



WASHINGTON NOTES ON AFRICA

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Afonso Dhlakama, leader of the Mozambican National Resistance (Renamo) will be visiting Washington next week for the first time, at a delicate stage of the peace process in Mozambique. Coming from New York, where he is meeting with United Nations officials, he will be hosted at meetings by the Heritage Foundation and the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). He will also meet with members of Congress and with officials in the administration.

Before Dhlakama arrived in the U.S., some administration officials said privately that they have no major concerns about Renamo's implementation of the peace accord, instead expressing more concern about delays on the Mozambican government side.

The issue of the numbers of troops assembled into assembly areas, and then demobilized or incorporated into the new national army, is indeed complex and controversial. The government as well as Renamo can be criticized for some delays. But the administration's apparent lack of concern about Renamo's failure to allow freedom of movement and political expression is disturbing. It is indicative of a *de facto* bias towards Renamo in implementation of the peace process, with Renamo delays and violations of the peace accord being treated with relative tolerance, while demands for concessions are directed primarily at the Mozambican government.

While the treaty calls for immediate freedom of movement and political expression throughout Mozambique, Renamo routinely denies those rights. The U.S. State Department itself, in its annual Human Rights Report, noted that Renamo throughout 1993 refused to allow other political parties to campaign in areas under its control, and continued to hold civilians captive against their will. A UNICEF report in May estimated that Renamo was still holding over 2,000 child soldiers in its bases under heavy guard. At the end of May, Dhlakama ordered his personal bodyguard to capture two local government officials in Gaza province who he said had blocked Renamo rallies. The two were heavily beaten; one is still in the provincial hospital in a coma.

Some of the incidents mentioned above can perhaps be dismissed as relatively minor. But the issue is whether they represent a pattern of behavior, particularly in Renamo zones which are generally off-limits to free movement by journalists. Many in Mozambique fear that the U.N. may repeat some of the mistakes made in Angola, where Jonas Savimbi's Unita, another former South African client, also evaded key provisions of the peace agreement.

As Angola prepared to vote, a small UN force made no protest while Unita violated the peace accord's mandates to demobilize its army, join in a nonpartisan national army, and allow free

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campaigning by all parties in zones it controlled.

After losing the September 1992 election, Savimbi plunged the country into war again. Learning one lesson from that failure, the U.N. has a larger contingent of troops in Mozambique. But there is a real danger that it will again go too far in caving in to those who fear democracy.

Out of initial estimates of 19,000 Renamo troops and 61,000 government troops, approximately 16,000 of the Renamo forces and 35,000 of the government troops have reported in to assembly areas. As of mid-May, the government had demobilized approximately 14,000 troops and Renamo about 1,500. But each had only sent approximately 2,500 men to the new national army to which each was supposed to contribute 15,000 troops. The peace treaty provides that a number of government troops, such as those guarding essential installations, will be demobilized or incorporated into the new army in place, without reporting to assembly areas. But there are disputes concerning how many such troops there should be in non-assembly areas, and whether the government's initial count of 61,000 was accurate or exaggerated.

Particularly problematic is the new national army. Soldiers of both sides, but particularly the government army, are reluctant to be recruited without better guarantees of improved conditions. The initial training commitment from Britain, France and Portugal applies only to 15,000 troops. There is some international pressure to postpone recruitment of the second 15,000 until after the election, but the government argues that this will be too small to ensure security in such a vast territory as Mozambique, which is twice the size of California.

Behind the details of troop numbers is the fundamental issue of how much trust to put in a movement with Renamo's record. The Mozambican government initially encouraged its international partners to aid in transforming Renamo from a military machine into a party capable of peaceful political competition. But trying to change Renamo has edged over into bias

which tends to promote Renamo at the expense of the government. As Renamo has made more and more demands, the international community has preached tolerance and has coughed up with monetary payoffs to Renamo in an attempt to buy peace.

But Renamo's transformation is by no means guaranteed. The State Department's record of judging the willingness of undemocratic forces to compromise and keep their promises--in Angola, Zaire, Haiti and elsewhere--is not good.

The context is indeed different from Angola. In particular one can hope that the precedents in South Africa and Malawi will make a significant difference. But the critical issue of a unified security force that will respect the results of an election is still untested in Mozambique. It would be a mistake to dismiss too glibly the danger of a scenario resembling Angola or rural KwaZulu.

Dhlakama has promised not to return to war regardless of the outcome of the vote. On his visit to Washington he should be pressured not only to keep that pledge, but also to immediately comply with the peace accord by fully demobilizing his troops and allowing free political expression. It is also important to provide adequate logistic support for the election process, including resources for political competition that will be open to all parties, including Frelimo and other opposition parties as well as Renamo.

With his principal patron gone, and in need of new friends, Dhlakama is trying to clean up his image. He should be told instead to clean up his act. The international community should not take sides in Mozambique's election, but it is both appropriate and urgent that the United States and the United Nations send a clear message: Mozambicans must be able to vote without interminable delays and free from the threat of violence. ■

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