

South African embassy opens

On 19 October, for the first time in 19 years the South African flag was officially hoisted in Maputo, immediately after the Mozambican and South African foreign ministers, Pascoal Mocumbi and Roelof Botha, had signed an agreement transforming the trade missions in each other's country into fully fledged embassies.

This followed the opening of diplomatic relations in September, after African National Congress (ANC) leader Nelson Mandela's call at the United Nations for an end to remaining economic sanctions against Pretoria had removed the last obstacle to the normalisation of relations.

Botha did not reveal to the press who the first South African ambassador would be, but said that a name had been submitted to the Mozambican government. Protocol calls for the name to be made public only after formal Mozambican agreement. In the meantime, the former trade representative, John Sunde, was appointed chargé d'affaires at the new embassy.

The opening of the embassy coincided with a visit by the president of the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC), Clarence Makwetu, and the leader of the Inkatha Zulu tribal movement, Gatsha Buthelezi, both of whom are opposed to the unfolding negotiations on the transition from apartheid to democracy.

All three held separate talks on 19 October with United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Ghali regarding United Nations assistance in South Africa's transition to democracy, and "the need for all parties to work together constructively to decrease levels of violence", according to a UN press release.

Botha criticises the west

Prior to his working lunch with Boutros Ghali, Botha produced an unexpected and surprisingly radical critique of western economic policy towards Africa. He told reporters that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank prescriptions, relying heavily on reduced state intervention and cutting public expenditure, were quite inappropriate in Africa, where key infrastructure (in-

cluding roads, railways, and telecommunications) had to be financed by the state because no private company would take on the task.

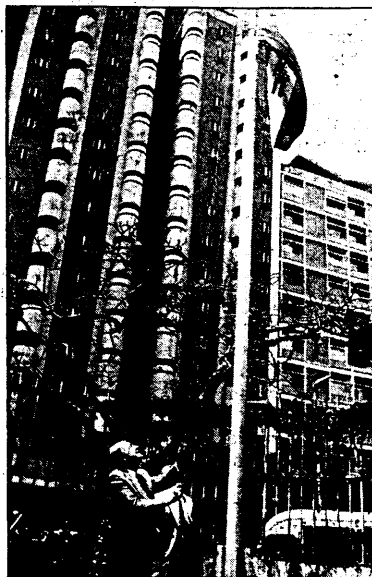
Botha said that southern African governments should "stand together and produce a joint plan to be presented to the West. We must develop a strategy to try to stop the marginalisation of Africa - the time has come for African leaders to wake up."

This call for regional cooperation was rather belated. While the independent states of the region were cooperating economically through the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) in the 1980s, Botha's government, far from assisting, was attacking them regularly through air raids, commando operations, and the sponsorship of surrogate forces such as Renamo and UNITA.

In his 75 minute meeting with Buthelezi, Boutros Ghali stressed that "by participating in the negotiations, no matter how difficult, all parties could ensure that their views were heard, discussed, and reflected in the interim constitution". He also impressed on Buthelezi the importance given by the international community to the multiparty negotiations, and to the formation of a Transitional Executive Council (TEC) that will oversee the government prior to the country's first democratic election planned for April 1994. He emphasized the need for Buthelezi "to show restraint" and to follow up his June meeting with Mandela in order to implement "a joint programme to promote peace at all levels of society".

But the Secretary General would have got a more intelligent response out of the average brick wall. Buthelezi bluntly rejected the appeal to return to the multi-party talks on South Africa's political future. When asked by reporters if Boutros Ghali had convinced him to return to the talks he replied "of course not."

He added "I stated to him that under no circumstances will we ever go back to the World Trade Centre (the talks' venue in Johannesburg)" and claimed that "millions of people" opposed the TEC.



Botha hoists the flag at the South African embassy in Maputo (AIM/Alfredo Mueche)

Buthelezi accused a *bbc* journalist of talking "bullshit" when the journalist asked about the smuggling of guns from Mozambique to Inkatha.

Boutros Ghali had no better luck with Makwetu, who simply repeated the PAC's hostility to the current negotiating forum.

