

# Mozambique talks point to lessening tension <sup>Gdn.</sup> 9/12/83

From Barry Streek  
in Cape Town

Talks between the South African and Mozambique governments may be held soon and they could reduce tensions—particularly on security issues.

With European countries and the United States stepping up support for Mozambique as the Eastern bloc countries make cuts, the West may be on the verge of a significant tactical victory in southern Africa.

This week, the effect of Mozambique's move away from the Soviet bloc became evident as Eastern bloc aid started drying up.

It is reported from Paris that President Machel has written letters to European leaders, including President Mitterrand in France and Edgar Pisani at the European Economic Community in Brussels, in an effort to get increased aid, including oil products and food, following the cutback in Soviet aid.

Mozambique's economic Minister Mr Jacinto Veloso will be in Paris next week to gather further support.

Not only is the Eastern bloc dissatisfied with the latest Mozambique moves towards improving relations with the West, but there is considerable

dissatisfaction, particularly in Bulgaria, with the adoption of new agricultural policies by Maputo.

On the southern African front, much hard talking still has to be done, but unfirmed reports that the foreign minister, Mr Pik Botha, and his Mozambique counter-part, Mr Joachim Chissano, are to meet in the Cape Verde Islands soon indicates that some progress has been made. An unscheduled return by Mr Botha to Lisbon for further discussions during his two-week visit to Europe has reinforced this view.

Unnamed Portuguese offi-

cials have been reported as saying that the talks could result in Mozambique agreeing to a clamp down on the guerrilla activities of the African National Congress within its borders and South Africa agreeing to stop supporting the Mozambique Resistance Movement.

Not only is the MNR causing widespread disruption in Mozambique but the country's economy has been hard hit by the devastating drought in southern Africa. In addition, Soviet support for the Marxist government in Maputo has not been nearly as substantial as had been hoped.

It was within this context that President Machel visited Europe two months ago.

Diplomatic relations between the US and Mozambique have been restored and when the new US Ambassador, Mr Peter John de Vos, presented his credentials, President Machel used the occasion to appeal to the US to join Africa in working to end apartheid.

In spite of continuing economic ties between the two southern African countries—there are about 40,000 Mozambicans working in South Africa—security issues continue to dominate their relationship.