

SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENTS

Pretoria Pushes for 'Facts'

Three key meetings with neighbouring governments to strengthen security and regional peace will be held in Mozambique and SA today and tomorrow, the Foreign Minister, Mr Pik Botha, announced yesterday. Speaking in parliament in the debate on his budget vote, Mr Botha also hinted at the possibility that SA might be able to circumvent aspects of the international arms embargo against the country in the wake of the Nkomati Accord with Mozambique.

Mr Botha said there would be talks today with Botswana to discuss details of a 'satisfactory and practical' security arrangement. Although he did not elaborate, it is understood that an agreement similar to that with Swaziland is being considered. Today's talks will be attended by security and foreign affairs personnel of the two states. Mr Botha said Botswana had not been keen on a security pact, but the recent use by Swapo insurgents of a northern portion of Botswana for an incursion into SWA apparently convinced the Botswana government of the need for some type of arrangement.

A high-powered Swazi delegation, headed by the Prime Minister, Prince Bhekimpi, will arrive in Cape Town today. Talks would be held tomorrow with Mr Botha and with the Prime Minister, Mr PW Botha, and would cover a wide range of subjects, including security, agriculture, education and water affairs. Prince Bhekimpi would be accompanied by three members of the supreme council, the Likoqo, and 10 members of his cabinet.

Mr Botha said SA's relations with Swaziland were good, although this had not been achieved overnight. Tomorrow there would also be talks in Maputo between members of the Joint Security Commission established in terms of the Nkomati agreement, he said. The JMC hoped to work out details of the security operation that would be mounted to protect the power lines from Cahora Bassa in northern Mozambique when they started feeding electricity into the SA grid later this year.

In terms of the Cahora Bassa agreements, SA and Mozambique are jointly responsible for the security of the lines. It was in this connection that Mr Botha referred fleetingly to the possible circumvention of the arms boycott. He indicated the possibility of *Mozambique obtaining the necessary arms, including helicopters - possibly from the US - if SA said it was unable to carry out the protection role fully without additional arms* [Editor's emphasis] ...

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