

Mozambique: An infamous accord

The South African-Mozambican-MNR peace talks have degenerated into confusion. Within each camp there is disagreement on how to proceed. The only reasonable certainty is that there will not be one overall settlement as envisaged in the Nkomati Accord signed on 16 March. Rather, there will be a series of lesser agreements and accommodations, not all of which will be announced publicly.

In South Africa, Portugal and Malawi there is disagreement as to whether to press for further concessions from the *Frelimo* government, or whether further fighting will damage the economic

gains already made. *Frelimo* seems to be trying to strengthen the forces which want to settle, while at the same time trying to split the MNR¹. But there are growing signs that a compromise between competing forces (broadly between South African Military Intelligence (SAMI) and the foreign ministry) in South Africa will lead to a settlement in the south of Mozambique, where South Africa has strong economic interests, and to continued South African support for the MNR in the north.

At Nkomati, South Africa agreed to stop supporting the MNR and to end its economic boycott

of Mozambique, while Mozambique agreed to end support for the ANC and to allow in South African businessmen and tourists. Economic and security commissions were set up. For South Africa, the Nkomati Accord was a major propaganda coup.

It then transpired that during the Nkomati talks South Africa had run a massive resupply effort for the MNR, sending at least 1500 heavily-armed and trained men into Mozambique, dropping tons of supplies, and organising an assault on the capital, Maputo. Although the level of support dropped after Nkomati, MNR guerrillas continued to cross the border, air and sea drops continued, and radio contact between South Africa and the MNR was maintained.

Before departing on his European tour in June, South African prime minister P.W. Botha issued a statement saying that South Africa reaffirmed its commitment "to the spirit and letter of the Nkomati Accord." But support for the MNR continued. The joint South African-Mozambican security commission met only once more. Further talks were at higher levels. The military commander in Inhambane province, Domingos Fondo, reported air drops of supplies in Homoine district in June and again in September. Homoine is only 250 km from South Africa. It is clear that other drops and radio communication continued in the south of Mozambique at least into September.

The Mozambican government and general public had strongly supported the Nkomati Accord, but the failure of South Africa to abide by it provoked disagreements within *Frelimo*¹. One side, which apparently includes Machel, still believes that P.W. Botha and foreign minister Pik Botha are sincere, but that private individuals and SAMI, which has always had overall responsibility for the MNR, are acting against the direct orders of the government. The other *Frelimo* camp, now gaining strength, believes that South Africa never intended to abide by Nkomati, and that since P.W. Botha's power-base is in the military, it is inconceivable that part of the military would act against him. Because of the views of the first group, the head of SAMI, Gen. Pieter van der Westhuizen, accompanied Pik Botha to meet Machel in June, and participated in later talks. Even this did not end support for the MNR. Where many Mozambican officials stressed until June or July their belief that South Africa was acting in "good faith", by October they were no longer willing to do so.

Matters came to a head in renewed talks in Pretoria starting on 27 September. The Mozambicans made clear that South Africa had to do something. The *Frelimo* delegation threatened several times to walk out. South Africa pressed Mozambique to talk directly to the MNR. There were also a series of "proximity talks" with South African foreign ministry negotiators shuttling between three parties (all in Pretoria): the Mozambican government, MNR, and SAMI, which by then seemed to be acting like a separate participant.

The final result was the Pretoria Declaration of 3 October, read out by Pik Botha, with the chief *Frelimo* negotiator, Jacinto Veloso standing on one side and the MNR delegation leader Evo Fernandes

on the other. The declaration: 1) acknowledged Machel as president of Mozambique, 2) said that "armed activity and conflict within Mozambique from whatever quarter or source must stop 3) requested the South African government "to consider playing a role", and 4) set up a joint commission to implement the declaration. The commission is chaired by South African deputy foreign minister Louis Nel and includes *Frelimo* and MNR representatives.

The structure of the declaration was unusual in that it was a South African statement and not a joint declaration. Mozambique interpreted it as a South African agreement to abide by Nkomati. South Africa presented itself as a peacemaker and neutral arbiter. The MNR had gained a guarded recognition from *Frelimo*, and a promise of a first direct meeting.

