Ending Mozambique's War

CAMERON HUME

ENDING MOZAMBIQUE'S WAR

The Role of Mediation and Good Offices

UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE PRESS
Washington, D.C.

The views expressed in this book are those of the author alone. They do not necessarily reflect views of the United States Institute of Peace.

United States Institute of Peace
1550 M Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20005-1708

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First published 1994

Printed in the United States of America

The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z39.48-1984.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Hume, Cameron R., 1947–
A path to peace : ending Mozambique's civil war / Cameron R. Hume.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 1-878379-38-0 : alk. paper. — ISBN 1-878379-37-2 (pbk.) : alk. paper
1. Mozambique—Politics and government—1975– 2. RENAMO (Organization). 3. FRELIMO. I. Title.
DT3398.H86 1994
967.905—dc20 94-28464
CIP

With thanks to Margaret, Rigmor, Laura, Heather, Jasmin, and Ivy—
For your love and understanding

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Foreword

ameron Hume's case study of the Mozambique peace process deserves a wide readership and a place of distinction in the burgeoning literature on peacemaking in internal conflicts. Drawing upon his vantage point as the deputy chief of the U.S. mission to the Vatican, Hume offers a compelling analysis of how the Mozambicans made the peace accords of 1992. His chronicle is at once authoritative, conceptually lucid, and enlivened with a feel for the temperaments, appetites, fears, and human motives of the parties.

But Hume offers us much more than a contemporary diplomatic chronicle or an academic case study. For one thing, the presentation is accessible to a wide readership and is mercifully free of the deadening prose of bureaucracy or academe. For another, his professional grasp of both African affairs and the field of conflict resolution is impressive, so that the reader is in good hands on both accounts—a rare experience in such works. Serving at the core of a small network of U.S. officials whose assignments included the pursuit of peace in Mozambique, Hume writes as a participant-observer. And the story he tells is as special as his qualifications are for telling it.

Mozambique did not know real peace from 1961 to 1992. For most of that sad period, Mozambicans suffered horribly, as if they were plagued to live under an evil star. Governed by Europe's poorest empire and decolonized irresponsibly in great haste by Portugal after a long and costly anticolonial war, Mozambique had the ill-fortune to start out in 1975 under leaders who pursued the Afro-Marxist fantasies of that era. Worse, this vast, impoverished land was hurriedly abandoned by its 200,000-member

Portuguese community and then promptly became caught up in the Rhodesian (Zimbabwean) liberation struggle. Once Zimbabwe achieved independence in 1980, Mozambique became tragically trapped in the futile contest between the exiled African National Congress (ANC) and the South African Defence Forces. By the mid-1980s, sustained South African destabilization efforts in Mozambique had transformed the rebel movement RENAMO into a major military challenge to the FRELIMO regime; Mozambique had slipped into a brutal civil war that thrived on external involvement and on the many inadequacies of its incumbent government. It would be hard to imagine a less auspicious start to a country's independence.

Many outside parties—governments and non-governmental organizations—involved themselves in the country's internal affairs. None, however, had a strong enough incentive to become Mozambique's primary foreign "patron," and none was ideally suited to play such a role.

This backdrop helps explain a central feature of the Mozambican peace process whose origins go back to the mid-1980s but were formally launched in July 1990: its complex, if not bizarre, structure and the lead role played by non-state actors. Hume's book demonstrates how Italy (of all places) served as the host, venue, and inspired patron of Mozambican peacemaking in the 1990s. Hume gives us an authoritative account of the origins of the links between Mozambican church leaders, the Vatican, and especially the Community of Sant'Egidio—a Catholic lay order based in Rome's Trastevere district. His discussion of the origins and social-action commitments of this originally student-led group (which today has 10,000 members on four continents) sheds needed light on one of the most unusual mediation exercises in contemporary diplomacy.

For much of the active mediation phase, the mediation "team" comprised a Mozambican archbishop, an Italian socialist parliamentarian and former diplomat, and two key leaders of Sant'Egidio. At various stages, this exercise received the assistance of ten governments plus the UN secretary-general. Of the delicately named "observers," the Italian and U.S. governments were the most important, while Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe headed the list of key African leaders who worked to bring about the October 1992 settlement. (Other governmental actors included Britain, France, Portugal, Botswana, Kenya, Malawi, and South Africa). Finally, the book cites the special contributions of "Tiny" Rowland, the British-based and Africa-focused businessman who served as booster and kibbitzer as well as financier and travel agent for the parties at various points.

