

SA backing

MNR

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US

Political staff

THE United States, in a considered statement, says the Mozambique Resistance Movement (MNR), which is engaged on a campaign of violence and sabotage against the government of Mozambique, "receives the bulk of its support from South Africa".

The US disclosure was made to the American publication, Africa Report, and is likely to cause a stir in political and diplomatic circles in view of South African denials that it is destabilizing governments in neighbouring territories. A full text of the article was received in Cape Town yesterday. An extract is published on this page.

'New swear word'

As recently as Thursday, the Minister of Defence, General Magnus Malan, described "destabilization" as a new swear word used by communist countries to hide their attempts to enslave the sub-continent.

For months authoritative Western newspapers have reported that the South African Government has been covertly destabilizing neighbouring states, such as Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Lesotho and Angola, by engaging in or associating itself with acts of violence and sabotage. The suggestion is that this goes beyond the overt South African activity of securing its interests by, for instance, wiping out African National Con-

Governments of neighbouring countries have made more direct charges. The foreign minister of Mozambique, Mr Chissano, said at the

United Nations in October that the MNR guerrillas had been recruited, trained, financed, equipped, transported, supplied and commanded by South Africa.

SA denials

The South African Government has responded with denials of destabilization and (as General Malan said in Cape Town on Thursday) statements that South Africa is merely ensuring its territorial safety. The allegation that it is behind the MNR, however, suggests not only activity against the ANC but involvement in a civil conflict in a neighbouring state, which lies at the base of the destabilization charge.

The Africa Report article said: "The questions in this report were prepared by Africa Report editor, Mr Anthony J Hughes, and put verbally to officials of the Bureau of African Affairs of the US Department of State. The bureau collated its responses into the form in which they are published here."

A State Department spokesman, approached by our Washington correspondent yesterday, said the department stood by this. Our correspondent added: "The article contains a highly-considered expression of US policy."

Message to Pretoria

Observers in Washington point out that the State Department is generally surgically careful about what it says, and the message to Pretoria is clear.

The issue cropped up when Africa Report asked about the MNR and the much support it received from South Africa. The reply was: "The MNR appears to have had some

success in carrying out disruptive guerrilla actions in some areas of Mozambique. It appears to be basically a military organization with none but the most general political programme, apart from trying to replace the government of Mozambique. It receives the bulk of its support from South Africa."

The State Department went on to say the US recognized and enjoyed improving diplomatic relations with the government of Mozambique, and had provided no support to the MNR, nor would any US interest be served by doing so.

MNR activities

Reported MNR activities since mid-1982 include:

December 29: Blowing up of the power station in the port of Nacala and setting off a bomb in the city's paratroop barracks.

December 11: Sabotage of Shell and BP fuel depot outside Beira which serves Mozambique and landlocked Zimbabwe and Malawi.

November 25: Six Catholic missionaries who had been held by the MNR were released.

October: Blowing up of water mains outside Beira.

October 11: Oil pipeline between Beira and Mutare in Zimbabwe seriously damaged, and three Portuguese technicians abducted.

September: Power supplies to Beira cut.

August 9: Fourteen people killed and 50 wounded in a train ambush.

July 18: Beira electricity supply cut.

July 20: civilians killed when two buses were ambushed.