

CHINESE FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS MOZAMBIQUE, 1963-1997

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1. INTRODUCTION

As in much of Africa, organised anti-colonialist nationalism developed in Mozambique after the Second World War and a number of political parties were formed to express anti-Portuguese sentiment. The *Frente de Libertação de Moçambique* (FRELIMO) was formed in 1962 as an amalgamation of a number of Mozambican nationalist parties, with Eduardo Mondlane, an associate professor of Syracuse University, as FRELIMO's first president. Early on in the struggle for liberation, the question of international recognition arose. Under Mondlane, FRELIMO undertook a vigorous campaign to achieve international recognition as the representative of the Mozambican people and was largely successful with FRELIMO achieving endorsement as the sole representative of the national liberation struggle by the United Nations. As part of this campaign, FRELIMO was keen to avoid becoming involved in the Sino-Soviet dispute and so referred to both Moscow and Beijing as "trailblazers" and "true revolutionaries".² At the same time, FRELIMO under Mondlane also maintained close linkages with Western supporters and was able to largely avoid the rivalries that other liberation organisations suffered through siding in the Sino-Soviet argument. Indeed, despite pressure from both Moscow and Beijing, the Mozambicans consistently managed to maintain a policy of neutrality towards either Communist power. This tactic continued as a bedrock of the FRELIMO government's foreign policy after independence.³

2. EARLY TIES

Chinese contact with FRELIMO stem back from 1963 when the

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2 *Mozambique Revolution* (Dar es Salaam), December 1964, p. 2 cited in T Henriksen, *Revolution and Counterrevolution: Mozambique's War of Independence, 1964-1974* (Westport, Connecticut, 1983), p. 183.

3 See R Henderson, "Principles and practice in Mozambique's foreign policy", *World Today*, Vol. 34(1), July 1978, pp. 276-86.

organisation's Secretary for External Relations, Marcelinos dos Santos, visited Beijing. The importance which China attached to the growing liberation movement in Mozambique and in southern Africa in general was illustrated by the fact that Dos Santos and his delegation was received by Mao Zedong himself. The visit came at a time of acute rivalry between Moscow and Beijing for the attention of the various African liberation organisations and it was an opportune moment for FRELIMO to develop aid linkages with Beijing. FRELIMO and China drew relatively close, with a number of FRELIMO cadres undergoing training in China.⁴ Armed with Chinese-made weapons, FRELIMO launched their armed struggle on 24 September, 1964.

3. PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA GUERRILLA TRAINING

Chinese training of FRELIMO guerrillas was extensive, though the Portuguese claim that 90 per cent of FRELIMO's troops had been trained by the PRC was no doubt an exaggeration.⁵ What is more likely is that most FRELIMO cadres were trained in Tanzania by either Chinese instructors or Chinese-trained Mozambicans. Indeed, one estimate asserted that only fifty Mozambicans received training in China itself, as opposed to the three hundred who were instructed in the Soviet Union.⁶ Like ZANU in Rhodesia, FRELIMO adopted Chinese guerrilla tactics well-suited to Mozambican conditions and Samora Machel was later to thank the Chinese for their help, saying "the assistance [China] rendered to the Mozambican people's war constituted one of the factors of vital significance in our victory... China supplied us with large quantities of arms and other equipment at many decisive junctures, for instance...when we were consolidating our military victory".⁷

In fact, FRELIMO aimed at balancing any overt foreign influence on its movement and was careful not to move too close to either Moscow or Beijing. An example of this was the insistence that any arms transfers to FRELIMO must be registered and supplied via the African Liberation Committee of the Organisation of African Unity. In the event, Chinese arms transfers amounted

4 See "Communist Chinese Involvement with African Liberation Movements in Mozambique, Rhodesia and French Somaliland, 1964-74", *African Studies*, Vol. 6-7, December 1976, p. 43.

5 General De Arriaga, Portuguese Commander-in-Chief in Mozambique until 1973, *Daily Telegraph*, 25 September 1972.

6 *Communist aid to the less well developed countries of the free world, 1976* (Central Intelligence Agency, Washington DC, 1976), p. 6.

