

# Swords into ploughshares



The effects of the Nkomati Accord will be felt for a long time to come. It stunned SA's critics and struck at the foundations of Russia's African policy. It will be a feather in Ronald Reagan's

cap at a time when the US administration needs foreign policy victories.

Far more importantly, it greatly increased the prospects for an overall peaceful settlement of southern Africa's problems. This was underlined when the Nkomati signing was rapidly followed by the Cuban agreement to withdraw its troops from Angola — though in terms to which Pretoria took the strongest exception. At midweek observers were attempting to assess whether Pik Botha's tough statement represented a major obstacle in the way of a Namibian settlement — or if it was designed as a reminder as to who is really calling the shots in southern Africa.

So much time and energy has been put into the Namibian-Angolan peace process, that the latter seemed more likely. That being so, independence in terms of UN Resolution 435 remains the target.

Nkomati was a diplomatic triumph and Pretoria can hardly be blamed for extracting every last ounce of propaganda value from the coup. It can also be forgiven a quiet chuckle that the turn of events made American presidential hopeful Gary Hart's endorsement of sanctions look fatuous.

However, if the long-term fruits of the

The prospects held out at Nkomati involve more than a regional defusing of political and military tensions. Economic co-operation can generate untold benefits in the years to come — but SA will have to tackle its reform programmes with renewed vigour if the wider expectations are to be met.

ACCORD OF NKOMATI SIGNED BY THE HONOURABLE PIETER WILLEM BOTHA AND HIS EXCELLENCY SAMORA MOISÉS MACHEL AT THE COMMON BORDER ON THE BANKS OF THE NKOMATI RIVER ON 16 MARCH 1984 ON BEHALF OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA AND THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF MOZAMBIQUE

ACORDO DE NKOMATI ASSINADO POR SUAS EXCELENCIAS PIETER WILLEM BOTHA E SAMORA MOISÉS MACHEL NA FRONTEIRA COMUM NAS MARGENS DO RIO NKOMATI NO DIA 16 DE MARÇO DE 1984 EM NOME DA REPÚBLICA DA ÁFRICA DO SUL E DA REPÚBLICA POPULAR DE MOÇAMBIQUE

VERDRAG VAN NKOMATI ONDERTEKEND DEUR SY EDELE PIETER WILLEM BOTHA EN SY EKSELLENSIE SAMORA MOISÉS MACHEL BY DIE GEMEENSAPLIKKE GRENS OP DIE OEWERS VAN DIE NKOMATIRIVIER OP 16 MAART 1984 NAMENS DIE REPUBLIEK VAN SUID-AFRIKA EN DIE VOLKSREPUBLIEK MOSAMBIEK

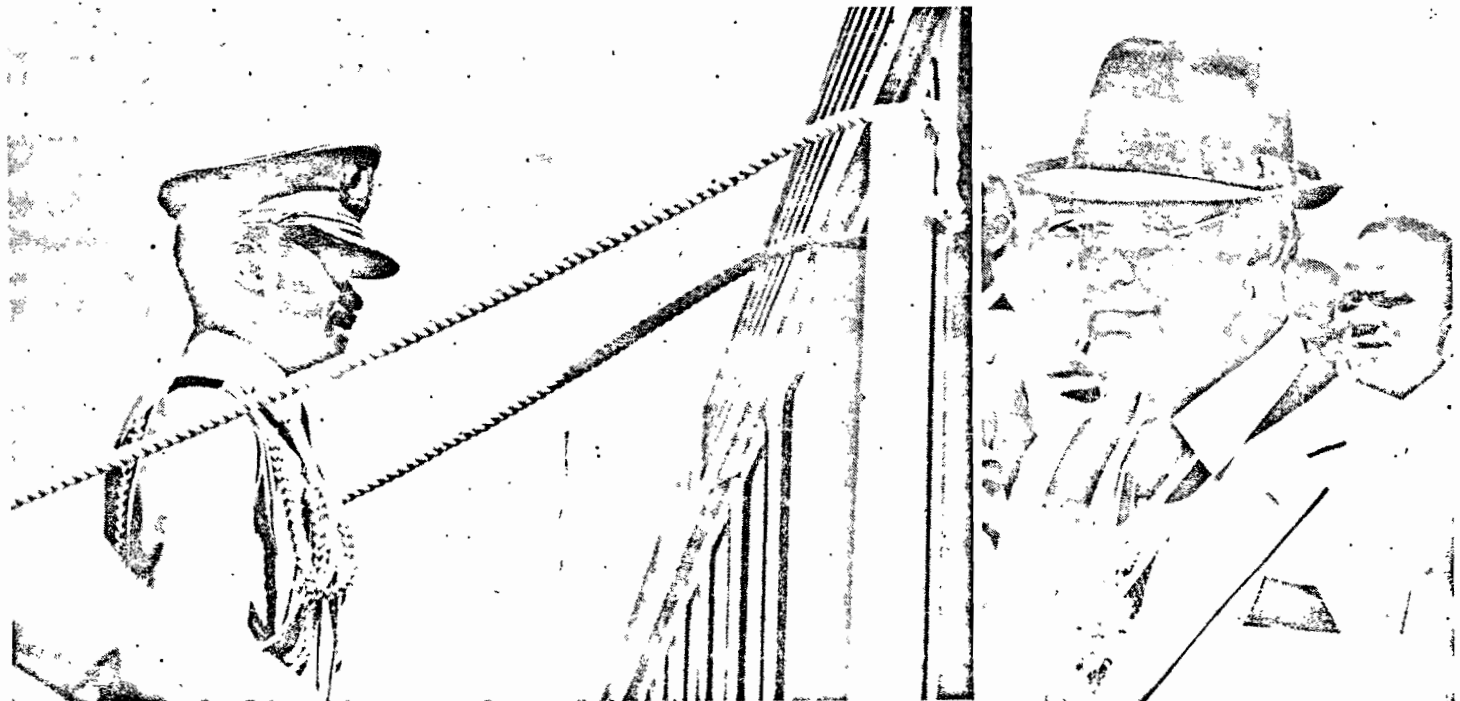
Accord are to be harvested there will need to be careful nurturing through political, diplomatic and, not least, economic means. No one should delude themselves into believing that Mozambique, or Angola, has suddenly decided that Pretoria is loveable and apartheid a reasonable policy. The hostility is still in place — though time could change that (see page 29).

