



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Prime Minister.

London SW1A 2AH

To note.

21 November 1983

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To see o.v.

President Machel's Visit

You may wish to have a short assessment of the impact of the visit.

President Machel was clearly delighted by his reception here. He has told our Ambassador how impressed and touched he was by the warm reception by Her Majesty and by the friendliness, charm and knowledgeable understanding of Southern African affairs shown by the Prime Minister. The stay in London, together with that in Lisbon, was clearly the highlight of the Western European tour.

There is some ground to hope that this experience has influenced President Machel's political thinking. Both the South African Foreign Minister, Mr Pik Botha, and the American Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Africa, Mr Frank Wisner, have told us what a great impression President Machel's visit to Europe made on him. Indeed, Mr Wisner went so far as to suggest that it had helped tip the balance in President Machel's mind in favour of trying to open up relations with the West, including South Africa and the USA. Mr Wisner's comments followed his own visit to Maputo which has convinced him that the Mozambique Government are in the process of a significant evolution in their external relations. Mr Wisner believes that a re-alignment is under way and that the Mozambicans are prepared to take risks in their relationship with the Soviet Union. He considers that an across the board agreement between Mozambique and South Africa is in prospect.

This might prove too optimistic. President Machel will continue to rely on the Soviet Union as long as his security is under threat. There are formidable obstacles to be overcome before a modus vivendi

/can be

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can be reached between Mozambique and South Africa. It is not clear whether Pretoria want such an arrangement and are prepared to restrict their support for the Mozambique Resistance Movement. However, Mr Pik Botha told Mr Rifkind that there might just be a possibility of coming to grips with Mozambique. A further bilateral meeting at ministerial level is likely to be held soon.

There is an obvious danger of disillusionment setting in after President Machel's euphoria over his visit to London and elsewhere in Western Europe. The aid and investment will almost certainly not meet his expectations. And agreement with South Africa could prove impossible. However there is now a better prospect than at any time in the past for lowering tensions between Mozambique and South Africa and for eventually breaking Mozambique's dependence on the Soviet Union. Even if these hopes run into the sand, President Machel's visit will not have been wasted. We know that his satisfaction with the visit has been carefully noted by neighbouring black African states. It will have given us greater flexibility to conduct our dialogue with South Africa without penalty and promote our interests in Southern Africa generally. There have also been two immediate returns. President Machel has kept his promise to urge Prime Minister Mugabe to mend his fences with us. And, unlike last year, Mozambique did not vote with Argentina in the UN General Assembly Falklands debate. The Mozambican delegation have told us it was deliberately absent from the vote. While bilateral difficulties with Argentina may have been a reason, the London visit almost certainly had an effect.

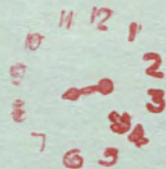
These developments confirm our belief that, whatever his Marxist leanings, President Machel is first and foremost an African nationalist, and that we are right to maintain our effort, together with our allies, to encourage his evident desire to lessen his dependence on the Soviet Union and cooperate with the West in seeking solutions to his country's problems.

I am writing in similar terms to Sir William Heseltine.

(R B Bone)  
Private Secretary



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