7 *New China News Agency*, 25 May 1978, cited in *Foreign Broadcast Information Service - China* (hereafter *FBIS-CHI*), 26 May 1978, p. A30.

to only US\$ 1 million compared to the Soviet's reported US\$ 15 million worth supplied to FRELIMO.⁸ Although preferring an organisation untainted by ties with Moscow, Beijing had no choice but to continue supporting FRELIMO whilst in turn attempting to minimise Moscow's influence. This was because FRELIMO was the only effective fighting liberation organisation in Mozambique, though for a period of time Beijing also supported a rival organisation - *Comité Revolucionário de Moçambique* (COREMO).

4. BEIJING AND COREMO

COREMO was formed in 1965 as a radicalist split from FRELIMO, and almost immediately sought aid and recognition from Beijing. After talks between COREMO's leader, Paulo Gumane, and the chairman of the Chinese Committee for Afro-Asian Solidarity, COREMO received some military aid and began operating from Zambia. The PRC was able to support COREMO without unduly offending FRELIMO because COREMO operated largely in the south of Mozambique whilst FRELIMO was northern-based.

This support lasted from 1965 through to 1971 and was referred to by the Beijing press carrying COREMO's media statements alongside that of FRELIMO's. Chinese support for COREMO stemmed from Beijing's desire to combat Soviet influence and its perceived hegemonic manoeuvres in the region, and organisations such as COREMO acted as a useful conduit for opposing Moscow's activities in the liberation struggle. In addition, the radicalisation of China's position during the Cultural Revolution meant that acceptance of Maoism as a guiding principle became a requirement for any organisation to receive aid from China. For small splittist organisations such as COREMO desperate for international recognition, acceptance of Mao Zedong Thought was a small price to pay.

However, China also wrote approvingly of FRELIMO's usage of Maoist-style guerrilla tactics and paid tribute to military successes enjoyed by the organisation. Beijing recognised that FRELIMO was the prime liberation organisation in Mozambique and though Sino-FRELIMO relations stagnated during the Cultural Revolution, they were never allowed to disappear altogether.

8 G Yu "Sino-Soviet Rivalry in Africa", in D Albright (ed.), *Africa and International Communism* (London, 1980), p. 176.

5. POST-CULTURAL REVOLUTION

The Cultural Revolution had seen relations between Beijing and FRELIMO go into a state of inertia, with no delegations to China from Mozambique between 1967 and 1970. In addition, 1969 saw the assassination of Eduardo Mondlane, attributed to the Portuguese secret service or a clique within FRELIMO with "Maoist tendencies".⁹ The blame on the pro-Maoist faction rests on the argument that the radical wing of FRELIMO was frustrated at the moderate politics of Mondlane and sought to redirect FRELIMO's political ideology in a more openly Marxist direction. Certainly, as a result of the assassination there was a change in leadership and a swing to the left with Samora Machel becoming President of FRELIMO. Whilst Mondlane had been generally reluctant to accept too much assistance from China, Machel accepted Chinese help with little prompting.¹⁰

However, following the invasion of Czechoslovakia by Moscow in 1968 and the Sino-Soviet border clashes in 1969, China became fixated with the perceived threat from the Soviets and slowly abandoned its more radical posturing in favour of a less aggressive position vis-à-vis the West and a more realistic policy in the Third World. In Mozambican terms this translated into an abandonment of the less effective splinter organisations such as COREMO.¹¹ Sino-FRELIMO ties were considerably strengthened to the extent that a FRELIMO defector was able to announce that, "[FRELIMO] is commanded by Communist China, although the Soviet Union...still continues to supply much war material".¹² This however was an oversimplification, though FRELIMO did have the distinction of receiving long-term aid and support from both Communist powers. Whilst most FRELIMO guerrillas received their training from Chinese instructors, they were largely armed by Moscow and FRELIMO was faced with opposing camps for its political allegiance. It was an achievement of FRELIMO's that it largely succeeded in transcending the Sino-Soviet squabbles.¹³

9 **Radio Lisbon**, 3 February 1969, cited by **Africa Contemporary Record, 1969-70**, p. C157.

10 **Sec I Christie, Machel of Mozambique** (Harare, 1988).