The simplest, but most incomplete, view of the "Agreement of Non-Aggression and Good Neighbourliness" is that SA wanted to stop the ANC in its tracks, while Mozambique needed to turn off the tap, as President Samora Machel put it, on which the Mozambique National Resistance movement (MNR) depends. But there is far more to the Accord than that.

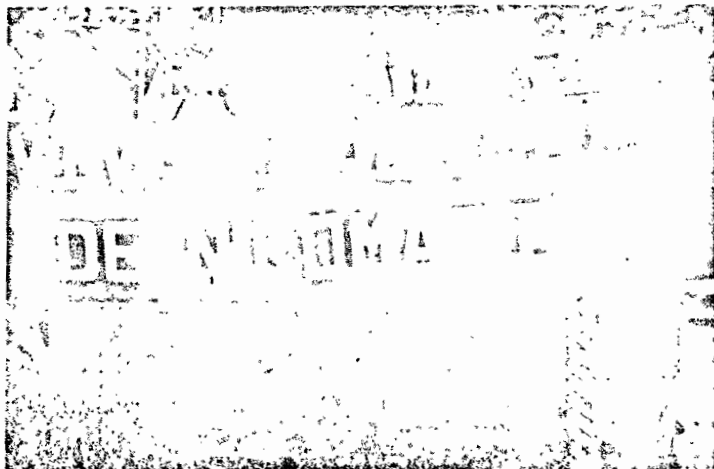
For one thing, Nkomati reaffirms that SA is an African state and that all her people are Africans. Where black Africa is concerned this means there is an important symbolic difference between white SA and former colonialists. As Machel said: "None of us, Mozambicans or South Africans, have another country. We are not foreigners to our continent or our countries."

Most African leaders in the region welcome the Accord — even though, naturally enough, there is some suspicion. They are waiting for signs that SA is sincere in its new "good neighbour" approach. And the first opportunity for SA to prove exactly this lies in the Namibian and Angolan negotiations.

The signal that Cuba is ready, conditionally, to withdraw its troops from Angola means the opportunity is ready-made.



Machel (left), Botha (right) ... towards an economic alliance



**Welcoming the Accord ...  
expanding opportunities**

Namibian independence and peace with Angola would kill most African suspicions. With Namibia independent, the last element of SA's *cordon sanitaire* against black Africa and the advance of African nationalism will have gone.

Of course there will be those, both white South Africans and black Africans, who will argue that the situation will then be one of "Fortress SA" — always the ultimate target after the fall of the Portuguese empire, Rhodesia and SWA. They should not be taken too seriously.