In press briefings immediately after the announcement, Pik Botha portrayed the declaration as a cease-fire. The following day both *Frelimo* and the MNR stressed that the war continued. Worse, all three parties interpreted the declaration differently. *Frelimo* said that recognition of Machel meant recognition of the entire *Frelimo* government, that thus there could be no political bargaining, and that the joint commission was only to arrange details like assembly points for MNR guerrillas. South Africa said that political talks were necessary, and that the MNR needed to be represented in the government, but that this could be discussed after cease-fire details were agreed.¹ And the MNR expected the commission to discuss a whole range of topics. Machel, it said, could remain president but the MNR would want to name a prime minister.

The first commission meeting ran for four days instead of the expected two. There was hard bargaining. Another two day meeting followed, with the three parties agreeing at least the outline of cease-fire procedures. But it was clear that *Frelimo* was still unprepared to have political talks, and after two weeks the MNR suddenly withdrew. Talks between Mozambique and South Africa continued.

The Portuguese connection

Portuguese who fled Mozambique at independence for Portugal (the so-called *retornados*) and South Africa have always been one of the key groups backing anti-*Frelimo* forces (AC Vol 23 No 15). But the role of the *retornados* in Portugal, South Africa, and Mozambique seems to have been strengthened since South Africa took over the management of the MNR in 1980. In 1983 several Portuguese officials in Mozambique in the South African-owned shipping agency *Manica* were arrested for MNR links (AC Vol 24 No 7). Two Portuguese farmers in Zambezia province were arrested in June and on 1 November this year, the former for supplying MNR men with food, the latter for having an MNR base on his farm.

In South Africa, SAMI increasingly used Portuguese businessmen as fronts for its support of the MNR. For example, Mozambican authorities allege that last year a plane being used to supply the MNR was sold by SAMI to a private firm owned by a South African Portuguese, but that the plane continued to

fly MNR supplies. At issue now is to what extent they can continue on their own, without SAMI approval.

In Portugal the *retornados* are a strong political and economic force. The right-wing social democrats (PSD) and the centre Socialists (PS)⁴, who form the coalition government, split the *retornado* vote between them, and thus must respond to their demands. This has had a direct effect on Mozambican-Portuguese relations. When a left-wing government in Portugal agreed to Mozambican independence in September 1974, relations were good. But with increasingly conservative governments, relations soured and Portugal even demanded compensation for the roads and buildings it had left behind in its former colony. This was suddenly ended by prime minister Sá Carneiro in 1981, and relations blossomed. But Sá Carneiro was then killed in a mysterious plane crash and relations soured again. Deals agreed under Sá Carneiro have never been carried out.

The Portuguese military is directly involved. Mozambican sources claim that serving Portuguese officers have been regularly in Pretoria, and that Lt-Col. Silva Ramos of Portuguese MI went to the main MNR base in southern Mozambique at Tome in Inhambane in May 1983.

Mozambican sources point to three people in particular: industrialist Manuel Bulhosa, deputy prime minister and CSD leader Mota Pinto, and minister of state and PS member Almeida Santos⁵. The 80-year-old Bulhosa, the main non-South African backer of the MNR is one of the wealthiest men in Portugal. He was previously director and part owner of the now nationalised oil refinery in Maputo. He wants it back. The two *retornados* who serve as MNR spokesmen and who head the MNR delegation at the Pretoria talks, Evo Fernandes and Jorge Correia, both work for Bulhosa's publishing house, *Bertrand*. Bulhosa was in Maputo in August 1984 and met Veloso, but apparently did not agree to end his support for the MNR.

Pinto has close *retornado* links but no previous connection with Mozambique. Santos is a lawyer who represented *Anglo-American Corporation* in Mozambique, and still sometimes acts for it. He attended the secret meeting in London between *Anglo's* Harry Oppenheimer and Machel in October 1983. He was also a special guest of the Mozambican delegation to the Nkomati talks.

The increasing role of the Portuguese became clear after Nkomati. The MNR demanded that the Portuguese who fled at independence should be allowed to return and reclaim the properties they abandoned 10 years ago, and that the Portuguese-appointed chiefs should be reinstated in rural areas. In his Independence Day speech in June, Machel talked of a "foreign conspiracy". On 4 July the politburo issued a statement on the "foreign conspiracy" which pointed to the "involvement of personalities in governments that maintain diplomatic relations with our country, as well as circles nostalgic for colonialism." This was a direct attack on Almeida Santos, whom the Mozambicans privately accused of working with the MNR.

