

## STATE'S SUPERFINE-TUNING

ON JANUARY 26 Glenn Frankel wrote an article for the *Washington Post*, datelined Maputo, remarking how "incongruous" it was that the Reagan Administration was now supporting "a self-declared Marxist-Leninist ruler of a one-party state," namely Samora Machel of Mozambique. A few days earlier Frank Wisner, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, had visited Maputo (formerly Lourenço Marques) where he had "discussed with Mozambican officials how the United States can aid Mozambique further." The plan, concocted by Machel and Chester Crocker, the Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, was for the Reagan Administration to request \$1 million worth of "non-lethal" military aid for the Marxist government, and to request an additional \$150,000 to send Mozambican soldiers to the United States where they would receive military training. More than 200,000 tons of food aid have already been sent to Mozambique.

Two weeks later, on February 11, President Reagan's autopen-inscribed signature appeared in the *Federal Register* beneath the following "Memorandum for the Secretary of State": "Pursuant to the authority vested in me by Section 3 (a) (1) of the Arms Export Control Act, I hereby find that the furnishing of defense articles and defense services to the government of Mozambique will strengthen the security of the United States and promote world peace. You are directed on my behalf to report this finding to the Congress."

Mozambique, a country governed in all but name and figurehead (Machel) by the Soviet Union, is fighting a losing war against an indigenous guerrilla force—the Resistência Nacional Moçambicana (Renamo)—that is decidedly anti-Communist and has been, at least until the State Department appeared on the scene, pro-Western.

The Reagan Administration's simultaneous attempt to fund indigenous forces fighting a Soviet-supplied government in Nicaragua, and to fund a Soviet-supplied government fighting indigenous forces in Mozambique, illustrates the remarkable confusion of American foreign policy. In order to understand how the current policy toward southern Africa developed, it is necessary to go over some recent history. The decisive event occurred in 1974, when the Portuguese government was toppled in a coup led by



leftist army officers. Portugal was then ruled by a confusing series of coalition governments for two years, in the course of which the Portuguese withdrew from both Angola and Mozambique. Power in Mozambique was seized by the group that had been waging a protracted guerrilla war, Frelimo (Mozambique Liberation Front).

Founded in 1962, Frelimo at the outset had democratic aspirations. But Frelimo's first president, Dr. Eduardo Mondlane, was killed by a letter bomb in 1969, and his vice president, the Reverend Uria Simango, was thrust aside by the new Frelimo bosses, Marcelino dos Santos, a pro-Soviet Cape Verde Communist, and Samora Machel, who at that time called himself a Maoist.

Their plan was not so much to end colonial rule as to change its sponsorship and ideology: from Portugal (Christian, if half-heartedly so) to the

Soviet Union (Communist, militantly so). Frelimo took over the reins of power in June 1975—the beginning of Mozambique's "long plunge into a political and social nightmare," as former Frelimo member Artur X. L. Vilankulu has written in an unpublished article, "A Decade of Marxism in Mozambique." (Vilankulu today is executive director of a nonprofit foundation based in New York, Friends of Mozambique.)

"The new Marxist regime of Mozambique was quick to refill the prisons that had just been emptied," Vilankulu continues. "Men and women were incarcerated without trial and in many cases without any sort of charges being filed against them. When the existing jails were filled, the regime began establishing what it called 're-education camps'—in reality nothing else but concentration camps. By 1984, there were thirty such camps holding more than 300,000 prisoners, and that figure does not include the more than 400,000 political prisoners who languish in the jails of Mozambique's major cities."

The ruling oligarchy moved quickly to invite the Soviets into Mozambique and to establish full socialism. Land was nationalized, which is to say the human and civil rights of those who worked it were abrogated, and property rights everywhere were destroyed. It became illegal for citizens to agree with one another as to the terms of exchange, and the death penalty was established and carried out (Machel in attendance) for such "economic crimes." →

Left-wing intellectuals around the world jubilantly received the news that one more government had swept away all procedural niceties and was attempting to impose the socialist outcome by force. The economy collapsed completely, but this did nothing to diminish the enthusiasm that imbued many news reports. Tom Wicker of the *New York Times*, for example, found "Hope and Discipline" in Maputo; in the countryside he found new communes to which "the rural population is drawn—not forced." Likewise Michael T. Kaufman reported in the *Times* that "Mozambique Is Viewed as Africa's Best Hope for the Flowering of Socialism's 'New Man.'" He euphemistically made mention of "social innovations" through which the government was seeking to transform Mozambique into "a non-racist, non-tribal, non-exploitative, and self-reliant society."

