

SECRET

MEETING BETWEEN MINISTER R F BOTHA, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND AMBASSADOR H NICKEL OF THE UNITED STATES : CAPE TOWN : 21 MARCH 1984

Also present: Mr T Carney, United States Embassy
Mr D W Steward, Department of Foreign Affairs.

AMBASSADOR NICKEL handed the Minister a letter from Dr Crocker which the Minister then proceeded to read.

THE MINISTER said that he agreed with most of the sentiments contained in the letter. He said that he would show it to the Prime Minister. He noted, however, that the United States always tried to find excuses for the other side but not for South Africa.

AMBASSADOR NICKEL said that the United States was letting Angola know how unhelpful their remarks had been.

MINISTER BOTHA said that he was urging President Machel and President Kaunda to get Angola to reply to his two questions. All that the Angolans need reply was that their government intends to fulfill its commitments in terms of the Lusaka Agreement and wishes to continue with the Joint Monitoring Commission. There would be no humiliation for them. They must just restate their Lusaka position and refrain from such language in the future. The Angolans on the Joint Monitoring Commission had even suggested that they use Sector 10 troops to control SWAPO. The question was whether these people represented Angola or not.

THE MINISTER said that he would be inclined to say South

SECRET

2

Africa shouldn't exceed to this request. There were too many risks for South Africa in this regard. The question was what did the leadership in Luanda want?

AMBASSADOR NICKEL asked whether Dos Santos had been too weak or whether he had been merely overwhelmed during his visit to Havana?

MINISTER BOTHA said there were three possibilities: Firstly, Moscow had evidently been upset by the Nkomati accord and had possibly cooked the Havana statement up to wreck things. Maputo had recently refused a visa to Oliver Tambo. Taken together these two developments may have led the Russians to make a chess-board move. Secondly, there was clearly a rift within the MPLA between the moderates, the radicals and those in the grey area in between. In this regard it would be very useful to know who had accompanied President Dos Santos to Havana. Thirdly, it was possible that Dos Santos had simply been inept and that we have been attributing to much sophistication to him. THE MINISTER recalled an incident at the United Nations when the Senegalese Ambassador had launched a victriotic attack on South Africa at the very time Prime Minister Vorster had been visiting Senegal. If the Africans had trouble managing their economies why should we imagine that they would necessarily be able to perform better on the level of international negotiations?

THE MINISTER said that another possibility was that Dos Santos had been under great pressure. However, the Minister said that he was worried about the degree of Moscow's grip on the Luanda regime and said that he foresaw

SECRET

3

difficulties for both South Africa and the United States in this regard.

AMBASSADOR NICKEL said that he thought that Dos Santos was either too weak or didn't see the implications of the statement. He approved of South Africa's decision not to make the Angolans eat crow. He said that the United States had now decided to encourage President Kaunda to support a meeting between the MPC and SWAPO with the proviso that it should be properly structured and that it should not be inconsistent with Resolution 435. South Africa was aware of the United States' position in this regard.

THE MINISTER said that he was glad to hear this because he had been under the impression that the United States was somehow against a meeting between SWAPO and the MPC. Whatever happened in the future, whether it would be the implementation of Resolution 435 or anything else, such a meeting would be essential. For all the Minister knew they might decide to implement Resolution 435.

AMBASSADOR NICKEL said that he was not blind to that possibility.

MINISTER BOTHA said that such a meeting was essential. The sooner it took place the better. It would be easier for South Africa if it could be said that the people of South West Africa had decided for themselves on a particular course.

AMBASSADOR NICKEL said that he knew that this was important. He asked whether South Africa's approach on the Havana statement would have the Prime Minister's support.

SECRET

THE MINISTER replied that the Prime Minister had phoned him after the previous night's newscast. The Minister had not even been aware that the SABC had carried an item on his statement yesterday that early. He didn't think it was possible to give a correct version because he had not finished his press briefing by the time the newscast started. THE MINISTER said that he thought the Prime Minister had accepted this.

AMBASSADOR NICKEL asked whether there would be any problems in the caucus.

THE MINISTER replied that he didn't know.

AMBASSADOR NICKEL said that Dr Crocker had stated that the Angolan/Cuban statement had almost been predictable.

THE MINISTER replied that the South African Government would endeavour to steer away from withdrawing South Africa's component from the Joint Monitoring Commission. That decision had been taken only at 5 pm. At first it was thought that South Africa would have to consider withdrawing.

AMBASSADOR NICKEL said that the United States was very grateful that South Africa had decided not to withdraw his component.