



PLA Dispatches First Military Medical Team to Mozambique

OE Watch Commentary: On 20 November 2017 China dispatched its first group of PLA medical personnel to the East African nation of Mozambique as reported on in the article from *PLA Daily*. The nine members of the Military Medical Experts Group were drawn from military hospitals in Wuxi, Nanjing, Shanghai, and Hangzhou and specialized in surgery, ENT (ear, nose and throat), internal medicine, orthopedics, and intensive care. While their primary responsibility was working with the military of Mozambique to train in epidemic prevention and general medical work, during their two months the group diagnosed roughly 3,000 patients and performed 40 major and minor surgeries. Epidemic prevention work in particular is important, as Mozambique has the fourth-highest prevalence of AIDS in the world.

Chinese Ambassador to Mozambique, Su Jian (苏健) also noted that the team made a point of providing health care to employees at Chinese companies and overseas Chinese communities during their weekends, treating over 200 patients. While the focus is on building relationships with their host countries, these visits are also an important part of showing the flag to Chinese companies and ethnic-Chinese communities abroad.

In 2016 China and Mozambique expanded their diplomatic relationship to “Comprehensive Strategic Cooperative Partnership” (全面战略合作伙伴关系) during a visit by Mozambique’s President Nyusi to China as noted in the press release from the *Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs*. Chinese involvement in Mozambique dates back to its support for anti-colonial movements in the 60s, but in recent years China has become a major trading partner and donor of humanitarian relief to the country. Chinese UN peacekeepers served in Mozambique from 1993-1994. In 2007 China provided Mozambique with a \$1.5 million grant to improve several departments in the Mozambican military. Another grant of over \$10 million for training and equipment followed the upgrading of relations in 2016.

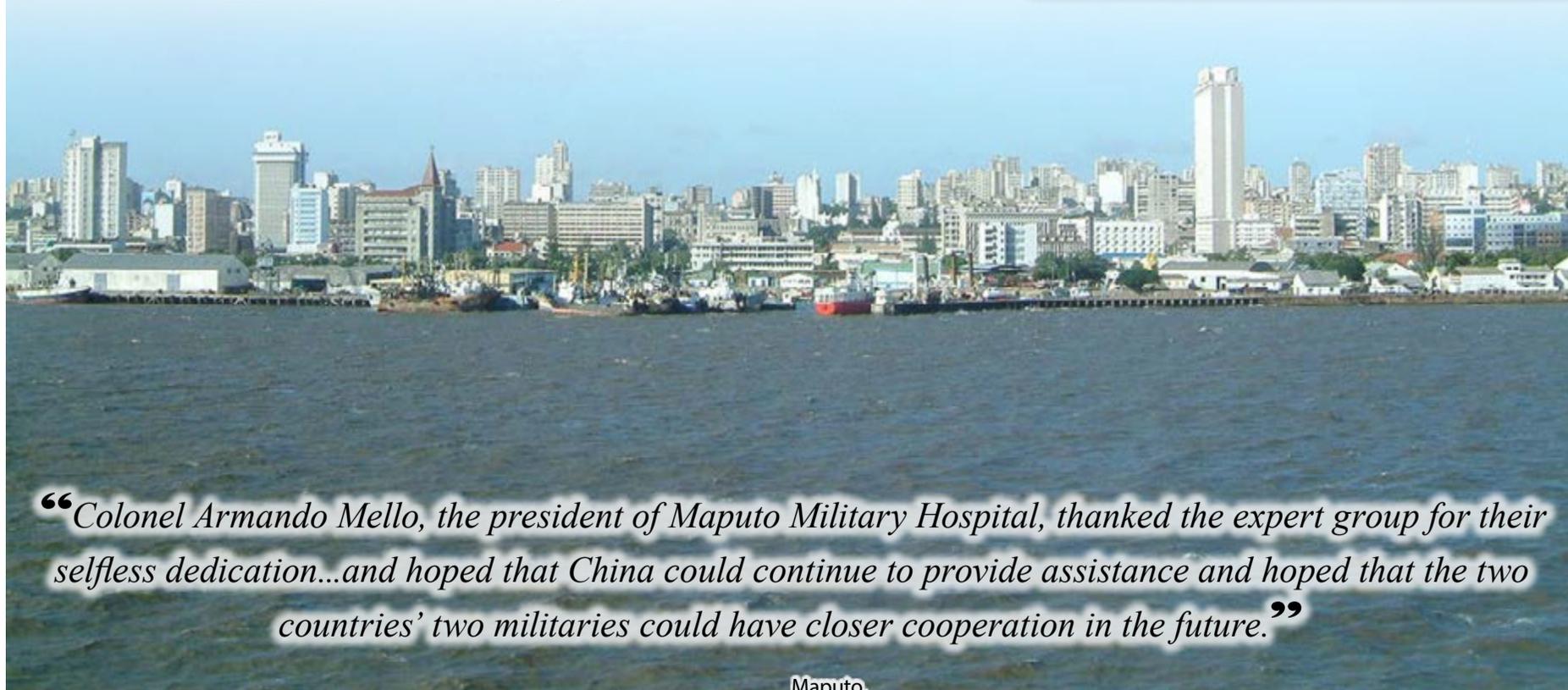
China’s relations with Mozambique are frequently framed in terms of the “Belt and Road” Initiative. As infrastructure improves and the country becomes wealthier, Mozambique could grow into a major hub allowing Chinese goods to reach across the Indian Ocean and plug into markets in Southern Africa while providing natural resources to China. Chinese military aid, even in the form of short visits by doctors, is another way of confirming Chinese commitment to its relationship with Mozambique, and will open the doors to other visits. **End OE Watch Commentary (Wood)**

Source: “中国首批援莫桑比克军事医疗专家组圆满结束任务回国,” (“China’s First Group of Medical Experts Successfully Concluded Their Mission and Returned to China”), *PLA Daily*, 15 January 2018. http://www.81.cn/jwgz/2018-01/15/content_7908296.htm

Chinese Ambassador to Mozambique, Su Jian (苏健), praised the expert group for its outstanding performance in fulfilling its mission. He said that China’s dispatch of military medical experts to Mozambique is a concrete manifestation of the China-Mozambique comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership and the implementation of the important consensus reached by the two countries last year regarding strengthening exchanges and cooperation between the two militaries in the military medical field.

Source: “习近平同莫桑比克总统纽西举行会谈 两国元首决定建立中莫全面战略合作伙伴关系” (“Xi Jinping and Mozambican President Nyusi – Both Nations Agree to Establish a Comprehensive Strategic Cooperative Partnership”), *Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, 18 May 2016. <http://www.fmprc.gov.cn/ce/cegh/chn/zgyw/t1364501.htm>

“China wishes to support Mozambique’s efforts to strengthen the building of national defense and stability maintenance capabilities and upgrade the security cooperation to a new level.”



“Colonel Armando Mello, the president of Maputo Military Hospital, thanked the expert group for their selfless dedication...and hoped that China could continue to provide assistance and hoped that the two countries’ two militaries could have closer cooperation in the future.”

Maputo.

Source: By Andrew Moir, <https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/4d/Maputo.jpg> CC BY 2.0.