
Chissano aims to secure more UK military aid

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FT 6/5/87

THE Incongruous alliance between an ostensibly Marxist African state and one of the most conservative governments in the West will be highlighted today when President Joaquim Chissano of Mozambique arrives in Britain on a four-day official visit.

High on the president's agenda will be security problems in a country where South African-backed rebels have waged a devastating campaign, and the need for economic assistance after a series of floods and droughts since in-

dependence in 1975.

About 4m people—nearly one-third of Mozambique's population—are in urgent need of food and medical assistance as a result of war and bad harvests.

The importance Britain attaches to the visit is indicated by President Chissano's diary: aside from an audience with the Queen, he will hold talks with Mrs Margaret Thatcher, the Prime Minister; Sir Geoffrey Howe, the Foreign Secretary and Mrs Lynda Chalker, Foreign Office minister; Mr Christopher Patten, Minister for

Overseas Development; and Mr John Stanley, Defence Minister.

It reflects both the cordial ties with Mozambique forged when the late President Samora Machel played a crucial role in ensuring the success of the Lancaster House conference on Rhodesia's independence, and the strategic importance of Mozambique in southern Africa.

The ports of Nacala, Beira and Maputo are vital alternatives to South African outlets for black states.

Britain, the only western

country with a defence attache accredited to Mozambique, also trains Mozambican army officers at a military centre in eastern Zimbabwe.

President Chissano is expected to urge Britain to step up military and economic assistance and may seek British support for Mozambique's efforts to reschedule its \$3.2bn (£1.9bn) external debt. He is also expected to brief ministers on the extent of South African support for rebels in Mozambique and review developments in South Africa.
