

South African Radio Comments on Relations With Mozambique

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Text of commentary:

Peaceful co-existence, mutual respect, good neighbourliness - those were the three cornerstones of the commitment made by President Samora Machel when he signed the Incomati Accord two-and-a-half years ago. The accord was in essence a non-aggression treaty, but the new era it signalled in relations between South Africa and Mozambique embraced the development of transport and communications, the supply of electricity, the promotion of tourism and economic co-operation in general. It is indisputably Mozambique that has derived greatest benefit from this economic co-operation.

South Africa, for her part, has found the chief benefit of the new relationship to be in the greater measure of security along her eastern frontiers. After Incomati, President Machel acted decisively to dismantle the terrorist-military structures that the ANC and the South African Communist Party [SACP] had erected within Mozambique. Firm action taken by Mozambique - coupled with similar action in Swaziland - saw a dramatic reduction in terrorist incidents mounted from Mozambique against South African territory.

My government, President Machel said at Incomati, will keep its word both in letter and spirit. Latterly, however, the spirit of peaceful co-existence mutual respect and good neighbourliness to which President Machel personally pledged himself has been absent. Last month, Machel used the Non-Aligned Movement's conference in Harare as a forum for a strident attack on South Africa, accusing this country of trying to destroy Mozambique. Shortly afterwards, his foreign minister alleged at the UN that South Africa was sending armed bandits into Mozambique to commit atrocities. These and other outbursts by the Mozambican government and its propaganda agencies have flown directly in the face of the spirit of the Incomati Accord.

Insofar as the letter of the accord is concerned, there has, in the past several months, been a resurgence of terrorist activity originating in Mozambique. Joe Slovo, the SACP agent who heads the ANC's terrorist campaign and who left his Maputo base after Incomati is reported to be back in business in Mozambique, and this year there have been at least 23 terrorist attacks in South Africa that were masterminded in Mozambique.

South Africa's primary responsibility is to secure her borders and safeguard her citizens. The imperative that counterinsurgency action against terrorist warfare orchestrated by communist powers should be taken expeditiously and decisively is all the more important now that there is a second front to defend - economic warfare. This consideration remains paramount - with or without Incomati. But it is clear that - if President Machel returns to the spirit as well as the letter of the accord - it is in the interests of both South Africa and Mozambique that they should build on the Incomati commitment of peaceful coexistence mutual respect and good neighbourliness.