

MOZAMBIQUE, ZIMBABWE FORTIFY TIES

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Mozambique and Zimbabwe are currently developing a joint strategy to crush armed groups in both countries operating against the two governments.

This coordination comes within the broader scope of cooperation, particularly in the economic field, which President Samora Machel and Prime Minister Robert Mugabe believe essential to national independence and development.

A high-level Mozambican military and security delegation visited Salisbury May 27 to discuss the question of the armed rebels. Senior officials of the Mozambique Peoples Liberation Forces (FPLM) met Emmerson Munangagwa, minister of state in the prime minister's office, and officers of the Zimbabwean Defense Force.

The two delegations agreed to "establish close cooperation and coordination in the vital areas of defense and security" and also decided to work out a short-term plan of action, it was officially announced.

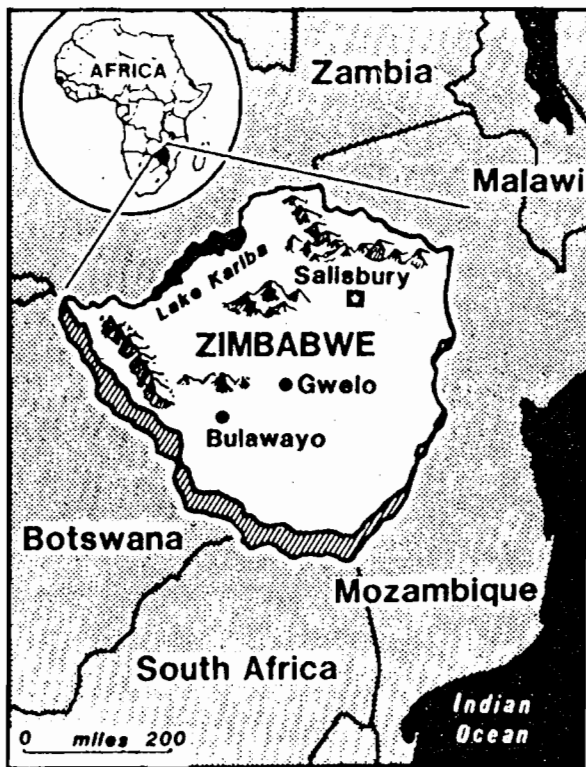
SOUTH AFRICAN SUPPORT

It is widely believed that rebels fighting the Mozambican government enjoy extensive South African support. Prime Minister Mugabe hinted as much on return from his talks with Machel in Beira, Mozambique.

"We know for certain that counterrevolutionary elements in this country are operating against Mozambique and Zambia," he told a press conference. "And some Zimbabweans went to South Africa after the elections. We are not giving them supplies, and one wonders who is flying supplies to them."

Military sources in Salisbury confirm suspicions of a South Africa connection, expressing their belief that South Africa provides counterrevolutionary forces in Mozambique with support and refuge. Large numbers of these forces are training in Northern Transvaal, south of Beit Bridge, they say.

Mugabe said he believed that anti-Mozambican government groups sought shelter in Zimbabwe when they were hit by Mozambican troops. "We have the right to clear them, from our area," he said, "and the



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Mozambicans will insure that they are accounted for on their side."

Asked whether such action would bring Zimbabwe into conflict with South Africa, Mugabe replied, "How does this offend South Africa, unless it is promoting these dissident elements?"

The so-called Mozambican Resistance is currently thought to be in considerable disarray. During the Smith and Muzorewa regimes, they enjoyed logistical support and leadership, from the Rhodesian Army. Mugabe's victory at the polls naturally cut this off, thus aggravating an already uncoordinated situation.

When the ceasefire came into effect in Rhodesia Jan. 4, the Mozambican counterrevolutionary groups were

split in two. Some were inside Mozambique, but others were in training camps in Rhodesia.

The latter were ordered to infiltrate into Mozambique, hide their arms, mingle with the population and await further orders. This order was given in anticipation of a ZANU-PF victory at the elections and consequent roundup of anti-Mozambican government forces.

Zimbabwe's independence on April 18 coincided with a cleanup operation launched by the FPLM, and some of the rebel forces, comprising mainly criminal sectors of the Portuguese colonial army and mercenaries, slipped back into Zimbabwe. It is these groups to which Mugabe referred in his press conference.

UNCOORDINATED GROUPS

Without support from the Rhodesian Army, these groups are uncoordinated, in need of food and increasingly resorting to banditry. Their sorties into hamlets from the bush are making it hard to consolidate stability in the border area.

An added problem for the Zimbabwean authorities are former soldiers from the Rhodesian Army, especially the counterinsurgency Selous Scouts and the guard force, who refused to join the new Zimbabwean Army.

Despite official promises that there would be no retaliation, they fled to the bush, where they are hiding from the people. The Selous Scouts are particularly notorious, having been responsible for atrocities which were then blamed on the Patriotic Front forces by the Rhodesian government.

Why they are hiding is explained by the fate of one Rhodesian who was caught. Discovered shortly after the elections by people from a "protected village," the former soldier was tied up, summarily tried, and burned to death even before the local authorities heard of the case.

Those living in the bush survive by robbing small villages and hamlets, creating another security problem for the Zimbabwean government as it tries to reconstruct a battered country.

By working together along their common border, Mugabe and Machel hope to bring peace to a long troubled zone. Without it, development will be doubly difficult.