

UP FROM THE ASHES

A Report on Mozambique, 2004

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Executive Summary

Examined apart from its strategic context, Mozambique would appear only as an inspiring example of the human ability to endure catastrophe and build a functioning—if still impoverished—country upon the ashes of the past. But if considered within an emerging framework of regional developments, Mozambique begins to assume an importance its territory has not possessed since the 16th century, when its coast provided vital “filling stations” and safe harbors for the Portuguese vessels that pioneered the seaborne trade with India and southeast Asia, seizing the rich spice routes from Muslim powers and robbing the Islamic world of a source of wealth whose loss proved a strategic disaster.

To appreciate its potential importance for the coming decades, Mozambique must be considered in two overlapping strategic spheres: Southern Africa, where a postmodern economic empire is growing largely unnoticed by Washington, and the Indian Ocean littoral—a vast, interdependent region of the first importance that Americans consider only in separate parts, instead of as a vital whole.

Still one of the poorest countries in the world, Mozambique defied not only the odds but regional patterns of failure. The Portuguese were brutal colonizers whose sole interest was extracting wealth, not development. With few exceptions, the most notable initiatives in the territory’s interior were envisioned and funded by British expatriates or Afrikaners (Boers)—and such initiatives focused overwhelmingly on constructing railroads to shorten lines of communications from British possessions that today include

the northern provinces of South Africa, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Botswana, Malawi and Zambia. The port of Beira, Mozambique's second-largest city (situated on the coast in the center of a long, narrow country that runs more than 1200 miles north to south) was an early 20th-century creation of British investors for whom it served as the terminus of a rail line that served then-Rhodesia. Even Mozambique's capital, Maputo, developed economically as a result of South Africa's transport needs.

Mozambique's history has always been about transit and strategic lines of communication—either between Europe and the East Indies, or between southern Africa's interior and the Indian Ocean. The country's primary importance remains its location even today. From the Portuguese use of its fine harbors for the old spice trade, through the use of its major rivers to open Africa's interior, to the British and Afrikaner exploitation of the shorter routes it offered to the sea, Mozambique's fate has always been to serve those powers who were “only passing through.”

That may well prove to be its fate again. Last year's report for the Center for Emerging Threats and Opportunities (CETO) focused on South Africa and Zimbabwe. It postulated that South Africa was in the early phases of developing a “postmodern empire” in Africa's southern cone by investing in ravaged countries in the neighborhood, buying up property and rights at firesale prices, while providing goods and services the region's troubled states could not provide for themselves and could not afford to import from elsewhere (added to which post-colonial sensitivities made it more attractive for nearby states to trade with “black” South Africa).

This year's research and travel strongly confirmed this theory. In fact, the speed with which South Africa has been achieving economic hegemony in the continent's southern third is remarkable by any standards. Emerging from its own internal strife only twelve years ago, the destruction of the apartheid state unleashed tremendous creative energies in South Africa—perhaps the crucial development was the swift recognition by black and white businessmen that they could grow very rich by working together.

Through a series of historical accidents, Mozambique provided the model for South Africa's cynical economic ventures. Following independence in 1975 (in the wake of a left-wing military revolution in Portugal), Mozambique was bitterly poor, undeveloped, uneducated and saddled with a government initially crippled by socialist theories of state organization. Almost immediately, Rhodesian security elements initiated efforts to disrupt the new state, while South African apartheid-era forces repeatedly launched destructive raids into Mozambican territory. But the greatest “success” of the Rhodesian security services was the creation of Renamo (*Resistencia Nacional Mocambicana*), a savage guerrilla movement—initially mercenary—later sponsored by South Africa after the Ian Smith government in Harare gave way to the new Zimbabwe.

Renamo's civil war against Mozambique's post-independence Frelimo (*Frente de Libertacao de Mocambique*) government destroyed railroads, bridges, already-inadequate roadways, factories, clinics, schools and villages. Its priority often seemed to be destruction itself. The economy, never robust, collapsed. Guerrilla raids reached the suburbs of the capital city, and the majority of the countryside was under Renamo's influence at one time or another between the late 1970s and the 1992 peace accords.

One man made a decisive difference in altering the likely fate of Mozambique. Samora Machel, the country's leader at independence, was initially written off by Western powers as a tool of the East Bloc (an assigned role much propagandized by the

apartheid government in Pretoria). But Machel had two great qualities—he was not personally corrupt, and he was not an unmovable ideologue. When it became apparent in the mid-1980s that socialist economic models, while appealing in theory, were hopelessly destructive in reality, he led a shift toward capitalism. And he did his best to avoid confrontation with the United States and the West.

Tragically, a number of North American Christian groups were convinced by agents dispatched by South Africa's apartheid government that the Frelimo government in Mozambique was composed of nothing but godless communists and that Renamo was fighting on the side of religious freedom. As a result, American church contributions went to a gang of thugs for whom rape, torture and mass murder were common tools, while the Maputo government, although initially wary of both Muslim and Christian religious influence in the political sphere, never forbade the practice of religion or oppressed believers. It was one of the most tragic examples of good intentions gone awry in recent decades.

Despite stunning poverty and desolation, Mozambique began to progress as it adopted capitalist practices—and aid programs, although inevitably saddled with some corruption, actually worked. Late in the Reagan era, a rapprochement between Washington and Maputo helped the beleaguered government gain a breathing space. And with the impending fall of the apartheid government in South Africa, Renamo recognized that its primary source of support was about to dry up.

In one of the surprising developments on the continent, proposals to legitimize Renamo as a political party and hold free elections actually worked (for the sources of Renamo's unexpected domestic legitimacy, see the full report). Repeated elections have been held since 1992--not without flaws, but judged to be fair by international observers. Renamo's fortunes have flowed and ebbed and flowed again, but it has never gone back to the armed struggle. At present, Mozambique is preparing for another presidential election in December, 2004, and, although past elections have inevitably drawn complaints of ballot-rigging from defeated candidates, the only country in southern Africa with a comparable record of electoral probity is post-apartheid South Africa. Election-related violence has been minimal to date and Renamo hasn't been prevented from assuming the governments of cities or provinces where it has won elections. Given the bitterness of a decade and a half of horrific civil war, the transition from the battlefield to the polling station has been a remarkable success.

Other successes include programs, under United Nations auspices, to reintegrate soldiers and guerrillas into civil society and to remove tens of thousands of land mines from the countryside, as well as the priority given to education and health care by the government (standards are abysmally low, but continue to improve). Even faced with the devastating floods of 2000, which inundated approximately five per cent of the country (disproportionately striking populated and cultivated regions), Mozambique has continued to march forward, repeatedly achieving the highest economic growth rates on the continent. And for all its enduring poverty, Mozambique has eliminated starvation, while striving to reduce the need for aid. It has a surprisingly free press (despite setbacks). Corruption, although it certainly exists, does not enjoy the free reign it does in so many other sub-Saharan countries.

Still, this is a country whose official illiteracy rate is almost forty per cent (some third-party estimates put functional illiteracy above sixty per cent), whose health care is

broadly inadequate (with HIV infection rates of at least 13 per cent nationally), and which still bears the scars of a cruel colonial past and a savage civil war.

South Africa exploits Mozambique's weakness and poverty, although the results are undeniably beneficial for Mozambique for now. The opportunities Mozambique's misfortunes created for foreign-investment buccaneers taught the post-apartheid Pretoria government and its business allies an invaluable strategic lesson—which South Africa is applying elsewhere.

In one of history's unforeseen and certainly unintended consequences, the Renamo campaign of destruction that the old apartheid government backed until its demise created extraordinary openings for the new multiracial and democratic South African government and its business community (the revolving door swings even more powerfully in South Africa today than it does in Washington).

Mozambique needs everything. South Africa is glad to let the still-aid-dependent country receive essential—and unprofitable--development help from Western governments and NGOs. Meanwhile, South African businesses are buying property, investing heavily, co-opting local partners and creating a debtor situation which will give its powerful neighbor leverage over Mozambique for decades to come. With Mozambique's belatedly discovered natural gas fields under development and the prospect of oil desposits, as well, South Africa made sure that the first new pipeline from Mozambique's interior ran straight across their shared border. South African companies are redeveloping port facilities, building toll highways, and buying up everything from hotels to breweries. South African firms provide key services, from engineering to financing. Even the leading supermarket chain in Maputo is South African.

The South African approach, generally, is to conduct black-on-black negotiations, then to deploy white managers to run "joint" companies, while making certain to employ enough Mozambicans in unskilled or semi-skilled jobs to build a local constituency wherever they invest. There is no evident South African interest in occupying or annexing Mozambique—which would only bring expense, excoiation and resistance. On the contrary, South African empire-building mimics America's success—concentrating on an economic and cultural, rather than a formal, military empire.

The South Africans are thinking strategically. Mozambique is far from their only regional interest (of which more below), but it's an essential piece of the puzzle. When the country's complex coastline is measured, it surpasses 2,500 kilometers or 1,700 miles. Yet the country is extremely narrow for almost its entire north-south length (you can envision Mozambique's size and shape by picturing the east coast of the United States from Georgia through Maine, but running inland only to the first ridges of the Appalachians, with one inland spur reaching across southern Ohio).

Despite the destruction of Mozambique's lines of communication during the civil war, the most economical (in some cases, the only practical) means of moving goods to and from landlocked states such as Zimbabwe, Malawi and southern Zambia is to use Mozambique's rail lines. Rebuilding priority has been given to these east-west routes, from internal border-crossing points to ports (Maputo, Beira, Nacala)—despite the fact that the country runs south to north.

The north-south "highway" is only a broken dirt road for hundreds of miles of its length, with decayed or jerryrigged bridges and potholes that challenge a 4X4. While stretches of the west-to-east trade routes often remain poor, they are almost always better

than the main strategic road that connects the country's southern and northern extremes; indeed, the sea remains the best means of moving heavy goods between north and south—just as it was the primary means five centuries ago.

At least as important as the immediate opportunities seized in Mozambique by the South Africans (who are also doing their best to move into Angola, while testing the possibilities farther to the north) is the model established to exploit other neighboring states: The destruction of infrastructure on the other side of its borders means opportunity for Pretoria.

That lesson is being applied heartlessly in Zimbabwe.

In examining South Africa's unwillingness to criticize Robert Mugabe's dismantling of the Zimbabwean economy, last year's report offered as reasons the reluctance of black African leaders to criticize old comrades from the independence struggle, a reluctance to admit to outsiders that any black African government has gone bad, and Pretoria's expressed fear that interference would lead to further breakdown and a flood of refugees South Africa cannot afford to accept. While the report discounted the last justification, it also missed a fundamental reason why South Africa is allowing Zimbabwe to fail: Key figures within the South African government and business community realize full well—thanks to the lessons learned in Mozambique—that everything destroyed or allowed to deteriorate in Zimbabwe during the twilight of Mugabe's rule will have to be rebuilt. And it's going to be rebuilt primarily by South African companies and investors.

We have missed the remarkable ability of South African insiders to think strategically then act ruthlessly on their conclusions. While we continue to view Africa (when we think of it at all) in terms of distinctly separate states and as a "failed" continent, overall, South Africans are thinking regionally and looking for affinities beyond the artificial lines drawn on maps by 19th-century Europeans.

South Africa is well on the way to becoming the greatest indigenous power sub-Saharan Africa has ever seen. It is already the diplomatic and economic power Nigeria was supposed to have become. While much could still go awry, South Africa is on a path to emerge as the decisive regional player in the 21st century. And if the United States avoids foolish actions and pays at least minimal attention, South Africa has the potential to become a key ally—after the revolutionary generations die off, leaving the government to businessmen and technocrats.

Mozambique is an essential part of the South African vision, both because of the aforementioned LOCs—the intravenous lines of landlocked states' survival—and because it extends South Africa's *de facto* influence an additional 1,800 kilometers northward along the Indian Ocean littoral—an even more important strategic arena whose importance the United States underestimates when it does not miss it entirely.

If we take a long historical view—five-hundred years—we can begin to see strategic continuities of the first importance to the United States (and especially to the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps).

Where once the caravels of Portuguese conquerors mastered the sea lanes, U.S. Navy aircraft carriers are dominant today. If the Portuguese once supported their far-flung empire from Ihla do Mocambique (Mozambique Island), the U.S. base on Diego Garcia serves an identical role today. After the Portuguese showed the way, Spanish, English,

Dutch and French sailors and soldiers sparred for hegemony on the Indian Ocean's littorals—if we know the history at all, we focus on the European squabbles with one another and miss the decisive importance of the 16th century in the Indian Ocean. Conditioned by our Euro-centric view of history, we see the historical conflict with the Islamic world from a Mediterranean perspective, interpreting the history through the great land campaigns that rimmed the sea and through naval engagements, such as Lepanto, fought on Mediterranean waters. But it was the events on the littorals of the Indian Ocean, from Albuquerque's brutal subjugation of Hormuz at the beginning of the 16th century to the emergence of the Dutch and the English as the dominant seapowers in the next century, that wrested control of the Spice Route and its riches from the Muslim world.

Suddenly, the Ottoman Turks were no longer building wealth from the trade, and the Arabs were reduced to local commerce. While Turkish arms continued to threaten Europe until the closing decades of the 17th century, the European "indirect approach," the seizure of the vital "globalized" trade of the day, put Europe on a path to wealth formation (further enhanced by developments in the Americas), while Islamic powers were forced to draw ever more of their operating funds from internal sources.

Although traditional historians might dispute it, European naval operations in the Indian Ocean five centuries ago started the Islamic world of the Middle East on the long road to bankruptcy and strategic failure. Although different authorities date Islam's decline from various points, strategically the loss of control of the entire Indian Ocean, the destruction of Turkish fleets and Arab fortresses, reduced the previously dominant players to minor roles as corsairs and pirates, or as secondary traders (and slavers).

Five centuries ago, the prize was control of the trade in pepper, nutmeg, mace and silks. Today, the key resource is oil. The control of the sea lanes and domination of the littoral has become, if anything, more important than it was when yesterday's empires contended for it.

Because of the convenience of the Suez Canal and its proximity to the oil fields, we too often narrow our focus to the northern extreme of the theater. And we think of India, likely to be a crucial player in the 21st century, as "way over there," while Africa might as well be on the other side of the world from the subcontinent. Yet, southeast Asia, India, Africa and the Muslim coasts that bind them to one another form a single strategic unity.

Local powers already grasp this (some figured it out centuries ago). Hence Indian investment in Africa (with ethnic Indian populations already in place in various countries). Arabs, too, are attempting an economic return to the old Swahili Coast, from the horn of Africa to northern Mozambique (some would argue all the way to Durban, South Africa). Even China, our Pacific counterpart, bids more ambitiously in the theater's extremes than we do.

The missing player is the United States.

Obsessed with developments in the Persian Gulf, we forget that the Gulf is merely a minor extension of the Indian Ocean world. And except for the major oil fields in northern Iraq, the Middle East's remaining source of wealth—oil and gas—is overwhelmingly located on or near its littorals. Without access to the sea lanes, as U.S. Navy strategists realize, the oil cannot reach Western and Asian markets. Yet, accustomed to naval dominance, we overlook the fact that those sea lanes may be

contested in the future by unconventional means. Worried about the straits of Hormuz, we may be underestimating the importance—and vulnerability—of the broad seas beyond.

While oil will remain a crucial commodity for the next decades, it may eventually be of as little strategic importance as pepper and nutmeg are today. In preparing for the out-years, we need to ask if the Indian Ocean, which has been a critical strategic arena for five centuries (even in WWI and WWII, British domination of the Indian Ocean enabled the empire's survival), is hiding its commodities of the future.

What might replace oil as the economic lifeblood of the region and a vital resource to the rest of the world?

Apart from growing markets and the still-enduring importance of oil, one answer may be human capital. In this century, human capital already has become the crucial factor in building national wealth—more important by far than natural resources. At present, only one state—India—on the Indian Ocean's rim is a major exporter of high-end human capital (both in the IT sector and in the physical export of trained individuals). At present, Africa lags far behind the rest of the world educationally—while the Arab world tumbles backward into a fundamentalist celebration of ignorance.

Can Africa turn around? Will its human capital become as important in a free environment tomorrow as it was during the age of the slave trade (Africa was, indeed, the world's leading exporter of human capital for centuries, except for the voluntary migrations from Europe). Will Africa's human resources again play an international role? Or will its natural resources be the object of strategic competition? Are there combinations of factors at work that will extend the strategic importance of the Indian Ocean in its totality? Will we be surprised by naval conflicts between regional states in the future? For that matter, what would happen were apocalyptic Islamic terrorists to gain weapons of mass destruction in the coming years and use them against the Suez canal, putting it out of commission for months, if not years, and striking not only the economies of the West, but the Arab governments they hope to depose, as well?

What if Saudi Arabia collapses? International control of its key oil fields would depend upon control of the neighboring seas. The same applies to the other oil powers of the Persian Gulf.

Without access to sea lanes, Iran cannot build a new economy. Except for South Africa, every African state along the continent's east coast relies on the sea lanes for essential exports and imports. The economic growth in southeast Asia relies on seaborne exports. India isn't straining to become a naval power out of vanity alone.

Could any power constellations or political alignments arise that might attempt to dominate the Indian Ocean in the out-years? Might we see non-linear events by mid-century, such as a burgeoning India attempting to develop new-model colonies on Africa's east coast for its excess population (Mozambique, for example, is underpopulated by regional standards and AIDS will reduce, though not halt, population growth)? Or even violent attempts to prevent alternative sources of human capital from becoming competitive? Studies have worried rightly about regional water wars—but what if there were “education wars” aimed at preserving the services-industry dominance of one party? Are new forms of slavery—intellectual, rather than physical—possible? Why should we believe that the patterns of the past centuries, demanding sea-lane dominance or exploiting human capital or seizing control of access to resources will change?

