

Comments on Incomati Blame Renamo and USSR for Obstacles

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There is no doubt that southern Africa as a whole can once again breathe a sigh of relief following the announcement that both South Africa and Mozambique have confirmed their commitment to the Incomati accord, now a year old. The renewed commitment follows the visit to Maputo by South African Foreign Minister Pik Botha and the Minister of Defence, General Magnus Malan.

In a joint statement, both sides said it was essential for the development of southern Africa that the pact be fully implemented. What is important is the realisation by the two sides that the Incomati accord is essential for southern African development as a whole. The symbolic and practical value of Incomati should never be underestimated.

What Incomati showed was that two countries which had been overtly hostile towards each other are capable of putting aside animosity and entering into a far-reaching and beneficial agreement. This development definitely had a ripple effect in southern Africa, in that subsequently there was a marked improvement in relations between South Africa and other neighbouring states, such as Lesotho and Botswana.

At the same time, the Western world - also for a long time wary over the neo-Marxist policies pursued by Mozambique - began to look at that country with new eyes, realising that President Samora Machel was fully capable of implementing pragmatic policies beneficial to the region as a whole.

However, it remains true that the continued Renamo [Mozambique National Resistance] violence in Mozambique is bedeviling the proper implementation of the Incomati accord, because it has obstructed development programmes in that country.

This is fully realised by South Africa, with the result that the South African Government has adopted a hard-line approach towards Renamo. State President P.W. Botha told Renamo that it should reflect urgently on the destructive consequences to all people of Mozambique of its continued campaign of violence. Renamo should also reflect urgently on the damage being done to the interests of Mozambique's neighbours.

Certainly, it is high time that Renamo took a new and hard look at the situation. Right now, it is the only factor standing in the way of renewed hope and development for Mozambique. The West and South Africa are standing by with aid, assistance and expertise. It remains only for stability to be restored in Mozambique, and that lies in the hands of Renamo.