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Divining Peace From Political Terrorism in Mozambique: A Case for Negotiating With Terrorists

Kevin Ellsworth

Introduction

Counter-terrorist efforts frequently entail the narrow policy options of repression, violent confrontation, and retaliation. The United States' "no deals" policy (Busby 1990, 1), for example, has long been widely accepted and praised. Often, however, these tactics are ineffective and even detrimental to peace-making efforts. Consequently, broader counter-terrorism strategies must be considered which include concession and negotiation. Mozambique's recent peace process and several new theoretical frameworks support the thesis that negotiation and concession are effective means of divining peace from political terrorism.

After a review of the relevant literature, I expose the limits of the traditional anti-terrorist approach by discussing first the weaknesses inherent in defining terrorism—weaknesses which tend to prevent an effective resolution by imposing narrow policy choices which exclude concession and negotiation. Second, I introduce Mozambique's terrorist organization, Renamo, and demonstrate that it fulfills all facets of terrorism's traditional definitions. Third, I demonstrate that in spite of Renamo's terrorist character, negotiation and concession have established a peace which repression and retaliation never provided. Finally, I review two conflict resolution theories which when applied to counter-terrorism encourage concession over repression and help explain Mozambique's successful peace process.

Literature Review

A vast amount of literature is available concerning terrorism and its contributing factors, especially by Jeffrey Ross (1993) who synthesizes most previous work on causal approaches to terrorism. Substantial writings are also available which attempt to define terrorism and document its occurrences. Research is lacking, however, which addresses negotiating with terrorist organizations. Almost universally, scholars and politicians prescribe a hard-line approach of preemption, repression, violent confrontation, and sometimes retaliation when confronting terrorist organizations. Available research regarding negotiations deals primarily with isolated terrorist incidents such as hijackings, kidnappings, and hostage situations (Atkinson, Sandler and Tschirhart 1987; Ochberg 1985; Roukis 1983; and Zartman 1990). Such negotiations do not address the terrorist organization as a whole or the possibility of a lasting peace.

These studies are useful when applied in some situations, but they do not deal with resolving the deeper ills of terrorism. The hard-line approach is effective when dealing with smaller, manageable cases of terrorism, but many nations are confronting terrorism on a much grander scale, a scale which calls for a different approach. The hard-line approach is ineffective and detrimental in third world nations where governments have neither the military resources nor political capital to address terrorism in the hard-line fashion, such as in Peru, Sri Lanka, and Mozambique, or in first world nations
confronted by well armed and organized terrorist organizations, as in the United Kingdom, Italy, and Israel.

Literature regarding political violence in general is abundant, but terrorism is something of a unique breed which has not been sufficiently addressed. Terrorism's perceived immoral component has encouraged anti-terrorist policy to bypass relevant conflict resolution analysis, causing governments to sometimes wage losing battles rather than seek peace through compromise and negotiation. Once the scope of policy options is broadened beyond the moral constraints of the anti-terrorist tradition, several studies on general political violence apply directly to situations like Mozambique's (Gupta, Singh, and Sprague 1993; and Lichbach 1987).

Regarding Mozambique's peace process, much has been written to document the conflict (Finnegan 1992; Hanlon 1991; Morgan 1990; and Hoile 1989). However, only Alden and Simpson (1993) have tried to analyze the peace process, but they focus primarily on the factors which brought the warring sides to the negotiating table and the history of the negotiations. They fail to generalize any theoretical implications of the Mozambican case study, or discuss the implications of successful negotiations with terrorists.

**Defining Terrorism**

The first step in seeking more effective anti-terrorist policies, is inspecting terrorism's inherently vague definition and the resulting vague label of terrorist. Many scholars have struggled to compose a comprehensive and exclusive definition for terrorism, but they continually confront numerous gray areas between terrorism and what may also be perceived as civil war, international aggression, governmental oppression, or armed revolution. Many definitions have emerged such as the following:

- Violent, criminal behavior designed primarily to generate fear in the community, or a substantial segment of it, for political purposes (National Advisory Committee on Criminal Justice Standards and Goals 1976, 3).

- Symbolic action designed to influence political behavior by extranormal means entailing the use or threat of violence (Thornton 1964, 71-99).