Will the Indian Ocean remain the strategic resource it has been for five centuries? The author of this report believes that its importance will increase dramatically as its littoral economies develop, while governance remains problematic and violence grows.

Is the greatest strategic weakness of the Arab and Persian world, in fact, the centuries-old destruction of their naval traditions? Sinbad the Sailor, the legendary figure from the *Thousand Nights and a Night*, is now a minor smuggler. Does naval power continue to constitute a crucial source of American might that we underestimate simply because of the current absence of competition? How might we lose control of the region's sea lanes? Could our naval power be defeated diplomatically?

Could the Global War on Terror, which already has seen attacks in east Africa, require expanded fronts on the Indian Ocean littoral?

This report concludes that, because of our traditional focus on the northern hemisphere and our current challenges in the Middle East, we are neglecting vast regions of strategic importance, of enormous possibility—and potential risk.

While the U.S. Air Force may prove a crucial player in the Indian Ocean in the future and the U.S. Army may see repeated involvements in regional wars that penetrate beyond the littoral (or that require major littoral occupations, as could prove the case with Saudi Arabia's oilfields), this region is a logical theater for the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps—and could surprise us by proving more strategically decisive in the 21st century than the Pacific.

It is foolish to try to predict our greatest future strategic challenges with too much specificity—but developments in the vast reaches and among the growing populations of the Indian Ocean and its bordering states have the potential to blindside us painfully if we do not learn to view the region as a whole, instead of as a collection of “unimportant” separate parts.

Mozambique itself will never be *the* key player in the new “great game” emerging around the Indian Ocean—but it has the potential to become one of the contested territories—an unexpected cockpit of crisis. Divided between a largely Muslim north and Christian south—with native religions and practices permeating the entire country—Mozambique has, as yet, experienced no significant religious conflicts (see below); it is on a promising development path (though it has a very long way to go); and it is an encouraging democracy by regional standards (the coming presidential election will be a crucial test). But the potential for various forms of conflict remain—especially if, as has so often happened in the past, stronger external powers engage in competition for control over the territory's vital LOCs (or the natural resources now under development).

Overall, we have far more reason to be soberly optimistic about Mozambique's future than we have cause for worry. But, as one piece of an emerging strategic design, its importance, both for Africa itself and for the greater Indian Ocean theater, should be neither ignored nor underestimated.

Above all the borders on the printed maps deceive us, creating artificial divisions where populations, cultures and interests overlap. If we could create a regional map without those borders to restrict our vision, we would see surprising unities, opportunities of great magnitude...and underappreciated threats.

The past four research projects conducted for CETO as part of this program have focused on Indonesia, India, South Africa/Zimbabwe and Mozambique—the strategic flanks of the troubled Middle East. All of it is one strategic whole.

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The center of power

The capital of Mozambique, Maputo, is a surprisingly pleasant city that spread from the shore of a sheltered bay up onto bluffs overlooking the Indian Ocean, eventually spawning the shantytowns that attach themselves like barnacles to cities throughout the developing world. With a colonial-era heart of broad avenues and an extensive quarter of villa-lined streets—all thoroughfares renamed to honor the icons of the left and African independence leaders (for the record, Engels is more appealing than Marx)—Maputo strikes you immediately as a “fixer-upper” with real potential. But today’s visitor is late: Others have already recognized that potential and the city is, albeit unevenly, experiencing a great deal of redevelopment. It’s a friendly, bustling, hopeful and only occasionally frustrating place to a visitor—poor, but not bitter. Given the country’s long sufferings from man-made and natural disasters, it’s a monument to the human ability to endure and keep on marching.

Still primarily agricultural—often primitively so—and with a foreign debt almost twenty times its gross national income of \$ 376 million, Mozambique is among the poorest countries on earth. Typically for Africa, the money that enters the country flows through the capital—and much of it stays there. Thus, Maputo is by far the country’s

most developed part. Yet, the city doesn't suffer as obviously—or as devastatingly—from economic polarization as do other developing-state capitals. Even the slums are less grim when you enter them than Western habits of eye lead a visitor to expect, while most of the “well-to-do” would barely qualify as lower-middle-class in North America.

Known as Lourenco Marques until independence, Maputo is a relatively new city. Up to the final decade of the 19th century, the Portuguese colonial capital was Mozambique Island, over a thousand kilometers to the north. But the dynamism of the neighboring British colonies and the attractions of the harbor on Delagoa Bay for the booming business community in Johannesburg demanded that the Portuguese establish a greater presence if they hoped to prevent their colony's dismemberment—the British lion's stomach was gurgling.

The Portuguese had established a fort on the site of present-day Maputo in the last quarter of the 18th century, but the surrounding settlement remained little more than a trading post until South African gold-and-diamond-boom era businessmen and political leaders recognized the advantages of a short-cut rail line linking their northern provinces to a deep-water harbor. Thus, Lourenco Marques/Maputo officially became the new capital of Mozambique in 1903.

It kept the Portuguese in, but it didn't keep the South Africans, Rhodesians and British out. A thriving commercial community grew up in the Baixa—the old downtown—and handsome villas soon covered the high ground that caught the ocean breezes. In addition to attracting businessmen, following the First World War the city became a getaway for English-speaking African colonists who wanted to go on a tear (much the way Gulf Arabs go to London or Paris today) or for families who wanted a cheap holiday on the seaside. While heavyhanded with the native population, the Portuguese authorities welcomed income from almost any source. Among other things, the city gained a reputation among ship's crews as one of the liveliest ports of call in the world (and that is the PG-rated version).

During the Second World War, Portugal's neutrality attracted agents and shady characters with passports from both sides to Lourenco Marques—although the British kept the upper hand. The spy-vs-spy situation in the drunk-on-gin-in-the-tropics atmosphere became so exaggerated it was almost comical—something out of a British satirical novel or film (during WWII the British, not certain what use to make of their literary types, sent novelists and critics in government service to Africa, hoping they would do no real harm—for example, Graham Greene was dispatched to Sierra Leone, while Malcom Muggeridge went spotting German submarines in Lourenco Marques).

Despite a presence in the colony since the early 1500s, the Portuguese always focused on extracting wealth and on basic trade, rather than development. Only in the colony's final century were a few methodical, if underfunded, attempts made to develop rational agricultural plantations (with laborers forced to work under conditions that were little better than slavery). Unlike the British, the Portuguese never trained a native clerical class, and the dominant form of Christianity (export Catholicism) emphasized faith and conversion, rather than the Anglican/Methodist formula of conversion and education that influenced the development of liberation movements in other regional territories.

The neglect of education had a perverse benefit: In the post-war wave of liberation movements and colonial withdrawal, the rise of an indigenous Mozambican independence party (which eventually became Frelimo, the current ruling party) went

slowly and its leaders were rarely as thoroughly indoctrinated by Marxist dogma as were many other, better-educated African cadres of the liberation era. While other colonies had felt the stirrings of independence movements even prior to WWII, it took Mozambican nationalists until the 1960s to begin to organize seriously--when the "father of the revolution," Eduard Mondlane (later murdered under circumstances whose details remain unclear), galvanized weak and disparate groups to initiate first a political, then an armed struggle.

The liberation movement always lacked sufficient educated cadre—indeed, one source puts the number of college-educated blacks in the country at independence in 1975 at just over forty. Still, with the backing of the post-independence governments of Tanzania and, to a lesser extent, Zambia, the movement was able to gain ground and launch forays into the remote, barely developed northern provinces of Niassa and Cabo Delgado (still Frelimo strongholds today, despite their heavily Muslim populations).

Meanwhile, Lourenco Marques/Maputo enjoyed a last bloom of prosperity. The post-war years saw the city's first hi-rise buildings go up and white residents enjoyed a pleasant late-colonial lifestyle (this is the atmosphere in which the wife of a current U.S. presidential candidate was raised). Portugal's empire—Europe's oldest—lasted the longest...almost through neglect rather than design.

But the freedom struggle grew ever more violent as the 1960s faded into the 1970s. If Mozambique remains, by various measures, Africa's poorest state, Portugal in the post-war years was Europe's poorest nation. Troop deployments to confront the insurgency drained the national treasury, while disease took a worse toll among recruits than did combat. The Portuguese military was starved of resources and living conditions even for officers were abysmal. Personnel losses and the financial drain of Portugal's colonial wars in Africa contributed directly to the left-wing military coup of 1974 in Lisbon, which overthrew the Salazar regime and immediately began negotiations to shed the African colonies—Guinea-Bissau, Angola and Mozambique—that Portugal had held for almost five centuries.

The newly independent state of Mozambique inherited an attractive, if sleepy and, thanks to the retreat of capital during the years of warfare, down-at-the-heels capital. Then came the Renamo insurgency (see below), its terrible effects compounded by clumsy attempts to organize the economy according to socialist economic theory. By the mid-1980s, Mozambique was bankrupt and Maputo was under siege. Hi-rise apartment buildings became vertical slums, crowded with refugees from the interior. Villas abandoned by fleeing Portuguese colonials were either requisitioned by the government or became tenements for squatters. Even the roads and sidewalks began to disintegrate, while city services virtually ground to a halt.

According to all traditional indicators, Maputo should still be a broken city today. Yet, it isn't. If you can look beyond the gaps in the sidewalks that make walking such an adventure and the potholes that serve as third-world speedbumps, it's still a tree-lined, attractive place—now undergoing a renaissance. While the old business district and various of the intermediate commercial areas appear run-down at first glance, you have to look at the proliferation of goods on offer—and the city is quite clean by regional standards. Unemployment remains high—not least because of a continued influx from the countryside—but there is plenty of business going on (with new factories being built one after the other in the outlying Matola industrial district).

As always, the diplomatic and government-residential quarter is in the best condition. The Polana District on the bluffs above the ocean is home to a few good hotels, a variety of restaurants, and even a simple indoor shopping mall—as well as art galleries and theaters. Still, the distance between most of the “well-to-do” and the poor is far less pronounced and repellent than in countries such as India (or even South Africa). Government officials don’t, as a rule, live in the palatial homes they would already have built in other developing countries. Upscale European and Japanese vehicles are increasingly evident (drivers remain unusually polite and orderly), but this observer, at least, never had the sense, as he has had in countries such as Pakistan or even Egypt, that only those who had already reached the top would ever have a chance to get to the top.

The old Portuguese government buildings remain in use—of necessity—and could do with repairs. Yet, it’s a positive sign that the government has rarely squandered its limited resources on ostentatious “show” projects (my colleagues might think of Turkestan—or, for that matter, Nigeria). New government construction, for the most part, is utilitarian, not extravagant. Most renovations underway in the city are commercial or private (of the pre-independence buildings, the best-maintained public construction is probably the city’s cathedral, one of the ugliest religious structures ever built).

It’s important, certainly, not to downplay Maputo’s (or the country’s) problems, which are profound. Health care and education top the long list of needs. Expatriates and upper-class Mozambicans leave the country when faced with serious medical problems, if they can afford to do so, and medical facilities up-country often consist of clinics with undertrained staff, few supplies, primitive equipment and, not infrequently, no electricity or running water. With at least 13% of the population HIV-positive, malaria rampant and nearly every imaginable disease lurking in the country, the challenges would appear insurmountable. Yet, the health ministry is recognized as conscientious and well-run, making the most of limited resources (during the 2000 floods, the ministry had a much better sense of what was needed and what was viable than the aid-agency representatives who flooded into Mozambique as disaster tourists). An outsider considering the country’s health-care needs might simply throw up his hands, but, faced with a problem, the Mozambicans tend to roll up their sleeves and go to work. We may sniff at the quality of the results, but the will to self-help is impressive by regional standards. Nonetheless, it got my attention when I entered a small hotel in a rural area and noticed a hand-made sign proudly announcing that “There is no cholera now.”

Although municipal officials are sensitive about the matter, cholera and other diseases that breed in poor sanitary conditions remain a threat in the capital, as well as in the hinterlands. But malaria remains the perennial killer, challenged only by AIDS, the new kid on the block. On a coldly practical level, the key developmental question regarding AIDS isn’t how many will die, but *who* will die. In Africa, education generally means a much-higher income (relatively speaking). More income means greater access to sexual partners in most of the region’s societies. Elsewhere in Africa, skilled workers and the professional classes have been hit disproportionately by AIDS, threatening developmental progress. The extent to which this may affect Mozambique, with its still-weak middle class, remains unanswered (I could not find any surveys of *who* was struck

by AIDS in Maputo), but the dying off of the “best and the brightest” is a concern for all of Africa.

Schools are full—a government priority—but there are not enough of them. The vast barrack-like highschools of Maputo remain poor and, if not technically understaffed, they are not possessed of sufficient teachers with desirable levels of competency. And, of course, classes can be double or triple a manageable size. Naturally, literacy levels are highest in urban areas, but, overall, this is a country with an official illiteracy rate of 38% and an unofficial, but convincing, functional-illiteracy rate above 60%. There are a few cyber-cafes in the upscale Polana district, but this is still a country that, outside of major urban areas, hasn't even entered the age of television. News arrives by radio—or word of mouth—for most Mozambicans. Even newspapers, although influential, aim primarily at urban elites and the tenuous middle class. This is a society that skipped the print age and hasn't entered the television (let alone the internet age). It's still struggling to emerge from the village-radio level of development. Schools in rural communities are often simply one room—without electricity or running water—and they frequently offer only a few years of rudimentary instruction. Educationally, geography is fate in Mozambique and few rural children will have the opportunity for advancement. It's a country that started from a very low level of education at independence, then fell to less than zero during its civil war. Educational equity and sufficiency will require generations of effort. Frustratingly, Mozambique has the innate talent and the will to advance, but reaching anything approaching a competitive level of education for today's knowledge-centered economies will take generations—while countries with a head-start will continue to advance. Although there are many other factors in play, as well, the education question alone may prove the greatest restraint on Mozambique's development in the coming decades. Even where there's a will, there's *not* always a way.

Of note, religious schools play a powerful role. Catholic universities are doing their best to make up for time lost during the colonial period (the newest campus recently opened in Pemba, in the Muslim north). They're generally considered to provide the best in-country education, but they aren't free (fees range from US \$500 per year in the north to as much as \$ 3,000 in Maputo) and scholarships are limited. Of more concern are the Muslim religious schools—not yet a worry because of radical theology (Mozambique's Muslims are generally relaxed—see below), but because their curriculae focus overwhelmingly on religion and fail to prepare their students to contribute to the economy or general social progress. With the Muslim north bitterly poor and development weighted heavily toward “Christian” Maputo and its neighboring southern provinces, the chances of sub-region stagnation, of the country developing ever-increasing wealth disparities between provinces, remains high. The government recognizes this danger, but lacks the resources to deal with it comprehensively—and the levels of development already reached in Maputo and its environs, as well as the port city's location at the end of a key LOC from South Africa, tend to attract ever more investment, gaining critical mass while the rest of the country lags behind. After the development and investment pioneers have blazed the trail, subsequent investments usually cluster where the quality of life has already improved—making Maputo the country's money-magnet, no matter what the government tries to do.

Crime remains low in Maputo (very low by the region's standards). I walked across the city repeatedly (during daylight) and never had the least difficulty--although in some

of the poorer quarters a few of the residents looked at me as if I were a pig with wings—they just didn't see whites in their neighborhoods unless they arrived in air-conditioned aid-worker SUVs. As with Washington, D.C., of course, the city has districts where I wouldn't linger at night. But the point is that Maputo is vastly better than its reputation—and, unfortunately, most of us judge not only Mozambique but all of Africa by its third-hand reputation. We don't go out to look at that entire, complex continent with our own eyes, so we make whopping strategic miscalculations—not least because we often seem to have an appetite for bad news from Africa and no interest in hearing about positive developments. Perhaps we're overloaded with concerns and responsibilities—but there's something of a desire in Washington to write Africa off and be done with it. So we miss the impressive progress made in barely a decade in Maputo, the startling rise of South African economic imperialism, and the potential of an entire continent.

Of course, much of the progress in Maputo has come about because of aid programs—even the housing market has been boosted by NGO staffers and their benefit packages. Mozambique has been described, over the past seventeen or eighteen years, as the “darling” of the international aid community, not least because the government has been sensible more often than not and because corruption, though undeniably present, has never been allowed to utterly derail development efforts as it has done elsewhere in Africa.

But, increasingly, it's investment that's bringing the city back to life. The city's hotels may host few tourists, but there are plenty of business travelers—most with South African accents (black and white). Increasingly, though, there are various European accents, as well. The Portuguese are still players, too (although, when you get them aside, native Mozambicans continue to harbor a strong dislike of their former colonial masters). This huge country, with a population of only about 18 million, with prime agricultural land, proven gas deposits and apparent oil reserves, strategically crucial LOCs—and, thus far, a stable, elected government--must appear to be undiscovered territory to non-African investors who don't understand that they've already missed the best bargains—snapped up by South Africans.

Unfortunately, not all of the “investors” are desirable. While the problem is not yet out of control, one of the gravest threats to Mozambique is international crime, especially Pakistani and Nigerian drug-traders. Maputo is used for money-laundering (through foreign exchange services and, at least in the past, through banks) by all parties, and the Nigerians—the most relentlessly criminal nationality on earth—exploit the weakness of government institutions and the opportunities for corruption in a country that remains cruelly poor. The Pakistani heroin mafia has long since put down roots and branched out. Most high-price, high-profit drugs only transit Mozambique, which is used as a way station and clearing house, but cheap chemical drugs have been dumped on the local economy. Frelimo's candidate for president in the December, 2004, elections, Armando Guebuza, is an old freedom fighter with a reputation for refusing to tolerate corruption. If he wins, as he is expected to do, he'll have his work cut out for him.

