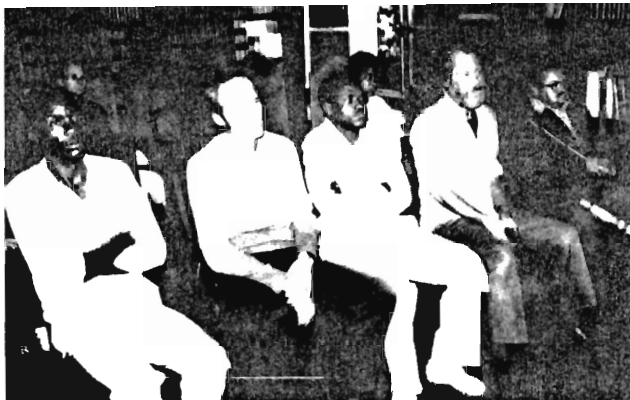
Turning gingerly on his side in a hospital bed, Paulino Chiziane spoke of forgiving the gunmen who had hacked off his left ear two nights before. "When the war ends, there is nothing I will be able to do," he said. "I would forgive them."

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Chiziane, a 50-year-old former mine worker in South Africa, was one of four people, including an eight-year-old girl, who lost ears when rebels rounded them up on the outskirts of the Mozambican capital, Maputo. A couple and their eight-month-old child were burned to death and two more people were seriously injured when a rocket

slammed into their home.

There was little to set the attacks on the Khongolote and George Dmitrov neighborhoods apart from the countless other rebel raids that occur each month in this southeastern African nation. Except that Chiziane's grisly encounter with anti-government guerrillas came on the night of July 24, about 12 hours after



President Joaquim Chissano's ruling Mozambique Liberation Front (Frelimo) opened its long-awaited Fifth Congress, just 10 miles away. The attackers were able to penetrate an extra-tight security net which the Frelimo army had thrown around the capital for the congress, which, meeting for the first time in six years, gathered over 700 delegates from all 10 provinces.

The raid provided a striking backdrop to Chissano's drive to gain full party backing for his plans to negotiate a peace settlement with guerrillas of the Mozambique National Resistance (Renamo), a shadowy rebel movement which has enjoyed long-time support from South Africa and right-wing U.S. groups.

For all the talk about Frelimo's ideological about-face—it dropped its adhesion to Marxism-Leninism—peace was the dominant theme of the July 24-31 congress. Fourteen years after leading Mozambique to independence from Portugal, Frelimo had decided that the revolution must play second fiddle to national survival.

"We are trying to work in a real framework," said ideology chief Jorge Rebelo, "not an ideal framework." While debates about rebel atrocities, rising prices, and increasing government corruption echoed through the congress hall, the deeper story of the fifth congress was being told in Maputo's central hospital.

"The people do not know anything about this war," said Chiziane,

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who had sent his wife and four children to live with relatives after a rebel attack a month before. "It is up to the government to know how to end the fighting."

President Chissano unveiled Frelimo's plan to end the war through a negotiated political settlement a week before the congress opened. A 12-point statement of principles offered direct talks with Renamo officials in return for a rebel pledge to agree in principle to renounce violence and to adhere to constitutional rule. He also named two mediators, Presidents Daniel arap Moi of Kenya and Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, the latter who maintains at least 7,000 troops in Mozambique to guard strategic transport routes from rebel attacks.

"We are telling our brothers who are in the bush to come back home for peace and development,"

Non-Mozambican prisoners serving sentences for security offenses released under amnesty and pardon measures: The amnesty passed in 1987 provided the legal instrument to wash away Renamo's crimes

Chissano explained. "And we need our friends to help us to achieve this."

The most striking feature of the congress itself, however, was its dramatic ideological turnaround. The estimated 700 delegates approved a program that not only dropped the party's commitment to Marxism-Leninism, but also opened membership to all sectors of society, including those previously scorned as class enemies such as businessmen, religious faithful, and property owners.

