

B. AFRICA

Warns

S African Defence Minister ~~Wants~~ Mozambique of Reprisals

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Text of dispatch datelined Johannesburg, 7th October:

The Minister of Defence, Gen Magnus Malan, has warned Mozambique of possible reprisals following the landmine blast which injured six South African soldiers yesterday in KaNgwane. The men, Rifleman V.P. van der Vyfer, 24, of Carletonville; Lance Cpl H.H. van der Merwe, 25, of Bellville; Rifleman C.J. Pienaar, of Vryburg; Cpl C.S. Moir, 23, of Empangeni; Cpl D.B. Jordaan, 24, of Evander; and Cpl C.G. Fourke, 26, of Benoni were flown to 1 Military Hospital in Voortrekkerhoogte after the blast and are in a satisfactory condition.

Approached for comment on the incident, which occurred at about 8 am near Mbuzini in a spur of South Africa south of the Kruger National Park and close to the Mozambique and Swaziland borders, Gen Malan warned that President Samora Machel held the future of the Incomati Accord in his hands. He also hit out at the USA and Russia and said it was possibly time for the southern African sub-continent to be declared a neutral zone with no military access for the USA or the USSR.

Gen Malan said recent events in Mozambique were of concern to the South African government as he [as received] appeared to have lost control of the country. He said the Incomati Accord was especially aimed at improving the security situation between the two countries, but Mozambique continued to launch subversive propaganda against South Africa. Against this background it was not strange that terrorist activities still continued from Mozambique, and Gen Malan said it must be clearly put to President Machel that these conditions could not be allowed to go on.

He said with the US economic sanctions, and the revolutionary war backed by Russia, South Africa could no longer allow itself to be caught in a pincer movement between the two superpowers. This reality must also be realised by President Machel, and if he allows a Moscow-inspired revolutionary war against South Africa he must also be prepared to take the responsibilities. "President Machel has the Incomati Accord in his hands. Incomati and landmines cannot exist side by side; if President Machel chooses landmines South Africa will react accordingly", said Gen Malan.

He said the stage had been reached where terrorism in southern Africa "could no longer be seen through one's fingers" [agency quotation marks] and the sub-continent's leaders had to decide for themselves which road to walk. South Africa had repeatedly expressed itself in favour of conciliation, but because of the warring factions in Mozambique found itself being too easily blamed for problems in that country. "But if President Machel chooses terrorism and revolution he will clash head-on with South Africa", [agency quotation marks] said Gen Malan.

He said South Africa wanted neither an economic nor a revolutionary war, but would be prepared to fight both with all the strength it could command. But South Africa must not be regarded as being in the last trench and would not only survive but come out stronger and with a political and economic system to meet the demands of its peoples.

The question was whether peace could be achieved in southern Africa while the superpowers were involved in the region. "Events in other parts of the world have shown that superpower involvement does not necessarily bring peace. Perhaps the time has come to declare the region a neutral zone with no military access for the USA or Russia. This sub-continent will in the future need all the aid possible to survive but we can do without conflict involving the USA and Russia", [agency quotation marks] he said.