

# AFRICA CONFIDENTIAL

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## Mozambique: RENAMO congress bids for peace

The *Resistencia Nacional Moçambicana* (RENAMO) held its first-ever national congress on 5-9 June at Gorongosa in central Mozambique. The congress came to the momentous decision to respond positively to President **Joaquim Chissano's** peace initiative. Chissano's 12-point peace plan has already won considerable international approval (AC Vol 30 No 13).

RENAMO has decided to accept the government's main conditions for talks, namely a renunciation of violence and agreement to work out differences within a constitutional framework. Sources who attended the meeting said that in his keynote speech, RENAMO's guerrilla chief **Afonso**

**Dhlakama** renounced any personal ambitions and said that the rebels no longer sought to overthrow the Chissano government. The congress also dropped several previous demands, such as for immediate free elections and the withdrawal of all foreign forces in Mozambique - principally the 10,000 **Zimbabwean** troops helping the government army to defend two strategic transport routes to the sea. Both issues are to be worked out in negotiation rather than on the battlefield.

RENAMO's new flexibility opens the door to some dramatic announcements at the *Frente de Libertação de Moçambique* (FRELIMO)'s Fifth Congress, to be held in Maputo from 24-31 July, its first such gathering in seven years. Chissano is hoping to enter the congress armed with a positive response from the rebels so as to swing the party faithful behind a peace agreement. RENAMO appears to have obliged.

Since Chissano embarked on the current peace efforts in August 1988, giving Mozambican church-leaders approval to meet with the rebels, his biggest problem has been a lack of coherent leadership within RENAMO itself. At the Gorongosa meeting, the movement underwent a major restructuring. The congress chose a new four-member cabi-

net, a 10-person national council and several new department heads. Gone is the long-time head of RENAMO's external relations, **Artur Janeiro de Fonseca**, now reportedly *persona non grata* in his old home, **West Germany**. His replacement by **Raul Manuel Domingos**, the former chief of staff of the 20,000-strong rebel army, marks the first time that a military man from inside Mozambique has been the rebels' effective foreign minister.

Another change was the shift of **Vincente Zacharias Ululu** from the head of the administration department -

mainly concerned with organising food and labour supplies - to head Information. In an effort to dilute the control of the **Ndau** ethnic group over

the movement, the national council has been shaken up to include one representative from each of Mozambique's 10 provinces.

The Gorongosa meeting provided the strongest evidence yet that right-wing **United States** groups, albeit certainly working with the blessing of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), are winning their battle to wrest control of RENAMO from **South African** military intelligence operatives (AC Vol 29 No 24). It would have been unthinkable for **Fonseca** to be dropped unless his South African mentor, Brigadier **Charles van Niekerk**, either had agreed or been neutralised. Washington sources indicate that the Pentagon has now dropped its objections to a State Department peace initiative on Mozambique. Last year, US Department of Defence officials objected to the civilian view that RENAMO should be stopped.

The battle for control of RENAMO has raged for at least two years. It centres around **Thomas Schaaf**, an American religious fundamentalist who established contact with RENAMO when he worked for Zimbabwe's agricultural extension department, Agritechs, in the border town of Mutare. Schaaf is working closely with **Ray Cline**, former CIA chief of operations. The CIA's aim seems to be to steer

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RENAMO away from Pretoria and remove pro-Pretoria elements in the movement's external leadership. Retired General **John Singlaub**, another CIA contact, also maintains a close interest. He was particularly close to RENAMO official **João Ataíde**, one of several RENAMO people murdered in the US-South African struggle for control.

The battle for control of US policy on RENAMO tipped irreversibly in favour of the State Department after publication of a report by **Robert Gersony**. It accused the rebels of carrying out atrocities and murdering at least 100,000 people. President **P.W. Botha**, during his 1988 meeting with President Chissano at Songo, promised to cut off South African support.

With RENAMO strong militarily but weak diplomatically, and FRELIMO having overwhelming diplomatic backing but a flagging army, the stage was set to bring the two sides together. Chissano solidified the dominance of the more pragmatic core of the FRELIMO leadership, forging a coalition of himself, Transport Minister **Armando Guebuza**, Security Minister **Mariano Matsinhe**, and his old friend Foreign Minister **Pascoal Mocumbi**, expected to

climb to the Political Bureau at the Fifth Congress.

The superpowers are also working together. The Soviet Union backed Chissano's search for peace by informing Mozambique's generals that there would be no more major arms supplies. Moscow has pressured Pretoria too, with Deputy Foreign Minister **Anatoly Adamishin** presenting **Pik Botha** with evidence that South African support for the rebels continues. US diplomats in the region still insist that RENAMO continues to receive supplies from South Africa. FRELIMO units spotted a helicopter arriving at the town of Magude, 50 miles north of Maputo, on 14 June and leaving towards the South African border. Another unidentified helicopter was spotted in the same area on 18 June.

As US ambassador to Maputo **Melissa Wells** championed improved relations with the Maputo government, other people in Washington set about cleaning RENAMO's external representation of its pro-South African elements, symbolised by **Fernandes** and **Fonseca**. **Schaaf** has visited the RENAMO headquarters in Gorongosa several times this year. All these efforts seem to have culminated in the restructuring announced in RENAMO's June congress ●



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## Angola: Mobutu's master-stroke brings less than peace

The 22 June handshake between Angolan rivals President José Eduardo dos Santos and Jonas Savimbi is of enormous symbolic importance. But precious little of substance lies behind it.

