

● President Chissano of Mozambique held talks in Maputo with South Africa's Foreign Affairs Minister Roelof 'Pik' Botha on 23 ^{AED} March. The two discussed ways of bringing peace to southern Africa, with particular reference to Mozambique. The Foreign Affairs Ministry in Pretoria says the talks also ^{3/4/89} included economic issues, and joint development projects. However, the focus was on the peace initiatives; Chissano put forward "important suggestions" that the South African government will seriously consider, Botha says. He added that the talks represented a continuation of his 10 February meeting with Chissano, in which it was proposed that the US mediate to end the 13-year civil conflict in Mozambique (AED 20:2:89). Mozambique remains the key to South Africa's apparent peace strategy for the region, observers say, adding that Pretoria is trying to repudiate accusations that it is providing military backing to the rebel Mozambique National Resistance (MNR). The Maputo initiative comes at a time when the UK appears poised to play a role in any settlement of the conflict in Mozambique. Botha is understood to have relayed to Chissano the outcome of his talks with UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher in the week ended 25 March (see AFRICA'S WEEK).