

Maputo asks to see pilot

Defector faces death if he's returned, says expert

Tribune Reporters

MOZAMBIQUE has apparently asked South Africa for access to Lieutenant Adriano Francisco Bomba, who defected from Maputo last week in his Soviet-built MiG jet fighter.

And the Frelimo government of President Samora Machel has also asked for the return of the ageing MiG 17.

The South African Government has not commented yet on its attitude to Lieutenant Bomba's request for asylum but an expert on international affairs said yesterday the lieutenant would almost certainly die before a firing squad if the South African Government should send him home.

The director-general of internal affairs, Jimmy van der Merwe, said every case of a request for political asylum was treated on its merits.

"Our investigations into the background of the person applying for asylum are more sophisticated than those we apply when somebody simply applies to immigrate," he said.

Lieutenant Bomba flew to South Africa on Tuesday and was almost immediately intercepted by two air force Mirages and escorted to the air base at Hoedspruit in the Transvaal.

He made a brief appearance before Pressmen, who were flown there on Wednesday, but has since been shielded by the South Africans.

The Department of Foreign Affairs was yesterday neither prepared to confirm nor deny the reports that Maputo had requested to see Lieutenant Bomba or that there had been a request for the return of the aircraft.

"We have received a communique from Mozambique and we are looking at it," said a spokesman.

A Defence Force spokesman said yesterday that Lieutenant Bomba's interrogation was continuing and interviews would not be allowed until it was completed. "That should be early next week," he said.

One of the reasons that has now been put forward for Lieutenant Bomba's flight to South Africa is

that his parents live here.

The editor of the Frelimo mouthpiece *Noticias*, Willie Waddington, said from Maputo that the young pilot had been investigated and it was discovered his parents live somewhere in South Africa.

But doubts have been expressed about this in South Africa.

Mr Waddington also said that Lieutenant Bomba matriculated in Mozambique and apparently spent 2½ years in the Soviet Union, where he became fluent in Russian. He is Portuguese-speaking and English is a second language. He does not understand Afrikaans.

Professor Marinus Wiechers, professor of constitutional and international law at the University of South Africa, said that under Mozambique's tough laws Lieutenant Bomba's offence in defecting to South Africa could be high treason or at least a crime against the security of the

