

A NEW STAGE IN THE STRUGGLE FOR MOZAMBIQUE

by

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Now FRELIMO has to fight the United States. It has to fight NATO and those two powers on the fringes of NATO, Rhodesia and South Africa. In a sense, FRELIMO has been fighting the United States and its allies all along.¹

A basic recognition is necessary in discussions of U.S. policy towards FRELIMO and Mozambique. It is that their war has its peculiarities. It is not a clash of vast armies as was the case in World War II. And it is not like Vietnam, (at least not yet), a large scale "limited war".

It is rather a semi-covert war, more apparent to some than to others, yet real nonetheless. It is a clandestine war, in which the C. I. A. (Central Intelligence Agency), instead of uniformed forces, is the engaged U.S. party.²

Now the Portuguese have been knocked out of the fighting, the situation in Africa is reminiscent of 1954 in Indochina. There, too, the United States financed the colonial war effort. When Mendes France became Premier, and France finally agreed to negotiate sincerely with the Viet Minh, the United States began a campaign to replace France as the area's colonial power. The "quiet American", Edward Landsdale, and the C.I.A. began a clandestine war against the French Deuxieme Bureau for control of the Saigon-Cholon area. Open war between the two intelligence agencies broke out in April 1955, resulting in the American victory that paved the way for the Second Indochina War.³

The U.S. support of white minority regimes in Southern Africa reveals one level of conflict between the United States and Frelimo or Mozambique. Partly because of racial tensions in the United States, in particular within the Armed Forces, the C.I.A. prefers discrete cooperation with South Africa rather than blatant intervention. This time it will be "quiet South Africans" who operate out of Luanda and Lourenco Marques instead of "quiet Americans". General Van den Berg, chief of the South African intelligence service, was on a visit to Beira on May 12 when the white colonists, or colons, began anti-black rioting.⁴ There are definite indications that a Mozambique version of the Organization de l'Armee Secrete (OAS), is being organized with South African assistance.⁵

Indeed if the current situation in Mozambique bears certain resemblances to the situation in Vietnam in 1954 and 1955, it also bears some to the situation in Algeria in 1961. Unlike Vietnam, Algeria had a sizeable colon population that supported the OAS against de Gaulle. The C.I.A. backed General Challe in his attempted coup against the French government. A major factor in the C.I.A.'s attitude was a meeting that Jacques Soustelle held in Washington on 7 December 1960. At that meeting the future leader of the OAS told high C.I.A. officials that not only Algeria but also France itself was threatened with Communism. One of the most sympathetic listeners to Soustelle's briefing was Richard Bissell, head of C.I.A. covert operations.⁶

During his recent visit to Portugal, UN Secretary General Waldheim warned that Portugal "will oppose any secessionist attempts or attempts at dismemberment (of her African colonies) from any quarter." The warning was considered particularly applicable to white-dominated South Africa and Rhodesia and to Malawi, a conservatively run black republic.⁷

The young officers of the Armed Forces Movement may warn others not to intervene in Portugal's colonies, but it is doubtful that they have the strength to enforce their warnings. General Spinoza is no de Gaulle, and Mozambique is not just across the Mediterranean from Metropolitan Portugal. But if there is one saving factor in the situation it must be that FRELIMO has never suffered the severe military defeats that the Algerian FLN *did*.

The Portuguese officers have to worry about C.I.A. activities not only in the far-away African colonies, but also within Portugal itself. The C.I.A. is currently fielding an unusually large number of operatives in Lisbon and Oporto. And an Intelligence ship is monitoring Portuguese telecommunications from a position just outside Lisbon harbor. A spokesman for the Armed Forces Movement has commented that the Movement wishes to cooperate with the United States, but has expressed "wonder" at the high level of C.I.A. activity in his country.⁸

In Portugal, as in the colonies, the C.I.A. is mainly stalling for time. Working closely with Spinoza, and with figures like Joaquim Motta, the Agency wants to organize "center-left" political parties to compete successfully against the Portuguese Communists.⁹ In the colonies, the Agency seeks to delay, if not sabotage, decolonization until South Africa can organize counterrevolution in Mozambique and Angola.¹⁰

On another level the United States and her allies are using the delay in decolonization to build up Western military strength in the region of Mozambique:

