

Guerrilla raids threaten Pretoria/Maputo links

JOHANNESBURG — South Africa's violations of the N'komati accord of March 16, 1984 with Mozambique, which until now have been bitterly denied by Pretoria, are now so obvious they can no longer be disputed. The publication by the Maputo authorities of excerpts from a diary kept by a Mozambican National Resistance (MNR) officer, Major Joaquim Vaz, throws some light on the nature of the aid South Africa is providing the Mozambican rebels. But it also draws attention to the disagreements existing between South Africa's army and its Foreign Ministry.

The diary, which was seized when Frelimo troops overran the MNR headquarters at Gorongosa at the end of August, is producing embarrassed explanations from Pretoria. Foreign Minister "Pik" Botha described the violations of the non-aggression and good-neighbour pact as "technical violations". But Major Vaz's diary proves that the MNR not only received a substantial amount of aid just before the N'komati accord was signed, but also that this

aid continued to be given afterwards as well. In addition it shows that the men high up in the South African military establishment were opposed to the treaty and repudiated President Pieter W. Botha's diplomatic initiatives.

Two names appear in the diary: they are Colonel Charles Van Nierkerk of the South African secret service, and General

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Constand Viljoen, chief of staff of the armed forces. The former is recorded as having told Alfonso Dhlakama, a MNR official, on June 21 that it was necessary "to destroy the economy, the infrastructure and control the population." The diary notes that General Viljoen transmitted the following message: "If the government orders us to fight the MNR in Mozambique, all the generals including myself will resign from the armed forces."

The general's reaction to this has been to declare that it is "untrue" and "propaganda by the

Communist bloc aimed at sowing dissension within the South African armed forces." He has nonetheless admitted that the Foreign Minister was not informed of the South African army's forays into Mozambiquan territory, and that neither he nor Defence Minister Magnus Malan was told when Assistant Foreign Minister Louis Nel made three secret visits to the Mozambican rebel base of Gorongosa.

Notwithstanding General Viljoen's protests that the army has accepted his country's "strategic change" towards Mozambique, all the signs are that it has not followed Pretoria's new diplomatic line and continues to support the MNR. True, General Viljoen has received particularly pointed backing from President Botha, who says he has confidence in him. But the fact remains that the Foreign Minister is in a dicey situation. Pik Botha, who visited the Mozambican capital early this month, had already had a bad time there in mid-September when the authorities showed him the incriminating diary.

At the time Pik Botha had to admit South Africa did indeed help the MNR to build a landing strip and that South African planes had provided transport for several rebel leaders and supplied "humanitarian" aid to the insurgents. All this, according to the official line, was intended to "encourage" the MNR leaders to negotiate with the Mozambican Government; to further a sort of Camp David, as General Viljoen points out. Major Vaz's notes cast doubts once again on Pretoria's willingness to respect international agreements. As one Mozambican journalist pointed out, "Either Pretoria is incapable of controlling its army or it has never intended to do so."

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