

SECRET

DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN SOUTH AFRICAN AND UNITED STATES
DELEGATIONS, WASHINGTON DC - 17-19 MARCH 1983

A. OPENING REMARKS BY DEPUTY SECRETARY
L EAGLEBURGER, 17 MARCH 1983

Mr Eagleburger opened the discussions with a summary of how he saw the Soviet Union, its leaders and their global aspirations. When President Reagan came to office, it was the new Administration's judgment that, due to the Vietnam War, the Soviet Union was under the impression that the United States had ceased to be a stable leader of the Free World. Defence spending had been decreasing 4% per annum in real terms while the Soviet Union was challenging the United States on several fronts, notably Angola, Afghanistan and Somalia. The President had therefore decided that it was necessary to take steps to be able to deal effectively with the Soviet Union, and stepping up of defence expenditure and measures to improve the United States economy were two of the major steps. It was also decided to let Moscow know about the change in Washington and a high level of public rhetoric and private diplomacy followed. Europe was worried about the new policy because it was seen to be endangering détente and improved Soviet/European relations. The United States Administration was of the opinion that détente had been overvalued but these different views originally strained relations between Western Europe and the United States. The Soviet Union used these strains to the full and exploited the situation with misinformation and other campaigns. The election of Helmut Kohl as West German Chancellor had caused the Soviet Union to lose face in Europe. It was, however, not yet the end of the United States' trouble in Europe since public opinion was still largely against the deployment of new U S missiles.

The United States Government wanted the South African authorities to realise how important sound relations between Western Europe and the United States were to the latter. It was highly unlikely that agreement on arms control would be reached with the Soviet Union, and the new missiles would have to be deployed. For this, a solid NATO alliance was necessary. It was therefore imperative to prevent breaking up of the Contact Group.

Apart from the importance of Western Europe, the United States would try to improve relations with Japan and Peking. The latter was more difficult because of Taiwan's special position as an ally of 35 years.

/.....

The State Department's current view of Andropov was that he was not firmly in control yet. He had full support of the KGB and the military establishment but it was not yet sure whether he had the support of the Party. Certain signs indicated that this was not the case, inter alia the slowing down of staff changes and the absence of a major policy speech on the anniversary of Marx's death. This lack of total control may mean that he would concentrate on domestic policy and avoid any major foreign policy changes. One could not expect flexibility from Andropov but some shifts may be possible if a carrot could be used to entice him - in southern Africa perhaps.

During the next two years, the United States intended to consider events in certain regions as part of its foreign policy actions apart from START and INF talks and Human Rights. These were the following -

- (a) Western Europe as discussed earlier on
- (b) Central America. Because of Vietnam, US troops would not become involved but the Administration was confident that Congress would approve more funds for economic and military aid.
- (c) Afghanistan. Selective sanctions imposed by the United States against the Soviet Union were still in force. It was the impression that the Soviet Union was keen to disengage from Afghanistan because it was paying a heavy price.
- (d) Kampuchea. Very few signs of change have occurred and very little was likely until the Soviet Union and China improved their relations.
- (e) Poland. The United States believed that Solidarity had been neutralised.
- (f) Horn of Africa. The United States was not in a position to replace the Soviets and they were there to stay.
- (g) Middle East. The Soviet Union was making a constant effort to become involved in the "efforts to find a solution" but the United States was resisting the Soviet approaches. The United States was committed to the security of Israel while the presence of Soviet SAM missiles in Syria posed a threat to that security. Action against these missiles was perhaps necessary strategically but would be politically unwise. Israel therefore had a difficult choice. This situation was also valid in southern Africa.

/.....

