

# JANE'S DEFENSE WEEKLY

WITH THE CIVIL WAR in the former Portuguese colony of Mozambique in its ninth year, the anti-Communist rebels are operating in all parts of the country.

More importantly, they seem to be winning over the local population.

## MOZAMBIQUE UNDER SIEGE

Anti-communist rebels threaten to topple shaky Marxist government

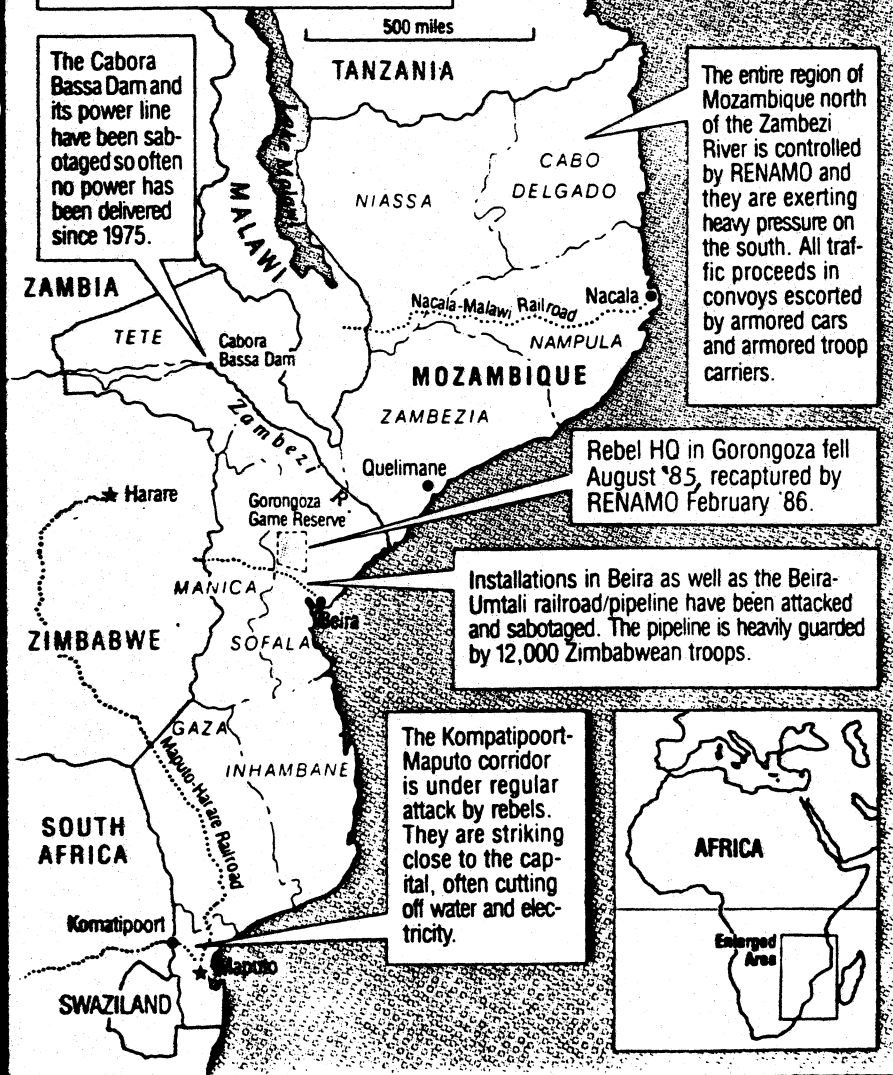
The Cabora Bassa Dam and its power line have been sabotaged so often no power has been delivered since 1975.

The entire region of Mozambique north of the Zambezi River is controlled by RENAMO and they are exerting heavy pressure on the south. All traffic proceeds in convoys escorted by armored cars and armored troop carriers.

Rebel HQ in Gorongosa tell August '85, recaptured by RENAMO February '86.

Installations in Beira as well as the Beira-Umtali railroad/pipeline have been attacked and sabotaged. The pipeline is heavily guarded by 12,000 Zimbabwean troops.

The Komatipoort-Maputo corridor is under regular attack by rebels. They are striking close to the capital, often cutting off water and electricity.



**R**ENAMO HAS DEVELOPED considerable credibility, despite being unable to enjoy foreign support — unlike the government whose policies it opposes.

The armed struggle began in 1977 under Rhodesian Intelligence control.

Later there was support from South Africa, but this disappeared with the 1984 agreement between Pretoria and the Maputo government.

Despite the loss of outside assistance, the insurgency is growing in strength — possibly because of the Mozambique Government's policy of imposing collectivisation.

Herdng the rural populace into *aldeas* (communal villages) has alienated peasants and created opposition in areas which were previously compliant.

The people appear to prefer to live in the resistance's 'liberated areas', where they have their own fields and can grow crops as they wish.

Three nuns, who had been prisoners of the rebels and travelled extensively with them in Nampula, Niassa and Zambesia provinces, told *JDW* they crossed vast areas where the rebels apparently enjoy total control, getting food and help from the farmers.

## Support bases

During our five-week journey in different parts of the country, we witnessed the same. Everywhere Renamo has a network of support bases, the locations of which are well known to the people, to the extent that the commander of our escort normally asked local civilians to guide our party to the camp in their area.