11 COREMO was last mentioned in the Chinese press in February 1971. The term "patriotic armed forces" was then used by Beijing (see, for example, **New China News Agency**, 6 March 1971, cited in **FBIS-CHI**, 12 March 1971, p. A6).

12 Cited in **M Glantz and M El-Khawas, "On the liberation of African liberation movements"** in **W Weinstein, Chinese and Soviet Aid to Africa** (New York, 1975), p. 215.

13 **T Henriksen, "Angola, Mozambique and the Soviet Union: liberation and the quest for influence"** in **Weinstein**, pp. 56-75.

6. POST-1974 COUP AND INDEPENDENCE

In Portugal, widespread disillusionment at the inability to win the colonial wars provoked the April 1974 coup which established a new government pledged to withdraw from Africa. This resulted in a cease-fire agreement being reached in Mozambique in September 1974. FRELIMO was at this point very much the government-in-waiting and the Chinese recognised this fact with their description of the organisation as the "true representatives of the Mozambican people".¹⁴ Zhou Enlai sent a message of congratulations to FRELIMO, but warned that "neo-colonialism of all colours will look for opportunities to stick in their hands and make trouble".¹⁵ This was to be a theme of Beijing's post-independent ties with Mozambique, with China urgently advising the new government to pay particular attention to the manoeuvres of the Soviets.

In February 1975, Samora Machel paid a state visit to China, where Machel met Zhou Enlai in hospital and China committed US\$ 59 million to Mozambique (while Moscow by contrast had given only US\$ 3 million to date).¹⁶ The PRC also rushed to send Chinese doctors to replace the Portuguese who had left en masse upon Mozambican independence. At this point, FRELIMO in fact seemed to concur with Chinese attitudes vis-à-vis Soviet encroachment and condemned Moscow for requesting military base rights in the country, with Machel asserting that Mozambique would "never agree to any interference in our government from outside".¹⁷ Sino-Mozambican relations seemed strengthened with the signing of an economic and technical agreement in July 1975.¹⁸

However, in early 1976 the PRC ambassador was recalled to Beijing and not replaced, and from this point onwards Chinese influence in Mozambique was supplanted by Moscow. The relative decline in Chinese influence may be traced to the fact that the PRC made the costly mistake of backing the FNLA against the MPLA in Angola. The MPLA's leader, Agostinho Neto, and Machel were old comrades and Mozambique had eagerly supported him in the civil war. In addition, China's physical limitations in terms of sophisticated military hardware available for offer to Mozambique was not sufficient for the new state

14 Peking Review, 13 September 1974.

15 New China News Agency, 15 September 1974, cited in FBIS-CHI, 16 September 1974, p. A10.

16 Yu, p. 170.

17 New China News Agency, 22 June 1975, cited in FBIS-CHI, 24 June 1975, p. A20.

18 New China News Agency, 3 July 1975, cited in FBIS-CHI, 7 July 1975, p. A20.

and forced Maputo to turn to Moscow. As a result of Beijing being unable to satisfy Mozambique's needs, Moscow gradually gained a prominent position in the country and further extended its influence in the region. Coming after the Angola débâcle, the events in post-independent Mozambique marked a low-point in Chinese foreign policy in southern Africa.

Indications that Sino-Mozambican ties were not as strong as supposed were illustrated in February 1976 when the Mozambican Minister of Industry and Trade visited Moscow and signed a number of trade agreements with the Soviets, following Machel's state visit to Moscow in May. During the visit, Machel proclaimed that "the people of Mozambique greatly appreciate the consistent and disinterested aid and the international position of the Soviet Union...We want to establish model relations between the People's Republic of Mozambique and the Soviet Union".¹⁹

Clearly, Machel rejected Beijing's warnings regarding Soviet intentions in Mozambique and Mozambique's disdain for Chinese activities in Angola was evidenced by the fact that the US\$ 59 million pledged by China in 1975 remained disembursed. Despite robust protestations that the Soviets were "stretching their tentacles into Africa in its contention for hegemony",²⁰ Machel chose to ignore Beijing and favour the aid offered by Moscow. Machel made his desire for strengthening Soviet-Mozambique relations explicit when he pledged to make Mozambique the first fully Marxist state in Africa. Speeches at the FRELIMO congress the next year made it apparent that it was the Soviet Marxist state that Machel was aiming for, and not that of China.

