

US offers to mediate Mozambican peace

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THE United States said yesterday it will seriously consider trying to mediate a peace settlement in Mozambique if the Mozambican government proposed the idea.

State department spokesman Charles Redman, responding to a South African proposal that Washington help broker a peace in the war-torn country, told reporters: "If (Mozambique) were to ask us to play a role in this regard, we would be

prepared to give thoughtful consideration to exactly how we could be of assistance, either as a mediator or otherwise."

South African foreign minister Pik Botha told reporters on Tuesday his government had asked Washington to help mediate peace in Mozambique.

Replying to that statement, Mr Redman said: "We welcome South Africa's expression of interest in ending the tragic conflict in Mo-

zambique that has brought endless suffering and death to hundreds of thousands of Mozambican citizens.

"It is clear that South Africa's longstanding relations with Renamo give it the ability to play a constructive role in ending the conflict if it's prepared to do so."

But he said the first step in any US involvement in a peace settlement must be "an expression of interest on the part of the Mozambican government". — Ziana.