- The culturally unacceptable use or threat of violence directed toward symbolic targets to influence political behavior whether directly through fear, intimidation or coercion, or indirectly by affecting attitudes, emotions, or opinions (Field and Estes 1985).

Even with relatively specific definitions, the problem of application is still evident. Depending on one's moral or political perspective, such diverse organizations as the Irish Republican Army, the Nicaraguan Contra's, or the United Nations in Iraq could all fit these definitions.

To clarify this ambiguity, policy makers often add a moral component to their definition of a terrorist. This moral distinction is, however, neither operative nor practical. Instead, it complicates the resolution process by sanctioning policies based more on subjective moral judgments than on an objective reality. The results are sometimes devastating and war rages where peace might otherwise be created. To demonstrate this point, I will use the last above-mentioned definition of terrorism to show that Mozambique's terrorist force is a
model terrorist force in the traditional sense, and consequently a standard against which to measure the failure of traditional counter-terrorism efforts and the success of a negotiated peace.

**Mozambique’s Terrorist Organization**

The Mozambican terrorist organization, known as the Mozambican National Resistance or Renamo, fits the last above-mentioned definition of terrorism in every aspect:

- Renamo uses culturally unacceptable force
- Directed toward symbolic targets
- In an attempt to influence political behavior
- By use of direct fear, intimidation, and coercion
- And indirect influence over attitudes, emotions, and opinions.

**Culturally Unacceptable Force**

During 17 years of war against Mozambique’s government, Renamo has killed hundreds of thousands of Mozambicans to consolidate their power and create an atmosphere of terror. In their widely publicized Romoine Massacre, Renamo murdered 424 people including many who were bedridden in a hospital and new born infants. "Almost half [of the victims] were women," and many were children (Van Koevering 1987, 43). Smaller but similar attacks occurred frequently. Overall, Renamo killed as many as 100,000 people and indirectly caused the deaths of another 600,000 to one million (Perlez 1992, 1[A]) and (Ayisi 1989, 60).

**Symbolic Targets**

When Mozambique gained its independence in 1974 and the new Frelimo government came to power, the country desperately needed educational and health care facilities, so one of Frelimo’s first efforts was to construct hundreds of schools and health centers. These institutions soon came to represent the government in the minds of many Mozambicans, and therefore became excellent symbolic targets in the minds of Renamo. Between 1980 and 1988 alone, Renamo "rendered incapable" 1,800 schools and 720 health care facilities (Vines 1991, 17).

Another significant target had been Mozambique’s economy. By targeting the economy, Renamo not only weakened the government, but it also symbolically attacked the government’s strength and sovereignty. To disrupt an already weak economy, Renamo incapacitated 900 stores and 1,300 trucks and busses (Vines 1991, 17). Many roads were completely impassable and the railroads were under constant threat. Because the threat was so serious, neighboring Zimbabwe posted 10,000 troops along the Mozambican railways it used in order to protect Zimbabwe’s economic interests.

By 1990 Renamo’s attacks had cost Mozambique $15 billion (Schneidman 1991, 1), and forced the government to spend approximately 40 percent of its budget on defense (Morgan 1990, 617). In 1990 Mozambique was designated by the "World Bank as the world’s poorest country, with a GNP per capita of just $100" (Meldrum 1992, 29). Sixty percent of its people live in absolute poverty, meaning they lack adequate nutrition "even though 60 percent of their total income is spent on food"
(Chelala 1992, 19). Many felt that the economic devastation was so massive that "development [would] not begin until the rebels [were] either destroyed or incorporated into the country's government" (Huffman 1992, 27).

Attempts to Influence Political Behavior

Since its birth, Renamo has been a political actor. The white-minority ruled Rhodesian government originally established Renamo to destabilize and discredit Mozambique's black-ruled, Marxist government. Since Rhodesia's demise and South Africa's withdrawal from the Mozambican conflict, Renamo has now resorted to consolidating military and political power for itself.