At the FRELIMO congress in February 1977, the organisation called for the application of scientific socialism and declared Mozambique a Marxist-Leninist state. This indicated a moving towards the Soviet model and, coupled with the steady increase in Soviet and other Warsaw Pact advisers and technicians, indicated that Chinese influence in Mozambique was on the wane. Indeed, China was notably absent from the list of twenty three Communist delegations in attendance. The visit to Mozambique by the Soviet President Podgorny and the decision by Machel to sign the Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation in March 1977, indicated that a discernible shift towards Moscow occurred in early 1977.

19 BBC Summary of World Broadcasts: Soviet Union, 19 May 1976, p. A5/3.

20 New China News Agency, 19 August 1976, cited in FBIS-CHI, 20 August 1976, p. A19.

7. TEMPORARY THAWING BETWEEN MAPUTO AND BEIJING

Relations between China and Mozambique did, however, slightly thaw in 1977, though largely on the economic level. Mozambique sent a low-level trade delegation to China in July 1977, and China reciprocated by sending a trade team to the Maputo International Trade Fair in August 1977. In September the Economic Planning Minister, Marcelinos dos Santos, visited Beijing and signed a treaty of economic and technical co-operation. This visit by Dos Santos was an attempt by Beijing to heal the breach in relations and as Dos Santos put it, "strengthen the co-operation between the governments and peoples of the two countries".²¹ This thawing in relations was signalled by the return to Maputo of a new Chinese ambassador in November 1977.

More forcefully, the improving *political* relationship between China and Mozambique was indicated by Machel's state visit to China in May 1978. Beijing downplayed Mozambique's links with Moscow, pointing out that Maputo had signed agreements with a variety of countries and Beijing apparently felt satisfied with pledges of non-alignment by Machel.

China evidently saw its policy in the region being best served by encouraging an independence in spirit amongst African states, to resist super power influence. Certainly, Sino-Mozambican relations seemed heading for a new warmth, with Mozambican newspapers praising the legacy of Mao and the Chinese revolution,²² and the Chinese Vice-Premier visiting in January 1979.

However, the thawing in Sino-Mozambique relations were halted and ties took a second downturn caused by events outside of Africa. Mozambique criticised China for its border war with Vietnam and likened China's support for Pol Pot in Cambodia as defending tyrants such as Idi Amin.²³ During his visit the previous May, Machel had publicly expressed concern over the tensions between Vietnam and Kampuchea and had urged a peaceful settling of the dispute "on the basis of Marxism-Leninism".²⁴ Angered by Chinese actions, Machel officially registered Mozambican displeasure with Beijing's behaviour at the Chinese embassy in Maputo. Later when Machel refused to condemn the

21 New China News Agency, 16 September 1977, cited in FBIS-CHI, 19 September 1977, p. A22.

22 Noticias (Maputo), 9 September 1978, cited by New China News Agency, 12 September 1977, cited in FBIS-CHI, 13 September, 1978, p. A26.

23 Africa Contemporary Record, 1979-80, p. B737.

24 New China News Agency, 25 May 1978, cited in FBIS-CHI, 26 May 1978, p. A29.

Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Beijing was incensed by such posturing for it had hoped that Afghanistan would spur Third World states against Moscow. Instead, Mozambique joined Angola in refusing to criticise the Soviets, and shortly after the Chinese ambassador in Maputo was recalled.

Conversely, Moscow-Maputo ties were strengthened. In January 1980 four Soviet fishing boats were added to the joint Soviet-Mozambican fishing corporation. In November Machel visited Moscow and it became clear that Maputo wished to join COMECON. As if to reinforce Maputo's closeness with the Soviets, FRELIMO opened its second embassy outside the African continent in Moscow (the other being in Lisbon). The breakdown in Sino-Mozambican relations in 1979-80 eclipsed that of 1976-77 and relations between Mozambique and China remained cool and with little substance.