Maputo is, in many ways, a very impressive city. But an outsider will never fully crack the code—and the dangers for the city's future, as well as the country's, are the sort that lurk in the shadows. Development takes time. The two factors likeliest to deny Mozambique that time are corruption and organized crime. Even AIDS, despite its toll,

is less likely to destroy what has already been achieved. There's still more reason to be optimistic than pessimistic, but as the plague of gas and oil wealth begins to strike, the income may do to Mozambique what civil war, poverty and terrible floods could not.

Corruption...the AIDS of developing states

This report will not reproduce the extensive discussion of the effects of corruption from the first paper in this CETO strategic studies series (on India), but a summary recapitulation is due: When we consider strategic factors that impede or accelerate development, corruption is generally underweighted, if it is considered at all. Yet, corruption has been the single greatest impediment to building successful states in the post-colonial world.

We generally think of corruption as a matter of government figures raking off millions or policemen extorting a dollar or two, viewing it as an annoyance and, perhaps, a disgrace, but little more: "The cost of doing business." The difficulty in grasping the third and fourth order effects of corruption stems from our lack of personal experience with it; we live in a society where corruption is regarded with outrage and disgust, where it is statistically rare, and where it is pursued vigorously by the legal system when it comes to light. Thus, we fail to appreciate its cancerous (the word is carefully chosen), debilitating impact.

In this observer's travels to sixty countries and every continent except Antarctica, the greatest skepticism he has encountered around the world has come when he stated that, in half a century of American life, he never had to pay a single bribe. From Indonesia to Russia to Latin America, conversational partners change their body language and facial expressions, as if they had suddenly detected a lie. It is incomprehensible to many in the developing world that *any* society could exist—even mythic America—in which bribes are unnecessary.

That mistrust shown by citizens of developing countries is the same mistrust they bring to their own governments and societies. *In bribery-ridden cultures, the social compact is radically different—the government is the enemy, in all its forms.* In corrupt cultures, the reach of government is to be avoided unless the citizen absolutely requires a government service. The mistrust between the citizen and the state bleeds into all other sectors except the family, which turns into a fortress against the rest of the society.

A modern or postmodern market economy relies heavily on trust—so much so that it's second nature to us and we hardly notice the number of trust-based transactions we enter into in a single day. The law is there as a back-up only--resort to legal action is a sign of failure (unless, of course, you're a trial lawyer). Similarly, although Americans complain about their government, they never doubt that standard services will be reliable—the social-security checks will arrive on time, the police will show up at the crime scene without being paid to do so, the courts will attempt to render an honest

verdict, highways will be repaired, water systems will be inspected and kept safe, and taxes paid will go to the state coffers in their entirety. The daily basis of our lives relies upon and expects government at all levels to be dependable and overwhelmingly honest. We have no sense of how different the patterns of life are in states when a place in a high school, a residence permit or even an electrical connection depends upon the payment of a bribe.

Societies that cannot establish trust between the individual citizen and the government consistently fail to develop trust with and between larger power groupings, whether ethnic or religious. The bribe paid to the traffic cop resonates through the entire society. Further strengthening that family-as-fortress.

We make much of “family values” in public debate in our own country—yet, in our day-to-day transactions, we trust colleagues, business associates, sales clerks, cops and neighbors from different ethnic or religious backgrounds. We do not worry about the tribal affiliations of our children’s grade-school teacher or the emergency-room doctor’s political party membership. When we speak of family values, we refer to a romanticized, “The Waltons” reinterpretation of the past, in which all extended families were virtuous; in fact, they were merely economically necessary in an agriculture-based society before the days of mechanization. Even in Europe and the United States, the sub-regions where the extended family or clan remained the dominant social construct were the poorest, least successful—and most suspicious—portions of the continent or country (the Scottish highland, for example, or rural Ireland, or southern Italy). Today, our forces encounter the deep mistrust within Iraqi or Afghan society—both still pre-modern in the sense that blood affiliations remain the basic determinant of social belonging. It frustrates and baffles us (“Why can’t they see that it’s for their own good?”).

Corruption keeps the extended family or clan system on life support in the 21st century. And in such systems, no one sees the point of doing anything to benefit a non-member of the family or clan; in fact, the perception—around the globe in such cultures—tends to be that anything that benefits a different family or clan, leaving it better-off and thus stronger, is ultimately to the detriment of one’s own family. It’s worse that a zero-sum mentality—it destroys any chance of developing the sense of civic membership and responsibility that makes Western-style democracies so robust.

The extended family certainly has virtues—it protects its members in times of trouble and often gives the young a start in life. But it prevents societies from developing fully modern economies. In the American experience, the long frontier era, in which neighbors were forced to rely on each other to survive, regardless of nationality or faith, did much to break down traditional barriers—and we tend to forget that the “modern” American nuclear family—the two-parent family in its own home, without co-resident grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces and nephews—was the tool that forged the American West for two centuries. Young couples—or individual males—could most easily afford to risk themselves on the frontier. Profit motives and industrialization broke down the remaining barriers until, today, the much-misunderstood American nuclear family is the most ferocious socio-economic tool in the world: We still love our parents, but, if a better job opportunity demands that we move from Atlanta to Denver, we put a for-sale sign in our front yard and start packing. This enables us to maximize human efficiency, the allocation of skills and the constant geographic redistribution of an ever-more-specialized workforce.

The extended family, clan or tribe keeps pulling the talented back, whether expecting them to work the family farm or enter the family trade, to support aging relatives, or simply to defend the family. The extended family also fosters corruption because it demands advantageous treatment from any member who attains a position of power, whether in government or in business. You can't hire the best man (to say nothing of the best woman). You must hire the cousin or nephew. Nor do you feel full freedom at the ballot box—you vote for the benefit of your clan.

By developing world standards, Mozambique is still a country in the balance. While there is certainly corruption (perhaps more during the sudden, largely uncontrolled influx of aid in the late 1980s than now), it remains well below the African norm—in other words, it has not yet paralyzed the economy or the society. The revolutionary leader who succeeded Eduard Mondlane after his assassination, Samora Machel, may have made errors, but he was not personally corrupt and he despised corruption. He set the tone for many of his peers in the movement. While the years have softened the resistance of many to corruption—greed is a universal human trait—a puritanical streak still runs through the upper echelons of the government. When corruption cases reach the light of day, they're prosecuted (if not always successfully). And Frelimo has tried hard to avoid becoming the party of one tribe, or one faith. Indeed, it's refusal to accept tribal divisions was so uncompromising that, during the civil war, it allowed Renamo, the opposition movement, to co-opt many tribal leaders by offering them recognition denied them by the Maputo government.

Mozambique is not—yet—either a fatally polarized or a thoroughly corrupt society. For all its problems, it remains a hopeful case. And the highest-profile corruption trial in its history, the Cardoso murder affair, is at once cause for optimism and concern.

The Cardoso Case

If anyone likely to read this report had encountered Carlos Cardoso, Mozambique's leading journalist of the post-independence era, he or she would have counted the seconds until they could find an excuse to get away. The son of middle-class Portuguese colonials in Maputo, Cardoso became radicalized in the early 1970s, while attending the apartheid-era University of Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. Expelled from South Africa for anti-apartheid activities before he could finish his degree, Cardoso became—and remained—a true believer in all leftwing causes. No evidence, no concrete development, no fact was ever able to shake his conviction that, even after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Marxism was humankind's inevitable future.

Although he never took the final steps to join Frelimo—which seems to have regarded him as a loose cannon—Cardoso supported its platform of a colorblind, socialist society. He not only gladly turned over to the government one of the two residential buildings left him by his parents after they joined the mass white exodus back to Portugal (in any case, a new law forbade any individual to own more than one residence—a law

since rescinded and never quite obeyed), Cardoso also willingly ceded two of the three floors of the building in which he lived to the government, keeping only a small apartment for himself.

His convictions often may have been wrongheaded, but he lived them. And, until his murder on November 22, 2000, he never stopped living them. During the civil-war years of siege in Maputo, he collapsed from malnutrition rather than seek perks his position would have allowed. He did his best to live the revolution.

Cardoso was by choice—perhaps by nature—a crusading journalist, a muckraker in a world with no shortage of muck. Working for a series of newspapers, journals and broadcast outlets over the years (including, for a time, the country's leading daily, *Noticias*), he viewed his pen as a tool of the revolution, writing what was, from our perspective, often-ludicrous propaganda. Yet, he never compromised his values, never accepted bribes or favors. Journalism in a country such as Mozambique is not a lucrative endeavor at any time, let alone during a civil war that played as much havoc with the food supply as it did with the supply of electricity. He never even owned a car, despite holding a series of powerful media posts.

But if Cardoso propagandized for the revolution, he also refused to allow the government to betray its own principles. He believed every slogan and expected the government to live up to its promises. He had no tolerance for corruption or incompetence (a pretty strict attitude in a starving country lacking an educated cadre). When he believed he had spotted something wrong, he launched into public criticism of the government (even landing, briefly, in prison for a few days in the early 1980s).

Gadfly though he was, his integrity gained him respect. And he developed a complex, mutually beneficial relationship with Samora Machel over the years—for all the frustrations Cardoso created, Machel shared much of his political puritanism.

Cardoso fought for freedom of the press. While the media were never suppressed to an East-bloc degree in Mozambique, many of the members of the new, post-independence government believed that the purpose of the press was essentially to release information the government wanted released, to withhold information the government wanted withheld, to praise the government's achievements, and otherwise to shut up.

Cardoso never shut up. When he became too hot for one outlet to handle, another publication took him up—or he created a collective and began a new publication of his own. The world of Mozambican journalism is small today and was much smaller a quarter-century ago. Everyone knew everyone. Despite the inevitable petty feuds in such an environment, Cardoso was never shut out entirely (nor did he suffer discrimination because he was white). He did, though, have his moments of despair—not least after Machel's assassination at South African hands (which the South Africans deny even today) and after the country's economic about-face turn toward a market economy.

He never figured out elementary economics, refusing to view any aspect of public life except through a socialist lens. He railed endlessly against the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, and he could never accept that the United States, by the late 1980s, had begun to play a positive role in Mozambique. His insistence that capitalism was purely exploitative even led him on a foolhardy campaign to prevent the introduction of supermarkets in Maputo—shops that ultimately delivered much lower prices to the poor, thanks to the free-market magic of competition. As the years went by, Cardoso

began to seem (from a Western perspective) a caricature of himself, a lefty dinosaur, a buffoon.

But his follies can obscure the powerful, positive role he played—especially in fighting corruption and keeping the government honest. Frustrated by the timidity he saw elsewhere in the media, he broke with the mainstream and founded a faxed newsletter that would give him and a small staff of investigative journalists complete freedom. *Mediafax* sounds almost quaint today—a faxed couple of pages as the primary insider news source in an entire country, but in the mid-1990s fax machines were an untapped outlet in Maputo, just arriving with the first waves of investment. The internet hadn't even taken hold in the West (and still lags in Mozambique today). Beginning with only a few dozen subscribers—and warned of inevitable failure—*Mediafax* turned out to be a perfect innovation for a capital city that had reasonably reliable phone lines, but little else. In short order, the publication became required reading not only in government offices (where its appearance must have been anticipated with beads of sweat on the forehead), but in business circles and in foreign embassies—where it often surprised political offices with scoops they could turn into classified cables home. *Mediafax*'s sources were first-rate, its standards high—and it was far gutsier than the daily and weekly newspapers which, although not government controlled, were careful of the government's power. With little overhead, *Mediafax* not only quickly became self-supporting, but was able to expand. It's muckraking journalism seemed revolutionary in a society still suffering an information deficit. Restless, Cardoso moved on to found a new journal, *Metical*, in 1997. For Mozambicans, he was Jack Anderson, Matt Drudge and Seymour Hersh combined (although he had a far greater respect for the truth than the latter two).

Eventually, Cardoso raked the wrong muck. Nyimpine Chissano, the son of President Joaquim Chissano, had more than a touch of Uday-Qusay disease, an ailment that often afflicts the children of rulers in developing states. While the president himself never appeared to be excessively corrupt, he made no apparent effort to rein in his son. Cardoso began to expose Nyimpine Chissano's lucrative, sometimes-violent off-the-books activities.

That got him warnings at first. Then he and his staff at *Metical* began to unravel the greatest scandal in the new state's history.

As part of its divestiture of state assets to meet the terms for new foreign loans, the government was liberalizing the banking sector and selling off its ownership of the country's two major banks. Shortly after the sale of one of the institutions, the Commercial Bank of Mozambique (BCM), it emerged that tens of millions of dollars had been siphoned off in an insider check-cashing scam (the official figure eventually reached US \$ 107 million, but the overall scandal may have involved as much as US \$ 400 million, an astronomical sum in such a poor country). Anxious to put the embarrassment behind it, the government agreed to pay the new owners over US \$ 52 million in restitution—but Cardoso wasn't content with that. He didn't see why the government, which needed the money desperately for basic services, should cover the cost of a massive theft. He began to probe.

Most government investigators and officials stonewalled. One government lawyer trying to pursue the case honestly died under mysterious circumstances. But Cardoso was persistent.

Soon enough, the trail led to the wealthy Satar family, a clan originally from Pakistan. The public reason for the family's riches was the success of their foreign-exchange offices. But the forex business was merely a front for extensive money-laundering, loan-sharking and virtually every form of corrupt activity known to man. With well-placed bribes and ready threats, the Satars believed they had guaranteed themselves impunity. They were, indeed, very well-connected. Especially with the president's son.

The investigation led through the Satars to Nyimpine Chissano, who appeared to have provided cover for the Satar clans activities.

Cardoso went public. With all of it.

After work on November 22, 2000, he was being driven home in a rattletrap company car when gunmen pulled up beside the vehicle and shot him to death.

It shocked the country, despite the national experience of violence. Cardoso was widely regarded as a hero for his long efforts to expose corruption. And, of course, journalists rally round their own. The murder attracted international attention and excited demands for justice around the globe.

The president attended Cardoso's funeral service, praising him. But the government dreaded a public court case.

The law—and world opinion—prevailed. Determined prosecutors continued to unravel the Satar clan's web of corruption. Widely reported, the series of trials, of the masterminds and the actual assassins, began in 2002. The country followed developments closely with an intensity usually reserved for sports teams.

The results to date are mixed. Several members of the Satar family received jail sentences. So did the primary assassin, nicknamed "Anibalzinho," who was identified and apprehended in South Africa.

Despite a courtroom appearance and a dramatic confrontation with one of the Satar brothers, who accused him of being behind the murder, Nyimpine Chissano went free.

Suspiciously, the main assassin escaped from custody. Twice. And the Satars continue to pursue every possible avenue to overturn their sentences.

Yet, by regional standards, this was a significant victory for justice. Except for South Africa, few, if any, sub-Saharan African states would have allowed the trial to go forward or convictions to be reached. If the results were imperfect, they nonetheless exposed Nyimpine Chissano for what he was. It's likely that President Chissano has cut a deal with the probable next president to protect his son in return for relinquishing the reins of power. But Nyimpine Chissano is on a much shorter leash.

And Mozambique has the region's most aggressive media outside of South Africa, a monument to Carlos Cardoso, journalist, Marxist and lifelong Don Quixote.

Goin' Up The Country

As the aircraft descends from the clouds above Nampula, the striking landscape draws your eye and you almost miss the city. Massive granite buttes rise above the savannah,

miles apart from one another, with tree-studded grasslands in between. One of the world's alien landscapes to Western eyes, it makes the dusty provincial capital beyond the airport seem like a human island in a remote sea.

The capital of Nampula Province, Nampula city is the developing world's standard cluster of shantytowns—villages grafted on to the urban core—around a few faded hi-rise buildings. To an outsider, it looks more of a town than a city, not least because, from a distance, the extensive informal settlements blend into the landscape. But Nampula is a critical strategic point in the country's north, a prize in any struggle, because the north's main rail line and primary road converge at its edge.

The rail line connects the port of Nacala, a few hours to the east, with Malawi. Although disrepair and war have driven many goods destined for Malawi (or for world markets) onto the terrible roads, the rail line remains the ideal transport means and will likely be rebuilt to meet the interior's needs.

The single main "highway" that connects the country from south to north also passes through Nampula. Although a map reconnaissance suggests a sparse network of alternative routes that might be used as detours, maps are deceptive in this part of the world. Most of the country's "red-ball" roads are in terrible repair—often merely dirt tracks seasonally washed out—and impassible to large commercial vehicles. Although quality varies widely (lengthy stretches of the south-to-north main route are in terrible repair, sometimes little more than rutted tracks difficult, when not impassable, in bad weather). After passing through Nampula and hooking east, the main highway serves the port of Nacala (this stretch has been greatly improved and widened, with ongoing paving), branching northward to Pemba, the next provincial capital, and continuing to Mocimboa Da Praia, just short of the border with Tanzania (a red-ball continues on to the Rovuma River and the border, but most local transport is by sea in the extreme north).

Control of Nampula cuts off the underdeveloped north of the country and forces Malawi-bound goods to follow longer routes from the south—or even to divert through Zimbabwe or Zambia at high cost. The city's strategic value was not lost on either side during the civil war.

Nor was it lost on the Portuguese, who advanced the cross in lieu of development funds. Riding northeast in a small Japanese pick-up (with a couple of bullet holes in the windshield just in front of the passenger's seat—sometimes you just don't ask), you encounter the standard developing-world pattern of settlements that have grown up along the main road, with countless locals walking, walking, walking on the edge of the thoroughfare. It's still a world that moves on foot, unless someone can afford a place in the dangerously overcrowded beds of old Nissan pick-ups or in the occasional smoking minibus. This is still thatched-roof Africa (as is much of Mozambique). The lucky have built homes of cinderblocks, others of mud bricks, while huts wrought of bamboo frames filled with rocks, then plastered over with mud, follow the coast northward. Hoe-worked patches of vegetables keep communities fed, while most of the countryside off the roads remains wild. The roads run like veins of settlement through a wilderness—and this is the most developed part of the country's north.

