



Pretoria's way to a tighter grip



President Samora Machel meets South African Ministers Pik Botha, Louis le Grande and Magnus Malan

(Picture by Daniel Maquinasse)

IN what can only be termed a major diplomatic offensive, South Africa last month released Toivo Ja Toivo the founder member of the South West African People's Organisation, agreed to withdraw its troops from Angola and signed a peace pact with Mozambique.

The release of Herman Toivo Ja Toivo from Robben Island where he had served 16 of his 20 year prison term is reminiscent of the release of such nationalist leaders as Jomo Kenyatta, Kenneth Kaunda and others prior to colonial stepdown and is seen as an indication that South Africa may at last be willing to relinquish control of Namibia.

The seeming stepdown by South Africa on the Namibian issue comes at the tail end of months of frantic diplomatic activity involving the United States and governments of Southern Africa. While the withdrawal of South African troops from Angola is ostensibly the focus of the talks, there is little doubt that Namibian independence is the key bargaining point — the process of troop withdrawal from Angola being the lever on negotiations.

Hostilities between Angola and South Africa started in 1975 when South African troops invaded the territory in an attempt to prevent the emergence of another socialist

In a flurry of diplomatic activity, South Africa has in the past few months signed a troop withdrawal agreement with Angola, released from prison Toivo Ja Toivo, founder of Swapo, in what might be the first step in relinquishing its grip on Namibia and also signed a non-aggression pact with Mozambique. MOTO looks at the implications of these events on the region.

state in Southern Africa. The invasion was halted only kilometres from Luanda and South African forces were forced to beat a hasty retreat. But despite this setback, South Africa has over the years established a more or less permanent presence in Southern Angola to act as a "buffer zone" in order to inhibit Swapo supply lines and logistical support.

This buffer zone, consolidated by the South African defence force in their 1981 "Operation Protea" invasion of Angola extends in a half circle from Ruacana on the Namibian border through Calueque,

Humbe, Melunga and ends at a point about 80 kilometres east of Oshikango. It is from this occupied zone that South Africa launched its attacks on Cahama, Cuvelai, Cassinga and Caiufdo in December 1983. It is also from this zone that South African backed Unita rebels are operating. But despite the South African buffer zone, Swapo has steadily intensified the military struggle in Namibia and whittled away at South Africa's resolve to hold the territory. The war in Namibia costs South Africa at least \$2 million a day and is placing an unwanted burden on South Africa's already strained economy.

Besides the strain of the war, pressure for an early settlement of the Namibian issue has come from other quarters notably the US. With the Presidential elections on, President Reagan is in need of a major diplomatic coup to make up for his less successful foreign ventures in Lebanon and Central America while at the same time diverting the public attention from the domestic scene. As Dr Murapa of the Political Science Department of the University of Zimbabwe sees it, "The US participation in the detente exercise at this juncture is not value free. The efforts of the US are timed to coincide with the elections at home. The US will therefore do all it

can to ensure that South Africa does not renege on its undertakings.

It was against this background that the US Secretary of State for African Affairs Dr Chester Crocker, set out in January on his whirlwind African shuttle. The initial round of talks between South Africa and Angola took place quietly in Cape Verde on January 23 and culminated in the agreement reached in Lusaka on February 16 to form a joint commission to supervise the withdrawal of South African troops and a ceasefire along the Namibian-Angola border.

By early March, the joint commission was established consisting of about ten top military diplomatic personnel drawn equally from South Africa and Angola.

The commission is supposed to monitor both the withdrawal of South African troops and Swapo's adherence to the ceasefire.

Article Three of the accord states:

(1) *The High Contracting Parties shall not allow their respective territories, territorial waters or air space to be used as a base, thoroughfare, or in any other way by another state, government, foreign military forces, organisations or individuals, which plan or prepare to commit acts of violence, terrorism or aggression against the territorial integrity or political independence of the other or may threaten the security of its inhabitants.*

(2) *The High Contracting Parties, in order to prevent or eliminate the acts mentioned in paragraph (1) of this article, undertake in particular to:*

(a) *forbid and prevent in their respective territories the organisation of irregular forces or armed bands, including mercenaries, whose objective is to carry out the acts contemplated in paragraph (1) of this article;*

(b) *eliminate from their respective territories bases, training centres, places of shelter, accom-*

