

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

16 May 1988

South African Ties to RENAMO

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Summary

South Africa is providing limited, but important support to insurgents of the Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO). A lack of detailed and reliable reporting makes the scope and volume of this aid difficult to assess, but we believe it consists primarily of communication, intelligence, and modest materiel and logistic support. Although RENAMO has become increasingly independent since South Africa reduced its support following the signing of a nonaggression pact with Mozambique in 1984, Pretoria appears to

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retain considerable influence with the insurgents. While South African support has boosted RENAMO's military capabilities, we believe the insurgents have become largely self-sustaining and would continue to operate effectively--though at reduced levels--were Pretoria to terminate all assistance. [REDACTED]

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Origins and Evolution

Sponsorship of the Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO) passed from Rhodesia--which formed the group in 1976 as a counterbalance to Mozambican-based Zimbabwean insurgents--to South Africa prior to Zimbabwean independence in 1980.¹ Pretoria saw the group as leverage against the Marxist-Leninist Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (FRELIMO) government in Maputo that was supporting anti-South African activities of the African National Congress (ANC). Pretoria transferred RENAMO rear bases from Rhodesia to South Africa's northern Transvaal Province, assumed responsibility for training and equipping the insurgents, and helped them infiltrate in and out of Mozambique. Under South African tutelage, RENAMO became a well organized and effective military force that grew rapidly and gradually expanded its area of operations. By

1. RENAMO initially was formed from diverse elements united largely by their opposition to the ruling FRELIMO government. The grouping included small political parties that refused to join FRELIMO, various tribal leaders in central Mozambique who had grievances against the southern-led FRELIMO government, and Portuguese citizens whose properties were nationalized at independence. For additional details on RENAMO'S origin and current military and political organization see DI Research Paper, ALA 87-10051 [REDACTED] October 1987, Mozambique: A Close Look at RENAMO. [REDACTED]

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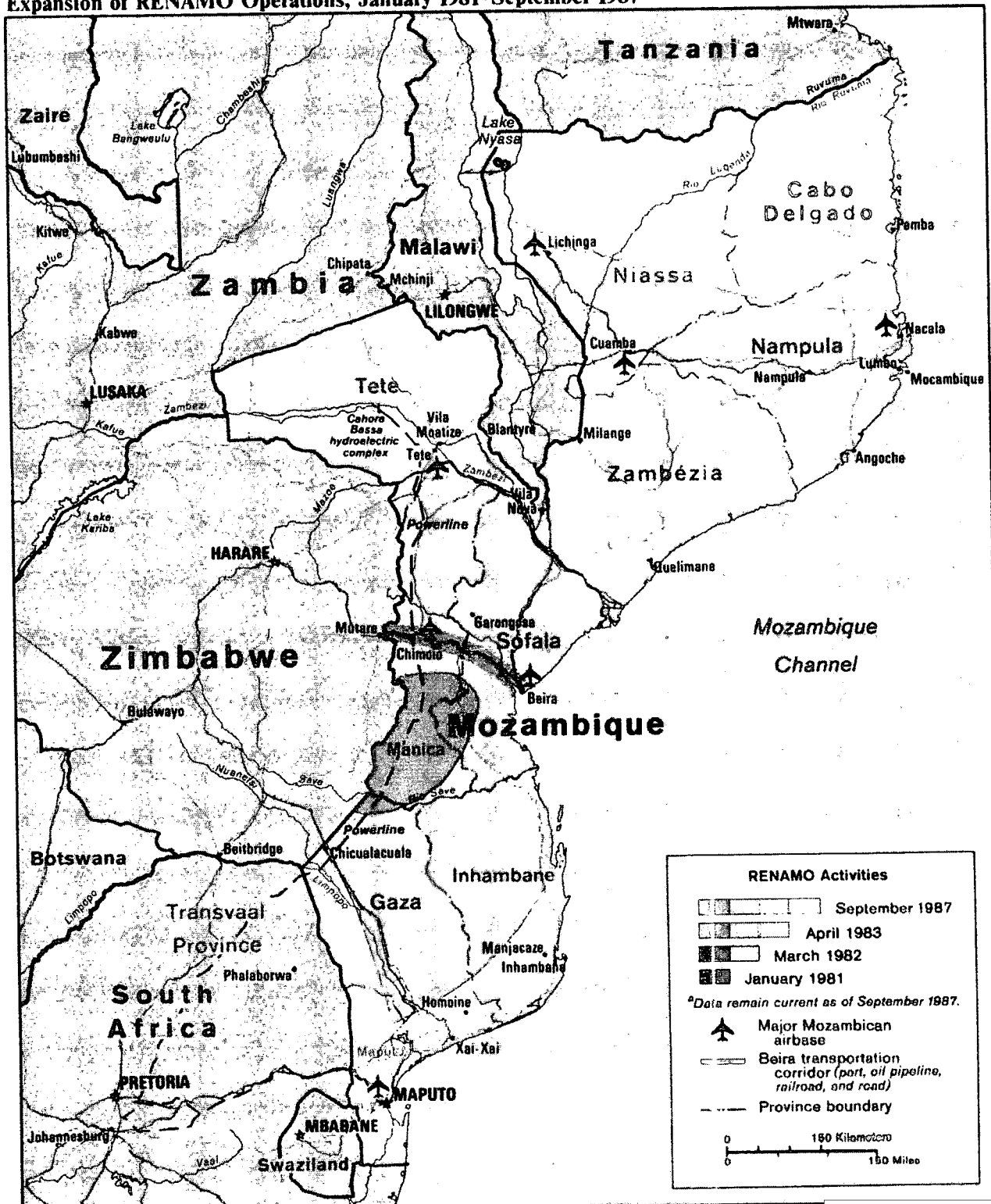
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Expansion of RENAMO Operations, January 1981-September 1987*