*As long as a year ago, when it became obvious that the rebels were gaining strength in Mozambique, the U.S. and NATO began to draw up contingency plans for air and naval defense of South Africa. In June 1973, NATO's Defense Planning Committee (DPC) instructed SACLANT (Supreme Allied Commander, Atlantic) headquartered in Norfolk, Va., to draw up plans for an allied air-naval task force to assist South Africa should the need arise.*¹¹

The planning aims not merely at defending the territory of South Africa, but also at dominating Mozambique and its adjacent ocean areas. To accomplish their goals, Pentagon strategists see a need for the closest cooperation between the U.S. and South African military forces. Accordingly, Admiral Hugo Biermann, chief of staff of the South African armed forces, visited Washington in early May of this year for emergency talks with his counterpart, U.S. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Thomas Moorer. Nervous about possible public relations problems, State Department staffers advised against granting Admiral Biermann a U.S. visa, but were reportedly overruled by Secretary of State Kissinger.¹²

The visit was just one in a number of high-level consultations between military and political leaders of the two countries. Earlier this year, the South African politician Cornelius Mulder, often mentioned as a possible successor to Prime Minister Vorster, visited the Pentagon, where he held secret talks with Vice Admiral Ray Peet, the senior official in the important "International Security Affairs" (ISA) office of the Department of Defense. Among ISA's responsibilities is the development of U.S. politico-military strategy in the Indian Ocean area.

In addition to his talks with Pentagon officials, Mulder also visited Senator Harry Byrd, author of the Byrd Amendment which allowed the import of Rhodesian chrome into the U.S.¹³ In a sense the violation of the U.N. embargo on Rhodesian chrome symbolizes the U.S. policy towards Southern Africa as a whole. Over the past few years the U.S. strategic planning has undergone a change of emphasis, and perhaps nowhere else in the world have the potential consequences of that change been as great as in the Southern African region.

It is well known that in the early post World War II years, the U.S. and her allies built a ring of strategic bases around the socialist countries. Behind that wall of containment the Western countries carried on the usual business of empire. But now many newly independent countries are demanding better terms of trade for their raw materials. Consequently the U.S. military planners are devoting increasing attention on how to secure materials. In this context, the U.S. has changed from a "have" to a "have not" nation with respect to raw materials. And as domestic reserves of ores become depleted, the dependence on foreign sources of supply increases.¹⁴

Worried about the raw materials situation, U.S. planners see the Indian Ocean as the crucial area for at least the next decade. In his testimony supporting funds for a strategic base on Diego Garcia, an island in the Indian Ocean, Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Elmo Zumwalt

*pictured the Indian Ocean as the area with the potential to produce major shifts in the global power balance over the next decade. "It follows," he said, "that we must have the ability to influence events in that area, and the capability to deploy our military power in the region is an essential element of such influence."*¹⁵

Cooperating with Britain and France, the U.S. has planned a string of strategic military bases across the Indian Ocean. The current buildup on Diego Garcia is just one consequence of a 50-year Anglo-American development agreement arrived at in December 1966. The agreement, it is important to note, covers not only Diego Garcia, but the entire British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT).¹⁶

Originally, the buildup on Deigo Garcia was downplayed. The Pentagon wanted funds merely for a "communications station." But it became apparent that this was something of a cover story. In addition to housing communications facilities, the base will store large stocks of fuel and war material. Meanwhile, the harbor is being improved, and will eventually be able to accomodate the carriers assigned to the U.S. Indian Ocean fleet. The expanded airfield on the island, moreover, will be able to accomodate planes as large as the B-52 strategic bomber.¹⁷

Moving closer to the vicinity of Mozambique, the U.S. depends on France for military bases. France has, of course, covertly cooperated with the southern African "white bloc"

for a long time. Now France is stepping up its cooperation with the U.S. in the waters off Mozambique. In March 1973, the French Chamber of Deputies agreed to let the U.S. construct another communications station on La Reunion. On this strategic island, too, the harbor has recently been improved enough to accomodate a carrier task force.¹⁸

France and her allies are now worried that "the tide of independence in Mozambique" will threaten Western bases in the Comores Islands and the Malagasy Republic, as well as on La Reunion.¹⁹ NATO and South Africa are therefore determined to dominate the entire East African searoute from Capetown to the Suez and the Persian Gulf. A particularly strategic stretch of the route is the Mozambique Channel separating the Malagasy Republic from Mozambique on the mainland.

