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Central Intelligence Agency

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Washington, D.C. 20505

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

4 March 1985

The Mozambique National Resistance [Redacted]

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Summary

The Mozambique National Resistance (RENAMO) is a rural-based insurgent group with 12,000 or more armed guerrillas. Formed in 1976 from several small groups opposed to the ruling FRELIMO Party, RENAMO received direction and support from Rhodesia and, by 1980, South Africa. The insurgent group has expanded rapidly and now operates in all ten provinces of Mozambique. RENAMO's military success, distributions of captured food, and opposition to FRELIMO's attempts to collectivize agriculture have gained the guerrillas some measure of popular support. Despite increased insurgent activity since implementation of the Nkomati Accord in March 1984, we doubt the group is being actively supplied by South Africa.

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This memorandum [Redacted]

[Redacted] was written by [Redacted] and [Redacted] Africa Division of the Office of African and Latin American Analysis. It has been coordinated with the Directorate of Operations and the Office of Central Reference. Questions and comments are welcome and may be directed to the Chief, Africa Division, ALA, on [Redacted]

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While scoring some impressive gains on the military front, RENAMO's political infrastructure and ideology are undeveloped, and it has no leader with the stature of President Machel. Moreover, RENAMO's military wing, largely black Africans, distrusts the group's exile-based and mostly Portuguese political spokesmen and backers, who themselves appear divided by personal ambitions. [REDACTED]

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The civil war in Mozambique is currently stalemated, with neither side able to defeat the other, but Maputo's military strength is eroding. Negotiations for ending the insurgency remain deadlocked; RENAMO seeks a power-sharing arrangement, while FRELIMO offers only amnesty and discussions toward a cease-fire. [REDACTED]

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### Background

After Mozambique became independent under FRELIMO in 1975, several anti-FRELIMO elements came together to form what later became the Mozambique National Resistance (RENAMO). Included were conservative whites who had fled black-ruled Mozambique, blacks from small political parties that refused absorption into FRELIMO, disenchanted FRELIMO officials, colonial Army veterans, secret police agents, and tribal leaders. With direction and support from Rhodesian intelligence and military officials, the guerrillas in early 1977 began sabotage and reconnaissance operations in central Mozambique against units of Robert Mugabe's Zimbabwe African National Union. Soon, however, RENAMO began its own hit-and-run attacks against Mozambican economic targets. During this period of Rhodesian assistance, the insurgents operated with marginal success in Manica and Sofala Provinces, as their forward bases in the Gorongosa mountains of central Mozambique were overrun by government forces in 1979 (see attached map). [REDACTED]

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As Zimbabwe neared independence in 1980, however, South Africa assumed sponsorship of RENAMO. The South African armed forces created a logistics infrastructure to support insurgent operations in Mozambique, and they established a headquarters and training base in the northern Transvaal. "The Voice of Free Africa"--RENAMO's radio station previously located in Rhodesia--began broadcasting from South Africa at that time.

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With South African assistance, RENAMO expanded north and south from central Mozambique, spreading to nine provinces by early 1983 and to Cabo Delgado Province in the extreme northeast last year. Insurgents also operated out of sanctuaries in South Africa and Malawi. We believe that antigovernment sentiment has been partly responsible for insurgent recruitment: FRELIMO has neglected rural areas hard hit by three years of alternating drought and floods, and its efforts to impose collectivization have been unpopular with the peasants,

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Leadership

RENAMO's President and Commander-in-Chief is Afonso Jacama, a black Mozambican and ex-FRELIMO guerrilla leader. Jacama has headed the group since 1979 when Andre Matsangaise was killed in a clash with government forces.

