

# Pressure on Thatcher to step up aid to Mozambique

By Michael Evans, Defence Correspondent

Mrs Thatcher and other heads of government of Commonwealth countries will be under pressure next month to provide more economic and military aid to the frontline states in southern Africa to reduce their dependence on Pretoria.

Mozambique, which is not a member of the Commonwealth, is to be singled out for special help because of the devastation to the country's economy caused by the guerrilla force, MNR, which is backed by South Africa.

Mozambique has been formally invited by the Canadian Government as guest to the Commonwealth heads of government conference to be held in Vancouver next month, although it will not take part in the meetings.

Yesterday the strategy for the Commonwealth conference began to emerge following the completion of a confidential report on the "deteriorating" situation in South Africa by a Commonwealth committee, chaired by Mr Roy McMurtry, the Canadian High Commissioner in London.

The Commonwealth Southern Africa Committee, which approved the report on Wednesday, will be sending it to all heads of government

attending the conference in Vancouver.

The report paints a gloomy picture of the situation in South Africa, focusing on the restrictions caused by the state of emergency, the imprisonment of children and the latest statements made by President Botha.

Although the report is not a policy document, Commonwealth sources said yesterday that it set the tone for what will be the key issue in Vancouver: not more sanctions this time, but more help to the frontline states.

Foreign Office sources said yesterday that Britain had given the frontline states £625 million in the past five years, most of it going to Mozambique, with the aim of rehabilitating the railways so that an alternative transport corridor could be created for all the frontline states which are at present dependent on South Africa's lines of communication.

Sources emphasized yesterday that the military aid being recommended would involve "non-lethal" equipment, such as Jeeps, boots and military training.

Britain already has a team in Zimbabwe training officers from the Mozambique Army.