

PORTUGUESE COMMUNITY

Machel backs down

Hopes for a community of Portuguese-speaking countries were shattered at the recent Luanda "Summit of Five" when President Samora Machel of Mozambique declared that, to him, the whole idea smacked of neo-colonialism.

To the dismay of the presidents of the other four former Portuguese African colonies — Agostinho Neto of Angola, Luis Cabral of Guinea-Bissau, Aristides Pereira of Cape Verde and Pinto da Costa of Sao Tomé e Príncipe — Machel made clear that he intended to sever all ties with Portugal.

As reported by the influential Lisbon weekly *Tempo*, Neto's willingness to have Portugal as a member of the proposed community has met with strong opposition from his Russian and Cuban advisers who fear a resurgence of Portuguese influence in Angolan affairs.

Although on friendly terms with Portugal's communist leaders, Machel has lately displayed an almost pathological contempt for the old coloniser highlighted by the arrogance he has shown to official deputations sent to Maputo by the Lisbon government to discuss pending matters arising from Portugal's "instant decolonisation" (TTP June 15 1979).

Machel's attitude was a severe setback to Cabral's efforts to promote close co-operation links between Portugal and its former colonies.

The three smaller states are reported to believe that Portugal should be regarded as "an ally and natural friend".