
MOZAMBIQUE-SOUTH AFRICA *ARB (P) 21 (1) 1984*

Talks Reduce Tensions

Representatives of the Mozambique and South African governments met for talks on January 16th in four working groups to discuss security and economic relations between the two countries. In South Africa there was "quiet optimism" that they could lead to a reduction of tensions.

Speaking at the opening session, the Frelimo Politburo member, and Presidential Economic Adviser, Mr. Jacinto Veloso, made clear the links between the economic talks in Maputo and the security talks in Pretoria. He told the South Africans, "we interpret your presence here as proof of the intention of the South African Government to carry out actions to end the violence and the escalating war".

The most important of the four groups was that which met in Pretoria to discuss security matters. When the two delegations met in Pretoria, photographs were permitted but no questions were allowed.

The other three groups, dealing with tourism the Cabora Bassa hydro-electric scheme, and economic matters met in the Mozambique capital Maputo.

The focus, however, was on Pretoria,

where the South African delegation was headed by the Commissioner of Police, General Johan Coetzee, who in his previous position as head of the Security Police spearheaded government action against the banned African National Congress (ANC), which has been responsible for a number of acts of sabotage in South Africa.

South Africa has alleged that the operational headquarters of the ANC are based in Mozambique and has demanded an end to cross border insurgency as a condition for closer ties.

Mr. Veloso said he hoped the two sides would "develop viable and long lasting economic relations which demand peaceful coexistence". This is part of the Mozambican view that if South Africa, has investments in Mozambique, it is less likely to push anti-government rebels to destroy economic targets.

Both delegations were headed by members of the highest political bodies. The Mozambican teams were headed by politburo members. The South African teams were headed by members of the State Security Council: the Director-General of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Johan van Dalsen in Maputo, and General Coetzee.

In addition to economic concessions, Mozambique may be forced to make some concessions on the African National Congress. The ANC President, Oliver Tambo, was in Mozambique for discussions with President Machel prior to the talks, and was believed to have remained in the country, awaiting the outcome.

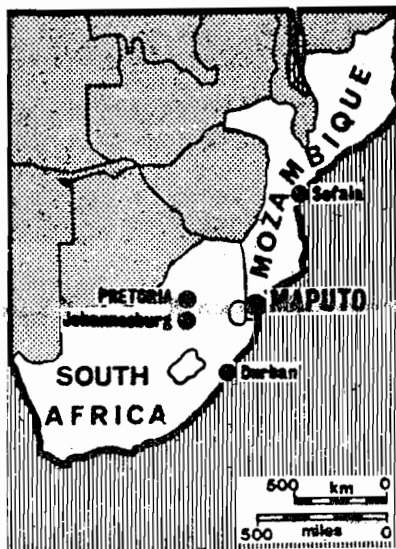
Economic Links

In opening statements, both sides noted the extensive economic links that existed in colonial times, before Mozambican independence, but sharply differed on what should happen now. The South African opening statement talked of "resuscitating" the colonial links.

The Mozambicans stressed the need for new and different relations now that both sides are equal sovereign states.

The South African team went to Maputo with few concrete proposals, and were waiting to hear what concessions Frelimo was prepared to make. Thus there were no formal agreements, and further talks seem likely.

Mozambique appears prepared to make some concessions, but much further



(FT 11/1)

negotiation will be required. On tourism the choice is between package tours and the colonial style of South Africans driving over the border carrying with them everything they need. The former gives Mozambique both control and profits. South Africa is pushing for a return to the latter.

Similarly, Mozambique wants capital investments from South Africa.

Satisfactory Progress

According to the *Financial Times*, the talks appeared to make satisfactory progress at twin sessions on January 16th.

But everything depends on whether the Mozambique Government shows itself able and willing to restrain the activities of the ANC inside, and in transit through, its territory.

For its part, the South African Government must show that it is not assisting the dissidents of the Mozambique Resistance Movement (MNR).

The South Africans make no secret of their position that economic relations between the two countries can only be improved as Maputo wishes if they are given satisfaction on the security issue.