Finally, in Mozambique itself, the large harbor of Nacala would make an excellent strategic base--the anchor of the Indian Ocean web of bases.

Nacala is an attractive port with an impressive infrastructure in its neighborhood. The Portuguese ambassador to the U.S. told his Washington hosts last Winter that

*Nacala...is large enough to accomodate the entire U.S. 6th fleet. It also has adequate base and fuel facilities and, in addition, is served by a railroad and airports.*²⁰

The Portuguese change in government has made the base even more attractive to the Pentagon. According to the July 1974 Sea Power,

*The hospitality of South Africa's modern base at Simonstown has been offered NATO and some Defense officials privately hope that President Nixon, at his June meeting on Lajes with Portuguese Premier Spínola, made suggestive overtures concerning base possibilities at Mozambique's deeply protected harbor at Nacala.*²¹

There is one decisive impediment to such dreams: FRELIMO. Spínola could triumph over the Left back in Portugal. He could offer the U.S. Nacala. But FRELIMO would still stand in the way.²²

The U.S. opposes all the genuine liberation movements in the three major Portuguese colonies. But the practical reasons for the opposition tend to vary. Guinea-Bissau possesses no great resources, but it does have a strategic

geographical location. Last Winter Pentagon officials leaked stories to the press about Soviet planes in Guinea-Conakry. According to the leaked story, a squadron of Soviet aircrafts had begun flying reconnaissance missions over the South Atlantic from that country.²³ While the flights would in no way diminish U.S. military superiority in the South Atlantic, the Pentagon was obviously concerned about them. But its concern tended to be a geographical one. An even purer case of geographic concern involves the part of Guinea-Bissau that lies 300 miles out in the atlantic, the Cape Verde islands. It is their position on the map that makes the islands militarily significant.²⁴

If Guinea and the Cape Verde Islands interest the U.S. for mainly geographic reasons, Angola tends to interest the U.S. for economic reasons. There the rich economic resources, both actual and potential, tend to be the overriding factor in U.S. calculations.²⁵ In Mozambique the U.S. is concerned about both the country's resources and about its strategic position.

Such strategic and economic policy considerations promise a lot of trouble for the national liberation movements in Southern and East Africa. Today FRELIMO may be preoccupied coping with the Portuguese, and behind them the South Africans. The U.S. position may appear to be only a small dark cloud on the horizon. But it most definitely promises storms to come. Even if FRELIMO arrived at a compromise with the U.S. and her allies in regard to one or the other of the two issues, the U.S. would still press for FRELIMO's acquiescence on the other. In other words, Frelimo's permitting Mozambicans to continue working in South African mines would not be considered enough to defuse the U.S. and South African hostility. And even if FRELIMO agreed to carry Rhodesian chrome and iron ore on the Mozambican railway lines-- that, too, would not be enough. The U.S. would demand more. In the view of U.S. strategists, the U.S. needs bases in South Africa and Mozambique at its disposal. Such bases would be extremely valuable military assets in case of any major U.S. military operations in the Indian Ocean.²⁶ Thus FRELIMO would acquiesce in so many areas in order to defuse the enmity of the U.S. and her NATO allies. Acquiescence would result in Frelimo degenerating to a different type of organization, becoming in effect, a neo-colonialistic organization.

Recognition that a state of war does exist is a liberating recognition. It liberates us from the illusion that the U.S. policy towards southern Africa is "mistaken" or "misguided". On the contrary, the U.S. hostility towards the liberation movements is no mistake at all.²⁷ Armed with such a realistic

understanding of the situation, we can consciously begin building an anti-war movement against the war in Southern Africa now, rather than several years from now. In doing so, we would avoid making the same mistakes as we did in the Vietnam anti-war movement. And perhaps the first fundamental mistake of that movement lay in starting work years too late, only after the American presence in Vietnam had become overwhelming and obvious to everyone. I believe that the time to start the anti-war movement for Southern Africa is now; and the more we delay, the more difficult our work will be in the future.