Notice the word "non-tribal." The Portuguese had lasted for nearly four hundred years in Mozambique; they must have been doing something right. Above all, they had not interfered with what Mr. Vilankulu today calls the "traditional political system." Even before Frelimo took over Mozambique, Marcelino dos Santos told Vilankulu that "we are going to get rid of the traditional system, we are going to destroy it." Which is what they have tried to do.

"And that is why Samora Machel is so quickly losing this war with the Resistência today," Vilankulu told me over the phone. "Because the people feel that he does not respect their system." And of course he does not. Tribes are particular, distinctive entities, while Communism strives for universality. As expected, the Communists have also waged war on the great rival universal system, Christianity. "Mission schools are used for military purposes," Vilankulu told me. "To worship you have to ask permission."

**K**AUFMAN had reported that the new government sought a "self-reliant" society, and the Carter Administration obliged. In this instance, at least, its human-rights policy was consistently applied, and economic aid was cut off. So you could say that a valid socialist experiment was carried out, with no interference or (which amounts to the same thing) aid from the United States. Alas, New Mozambique Man stubbornly refused to emerge from the re-education camps. By the time Heritage Foundation president Gordon Jones and several congressmen visited Mozambique earlier this year, the country was at a virtual standstill: no electric power at all in Maputo; rubble-strewn streets, empty shops, and an almost unanimously hostile population lurking in the bush. (Mozambique has twice the area and half the population of California.)

"Prices are either set too low to produce things or too high to buy them," Jones noted. The routine leftist explanation is that the "departing Portuguese colonials took everything with them." (Most such exculpatory sentences end with the words "including the light bulbs.") Then of course there are the vagaries of the weather, which all countries experience but which socialism invariably manages to transform into drought and famine. (There would certainly be both drought and famine in a Communist California.)

From Machel's point of view, the growing problem was that the Soviet Union, itself bankrupt, was unable to furnish much more in the way of financial assistance to its

colony. In 1982 a Soviet army general toured the country and concluded that Machel didn't control it, outside a narrow strip of coastline, and was certainly unable to repay earlier Eastern-bloc "fraternal assistance." Since then, approximately 11,000 young Mozambicans either were sent to East Germany to perform what is essentially slave labor in the factories, or were sent there for "education" and had their passports taken once in Germany. (Labor shortages are an enduring and inevitable feature of Communist economies; what is surprising is how little attention the press pays to the Communist bloc's imperialistic method of resolving this problem.)

It was left to Anthony Lewis of the *New York Times* to point to the capitalist solution to the socialist impasse in Mozambique. He visited the country in 1983 and wrote a series of columns, one incongruously (at first sight) for the *Business Day* section of the paper. Here he encouraged investors to avail themselves of the marvelous opportunities for profit in "this potentially rich but desperately underdeveloped country," which, Lewis reported, was "eager for Western investment" and would welcome "joint ventures." The government had even "invited tenders from the world's oil companies," Lewis related. He made it seem as though profits were just sitting there ready for the taking. Somehow, Lewis forgot to mention that the country had a Communist government.

Marxist Angola, with a recent history analogous to Mozambique's, has been sustained since 1975 by Cuban troops and Gulf Oil, and Lewis surely realized that what Machel needed was his very own Gulf. But Lewis's advertisement for the regime seems to have been ineffective. Gordon Jones of Heritage talked to a government official who spoke hopefully of the impending arrival of Chase Manhattan to build an electric railroad, but no doubt even David Rockefeller would be daunted by the socialist inroads in Mozambique. Mozambique has joined the World Bank and the IMF, however, and Western bankers have (perforce) rescheduled \$300 million in debt.