The security talks in Pretoria lasted for eight hours after which a communique was issued stating that the delegations had "considered measures to be taken in order that the territories of neither state should serve as a springboard for

aggression and violent action against the other."

"They also discussed practical mechanisms to ensure the implementation of the objective as well as the continuity of the process."

Meanwhile, in Maputo two senior delegations discussed economic co-operation, including the resumption of power supply from the Cahora Bassa hydroelectric project (which has been repeatedly interrupted by MNR sabotage), migrant labour from Mozambique to the republic, and the resumption of the potentially valuable tourist traffic from South Africa.

(GD 17/1, FT 18/1)

Press Comment

The Mozambique newspaper, *Noticias*, carried an editorial on the talks of January 19th. It said that Mozambique and South Africa had opened the path to define a relationship that would prevent war, and noted that delegations of the two countries had studied practical ways of ensuring an atmosphere of peace and coexistence in the region. The editorial added that it was a question of mutual adoption of the rules of international law: respect for territorial integrity, the inviolability of borders, non-interference in each other's domestic affairs and the guarantee that neither of the states would serve as a base for acts of violence against the other.

The editorial stressed that the application of those principles "reflected our socialist policy of peace as defined by the fourth Frelimo Party Congress (p. 6840)". "In holding talks with South Africa", the editorial stressed, "we were fulfilling a basic principle of our foreign policy and contributing to the elimination of a focus of tension in the region and the world". However, the editorial warned that "we must realize that peace was not a reality that had been achieved, it was a path to be built". It called "on us not to relax our vigilance even after we had achieved an atmosphere of peaceful coexistence with South Africa. United and organized, we would have to apply ourselves in an even more determined manner to the total liquidation of the armed bandits and the development of our economy—guidelines that we would transform into reality in 1984", the editorial stressed.

(R. Maputo 19/1)

The *Financial Mail* (South Africa) thinks

that it would be premature to expect immediately visible results from the talks on security between South Africa and Mozambique. That the two ideologically opposed neighbours have met at all—face to face and in a constructive atmosphere—is notable in itself. Miracles take a little longer.

At the nub of the talks is the quality of support which Mozambique gives the banned ANC, and in this area its freedom to manoeuvre is limited. One constraint is President Machel's personal commitment to the ANC cause as a brother black nationalist; another is the pressures on Mozambique as a "front-line" state, and yet another is its ability to control the ANC guerillas even if it wanted to. It can be assumed that the South African negotiators went into the talks well aware of these inbuilt limitations.

What can be hoped for is an understanding similar to that existing with **Zimbabwe**—that Mozambique will refrain from lending itself as a military base, while continuing to offer moral and political support. In return South Africa can offer a powerful inducement—some form of undertaking to rein in the MNR rebels. Economic co-operation of various kinds, the subject of parallel talks, would help cement the bargain.

If this much can be agreed on it will be a considerable achievement. It is likely that no great changes will be visible to the naked eye. On the security front, both sides will await concrete results—which could take many months to manifest themselves—in the form of reduced guerilla activity. The ANC can be expected to seek alternative avenues for attacks across the border, with or without Mozambique's compliance. The Pretoria-Maputo relationship will be a mutually wary one.

"What the current talks can achieve, in effect, is some lessening of pressures on our eastern border. Yet almost as important as concrete results is the changed attitudes on both sides which they represent." (FM 17/1)

Russians Freed

South African-backed Mozambican guerrillas freed 12 Soviet mining technicians held prisoner for the past five months on January 25th, fulfilling "a direct accord with Moscow", a guerrilla spokesman said.

The Spokesman, Jorge Correia, said in a

telephone call that the technicians, captured last August 21st at a northern emerald and tantalite mine (p. 6953) were released "along the frontier with **Malawi**". He said Malawian officials had been informed of their release.

Two remaining Soviet captives were in "good health" but would only be released later because of logistical problems", Mr. Correia said. He said that he expected that the Soviet Union would compensate his group, but would not say what the compensation was. The rightist guerrillas, belonging to Mozambique's National Resistance Movement (**MNR**) had announced on January 20th that they would free their hostages. (HT 26/1)