Once a "vanguard part of the worker-peasant alliance," Frelimo recast itself as a "vanguard party of the Mozambican people." Foreign policy is now to be based on national interests rather than on championing the "international working class movement" and the "world anti-imperialist front."

The congress marked a personal triumph for Chissano, 49, the pensive ex-foreign minister who assumed the presidency in November 1986 after his flamboyant predecessor, Samora Machel, died in a plane crash in South Africa. In 1977, under Machel's stewardship, Frelimo had adopted a radical program of socialist revolution, whose policy of villagization and hostility to traditional chiefs and spiritual leaders alienated the conservative peasantry.

The congress also saw a significant shakeup in the party hierarchy, with the new politburo expanded from 10 to 12 with four new members, including Foreign Minister Pascoal Mocumbi, a Chissano confidante, and the national political commissar, Eduardo Nihia. Minister of the Presidency Feliciano Gundana and Manica province Governor Rafael Maguni were also elected, while Gen. Sebastiao Mabote, chief of staff of the army until 1988, and Minister of State Administration Oscar Monteiro were dropped. The

new central committee was expanded from 130 to 160 members.

The meeting will allow Chissano to enter expected negotiations with Renamo armed with a party program that addressed some of the rebel movement's key demands, such as a free-market economy, freedom of religion, and an end to "communist" rule.

Indeed, cobbling together a new nationalist coalition to rebuild the country from the ashes of war was a major theme of the congress. Today, total economic output is about one-quarter of its level before independence from Portugal in 1975. One-third of its 15 million people need food aid to survive, and annual export earnings of \$100 million represent one-fortieth of the foreign debt.

Gone is the policy of pouring scarce resources into inefficient state farms, while small family plots, where 80 percent of the population work, are to be the backbone of rural development. A system of voluntary cooperatives will lead to the "gradual socialization" of the countryside, and all types of property ownership—state, cooperative, private, and peasant—are to enjoy "active participation" in the economy.

The congress also pledged greater support for the beleaguered armed forces, but condemned the army's recent practice of press-gang-ing youths off the streets. It also opened up the possibility of private education.

"The overall strategic guideline is the satisfaction of the basic needs of the people," said Prime Minister Mario Machungo, a key architect of Mozambique's free-market economic program, which is backed by the International Monetary Fund.

Chissano's plan to negotiate with the Renamo rebel movement received full party support. The congress cautioned, however, that any agreement must bring "a peace that is not a reward for terrorism"—a reflection of growing unease in Frelimo party ranks that peace talks will bring rebel leaders into the government.

The idea was addressed by Chissano himself during a closed-door session on Saturday. If rebels accept the government's 19-month-old amnesty, they have the right to contest elections, he said. "If they have the necessary qualities, well, who knows, some could even become ministers. But this is not what they want," he said. They want "to come here as a party. It is this

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that we refuse."

Frelimo's 12-point statement of principles pledged that "the normalization of life and the integration of those elements now involved in violent acts of destabilization implies in a general way their participation in economic and social life in ways agreed to by themselves and guaranteed by the government," it said. "Acceptance of these bases can lead to a dialogue about the ways to end the violence, establish peace, and normalize life for everyone in the country."

The Frelimo document described the 14-year-old war as "an operation of destabilization which should not be confused with a struggle between two parties." It said that Renamo leader Afonso Dhlakama must put a halt to "all acts of terrorism and banditry."

The proposal said the Maputo government would guarantee freedom of worship, expression, and association and that it was revising the constitution "to introduce increasing factors of democratic participation in the functioning of the state."

"The objective of the dialogue is to clarify these positions and to give guarantees of participation for all individuals including those hitherto involved in violent acts of destabilization," the document said.

The statement of principles represented a major step in church-backed efforts to negotiate an end to the war, which, all parties agree, no one can win and is only bringing Mozambique to national disintegration.



Mozambican refugees: "One-third of the country's 15 million people are threatened by famine."