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1983, RENAMO had grown to at least 10,000 men, largely because of mounting opposition to government policies in the rural areas, and was operating in nine of the country's ten provinces. [REDACTED]

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Maputo's inability to contain the insurgency was a key factor in the late President Machel's decision to conclude the Nkomati accord with South Africa in March 1984. The pact called for South Africa to end its materiel, logistic, and training support for RENAMO, while Maputo promised to terminate military assistance to the ANC. Despite Machel's hopes that the pact would cause RENAMO to wither away, by 1987 the insurgency had grown to some 20,000 men, was operating in all ten provinces, and had become the predominant force in some rural areas in central Mozambique. Although RENAMO benefited from a large transfer of weapons and equipment from South Africa shortly before concluding the Nkomati agreement, the insurgents have become largely self-sufficient in arms and ammunition as a result of successful attacks on vulnerable Mozambican military targets. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]		(b)(1) (b)(3)
[REDACTED]	South Africa has continued to maintain ties to RENAMO.	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]		
[REDACTED]	RENAMO operations have been run out of a	
special forces base near Phalaborwa in the eastern Transvaal		[REDACTED]

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Current Level of South African Assistance

South Africa is currently providing communications, intelligence, logistic, materiel, and possibly training assistance to RENAMO, according to sources of varying reliability. We judge that the scope and volume of this aid is limited, however, and much reduced from pre-Nkomati levels. [REDACTED]

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Communication and Intelligence Support

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Pretoria supplies vital communication equipment to RENAMO, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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In our judgment, the combination of South African communications and intelligence support is very valuable to RENAMO.

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Materiel and Logistics Assistance

Although it is difficult to confirm, South Africa probably provides
RENAMO with limited materiel support, including light weapons.

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South Africa appears to deliver most supplies by air.

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2. Zimbabwean officials claim that they have traced Soviet serial numbers on some captured RENAMO AK-47s--probably with Soviet or Angolan assistance--to arms seized from the Angolan government by South African-backed UNITA insurgents. Reporting [redacted] support the view that Pretoria has transferred weapons captured by UNITA in Angola to RENAMO. [redacted]

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South Africa may use land and

sea routes to deliver supplies to RENAMO.

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3. According to the US defense attache in Malawi, there is no firm evidence to support this claim, but the South African defense attache is the liaison between ARMSCOR--the South African Arms Company--and the Malawi Government, which would provide excellent cover for such an operation.

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Pretoria also appears to facilitate the movement of insurgents and their supporters between Mozambique and South Africa. [REDACTED]

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On balance, we believe the evidence suggests that the scope and volume of South African materiel and logistic support to RENAMO is fairly limited.

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4. In one incident, a group of insurgents entering Mozambique from South Africa in late 1987 ran into a minefield. Pretoria claimed the Mozambican who hit the minefield were returning refugees, but refused to allow Mozambican authorities to interview the wounded who were taken to South African hospitals. [REDACTED]

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Advisory Support and Possible Training