In any event, by 1984 the idea seems to have formed in the collective unconscious of George Shultz's State Department that maybe the best thing would be for the United States Government itself to come to Samora Machel's rescue. Carter's human-rights-based policy was swept aside and diplomatic relations restored. As for the possibility that Mozambique might sustain itself by moving toward free-market arrangements (permitting people to agree with one another as to price), our own new ambassador to Maputo, Peter De Vos, has discouraged the thought. He told one visitor recently that Mozambicans "have had no experience" of such a system, and "wouldn't know what to do with it."

Howard Phillips of the Conservative Caucus notes that the Reagan Administration's emerging Mozambique policy validates the liberal charge that Republicans really would rather have a "United Fruit foreign policy": If it is in our "interest" to trade, or send aid, or advance loans, then we should do so without fussing too much about the internal affairs of the other fellow's country. Any worry about helping the Soviets, then? Not really. If we trade with them they will be better off—right?—hence less dangerous, and then we will all be better off.

Chester Crocker, who appears to be very much of this mindset, saw the opportunity for a "deal" that would bring

"regional stability" to southern Africa. An agreement, brokered by the U.S. and known as the Nkomati Accord, was signed on March 16, 1984. South Africa would terminate its reported support for Renamo; Mozambique would throw out the anti-South African resistance group known as the African National Congress.

**T**HE NKOMATI ACCORD—routinely described as Reagan's "one diplomatic triumph in Africa"—has plainly failed. Renamo flourishes in all ten Mozambican provinces (kept going, it is said, with Soviet arms provided by deserting Mozambicans), and the ANC's offices remain open in Maputo. And how did the Soviets react when their client Machel started to make deals with South Africa and the United States? The Soviet dog did not bark. And of course Machel knew, or soon figured out, that he would only have to say something about "disillusionment with the Soviets," about nonalignment, and perhaps throw in a few chastened comments about "mistakes that were made," and the U.S. would come running with fistfuls of money. And in that way we would persuade ourselves that Machel was being deflected away from the Soviets.

That is what Machel has done, and so far it has worked fine. On March 1 the State Department issued a policy statement that was foggy-minded even by the standards of Foggy Bottom: "Mozambique has undertaken a serious opening to the West in general and the United States in particular. Mozambique has made it clear it will be non-aligned; it strongly supports peace in southern Africa . . . In a clear departure from past economic commitments to the Soviet bloc and Marxist economic doctrine, it has joined the IMF and World Bank, opened its doors to Western business, and moved to reinvestigate its domestic private sector, especially in agriculture."

A phony barking Soviet dog was flourished: "The Soviet Union has publicly predicted that Mozambique's opening to the West will fail to improve Mozambique's economic and security situation." (This prediction was realistic, of course, but Soviet disapproval of Machel should not be inferred.) The State Department added that its policy is "intended to reduce Soviet influence in Mozambique and the region."

Howard Phillips told me that he had "confronted" Frank Wisner at a Washington conference recently. What were we up to in Mozambique? Phillips asked. "His answer, so help me God, was: 'It is better to have Frelimo in the capital and Renamo in the bush because that way we can keep an eye on Frelimo.'" Phillips paused and added: "Therefore in Managua our problem is solved, right? Because the Sandinistas are in the capital and the *Contras* in the bush."

I subsequently interviewed a State Department official with responsibility that includes Mozambique, but he insisted on anonymity. What were we asking of Machel in return for our money, I inquired.

"Well," he said, "it's a process of give and take. I don't think we want to see this, you know, come out in the press that the U.S. is demanding A, B, and C. Which means it will be perceived that the Mozambicans are giving up their national sovereignty for the sake of Western assistance. It isn't an explicit quid pro quo. It's a mutual back and forth, a step-by-step procedure."

Were we asking Machel to throw out the Soviets and abandon Marxism?

The man paused and said: "I mean, we're not asking him to sever his ties, break diplomatic relations, that sort of thing."

Well, what then?