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Evo Fernandes, RENAMO's Secretary General and second ranking official, heads the political wing. [Redacted]

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[Redacted] Fernandes has held his position since shortly after his predecessor, Orlando Christina, was killed by unknown assailants at his residence in South Africa in April 1983.\* [Redacted]

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[Redacted] He resides in Portugal, unlike his predecessor who lived in South Africa, and has handled most negotiations with Pretoria and FRELIMO on RENAMO's behalf. [Redacted]

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Popular Support and Ideology

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[redacted] we have no evidence that the insurgents--unlike UNITA in Angola--have established "liberated areas" in the sense that they provide civil administration or engage in systematic political indoctrination in areas under their control. Moreover, they have alienated the Catholic Church, which exerts considerable influence over the country's Christian minority. The Church had considered RENAMO a viable political force until the recent murders of several priests and nuns. Church spokesmen now say it is an ill-disciplined group with no real political ideology and little popular support, according to Embassy reporting. [redacted]

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In our judgment, RENAMO has little appeal beyond the rural peasantry, in large measure because its political ideology is undeveloped and simplistic. The insurgents' pronouncements are little more than vehemently anti-Communist sloganeering, describing Machel as an agent of Soviet expansionism and condemning his acceptance of Soviet, Cuban, and East German advisers. RENAMO professes vague support for a democratic form of government and a free-market economy, and it swears allegiance to the Mozambican nationalism of the late Eduardo Mondlane, FRELIMO's first president, but it has not articulated these views in a well organized fashion. In our view, RENAMO remains essentially an anti-FRELIMO movement. [redacted]

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Military Situation

As a political movement RENAMO is unsophisticated, but on the military front it has grown and expanded impressively since 1979 when a few hundred guerrillas were on the run from government forces in Mozambique's two central provinces. In fact, RENAMO may have more than

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the 12,000 guerrillas that we estimate.

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[redacted] the insurgents seek to isolate Maputo by attacking government forces, transportation routes, power lines, and foreign workers, and to demonstrate RENAMO's reach throughout Mozambique in order to expand popular support and demoralize the Army.

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[redacted] RENAMO has murdered approximately 42 foreigners over the past two years, and kidnapped others, which has caused many foreign workers to flee and set back development projects throughout the country, according to Embassy reporting.

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Reports of guerrilla incidents--including sabotage, ambushes, raids, and terrorist attacks on civilians--increased by more than 50 percent in 1984,

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[redacted] Most incidents have taken place in Zambesia, Mozambique's richest and most populous province, and also near the capital (see attached graphics). Attacks recorded in Maputo Province alone increased from six in 1983 to 100 last year.

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\*The South Africans also calculate that the incident rate rose sharply in 1984, according to Embassy reporting.

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In addition to insurgent attacks against FRELIMO, RENAMO's activity also includes some banditry. The insurgents have looted stores and civilian homes, and they bayoneted dozens of civilian passengers during ambushes near Maputo in January, according to the international press. The brutality seems to increase in the south, however, and it may reflect looser control by RENAMO headquarters over remote units, as well as some ethnic hatred for southerners and foreigners by guerrillas recruited mainly in the central provinces. [Redacted]

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Maputo's response to RENAMO's attacks has been ineffective, and we expect additional government reverses in the months ahead. The Army continues to mount sporadic offensives in the countryside, but it has generally withdrawn to protect the cities and a few key transportation routes. The US defense attache calls Mozambique's Army of about 20,000 troops the poorest he has seen, partly because the USSR has not provided equipment appropriate for a guerrilla war during its nearly ten years of military assistance programs. The force is mostly conscripted, and morale suffers from poor food, quarters, training, and medical care. Embassy sources report that it remains in garrison and is avoiding combat. [Redacted]

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Outlook

RENAMO's unabated guerrilla activity over the past year has shattered President Machel's early hope that implementation of the Nkomati Accord in March 1984 would cause the insurgency to wither and die. In our judgment, the civil war in Mozambique is at a military stalemate in which neither side can defeat the other, but the government's military strength is eroding. [Redacted]

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We judge that, confident of its military prowess, RENAMO is unlikely to abandon its hard-line position in the deadlocked negotiations.

[redacted] RENAMO wants an internationally supervised cease-fire, direct talks with the government to choose a president, and free parliamentary elections. It also demands that Maputo suspend arms agreements with the Soviets and send all foreign troops home within a 15-day period. Maputo so far has offered only a general amnesty and discussions toward arranging a cease-fire. [redacted]

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