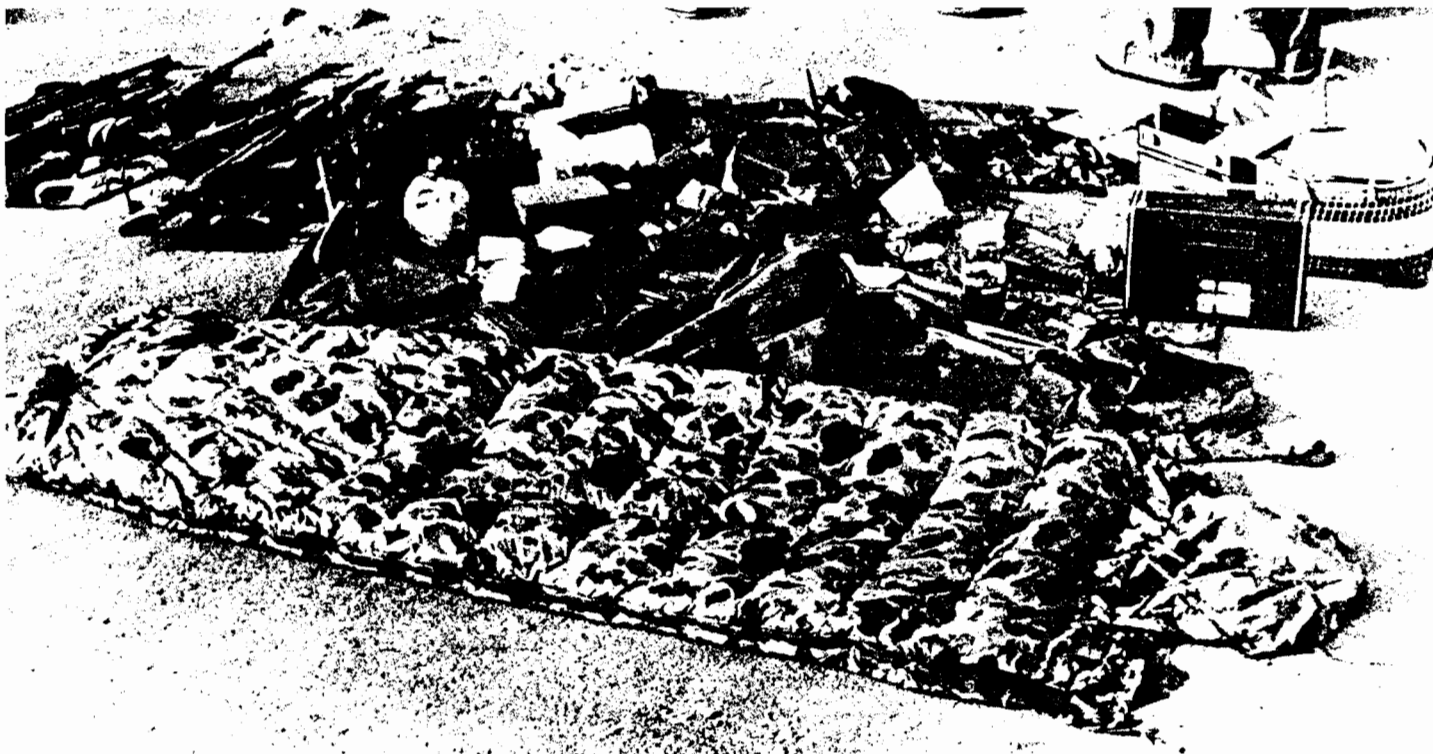
tory of either to a place in the territory of the other or to a place in the territory of any third state which has a common boundary with the High Contracting Party against which such elements intend or plan to commit the said acts;

(i) *take appropriate steps in their respective territories to prevent the recruitment of elements of whatever nationality for the purpose of carrying out the acts contemplated in paragraph (1) of this article;*

(j) *prevent the elements contemplated in paragraph (1) of this article from carrying out from their respective territories by any means acts of abduction or other acts, aimed at taking citizens of any nationality hostage in the territory of the other High Contracting Party; and*

(k) *prohibit the provision on their respective territories of any logistic facilities for carrying out the acts contemplated in paragraph (1) of this article.*

(3) *The High Contracting Parties will not use*



The MNR's legacy: weapons and equipment left at scene of foiled sabotaged bid by Irish Mercenary Alan Gingles and colleagues (MOTO April 1983)

Although the exact terms of the Angola-South Africa agreement have not been announced, judging from the intensive propaganda campaign mounted to prepare white South African public opinion to accept Namibian independence, it seems likely that a Namibian ceasefire and independence negotiations between Pretoria and Swapo are firmly on the cards.

Meanwhile, in a similar development, South Africa held talks with its Mozambican neighbour aimed at normalising relations between the two countries and securing peace in the region. The talks culminated in the signing of a Non-Aggression and Good Neighbourliness agreement being signed on March the 16th.

