

S African View of Incomati Accord as "A Necessary Milestone"

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Excerpts from commentary:

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At a meeting in Maputo, senior government ministers have signed a declaration renewing the commitments of the Governments of South Africa and Mozambique to the accord of Incomati. . . The statement provided the answer of the two sides to the recent growing speculation about a rift and even the possible failure of the accord. Most of the speculation obviously emanated from circles that have been hostile to the accord since it was signed.

The truth is that Incomati contains the promise of such tremendous benefits for both South Africa and Mozambique, and in the longer term for all of southern Africa, that allowing it to collapse is simply not on. It was the first major concrete step toward a far-reaching change of climate in southern Africa. . . The goals the treaty sought out are as valid now as they were then - firstly, replacing (?that) era of conflict with regional commitment to peaceful coexistence, and secondly, moving from there onto a dispensation of active cooperation among countries for economic development.

It was far-fetched to imagine that Incomati accord heralded . . . a sudden conversion of the forces of violence in the region to the cause of peaceful cooperation. . . What it did represent was the coming to terms with the imperfections of the world and acceptance of the hard realities of Africa [passage indistinct]. The accord was not an end in itself but was a necessary milestone planned along the road to a realistic improvement in relations [passage indistinct] meaningful, social, and economic development in southern Africa. . .

For all states in the region, the peace initiatives for the past year have presented the opportunity to create a new pattern of international relations that will improve economic and political prospects immeasurably. What it requires to succeed is a desire to patch up the differences through negotiation and the rejection of any action that would undermine the security of a member state. An accord provides a necessary framework for such an advance, but it is the spirit manifested by all participants on the southern African arena that will make it work.