

S African Radio Commentary on “Good Neighbourliness” with Mozambique

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Text of commentary:

Recent indications of improved relations between South Africa and Mozambique are encouraging. Not only for the two countries themselves, but for the southern African region as a whole. It speaks of commendable statesmanship on the part of Mozambique's relatively new president, Chissano.

At his first big news conference, shortly after taking office, President Chissano made it clear that he was not seeking confrontation with South Africa and wished to pursue a policy of good neighbourliness. Two things he said were particularly encouraging as far as relations with South Africa were concerned. He reaffirmed Mozambique's commitment to the Nkomati accord with South Africa, and he gave the assurance that his country would not be used as base for terrorists attacks against South Africa.

In doing so, President Chissano was in fact responding to a message from President P.W. Botha in which the South African leader had reaffirmed his commitment to the Nkomati accord. President Chissano clearly has enough problems of his own. He has to secure his leadership, he has to contend with the growing challenge of Renamo, and he has committed himself to improving his impoverished country's economy, in the midst of a debilitating civil war.

With regard to the Renamo threat, President Chissano has accused South Africa of aiding the resistance movement in violation of the Nkomati accord. South Africa has repeatedly denied further aid. This has also been denied by Renamo leader, Alfonso Dhlakama. It is clear that both Mozambique and South Africa have a new appreciation of the importance of the Nkomati accord. It is proof again of the fact the countries, particularly in an interdependent region such as southern Africa, can and should enjoy good relations despite political differences.