

REALITY IN MOZAMBIQUE PUNCTURES A STATE DEPARTMENT MYTH

The State Department has been arguing that giving increased levels of U.S. financial and military aid to Mozambique would "wean" its communist leaders away from their present close ties with the Soviet Union and lead to a liberalization within the country. Yet in a recent three-hour interview, Joaquim Chissano, Mozambique's President and leader of FRELIMO, the country's only allowed political party, firmly stated that this policy of "weaning" Mozambique away from the Soviet bloc will not work.

Mozambique today is controlled by FRELIMO, whose third party conference in 1977 declared Mozambique to be a Marxist-Leninist state. The walls of Maputo, Mozambique's capital, are covered with officially painted slogans deploring capitalism and calling for the building of scientific socialism. Anti-Semitic posters also grace the capital's walls. One depicts "Zionists" strangling blacks. Under FRELIMO Mozambique consistently has backed Soviet foreign policy positions, voted against the United States in the United Nations 92.8 percent of the time, and plotted to overthrow the pro-American government of neighboring Malawi.

Chissano Will Not Change. Yet when asked directly by a visiting group of American foreign policy experts whether increased American aid would lead to more support for the U.S. in the U.N. or the removal of Soviet and Cuban troops and advisors, Chissano emphatically declared, "Never." He repeatedly stated that there is no need for him to change his policy since it is already non-aligned "and has been from the start." He votes against the U.S. he says, because the U.S. is "wrong." The U.S., he advises, should not look to him to change policy.

Chissano claimed there were "no strings" attached to the Soviet Union's deliveries of oil and weapons to Mozambique. When asked whether he would ask the Soviets to leave, he said: "We don't feel threatened by the Soviets. We are not afraid of the Soviet Union." Chissano refused to discuss relaxing FRELIMO's near-totalitarian grip on Mozambique. Allowing democracy, it is clear, is out of the question. Since FRELIMO came to power in 1975 as the Portuguese Empire was dissolving, there have been no free elections.

"Look around in Africa," Chissano said in defense of his one-party state, "Kenya, Zambia, Tanzania, Uganda. Nowhere have multi-party democracies remained." Rebuffing suggestions that he allow RENAMO, the principal opposition

group in Mozambique, to take part in free elections, Chissano repeated his preference for a one-party state and closed the meeting with the observation, "This is Africa."

Time to Work with Freedom Fighters. For seven years, American policy set by Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Chester Crocker has been to give Mozambique handouts from U.S. taxpayers. Since 1981, this has totalled \$241 million; this year it is \$85 million. The State Department says that these funds will encourage Mozambique to leave the Soviet orbit. Chissano candidly admits that this is nonsense. In fact, as U.S. aid has flowed into Mozambique, the number of Soviet bloc troops and advisors in that country have increased. It is time for the State Department to pay attention to what Chissano does and clearly says. Instead of continuing to subsidize a pro-Soviet repressive regime, the U.S. ought to be working with the anti-communist freedom fighters in Mozambique, known as RENAMO, the Mozambique National Resistance.

RENAMO now operates freely in more than 85 percent of Mozambique, has grown to more than 22,000 men under arms, and has limited the government's control to little more than narrow perimeters around the major cities. A senior American intelligence official calls RENAMO, "The fastest growing anti-communist insurgency in the world today." Opponents of RENAMO say that it lacks a political program, and thus is an army and not a political movement. In fact, RENAMO has a well thought out and documented political program whose major planks include:

Free Elections: RENAMO repeatedly calls for free, internationally supervised elections in Mozambique. By contrast, Chissano insists on one-party rule.

Freedom of Religion: In the areas liberated by RENAMO, Mozambique churches have been restored and returned to the denominations from which they were expropriated by FRELIMO. RENAMO calls for allowing the Catholic Church to regain its radio station and expropriated parochial schools and hospitals.

Removal of Soviet, Cuban, East Bloc, and Zimbabwean Troops: RENAMO demands that all foreign military "advisors," and mercenaries leave Mozambique. Today, East Germans run SNASP, the FRELIMO secret police. More than 10,000 Zimbabwean troops prop up the FRELIMO regime.

A Pro-West Foreign Policy: RENAMO supports the West and democratic nations and U.S. positions on Afghanistan, Angola, and Nicaragua. RENAMO President Dhlakama has said, "we are fighting FRELIMO because they are communists and puppets of Soviet imperialism. We want to be truly independent and a friend and ally of the West."

RENAMO's political goals, say Western reporters who have travelled through the countryside, are shared by the majority of Mozambicans. It is these which the State Department should be backing. To do so would translate the Reagan Doctrine from a rhetorical promise of hope into a political reality.

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Grover Norquist recently returned from a 6-day visit to Mozambique; his tenth visit to Africa in the past two years, where he met with President Chissano and toured areas liberated by RENAMO.