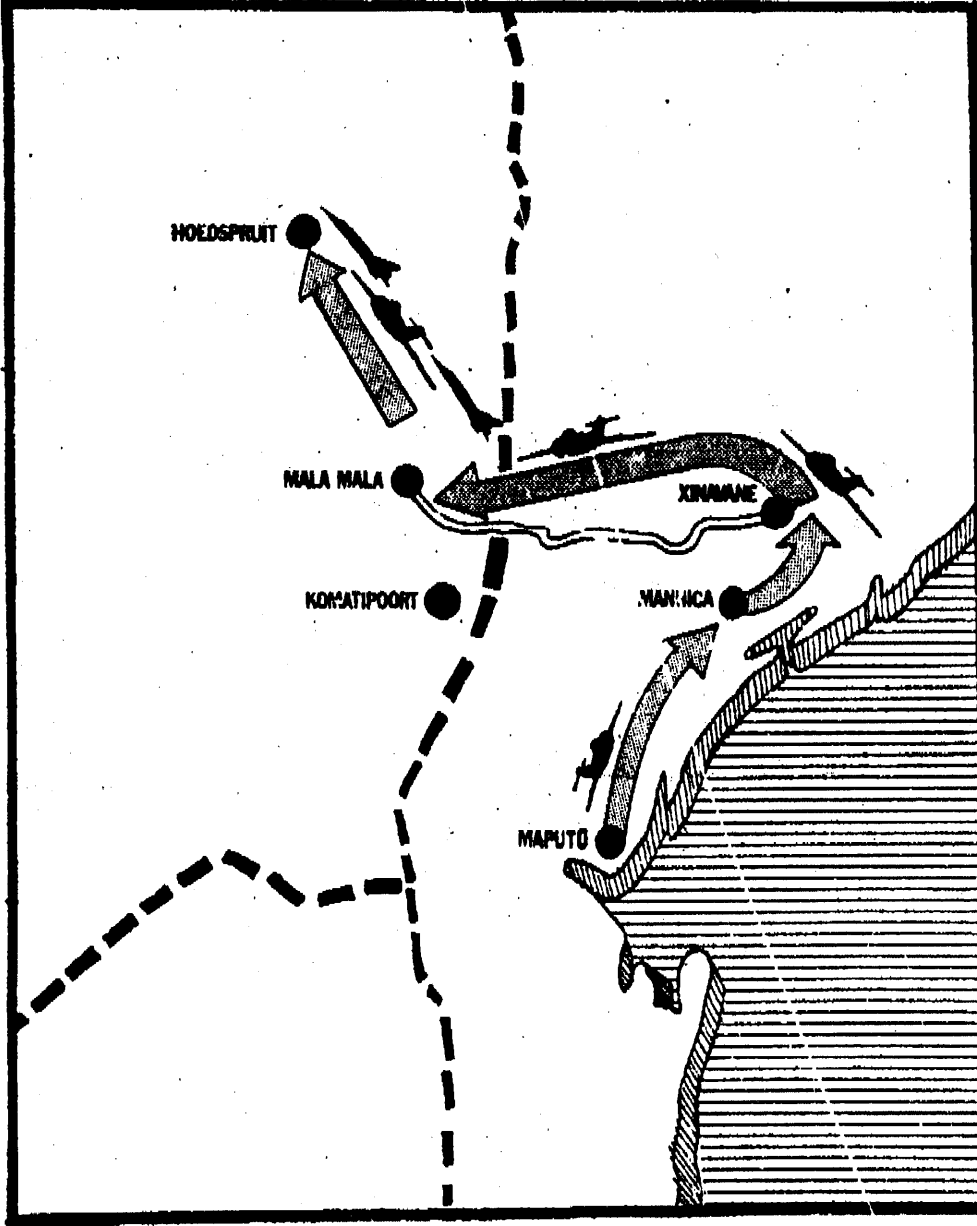
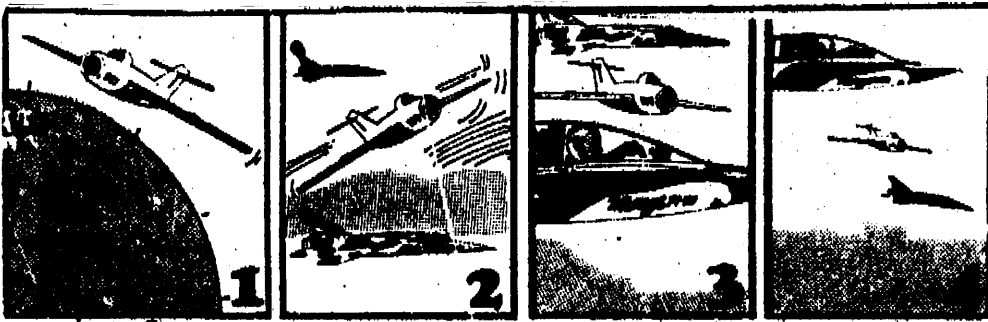
state. It was likely to be regarded in Mozambique as a more serious offence than that committed by the alleged spy Enoque Cau, sentenced to death by firing squad only a few days before Bomba's defection.

Cau, accused with six other Mozambicans of crimes against the security

of the state, was alleged to have spied for South Africa and to have helped to launch South Africa's January raid on the headquarters of the banned African National Congress outside Maputo.

Dr Michael Hough, director of the Institute of Strategic Studies at the University of Pretoria,

said the possibility that Lieutenant Bomba was a spy planted on South Africa could not be overlooked. Another possibility was that his defection had no political or strategic significance and had been done for personal reasons or to get away from some kind of trouble.



The arrows indicate the MiG's flightpath after takeoff from Maputo.

(1) The MiG is picked up on South African radar screens, apparently while still over Mozambique.

(2) Two SAA Mirages, returning to the standards base near the

Mozambique border after a routine training mission, are instructed to lock-in on the intruder.

The aircraft position themselves alongside and behind the MiG.

(3) There is no radio communication between

the MiG and the Mirages so the pilot of the leading Mirage signals for the MiG to follow him.

(4) At Hoedspruit, one of the Mirages lands first followed by the MiG, which is closely tailed by the second Mirage.