The Portuguese prime minister, Mario Soares, visited Mozambique on 31 August to 3 September.

As a goodwill gesture, 10 Portuguese detained for suspected MNR links were released. Soares declined to curb the MNR in Portugal, suggesting instead that the MNR be given places in the government and that *retornados* should get their properties back.

The Portuguese connection is also important in Malawi. Orlando Cristina, a former Portuguese secret police (PIDE) agent who helped set up the MNR, previously helped train Banda's Young Pioneers (AC Vol 23 No 12). There are many Portuguese in Malawi. Some set up businesses there during a colonial era but kept close links with Lisbon. PIDE set up a clandestine anti-*Frelimo* network in Malawi during the colonial period, as well as having official links with Malawian security. Other Portuguese moved there after independence, and strongly opposed *Frelimo*.

In October four Portuguese hunter-guides were arrested in Tanzania after building an airstrip near the Mozambique border, supposedly for tourists but in reality for flights to bring supplies for onward dispatch into Cabo Delgado. Three of the four had longstanding MNR links in Rhodesia and South Africa. Such flights could most easily come from the Comoro Islands, which are only 400 km off the coast of northern Mozambique. Since the mercenary coup of some years ago, the Comoros have had close links with South African security. At least two planeloads of arms for the MNR are thought to have arrived there. Sea drops to northern Mozambique could easily come from the Comoros.

On 11 October Evo Fernandes walked out of the Pretoria talks. Mozambican sources claim that Fernandes was recalled to Portugal by a personal telephone call from Mota Pinto, and that when Pik Botha tried to go to Lisbon the following day for talks with the government there, Mota Pinto (as deputy prime minister) told Botha he was not welcome. On 2 November the Mozambican foreign ministry called in the Portuguese ambassador and handed him a strong protest note about Portuguese links with the MNR. South Africa then joined in the attack on the Portuguese. Jorge Correia complained that Pik Botha was in league with *Frelimo*.

Both South Africa and Mozambique are promoting the Lisbon link for their own interests. It allows South Africa to blame Portugal and show clean hands. But it is useful to Mozambique as well, which is trying to split the white *retornado* leadership from the black rank and file of the MNR. *Frelimo* refuses to negotiate any concessions that it regards as neo-colonialist. It stresses that the negotiations are being carried out by *retornados* and not black Mozambican guerrillas, arguing that the black guerrillas are simply being used as pawns by the white leaders. The guerrillas, it says, have no businesses to regain, and when they realise this they will accept *Frelimo's* long standing amnesty offer. They are simply misguided, and not real enemies like the Portuguese, so they can be reintegrated. That is the message from Maputo.

Mozambique says that elements of the Malawian security services actively support the MNR in the northern province. Israeli instructors reportedly train MNR men in at least two Malawian police camps. In October two MNR officers were caught in Zambezia

wearing Malawi officers' uniforms. Supplies are sent from Malawi to Zambezia and Nampula by plane and to Niassa by boat across Lake Malawi.

Bargaining points

Frelimo demands from South Africa are relatively simple: stop supporting the MNR; tell *Frelimo* where the arms dumps are, what plans have been given to the MNR, and where there are MNR agents; and use its radio command system to tell the MNR to surrender and to assembly points.

On the other side, however, there seems to be considerable confusion in Portugal, Malawi, and South Africa about what they want from Mozambique and how to proceed now. The Nkomati process has already forced Mozambique to give a substantial number of concessions some of which have received little publicity: South Africa is to have more (albeit still limited) say in running Maputo port, South African farmers will be able to lease Mozambican farmland, South African firms will be able to set up in Mozambican free trade zones (and perhaps thus be able to put "Made in Mozambique" labels on their produce to break sanctions), South African troops might be allowed into Mozambique (ostensibly to assist the reintegration of MNR men), and *Radio Mozambique* is finally killing its internal (Portuguese language) weekly radio programme linked to the *African National Congress* (called "Apartheid: Crime Against Humanity").