8. RELATIONS IN THE 1980s

China's foreign policies changed somewhat in the early 1980s as Beijing toned down its anti-Soviet posturing for one of equidistance between the two super powers. This was provoked by disappointment at Reagan's selling of arms to Taiwan and also Chinese perceptions of growing US power and a stagnating Soviet Union. This raised the prospect of a hegemonic super power - the USA - on the rise with no effective challenger in Moscow. As a result, China's "independent foreign policy" was born.

This change in policy coincided with events in Mozambique. Destabilisation by South Africa through the *Resistência Nacional Moçambicana* (RENAMO) meant that the security of the Mozambique state was under serious threat. After a disastrous famine in 1983, Soviet aid was seen to be inadequate, and as a result, Machel began a campaign of opening up and broadening contacts, particularly with the European Community and China. Thus Mozambican foreign policy encouraged closer co-operation with Beijing. Whilst China could in no way offer satisfactory military assistance, the broadening of economic and political ties was important for Maputo and at the same time suited Beijing.

In August 1982 Maputo and Beijing signed a trade deal by which Mozambican cotton would be exchanged for chemical products, consumer goods and agricultural equipment. This was in part a recognition by Maputo that Soviet largesse could no longer be relied upon and that alternative sources

of aid and assistance were required. Thus the attendance of a Chinese delegation at FRELIMO's Fourth Congress, may be seen as an indicator of the change in Mozambique's foreign relations.

In a desire to broaden its Third World contacts and extend its economic markets, China sought out states willing to conduct business with Beijing. Mozambique was one such country. During a visit by Chissano to China in September 1983, the Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs made this quite explicit saying, "China is willing to strengthen its economic and technical co-operation with the Third World in a concerted effort to establish a new international economic order."²⁵ Two years later, Beijing extended a US\$ 13 million loan without interest to Mozambique. Of this amount, US\$ 2 million was to buy Chinese consumer goods, whilst US\$ 2 million worth of goods were donated.

Chinese trade with Mozambique has been low-keyed and unremarkable, but has allowed Beijing to maintain a presence in the country. Sino-Mozambican trade suffered a slump after the ties had been strained following Vietnam and Afghanistan. However, as relations have gradually improved and ties strengthened, so the extent of trade between the two countries has increased. An examination of the trade figures between China and Mozambique bears this out. Yet, as can be seen, trade between China and Mozambique remains on a somewhat low level and also in favour of China - stressing the fact that Mozambique has relatively little to offer Beijing on a commercial basis.

Table 1: Sino-Mozambican trade relations²⁶

Unit: US\$ one million

	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986
Exports to Moz.	.3	.3	-	1	-	-	4	19	17	20
Imports from Moz.	2	4	5	8	-	-	.1	-	13	7

25 Xinhua, 13 September 1983, cited in FBIS-CHI, 14 September 1983, p. 13.

26 Data from the CIA's *China International Trade, Fourth Quarter (1980-87)*, cited in *China: Facts and Figures* (Academic International Press, Gulf Breeze, Florida, various years); *China's Customs Statistics* (Economic Information Agency, Hong Kong, various years); and *China Statistical Yearbook, 1996* (China Statistical Publishing House, Beijing, 1996).

	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
Exports to Moz.	18	85	66	13	12	21	16.5	6.5	11.5
Imports from Moz.	26	13	52	59	47	38	7	5.6	1.1

9. MACHEL'S VISIT TO CHINA, 1984

In March 1984, Mozambique and South Africa signed the Nkomati Accord whereby FRELIMO agreed not to harbour South African liberation personnel and Pretoria ostensibly committed itself to giving up support for RENAMO. This accord was seen as a defeat for Moscow as it was an open acknowledgement that the Soviet Union had failed in its defence of Maputo.²⁷ For its part, China recognised the difficulties Maputo was suffering and refrained from criticising FRELIMO for dealing with South Africa. The growing links between China and Mozambique were symbolised by Samora Machel's visit to China in July 1983, indicating Maputo's desire for a complete normalisation of relations. At a time when the activities of RENAMO were paralysing the economic life of the country, Mozambique was grateful for Chinese help and Machel was gratified by the decision to develop economic and technical co-operation and explore the possibilities of exploiting the natural resources of Mozambique through joint ventures.²⁸ The visit was later in the year followed up by a fishing protocol being formalised, granting licences to Chinese fishing boats in return for Chinese assistance and materials for developing Mozambican fisheries, and in February 1985 Beijing provided US\$ 230 000 worth of farming equipment.

