

# Chissano comes to call on a newly-discovered friend

INDEX 6/5/87

THE POPE and Mrs Thatcher may seem odd choices for the new president of a Marxist government to visit on his first overseas tour, but it is a measure of the closeness of the new relationship between Britain and Mozambique that President Joaquim Chissano has chosen to go to London before Moscow.

Mr Chissano, who saw the Pope in Italy yesterday, arrives in London today for a three-day visit during which he will seek to secure British help in rescheduling some of Mozambique's \$4.5bn (£2.8bn) debt and get more aid for his ravaged country. He will also be asking Britain to increase its military help for Mozambique.

Mr Chissano is due to meet the Prime Minister, the Foreign Secretary and the Minister for the Armed Forces. He will have lunch with the Queen on Thursday.

This month, Britain increased the number of Mozambican officers at the battle training college

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at Nyanga, Zimbabwe, from 60 to 120 per course. The British military team there has been increased from eight to 12. In addition, two Mozambican officers are at Sandhurst and the British are supplying some £250,000-worth of non-lethal equipment.

A team of former SAS men from Defence Systems Limited are helping train a 600-strong counter-terrorist force to defend the Nacala railway which runs across Mozambique to Malawi. Britain has also allowed the latest Enfield rifle to be supplied to this unit.

Direct British aid to Mozambique has quadrupled in the past four years and much of the £35m committed to Southern Africa will go to Mozambique. This represents Britain's commitment to reducing the Frontline states' de-

pendence on South Africa and, in particular, building up alternative transport routes and helping provide the means to defending them.

The main routes run through Mozambique and are subject to attacks by the National Resistance Movement, a rebel movement supported by the South Africans. Britain is keen that Mozambique should win the war against the rebels. Unlike Angola, whose request for British military helicopters was turned down, Mozambique would probably be sold British arms if it asked for them.

President Chissano, 47, is a quieter, more reflective man than his ebullient predecessor, Samora Machel, who was killed in a plane crash last October. He has visited areas ravaged by famine and last week cancelled a speech he was scheduled to make in Sofala province and asked the crowd to tell him of their concerns instead.