The South Africans also appear to advise RENAMO on military strategy,

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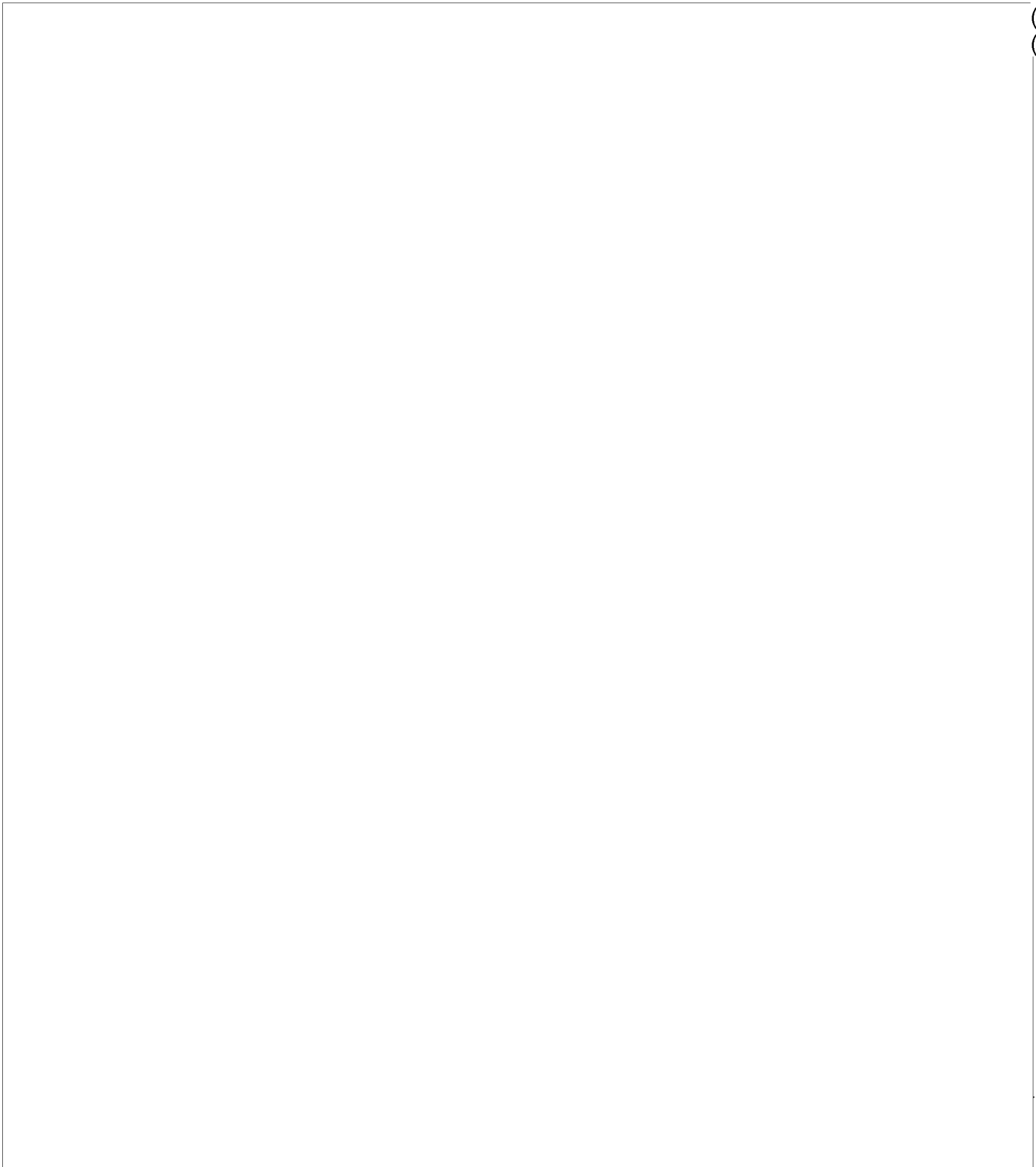
5. We have no reporting concerning Pretoria's attitude towards growing RENAMO abuses against civilians in Mozambique.

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Extent of South African Influence

While South Africa appears to maintain considerable influence with RENAMO, the insurgents have become increasingly independent of Pretoria since the signing of the Nkomati accord, in our judgment.

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Nevertheless, we believe South Africa's continued position as RENAMO's primary external backer assures Pretoria important influence with the insurgents.

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We believe South Africa also tries to influence RENAMO's external political wing. Evo Fernandes--former RENAMO Secretary General who was murdered in Lisbon last month [redacted] --was the primary conduit for South African influence [redacted]

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RENAMO's Role in South African Policy

RENAMO is a key element in a broader South African policy toward Mozambique that combines military pressure and economic inducements to force Maputo to acquiesce in South Africa's security concerns. Although this policy has been highly successful, a variety of sources report that since the signing

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of the Nkomati accord, differences have surfaced between the SADF and the Department of Foreign Affairs over the right mix of coercion and cooperation to apply toward Mozambique. In addition, recent insurgent attacks on economic targets in Mozambique, which are partially financed by Pretoria, have brought into sharper focus the potential conflict between military pressure and economic inducements. [REDACTED]

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The Stick...

