

SA aims to get Frelimo and Renamo talking

Sun. Times 19/8/84

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Immediately after the signing of the Nkomati Accord, both South African military assessments and those of the Maputo Government were that the Renamo rebels — with no apparent logistical support from South Africa — would be wound down.

But recent daring raids by the Renamo forces on truck convoys, power installations, rail and oil links and even towns have convinced the Mozambicans that Renamo's power has increased rather than diminished.

Desperation

The decision by the Maputo Government to approach Pretoria to act as interlocutor with the rebels is an indication of their desperation to wind down the conflict and create the right investment climate.

Although there is no confirmation from South African sources, it is understood the Frelimo Government is pushing for military assistance from South Africa.

Pretoria has made it clear,

however, that this would be politically impossible — the Conservative Party has already warned against any South African involvement in even defending the Cahora Bassa powerlines against Renamo.

Further rounds of proxy talks are envisaged.

● The Botswana Government is concerned at South African efforts to force it to sign a peace agreement similar to the Accord of Nkomati with Mozambique.

This has emerged from talks in Gaborone this weekend between the Botswana leader, President Quett Maseru, and a delegation of Progressive Federal Party members.

The delegation was led by Johannesburg North MP Mr Peter Soal.

"The president said Botswana had never allowed its territory to be used as a base for acts against South Africa and would not change this policy," Mr Soal said.

The president told the delegation he believed South Africa was stalling on Customs Union payments to Botswana as a way of exerting pressure.