Use of Fear, Intimidation, and Coercion

The Mozambican people lived in constant fear that they would fall victim to Renamo's unpredictable attacks, a fear Renamo intentionally cultivated. Renamo sometimes cut off the ears, nose, and lips of their victims and then allowed them to live as a source of warning and fear to all who saw them (Perlez 1992, 13 October, 8[A]). Renamo also coerced villages to provide Renamo with food and manpower—men and boys as young as thirteen years were forced to join Renamo's ranks.

The coercion did not end once these men were compelled into service. Under threat of death, Renamo forced the kidnapped recruits to fight with them (Minter 1989, 18). One reporter interviewed 32 Renamo terrorists and thirteen of which "had personal knowledge of the execution of Renamo combatants who tried to escape" (Minter 1989, 19). One escaped Mozambican claimed "the first thing they tell you is that if you try to escape, we'll kill you" (Ottaway 1992, 25[A]).

Influence over Attitudes, Emotions, and Opinions

At first, these atrocities led Mozambique's general population to hate Renamo which prevented Mozambique's government from compromising with Renamo. As the war waged on, however, this attitude began to soften. Renamo-induced starvation, for example, had a substantial impact on the Mozambicans' attitudes.

In 1992, four million Mozambicans were under threat of starvation (Matonse 1992, 29) due mostly to "terrorist activities," which had forced farmers from their land and severed many transportation routes (U.S. Congress, House 1988, 7). By creating an atmosphere of hopelessness through extreme poverty, starvation, and fear, Renamo has imposed upon the Mozambican people a weariness and readiness for compromise. A former Frelimo supporter articulated the general feeling of many desperate Mozambicans, "I don't even care anymore what kind of government we have, just so long as we have peace" (Meldrum 1992, 32). One man released from a rebel-held area stated his highest hopes saying, "Maybe we will be able to move a little bit now and search for food..." (Perlez 1992, 1[A]). By 1992 starvation and desperation had driven both sides to negotiate a settlement.

The Peace Process

The negotiating process formally began in July 1990 when Mozambique's no-win predicament had become evident and the Frelimo government began bargaining directly with Renamo. After many concessions and compromise, on 4 October 1992 the Frelimo government and Renamo signed a peace treaty officially ending the 17 year war. The peace negotiations made it
clear that "while the Chissano [Mozambique's current president] government is opposed to many of Renamo's demands, it is losing the will to argue about principles while its administration is rapidly collapsing" (Meldrum 1992, 32).

Consequently, Mozambique's government has been forced to make some very substantial compromises. It is currently revising the national anthem (Zandamela 1993), and it agreed to change the country's name from the People's Republic of Mozambique to the Republic of Mozambique. Other major concessions include the following:

- Complete political asylum for all Renamo soldiers (a significant compromise considering many citizens view these men as ruthless murderers).
- The establishment of a unified armed forces made up equally by the government and the rebels.
- UN supervised elections with Renamo as a legitimate contender for the country's leadership.

The crucial question remains: Will these compromises pay off? Will they provide the peace that Mozambique desires or will the country relapse into war? More than one year into the peace process, evidence is emerging for much optimism.

Factors of Hope

So far the peace accord has been an overwhelming success. Almost immediately after the peace accord was signed the fighting stopped (Perlez, 16 October, 8[A]), and there has been very little violence since. For the peace process to be considered truly successful, however, much more than temporary peace is needed; Mozambique needs to create a stable political environment which will secure a lasting peace.

There is still room for skepticism concerning the durability of the peace, especially given the slow pace of troop demilitarization. But overall the process has been surprisingly successful in preparing for long term peace. This success demonstrates itself in a number of ways.

War Fatigue

One of the most positive factors contributing to the peace process is the nation-wide weariness of war and desire for peace. On the first year anniversary of the peace accord Aldo Ajello, UN special representative to Mozambique, announced that "Mozambique had enjoyed a year without fighting" and claimed that because the Mozambican people had tasted peace "it would be hard for either side to go back to war" (BBC World Service 1993).

As a result of this war fatigue, both sides of the conflict have supported the peace process and solicited international support for peace. Both President Joaquim Chissano and Afonso Dhlakama, Renamo's leader, have visited many foreign capitals in order to solicit assistance. Consequently, the peace process has received international attention and substantial United Nations assistance.