Footnotes

1. See *Portugal and NATO*, third revised edition, Angola committee, Amsterdam, Holland.
2. One long-term C.I.A. operation has been the subversion of African students; see "Students Opposing U.S. - Aided Regimes Got C.I.A. Subsidies," N.Y. Times, Feb. 21, 1967.
3. See *The Politics of Heroin in Southeast Asia*, by Alfred McCoy, Harper, New York, 1973, pp. 117-20.
4. See "L'apartheid en visite," *Afrique Asie*, June 24, 1974, pp. 35-6.
5. South Africa is the sanctuary where the terrorist organization is being formed. Many top Portuguese secret police officials have fled from Mozambique to South Africa: see "mozambique Holds Secret Policemen," N.Y. Times, June 11, 1974. The Portuguese Army prevented a possible coup d'etat in late April by taking over Mozambique, deposing the provincial administration, and flying the former colonial governor out of the country: see "Ex-governor of Mozambique is Flown to Portugal," N.Y. Times, April 30, 1974. Meanwhile an OAS-type organization has become active in Lourenco Marques; it blew up the printing plant of the capital city's leading newspaper, Noticias, in mid August: see "Bomb Mozambique Paper," N.Y. Post, August 15, 1974.
6. See "The C.I.A. in Algeria," by Alexander Werth, *The Nation*, May 20, 1961, p. 433. The C.I.A. channeled war materiel to

the rebels through a number of covert conduits. One was the Schlumberger Company, a French corporation with offices in New Orleans. This particular C.I.A. operation only came to light during the New Orleans DA's investigation of Kennedy's assassination: see *A Heritage of Stone*, by Jim Garrison, Putnam's, New York, 1970, pp. 111-12.

In Mozambique, the foreign intelligence services have created a coalition of neo-colonial groups to oppose FRELIMO: see "Coalition Challenges Mozambique Liberation Front", N.Y. Times, August 25, 1974. The scenario seems to be to present this puppet organization as the voice of moderation and reason in the country, as opposed to the black extremists of FRELIMO on the one hand, and the white extremists of the OAS on the other.

7. See "Portugal Ready to Grant Guinea Its Independence," N.Y. Times, August 5, 1974.
8. See "C.I.A. Operating in Portugal?," N.Y. Post, May 25, 1974.
9. See "Communist Party Emerges as Strongest in Portugal," N.Y. Times, May 6, 1974; "Local Purges in Portugal Enable the Communists to Gain Ground," N.Y. Times, June 24, 1974; "Close Lisbon Ties +o West Seen," Washington Post, May 8, 1974.
10. See "Serait-ce Deja L'Hiver?," *Afrique Asie*, June 24, 1974, p. 31. It's hard to believe that at this late date Portuguese officers are expressing "wonder" at C.I.A. activities. They need only read the New York Times to learn how the Agency has manipulated the politics of other countries: see, for example, "U.S. Said to Order C.I.A. to Curtail Role in Greece," N.Y. Times, August 7, 1974.

While on the one hand the Agency cooperates with other powers, such as South Africa, it also maintains an independent capability for intervention in Portuguese Africa. In the 1960s the Third Special Forces were trained in the Portuguese language for intervention in Angola and Mozambique. See *Soldier*, by Anthony Herbert, Dell, New York, 1973, pp. 102-7. Since then, many Third Special Forces personnel have no doubt left the Army to become C.I.A. mercenaries. The Army itself has extremely detailed plans for intervention in East Africa. Its 357th Civil Affairs Unit, for example, has prepared operational plans for the occupation of Tanzania: see "Tanzania: Plans d'occupation of

Tanzania: see "Tanzania: Plans d'occupation," *Afrique Asie*, July 5, 1971, p. 22.

