

Mozambique-S. Africa pact in perspective

D. News. 19/3/84

MOZAMBIQUE and South Africa last Friday signed an agreement on "non-aggression and good neighbourliness". The last ministerial meeting between the two countries took place in Cape Town about two weeks ago.

The two delegations agreed on the main points of the agreement. It established that neither of the two countries will serve as a base for acts of aggression or violence against the other. It also established that neither country would use the territory of a third state for this end.



Ndugu SAMORA

But in order for them to take place, there was beforehand a lengthy and arduous process of diplomatic contacts — while at the same time South Africa waged an undeclared war against Mozambique.

These diplomatic contacts date from the time of Mozambican independence. In them were involved, on the Mozambican side, Sergio Vieira, who was then the Director of the President's Office, and on the South African side, Brandt Fourie, then General Director of Foreign Affairs.

At the same time, there were meetings to resolve problems related to railways and ports, and within the framework of criminal investigations.

The first two ministerial meetings were held at the South African frontier town of Komatipoort in December 1982 and May 1983. In these two meetings, Mozambique proposed that the two countries should relate to each other on the basis of co-existence.

But the Mozambican delegations to these two meetings added another point of fundamental importance: There could not be any state to state relationship without

MOZAMBIQUE and South Africa on Friday signed an agreement on non-aggression and good neighbourliness. News of the agreement as well as its preparatory meetings attracted world attention and invited conflicting opinion and reaction among the world community. The Mozambique News Agency (AIM) backgrounds the agreement and puts the whole issue in its true perspective.

first reaching a security agreement. In other words, without South Africa first abandoning its support for the bandits of the Mozambique National Resistance" (MNR).

South Africa was speaking with Mozambique at the diplomatic level, but on the ground it continued to organise acts of banditry, and to launch direct attacks with its own forces, such as the May 23 air raid against the Maputo suburb of Matola.

Meanwhile, in Western Europe and in the United States, governments and influential political forces analysed, Southern/Africa on the basis of criteria which derived from the powerful South African propaganda apparatus.

These realities led the FRELIMO Central Com-

mittee to take three decisions at its tenth session, in August 1982: First, to put the country's economy on a war footing, second, to launch a coordinated offensive by the Mozambican armed forces (FPLM), and third, to undertake a diplomatic offensive in the West to break Mozambique's isolation from western governments.

By mid 1983, the positive effects of the FPLM's offensive were already being felt, and in October last year President Samora Machel visited six European countries, five of them Western.

This visit is of crucial importance for understanding what followed. The leaders with whom Samora Machel spoke, notably in Portugal, France and Britain, finally understood that Mozambique

is indeed an independent country, and tenaciously defends its own sovereignty.

They understood also that Mozambique will not agree to serve as a mere platform for any other country to launch attacks against South Africa.

In other words, the socialist policy of peace and co-existence is not just a slogan, or an article in a constitution, but a real policy applied on the real terrain of international relations.

A few days after President Samora Machel's return to Mozambique, the South African Foreign Minister racist Roelof Botha left for Europe. Here he found a large number of doors closed to him.

Mozambique's diplomatic offensive was having the desired effect. The world had begun to understand the true nature of the conflict in Southern Africa.

It was then that South Africa asked to reopen the dialogue that Mozambique had initially begun. What followed from that is now general knowledge — meetings first in Mbabane, then simultaneously in Pretoria and Maputo, then in Maputo again, then finally in Cape Town.

For many people, all this came as a surprise. But there was nothing surprising in it for anyone who had followed

closely South Africa's own economic crisis, and the failures it had suffered in its military strategy.

In Mozambique, in Angola, in Namibia, and in Zimbabwe, the leaders of South Africa have not managed to turn the clock back. If for South Africa the strategy to be followed now is the attempt to win through economic power what it failed to achieve by force of arms, for Mozambique the agreement that has just been signed is the culmination of many years in pursuit of a policy of co-existence.



Mr. P.W. BOTHA