UN Peacekeeping Efforts

Because all sides of the conflict agree on the need for international assistance, they have opened the door for substantial UN involvement. One opposition party leader stated that "the United Nations has a great deal of influence, and we can say that the Mozambican people have been very lucky" (Radio Mozambique Network 1993, 7 June, 1030). Even Renamo's president has "appealed for greater UN involvement in
order to prevent a repetition of what has happened in Angola" (Radio Mozambique Network 1993, 4 October, 0500).

The UN effort, entitled the United Nations Operations in Mozambique (UNOMOZ), began with a small token force of only 25 peacekeepers (Perlez 1992, 16 October, 8[A]), but quickly increased to 6,200 by the end of May 1993. (Radio Mozambique Network, 28 May, 1030). The UN effort has solicited widespread international support; currently twenty-four nations are participating in UNOMOZ (Radio Mozambique Network, 28 May, 1030).

The United Nation's involvement is not however limited to peacekeeping activities. The UN has also agreed to fund Renamo with $10 million to assist its transition to a political party (Radio Mozambique Network 1993, 20 May, 1730), and UNICEF is providing an education for many displaced children (Radio Mozambique Network 1993, 8 June, 1100).

Troop Demobilization

Piet Kruger, UNOMOZ coordinator in charge of troop demobilization, estimated there were originally 80 to 100 thousand active Frelimo and Renamo soldiers (Radio Mozambique Network 1993, 8 June, 1100). Demobilizing these soldiers is a monumental task which Aldo Ajello claims is one of Mozambique's most crucial problems (Radio Mozambique Network 1993, 15 October, 1030). Unfortunately, by the first anniversary of the peace accord, when elections were originally planned to be held, "neither side has demobilized a single soldier or handed in a single weapon" (BBC World Service 1993). By January 1994, however, 8,340 Frelimo and 5,400 Renamo troops had been demobilized (MEDIAFAX 1994, 2).

Several governmental policies are facilitating troop demobilization. To enable many of the troops to demobilize, they are given three months wage to help them start a new life (Baloi 1993, 23). Some troops, however, are not being paid, and observers fear that disgruntled troops might resort to banditry. A few incidents support this concern, but others contradict it. One demobilized soldier claimed "the most important thing is that I am going home. I was tired of fighting. With or without money, the fact is that I will be at home" (Baloi 1993, 26). Furthermore, to ease the transition the government is offering abandoned farm land to demobilized soldiers (Channel African Radio 1993).

Reintegrating twenty thousand Renamo rebels into society could be especially difficult for personal and social reasons. Many Renamo soldiers have known no other life but war, so adjustment will be difficult. Fortunately, Renamo's character should make demobilization easier. Renamo differs from other terrorist or rebel forces in that many of the members support Renamo unwillingly. Of 32 Renamo soldiers interviewed, only one claimed he belonged to Renamo for ideological reasons (Minter 1989, 18). When given the opportunity, many escape. In 1988 the government offered amnesty to anyone who left Renamo, and 3,000 accepted.

In addition to Renamo troops' adjustment, Mozambican society may also have difficulties with Renamo's demobilization. Of 170 Mozambican refugees interviewed, 91% felt very negatively toward Renamo (Huffman 1992, 116). Fortunately, war fatigue has made this a somewhat moot point. The general feeling among Mozambicans is that they can accept Renamo troops and work with them to start their lives together anew (Zandamela 1993).
Troop Integration

Another potential source of conflict is likewise rapidly diminishing—the creation of the Armed Defense Forces of Mozambique composed of 15,000 soldiers from each party. On August 16, 1993 the first 100 men (50 from each side) were sent to a leadership training base in Nyanga, Zimbabwe. Several weeks into the training, the integration showed signs of success. Soldiers who had been shooting at each other just months earlier were "working, eating, and living together" apparently with no conflict (TEempo 1993, 10-12). Most observers could not perceive any differences among the men at all.

A former government soldier, who at first doubted the plan's potential for success, claimed later to "feel very good about it." A former Renamo soldier claimed the experience was "very constructive." In October, another 440 soldiers joined the first 100, and together these 540 soldiers were prepared to train and lead the 30,000 man unified army (TEempo 1993, 10-12). By February 21, 1994 the first six battalions of 700 men each were to report for this training (Radio Mozambique Network 1993, 2 February, 1730).