"For them to share in the economic assistance that will be forthcoming from the U.S., the World Bank, and the IMF, as well as the Western investment, they will have to make policy changes to accommodate this. They will see that it is in their interest to continue this move. Essentially that's why any government does anything—they perceive it's in their interest to take certain steps."

His first mistake surely is to think that a Soviet puppet regime is just "any government." But let us analyze the problem from the vantage point of "self-interest"—the State Department approach. Samora Machel has a personal bodyguard of Cubans and East Germans armed with Soviet automatics ostensibly pointed at his potential assailants, but in fact pointed at the back of his head. (The same is true of the Sandinista directorate, I have been told.) This is one of the most sinister and under-reported aspects of the Soviet empire. Machel is firmly locked into a hierarchy of terror, and he cannot escape it even if he wants to. If Machel deviates any more than is needed to reach into Uncle Sam's pocket he risks having his head blown off. That, undoubtedly, is how Machel perceives his self-interest. He surely knows that his counterpart puppet in Angola, Agostinho Neto, died in a Moscow hospital.

Machel has Libyan pilots, and when he flies anywhere there are rarely Mozambicans on the plane—mostly Soviets, Libyans, and Cubans. The head of the Mozambique air force is from North Vietnam. North Koreans have been in the country since 1982. Jack Wheeler recently reported in the *Washington Times* that Machel "is kept in power by Marxist mercenaries: some six thousand to seven thousand Cuban troops and advisors, 1,500 East Germans, two thousand Russians, three thousand Zimbabwean and five thousand Tanzanian soldiers." Vilankulu says that all Eastern-bloc countries are represented, with the exception of

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Albania. Coastal areas north of Beira (where the Soviets are thought to be constructing a naval facility) are out of bounds to Mozambicans. Maputo itself is closed to, all except Soviet-bloc shipping. Machel's central committee includes many white Portuguese Communist Party members.

There is no greater mistake than to imagine that those who practice Communism don't believe in it. State Department people cannot imagine that as unpragmatic a doctrine as Communism can be anything other than expediently adopted. Machel *possibly* does not believe in it (Vilankulu, who knew him in the late Sixties, thinks otherwise), but, ultimately, thought processes are irrelevant. Certain Renaissance popes may not have believed in God, but they said Mass correctly in St. Peter's, and the sacraments they administered were valid. Likewise today's Communists do not stray from correct practice or doctrine, so it is simplest to assume they mean what they say.

Have the Soviets neglected Machel's "interest"? The European trinkets that he desires for his entertainment are somewhat more expensive than those furnished by the nineteenth-century African explorers, but we can imagine that they keep Machel happy: expensively tailored suits and uniforms from London; two pink Rolls-Royces to date. Like Neto, Machel drinks heavily; the Russians provide him with crates of the best Scotch and are no doubt only too happy to do so. Less understandable is the State Department's eagerness to foot the bill.

Has the new policy borne fruit to date? Frank Wisner admits that the level of Soviet assistance has increased. And ten days after Reagan signed the request for military aid, the following "Joint Communiqué with Mongolia," broadcast from Maputo, was monitored and published by the Foreign Broadcast Information Service: "Mozambique and Mongolia firmly supported the efforts of the people and government of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan in the defense of the gains of the April revolution." Not much progress so far, evidently.

All this information about the considerable Soviet-bloc investment and Machel's quasi-captive status is readily available to the State Department. Pondering it, one is bound to conclude that to sustain U.S. gullibility, Machel may soften his rhetoric, marginally, but that nothing else will change. The Soviets are indeed out on a limb in southern Africa, but to imagine that they will meekly climb down because the Americans are giving their client money is absurd. In his first speech as General Secretary, Mikhail Gorbachev laid it on the line. The "first precept of the Party," he said, is to "strengthen in every way the fraternal friendship with our closest friends and allies—the countries of the great socialist community."

The Soviets' position in Mozambique is an exposed one. Our helping to pay their bills will make it less so. My own conclusion is that at an unconscious level the State Department is well aware of all these things, but by some genetic impulse strives continually to reduce tension, to avoid confrontation, and above all to avoid making things more difficult than they already are for the Soviet Union. □