What is one to make of this idiosyncratic bouillabaisse of ingredients that made up the Mozambican peace process? Is it replicable? Can lessons be learned from it? Hume makes a persuasive case that useful conclusions can be drawn, and his detailed chronology is sprinkled with analytical asides that reflect the depth of his personal expertise while also explaining why the process unfolded as it did. The presence of non-state actors helped get around the "status" issue dividing the FRELIMO government led by President Joachim Chissano and the RENAMO rebel group led by Afonso Dhlakama. The Sant'Egidio mediation helped to transform this purely hostile relationship into a pattern of dialogue that over time led to an agenda and a series of protocols and accords.

But the Mozambique case is not by any means a pure case of "track two" negotiations. The discreet intervention of official diplomats was essential in formulating the sequence of issues to be addressed and defining a workable path forward on the military and constitutional issues. UN officials, in quiet coordination with key governments, made clear to the parties what would be necessary in order for the UN to oversee and help implement the necessary accords leading to encamping and demobilizing armed forces, forming a unified army, conducting an election campaign, monitoring the cease-fire, and other matters. Similarly, African and western governments (plus Rowland) were needed at various points in order to break through impasses among the heads of Mozambican delegations in Rome by appealing to the top leadership. Summitry was used to break logjams, set deadlines, create legitimacy, and force issues that might otherwise remain unresolved to this day.

Ending Mozambique's War will be a gold mine for scholars and practitioners seeking guidance on the "key factors" that led to the 1992 Mozambican accords. The answer will not fit on a bumper sticker. Clearly, the warring parties were nearing exhaustion, and this situation was reinforced by a devastating drought in 1992. By the early 1990s, no external party was prepared to keep sustaining its chosen Mozambican ally; alliances were frayed (for example, Zimbabwe wanted an exit from its intervention, and the Soviets and South Africans were disengaging), and donor fatigue had begun to appear; moreover, Mozambique had virtually no resources of its own to sustain the conflict. The impetus from Rome (both religious and official) found a receptive audience in southern Africa—in part because U.S., British, and Portuguese attention was directed elsewhere.

The skilled and deeply committed people of Sant'Egidio shaped history through their initial intervention, and as time passed, their efforts created

a critical mass of facts and momentum so that there was something for "track one" decision-makers to support.

Indeed, this case offers dramatic support for the concept that third-party intervention can make the decisive difference, and that conflicts seldom resolve themselves (even when circumstances might appear propitious). Hume's account of the "endgame" that played out between August and October 1992 makes it abundantly clear that Chissano and Dhlakama needed constant "encouragement" to conclude what they had started. A week prior to the final Rome summit, Hume reports, the parties had "not seriously discussed" the key documents for putting the peace agreement into operation and had little understanding of what implementation would actually mean. They may have only dimly realized the full extent of what they agreed to during the subsequent four-day "working summit" that should be recorded as one of the most spontaneous summits of modern diplomacy.

As a result, the October 1992 accords are best understood as a decisive but not final stage in a peace process that continues to this day. Neither the UN system nor the Mozambican parties proved capable of adhering to the ambitious schedule laid down in Rome: in an act of realist statesmanship they mutually agreed to a full one-year delay of the implementation plan. If the October 1994 Mozambican elections produce a credible result, this will be further evidence for the proposition that peacemaking starts when a third-party actor gains the inspiration to intervene, and it does not end until all agreements have been implemented on the ground. The signing ceremony is but the beginning of the implementation phase—in some ways as crucial as any other. By the same token, the fact that the 1992 accords survived a one-year delay in implementation bears testimony to their quality and to the quality of the support they received from all concerned, as well as to the reality of Mozambique's readiness for peace.

Chester A. Crocker
Georgetown University

Preface

wrote about these events from a specific vantage point. In December 1990, when I was visiting Washington to prepare for an assignment as deputy chief of mission at the U.S. embassy to the Holy See, Ambassador Herman J. Cohen, the assistant secretary of state for African affairs, asked me to carry on the work of my predecessor, James Creagan, with the Mozambique peace talks. I was to stay in touch with the mediators and the delegations of the Mozambican government and RENAMO in Rome, working to keep them engaged and, if possible, moving forward. Cohen emphasized that because the U.S. government had no other point of contact with RENAMO, I had to keep open the channel of communication in Rome.