The market towns in this heavily Muslim region are sudden explosions of color, especially on Fridays, when the stalls selling bright fabrics or used clothing (one granny proudly wore a far-too-heavy jacket with a Wisconsin highschool football team logo)

appear to attract far more interest than the local mosques. And beer is plentiful and cheap.

But the most striking architectural features of the landscape are the old Portuguese churches, many still in use, if underattended. Their white-washed walls faded and mottled by the rot of the tropics, churches almost large enough to be cathedrals rise suddenly from a roadside grove. Often locked tight, they have a crestfallen, disappointed look.

Islam, present before Christianity arrived, is back—to the extent it ever left. Nampula city is one of the country's centers of Islamic learning. As is Iha do Mocambique (Mozambique Island), the colony's capital for almost four hundred years, situated on a long, narrow strip of sand a mile off the coast and three hours east of Nampula (just over two, if your driver is a madman—which adds interest to the journey).

Mozambique Island's tale is the story of much of the east coast of Africa.

The Island of Ghosts

The Portuguese arrived on Mozambique Island in 1507. Except for a few hardy souls, they're gone now, leaving behind their language and ruined colonial buildings that are picturesque unless you have to live in them. Barely two miles from north to south, and less than two hundred yards wide at its narrowest point, the island today seems a dusty, fallen backwater. But its past strategic importance was almost immeasurable.

The island (and, eventually, the country) took its name from an Arab sheikh, Moussa bin Mbeki, reputed to have founded a trading settlement there centuries before the Portuguese arrived. Prior to the beginning of the European era of world conquest, the island was one of the southern outposts of the "Swahili Coast," the thousands of miles of shoreline beginning at the Horn of Africa and reaching south in search of trade and slaves. Islam came early, and Mozambique Island remains the country's premier center of Islamic learning today (although you wouldn't realize it if you weren't informed). But perhaps what's most striking about the impact of both "imperial" Arab Islam and missionary Christianity isn't the number of nominal converts or those who, when asked, describe themselves as Muslim or Christian, but the tenacity of folk beliefs and folk practices (to the north, on Ibo Island—literally the end of the line, if not beyond it—most of the people are Muslim by day, but follow ancient native practices and witchcraft by night).

The Portuguese built a harbor station, then a massive stone fort, on the island in the 16th century, fighting off Arab and Ottoman attackers, then the Dutch (who would replace the Portuguese in the East Indies). When fleets bound toward, or carrying homeward, the wealth of Goa or the Spice Islands put into the harbor to wait for favorable winds, the settlement's population approached a thousand whites. This sounds a small number, but it was the most significant European outpost on the entire East African coast at the time. In any case, the great conquests, as well as the ferociously contested trade, of that

decisive century were carried out by very small numbers of sailors, soldiers and officials. The Portuguese, especially, were always forced to run an “economy-of-force” empire, shifting contingents of troops and administrators between Goa, the Indies, Hormuz, Mozambique, Angola, Guinea—and even Brazil. The range of the Portuguese empire is particularly impressive when you run the numbers and realize that it was built and always run on a fiscal and human shoestring.

Had the Ottoman fleet taken the Portuguese fort on the island in the mid-16th century, the history not only of the Indian Ocean, but of the Mediterranean and Eastern Europe might have been very different. While conventional historians, riveted by the wealth of available data and the proximity of events, focus on the sea battle of Lepanto in 1571, when a combined Venetian and Spanish fleet destroyed an Ottoman armada off the coast of Greece, that encounter only bought a breathing space for the West, while, on land, Muslim armies continued their conquests in eastern Europe—and virtually annihilated Portugal’s military aristocracy, killing its king, in the disastrous battle of Alcazarquivir in 1578, in today’s Morocco. While we in the West tend to see the long contest with Islam in terms of a few isolated events, it was, in fact a continuous struggle down the centuries (perhaps the closest thing to a hiatus was the half century from 1923 to 1973, a period of exceptional Muslim powerlessness).

Most accounts of the Western triumph over military Islam mark the turning of the tide with the catastrophic Ottoman defeat before the gates of Vienna in 1683, when a Christian army led by King Jan Sobieski of Poland shattered the last great army the Turks managed to send against the heart of Europe. But if we overcome our Eurocentric focus and look at the near-global struggle between Islam and the West that has not ceased for 1,300 years, it appears that the truly decisive events may have taken place on the rim on the Indian Ocean, in the 1500s, at near-forgotten outposts such as Mozambique Island.

The Portuguese intrusion into the Indian Ocean—followed by other European seafaring powers—stopped Ottoman expansion down the coast dead, then rolled it back dramatically. How many of us know of the history-changing sea battles and coastal assaults such as the Portuguese naval triumph at Diu, where an Ottoman fleet was utterly destroyed *off the coast of India* in 1509 in a struggle for control of the spice trade? The Ottoman fleet had sailed from the Red Sea intent on eliminating the European presence on India’s western coast and maintaining control of the spice trade. Only one in a string of Francisco de Almeida’s victories that stretched from Mombasa to Goa, it was complemented by the decisive, but now-forgotten subjugation of Hormuz at the entrance to the Persian Gulf by Afonso de Albuquerque, whose ferocity terrified even the Turks and Arabs (Along the Arabian coast, he cuts off the forearms of any males his men could seize and sliced off the noses of the women—a true Christian of his day, however, he executed one of his own officers for having sexual relations with an “infidel” Muslim girl).

Most accounts of the period focus on the Turkish seizure of Cyprus in the latter half of the 16th century as a great Ottoman advance. But, at that point, the Ottomans—by far the dominant Muslim power of the age—had lost control of the Indian Ocean world, which was a vastly greater prize than Cyprus (where Muslims and Christians are still in opposition today).

Suddenly, the “oil” of the day, the precious commodities of pepper, nutmeg, mace, dyes and silk no longer had to pass through Muslim middlemen or Ottoman cities and

ports. While the Sublime Porte on the Golden Horn could still draw tremendous internal wealth from the far-flung Ottoman Empire, an essential source of external wealth was lost. Economists may argue that the wealth loss was only a small percentage of the Ottoman economy, but the rest of that economy was already static or in decline, even if the shift remained imperceptible to the Europeans who had to face the sultan's mighty armies.

And the wealth subtracted from the Muslim heartlands of Arabia, from the Persian Gulf and the caravan routes, and from the Ottoman Mediterranean ports didn't disappear. It shifted to European coffers—just as the opening of the Americas deluged Spain and the Habsburg empire with riches. Soon enough the Dutch—having wrested their independence from Spain in a forty-year struggle—were replacing the Portuguese in East Indian waters, to be followed by the ultimately triumphant English. But the wealth never stopped heading westward, around the African cape. It fueled the northern European renaissance and Mediterranean resistance to the Ottomans. And, except in the Iberian Peninsula, where fatal protectionist policies stunted economic diversification and growth, the flow of riches jump-started Europe's wealth-generation machine. Once the new dynamic was in place, the increasing power of Europe could be answered in the east only by attempts to slow the region's decline. The capitalism of the bourse triumphed over the marketplace of the bazaar.

Had the Ottomans and their Arab auxiliaries been able to seize Mozambique Island, depriving the Portuguese of their essential way-station, the course of history might have run against us. If we are willing to take a wide-angle view of the "world war" of the day, the decisive battles weren't fought between the hundreds of ships at Lepanto, but between a dozen here and there at the outer reaches of the known world. Deprived of hegemony in the Indian Ocean, the Muslim world lost its strategic—and economic—depth. The 16th century may have been the golden age of Suleiman the Magnificent in Istanbul, or the rise of the Safavid dynasty in Persia and the brilliance of Akbar the Great in Mughal India, but the Muslim world was soon revealed to be far less than the sum of its gilded parts. By the next century, with the Europeans firmly in control of the sea lanes and the Ottomans reduced, even in the Mediterranean, to little more than grandiose piracy on the waves, the rise of the West and the decline of the East was probably irreversible. Slowly at first, the Western powers had begun to nibble at India, while the Mughal rulers in the north lost the initiative and, soon, their energies. Persia, ravaged by centuries of invasions, was only a regional, not a "global" power. And with economic and strategic decline came intellectual decline, a spiritual lock-down, and a defensive mindset in place of the conqueror's confidence.

We do not think in such terms, but the American sailors and the Marines aboard ship today in the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf are the inheritors of a tradition of dominant Western maritime power that goes back almost exactly five-hundred years, to Almeida and Albuquerque, leading ten or a dozen ships against the greatest empires in the world.

Perhaps it's time to re-read Alfred Thayer Mahan—and extend his case studies eastward.

From Caravels to Carriers

While U.S. Navy planners certainly take the Indian Ocean into account, do we underestimate its enduring—perhaps growing—criticality? Today, the spice route has been replaced by oil export routes, transporting the new wealth of the region's littorals to the east and west. At present, American naval power, along with long-range airpower, allows us strategic control of the Indian Ocean (with the British navy a helpful ally). Yet, while it's difficult to imagine the U.S. Navy, supported by our other strategic assets, ever losing control of the Atlantic or Pacific sea lanes, the Indian Ocean environment may pose significantly higher risks than we have yet admitted to ourselves.

While the regional navies—with India's by far the largest—pose no present threat to the U.S. Navy, or to Anglotalateral naval forces overall, weapons advances, niche capabilities, strategic shifts in alliances, global opinion and, indeed, the apparently endless struggle between a West still in denial and militant Islam could conceivably result in out-years combinations that would make this distant, difficult theater an unwelcoming place for U.S. power projection.

In time, oil, while critical today, may be replaced by alternative power sources. The spice trade gave way to more complex exchanges, then, at last, to the oil trade. Might there be a next-in-line commodity that will extend or even intensify the importance of the Indian Ocean sea lanes? Will oil prove of enduring importance?

What about the populations on the littoral? If human capital is the key resources of the 21st century—and this observer is convinced of it—then a prime source of educated, skilled human capital is obviously the educated portion of India's billion-plus population. But, while the Muslim world of the Middle East is unlikely to make significant human-capital contributions to the world in the coming decade (except for terrorists), Africa is a great unknown. While education levels remain abysmally low and diseases (not only AIDS) remain a wild card, we cannot foresee either what Africa's future may require—or offer. It's a vast, natural-resource-rich continent that we've essentially written off—astonishing that we're too busy to consider a continent.

Africa's "human capital" has, of course, long been a strategic resource, if a cruelly used one. While the West would certainly have risen to its wealth and power without slavery, the path for some nations—and many individuals—would not have been so direct. Indeed, far more important to the Portuguese, for example, than the minor goods trade up the Zambezi, was the export of slaves, gathered by Arab traders and sold through Portuguese slavers to French plantations on Mauritius and elsewhere (on Africa's west coast, of course, Portuguese colonies exported millions of slaves to Brazil, Lisbon's most important colony).

Will Africa offer a more-humanely-handled form of human capital to the world in the future? It seems unlikely at present. Yet, with the probable rise of South Africa as the dominant regional power in the coming decades, it would be foolish to assume that tomorrow will simply be a linear extension of the troubled present.

Whether or not Africa becomes an unexpected "human capital" player, regional markets and economies around the Indian Ocean littoral are likely to continue to grow—while the Middle East could either improve in parts (perhaps Iraq and Iran), while

continuing to fail elsewhere—or could continue its overall strategic decline. In either scenario, control of the sea lanes will remain a vital insurance policy for the United States and its key allies. Airpower alone will not be able to cope with regional crises. Just as the Army's large numbers of boots on the ground remain essential to establishing a convincing long-term presence on land—especially in deep-interior operations—a naval presence is critical to the psychological, as well as to the practical, control of the sea lanes. Currently obsessed with inland problems in the Middle East and Central Asia, we may be underestimating the enduring importance of visible sea power in the region. Especially since today's warships offer comparatively little raw firepower to support ground operations, we may fail to grasp that the sea lanes are our ultimate means of strategic control in the region (we worry about the Arabs turning off the taps—but, in a grave crisis, we also have the power to turn off their taps—as long as we maintain control not only of vital choke-points, but of the high seas beyond).

The Navy-Marine team that beat the Barbary pirates almost two-hundred years ago may be required to do much larger operations of a similar nature on the shores of the Middle East.

What if, against our present expectations of crises in East Asia, the crucial theater for naval and littoral operations in this century turned out to be the Indian Ocean?

Of course, we cannot make confident predictions on such matters—but strategic planners should always bear in mind the rule that the bogeyman likes to emerge from the closet you didn't check.

Whatever the future may hold, our current joint operations in the region are nothing new in historical terms—new for us, perhaps, but solidly in an unbroken Western tradition of dominating the Islamic world's "soft underbelly." Or, in Liddell-Hart's term, the West mastered the Middle East by exploiting the indirect approach. We've simply replaced those Portuguese caravels with supercarriers.

For the USMC, it's unlikely that a single Marine entering the Corps today will be able to complete a full career without repeated assignments to the region that stretches from the east coast of Africa northward to the Suez Canal, around to the Persian Gulf, on to India and out through the Straits of Malacca.

Strategically, the American facilities on Diego Garcia are simply our era's version of Portugal's fortified harbor on Mozambique Island. It isn't politically correct to think in such historical sweeps, of course. But our enemies do.

The Ruins of History

On Mozambique Island today, you walk. There are a few weathered vehicles and numerous motorbikes, but bouncing along the rutted seaside road in a pick-up is more trouble than it's worth. And the lanes of the old "stone town" and the twisting paths of the native "reed town" aren't particularly welcoming to anything with more than two

wheels. Besides, when you walk, you see—for the man or woman who truly wants to understand a foreign environment, life has to be an endless dismantled patrol.

What you see on Mozambique Island is a lost world. The walls of the old administrative buildings remain, some with squatters making their homes in the shells. A few of the colonial structures have been kept in sufficient repair to house the local government or slow-motion businesses, and there's a time-warp museum in the former governor's palace (with its décor brought not from Portugal, but from Goa). None of the buildings on the island are on the scale of the imperial structures left behind by richer powers—except for one. The massive Fortress of San Sebastian at the island's northern tip has survived for more than four centuries and, despite the trashing of the abandoned interior, appears likely to survive at least four more. With stone walls thick enough to withstand the heaviest naval guns of the age and a simple modified-star design of the sort built throughout Europe and its colonies before Vauban revolutionized the art of fortification, the blackened walls appear eerie, almost menacing, amid the general brightness of sea and sky. Inside, the locals still draw water from the fortress's central cistern, lugging it back to their homes in tubs or plastic fuel cans. But, except for a pair of old men who have appointed themselves to keep an eye on things (hoping against hope that a tourist will come), only the ghosts remain. And there must be plenty.

Right down to the last days of the colony, the fortress remained an important garrison for the Portuguese. In the 1970s, soldiers and officers lived in the same cavernous halls their predecessors had lived—and died—in for centuries. The broken remains of a bar, stripped bare, signal the location of the small officers' club and a quartermaster's sign still hasn't faded completely above one doorway. Otherwise, there's nothing but a few rusted guns propped up for tourists who rarely bother to come. And, just below the walls, cordoned off on the very tip of the island, stands the oldest European building in sub-Saharan Africa, a church.

Even though the island is now overwhelmingly Muslim, the church has never been defaced. Nor have the other churches that dot the island been disturbed—although most are in poor repair. No longer used for worship, that oldest church still contains a stone altar, a few time-worn graves and, above a pediment, the half-dissolved Portuguese royal coat of arms. In accord with custom, the nave points toward Jerusalem (and, incidentally, Mecca). It's a quiet, irresistibly moving relic of a vanished empire.

The rest of the island is split into two sections—both poor: The old Portuguese district, into which the locals have gradually been migrating—although it consists of more ruined buildings than whole ones—and the dense, lively native section to the south, where the mosques begin.

The main mosque on the island, a miniature imitation of the great mosques of the Muslim heartlands, is painted a heavy chemical green—the Prophet's color, or almost. It hardly appears significant enough to be a central point of religious doctrine for several million believers, but, for the Muslims of Mozambique, it's central. Of note, I never experienced the least hostility—only curiosity, giggles and friendliness—from the island's Muslims. And there appeared to be little rigor in their rituals and habits. As recently as 1998, a cross had been erected on the edge of the Muslim shantytown, commemorating the 500th anniversary of the Portuguese sighting of the island and the first landfall. It hasn't been defaced, nor have any of the derelict or active churches suffered apparent vandalism.

One hopes the situation will not change.

Cross, Crescent and Continuity

The population of Mozambique is divided into three primary confessional groups: About forty per cent Christian, thirty per cent Muslim and the remainder followers of indigenous practices. That's the official story. Christians claim to make up a majority of the population. Muslims insist they're the majority and that they're victims of devious undercounting. In actuality, the practitioners of native religions, who make few public claims, may be the true majority if the test for Christians or Muslims is doctrinal or ritual purity.

At present, Muslims see their faith as resurgent—not violently so—after the long centuries of Christian domination (although Frelimo's leadership more often come from native Christian than from Muslim stock, ideology replaced religion for the aging revolutionary generation). In any case, the situation is far more complex than census numbers or sampling suggest.