The agreement which has come to be known as the Nkomati Agreement after the place where it was signed states in parts:

The ... Parties undertake to respect each other's sovereignty and independence and in fulfilment of this fundamental obligation to refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of the other.

modation and transit for elements who intend to carry out the acts contemplated in paragraph (1) of this article;

(c) *eliminate from their respective territories centres or depots containing armaments of whatever nature, destined to be used by the elements contemplated in paragraph (1) of this article;*

(d) *eliminate from their respective territories command posts or other places for the command, direction and co-ordination of the elements contemplated in paragraph (1) of this article;*

(e) *eliminate from their respective territories communication and telecommunication facilities between the command and the elements contemplated in paragraph (1) of this article;*

(f) *eliminate and prohibit the installation in their respective territories of radio broadcasting stations, including unofficial or clandestine broadcasts, for the elements that carry out the acts contemplated in paragraph (1) of this article;*

(g) *exercise strict control, in their respective territories, over elements which intend to carry out or plan the acts contemplated in paragraph (1) of this article;*

(h) *prevent the transit of elements who intend or plan to commit the acts contemplated in paragraph (1) of this article, from a place in the terri-*

the territory of third states to carry out or support the acts contemplated in paragraphs (1) and (2) of this article.

While some African countries have frowned on this agreement which they see as Mozambique's capitulation to apartheid, it is necessary to look at the pressures which were brought to bear before it sat on the conference table.

Mozambique has not known peace for the past twenty years. First Frelimo fought against the Portuguese colonials, then it became embroiled in the Zimbabwean struggle by providing bases for Zanla guerrillas. Finally, they have become bogged down in a fight against the Mozambique Resistance Movement (MNR), a guerrilla group invented by the Rhodesians and inherited by the South Africans as a way to keep Frelimo unbalanced and fragile. Coupled to all this, Mozambique has been in the grips of a severe drought for the past three years which has seen thousands of people dying from starvation and thousands more

crossing the border into Zimbabwe as refugees. It is against this background that one is able to understand Mozambique's readiness to negotiate.

The immediate benefits of the Nkomati Accord for Mozambique are not hard to find. The MNR, lacking a political platform and now cut off from its life-line South Africa, is likely to peter out and die. With the normalisation of trade between the two countries, Mozambique will be able to import much needed goods from South Africa while tourism will also benefit the country's coffers.

On the South African side, South Africa will be better able to deal with attacks from the ANC as Mozambique will deny it refuge. South African trade will also benefit from the large and hungry Mozambique market.

But perhaps more important at the moment for South Africa is the major gain it will make diplomatically from having "a policy of peaceful co-existence with its neighbours".

As Dr Murapa says, "When South Africa launched the detente exercise, it was declaring a diplomatic war on Africa aimed at denying black Africa support throughout the world. The reason why Frontline States have had support in the international community is because they have been seen as victims of apartheid's brutality and bullying tactics. But if South Africa is seen to be willing to live peacefully with its neighbours, then this support will whittle away. For the black masses of South Africa, this would be worse as it would reduce the human rights issue in South Africa to a civil rights issue which South Africa being recognised as a sovereign state will alone be capable of solving."

Although Zimbabwe is a Frontline state and is also affected by South Africa's destabilisation policies, it has been left out of the current detente exercise. Dr Murapa sees this as a deliberate tactic on the part of South Africa aimed at isolating the country, "The implications of the detente exercise specially with Zimbabwe left out are that once South Africa manages to normalise relations with its African neighbours, Zimbabwe will cease to have the economic value it wields at present and there will not be any reason why the countries in the region should continue to buy from it when they can get goods cheaper from South Africa. The impact on SADCC will be even more direct because the *raison d'être* for the organisation will have fallen away."

While the pact will bring marked benefits to Mozambique, for the ANC of South Africa, this will be a backward step. In a statement made soon after the accord was signed, the Secretary-General of the ANC Alfred Nzo said South Africa had launched a diplomatic and propaganda counter offensive in Southern Africa aimed at isolating the ANC and compelling the states in the region to act as Pretoria's agents in emasculating the ANC and liquidating the armed struggle. Cde Nzo went on to say that the ANC would intensify its political and military offensive inside South Africa.

Reports by: Lois Brown in Maputo, Solidarity News Service in Gaborone. Story compiled by Leonard Maveneke.