The long-term implications of Nkomati should serve as a reassurance to whites who think that an independent Namibia will mean a Soviet puppet regime with Cuban soldiers on the Orange River. For if the Marxist Frelimo regime can be brought to sign an agreement of non-aggression and good neighbourliness, no Swapo regime in Windhoek will be able to adopt a more hostile line. An independent Namibia will be almost as poor as Mozambique — and far more dependent on SA.

SA's conditional acceptance by Africa and the international community is unlikely to be permanent. Peace and prosperity based on accords like Nkomati cannot last, while SA is locked into apartheid. And the United Democratic Front's Allan Boesak — president of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches — was right when he asked: "If the SA PM can sit down and make agreements with Mozambique, why can't he sit down and make agreements with the people of his own land?"

Nor does the fact that Mozambique is committed to curbing the military wing of the ANC mean that it, and other African states, has stopped believing the ANC is "the authentic representative" of black SA. While its military effort may be crippled, the organisation can be expected to compensate by intensifying efforts to organise within SA itself — always a major ANC weakness. Recent terrorist incidents would seem designed to reassert the ANC's presence in SA's consciousness.

Government needs to counter this by embarking on an aggressive policy of dialogue

with black leaders, including those whose approach it dislikes. It also needs to scrap discriminatory legislation, particularly that restricting social, economic and residential freedom of choice. That would in

*"Pretoria should never forget that in the long term the path to Africa lies through SA itself. Ultimately that depends on the way it treats its own people."*

any case make sound economic sense — as much as does regional security.

Government has not abandoned its dream of a "constellation" of southern African states bound by economic self-interest. Fair enough: but the internal component needs to be emphasised. And that means rationality instead of ideology.

On the wider front, Mozambique must be helped to improve its economy — a difficult task following years of mismanagement, natural disasters and widespread insurgency by the MNR.

In 1980 Mozambique had a budget deficit of some R100m and an even bigger balance of payments problem. Thousands of people are starving in the country and hardly anything is being spent on development. Helping Mozambicans to get back on their feet could at least serve to spread an appreciation of the value of a free market system — though the force of revolutionary zeal may take some time to abate. Machel, for example, is almost certain to encounter opposition to the path he has now embarked upon.

Assistance to Mozambique — where it is not extended on purely humanitarian grounds — will be pointless if it takes the

form of handouts. Nor is there any reason it should do so. Maputo is the natural port for much of the requirements, and exports, of the PWV complex and was once used extensively for precisely this purpose. For many reasons — involving inefficiency in Maputo, the recession, and the political mood — that use dropped drastically in recent years.

In 1975 6 Mt of SA goods travelled through Maputo. By last year the figure had dropped to 1 Mt. In the new diplomatic climate there should be greater private sector readiness to use the port — and more official encouragement to do so.

Before 1974 some 500 000 South Africans visited the tourist paradise that Mozambique used to be — every year. Maputo would like to see them returning. But before that can happen it will need to improve its hotel and other tourist facilities — which SA entrepreneurs are admirably placed, in their own interests, to help it do.

Agriculture and fishing in Mozambique are great potential revenue earners, though, as always, there are difficulties. Sleeping sickness, for instance, is endemic in most of Mozambique, as well as malaria and cholera. All three reduce agricultural output. But SA has vast experience in combating these plagues in the African environment. Co-operative fishing ventures with Mozambique are also possible and could help stop the Russian, European and Far Eastern fishing fleets from plundering coastal resources — as they are busy doing off Namibia and Angola.

As Machel said: "The prospect of peace opens possibilities for developing the vast resources in which our region abounds. These resources must as a matter of priority be exploited for the benefit of the people."

Botha responded: "We can explore numerous possibilities for expanding our relations for mutual benefit in the atmosphere of peace and trust that we are now creat-

ing. Such an atmosphere will lead to confidence and will encourage the private sector of the SA economy and of other countries to play a constructive role if they can be assured that their investments will be secure and of mutual benefit to producers and consumers alike."

He added: "I see a sub-continent in which countries work together to rationalise and increase food production, develop regional trade, establish housing programmes, edu-

cation and training schemes, health services, employment opportunities and many other mutually beneficial activities.

"We can exchange information on programmes to overcome the consequences of droughts, floods and other natural disasters. Together we can form an economic alliance to negotiate better prices on world markets for our minerals and raw materials.

"Given the necessary stability and good

neighbourliness, I have a vision of the nations of southern Africa co-operating with each other in every field . . ."

It is a grand vision and much needs to be done before it can be realised. Brand Fourie has said the path to Western acceptance lies through Africa. Pretoria should never forget that in the long term the path to Africa lies through SA itself. Ultimately that depends on the way it treats its own people.