Although Islam successfully endured the official Christian epoch in Mozambique, native beliefs and practices have survived far longer than either imported faith. The persistence of tradition, including the occult, is striking. Many nominal Christians and Muslims still practice native rituals and witchcraft to a degree that would horrify the religious authorities in Mecca, the Vatican or American Mid-West Bible colleges (as a historical note, both Christianity and Islam have long quietly incorporated pre-existing local beliefs, from the transformation of a Roman holiday into Christmas and the siting of churches atop wells venerated by pagans, to Muslim Sufi "saints" and shrines and the Indonesian Muslim's fondness for traditional goddesses and nature spirits; however, in our time, Christianity has proven the more malleable faith, while Islam is passing through a period of doctrinal retrenchment and behavioral strictness in much of the Muslim world—likely one of the reasons why evangelical Christianity, sometimes in highly mutated forms, is booming in sub-Saharan Africa, while Islam is fighting to hold on to centuries-old gains).

Regarding Islam, one of the things I could not determine was the extent of Wahabi money and missionary work currently in play in Mozambique. New mosques are being built—generally a sign of the presence of Saudi or Gulf "charities," but I could not crack the local code in that regard—there were simply too many layers and barriers for an outsider without a command of local dialects (added to which the long interval of civil strife left those old enough to speak authoritatively wary behind their superficial friendliness. Small talk was fine. Generalities were fine. Even criticizing the government (or Renamo) was fine. But probed past a certain point, conversational partners of a religious bent would gloss over "family secrets." This doesn't suggest any secret conspiracy to hide Saudi involvement; on the contrary, it's a natural human

response based upon hard experience. Building sufficient trust to overcome the barrier would require a long local residence—and that would guarantee nothing.

Yet, even having seen the efforts of Saudi-sponsored zealots from Turkey to Uzbekistan and from Egypt through Azerbaijan, Pakistan and Indonesia, my sense was that—as in Indonesia—the Wahabis would have their work cut out for them in Mozambique.

Historically, Islam followed a roundabout path to Mozambique. It didn't travel directly down the coast from the Arabian heartlands, but took a detour through Madagascar—whose religious authorities still command more local respect than do those of Mecca. Although currently in eclipse as far as influence goes, Zanzibari Islam also had some impact on the faith in Mozambique (and may again—Muslims in Mozambique's northern provinces more often, and more easily, travel to Dar es Salaam for work than to more-distant, traditionally Christian Maputo). As a result, while many Mozambican Muslims may be devout by local measurement, they would not begin to come up to Wahabi standards. Applying my personal yardstick of zealotry, I never reached a settlement, however remote or thoroughly Muslim, where I couldn't openly buy a beer.

Although the society is conservative in the Muslim north, I saw no veils (and the dress of the poor cannot always conform to even elementary modesty). Islam appeared to be distinctly African—beside which there is an important ethnic division within Mozambican Islam: smaller, but richer, congregations of ethnic Pakistanis and Indians from India's northwestern states—traditional traders throughout East Africa) and the poorer black mosques. Although the state glosses over the ethnic division and simply lists Sunni Islam and a much-smaller Ismaili community, the divisions between the “brown” and “black” congregations run deep. The Indian mosques often provide funds for the poorer African mosques, but there is little practical mixing between the two groups. Although extremism can appear in unexpected places, the first place to hunt for it in Mozambique would be in the mosques and madrassahs serving the Indo-Pakistani Islamic community, which maintains connections with the outside world. Black Muslims tend to be more culturally introspective and far less rigorous.

The danger, of course, is that Gulf-Arab and Saudi wealth could have a devastating effect on such a poor society, were Wahabi missionaries or similar foreign zealots to stage a massive, well-funded intervention. Where there are few or no schools for children, a religious school that offers a free meal and some form of literacy is a very desirable institution to most parents (unquestionably, the most effective conversion-to-fundamentalism tool I've personally encountered around the Muslim world hasn't been firebrand sermons, but madrassahs that offered basic literacy and nutrition to the following generation).

Overall, the people of Mozambique are weary of strife. During the civil war, up to a million Mozambicans died—approximately eight per cent of the population during the period (the equivalent would be over twenty million dead Americans). But, with unemployment affecting at least thirty per cent—and perhaps over half—of the living, well-funded demagogues could potentially do great damage.

Still, the indestructible native practices also appear to temper both Islam and Christianity. For example, on remote Ibo Island, long an important Portuguese outpost in the far north and now overwhelmingly Muslim (and terribly poor) backwater of a

backwater, I visited the main mosque—a small, ramshackle affair with only half a roof, its attendees more interested in chatting with one another than with performing the ritual ablutions or even the regular prayers required of Muslims. Shaking off a leprous beggar, I strolled down the derelict street with a young man who spoke some English. Our dialogue went something like this:

Q: But there are still Christians here, aren't there?

A: Oh, yas. Some. A few. There is the bishop's house [a mold-covered cottage with a long unused look—and the main church was boarded up]. I will show you. But most of us are Muslims now.

Q: I've heard that, at night, there are witchcraft ceremonies here.

A: [With an enormous African smile.] Ooooh, yasss! Some of these things happen.

The people are Muslims in the daylight hours, but not necessarily after darkness falls. There simply wasn't a Muslim feel to the place. Instead, I caught something not-quite-right in the air, a sense that, if pressed to choose, the locals would give up on Islam to hold on to the beliefs handed down through countless generations.

The same applies to many of the Christians, to the great chagrin of missionaries and field workers from Christian charities. While Mozambique includes devout members of both the Christian and Muslim faiths, the belief systems—which vary regionally, as well—appear far more complex than anthropologists have mapped out.

The other notable development since the end of the colonial era has been the great expansion of Protestant evangelism. As a result, in 2004 over 500 distinct denominations are recognized by the government's Department of Religious Affairs (subordinate to the Ministry of Justice) and 107 religious organizations are on the department's registry. The Christian ledger includes, among many others and in addition to the traditional Roman Catholicism, the African-founded Zion Christian Church, Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Mormons, the Church of the Nazarene, Seventh-Day Adventists, Jehovah's witnesses and a swarm of splinter churches, often exclusive local affairs. Faith appears vivid and active—if not always doctrinally sound.

Still, anyone expecting religious purity will be disappointed: Christians and Muslims alike engage in traditional ceremonies before important events, engage in ancestor-worship-lite, and routinely consult *curandeiros*—traditional shamans and healers which a less politically correct era would have called witch-doctors.

While Catholicism dominated the colonial era, Protestant missionary work has a long tradition, as well. In 1858, David Livingstone began his exploration of the Zambezi River in Mozambique as he sought a water route into the continent's interior for his evangelism. And the territory's border regions, neglected by Portugal, sometimes came under the influence of neighboring British, largely Protestant colonies. But today's "battle for souls" throughout Africa is, if anything, more vigorous than in the 19th century's golden age of missionary work. The strategic stakes are higher, as well, as Islam attempts, elsewhere on the continent, to regain its lost southward momentum, while charismatic and hybrid Christian denominations stretch northward on a collision course.

The great interfaith battles of this century, in terms of both numbers engaged and casualties, may well be fought in Africa, not between the West and the Middle East. Despite well-publicized massacres of Christians by Muslims in southern Sudan and interfaith violence in Nigeria and elsewhere, Africa appears to be Christianity's expanding frontier—and the increasingly weak defensive line of Islam.

It's not about the numbers killed, but the greater numbers converted. Africa is the one place where Christian fervor most dramatically exceeds that of Islam. The situation is by no means uniform—and Islam, too, can make local in-roads. But the term “church militant” could take on an all-too-literal meaning in the Africa of tomorrow. We may be surprised to find that the “clash of civilizations” in this century is played out less between Euro-America and the Middle East and more extensively, violently and uncompromisingly in Africa.

Mozambique also has a range of other faiths professed by much smaller segments of the population, from Hinduism and Judaism to the Baha'i faith and more obscure sects. The Indian Ocean littoral has long been a mosaic of creeds, as well as of languages and cultures.

Globalization has been around for a very long time.

The government's attitude toward religion has changed markedly since independence. Although the Frelimo government that assumed power in 1975 was largely socialist and regarded religion as a tool of oppression—in accordance with leftwing dogma—religion was never forbidden or seriously repressed in Mozambique. It was, however, sufficiently slighted in the early post-colonial years to play into the hands of the Renamo guerrillas and, tragically, to excite gullible American Protestant fundamentalists into contributing funds to Renamo, as bloody and godless a movement as any Africa has seen.

The government quickly recognized that it wasn't enough to grudgingly tolerate religion, that the hold of faith was so tenacious that it was essential to gain the backing of influential Christian and Muslim authorities. Additionally, the work of Christian relief organizations had a profound, positive effect on the impoverished, strife-torn country. Constitutionally, Mozambique has always allowed freedom of religion, but today the government fully recognizes the political importance of the country's religious groups and behaves accordingly. Missionary groups are active, vigorous and, usually, helpful in the development sphere.

A superficial look at the country's religious demographics, with Muslims strongest in the north, Christians weighted in the south, and native faiths persistent in the interior, might suggest a danger of the country breaking in two along confessional lines. But the greater lurking danger to the country's integrity, at least for now, isn't religion, but politics. And the threat is right in the center of the country, the Renamo opposition's stronghold.

Heart of Darkness?

Joseph Conrad's peerless and enduringly relevant novella, *Heart of Darkness* (twisted into the film "Apocalypse Now"), takes place in the late 19th-century Belgian Congo. But the journey into horror and madness described in the book could easily have been set a bit earlier, on the Zambezi in Mozambique.

Prior to the 20th century, the Portuguese made only half-hearted efforts to develop the interior. The most serious initiative began in the mid-1600s when the Portuguese crown granted extensive land holdings in the uncharted reaches of the Zambezi to subjects who promised to settle and develop them. The estates, or *prazos*, lay in a region only crudely mapped—literally *terra incognita*.

The high hopes of both the state and the settlers were disappointed almost from the start. Local diseases slaughtered whites with no inherited exposure. Tribal violence killed others. Still, with nothing to return to in Portugal, some *prazeiros* hung on out of desperation—or, in some cases, because they were pleased to be able to indulge in behavior that would not have been accepted even in the roughest coastal settlements.

Where cash crops could be raised, it was difficult to get them downriver to Sofala or any other port where they might be sold. Few of the *prazeiros* prospered over the decades. Ostensibly valid only for three generations, many of the grants were matrilineal holdings—intended to draw and keep women in the colony, thereby putting down human roots to deepen Portugal's claim. But many of the plantations disappeared as the years went by, while others blended with the local culture, creating hybrids that were neither Portuguese nor African, but often the worst of both. Intermarriage broke down bloodlines ("intermarriage" is the polite way to describe it) and *mazungos*, or half-castes, frequently represented the "Portuguese" in the bush. A number of the surviving *prazos* evolved into renegade mini-states, laws unto themselves, rampaging the interior or engaging in river piracy. Culturally, morally and psychologically, the local strongmen—unconditional rulers of their small, remote domains—became so odious that, in the 19th century, the Portuguese undertook military campaigns to subjugate them. Not all of the campaigns were easy, between small-scale but savage engagements and devastating fever casualties among the Portuguese. Lisbon ultimately established a measure of control, but as late as World War I the forts that dotted the interior were undermanned, disease-ridden and incapable of extending the rule of law much beyond a day's walk from the walls (when, late in the First World War, Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck, Germany's "Lawrence of Africa," entered Mozambique to evade converging British columns, he made an example of one Portuguese fort, allowing his native *Askaris* free rein; thereafter, the remaining forts surrendered at his approach, or the first rumor thereof).

The same backcountry became and remains the stronghold of the former guerrilla movement—now one of Mozambique's two major political parties—Renamo.

Converted killers

Mozambique's second-largest city is the port of Beira, smack in the center of the country's long coastline. It commands the strategically vital rail and highway routes from Zimbabwe, as well as the Zambezi estuary just to the north. Today, Beira is the headquarters of Renamo, the political party. Renamo runs the city and provincial government. The long-time guerrilla leader, Afonso Dhlakama, a perennial candidate for president, holds the city almost as his private fief. Built by English-speaking businessmen as the terminus of the rail line from Rhodesia at the turn of the century (a rail line whose construction through fever swamps cost thousands of lives), Beira suffered first from the post-colonial departure of the Portuguese and other Europeans who made the infrastructure work, then from the devastating civil war. By the mid-1980s, Beira was a ruined city, with little electricity, a collapsed water system and a destitute population swelled by tens of thousands of refugees.

Today, Beira's redevelopment lags well behind that of Maputo—unequal allocation of aid and investment funds is a constant, at least partially justified, Renamo complaint—but life has returned (along with electricity). What's remarkable, though, isn't the city's steady reconstruction, but the power of Renamo at the ballot box.

Renamo was *not* an organic product of Mozambique. It was founded after the Portuguese withdrew and newly independent Mozambique indicated it would observe UN sanctions against trading with Rhodesia. Renamo's creators were Rhodesian security agents who hired on Mozambican dissidents (and outright criminals) excluded from power by Frelimo, the new ruling party. Determined to disrupt the emergence of a socialist state on its border—and determined not to cede control of the vital Salisbury (Harare) to Beira rail line and the adjacent highway—the Rhodesians provided funding, arms and, when necessary, direct military support to Renamo.

Renamo did not begin as an ideological movement with a political agenda. It was a tool of destruction, its actions nihilistic. Renamo was a killing machine that swelled as it fed on corpses. After the transfer of power from white-ruled Rhodesia to black-majority Zimbabwe, apartheid-era South African intelligence and security forces quickly moved in to back Renamo after Rhodesian support collapsed. The apartheid government was determined not only to hold the line on the Limpopo river against “communism,” but to disrupt the neighboring states to the degree that it could.

In addition to staging intermittent direct attacks on Mozambique, the South Africans encouraged barbarity on the part of Renamo. The insurgent movement recruited by kidnapping young people—after forcing them to carry out public executions in their villages to cut them off from their roots. The guerrillas destroyed schools, clinics, bridges, communications systems and even homes, while killing government officials, development technicians, doctors, nurses, schoolteachers and villagers deemed sympathetic to the government. Eventually, Renamo either occupied or managed to carry out attacks in at least 80% of the country, cutting roads, burning supply trucks and terrorizing even the suburbs of Maputo.

The question, of course, is how this “Khmer-Rouge-lite” was able, in the wake of the 1992 peace accords (triggered by the fall of the apartheid regime in Pretoria), to turn

itself overnight into a political party that not only enjoyed powerful regional support but came close to winning national elections.

The answer resonates far beyond Mozambique and underscores a lesson we should draw from our own missteps in Iraq: Renamo was able to attract genuine grassroots support not because of its innate appeal, but because of Frelimo's naive assumptions about what the population desired or would tolerate. Above all, Frelimo fatally underestimated the population's loyalty to traditional, local hierarchies. The country's new rulers convinced themselves that people would make "rational" decisions unaffected by the emotional hold of the familiar.

Just as some American decision-makers (outside of the military) blithely assumed that "all" Iraqis would welcome Western-style democracy, that old loyalties and ethnic identities would somehow evaporate, and that selfish interests would be subsumed in a desire for the common good, Frelimo gullibly accepted the standard doctrines of the left, instead of soberly analyzing conditions in their own country.

Frelimo assumed that, given independence, Mozambique's disparate groups would naturally work for the common good—or could be persuaded to do so. Party ideologues convinced themselves that tribal and clan membership was a relic of the past. They ignored or dismissed traditional leaders and mocked "unscientific" folk healers (*curandeiros*). And, initially, while they did not suppress religion, they kept religious leaders at arms length and strictly forbid the participation of confessional leaders in the political process. Although Frelimo was on the left and the American occupation of Iraq was conceived (if never exactly planned) by neo-conservatives, the similarity in the errors made early on is uncanny. Americans, too, initially underestimated the importance of tribal leaders and missed the virtually indestructible (if sadly detrimental) ties of family, clan, tribe and ethnicity that had dominated the territory since time immemorial. Both Frelimo and the Americans failed to make provisions to co-opt, divide or neutralize the power groupings they had just dispossessed. And both parties assumed that development would quickly trump tradition.

While Iraq has a far better chance of reasonable success than Mozambique initially did, the similarity of the errors and lessons in such radically different environments should be written down in stone above our service academies: *Never underestimate the power of tradition or humanity's loyalty to the familiar.* As we embark on what promises to be decades of engagement, punitive expeditions and occasional occupations in the Middle East and elsewhere, it is a maxim we would be foolish not to take to heart: It doesn't mean that change is impossible, but that to effect change successfully you have to work with the situation as it exists, not as you wish it to be.

Renamo, for all its bloodthirst, cannily demonstrated respect for tribal leaders uncomfortable with government pronouncements and initiatives (such as the disastrous attempt to collectivize agriculture, a program that swiftly excited anti-Frelimo hatred in the countryside). Renamo not acknowledged the influence of traditional healers, but recruited them to accompany guerrilla bands to nurse the wounded and sick. Whereas Frelimo threatened traditional structures, Renamo exploited them. Indeed, the ability of Renamo not only to survive, but to develop electoral support in regions they themselves had ravaged is a stunning testament to humankind's loyalty to its cultural inheritance—and the danger of trying to erase the routine manifestations of that inheritance overnight.

Even after the new Zimbabwean government (and other African-ruled neighbors) deployed troops to Mozambique to attempt to shore up the government (and, in Zimbabwe's case, to defend the vital rail line—an attempt that was only partially successful), Frelimo didn't rule the country, but only controlled a network of cities and towns often isolated one from another. It helped little that Frelimo's army quickly became corrupt, its true-believer cadre swiftly diluted by expansion or seduced by the opportunities for profit that all wars bring. Frequently, the indiscipline of the government's troops, both an unwillingness to fight aggressively and the maltreatment of villagers, played into Renamo's hands. By the mid-1980s, the situation had deteriorated into a contest between two forces that were little more than bandit gangs.