Diplomacy in the veld

PRESIDENT SAMORA MACHEL of Mozambique and Prime Minister Pieter Botha of South Africa sat at a special table set in the open on the border between their two countries last Friday (16 March) and signed an agreement that supporters of both sides hail as a victory over the other.

The pact guarantees that neither country will in any way support attacks against the other.

One interpretation of the historical Nkomati Accord is that South African destabilisation has brought Mozambique to its knees, and the ruling Frelimo Party has capitulated to apartheid with the signing of a pact that betrays the concept of independence from South Africa.

Mozambique's view is that the accord is consistent with Frelimo's peace policy, pursued since independence from Portuguese colonialism in 1975.

On the eve of the signing of the accord, a highly-placed official in Frelimo said Mozambique had offered the pact to South Africa in December 1982 but was turned down.

Now, he said, Pretoria has accepted the pact on the same terms it had rejected before. Mozambique will not recognise the bantustans or the system of apartheid, and it will not end its support for the African National Congress.

The Frelimo official pointed out that the accord is "extremely important" in the history of the country because it marks a significant point in twenty years of war Mozambique has seen.

During the armed struggle and during the struggle for Zimbabwe's independence, South African troops fought inside Mozambique against Frelimo, he said. In 1974, the Lusaka Accords took the Portuguese out of the fight. In 1980, with Zimbabwe's independence, the Rhodesians were removed from the conflict.

"When we sign the Nkomati Accord with the South Africans," he said, "we sign with the third force that has been involved in attacks against Mozambique for twenty years."

He said South Africa's destabilisation strategy had not accomplished what it had been designed to. It had not changed any governments in the region, while Angola, Zimbabwe and Mozambique were all led to increase their defensive capacity. SWAPO has grown stronger, he said, and Lesotho has acquired an international personality and won respect.

In 1983, Southern African countries launched offensives against their South African-backed opponents inside their borders because they could detect weaknesses in the apartheid system.

The financial cost of destabilisation has been incredibly high, both militarily and economically: it has resulted in the removal of natural markets for South Africa's exports. Apartheid has also demanded in unwieldy state structure that has had to be reproduced fifteen times over to preserve the illusion that the bantustans are independent states, the Frelimo official said.

The Nkomati Accord represents a change in South African policy because the "military option" and destabilisation had not yielded results, he concluded.

Under the terms of the accord, South Africa must stop supporting the Mozambique National Resistance. The evening before the signing of the pact, the MNR radio broadcast from the eastern Transvaal, announced it was going off their air.

But the real test of the Accord will come in the months ahead as the joint commission set up to handle disputes does its work.

Though Mozambique has retained its right to continue political, moral and diplomatic support for the ANC, the terms of the Accord could affect even such innocuous events as cultural



The accord's signatories: Pieter Botha and Samora Machel

events if South Africa insisted on the most extreme interpretation of the Accord.

Just before the signing of the Nkomati Accord, President Machel and Prime Minister Botha took turns addressing the officials and diplomats who had gathered to witness the event.

Both leaders gave the impression that neither had moved from their long-term agenda.

Prime Minister Botha spoke of an economic alliance in Southern Africa and a "vision" of a "constellation of states", a term once synonymous with the Afrikaner dream of being the centre of Southern Africa from which all its neighbours would draw their nourishment.

President Samora Machel reiterated a policy that has never lost currency in Mozambique — that economic dependence on South Africa, or any other country, is not conducive to stability and progress, and he invoked the Southern Africa Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) to make the point.

The question of the regional support for Mozambique's decision to sign the pact was reflected in President Machel's reference to African allies.

He saluted the Organisation of African Unity (which stopped short of giving its support for the accord) for its struggle to affirm the dignity and personality of African man.

He lauded the leaders of the Front Line States (most of whom did not attend the signing) for their decisive role in the cause of the liberation of Africa.

African solidarity with Mozambique holds, even though the pact has clearly been difficult for many to accept.

But now the battleground has shifted. South Africa could clearly dominate the field through its military might, but the pact removes that option.

Many of the rationales for not aiding Mozambique economically no longer hold. The west can invest in SADCC projects without fear of long-term security problems. South Africa can no longer play bully-boy in the region, blaming other countries for internal opposition to the apartheid region.

The MNR will remain a problem in the short term. Its brutality may very well increase in the coming months as it makes an intensive effort to make the most of its stockpiled arms and remaining strength.

The Accord touches a vital operational point of the "bandits", according to the Frelimo official. The MNR will lose their supply lines, their communications network, the central strategic command and their propaganda instruments.

"We don't expect an immediate victory," he said, "but we think that now the best ever conditions for the destruction of the bandits have been created." □