South African security officials view RENAMO as a low-cost vehicle to ensure that Mozambique and its Frontline States allies, particularly Zimbabwe, restrict ANC activity and remain weak. They also see the insurgents as an obstacle to the Frontline States' efforts to use transportation routes through Mozambique to reduce South Africa's regional economic leverage.⁷ Although a variety of sources report that South African security officials believe that Maputo has made some effort to control the ANC, they distrust Chissano and believe constant pressure is needed to make sure he continues to restrict ANC activity in Mozambique. The South African military frequently warns Maputo to clamp down on the ANC, and it occasionally intervenes directly, such as the two attacks in Maputo over the past year against presumed ANC personnel and residences. [REDACTED]

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7. For additional details on southern African economic ties see DI Intelligence Assessment, ALA 88-10024 May 1988. Southern Africa: Wrestling with South African Economic Ties. [REDACTED]

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In our judgment, most South African military officials do not see RENAMO as an alternative to the current FRELIMO regime, and they are unwilling to provide the substantial resources needed for a RENAMO military victory. Moreover, the SADF may also be concerned that a more serious RENAMO threat to the Maputo regime would lead to increased Communist influence in Mozambique, possibly including the deployment of Cuban troops. Finally, a variety of reporting indicates that senior South African military officials view the insurgent's political organization as feckless, and they probably reason that the insurgents could not govern effectively in any case.

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...and the Carrot

In contrast to the military approach, the South African Foreign Ministry is encouraging Maputo's security cooperation by promoting modest economic assistance programs that reinforce South African leverage. Pretoria is giving Maputo a \$3 million low-interest loan and technical assistance to improve the port at Maputo--the closest harbor to South Africa's industrial heartland. It also is providing food aid and negotiating a new work permit system for more than 70,000 documented Mozambican migrant workers in South Africa who pump critical foreign exchange into Mozambique's economy. Finally, Pretoria has cooperated with Lisbon and Maputo in trying to reopen the Cahora Bassa hydroelectric complex in northern Mozambique. Last month Pretoria agreed to

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equip 1,500 Mozambican troops to guard the transmission lines from attacks by RENAMO insurgents.⁸ [REDACTED]

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South African foreign affairs officials have been pleasantly surprised by Chissano's pragmatic policies, and they believe that Pretoria can work with him to improve bilateral relations. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Foreign Minister Pik Botha is encouraging increased economic ties to Mozambique, while also pushing to limit South African ties to RENAMO. South African foreign affairs officials are advocating improved economic ties to Mozambique, partly in an effort to resurrect their influence in a policymaking process dominated by security officials [REDACTED]

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RENAMO attacks on economic targets in Mozambique, however, appear to be complicating Pretoria's dual-track approach. Over the past year South African repair crews have repeatedly rebuilt track and bridges destroyed by RENAMO that had delayed export of thousands of tons of South African goods through the port of Maputo. RENAMO attacks also are a major stumbling block to reopening the Cahora Bassa hydroelectric complex--a key issue in South African-Mozambican relations whose successful outcome is viewed by Maputo as an important sign of good faith by Pretoria. [REDACTED]

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8. The Cahora Bassa hydroelectric complex was built in the late 1970s with Portuguese financing and was intended to supply about 10 percent of South Africa's electrical needs. RENAMO attacks in the early 1980s destroyed a large portion of the transmission lines to South Africa, preventing Pretoria's use of the electricity from the complex. [REDACTED]

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Outlook

In our judgment, limited South African support to RENAMO is likely to continue to be part of Pretoria's two-track policy toward Mozambique. Debate probably will intensify, however, between South African military and foreign affairs officials over which track should be emphasized. Chissano's apparent willingness to cooperate may give added leverage to South African officials who favor playing down aid to RENAMO, but Pretoria's policy will depend primarily on Maputo's ability to cooperate on South Africa's terms. The successful reopening of the Cahora Bassa Hydroelectric Complex, in our judgment, would be a key indicator that Pretoria is moving toward emphasizing cooperation over coercion in its Mozambican policy. South Africa almost certainly would not publicly oppose negotiations between RENAMO and Maputo, and it may be willing to facilitate talks. Nevertheless, Pretoria probably believe that successful negotiations are currently unlikely given RENAMO's lack of political leadership and FRELIMO's unwillingness to share power.

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Although less likely, a change in South African policy that increased aid to RENAMO is also possible. In our judgment, antagonistic actions by Maputo--such as allowing increased ANC activities in Mozambique or renouncing the Nkomati accord--probably would spur Pretoria to increase support to RENAMO. New South African assistance probably would include increased training, arms, and ammunition. Pretoria may also provide heavier weapons to improve the insurgents' capability to attack larger towns and garrisons and to hold and defend territory.

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Alternatively, Pretoria may decide that Chissano's willingness to acquiesce to its security concerns and cooperate on key economic projects argue for an end to aid to RENAMO. Although such action would lead to an erosion in RENAMO's military capabilities, the insurgents almost certainly would continue to be a major destabilizing factor in Mozambique.

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