As mentioned above, the South African apartheid government also staged a highly successful propaganda campaign among fundamentalist Protestant congregations in the United States. Even as Renamo was embracing indigenous (“pagan”) religions and tribal shamans, the South Africans sponsored fund-raising visits to America by well-rehearsed Renamo representatives who piously portrayed the struggle in Mozambique as being waged between humane, freedom-loving, Christian Renamo and godless, church-burning Marxists. At a time when Renamo was raping and slaughtering the innocent, gutting schools and clinics, well-meaning American Christians were contributing millions of dollars to buy the guerrillas arms and other supplies.

What brought Renamo to the bargaining table was the transition in South Africa. Although it had built a sufficient domestic base to fight on for an indefinite period, South African support was essential to the movement's long-term survival. And the likely new leader of South Africa, Nelson Mandela, was not going to be sympathetic to a terror group created by the regime that had imprisoned him for thirty years (indeed, Mandela later married Graca Machel, the widow of Mozambique's revolutionary leader Samora Machel).

Still, the transition in Mozambique was remarkably successful. While limited, sporadic violence accompanied some subsequent elections (and Renamo liked to boycott elections they appeared certain to lose), international observers have been pleased with the process over the past twelve years. Thus far, the old developing world “democratic” model of “one man, one vote, one time” has been avoided—with President Chissano committed to stepping down after the December, 2004, election, no matter which party wins. And while Frelimo is favored to win the presidency again, there remains an outside chance that Renamo will pull off an upset (playing both on Frelimo's perceived favoritism toward the south and natural voter weariness with those who have been in power and have failed to fix local problems). In casual conversations, I found Mozambicans unanimously convinced (and hoping) that Frelimo would win; however, it's necessary to add a cautionary note that those with whom I spoke were, by the nature of their language skills, better-educated, likelier to be employed and much more likely to have benefited from Frelimo policies and programs. Certainly, Frelimo hasn't ruled out Renamo's chances—after all, in the 1999 presidential poll, Chissano's margin of victory over Renamo's leader, Afonso Dhlakama, was only 52% to 48% (and not all observers were convinced the count was completely accurate).

In the last regional and municipal elections, Renamo advanced in three central provinces. With the party's strength building in the country's mid-section (and its reputation for governance no worse than Frelimo's, despite its past), the greatest political

danger facing Mozambique would be an electoral perfect storm in which everything went wrong—with ballot manipulation so flagrant it led to civil strife or even, in the nightmare scenario, renewed civil war. While Mozambicans overall do not want a return to violent conflict, it takes only a fraction of one per cent of the population, armed and determined, to disrupt or even dismember a fragile country. The army of less than thirty thousand has not been a top government priority—unlike in less promising societies—but the negative effect is that it might not be effective against or might react clumsily to disturbances; also, the army includes former Renamo guerrillas who were integrated into the force as part of the peace deal. While fewer and fewer of these guerrillas remain, due to the passage of time (and AIDS and other factors), the loyalty of the military is unlikely to be uniform and may depend upon garrison location.

This is distinctly not meant as a prediction. The odds remain strong that Mozambique will successfully pass this critical electoral test—but it would be foolish to assume away all potential problems. And a worst-case outcome, in addition to the potential human misery, could break the country in the middle. Given its paucity of transportation means, it is unlikely that a Maputo government could long continue to effectively control the northernmost (and Muslim) provinces if the middle of the country managed to secede.

Were such a crisis to threaten, it's likely that South Africa and even Zimbabwe would intervene (perhaps other regional powers, as well), this time behind Frelimo and the existing government. Perhaps more than anything else, awareness that extreme political violence would bring not just a local but a regional response is the factor apt to keep Renamo at the polls rather than the barricades.

Even allowing for the existence of such worst-case scenarios, the transition made from bitter enemy factions to political opponents capable of reasonable levels of cooperation has been remarkable. Although this remains an aid-dependent country, and the transition was facilitated by international funding and an array of integration programs that ranged from extensive de-mining operations to a successful program to reintegrate guerrillas and government soldiers into their communities, Mozambicans have every right to be proud of having achieved a level of continuous, peaceable and popular government most neighboring states can only envy.

Waist-deep in the Big Muddy

The four waves of flooding that struck Mozambique in February and March of 2000 broke records, washed away towns and villages, undid painfully achieved development progress in the countryside and inundated approximately 5% of the country. Given all that the country had suffered in the recent past and its model behavior as a development case, the sense of injustice excited a broad international response. But the most impressive aspect of the human reaction to nature's fury was the behavior of the Mozambican government.

Just as its roads and rail lines run west to east, rather than north to south, the country's original lines of communications, its rivers, wind from the west eastward to their Indian Ocean deltas. Floods occur once or twice a decade, with serious flooding about every quarter century. But no one could foresee the deluge of water that would sweep down from neighboring countries in 2000. The flooding was so fierce that many of the monitoring stations up-river were simply swept away.

Although always operating on a shoestring, the Maputo government had recently established the National Disaster Management Institute (INGC). The organization monitored weather patterns and predictions from world sources and already foresaw early 2000 flooding as a result of La Nina. Although the dimensions of the calamity were unexpected, the INGC had already begun to put flood plans in place. As a result, the catastrophe killed only 700 people—a painful figure, but only a fraction of the potential loss.

Mozambique had already established disaster-reaction relationships with its neighbors—especially South Africa and the South African air force. While internal resources were sparse, those available were generally well utilized—and South African assistance mobilized on the first wave of flooding. By the end of March, eleven air forces had become involved, including those of the United States, Britain, Portugal—and, clumsily and unhelpfully, Libya. As one river after another inundated the countryside, the Limpopo, Incomati, Umbeluzi, Save, Buzi, Pungue and Maputo tore away bridges, washed out roads and quickly fragmented the country. For a time, Maputo was locally isolated from some of its suburbs and neighborhoods collapsed into ravines. Although arriving aid workers had an inevitable sense of confusion, international cooperation at the Maputo airport (the nexus of the relief operation) went surprisingly well—despite the inevitable arguments about whose aircraft would park where, the arrival of inappropriate supplies, bureaucratic attempts to collect landing fees (soon squelched), fuel shortages and not a few oversize foreign egos. Rural airstrips upcountry were pressed into service, as were stretches of highway that could handle transport aircraft.

The tiny Mozambican navy did what it could, assisted by some South African assets, but tens of thousands of flood victims were rescued by the “Dunkirk model,” local fishermen spontaneously sailing about to rescue those stranded in trees (sometimes several dozen in a single tree), on rooftops, or on isolated stretches of high ground. While there were some instances of boat owners demanding payment, as well as looting incidents, the surprise was how little venality was in evidence. The country did an impressive job of pulling together.

And while foreign transport and aid assistance were essential, one of the gravest problems was with the arrogance of a few international relief managers who assumed that they knew better than the Mozambicans. In fact, the country, despite its poverty, had a functioning human infrastructure and a rudimentary but useful reporting system in place. Eventually, almost all of the aid agencies recognized the importance of unity of effort and took direction from the government. A U.S. military cell facilitated communications in Maputo—to the chagrin of leftwing journalists who continue to insist that American help really wasn't important. The government felt differently, but academics and journalists in any society are always the last people to accept facts they find unpalatable).

The flood also greatly helped the image of South Africa's post-apartheid military—with globally televised images of white helicopter crewmen pulling black women and

infants from treetops as floodwaters swirled around them. Images of black Mozambicans rescuing black Mozambicans did not, of course, have as much resonance with the global media.

What *didn't* happen was also noteworthy. The anticipated death toll was much higher than the final tally of 700. While 45,000 people were displaced for an extended period, the hastily established camps were generally well run (thanks to international NGOs with extensive experience—but not to the “disaster tourists” who dropped in for photo shoots to raise funds for their organizations, and who demanded attention and special treatment from a government whose few real experts were literally dropping over from exhaustion). Cholera and typhoid epidemics were feared (Maputo had experienced a nasty outbreak in the late 1990s), but the epidemics never materialized. And the government did a praiseworthy job with few resources of its own.

Still, the floods were a painful setback. Again to its credit, Mozambique sought to avoid the sort of long-term give-away aid that creates enduring dependencies. Among the government's goals were re-establishing agriculture swiftly in affected regions and returning refugees to their homes as swiftly as possible. No one could pretend that all went smoothly, but by 2004 the country has largely made up lost the ground.

But nature is only one of the country's intruders.

Terrorists?

The visitor passing through Mozambique sees no sign of Islamic terrorism. Religious organizations and sects are not oppressed; except for the Muslims with roots in Pakistan or India, Islam as practiced is relatively *laissez-faire*; life is improving, steadily if slowly, for the population; and what foreign “intrusions” there have been of late have brought economic benefits and have been welcomed.

Yet, among the country's five to six million nominal Muslims, there doubtless are at least a few radicals, some aware of trends elsewhere in the Islamic world, others drowning their personal discontents in the fundamentalist's sea of faith. The remoteness, lack of government presence and poor communications would seem to make the country's north, especially, a possible choice for extremists wishing to go to ground, to disappear for a time.

It's also possible that terrorist training camps could be set up in the country's rugged interior (flying over parts of Mozambique reminded me of flying over the Amazon, although the actual distances are not so great). But the isolation cuts both ways. Terrorists would have difficulty displacing quickly—were their hide-outs ever detected, a helicopter-mounted force would have tremendous advantages. A hiding place in the bush could easily turn into a trap.

Also, the interior remains black African, with close-knit local ties. Outsiders, especially if engaged in dubious activities, would not be likely to find a welcome and, as a minimum, would have difficulty concealing their presence (in contrast, for instance, to

the tribal areas of Pakistan, whose residents feel a spiritual kinship with Islamic extremists). Indeed, if terrorists were to appear from within or flee to Mozambique from the outside, their best option would be to submerge themselves in the Indo-Pakistani Muslim communities of the cities.

While classified data may be available that identifies terrorists or suspected networks in Mozambique, perhaps the greatest reason for concern is the north's proximity to prior terrorist attacks. More within the gravitational pull of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, than Maputo, the largely uncontrolled border would allow Tanzanian-based radicals to slip into Mozambique to evade surveillance. And the bombings in the last decade of U.S. embassies in Dar es Salaam and Nairobi provide fair warning that no African country with an Islamic population can be written off as unthreatened.

Tanzania itself has simmering problems. The post-independence union of the Muslim, Swahili-culture island of Zanzibar with the Christian-animist, black-African mainland (Germany's Tanganyika colony, administered by Britain after the Great War) has never been a complete success. Today, the dominance in government and the economy of mainland, Christian blacks over the Muslim ethnic fusion of Zanzibar excites continuing discontent. While the bombing of a tourist bar on Zanzibar a few years ago likely had more to do with noisy, late-night misbehavior on the part of the customers than with Islamic purity, there has been an indisputable trend toward Islamism on the island (and among Dar es Salaam's significant Muslim population). With investment, development and education lagging on Zanzibar, resentments continue to build. Violence is not inevitable, but the trends are consistently negative and the religio-ethnic divisions grow stronger, not weaker.

It's impossible to judge how hypothetical events in Tanzania could affect the Muslims of Mozambique, but the point is that the firm, clear borders drawn on the maps can easily mislead us. While Muslim "school ties" between Zanzibar and Mozambique have actually decreased over the past century or so, an infusion of Wahabi funding could conceivably create a new, radical Muslim solidarity. The extent to which this is monitored by, or a concern to, the Maputo government is unknowable to outsiders. The best that can be said is that, within Mozambique, inter-confessional relations are rarely seriously troubled and that there have been no insurmountable problems between the government and the Muslim population in recent decades.

Eruptions of discontent and violence can, of course, happen very quickly, sparked by issues out of foreign periscope range. The issue of radical Islam in Mozambique does not appear threatening at present, but, given the overall state of the Islamic world and its discontents, the potential for radical penetration demands a rational degree of monitoring.

As for attacks on U.S. facilities or persons in Mozambique, embassy-related buildings in Maputo appear reasonably well protected, but the ease with which goods or persons can be smuggled into the country asks greater vigilance. As for attacks upon individuals, either embassy officials, NGO workers or tourists, the daily threat level is very low—higher from street crime or rural banditry than from radicalism—but one-off events are easy to stage (this reflects a personal judgment based upon experience; embassies consistently rate the level of threats to American citizens much higher than I do, a phenomenon about which the reader may draw his or her own conclusions).

Generally, the climate, the "feel," of Mozambique is one of the least threatening this observer has encountered during extensive travels in the developing world. Mexico City

is vastly more dangerous at any time of day than Maputo, and the hospitality up-country is usually welcoming and never overtly hostile. While it only takes a small number of extremists to stage a headline event, the overwhelming majority of Mozambicans are not resentful of Westerners and, in the wake of a civil war that killed a million of their fellow citizens, have had enough of violence for their lifetimes.

At present, Islamic terrorist activities in Mozambique would be much likelier to involve cadres from abroad than indigenous movements.

Invaders

To fly to Maputo from Washington, D.C., you have two practical choices. You either can fly through Lisbon and continue to Maputo on a Portuguese carrier, or you can fly through Johannesburg, South Africa. The flights through Lisbon are in smaller aircraft and do not fly every day. You can, on the other hand, get to Johannesburg from any number of hubs and take your choice of multiple daily flights into Mozambique.

It's a good metaphor for the degree to which the influence of the Republic of South Africa has replaced that of the old colonial power, Portugal. For its part, South Africa is a "colonial" power in its own postmodern manner—dominating through investment and trade, rather than occupation. The new form of colonialism is far more beneficial to the people of Mozambique, although it could, in the out-years, allow them only a little more control over their collective destiny than did the formal colonial regime run from Lisbon.

As stressed above, South Africa is on its way to becoming the greatest indigenous power sub-Saharan Africa has ever known. It acts regionally, but thinks globally (with investments as far afield as the USA, the UK, the PRC and even the Czech Republic). And the South Africans know a bargain-basement sale when they stumble into one.

You cannot travel in Mozambique without encountering South African business people on every flight, at every hotel, in every restaurant where dysentery isn't raging. Although no one would suggest a government-wide scheme in Pretoria to take over Mozambique's economy, wise cliques within the South African government and business communities know full well what they're doing. While letting international aid agencies continue to handle the unprofitable side of development, South Africans are moving to dominate as many spheres of the Mozambican economy as they profitably can do, from selling groceries to providing cellular communications.

Recently, South Africa's *vodacom* cell-phone network moved into the country. They didn't test the waters with timid, local experiments. They blanketed the country with billboards, newspaper advertisements, street hawkers, broadcast offers—and local girls dressed in *vodacom* violet with their faces painted blue. The local company, *mcel*, which had enjoyed a monopoly, is now on the defensive, with *vodacom* entering the market strong and gaining every day—through image ("If it's foreign, it must be better!"), concessional promotion rates, and superior infrastructure and service. Nor is this

vodacom's first foray abroad—as soon as a regional telecommunications market opens up to foreign investment, they pounce. *Vodacom* is a key player not only in South Africa, but in Tanzania and Lesotho—and they're heavily engaged in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Connect the cellular network and watch South Africa's postmodern empire grow.

Southern Mozambique, with Maputo as its focal point, is by far the most developed and investment-ready portion of the country—and it's only a two-hour drive from the South African border if you take the new toll road built and run by Trans African Concessions (TRAC), a South African company with a thirty-year contract.

The rail line is undergoing improvements to support South Africa's fast-growing economic sectors. Maputo's port facilities are the closest to South Africa's northernmost, landlocked provinces, which long had to rely on Durban (overall, South African growth is so swift that, despite the reopening of Mozambique's facilities, there is also major port construction underway on the South African coast north of Durban).

South African companies manage much of the international transport. They receive, store, protect and expedite goods at Maputo Port. An additional US \$ 70 million recently has been arranged to further upgrade Maputo's harbor facilities (a small amount by developed-world standards, but a great deal in the local context).

South African business has financed a coal terminal in Maputo's industrial suburb of Matola—both South Africa and Mozambique have major coal deposits.

The South-African backed, jointly owned Maputo Corridor Logistics Initiative (MCLI) was launched recently to move more goods more efficiently and faster from South Africa's northern provinces through Maputo's port facilities. The business model is becoming standard: South Africa dominates financially and managerially, but brings in and enriches a sufficient number of well-connected Mozambicans to make the project locally attractive. The South African companies also hire and train locals for low-skills jobs, thus saving themselves salary costs and creating local goodwill.

The most-advanced supermarket chain in the country is South Africa's ShopRite. On the input end, South Africans are investing not only in Mozambican agriculture (including, to be fair, donative aid projects), but in food processing. South African fast-food outlets are moving in. South Africans (and expat white Zimbabweans) are dominant on the managerial side of the hotel and (growing) resort industry.

Overwhelmingly, this benefits the citizens of Mozambique. South African-Mozambican relations are very strong—and shared profits tend to improve them. South Africa, despite its unaccountably negative image abroad as a troubled country, has far more managerial, entrepreneurial and technical expertise than any other sub-Saharan state (likely more than all the others combined), and the remarkable speed with which post-apartheid South Africa developed a racially integrated business community has made it an attractive, reassuring model.

In Maputo's handful of upmarket hotels (with more opening), the conference rooms and banquet facilities are usually booked by joint South African-Mozambican groups, or simply by South African corporations. Even that degree of commerce spills outward and downward to the Mozambicans employed in the hospitality industry and their often-extensive families. Nor are the investments and businesses highlighted here by any means all of the transactions and projects that are underway.