Building Trust

Before demobilization can begin in full force, a certain amount of mutual trust is necessary. "Reflecting on a year of peace in Mozambique, Aldo Ajello admitted there was one obvious cause for regret—a total failure to build trust between the two sides" (BBC World Service 1993). Soon thereafter, however, the two parties made agreements" which caused Ajello to claim that the "peace machine is working at full speed," and that "the government and Renamo are slowly overcoming their mistrust of each other" (Radio Mozambique Network 1993, 29 October, 1400).

Although Chissano and Dhlakama still disagree on many issues, they have been able to build a close personal relationship which is very beneficial to the peace process. Dhlakama said that "the two of us have had conversations, and we often tell jokes and laugh" (Radio Mozambique Network 1993, 22 October, 1730). UN Representative Ajello also voiced his approval stating "he was pleased with the atmosphere" the two leaders were creating and the real understanding they were forming between them (Radio Mozambique Network 1993, 22 October, 1730).

Miscellaneous Factors

Several miscellaneous aspects of Mozambique's current status cause one to question whether overcoming such great problems is possible. For example, the economy is still a shambles, and millions of Mozambicans are still displaced or living as refugees abroad who must be reintegrated into society and the economy. Malawi alone harbors almost one million refugees (Huffman 1992, 114). Furthermore, Mozambique's infrastructure is still mostly unusable, due to an estimated two million land mines (Radio Mozambique Network 1993, 18 May, 1030).

In contrast to these problems, hundreds of refugees are coming home and being successfully reintegrated. Approximately 1.5 million who were displaced abroad and domestically have returned to their homes with very few problems (Radio Mozambique Network 1993, 19 October, 1030), a sign "that the people believe that peace has come to stay..." (Engineering News 1993, 36).

Furthermore, the destruction of the economy has stopped, and more importantly, Mozambique is creating the political stability that will help the economy...
grow. Prospects of economic development are even brighter considering that all sides of the conflict are working together to encourage economic development. Dhlakama now pleads for the reconstruction of "shops, schools, hospitals, roads, and bridges" which he has spent the last two decades destroying (Radio Mozambique Network 1993, 21 May 1030). South Africa's Engineering News claims that "as peace takes hold in Mozambique after almost 30 years of war, so optimism is taking hold. Foreign investors and tourists are flooding back to the country to rebuild its infrastructure..." (36). Already 200 foreign investors have begun projects with Mozambique, and several major corporations including Coca Cola and Colgate-Palmolive are strongly considering seizing business opportunities there (Southern African Economist 1993, 22 and 23).

Evaluating the Peace Accord's Success

Although the debate over the peace accord's success cannot yet be completely settled, most indicators point toward a successful conclusion to the peace process. Even if the worst case materializes and the country plunges back into war, Mozambicans will have experienced more than a year of peace they would not have enjoyed otherwise. At the very best, 15 million Mozambicans can live out their lives in peace.

Theoretical Application of Mozambique's Case Study: Negotiating with Terrorists

One lesson that may be extracted from the Mozambican experience, is that policy makers should sometimes cast off the dogmatic hard-line approach. They should accept that traditional methods of understanding and reacting to terrorism are insufficient and counterproductive in some situations. Abandoning previous assumptions does not, however, leave policy makers without a foundation for analysis and action. Instead, a multitude of theoretical conflict resolution models may be refined and applied to address political terrorism.

Two conflict resolution theories, in particular, demonstrate concepts of general political violence that are easily applied to terrorist violence: the research of Mark Lichbach (1987) and Dipak Gupta, Harinder Singh, and Tom Sprague (1993). The two theories explore the relationship between governmental coercion and the magnitude and quality of political dissent—a relationship crucial to political terrorism.

Jeffery Ross alludes to the importance of this relationship in his causal study of oppositional terrorism. Among terrorism's precipitant causes (as opposed to structural causes), he ranks grievances as the most influential (320). Among potential grievances, he discusses legal grievances which closely parallel Lichbach's and Gupta's concept of governmental coercion or repression (Ross 1993, 325). Lichbach and Gupta et al. have expounded greatly on this relationship.

