



Apartheid regime killed Machel, Mbeki hints

By Paul Fauvet

Maputo - What has been dismissed as a conspiracy theory gained credence on Thursday when President Thabo Mbeki suggested that apartheid armed forces were behind the plane-crash death of Mozambican president Samora Machel.

Addressing a special session of the Mozambican parliament on Thursday, Mbeki stressed the "heroic sacrifices" made by Mozambicans in the struggle to end apartheid in South Africa, and thanked them for "standing shoulder to shoulder with us until we gained our freedom".

In that struggle, he added, Machel had "perished on South African territory at the hands of our common enemy".

Machel died in a plane crash in 1986.

The main purpose of Mbeki's visit was undoubtedly economic.

On Friday, he and President Joaquim Chissano are to inaugurate the construction of a 900km-long gas pipeline that will take natural gas from the fields in the Mozambican province of Inhambane to Sasol's chemical plants in Secunda.

"This will create much-needed jobs in Mozambique, and supply markets in South Africa," Mbeki said.

He told Mozambican parliamentarians that, with R25-billion invested by South African private and parastatal companies, South Africa had become the largest foreign investor in Mozambique. - Independent Foreign Service

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