

South African Deputy Minister on Relations with Mozambique

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Text of live interview with Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister Ron Miller by Kolie van Koller on the "Network" programme:

[Presenter] South Africa, through its Minister of Defence, General Magnus Malan, has warned Mozambique that if it continues to provide shelter to the ANC, this country would take action. This warning was given following the landmine incident on Monday in which six SADF members were injured. The Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Ron Miller, is in direct contact with us by microwave.

[Van Koller] Mr Miller, good evening and welcome to "Network". Yesterday South Africa gave a harsh warning to Mozambique. As General Malan said, Mozambique was heading for trouble if it continued with these acts of terrorism. What should one read into this type of warning?

[Miller] Well, I think that warning was one that had to be given to Mozambique. If it is prepared to provide bases for the ANC, this is not only a violation of the Incomati Accord's main principles; but also, South Africa has the right to defend herself, despite the fact that we have this agreement with Mozambique. We are aware, as the Defence Force has shown, that the ANC is more active in Mozambique than before. One should remember that, in terms of the Incomati Accord, there is a ban on the establishment of bases for terrorists who want to carry out attacks against either Mozambique or South Africa. So this is a timely warning to Mozambique.

[Q] Thanks. Does this mean that all diplomatic contact with Mozambique has been stopped, following this warning by Gen Malan?

[A] No, not at all. The Incomati Accord provides for the resolution of this type of problem through diplomatic channels. But when these fail, then one has to realise that the SADF is ready to defend the country. Of course, we will always attempt to use the mechanisms created by the Incomati Accord to resolve the differences between ourselves and Mozambique.

[Q] Should we then accept that the diplomatic approach failed?

[A] No, it is a continuing process; it is a process which continues all the time. We are always in contact with Mozambique. But there is a problem with the Maputo government. We inform them about the incidents which take place and we ask them, under the accord, to do something about the ANC. But in many cases they can do nothing; and then the ANC misuses the hospitality of Mozambique. But, as Minister Malan said, we want to make it very clear that we are not going to tolerate that in Mozambique.

[Q] So, what is the next step?

[A] Well, for our part, in the Department of Foreign Affairs, we are busy arranging the next meeting between Mozambique and ourselves. One of the main items on the agenda is the increasing activities of the ANC. The minister who is going to be involved at that meeting will press our case very strongly.

[Q] But on the other hand, Mozambique says that South Africa is supporting the MNR. Is this not an eye-for-an-eye situation we have here?

[A] Perhaps in terms of propaganda. This may be an attempt by them to dirty South Africa's name with the MNR. But as you know, it is a matter of hard proof. We have hard proof of the activities of the ANC. For their part, Mozambique is simply busy with accusations against this country.

[Q] You speak of hard proof regarding the ANC. Where is this proof - in Maputo?

[A] Well, our security service is made up of skilled people. They provide us with the evidence. I cannot use this in public. But let me just say we are very well informed about the activities of the ANC in southern Africa, and that includes Mozambique.

[Q] Can you, here, tonight, deny categorically that South Africa is supporting the MNR?

[A] I can deny it.

[Q] Categorically?

[A] Categorically. I can tell you that the people in the MNR do not need South Africa's assistance. They have enough manpower, they have enough funds, they have enough weapons. They do not need this country to help them. Let me just say, by the way, with reference to your earlier question about Mozambique's allegations against South Africa, that the Incomati Accord created a false expectation in the Mozambican government - that is, the Frelimo or Machel government - that the accord, as such, was going to solve the differences between the MNR and Frelimo. They did not realise that South Africa cannot involve itself in that issue, and that that is actually a matter they themselves have to solve. The Incomati Accord cannot solve the difference between those two factions. But unfortunately, the wrong impression arose in Mozambique that that would be the case. Now they believe that, because that problem has not been solved, South Africa is the instigator of the MNR. And we are not.

[Q] What is the present status of the Incomati Accord?

[A] The Incomati Accord still exists. As you know, the accord involves various economic, social and security aspects. Right now we are dealing with the security aspect raised by Minister Magnus Malan's warning, while at the same time continuing with other programmes in Mozambique, such as the dredging of the harbour in Maputo, which got under way without any problems. However, there is always a problem regarding the security aspect of the accord.

[Q] Can the security problem not lead to the whole edifice collapsing?

[A] Quite naturally, there is that possibility. That is why it is such an important issue for both of us - South Africa and Mozambique. In all our joint meetings we have repeatedly stressed that Mozambique should not allow the ANC to cause problems with South Africa from its territory.

[Q] What will be the result if one or both parties fail to honour and support this position?

[A] You must know that we liaise with them regularly. We have trade ties; we speak to each other, and also reason with one another. If we did not have such frequent contacts matters would have become very serious, worse than they are right now. You should know that even in the UN people talk to one another. But nations do not take up arms to settle quarrels. We have already developed a process for settling any differences between South Africa and Mozambique.

[Q] You have said you will be meeting shortly with the Mozambican authorities. When will this take place?

[A] We hope it takes place before the end of the year. We usually hold meetings every three months of the steering committee, of which I am chairman. We discuss broad

topics ranging from security, economic, social and other developmental projects between Mozambique and South Africa. We hope that before the end of 1986 we will have held our last meeting for the year [sentence as heard].

[Q] Do you not feel that you have reached a dead-end in this matter?

[A] Not at all. I think we should reach a heightened understanding in terms of the security threat pose by the ANC. Otherwise, joint development projects for Mozambique still continue undisrupted.

[Q] Mr Miller, thank you very much for appearing in tonight's programme - "Network". Good night.

[A] Thank you.