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Leaders Stress Defense as 'Top Priority'

Gen Mabote on Economic Losses

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[Text] Mozambique's government and military leaders have declared that the defense of the country must be given top priority.

Speaking at one of several meetings held in factories in Maputo yesterday, the Mozambican Armed Forces chief of staff, General Sebastiao Mabote, said that the war being waged against Mozambique was not a civil war. He said the war was directed from outside by people who lost their wealth in Mozambique after independence. Gen Mabote said the real leaders of the MNR terrorist movement are those whose property was nationalized in 1975 and 1976.

He outlined in brief the wars fought by Mozambique against Portuguese colonialists, against the Rhodesia regime of Ian Smith, and against South African aggression, resulting in enormous economic losses. Gen Mabote said Mozambican exports were valued at \$225 million in 1980, but fell to below \$19 million in 1984. In 1981 Mozambique exported cotton but had to import the commodity this year due to sabotage by the bandits backed by outside forces. He said Mozambique's development plans were correct, but the country has not been able to fulfill them because of 10 years of war. Gen Mabote called on the people to contribute to the war effort against the bandits.