10. POST-MACHEL RELATIONS

Samora Machel's death in an aeroplane crash in October 1986 was widely commented on in the Chinese press and Machel was referred to as a "respected old friend". Beijing quickly moved to assure Machel's successor, Joaquim Chissano, of its continued support and wish to continue bilateral co-operation. In March 1987 a delegation arrived in China to study its agricultural reforms and learn from its development of small projects. Under Chissano a process of

27 For an exposition of this, see D Albright, *Soviet policy in southern Africa after Nkomati* (South African Institute of International Affairs, Johannesburg, 1985).

28 *Xinhua*, 18 July 1984, cited in FBIS-CHI, 18 July 1984, p. 14.

restructuring the economy, promoting growth and development, reforming the stagnant state apparatus and moving away from the Leninist model was embarked upon. China's own history of shifting from the command model to the market model was viewed as offering possible lessons to Maputo. As the visiting Mozambican Prime Minister, Mario Machungo, was told, "China's past experiences and current reform and opening policy can serve as reference for Mozambique".²⁹

An agricultural co-operation agreement was signed in April 1988, pledging China to send agronomists and a technical group to Mozambique. Later on, Chissano again visited China and the PRC donated a substantial US\$ 13,5 million credit to be repaid after twenty years and with a twenty year grace period and no interest. China again took the opportunity to advise and encourage Chissano concerning his economic reform programme and to assert that Mozambique's "policies are correct [if] they are conducive to the development of the productive forces".³⁰ Indeed, Deng Xiaoping took great pains to remind Chissano that "poverty is by no means socialism" and that one must take "a firm grip of [one's] country's concrete situation in drawing up...policies".³¹

11. POST-TIANANMEN SQUARE

Mozambique, like most African states, remained aloof from criticism of Beijing following June 1989. Mozambique was one of the countries visited by Qian Qichen during his August 1989 tour and as *Xinhua* noted, "the measures adopted by the Chinese Government in quelling the riot received the foreign leaders' understanding and support".³² During the visit, Beijing granted US\$ 12 million to construct a new parliament in Maputo and also signed two agricultural agreements. The theme of domestic stability was continued when a visiting Mozambican delegation was told that "a developing country can attain economic growth only in a favourable environment of domestic political stability and unity".³³ For a country ravaged by internal opposition and sabotage, such words from China would only have been too well understood.

29 *Xinhua*, 4 November 1987, cited in *FBIS-CHI*, 5 November 1987, p. 6.

30 *Xinhua*, 17 May 1988, cited in *FBIS-CHI*, 17 May 1988, p. 16.

31 *Xinhua*, 18 May 1988, cited in *FBIS-CHI*, 18 May 1988, p. 16.

32 *Xinhua*, 13 August 1989, cited in *FBIS-CHI*, 14 August 1989, p. 8.

33 *Xinhua*, 21 August 1989, cited in *FBIS-CHI*, 21 August 1989, p. 12.

12. POST-COLD WAR RELATIONS

In December 1990 the Mozambican National Assembly decided to allow multi-party competition and moved away from the Marxist-Leninist model. The country became simply the Republic of Mozambique, and no longer the People's Republic.³⁴ With the demise of the Soviet Union and the subsequent cutback in aid and assistance, Mozambique realised that it had to be prepared to face this harsh reality and to find new paths and new partners".³⁵ China was seen by Mozambique as a natural partner with whom to continue and further develop links. In December 1992 Qian Qichen visited Mozambique and agreed to further develop bilateral ties.³⁶ Qian congratulated Maputo on signing a peace agreement with RENAMO and expressed the hope that this peace would enable Mozambique to enter a new stage of economic development and progress.

