

# Pretoria raises a smokescreen

A NEW propaganda offensive has been launched in an effort to convince world opinion that South Africa is not responsible for the activities of armed bands operating in parts of Mozambique.

The authorities in Pretoria have always denied having any role in the activities of the terrorist groups known in Mozambique as the *Kizumba* (hyena). But although South Africa has managed to get *its* name for the Kizumba — the Mozambique National Resistance (MNR) — adopted by the press of many countries, it has had considerable difficulty in concealing the groups' links with apartheid.

The new "disassociation" offensive became particularly evident in August when the Kizumba announced in Lisbon that they were sending a delegation to France, West Germany and Britain. The aim, they said, was to improve their image in the West and to obtain arms. They would also explain their "opposition" to apartheid.

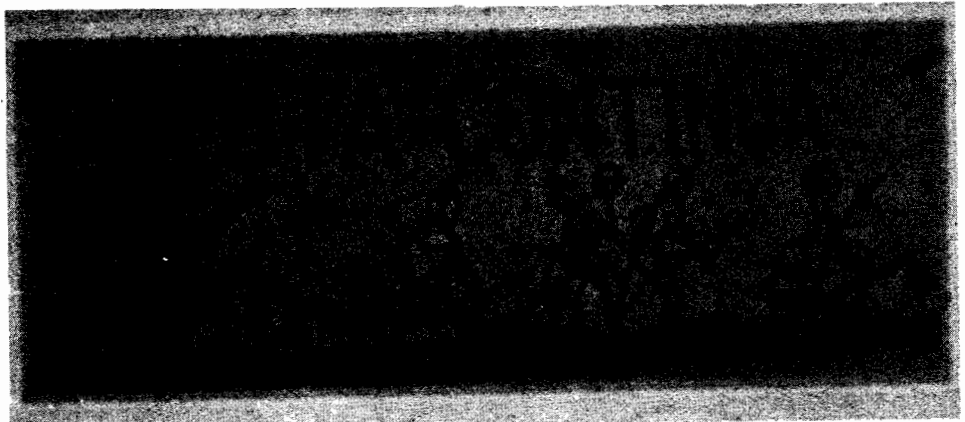
This month, a Kizumba spokesman in Lisbon declared that the delegation had visited four European countries, which he did not name, and said promises of support, including arms, had been made. There is no evidence, however, that any such promises were made and diplomatic sources in Maputo have cast doubt on whether the visits took place at all.

Another, and more curious, "disassociation" move was made on 8 September, when a South Africa radio station announced: "A former Mozambique Air Force pilot was

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**South Africa is busy mounting a 'disassociation' campaign in an attempt to distance itself publicly from the activities of the Pretoria-backed resistance forces in Mozambique. Ian Christie reports from Maputo.**

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**Maputo wall-poster: the struggle continues, with help from Pretoria**

manipulated by South Africa for propaganda purposes. A statement from the anti-government Mozambique Resistance Movement says this is why Lieut Bomba has left South Africa. Bomba defected to South Africa last year and is now believed to be fighting with the MNR in Mozambique."

Bomba did in fact defect from Mozambique to South Africa last year and early this year the *Citizen* newspaper, known for its close links with Pretoria's security bosses

announced that the pilot had joined the Kizumba as head of its youth wing. Bomba then managed to spoil everything by admitting, during a visit to Washington to brief senators on the virtues of South Africa, that he worked for the South African Air Force's Information Department.

But to clean up his image, and that of the Kizumba, the South African press is now billing Bomba as "a leader of the MNR".

So much for images and myth-making. The reality is something else.

In his 1981 book *Inside BOSS*, former BOSS agent Gordon Winter admitted: "South Africa's Army Chief, General Magnus Malan (now the Minister of Defence), and his military intelligence apparatus set up a fake black liberation movement in Mozambique, in league with Rhodesian intelligence. I know all about the movement because I was its number one propagandist right from the start. It was the most successful clandestine operation ever mounted by Pretoria. Its name was the 'Mozambique National Resistance' (MNR)."

Much evidence of this has surfaced in Mozambique. Documents captured last year when a Kizumba base was over-run at Garagua, in southern Manica province not far from the Zimbabwe border, included minutes of meetings in South Africa between Kizumba leaders and their South African sponsors. English-speaking white soldiers have been identified in several terrorist and sabotage attacks later claimed by a Kizumba spokesman in Lisbon.

In fact, the dividing line between the South African regular forces and the Kizumba is becoming increasingly blurred. In July, the Mozambican forces intercepted a reconnaissance unit of six whites and two blacks, close to the South African border, south of the frontier town of Ressane Garcia.

In September a commando unit of white

officers, with their faces blackened, and black soldiers arrived by helicopter at the town of Namaacha, a few kilometres from South Africa. They killed three people and kidnapped another three, all civilians.

When Zimbabwean military sources were quoted as saying that the three members of the South African army killed on Zimbabwean territory in August were apparently advisers to the Kizumba and were on the run from Mozambique, there was a swift response from Pretoria. Unable to deny that the dead men were members of the South African forces, since even their names had been published, armed forces chief General Viljoen declared that they were former Rhodesians engaged on an "unauthorised" mission against a specifically Zimbabwean target.

Whatever the truth of the matter, it is clear that the Pretoria authorities were at pains to steer public attention away from the Kizumba connection.

The smokescreen around Pretoria's sponsorship of the Kizumba is not new. Gordon Winter admits in his book that this was one of his jobs as BOSS agent in the South African press. But Pretoria has conspicuously been unable to stop the truth getting out in recent years, and the new propaganda offensive is apparently aimed at getting the record squint once again. One thing is certain: Pretoria will continue trying all means at destabilising any neighbouring country unless such a country would change its anti-apartheid stand. □