Buthelezi walked out of the multi-party talks in July and broke off direct talks with President F.W. de Klerk's government in early October to join other right wing forces, black and white, in the misnamed "Freedom Alliance" to press for a post-apartheid federation in South Africa. The Alliance is bitterly opposed to plans for democratic elections.

At a press conference, Botha expressed his doubts that Buthelezi had the capacity to spark off a war and denied that Inkatha possesses any significant military force. He downplayed this obstacle on the path to South Africa's first non-racial elections and said that Boutros Ghali "will continue to hold discussions" with Buthelezi. Botha thought further attempts should be made to bring back to negotiations not only Inkatha and the PAC, but also the pro-apartheid extremists of the Conservative Party, and even Lucas Mangope, leader of the supposedly "independent" bantustan of Bophuthatswana.

Placating the bantustan leaders

When AIM asked why the South African government was prepared to allow the likes of Mangope to hold negotiations to ransom when it could pull the rug out from under their feet by depriving the bantustans of funds, Botha declared that Pretoria "will not use force to achieve political objectives". He argued "if you start tampering with the flow of funds, the first people who will be fired are those in services that are for the public." He claimed that the only way to deal with the bantustans created by apartheid was "to negotiate their return to South Africa". (About 80 per cent of the bantustans' budgets comes directly from Pretoria.)

When asked if he could give any guarantees that there would be no civil war among Afrikaners, Botha said "No. I can't. No one can give such a guarantee. The best thing I can do is voice my hope that things will not reach that point."

Perhaps unwisely, Botha recalled the abortive Nkomati non-aggression accord signed between Mozambique and South Africa in 1984, but never honoured by Pretoria. He said he still regarded it as a starting point for a philosophy of regional negotiations. "Then why didn't you implement it?", asked the independent Maputo newsheet *mediaFAX*. "I had the full support of my government for carrying out the accord," replied Botha, "but it was not possible to control all those individuals inside South Africa who might have been against the accord."

The UN Secretary-General also talked with John Hall, Chair of South Africa's National Peace Committee, and with Antony Gildenhuys, who chairs the

National Peace Secretariat. According to his spokesperson, Therese Gastaut, he commended South Africa for its National Peace Accord, which he described as "unique". He discussed with Hall and Gildenhuys "how the peace structures could be strengthened to defuse violence and broadened to be more representative of the population as a whole". He pledged the assistance of the entire UN system in the "democratisation and final elimination of apartheid in South Africa".

Gastaut told reporters that Boutros Ghali had stressed the need for all parties to take part in the *tec* "to level the playing field for all South Africans and to work together with other parties to create and sustain an atmosphere of political tolerance".

Botha confirmed in an interview with *mediaFAX* that Dhlakama has withdrawn all the preconditions that Renamo tried to attach to the process of assembling and demobilising its forces - all he was asking for now was "a signal from President Chissano that the militias will be dismantled". Botha, who has continued to maintain close links with Dhlakama, claimed that Dhlakama was more afraid of the militias than of the regular Mozambican army. He feared that once Renamo's forces were in the UN-administered assembly points intimidation would be carried out by the police, the militias and other paramilitary forces.

Botha also said that he has insistently asked Dhlakama to leave his headquarters in the central district of Maringue and live in Maputo and strongly denied that there were any Renamo units still integrated into the South African armed forces.

Botha pays tribute to Samora Machel

The efforts towards improving relations between South Africa and Mozambique were shown symbolically when, on 20 October, Botha laid a wreath at the Heroes' Monument in Maputo, where Mozambique's first president, Samora Machel, is buried. This was the first time a high ranking official of the Pretoria government had laid a wreath at the monument. The ceremony occurred the day after the seventh anniversary of President Samora's death in a plane crash at Mbuzini, just inside South Africa.

Samora's death has been described by Mozambican authorities as "murder", and it is widely believed that the plane was diverted from its correct flight path by a decoy radio beacon planted by the South African military.

When asked why he had waited for seven years, Botha said he had wanted to make the gesture earlier but thought "the time was not opportune". He described President Samora as "a friend" and laid the wreath because of his "personal desire to pay tribute to this friend and leader of Mozambique. I thought the time was now right and nobody in Mozambique could possibly object".