Relations in the mid-1990s have remained concentrated around trade and the desire by China to maintain a support base from which it can shield itself against adverse criticism by the West. China continued to help Mozambique in its economic reforms, with Jiang Zemin telling the visiting Mozambican Prime Minister, Machungo, in May 1993 that China was "ready to further strengthen co-operation".³⁷ In turn, Machungo asserted that "remarkable economic achievements made by China in recent years have set a good example for other developing countries all over the world".³⁸ A trade delegation from Guizhou was sent to Mozambique shortly after to explore co-operation in industry, agriculture and tourism. Significantly, Beijing took an interest in the peace process in Mozambique, urging international aid for rebuilding the shattered country, donating cash to the Mozambican disaster relief committee, and sending a number of observers to supervise the Mozambican multi-party elections in October 1994. Beijing also donated educational equipment to the value of US\$ 25 000 as a goodwill gesture to the newly re-elected government. Previously, a Chinese official had met privately with Alonso Dhlakama, head of RENAMO, to encourage the peace negotiations prior to the elections. As a result of the elections, Chinese Vice-Premier Zhu Rongji, whilst on the

34 For an account of this transformation in Mozambique's political orientation, see M Simpson, "Foreign and domestic factors in the transformation of FRELIMO", *Journal of Modern African Affairs*, Vol. 31(2), 1993, pp. 309-37.

35 *Xinhua*, 11 February 1991, cited in *FBIS-CHI*, 12 February 1991, p. 16.

36 *Xinhua*, 9 December 1992, cited in *FBIS-CHI*, 10 December 1992, p. 15.

37 *Xinhua*, 6 May 1993, cited in *FBIS-CHI*, 7 May 1993, p. 17.

38 *Xinhua*, 5 July 1993, cited in *FBIS-CHI*, 7 July 1993, p. 9.

Mozambican leg of his seven-nation southern African tour, declared in July 1995 that "the realisation of peace...had created favourable conditions for the expansion of economic and trade co-operation between China and Mozambique".³⁹ It is this activity that will likely shape future Sino-Mozambican interaction. Zhu Rongji welcomed the General Secretary of FRELIMO, Manuel Jorge Tome, to Beijing in January 1996 and asserted that China would continue to support Mozambique's attempts at restoring the economy following the peace agreement.

13. CONCLUDING REMARKS

During the independence struggle, FRELIMO's aim of eliminating Portuguese colonial rule tied in with both Moscow's goal of disturbing Western predominance in Africa and Beijing's policy of combating perceived hegemonic manoeuvrings by the super powers. China was able to exploit FRELIMO's desire for international recognition and the need for aid and assistance, to involve itself in the liberation struggle in order to thwart total Soviet influence over the Mozambican revolutionaries. Whilst FRELIMO was determinedly resistant to any overt demand for loyalty over and above the normal friendly discourse that it was willing to offer to either Moscow or Beijing, this actually coincided with the Chinese policy requirements for it meant that there was little chance of Mozambique succumbing to the hegemonic aspirations of Moscow as perceived by China. In essence this meant that during and immediately after the liberation war, China felt relaxed at the state of Sino-Mozambican relations.

However, following China's disastrous involvement in Angola and the heavily-criticised invasion of northern Vietnam in 1979, coupled with Maputo's refusal to condemn Moscow's invasion of Afghanistan, Sino-Mozambican ties slumped to their lowest ebb. It was only with patient work on the part of China that Beijing was able to reconstruct a satisfactory relationship with Maputo and re-engage Mozambique as a friendly state in the region. Sino-Mozambican relations in the 1980s and 1990s have increasingly come to be dominated by economic and commercial matters, as the race for economic growth in China has spurred Beijing's policies elsewhere. China has been an enthusiastic supporter of Mozambique's economic reform programme and has repeatedly proffered China's own reform experience as a model from which Maputo could learn. This has been accepted by Mozambique, as has the no-strings attached aid that China has granted to the country on occasions.

39 *Xinhua*, 26 July 1995, cited in FBIS-CHI, 27 July 1995, p. 5.

Mozambique is a country of little strategic use for Beijing now that the Cold War has ended. However, China is as determined as ever to prevent the dominance of one country over another in distant regions, as this would necessarily exclude Chinese influence and be a blow to China's pretensions of a major power. Thus Beijing has been and will likely continue to be involved in Mozambique on a low-level of interaction, as a means by which Chinese influence and prestige may be extended, at little cost to the Chinese exchequer and nominal political and economic commitment.