

The 1984 Act was introduced in response to the SADF's acute shortage of personnel. Britain's inaction lets Pretoria off a nasty hook. South Africa's continuing occupation of Namibia, its war of aggression against Angola and the military presence in the townships have placed severe strains on the SADF.

British military assistance to the front line states, particularly Mozambique, should be increased and include arms as well as non-lethal military supplies and training. Measures should be introduced to halt the recruitment of British service personnel and the conscription of British passport holders into the SADF.

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Turning a blind eye?

British Foreign Office minister Lynda Chalker has justified limiting military aid to Mozambique to non-lethal supplies and training. "I have been told of many incidents which have led me to think that all these happenings in this part of the world must have some connection," she said. But she had not seen "absolute proof" of Pretoria's backing for the MNR.

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Ditching the Debt?

SADCC members face the same awesome debts as many other developing nations. Repayments on Malawi's \$900 million debt absorbed about 50% of its export earnings in 1987. Mozambique's foreign debt totalled \$3.2 billion in 1987 while exports brought in a mere \$85 million.

The Wass Group, a United Nations advisory panel appointed to assess Africa's financial condition, reported in February 1988 that merely rescheduling the debt repayments of countries like Mozambique "makes no sense." The group, chaired by former British treasury secretary Sir Douglas Wass, outlined the causes of the crisis facing SADCC members and the rest of sub-saharan Africa:

- * the catastrophic collapse of commodity prices and, therefore, export earnings in late 1986 which halted agricultural investment
- * the rapid decline in capital investment since 1982
- * Africa's crippling foreign debt of over \$100 billion

The Wass Group recommended a \$1 billion increase in bilateral aid to affected African countries and measures to reduce their debt by \$1 billion a year.