have been destroyed. The country's commercial network has also suffered, as the rebels have destroyed 900 stores, representing one-third of Mozambique's total, according to Ratilal. An international donors' conference was to be held in Maputo April 26 and 27 to raise funds, not only for food supplies, but also to help fund the rehabilitation of the ruined infrastructure.

Surprisingly, with all its successes in destroying targets throughout the country and in restricting government activities in large areas, Renamo has not established any sort of alternative administration for the benefit of the people.

"This war is one of the most brutal anywhere, the massive scale of misery suffered by civilians is unprecedented. Not even Uganda's killings have been as widespread as this," said a Western diplomat in Maputo. "We see no signs that Renamo tries to win over support from the population. This leads us to conclude that Renamo, at the bidding of its South African backers, is just ruining whatever it can in Mozambique, with no attempt to take it over."

South Africa has repeatedly denied that it has backed Renamo since it signed the 1984 Nkomati non-aggression pact with Mozambique. But in 1986, papers captured by Zimbabwean troops showed continuing South African training and support for Renamo. Most recently, Renamo's European spokesman, Paulo Oliveira, defected to Maputo in March, dramatically recounting several ways that South Africa continues to back Renamo. Oliveira said he eventually became disillusioned and disgusted with "the level of terror carried out by Renamo as dictated by South Africa."

Perhaps most tragically of all for Mozambique, there does not appear to be any resolution in sight to the violence. "Negotiations don't appear to be a possibility, because Renamo does not appear to have any leadership for that and South Africa has already proved through the Nkomati pact that it cannot be trusted," said a UN official. "It seems the only hope of ending Mozambique's suffering is for the end of South Africa's apartheid system and its regional policy of destabilization."

□

A Diplomatic Success

When Melissa Wells drives up to the Lhanqueni Center, the 35 boys playing in the yard spontaneously stand to attention and say "Bon Dia, Señora." Wells, the U.S. ambassador to Mozambique, has taken a special interest in the center for boys aged 7 to 15 who were taken by Renamo and trained with weapons. Many of them were forced to kill and all of them witnessed murders and mutilations—cutting off of lips, noses, ears—that have become Renamo's gruesome hallmark. These boys escaped from Renamo and the government has established the center to ease them back into normal life.

Wells often visits the center, talking and joking with the boys. She has also obtained funding for repairs of the center's windows and lavatories. Outgoing and fluent in Portuguese, it is easy to see why she is popular in Maputo, highlighting the dramatically improved U.S.-Mozambican relations.

The American ambassador speaks highly of President Joaquim Chissano's government and seriously questions Renamo's tactics. Wells cites the Mozambican government's economic restructuring efforts and a more open political climate as important reasons for the warmer, more friendly relations. Such a diplomatic success on the tightrope between the Reagan administration and an avowedly Marxist government was probably just what Senator Jesse Helms feared when he held up Wells' confirmation for an unprecedented 11 months. During that period, Wells said she read up on all matters regarding Mozambique, particularly the literature from Renamo's Washington office.

"Since coming to Mozambique, I've been trying to figure out how the devastation I've seen in the countryside can possibly achieve those [Renamo's] objectives," said Wells, referring to her extensive travels in nine of Mozambique's 10 provinces. "I'm very troubled because in my travels I make a point to check out schools, hospitals, and water supplies. These are probably the most sensitive social infrastructure points and in most of the villages I have visited, they have been targeted along with looting and abductions of the local population," said Wells, who has also met people mutilated by Renamo. "If this is a particular technique of war, then I think it's pretty awful."

Wells said she believes South Africa has continued its support to Renamo. "We know there was a very open relationship between South Africa and Renamo and that's why the Nkomati Accord was signed in 1984, there were no bones about it," said Wells. Following the defection of Renamo official Paulo Oliveira and his revelations of continuing South African support to the rebels, Wells said, "Generally his description of continuing connections between South Africa and Renamo are consistent with our information of a continuing pattern of South African contact with and support for Renamo."

Wells has no easy answers when asked what would end Mozambique's bitter war. She suggests that the government's position has been strengthened by many pragmatic steps, including the economic reforms, improved relations with the Catholic and other Christian churches, and most importantly, an amnesty offer to all Renamo rebels who give themselves up.

The ambassador said the Mozambican military could be strengthened with Western aid. The U.S. Congress has prohibited any American military assistance to Mozambique, but Wells said "other countries are carrying their weight in this. Western countries, the British, the Portuguese, and a number of other NATO allies are looking into this."

Summing up U.S. relations with Mozambique, Wells said American policy was to "continue to support it on the course it has chosen for itself." She added: "As we see that it is becoming more truly non-aligned in terms of developing broader contacts with the Western countries. . . We are supporting the government in its search for peace. Our policy has been not to have official contacts with Renamo and it continues to be that."

—A.M.