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WEAPONS:

MAPUTO, JUNE 22, REUTER -- PRESIDENT SAMORA MACHEL TOLD THE POPULATION OF MAPUTO TODAY THAT THEY WOULD BE GIVEN ARMS TO DEFEND THE CITY AGAINST ARMED BANDITS SENT TO MOZAMBIQUE FROM SOUTH AFRICA.

AT A MASS RALLY IN INDEPENDENCE SQUARE MR MACHEL SPOKE OF THE COUNTRY'S WAR FOR INDEPENDENCE FROM PORTUGAL AND SAID: WE DIDN'T FREE THIS CITY FOR IT TO BE USED TO PROMOTE SOUTH AFRICAN CRIMES.

HE WAS SPEAKING JUST THREE DAYS BEFORE THE COUNTRY'S SEVENTH INDEPENDENCE ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS, AMID A WAVE OF RUMOURS THAT THE EVENT MAY BE MARKED BY BOMB ATTACKS IN THE CAPITAL.

RUMOUR MONGERS WERE AGENTS OF SOUTH AFRICAN DESTABILISATION AND WOULD BE DEALT WITH BY THE REVOLUTIONARY MILITARY TRIBUNAL, SAID MR MACHEL.

WEARING ARMY UNIFORM, HE RECALLED THE SITUATION SEVEN YEARS AGO WHEN HIS FRELIMO GUERRILLA MOVEMENT CAME OUT OF THE BUSH TO TAKE POWER. HE SAID: WE TOOK OFF OUR PISTOLS BECAUSE SOME PEOPLE WERE DISTURBED BY THEM. THEY SAID OUR PISTOLS WEREN'T ELEGANT.

THEN HE ADDED IRONICALLY: SO WE KEPT OUR ELEGANCE AND THEY TOOK THE PISTOLS.

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:WEAPONS 2 MAPUTO:

MR MACHEL TURNED TO HIS FORMER GUERRILLA COMPANIONS IN THE INDEPENDENCE WAR, NOW SENIOR MINISTERS, AND POINTED OUT THAT ALTHOUGH THEY WERE IN UNIFORM THEY WERE UNARMED. HE SUMMONED AN ARMY OFFICER WHO STRAPPED A GUN TO HIS WAIST, TO PROLONGED APPLAUSE FROM THE CROWD OF ABOUT 30,000 .

PRESIDENT MACHEL RECALLED THAT THE INDEPENDENCE WAR HAD BEEN CONFINED TO THE NORTHERN HALF OF THE COUNTRY AND HAD NEVER REACHED THE CAPITAL. LIBERATED AREAS HAD BEEN CREATED IN THE NORTH, BUT NOT IN THE MAPUTO AREA.

NOW THE TIME HAD COME, HE SAID, TO ARM THE CITY POPULATION +TO DEFEND MAPUTO AS A LIBERATED AREA OF THE MOZAMBIKAN REVOLUTION+.

MR MACHEL SAID THAT NEIGHBOURHOOD COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS WILL BE ARMED TO DEFEND THEIR AREAS. IN ADDITION, RESIDENTS WILL BE ARMED TO GIVE PROTECTION TO PUBLIC BUILDINGS, DIPLOMATS AND FOREIGN AID WORKERS.

THERE WOULD ALSO BE STRICTER CONTROLS ON PEOPLE COMING INTO MAPUTO FROM THE COUNTRYSIDE AND ON MOVEMENT AROUND THE CITY AFTER DARK. HE DID NOT SAY THIS MEANT A CURFEW, BUT NIGHT POLICE CHECKS HAVE BEEN INCREASING SINCE THE BOMB RUMOURS BEGAN HERE ABOUT A MONTH AGO.

MR MACHEL'S SPEECH FOLLOWS A DECISION ANNOUNCED FOUR MONTHS AGO TO ARM THE PEASANT POPULATION OF GAZA AND INHARDANE PROVINCES NORTH OF HERE. THESE ARE AREAS WHERE THERE HAS BEEN GROWING ACTIVITY BY THE MOZAMBIQUE NATIONAL RESISTANCE (RNM), WHICH THE GOVERNMENT AND WESTERN DIPLOMATS HERE SAY IS BEING SUPPLIED BY SOUTH AFRICA BY SEA AND AIR.

THE RECENT RUMOURS AND THE APPEARANCE OF ANTI-GOVERNMENT PAMPHLETS IN THE CAPITAL HAVE APPARENTLY GIVEN RISE TO FEARS THAT THE RNM MAY HAVE MOVED SOME OF ITS MEN SOUTH TO DISRUPT FRIDAY'S INDEPENDENCE CELEBRATIONS IN THE CAPITAL.

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TOOK THE PISTOLS.

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