Even the Mozambican bureaucracy is shaking off the usual developing-nation straitjacket of requiring multiple stamps to validate the stamp that stamped the stamp that allowed you to apply for the stamp you need. Visas, once slow and sometimes difficult to obtain, are now available instantly at any land, air or sea port of entry. Although automation lags, the government is making serious efforts to streamline the processes that support investment. In a recent interview, the Mozambican finance minister, Luisa Diogo, complained not of a lack of investment, but of the shortage of accounting skills in the country. In the same interview, she repeated her declaration of war on corruption.

Mozambicans try hard. When they fail, it's often because they don't understand the problem or lack an adequate model for solving it. The national airline, LAM, is very dependable by developing world standards, well-run under tough conditions (even airport restrooms are surprisingly clean). In fact, it was hard not to smile as an earnest young Mozambican apologized to me when an up-country flight was twenty minutes late arriving (every other flight I took with LAM was on time). The young man assumed that, in the West, such delays would never happen. I thought of the hours I've spent waiting for delayed or canceled flights at O'Hare, Atlanta-Hartsfield or La Guardia. By American standards, LAM's on-time-arrival rate was stellar.

There is precious little resentment, at least for now, of the investment pouring in from Mozambique's old enemy to the southwest (admittedly a very different state today). Yet, there are a few human nuances behind the receiving-line smiles and beyond the handshakes. Mozambicans tend to get on best with black South Africans and South African whites who fall into the English-speaking cultural traditions (in an amusing circle of resentments, the Portuguese who stayed on regard the white South Africans as interlopers, while black Mozambicans harbor lingering resentments toward the Portuguese—especially toward those who return to invest, although their much-needed money is accepted).

The one group that is numerically present in force and widely disliked is South Africa's Afrikaners, the Dutch-descended Boers. They come to vacation on Mozambique's endless beaches, arriving over the awful up-country roads in four-wheel-drive vehicles dragging trailers with elaborate camping gear (and packing canned goods into a country with great produce and an endless supply of fresh, cheap, terrific seafood). Although many Afrikaners have fit themselves into the new South African reality, they don't seem to be the sort who come to Mozambique for an inexpensive holiday on the shore. The Afrikaner vacationers cluster together in seaside campgrounds whose facilities would remind Cold-War veterans of the old German shower blocks at Hohenfels. They sit sullenly by their lanterns in the evening, keeping to themselves and drinking themselves to sleep. The Mozambicans call them "big-belly Boers," and they do have notably well-nourished physiques, but even the small amounts of money they spend are important to Mozambique's impoverished economy, so, on the whole, the Afrikaners are made to feel welcome and the Mozambicans accept their rudeness and racial prejudice.

But there are limits. A South African woman who runs a compound of cabins with a tiny swimming pool up-country told me about the worst day of her business career. A female Mozambican minister of state had her family home in the community. When the minister came to visit, she would stay in one of the guest cabins on the compound which, though simple, were far superior to the local housing. Relations were friendly and

consistently positive. Then, one very hot day, the minister asked the proprietress if her nieces could use the pool just for the day. The owner said, “Yes, of course,” and thought no more of it.

But there were other guests, including two large families of Afrikaners who had taken a number of the cabins. When the white Boers saw the black children playing in the swimming pool, they dragged them from the water, swearing that they’d be damned if “dirty, black kaffirs” were going to swim in a pool their own children intended to use.

It was not a sound way to treat the relatives of a government minister.

The Afrikaner families were arrested: men, women, children and dogs. After being enjoying the local prison facilities for a day or two, they were loaded into their SUVs and escorted by the police throughout the grueling drive to the nearest border-crossing station. During the journey they were not allowed to exit their vehicles.

Fortunately, the minister bore no grudge toward the owner of the little compound. But the vast changes underway in southern Africa, as impressive as many of them have been, still have some distance to go at the human level.

The Postmodern Loan Shark

The most cynical side of South Africa’s empire-building is masked by a veil of kindness. Although it affects Zimbabwe to a much greater degree than Mozambique, it applies to both.

Zimbabwe makes the case most bluntly. Unable to pay its massive bills for basic goods and services, Zimbabwe lives on credit to the degree it still functions. Although the sums involved are soaring, South Africa won’t cut off the power it supplies to parts of Zimbabwe. Rates go unpaid, but South Africa continues to supply transit support for goods destined for Zimbabwe. Essential goods and services continue to flow. South Africa explains that it simply can’t watch a neighbor suffer. But all the sums go down in the little black book.

Mugabe will die. There may be an interval of aggravated disorder, but, eventually, the country he ruined will have to begin again. Everything that Mugabe destroyed will have to be recreated. And South African firms will not only do most of the rebuilding, they’ll end up owning most of what they build in the bankrupt country. Zimbabwe’s massive state debt also will result in “generous” offers from Pretoria to swap debt for physical equity. Not only will South Africa own much of post-Mugabe Zimbabwe, it will control key concessions and take over Harare’s shares in key infrastructure projects—between debts owed to Pretoria by both Zimbabwe and Mozambique, and its stranglehold on Malawi, South Africa will end up in control of the Cabora Bassa Dam hydroelectric project and the potential of the Zambezi river below Zambia.

At present, the mainland Chinese have gained significant concessions and land from Mugabe as he grows more desperate. But the Chinese will find it impossible to maintain their position without South Africa’s goodwill—as the informal South African empire

envelops (and eventually includes) Zimbabwe. China and other intruders (even Libya has a stake in Zimbabwe) may well find it to their benefit to sell out their holdings in coming years. If so, the buyers will doubtless be South African.

The South Africans have also helped Mozambique develop its natural gas deposits. A pipeline recently opened. It runs from the rugged bush of Mozambique five hundred kilometers to the South African border. It will be interesting to observe the degree to which South Africa is able to exercise *de facto* control of Mozambique's reported oil reserves, the volume of which remains unclear. (A curious sidelight to this is that Enron, the scandal-gagged American energy services company, had expressed an interest in the Mozambican gas fields early on, although it's now out of the picture. Having also encountered the visionary, if hardly selfless, involvement of Enron in India's development of its electric-power-generating capability, it struck me that, had the greed of its executives not brought the company's overseas engagement to a halt, Enron might have generated far more profits in the long run through its adventurous, clever engagement in the developing world than its top officials ever could have gained through fraud—for all Enron's repugnant misbehavior, it was a company with remarkable potential.)

It also will be instructive to watch how South Africa approaches the problem of oil-and-gas-wealth corruption that has struck every non-Western oil or gas producer. Will South Africa insist its neighbor maintain sound business practices? Or will it allow corruption to fester as a means to further advance its own interests. Judging by the savvy demonstrated by their business community to date, the South Africans will probably try to keep corruption under control (once the poison takes effect, it's impossible to counteract).

Of course, the South Africans also take an interest in the more-developed oil reserves of Angola on the Atlantic Coast, but there's far more competition in place and, unlike Mozambique, Angola has not really begun to resolve its deep internal problems (more than one Mozambican told me, "We are not Angola, we are not like Angola," meaning that they could work together and would not let their country break down into hostile sub-regions).

In any case, South Africa appears well on its way to dominating the economies, natural resources, infrastructure, telecommunications, LOCs and electricity-generating capacity in Africa's southern cone.

Not bad for a state many believed would fail a decade ago.

On a grim, related note: Whenever South Africa's prospects are praised, a listener here in the United States inevitably raises the HIV-infection rate. Certainly, the 30%-plus infection rate in South Africa is going to take a devastating human toll—it's already doing so. But we would be foolish to simply impose our economic model on so different a society. Here in the United States, where, in terms of classical economics, we enjoy nearly full employment, the loss of more than thirty per cent of our population would shatter the economy. We have no excess population to spare and, indeed, require constant infusions of new talent. But the unemployment and under-employment rates in South Africa may exceed sixty per cent. While a dynamic core within the country is blazing into the future, the unskilled and unemployed simply consume resources. Brutal though it sounds, the population loss facing South Africa may simply streamline the society and result, as the Black Death did in late-medieval Europe, in a transition from an

economic system with surplus human capital to one with a strong demand for human capital. Fifty years from now, those of us who are still around may have to admit, however painfully and grudgingly, that AIDS ultimately had a positive effect on South Africa's rise to regional dominance.

Growth Industries

A young Mozambican remarked to me, "We will work hard. We have peace now, and we will work hard. But we cannot do everything alone. We need help, we need to learn from you how to do things. We must be taught so we can do these things ourselves."

Mozambicans are willing to work hard. And with 83% of the population still involved in agriculture—much of it subsistence labor—there's plenty of sweat flying. But even though the abysmal experience of collective farms helped turn the rural population toward Renamo early in the civil war, only a few leftist intellectuals have any reservations about agribusiness today.

In Manica province, bordering Zimbabwe, a progressive governor has done all he could do to attract white farmers dispossessed by Robert Mugabe's farm seizures. At present, more than 250 Zimbabwean farming families—from the culture that once made Zimbabwe southern Africa's breadbasket—have been granted land at concessionary rates and are employing thousands of Mozambicans (Mugabe's farm seizures put over a million black Zimbabweans out of work). The governor has a special call-in line just for these farmers. If they encounter excessive red tape, or if anyone tries to extract a bribe or interfere with their farms, they can phone the governor directly.

There is no starvation in Mozambique, a result of post-civil-war agricultural recovery and well-focused aid programs (although, in certain areas, Mozambique remains a net importer of food from—guess who? South Africa). But the countryside, sparsely populated by regional standards, still has reserves of rich soil (alluvial soil enriched by the regular floods that also destroy and kill). At present, its primary agricultural exports remain cashews (a surprisingly big international business) and cotton. But, thanks not least to South African investment, citrus-growing is on a rapid increase and the fishing industry, long noted for exporting the world's best prawns, is moving into aquaculture.

While Mozambique cannot build a prosperous modern economy on agriculture alone, at its low stage of development even a marginal improvement in land use and farming practices can have a powerful effect. Flying over Mozambique in a bush plane, you suddenly spots miles of coconut palms planted in orderly rows by Portuguese settlers. The potential is there. And, in the coming decades, Mozambique may prove to be the new breadbasket that feeds its neighbors—for a price.

Bacon for Allah

Pemba, formerly Porto Amelia, is a threadbare harbor on a magnificent bay in Mozambique's northernmost province, Cabo Delgado. Shantytowns surround a dusty, sunswept city that climbs a hill overlooking Pemba's impoverished colonial heart. A small container port serves the cashew trade, as well as handling the other goods that keep the place alive. Around the headland, a long crescent beach entertains the local power brokers and the few tourists intrepid enough to make their way up-country. To the local upper-crust, a small, forlorn casino represents the high life as they imagine it lived in the great world beyond. Pemba drew me because I wanted to use it as a base to reach Ibo Island—the end of the line in more ways than one—an old, ruined slaver port beyond the reach of electricity and most of what we expect of the modern world.

Pemba was where I learned about the sheikh and his vision.

I had booked myself into a bunkhouse proudly called the “Pemba Beach Hotel.” I'd been told it was a five-star establishment—but, given Mozambique's poverty and my experience with the star-rating system in the less-developed parts of Africa (*four* stars seem to mean, up-country, that there is occasional electricity, while five suggests an ancient air-conditioner) I expected little and only wanted a bed and a place to stash my bag while I found a bush plane to take me up to Ibo.

I had not reckoned on the sheikh and his dream.

There are a few ultra-luxury establishments on remote islands off the coast, catering to international tourists willing to travel far and spend a great deal to one-up their traveling neighbors, but I had no interest in little artificial worlds created for rich Westerners. My goal was to gain an understanding of Mozambique, not a perfect tan. Yet, in Pemba, I found myself in a little artificial world created for a Saudi Arabian with money to burn.

The Pemba Beach Hotel is not about to give the Four Seasons or Ritz-Carlton chains sleepless nights—the rooms are furnished at the just-remodeled Holiday Inn level. Yet, when the vehicle that delivered me from the rural airport turned into the compound, I was startled.

On a distant coast, at the edge of a run-down city, someone had built a re-imagined palace fit for a Swahili-coast sultan from the days before the Europeans arrived and spoiled the fun. Stunning architecture rose above the sea amid a palm grove and lush gardens; the bell staff were dressed in robes whose style hasn't changed for centuries; and as you stepped into the lobby, built around a Persian-style fountain, you entered an oasis.

I soon learned that the hotel had been built by a Saudi sheikh. Now, anyone with experience in the Middle East and, especially, of the horrible, over-ripe, hyper-tacky hotel and hi-rise architecture of the Persian Gulf, does not expect quiet good taste and harmonious design from wealthy Arabs. But the sheikh provided a caution to beware assuming that any society is uniform.

He built the hotel to chase a dream. Hiring a South African architect, he instructed him to design a facility based upon the heritage of the traditional palaces of the Swahili Coast and the spice route, telling the man to spare no expense, but to create something of beauty. Sited on a low bluff above the sea, the hotel's spawling appearance would suit the seafaring tales of Sinbad in the *Thousand Nights and a Night*. Amid the general

poverty and languor—with thatch-roofed huts just across the shoreline road--it looked to be the palace of some ruler from a time-warp. Nor was this the only hotel the sheikh owns or plans to build on the east coast of Africa. His dream is to recreate—to recapture—the spice route with a chain of luxury resorts and hotels.

That route doesn't change, only the goods and the travelers. It was odd to find that a Saudi sheikh, nostalgic for bygone glories, was thinking in his way of the same strategic “superhighway” that had been preoccupying me. The resorts and hotels were his way of repossessing what he felt was an Arab heritage interrupted by the now-vanquished European presence.

The sheikh's approach was, at least, more welcome than the investments in spreading fundamentalist hatred I had encountered elsewhere and often between Ankara and Jakarta, all funded by Saudis. This wasn't militant Islam creeping in, but the revival of a Muslim culture that had never completely disappeared. It shifted the calculus of power from the Koran to the bank account, from the mosque to a pleasure garden. And the sheikh and his dreams were welcomed by all, from the ambitious local officials to the newest trainee on the dining-room staff. The danger to health came not from suicide bombs, but from happy hour.

The sheikh must be an intriguing character, if not an entirely admirable one. He had first come to Mozambique's north to hunt game. Well, the game in the country was almost wiped out during the civil war. The only reason you come to Mozambique for big-game hunting is to kill animals you aren't allowed to kill elsewhere—or to kill more of them than the rigorous game-control policies in other East African states allow you to do. The sheikh enjoyed the hunting so much, according to the hotel management, that he first decided to build himself a home on the coastline so he might have a comfortable place to stay when he came to visit. That plan turned into a hotel, where the spectacular bar reflects the sheikh's passion for hunting with an elephant's head, tusks and extended trunk protruding over the rows of bottles (Johnny Walker Blue, anybody?). While members of PETA would not think much of the sheikh's splendid collection of trophy heads, to his great credit, as far as this thirsty traveler was concerned, the sheikh does not appear to think much of the Islamic prohibition against the consumption of alcohol.

There's also bacon at breakfast, kept in a separate dish but offered in abundant quantities for paying infidels. The sheikh doesn't put too fine a point on doctrine.

Of course, the point isn't that there's a nice place to stay the next time the MEF wades ashore at Pemba (watch that coral, Marine!). It was the sheikh's vision that captured my attention, his benign attempt at reclaiming a lost world. More individuals—and governments—are thinking about the Indian Ocean's future, as well as about the potential of Africa, than we distant Americans realize.

Slave pens and the tyranny of poverty...

The one African resource that long appealed to Arab traders and European entrepreneurs alike was the continent's population. Arabs had been slavers for centuries

before the Europeans arrived to seize the middle-man role and globalize what hitherto had been a regional business. Slaving black Africans was the one endeavor in which Muslims and Christians frequently cooperated—until Britain forced an end to the international slave trade in the early 19th century (which did not end local exploitation or Arab slaving to the Middle East, which endured into the 20th century and persists today in countries such as Sudan).

Ibo Island relied on the profits of that human cargo in its heyday.

As Americans are discovering in Iraq and Afghanistan, you have to learn from ghosts. If you don't crack the under-lock-and-key codes of local history, you cannot penetrate the soul of any society. History is where you start (and you end by becoming a part of history yourself). And you cannot fully appreciate the complex strains of Mozambique's history, or the ebb and flow of empire and event, without making a pilgrimage to Ibo Island.

From Pemba, you can reach the island in two ways. Either you can work your way still farther north on poor roads, then wait for a boat (usually a dhow, although a few more modern craft stop by), or you can fly up in a small plane and land on the grassy field that serves as an airstrip.

I flew. Over seemingly endless mangrove swamps, although the flight took hardly half an hour. The northern coast and the islands just offshore are as remote as the Indian Ocean's littoral gets...with an occasional oil-palm plantation left over from colonial days and small, isolated fishing villages clinging to coral reefs on the few populated islands. You can tell, even from the air, that Ibo town is desolate. The foliage, though rampant, doesn't begin to hide the collapsed roofs or the mottling on the old walls. The plane drops you, alone, at the edge of the field about a mile from the town, which you reach by a dirt trail flanked here and there by shanties, an abandoned chapel and a fishing boat on the mud flats showing its bones through a rotten hull. Known as a center of witchcraft, though once Christian and now Muslim by daylight, the island's inhabitants regard visitors with more reserve than elsewhere in Mozambique. Greetings are not so readily returned and some of the faces are sullen (or perhaps just worn out by the difficulty of life and its lack of promise). Only those who might profit from you smile.

You emerge from the brush to find a ruined town, its decayed buildings littered along the waterfront. When Ibo was the regional capital—before the rise of Pemba with its deepwater harbor—the population may have reached seventy thousand. Today, the island holds perhaps four thousand people, but seems almost a ghost town when you walk its broad, dusty, empty streets. The remaining inhabitants are spread out thinly in ramshackle houses that dot the island's bush.

