

US paper hails report on MNR

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Herald Reporter

ONE of the most influential American newspapers, The New York Times, has praised a recent US State Department report on MNR bandit atrocities in Mozambique but has called for another report detailing South Africa's role, noting that the regime continues the airdrop of supplies to the MNR.

The newspaper in an editorial was commenting on the report by consultant Mr Robert Gersony made public in Washington last week, which estimates that 100 000 Mozambicans have been murdered by the MNR. Extracts of the report have been published by The Herald.

The editorial noted that the MNR was created by Rhodesia's now-defunct white regime in 1977 to punish Mozambique but when Rhodesia became Zimbabwe, South Africa assumed sponsorship. Pretoria promised to end aid to the MNR when it signed a non-aggression pact with Mozambique in 1984.

"But despite denials, Pretoria continues to airdrop supplies to Renamo.

"Incredibly, the rebels of Renamo are depicted as 'freedom fighters' by Senator Jesse Helms and a vociferous lobby that now includes Senator Bob Dole and representative Jack Kemp. The Reagan administration has shown greater honour and sense, not least by detailing the truth in the State Department's report. It has also given Mozambique economic and humanitarian aid, and now Britain is providing military training.

"Gestures like these help erode Soviet influence in Southern Africa. But surely more can be said about Pretoria's complicity. Why not another report exposing South Africa's real hand in Mozambique?"

Senator Dole is the US Senate minority leader and both he and Mr Kemp unsuccessfully sought the Republican nomination for President to succeed Mr Reagan.