The handshake was a diplomatic triumph for Zaïre's redoubtable President Mobutu Sese Seko. The 17 foreign heads of state assembled by Mobutu at Gbadolite, his home town, were as surprised as the rest of the world by the events of 22 June. The Angola peace process was dragging its feet. The next summit meeting was not due until August, the date agreed last May during the previous Angola peace summit in Luanda. During the May meeting, dos Santos had unveiled a peace plan notable mainly for its lack of fresh thinking. Luanda's position was essentially to call for national recon-

ciliation based on an amnesty for members of the *União Nacional para Independência Total de Angola* (UNITA) and their incorporation into the existing political machinery. Luanda was still refusing to negotiate with Savimbi in person.

Some days before the 22 June summit, Mobutu began inviting African heads of state to Gbadolite. Some were invited no more than a few hours in advance. None had much idea of the back-stairs diplomacy taking place on 22 June as they waited for the evening banquet. Savimbi, arriving two hours after the last head of state, was whisked away to an ante-room, with many of the attendant heads of state unaware even that he was in Zaïre.

The man most likely to object to Savimbi's presence, dos



Santos, had received a phone call from Mobutu only minutes before his scheduled departure from Luanda. Mobutu told him that there was a possibility that Savimbi might be present. A furious dos Santos told his aides to cancel the trip. What made him change his mind is not quite clear, but Mobutu appears to have put pressure on dos Santos through other African heads of state, spreading word around the chanceries and presidential palaces of Africa that he had obtained from Savimbi the promise of a ceasefire and a peace accord. Other heads of state thereupon put enormous pressure on dos Santos to go to the summit. The result was the historic Gbadolite handshake and the Gbadolite declaration. The latter does not mention UNITA or Savimbi once in its text.

Mobutu's triumph in orchestrating the handshake came just before his visit to Washington, where he is the first African head of state to be received at the White House by President **George Bush**. But he also has more enduring motives. Mobutu appears to have extracted some important promises from dos Santos during the May summit in Luanda, including, possibly, concessions on Zaïrean access to Angolan fishing and oil. In return, dos Santos was hoping that his foreign minister, **Pedro de Castro van Dunem 'Loy'**, would go to Washington in June with Mobutu. This would hasten diplomatic recognition of the Angolan government by Washington. Mobutu wanted to arrive in Washington with a resounding diplomatic victory under his belt in order to disarm the anti-Mobutu and human rights lobbies in the **United States**. He needs US financial and military aid, opposed by such as Congressmen **Howard Wolpe** and **Ronald Dellums**.

Mobutu is also concerned about longer-term US support. With the decline of East-West tension and the forthcoming independence of **Namibia**, and above all with the imminent departure of **Cuban** forces from Angola, he fears that Angola could replace Zaïre as the leading US ally in the region. Angola is rich, it has access to the sea, and it shares a border with **Namibia**, making it a point of commercial access to **Namibia** and southern Africa. It is imperative for Mobutu to remain a pivot of Western diplomacy. This is why he wrote into the Gbadolite declaration a clause establishing an international commission to oversee Angolan reconciliation under the chairmanship of himself.

As for UNITA, Savimbi's handshake with dos Santos is a huge symbolic victory. Savimbi, labelled a bandit, terrorist, mercenary and **South African** puppet by the Luanda government, can now throw these words in Luanda's face. In return, Savimbi agreed to sign a document - the Gbadolite declaration - which had been the subject of little negotiation.

Savimbi needs a chance to take stock of his diplomatic options. UNITA, like everyone else in Angola, is tired of

war. Once **Namibia** becomes independent next year it will have lost any possibility of re-supply from the **Caprivi Strip**. The US government finds UNITA less and less useful (AC Vol 30 No 3). The Luanda government is increasingly accepted internationally, not least by international businessmen interested in the prospect of an Angolan-Namibian block linked by good communications. Savimbi can therefore see his international support leaking away. UNITA's undoubted ability to create insecurity becomes an irritant to diplomats and businessmen in proportion as peace and prosperity reign in Angola. Savimbi's trump card in regional affairs now is his ability to create problems for Zaïre if Mobutu doesn't give him the backing he requires. UNITA fighters are already based in Zaïre. While some UNITA intellectuals are strongly in favour of peace, others may demand an explanation for the 22 June handshake. This is perhaps why, eight days after the ceasefire, UNITA attacked the power-lines bringing electricity to Luanda and mined a civilian convoy near Huambo.

On the question of exile, it seems clear that Savimbi never agreed to any such proposal. The main source for the assertion that Savimbi agreed to go into exile is President **Kenneth Kaunda**, an enemy since the two were allies in the mid-1970s.

Inside Angola, cadres of the *Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola* (MPLA) fear the challenge to their power and privileges represented by a future influx of UNITA cadres. The MPLA has no more than 30-35,000 members. UNITA could probably muster many more, threatening to swamp an integrated party. Integration in the armed forces, on the other hand, would be comparatively easy. Senior MPLA members also fear Savimbi. So while UNITA can face the prospect of political reconciliation with relative confidence, in spite of the existence of UNITA dissidents (AC Vol 29 No 16), the faction-ridden MPLA is nervous about its ability to stand united through a testing period of negotiation. There could now be a period of extended struggle between hard-liners and conciliators within the MPLA. Dos Santos is relying on the support of his allies within the party. He has the backing of Moscow. Above all he is counting on economic success to win friends in Luanda. Peace would lead to a big influx of foreign capital and the rehabilitation of resources such as the **Benguela railway**, the diamond mines and the coffee-fields.

While the MPLA in particular remains nervous of reconciliation, international factors too continue to render Angola volatile. For Pretoria, **Namibian** independence is the top regional priority. Until **Namibia** achieves independence, as long as there are Cubans in Angola, and as long as the super-powers have not specifically underwritten the Angolan peace process, the situation remains volatile. ●