Buildings that once served as Portuguese villas, businesses or government offices stand with broken roofs and knocked-out windows. A very few—including the Frelimo party headquarters—have been repainted and sport the national flag. The main church is locked and shabby, while the bishop's residence, long empty, has a drowsing watchman, an overgrown yard and no other sign of life.

There is at least one mosque, a grubby affair that looks more like a small open-air market than a sacred building. On Friday, the Muslim holy day, the men seemed more concerned with sitting in the yard and telling stories than with prayer. Everyone on the island appeared to be waiting dully for life to begin again.

Except for a generator at a lodging house run by the sort of displaced whites who wash up at the end of the world for their own eccentric reasons, the island has no electricity—although a phone line had just been laid in. The two story clinic might have done for a cholera hospital in the early 19th century. And the primary government building was so run-down I initially mistook it for a raggedy native bar (the beers on the tables seemed to be a dependable indicator, but initial intelligence is often wrong and the tables turned out to be desks for the customs officials and their colleagues—Friday or not, Mohammed didn't mind a couple of brews on a warm day).

On the island's northern tip sits a stone fort, built, like the more-imposing fortress on Mozambique Island from rocks carried as ballast in the hulls of merchant vessels and warships in the age of sail. A local man who had learned English while working in Dar es Salaam (and who took me to the mosque, among other places) gave me the other side of the colonial romance.

The fort was a crowded place in its days of power, with the garrison, servants, prisoners and consignments of slaves awaiting transport all crammed within an area about the size of a fast-food restaurant's parking lot. In a triumph of Portuguese colonial architecture, the communal latrine was just outside the kitchen's single window. No one knows how many thousands of slaves were crammed into the windowless dungeons over the centuries, or how many prisoners perished in a long cell that was built to flood. Keeping slaves locked up until their owners could load them on a ship bound for the French plantations on Mauritius became a primary military duty after the East African coast had been carved up between European powers and the threat from Ottoman fleets and Arab raiders was long gone.

Long after the slave cells had been emptied, the fort took on yet another life, as a prison for any local blacks suspected of sympathy with the freedom fighters infiltrating the country from the north. The fort was a long way from Lisbon—or Maputo. According to the locals, arrests were often matters of pique and summary executions were used to alleviate crowding in the cells. A field under palms just outside the walls was used for mass burials—although, since the high water table kept the graves shallow, wild dogs would dig up the bodies before families could retrieve them in the night.

Now the fort is empty save for half a dozen craftsmen who sit in the entry passage forging jewelry from old coins and hoping that, perhaps today, yes, maybe today, a stray backpacker will appear (some do) or a boat will put in with a few intrepid South Africans willing to risk malaria and to sacrifice comfort for an inexpensive holiday in a time machine. Except for their steel-head hammers, the tools and techniques the workmen employed had not progressed much since the bronze age. Still, they at least had work of a sort. With the island meaningless economically and tourism unlikely to become a dependable source of revenue, young people had to leave—usually for Tanzania—to find work. Illiterate, unemployed and hardly tended to by government, the residents of Ibo who remained—in shacks or squatting in ruined buildings that had once belonged to a thriving Indian merchant community (long gone in its entirety)—were living ghosts themselves, the living dead, human castaways left behind as the world moved on.

That fort, which had a heavy air of death even in the noonday sun, was the farthest north I went in Mozambique and a fitting place to turn around. The wide, eerie streets of Ibo town, where no cars run (there's a rotting old hulk in one yard, though) and only a few of the impoverished inhabitants have motorbikes, seemed a testament to how empires

fall but life goes on, albeit on a humble, near-brute level. Ibo Island was over a thousand miles from Maputo and more than a century behind in development. It served as a strong reminder that, despite falling poverty rates in the country, Mozambique remains a bitterly poor land where today's adults can have little hope for significant improvement in their lifetime. Maputo is struggling toward the 21st century, however unevenly, but much of the rest of the country seems barely to have reached the early-20th century (with rural areas farther behind still).

The future of Mozambique is undetermined. Despite real forward motion, South African aspirations, and more good choices than bad on the part of its government, much could still derail the nation's progress. In the end, its great potential wealth isn't that recently developed natural gas or potential oil reserves, but its people—yet, developing that wealth is a challenge that will require generations of intensive effort. On the positive side, the people have had enough of war and political violence. They want to move on and, on the whole, seem willing to do what it takes. They exhibit a stoicism that doesn't collapse into the passivity found elsewhere in ultra-poor countries. Of course, the potential tragedy is that, in such a poor country, a relative handful of malcontents, armed, funded and committed, might frustrate the hopes of millions.

The question with which I left the country is this: How long before more competitors recognize the veiled strategic importance of Mozambique? The South Africans have already figured it out, connecting hegemony over southern Africa's interior states with the strategic importance of the Indian Ocean—all linked by Mozambique's key lines of communication from its ports into the heart of the continent. Poor and unimportant at first glance, Mozambique only reveals its true significance when considered in context of South African ambitions, the fate of perhaps half a continent, the future of the Indian Ocean (its strategic sea-lanes and vital, troubled littorals), the resurgence not only of Islam, but of a more general Middle Eastern interest in the old Swahili Coast stretching from the Horn of Africa down to Mozambique's midsection—and even the strategic dreams of India across the sea.

Although we rarely give it comprehensive attention, the United States is likely to remain involved in the Indian Ocean indefinitely—perhaps at dramatically increased levels of engagement in the out-years. Although the U.S. Air Force and the U.S. Army both will play essential roles in major emergencies and large-scale crises, our nation's global requirements as well as natural force matching make this a theater of primary interest for the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps. Although our preoccupations north of the Indian Ocean command our attention at present, any resources (and intellectual energy) that can be spared to study and evaluate this strategic space is likely to be well-spent in helping to prepare our forces for the future.

There are many possible scenarios that could draw U.S. interest: A postmodern South African hegemonic empire; an Indian regional power play in the coming decades; a regional alliance network that attempts, though a demilitarization ploy, to alter the law of the seas and exclude foreign warships—and power—from the Indian Ocean; terrorist expansion; an intensification of Islam's confrontation with Christianity in Africa; an out-years demand for unexpected resources or human capital—or a nihilistic Islamic terror attack on the Suez Canal with WMD that closes the canal for months or longer (it bears repeating that the hardcore rejectionists within the Islamic terrorist movement do not care about lost oil revenues or government bankruptcies in the Middle East—on the contrary,

they'd welcome such developments as helping the region break ties with Western infidels and return to a "pure," regressive social condition).

Of course, the scenario that should worry us the most is the one we can't yet imagine.

As a minimum, we need to better appreciate the enduring importance of the Indian Ocean and its littorals, from Africa to Indonesia, to embrace the problem intellectually even if we cannot yet take additional material measures. The routes and landfalls the Portuguese struggled to control five centuries ago may have seen caravels replaced by supercarriers, but there is no sound reason to believe that a strategic arena whose importance has endured for more than five centuries will be any less important in the future.

Epic of Blood

In the autumn of 1569, an impoverished Portuguese soldier of fortune left Mozambique Island, bound for Lisbon. After service in India, the East Indies and China, he had fallen out with the colonial authorities and, after a brief stay in prison, borrowed as much money as he could for his homeward journey. The funds had taken him as far as Mozambique, where he had spent two hungry years waiting for friends to collect enough money to carry him back to Portugal. While stranded in the old colonial way-station, Luiz Vaz de Camoes wrote two literary works. One was lost along the way, but the other, "The Lusiads," became Portugal's national epic. Camoes is revered in his native land much the way the English regard Shakespeare or the Italians Dante.

Yet, Camoes had none of Shakespeare's humanity, universalism, subtlety or wit, nor was he possessed of Dante's transcendent vision. And Camoes certainly wasn't humble. He took Homer's "Iliad" as his model, then threw in a good bit of Virgil. But difficult as it is to read in an English translation—due to its pomposity and oddity—"The Lusiads" is nonetheless an essential text for those who truly want to gain a feel for the Indian Ocean world of the 16th century.

"The Lusiads" is a poem about conquest. And killing. Massacres are celebrated, and the only good Muslim is a dead Muslim. The "Moors" are evil, the Portuguese are men of flawless virtue, and life is a zero-sum game. This epic, which runs well over two-hundred pages in translation, is the great heroic poem of empire.

Portugal's imperial feats are celebrated, one after the other: The discoveries and conquests, the naval battles, the sieges and the clash of armies on land. But, above all, the men who conquered the Indian Ocean for Portugal are the poem's heroes. Prior to 9/11, it might have been impossible for an American to even approach Camoes's uncompromising spirit of vengeance against an enemy perceived as irredeemably treacherous. Even now, few would share Camoes's outright craving for gore (were he alive today, he would either be a formidable soldier who needed to be kept in the field 365 days a year, or a director of splatter flicks).

To offer a sense of the kill-or-be-killed world of the Camoes's day—of the century that changed the world—one verse and a few additional lines should do:

*Heads rolled across the field of gore,
Limbs flew, unattached, robbed of all feeling
And guts, still throbbing, slimed earth's floor.
Faces, pallid and still, stared at Heaven's ceiling.
At last, the Moors were broken in defeat.
Spilled blood turned rivers red.
The earth itself slopped crimson under their feet,
And meadows, once green, embraced the countless dead.*

*So the Portuguese won their victory
And gained a bounty of loot...*

Camoes reached Lisbon in the spring of 1570 and disembarked in a plague-swept city. He survived that, too. But the Portuguese empire of the east was already giving ground to the English and French, as it soon would do to the Dutch. Lisbon would hold the key to the Persian Gulf for some further decades, and retain Goa and Mozambique for four more centuries. But Camoes lived and wrote at the pinnacle of his people's empire.

"The Lusiads" wasn't celebrated in Camoes's lifetime. He died poor. Perhaps only a later, fading empire could fully savor his testament to its early glories. But of one thing we may be certain: While today's Americans might find Camoes's poetry and character bloodthirsty and heartless, were he alive he would instantly recognize the role of a U.S. Navy carrier battle group as it passed him by on the sun-swept southern waves.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Note: While some of the recommendations below are straightforward and practical, others are "above the pay-grade" of most potential readers of this report—the high-level recommendations are provided as food for thought and fodder for discussion.

1. *Start asking tough questions about the region.* The Center for Emerging Threats and Opportunities (CETO) should convene one-day round-tables, including warfighters and invited experts as guests, to discuss, first, the strategic potential of southern Africa and, second, the enduring and potential future importance of the Indian Ocean and its littorals. The second session would be more ambitious, of

course, and could, if successful, lead to further discussions focusing on Indian Ocean sub-regions. It is, however, important to begin with overviews, since our routine focus on the separate parts, but not the whole, tends to obscure the overall strategic value of the region—as well as the potential impact of regional problems creating unexpected chain reactions throughout the Indian Ocean arena and beyond. We recognize that some of the regional parts are important, but the sum of the parts may prove of far greater consequence.

2. *War-game the regional future* (the operative rule should be: “No idea too outrageous”). Despite extensive requirements to support current operations, the U.S. Marine Corps should conduct considerably more study and analysis of the Indian Ocean and its littorals—especially the east coast of Africa, where conflict in the north (Somalia) already has engaged U.S. forces in bloody littoral combat, while, in Kenya and Tanzania, terrorism has struck U.S. facilities. Islamic fundamentalism is a growing problem for still-weak states with under-developed surveillance and reaction capabilities. Still largely unaffected by Islamic extremism (to the extent we can see into the problem), Mozambique demands study not only as a potential future problem, but because of the absence of violent confrontations between its Christian and Muslim sub-populations to date. Control of east Africa’s ports means control of the vast interior. Our Navy and Marine Corps may be called upon in the future, under conditions we cannot yet anticipate, to secure port facilities in any of the states mentioned—possibly in support of existing governments, but more likely during periods of insurrection and the breakdown of civil order and state control. While such involvement may appear unlikely to some, the region’s growing importance, along with the related challenges of Islamic extremism, international organized crime and regional disorder, make this a strategic region of far greater importance than is generally appreciated. We never expected to find ourselves in Somalia, in force and for an extended period. If Somalia proved anything, it was that the failure to understand local conditions prior to intervention is an enormous—and potentially deadly—obstacle to mission success.
3. *Get the Navy into the discussion*. The Marine Corps should attempt to engage the Navy, with its greater resources and long experience in the Indian Ocean, in a joint effort to assess the strategic potential, challenges, requirements and intelligence demands in the region. This most-distant theater is also inherently a Navy-Marine theater.
4. *Send smart officers out there to learn*. The Marine Corps should, despite current operational requirements, seek out opportunities to deploy additional officers to East African states, whether in embassy positions, on exchange, as part of assistance teams, or as Foreign Area Officers in training. The goal would be to

build up at least a limited reserve of officers with first-hand experience of these strategically important “sleeper” states.

5. *When engaging East Africa, use a light touch.* Despite occasional disagreements over specific aid policies, U.S. Government assistance to most East African states has been increasingly welcome and increasingly effective. President Bush’s AIDS initiative has, in fact, been adapted at the request of Mozambican authorities to better suit local conditions—just one example of a more practical, open-minded approach to aid programs. Relations with East African states are slowly improving, on various fronts, after the confrontation and mutual recriminations of the liberation era. While in South Africa, specifically, the revolutionary generation and its acolytes will have to die off before the United States and the Republic of South Africa can fully realize the potential of a strong alliance, most trend lines that matter (business, strategic interests) are converging toward a cooperative future. In Mozambique, U.S. assistance has made a significant difference in development and is appreciated by all except for leftover intellectuals and aging journalists from the liberation era. Thus, the recommended approach for the USG is to continue to provide working-level, practical aid, within digestible limits, to the key states—while paying special attention to the potential for corruption. Our profile is improving with most non-Muslims in the region (and with some Muslims it at least has not worsened as it has elsewhere). In more northerly countries, such as Uganda, which feel threatened by militant Islam, the USG now has many avid supporters and advocates. But the key to success is not to be heavy-handed, to listen to competent local authorities and experts, to work cooperatively, and to focus on real needs, rather than merely providing outlets for American surplus materials (some states, such as Mozambique, can do more for themselves with small grants of funding than with large hand-outs of goods or the imposition of designed-in-Washington, one-size-fits-all aid programs. We have made great progress in this regard, but still have far to go. And we must focus on real people, not just statistics. Simple respect and a cooperative approach in relatively minor aid programs can do more for us in East Africa than wanton generosity without direction—accompanied by arrogance. Perhaps the one thing we too long underestimated was the innate human need we all feel for respect.

6. *Don’t militarize the problem prematurely* (but collect chips you can play later). While deploying individual officers for educational and training purposes makes sense, the U.S. military should not aggressively seek to engage counterparts in East Africa. Let them ask. And if asked for assistance, we certainly should provide it, if possible and if the request is sensible—always being careful not to offer uniquely American solutions far weaker local militaries can neither digest nor sustain (the need for good FAOs appears again here). Africa needs time—with minimal interference and well-judged external support—to make its next few steps on its own. It’s essential to avoid the image of seeking to militarize these

countries and to avoid creating the perception that we only want them for military (imperial) purposes. With few exceptions, native military establishments have been a curse on Africa. Most countries need capable (and more far honest) police and domestic constabulary forces, not unaffordable, unreliable militaries.

Although real threats exist, Mozambique, for example, is better off for now with a small, weak military establishment that cannot threaten the government if only because its leaders realize it could never control the country in the wake of an unpopular coup. Except in matters of primary strategic importance, we can afford to allow East African governments to lead the dance for now (our dance card's pretty full, in any case). Our forces—even small elements—should deploy to East African states only because they're wanted and invited (or because of genuine strategic necessity). Of course, some existing relationships and facilities-use remains beneficial, but it's essential that our own military not be seduced by the idea that stronger, more-capable militaries are always best for any state—the contrary is more often true in the developing world. African states, in general, need to learn to want—and to trust--our military presence. They're already headed in that direction in a number of cases. We just need to give them time to develop a rational sense of their place in the world and their genuine needs. For five centuries, Africa suffered under foreign domination and foreign interference. Just now, as long as other parties don't interfere with the continent's development, the most promising African countries need breathing space. Our military policy should focus on the out-years, while remaining ready to deal with crises in the interim.

7. *Study Islam regionally.* Despite the ability of al-Qaeda and related terrorist organizations to recruit individual East Africans and to stage attacks in the region, Islam as practiced by many black Africans is very different from that of the Arabian peninsula. As in Indonesia, it often makes room for inherited local traditions that would be anathema to the theologians of Mecca. It also has never acquired the status of a monopoly religion in the region (speaking of the coast from Kenya southward), thus it could not and cannot be as dictatorial and uncompromising as it has become in the Arab heartlands or in corollary Islamic-monopoly states. In Mozambique, for example, there's much more give-and-take, more tolerance and, frankly, more ignorance of Islam's tenets than in the Middle East. Many Mozambican Muslims resemble Christians of the Middle Ages—illiterate and uneducated in the doctrines of their faith, they rely on the local mullah and tradition as their guide. And, as was the case in medieval Christianity, the local cleric often doesn't know a great deal about the complexities of his own faith, either. This is far-from-the-flagpole Islam, at least for now. While it's only sensible to be concerned about the spread of Islamic extremism in the region and about the appeal of Wahabi-style fundamentalism, a productive approach to the problem might be to shift some of our attention from the “frozen” Islam of the Middle East in order to study what makes Swahili-Coast Islam different—what makes it generally more tolerant (for example, is it merely the lack of a monopoly status for the religion, or has Islam taken profoundly different turns in the region

that have remained opaque to us?). As a minimum, we may gain a better understanding of Middle Eastern extremism by looking at it through a back window. Or we may find reason for hope in the mutations Islam has undergone during the region's cultural intermingling over the past five centuries.

--July, 2004