Mark Lichbach (1987) reviews several debated relationships between governmental repression (indicated as increasing with the X-axis) and political violence (indicated as increasing with the Y-axis), and considers four different models signified in Figures 1, 2, 3, and 4. Traditional anti-terrorism approaches would endorse the model shown in Figure 2, which prescribes more coercion to stop political violence, but Lichbach suggests another theory. He believes that "an increase in a government's repression of nonviolence will reduce the nonviolent activities of an opposition group but increase its violent
activities" (Lichbach 1987, 266). According to his model, the traditional reaction to terrorism--repression and non-negotiation--would increase, not lessen terrorist violence. Grupta et al. (1993) analyze this same relationship between coercion and political dissent by graphing the relationship of empirical data they collected. They also break down the analysis between democratic and non-democratic nations, and between violent and less violent political dissent. They summarize their findings in the table found in Appendix 1 (335).

Considering that political terrorist violence contains many of the qualities measured in the Political Instability Quotient, deaths from domestic group violence, and armed attacks, Gupta, Singh and Sprague's conclusions may also be applied to the effect of governmental repression on terrorist violence.

Their findings generally depict two relationships: a positive relationship (similar to Figure 1) for democracies, and an inverted U relationship (similar to Figure 4) for nondemocracies. This second relationship seems to indicate that increasing governmental repression in a nondemocratic country may sometimes lessen terrorist violence. Gupta et al. admit, however, that few countries sufficiently coerce their citizens to place the relationship on the negatively sloped side of the graph. Most regimes find themselves on the positively sloped side of the graph where increasing coercion increases political instability (323). Therefore, except for a few extremely coercive nondemocratic governments, all of Gupta's findings agree with Lichbach's claim that increased governmental coercion only increases political violence (the positive relationship found in Figure 1).

Each of these theories accurately explains the success of Mozambique's peace process. As the government began to negotiate with Renamo, the government's
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coercive effect was drastically reduced. Consequently, and as both models had predicted, political violence declined.

Conclusion

In Mozambique an unconventional approach to terrorism has been successful, but this should not be surprising. By examining ambiguous definitions of terrorism and viewing two conflict resolution theories in the terrorist context, one finds that untraditional approaches may prove very successful in other situations similar to Mozambique's.

Further study is still needed before this conclusion can be more generally applied. Mozambique's unique political situation, the magnitude of the conflict, the willingness of Renamo to negotiate, and the willingness of the international community to assist the negotiation all play a vital role in the peace. Two historic opportunities lie before the scholarly community at this time which may confirm or rebuke the wisdom of negotiating with terrorists. The first is the newly publicized negotiations between the United Kingdom's government and Sinn Fein, the political arm of the IRA. The second is the ongoing negotiations between Israel and the PLO. In each of these cases, however, significant extra-governmental coercion plays a role which should also be considered as part of the coercion-violence relationship.

Further study will also be needed regarding the Mozambican peace process as it continues to develop. Events in the coming year, the elections next October, and the adjustment period thereafter will paint a more complete picture of the effects reduced governmental coercion have on political violence. For the present time, however, the peace process appears to be successful, and negotiating with terrorists is in this instance a successful counter-terrorist approach.

WORKS CITED


APPENDIX 1

Summary Results of Relations Between Repression and Dissident Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regime Type¹</th>
<th>Overall PIQ²</th>
<th>Deaths from Domestic Group Violence</th>
<th>Armed Attacks</th>
<th>Protest Demonstrations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democracies</td>
<td>Insignificant</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democracies (Gurr)</td>
<td>Insignificant</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Positive</td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nondemocracies</td>
<td>Inverted U</td>
<td>Inverted U</td>
<td>Inverted U</td>
<td>Insignificant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nondemocracies (Gurr)</td>
<td>Inverted U</td>
<td>Inverted U</td>
<td>Indeterminate</td>
<td>Indeterminate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ Note that two definitions of democracies and nondemocracies were used (the second offered by Ted Gurr) which offered only slightly differing results concerning armed attacks and protest demonstrations in nondemocracies.

² "Political Instability Quotient" takes into account the number of political demonstrations, riots, political strikes, deaths from political violence, assassinations, armed attacks, political executions, and attempted coups d'etat.