

# United States envoy in talks on Mozambique conflict

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HARARE — A senior American diplomat has started consultations in the Frontline states regarding a South African suggestion that the United States mediate in the conflict in Mozambique.

Deputy assistant secretary of state for African affairs, Mr Charles Freeman, held talks in Harare with Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe.

Mr Freeman said after the meeting that his government was exploring the basis for an American role and co-operation in bringing about peace in Mozambique.

## IN TOUCH

He said the American government was "in constant touch with all parties such as Zimbabwe, South Africa and Malawi", but gave no other details.

Mr Freeman arrived in Zimbabwe from Mozambique where for two

days he held talks with President Joaquim Chissano

American diplomats said President Chissano and Mr Freeman had held "exploratory talks"

Last month South African Foreign Minister Mr Pik Botha disclosed he had written to the United States offering South Africa's help to launch a peace initiative to end the Mozambican civil war, similar to that in Angola, Namibia.

A few days later Mr

Botha held talks with Mr Chissano in Maputo where it was agreed the situations in Angola and Mozambique were totally different. Because both the South African and Mozambican governments agreed on the need to end the conflict in Mozambique there was no need for a mediator, a spokesman for the Department of Foreign Affairs said.

However, if America "or other countries" wished to play a constructive role in ending the conflict they were

welcome to discuss this with the two governments

Mr Freeman's trip to Mozambique and Zimbabwe came as a surprise but diplomats cautioned that his talks in Maputo and Harare did not indicate a major initiative was under way.

His trip was being regarded in Maputo diplomatic circles as an attempt by the United States to find out if, following talks between Mr Botha and Mr Chissano, there was anything Washington could

do to help end the conflict in Mozambique

Diplomatic sources said the Mozambican government's position towards the rebels of the Mozambique National Resistance movement had not changed.

## REFUSAL

The Frelimo government still refused to negotiate with the MNR but had offered an amnesty to those rebels who surrendered.

However, sources said, Mr Chissano's gov-

ernment was not discouraging contacts between third parties, such as church groups, and the rebels.

Following Mr Botha's proposals last month, the MNR itself rejected any South African involvement in peace negotiations, saying South Africa was now an ally of the Mozambican government.

The MNR insisted on direct negotiations with the Frelimo government