- (h) Southern Africa. It was the United States view that Afghanistan and Poland presented the Soviet Union's prime concern due to the geographic proximity of these countries. If the United States forced the Soviet Union, the latter would consider pulling out of Central America. Southern Africa occupied a position between these two poles. The Soviet Union became involved in Angola because it could not restrain its appetite. The position now was that the Soviet Union was not to be seen to be humiliated in Angola, since that would largely determine their behaviour. The situation called for mature behaviour since that would enable the United States to deal with the Soviet Union in some fashion in the future. Also important was the shift in attitude of the Frontline States to the detriment of the Soviet Union, despite public utterances by certain leaders. In the United States view, the Soviet Union would pay the cost necessary to deal with a direct threat. If the United States and South Africa could, however, handle the matter with some sophistication, it could take the edge off the Soviet involvement. At present, the Contact Group was still holding together and maintaining momentum, but this would not be the case if things got out of hand in southern Africa. South Africa had to realise how important relations with its allies were to the United States. It was a major United States concern. The Soviet Union would jump at the opportunity presented by a split in the alliance.

As a further thought, the Deputy Secretary added that the United States view of the Soviet Union was not simplistic, as often charged in newspapers. The United States realised that the Soviet Union was not on the verge of economic collapse. The United States would continue to prevent the transfer of high technology to the Soviet Union while maintaining a freeze on export credits. It was important to bring home to the Soviet Union that there was a different Administration in Washington. It was also possible that southern Africa presented an area where the Soviet Union could be removed and thus prevent an opportunity for East/West conflict. With that the opening statement was concluded.

MR VAN DALSEN asked Mr Eagleburger if he could confirm that the Soviet Union was becoming unsure of its position among the Frontline States (FLS).

/.....

MR EAGLEBURGER responded that the Soviet Union was not even sure of the Angolan Government's attitude while the FLS no longer felt that the Soviet Union was the only power with a solution for the region. Moscow's grip had been broken and it was feeling unsettled.

AMBASSADOR FOURIE asked, on the question of face saving, whether it was thought necessary for the Soviets to maintain some influence in the Angolan government.

MR EAGLEBURGER replied that the Soviet Union was not dominating the Angolan government to the extent thought. If the Soviets were challenged they would act, but at present they were unsure of themselves and would only maintain a defensive stand by supplying arms and Cubans. An escalation of Soviet involvement would cause it to lose face among the FLS. During the Bresjnev regime bigger Soviet involvement was far more likely than under Andropov at present.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY CHESTER CROCKER added that the Soviet Union would not allow the destruction of its creation but would probably try to retain what influence it had.

AMBASSADOR FOURIE asked if this would be true if destruction took place from inside by internal forces without external involvement.

DR CROCKER replied that he thought the Soviet Union would want to see the MPLA continue in office.

MR EAGLEBURGER explained that in his view the present Afghan government would immediately disintegrate if the Russians left the country. In Angola it was different because the MPLA had a degree of legitimacy. That is why the United States insisted on Angola becoming a neutral non-aligned state. That way the Soviets would save face and since they had no geographic proximity, middle ground could be found. The United States was prepared to help to solve the problem, well knowing that they would have to give the Soviet Union some pay-off in their relations somewhere sometime.

MR VAN DALSEN and AMBASSADOR FOURIE then requested confirmation of their impression that the above concerned only Angola and not South West Africa/Namibia.

MR HOUGH added that the withdrawal of the Cubans would mean a loss of face.

MR EAGLEBURGER confirmed that the withdrawal of the Cubans was a firm issue and that in his view, if handled correctly, need not constitute a loss of face. The solution, however, had to be an African one - a

/.....

role for the FLS - and in this issue France and the UK were in a better position to influence African leaders.

DR CROCKER added that in his view it was important to prevent the FLS from thinking that the issue was "another US/South Africa" failure.

MR EAGLEBURGER concluded with the statement that the whole issue was very important since success would remove the chances for an East/West conflict.

B. BRIEFING BY US DELEGATION, 17 MARCH 1983

Dr CHESTER CROCKER opened the second part of the talks with an explanation of how he saw the Soviet position in Angola. He described the absence of real US influence in Angola since 1975 and the need for the US to catch up. The MPLA government saw the Soviet Union as the hand that fed it but also the hand that strangled it and was consciously trying to get closer to the United States. While waiting for the United States to slip, the Soviet Union was orchestrating a propaganda barrage at the UN and during other meetings (Paris, New Delhi) in an effort to destroy the US position vis-a-vis the FLS. It was also involved in a dis-information campaign against the United States.

