

# War-weary Maputo seeks fraternity with the enemy

NMail  
20-26  
4/90

WHEN Frelimo negotiators meet their Renamo counterparts for peace talks expected next month the key issue will be a draft constitution and the integration of the two armies, both proposed by Mozambique's President Joaquim Chissano.

Chissano said in an interview last month that after a peace agreement was reached, Renamo fighters could be integrated into the army. "After this quarrel is finished, we want to be brothers, and even friends with everybody," he said. "We would have to find a way of integrating this national army."

But integration need not bring peace, as few observers believe that the two sides control all the gunmen running loose in the bush.

"We may come to good terms with (Afonso) Dhlakama (Renamo's leader), we may become brothers and we may live together, but both crying because in the bush someone will be continuing the massacres of the population," Chissano said.

After a year-long, on-again, off-again diplomatic effort headed by the two mediators, President Daniel Arap Moi of Kenya and Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, the only roadblock to the opening of negotiations appears to be differences over the time and venue.

Chissano, in a television interview in Ghana on April 4, proposed a meeting in Malawi on April 16, which a Renamo spokesman rejected with a counter-offer of April 10 in Nairobi, the site of numerous contacts with the rebels by Mozambican church leaders and foreign envoys, including British, American and South African.

Mozambican officials have said privately that they prefer Malawi because they feared that the Kenyan government was too close to the rebels. Further, Frelimo has been working to involve the Kamuzu Hastings Banda government of Malawi in the peace process in an effort to ensure that all neighbouring states respect any future accord.

Renamo officials, including Dhlakama, have often stayed in Malawi, which, in the 1986 rebel offensive in the central provinces of Tete, Zambezia and Sofala, was an important supply route for the insurgents.

Despite the disagreement, Chissano's peace talks offer marked the first time that he had proposed a time and place for the negotiations. In the face of growing Western impatience, he promised to make quick peace moves last month when he met President George Bush in Washington and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in London.

The war, begun soon after Mozambique's independence from Portugal in 1975, has killed at least 100 000 civilians, forced three million people from their homes, and left one-quarter of the nation's 14 million people dependent on international food relief.

*Peace talks proposed by President Chissano provide Mozambique with its best chance yet of ending its war with Renamo — but that does not mean the fighting will stop, reports KARL MAIER*

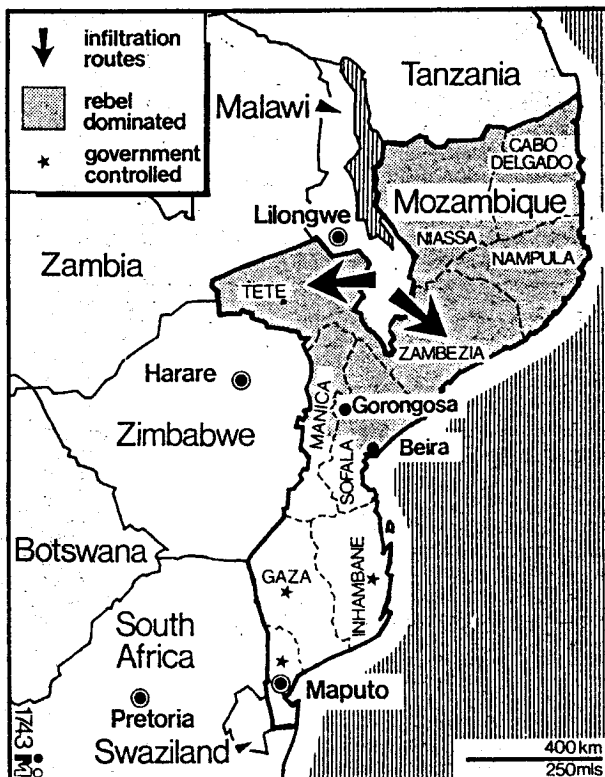
"Donor fatigue" has set in among Western nations, amid growing impatience with the lack of peace negotiations and the government's failure to publish a report into thefts of aid supplies.

Support from Mozambique's allies in Eastern Europe has fallen sharply, with all but 300 of the estimated 800 Soviet military advisers having pulled out by January. Military sources say that with the advisers went shipments of fuel, spare parts and ammunition which are vital to Chissano's poorly equipped 30 000-strong army.

Yet Chissano insisted that negotiations would take place, crediting his optimism to the "irreversible" changes in neighbouring South Africa, which began supporting Renamo in 1980.

"The people who were visibly supporting (Renamo) were on (South Africa's) military wing. They also seem to be accepting the changes, and therefore they are less and less interested," he said. "The change of the

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situation in South Africa, I think, will block all the forms of assistance to Renamo."

The centrepiece of Chissano's strategy, the draft constitution, provides for wide freedoms, including the right to strike, direct elections to the presidency and legislature, a ban on the death penalty, and right to private property.

Chissano called on Renamo members to participate in a nation-wide debate about the proposed constitution, which he unveiled at a public rally in Maputo on January 9. "They should be here," he said. "And we would accept for all of them to be here, provided they come (...) respecting the law and understanding that we mean the development of democracy in Mozambique."

Whether Chissano means a multi-party democracy, which Renamo has demanded, remains a key question. Should the two sides agree to establish a pluralistic system, Chissano has suggested that both Renamo and Frelimo might disappear as unified political forces.

"I don't think they are so homogeneous that in a situation where there is freedom for each one of them to create their own party that they would not do so," he said.

"I am not saying that in Frelimo we will continue also all in the same party. There are some who want to go more to the left, there are some who want to go more to the right, and some who want to go more to the centre."