11. See: "A 'New Beginning' in Portugal," *Washington Post*, May 2, 1974. See also: "NATO to Aid White Africa," *N.Y. Post*, May 10, 1974.
12. See: "Military Chiefs of U.S., South Africa Confer Quietly," *Christian Science Monitor*, May 10, 1974.
13. Mulder also visited a number of other politicians, including the then vice-President Gerald Ford, and California Governor Ronald Reagan see "Special: Secret South African Visit Portends New US/SA Strategy," *Southern Africa*, April 1974, p. 28.
14. See: "U.S. Global Military Role: Are Forces Big Enough?," *N.Y. Times*, March 11, 1974.
15. See: "Zumwalt Backs U.S. Plan for Indian Ocean Base," *N.Y. Times*, March 21, 1974. At a November 30, 1973 press conference, Defense Secretary Schlesinger announced that the U.S. naval presence in the Indian Ocean would be "more frequent and more regular than in the past." A Navy magazine described this policy decision as "a major step toward establishment of a permanent Indian Ocean fleet: see "U.S. to Beef Up Indian Ocean Force," *Sea Power*, Dec. 1973-Jan. 1974, p. 35.
16. See: "To Build a Link - the Seabees at Diego Garcia," *U.S. Naval Institute Proceedings*, April 1973, p. 101.
17. See: "Role of Indian Ocean Base is Discussed," *N.Y. Times*, March 13, 1974.
18. See "Base Necessities; the World Lineup," *Sea Power*, Aug. 1974, p. 16.
19. See: "Hatching Dinosaur Eggs," by C. L. Sulzberger, *N.Y. Times*, May 15, 1974. See also the general Indian Ocean survey, including comments on the political situation in the French colonies in "The Isles of Capricorn - This is the Indian Ocean; Color it Red," *Sea Power*, May 1974, p. 23.
20. See: "Portugal Offers U.S. a Port in East Africa," *Washington Star-News*, Jan. 26, 1974. As far as fuel is concerned, Texaco, Hunt and Gulf have oil exploration concessions along the Mozambique coast: see UN map 1909 (July 1969) in *Africa Today*, July-August 1970, p. 26.

21. See: "The Dwindling Presence: U.S. Overseas Bases Cut Precipitously, *Sea Power*, July 1974, p. 28.
22. The Azores are another matter. Both the Azores and Mozambique are Portuguese colonies with strategic significance for the Middle East. But while *Frelimo* is about to take power in Mozambique, Portugal retains its sovereignty over the Azores. This is a source of danger for the Portuguese Left. Portugal was the only U.S. ally to cooperate in the military resupply airlift to Israel, see "U.S. Jets for Israel Took Route Around Some Allies," N.Y. Times, Oct. 25, 1973. The U.S. will not tolerate the Portuguese Left joining the other European countries in denying the Pentagon access to the Mideast. The C.I.A. may be expected to encourage on one hand, a pliable independence movement in the Azores and on the other hand to destroy the Left back on mainland Portugal.
23. See "Soviet Said to Use Guines to Observe U.S. Shipping," N.Y. Times, Dec. 6, 1973.
24. See "Lisbon Announces a Two-Year Plan to Free Angolans," N. Y. Times, Aug. 11, 1974. In November 1973 a Portuguese Foreign Ministry official argued to the New York Times: "If Guinea goes, the Cape Verde Islands will become vulnerable....The islands have a strategic importance to the West along the north-south Atlantic routes equal to that of the Azores on the east-west routes." See "Portugal Rations Gasoline For Cars," N.Y. Times, No. 11, 1973.
25. See *Angola: Five Centuries of Portuguese Exploitation*, by Americo Boavida, LSM Information Center, Richmond, British Columbia, 1972. See also "Gulf Oil in Cabinda," *Africa Today*, July-August 1970, p. 20.
26. See *Portuguese Africa - A Handbook*, Praeger, New York, 1969, "Strategic Implications," by David Abshire, p. 437. The U.S. could get its way with respect to African resources, but that would not deter the U.S. Navy from moving into the Indian Ocean. A seldom mentioned, long-term reason for the move is the developing crisis on the Indian subcontinent. See, for example: "A Grim India Marks 27th Anniversary, N.Y. Times, Aug. 16, 1974;" also "Indian Grain Flow to Cities Falts," N.Y. Times, Aug. 13, 1974. The U.S., then, would like Southern African support bases to ease the logistics burden involved in operating around the Indian subcontinent. In fact Pentagon leaders are so determined to go into the Indian Ocean, they are willing

to deceive Congress about the situation out there: see "U.S. Thai-Flight Ban Seen as Political Ploy," Los Angeles Times, July 25, 1974.

27. Thus Willard Johnson and his colleagues on the one hand describe the reactionary role of the U.S. in Southern Africa, yet on the other hand they propose liberal reforms, such as expansion of U.S. capital loans, technical aid and trade with independent Africa: see "United States Foreign Policy Towards Africa," by Willard Johnson *et al.*, *Africa Today*, Winter 1973, p. 15, 44. There is a fundamental failure of analysis here, a failure to admit that it is a war that is going on. Any liberal, progressive policy reforms will simply be tactical changes in the U.S. war strategy. The U.S. should simply get out of Africa.

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