Ten months later, Cohen's principal deputy assistant secretary, Ambassador Jeffrey Davidow, supplemented these instructions. After a working dinner with the mediators at the convent that serves as headquarters for the Community of Sant'Egidio, he told me to support the mediators, whether by offering them advice based on my previous experience with negotiations and peacekeeping or by planning and coordinating diplomatic approaches to the parties. Davidow informed the mediators of my new instructions, and they welcomed whatever support the United States could provide.

Thus for two years I met frequently with the two delegations, the mediators, and representatives of the other governments that eventually intervened in the negotiations. My position was at times on the outside of the negotiations, at other times on the fringe, never in the center. For an observer it was a good vantage point.

In July 1992 the United States Institute of Peace held a conference on regional conflicts. On the initiative of the Institute's president, former ambassador Samuel Lewis, and Professor Chester A. Crocker, I was

invited to lead a panel discussing the conflict in Mozambique. Because of the conference participants' interest in the Mozambique peace process, I talked with Crocker about a book on the negotiations, which he encouraged me to write. When I returned to Rome, Ambassador Thomas P. Melady likewise encouraged me, as he often did during the two years of negotiations.

Three months later, after the general peace accord was signed on October 4, I was back in Washington with notes on the negotiations and an outline. Lewis said the United States Institute of Peace could provide a fellowship to facilitate the completion of a book, an offer that committed me to the project. David Smock, the Institute's coordinator for Africa, has since encouraged and advised me. At the same time, in response to a request from Hans Binnendijk and Margery Thompson at Georgetown University's Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, I began to write an article on the negotiations for *The Diplomatic Record 1992–93*.

I have examined those aspects of the negotiations with possible relevance for negotiations to bring other regional or local conflicts to an end. Because I had worked both in Washington and overseas on the problems of southern Africa, served in the Middle East, and been a member of the U.S. delegation to the United Nations, this focus seemed natural. This interest had already led me to write several articles and a book, *The United Nations, Iran, and Iraq: How Peacemaking Changed* (Indiana University Press, 1994).

Earlier, during the academic year 1989–90, while a fellow at Harvard's Center for International Affairs, I became involved with the work of the Harvard Negotiation Project (HNP). That work included an opportunity for me to join Professor Roger Fisher, Ambassador Viktor Issraelyan of the Diplomatic Academy of the USSR, and HNP staff members in conducting a training program on diplomatic negotiations at Columbia University for forty diplomats from more than twenty countries. The work done by Fisher and HNP provides a coherent framework for understanding even unorthodox negotiations, a framework that informed my own analysis at many points during the negotiations and later while writing.

I would like to thank the Johns Hopkins School for Advanced International Studies in Bologna for a workshop it hosted in March 1993. Faculty, students, members of the mediation team, and I explored the peace process with the benefit of hindsight. The workshop reinforced how important it is to distinguish the separate roles of the parties, the mediators, and the outside governments that intervened. That workshop deserves credit if this book succeeds in sharing the lessons of the Mozambique peace process with a wide range of readers.

Colleagues in the Department of State have given me wise counsel and support. In addition to Ambassadors Cohen and Davidow, I would like to mention members of the Africa Bureau's southern Africa negotiating team (John Byerly, Robert Cabelly, William Jackson, Randall Lecocq, Richard Roth, and Charles Snyder), as well as the U.S. ambassador in Maputo, Townsend B. Friedman, Jr.

The views expressed in this book are my own and do not necessarily represent those of the Department of State. For reasons of style, any mention of myself in the text is in the third person.

It would have been impossible to write this book without the friendship of members of the Community of Sant'Egidio. They have provided information that is available from no other source and shared their perspectives on what happened. I thank them.

The experience of building a durable peace in Mozambique should remind us all that negotiations must serve, above all, to change the character of relations between the parties. Formal written agreements are key milestones, showing both the distance already traveled and the road ahead. For peace to succeed in Mozambique, the government and RENAMO must have the courage to keep the peace process moving forward from their formal agreements, and the international community must have the wisdom to support their courage with generosity. May this happen elsewhere.

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