

How South Africa can help to create stability and security in the Southern African region

Learning to live together

By ROBERT DAVIES

THE recent state visit by President Nelson Mandela to Mozambique and the establishment of a joint working committee on cross-border security have emphasised the linked destinies of South Africa and Mozambique in the security spheres.

The doctrine espoused by the securocrats in the 1980s – that security could be built in South Africa by generating insecurity in other countries in the region – has now decisively been turned on its head. It is now widely recognised that, in Southern Africa, insecurity anywhere is a threat to security everywhere.

While the prospect of greater security cooperation between South Africa and Mozambique is to be welcomed, it is essential that this be located within a new framework of thinking on security.

Mozambique and a democratic South Africa pose no conceivable conventional military threat to each other, nor is it primarily the security of the two respective states that needs to be enhanced by a new co-operative relationship.

Challenge

Rather, the challenge is to find ways of responding effectively to a situation in which the insecurity of the people of one country, in this case Mozambique, is rebounding on the security of the people of the neighbouring countries, including those in South Africa, in the form of large scale clandestine migration,

drugs and arms trafficking and cattle rustling.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has recently added its voice to calls for a new approach to security thinking. In its recently released "Human Development Report 1994", the UNDP calls for a concerted international effort to promote "human security", embracing economic, health, food, environmental, personal, community and political security for all the people of the world. Among other things, the UNDP report suggests that there is a need to monitor indicators providing an "early warning that a country is facing problem of human insecurity and heading towards social disintegration".

Poverty

One of the examples of a country in this category cited by the UNDP is that of Mozambique. The report points out that despite the peace agreement and a relatively good harvest in 1992, food availability was only 77 percent of minimal per capita calorie requirements; that GNP per capita had declined annually by just over one percent in the 1980s and stood at only about R290 in 1991; that over 60 percent of the population lived below a minimal poverty line and that quarter of a population remain displaced.

The report could have

added that a sample survey of 590 of Mozambique's major employers showed that employment declined by eight percent between 1991 and 1992 or that the jobs of Mozambican miners in South Africa are being threatened by problems in the mining industry.

Various factors clearly underlie the profound human insecurity in Mozambique, but prominent among them are the continuing effects of the policies of this country in the past.

Displacement

Not only are the effects of a war sponsored by South Africa in the 1980s still being felt in the form of the continued displacement of large numbers of people, but the combination of the effects of war and of other policies introduced by South Africa in the 1980s have led to a massive loss of revenue from services historically provided to Mozambique by South Africa.

This includes sharp reductions in revenue received from migrant labour remittances, from the provision of port and railway services to South African clients and from the export of Cahora Bassa hydro-power to South Africa.

Only if the underlying root causes of the present human insecurity in Mozambique are understood and addressed will it be possible to deal with the effects of this insecurity on South Africa.

More Mozambicans moved clandestinely to South Africa in 1993 than the year before,

despite the fact that the ceasefire between Renamo and the Frelimo government held. At the end of 1993, officials of the Department of Home Affairs estimated that there were as many as 2.2 million Mozambicans in South Africa.

Insecurity

Migration of Mozambicans to South Africa has deep historical roots and the recent escalation in the numbers involved in clandestine migration must be recognised as being, fundamentally, a reflection of the deep-seated human insecurity that continues to engulf Mozambique. The human flow to South Africa and associated arms and drugs trafficking will not be stopped by conventional police or security force action alone.

Rather, what is needed is a comprehensive strategic approach towards this issue, preferably located within a broader multilateral Southern African regional framework. A democratic South Africa needs, ultimately in its own enlightened self-interest, to identify in a comprehensive and systematic manner, ways in which it can, together with the rest of the region and international community, assist in addressing the underlying problems of human insecurity in Mozambique.

Of crucial importance in this respect will be action to assist Mozambique to boost its income earning capacity from involvement in the Southern African regional

economy. This must include supporting and facilitating efforts by Mozambique to recover its position in certain historical forms of involvement in the Southern African region, such as; exploring ways of making greater use of Mozambican transport facilities; acting to ensure the earliest possible reconnection of Cahora Bassa to the South African grid and being sensitive to the situation of Mozambican workers in the South African mining industry.

Economy

It must also involve acting to create a regional economic environment conducive to a country like Mozambique being able to diversify into non-traditional forms of involvement in the regional economy, for example, by increasing exports to South Africa. Ultimately, only if Mozambique is able to develop its own Reconstruction and Development Programme can the underlying cause of human insecurity be addressed. As long as Mozambique continues to face the threat of social disintegration, enormous pressures to engage in cross-border activities potentially damaging to people in South Africa will remain.

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