Margaret A. Werzok

Renamo's insurgency, fostered by South African military intelligence since 1980, has spread anarchy through much of Mozambique's countryside. One-third of the country's 15 million people are threatened by famine and an estimated 100,000 civilians have been killed. At least 1 million Mozambicans are refugees living outside Mozambique, and 2 million more have fled their homes to makeshift resettlement camps inside the country.

Chissano's peace drive dates to November 1986, a month after he succeeded the late Samora Machel. With huge tracks of the country in anarchy, millions of peasants facing starvation, and an army too poorly fed, clothed, and armed to pursue the rebels, Chissano saw little alternative to a political settlement.

He began by cementing the already improving relationship between Frelimo and Mozambique's churches. Chissano, whose father worked at a Protestant mission in the southern province of Gaza, called a meeting in December to assure the religious leaders that freedom of worship was guaranteed.

A year later, after Chissano told then U.S. President Ronald Reagan that his government was committed to a non-military solution to the war, the People's Assembly passed an amnesty for the rebels in December 1987. The bill, which sparked fierce debate in the assembly, both provided the legal instrument to wash away Renamo's crimes against civilians and property and sent a message to Frelimo's rank and file that one day the guerrillas would rejoin society.

In August 1988, Chissano approved a plan by the 17-denomination Mozambique Christian Council and the Catholic church to meet with Renamo officials in Nairobi, Kenya. But they were soon disappointed with the rebels' external representatives. "Renamo people outside were more interested in buying new cars and flats than in serious talks," said one senior religious official. "They were interested in keeping the war going, not stopping it."

The breakthrough came in February this year, when Cardinal Alexandre dos Santos of Maputo, the Catholic Archbishop of Beira, Jaime Gonçalves, and Maputo's Anglican Bishop, Denis Sengulane, met with two of Dhlakama's closest aides, Raul Domingues, then general chief of staff of the Renamo army, and Vincente Ululu, the university-educated current secretary for information.

The religious leaders returned to Maputo and reported that they had found an answer to Chissano's oft-repeated question, "With whom can we negotiate?" Domingues and Ululu had confirmed that Renamo too was tired of fighting, and that a negotiated settlement to the war was possible. It was at that point that Frelimo decided to set down its ideas in

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the statement of principles. Chissano has insisted that for any dialogue to start, the rebels must accept the government's principles. U.S. officials confirmed that they would be prepared to meet with Renamo leaders to convince them to accept the Frelimo document as a basis for negotiations.

During a two-day visit to Maputo in July, Herman Cohen, the new U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, said, "I believe that it is now important that no group in Mozambique should seek to impose its will on the people or government through use of force or violence. If Renamo announces the acceptance

of this principle, I believe it is possible to proceed with negotiations in the very near future."

That same month, the peace effort won support from South Africa's new president, F.W. de Klerk, who called on the rebels, which the Pretoria government has supported since 1980, to stop fighting. "Renamo should, according to our view, stop violence and become part of the efforts for peaceful development in Mozambique," he said.

The bishops, with the aid of the Kenyan government, met with Dhlakama and a six-man Renamo delegation in Nairobi in August and presented the Frelimo statement of principles. The rebels responded with a 16-point document of their own, which pledged that they were not seeking to overthrow the existing constitutional order in Mozambique through force of arms. While Renamo did not include its prior demand for multi-party elections, it did say that Renamo must be recognized as "an active political force."

While Mozambican and foreign analysts do not believe the Renamo leadership could enforce a nationwide ceasefire should an agreement be reached, they do think Dhlakama directs a large enough proportion of the 20,000-strong rebel army to be able to order a significant reduction in attacks. Following the fifth congress, the number of rebel raids rose sharply, particularly in the central provinces of Zambezia, Sofala, and Manica, and the southern provinces of Gaza and Maputo. On August 19, Renamo occupied the Zambezi river town of Luabo.

Meanwhile, top Mozambican officials, including Chissano, continued to question the rebels' readiness to end the war through a political settlement, but suggested that there was no longer any alternative but to try.

"The impression we have is that Renamo was never prepared for a dialogue," Chissano said. "We have found a great repudiation of terrorism by our people, but at the same time a great desire to see the end of the war." ○