In late October, the Paris Club of OECD creditors finally agreed to reschedule some of Mozambique's debts, after an eight month delay - a clear sign that leading members (particularly France) thought Mozambique was moving quickly enough down the Western road. In South Africa itself, there is some pressure for a settlement: the recession makes businessmen anxious to use the cheaper Maputo port and Cabora Bassa electricity, both still restricted due to MNR activity. Continued war also impedes the few profitable South African investments which have been organised.

Perhaps the strongest argument for a settlement is that South Africa has invested so much prestige in Nkomati. P.W. Botha made clear that Nkomati underpins South Africa's growing claims to status as a "regional power". This means its priority in the region must be recognised both politically and economically - that foreign powers should not block its essential regional interests and that foreign investment should be channelled through South Africa.

On the resettlement question, South Africa has agreed to give mine jobs to the estimated 6000 to 8000 MNR men still in camps in South Africa. Mozambique has accepted this. Mozambique says it now has 5000 MNR men in its hands, both captured and those who have turned themselves in voluntarily. Although there are probably more than 10,000 MNR men still in the bush, that still leaves fewer than 20,000 to resettle. Eventually they will probably be put into new villages developed with US aid money.

South African soldiers are likely to be in the villages to protect the MNR men and help with initial development. The MNR will also want some guarantee that men will not be sent to *Frelimo*'s notorious reeducation camps, but will probably accept that it would be unsafe for them to return to their home villages. There will probably also be some sort of "resettlement commission" which would involve an outside agency like the *Red Cross*, or perhaps even low-level MNR participation. *Frelimo* must make some political concessions as well, but it is less clear what these would be. They will probably never be publicly linked to a cease-fire, and will probably just be announced over time. Any return of the Portuguese would also only be announced later or not at all.

Frelimo's fear now is that there will be a settlement in the south, where South Africa has its economic interests, but not in the north. This would satisfy both SAMI, which is reluctant to abandon the MNR entirely, and the business community, which needs peace in the south. And it would look better to the outside world, as South African support would be masked by intermediaries like Malawi, Comoros, and Portugal. Israel, which might already be training the MNR in Malawi, would be an ideal candidate to provide the outside support. It might be sufficient to maintain the MNR at a lower level of activity than now, but at a level capable of remaining a permanent destabilising factor, and to ensure that it could be reactivated on a larger-scale or used to extract further concessions later. An immediate settlement of the war is not on the cards ●

Footnotes.

1. The group was originally called the *Movimento Nacional de Resistência de Moçambique* (MNR). Its leaders in Lisbon later adopted *Resistência Nacional Moçambicana* and used the shortened form, Renamo. Since the Pretoria Declaration of 3 October, Mozambican officials have tended to accept the use of Renamo, perhaps to stress the Portuguese link, although they still also use "armed bandits" as the preferred term.

2. Settling with South Africa is now seen as the central issue facing *Frelimo*. The top leadership in time of crisis patches up differences. So Armando Guebuza, the politburo member dismissed earlier this year as Interior Minister (ACC Vol 25 No 16) has been returned to government as minister of state in the presidency.

3. The most likely interpretation of the recognition of Machel was that it was a signal to the MNR that South Africa would no longer press for the overthrow of *Frelimo*.

4. Names of Portuguese political parties no longer correspond to their positions on the political spectrum.

5. The MNR also has links with government figures in West Germany. It was revealed last year that the Pretoria representative of the West German BND security police (Bundesnachrichtendienst) was assisting the MNR. Franz Josef Strauss, prime minister of Bavaria and head of the CSU (one of the government coalition parties) has long-term links with Unita in Angola, which has a representative at the CSU's *Hans Seidel Foundation*. In November 1983, an MNR delegation headed by its black leader, Afonso Dhlakama, visited Germany and met with the *Hans Seidel Foundation* and probably with Strauss. It also met with the *Konrad Adenauer Foundation*, the establishment of the ruling CDU.

6. This was first proposed by Portugal and South Africa in the early 1970s as a way of stopping the southward move of *Frelimo*. The idea was for a separate country in the north of Mozambique to be called Rombezia (from the Rovuma River south to the Zambezi River) which would be associated with, and dominated by, Malawi, while Portugal kept control of the southern half of the colony ●