Mr MARK PALMER, Chief Kremlinologist of the State Department, subsequently gave his impressions of the Soviet Union's stand on South Africa. He pointed out that the Soviet Union was preparing for a race war in South Africa, inter alia by training cadres. The Soviet Union was adamant to prevent ideological reversals such as in Chile, although it was possible that Andropov might want to take some initiative during his period of "orientation" as had happened in Austria (1953-56). It would help him to ease matters abroad while settling things at home. On the other hand, the Soviet Union had the reputation for being able to live with a problem for a long time, due to the absence of political pressure internally (e.g. pressure groups). It was his view, however, that the Soviet Union was better at the offensive than during the defence. A settlement in Namibia linked to the withdrawal of the Cubans might be enough of a face saving situation - the Soviet Union could possibly live with such a reversal because it would be possible to construe the situation as anything but a defeat. From reports it seemed that Andropov was of the opinion, at present, that Soviet diplomacy was over-extended and in need of some trimming. It was also thought that the southern Africa scene was being "run" by the Party and not Soviet diplomats - Andrei Gromyko seemed poorly informed on southern African matters during contacts with United States office bearers. Since in the view of the United States, the Soviet Union had only negative interests in southern Africa (strategy of denial and anti-United States), it might be an area where the United States and the Soviet Union could come to some agreement.

/.....

AMBASSADOR HERMAN COHEN proceeded to give an analysis of Soviet involvement in Africa. He referred to the progressive Soviet efforts to get involved - first through the European communist parties and after the independence of countries in Africa, by direct involvement despite many setbacks. Soviet objectives with its involvement in Africa were extensive. It wanted to be recognized as a superpower projecting its military power over the globe (the blue water navy), Africa was considered a backdoor to the Middle East, while the Continent was useful as a base for Atlantic aerial reconnaissance and fishing fleet activities. As a general description, it could be said that the Soviet Union had had the imperialist itch for a long time - but it could compete only militarily and not economically.

Since 1975 the Soviet Union had gained tremendous experience in airlift capabilities and was known to have engaged in exercises to airlift heavy gear to Maputo through the Seychelles and Angola through the Arab world and Nigeria during the week 1 to 8 March 1983, at jet speeds. Advanced systems being deployed in Africa at present had never been seen before and were considered the results of criticism from client states about inferior Soviet weaponry (notably the SAM8 being deployed in Angola). The Soviet Union was unwilling to be seen to be weak.

It was further thought that the Soviet Union was worried about contacts between South Africa and Angola and Mocambique since they were unable to exercise control over their client states. Generally it could be said that the Soviets were not successful in Africa because of poor goods, bad planning, political impatience, greed and Africa's need for independence from any outside power.

Mr D FENTON gave details of direct Soviet military aid given to Angola and Mocambique. Aid given to Angola since 1975 was estimated at 1 billion US dollars (at cost price). The Soviet Union however expected cash for repairs while some equipment was obsolete. Quality had picked up over the last six months with more MIG 21 aircraft, SAM 8 missiles and T62 tanks being delivered.

Mr P CLEMENT argued that, since history had proved that the Soviets could be evicted from a country, the Soviet Union could not be too influential. It was, however,

/.....

true that the presence of Soviet personnel in a country represented an intimidation factor. The Soviets were also worried about signs that the Chinese might be making a come-back in Africa. Reference was also made to the fact that Angola and Mocambique had only taken up a small part of Soviet credit available (Angola 27m\$ out of 33m\$ and Mocambique only 14%).

Dr CROCKER concluded the session with the remark that there were therefore clear Soviet assets and vulnerabilities in Africa.

C. BRIEFING BY SOUTH AFRICAN DELEGATION, 18 MARCH 1983

Mr VAN DALSEN opened the proceedings of the day with a brief introduction and a description of the non-officials who were to participate in the South African briefing.

Dr J du PLESSIS commenced the briefing by indicating to what extent the South Africans agreed with the US evaluation of Soviet strategy and policy especially in southern Africa. He continued that certain aspects should, however, have been added, notably the important aid given to "liberation movements" by the Soviet Union. The presence of the Soviets in Africa also formed part of a very specific theory concerning the stages of development of communist states in the region, i.e. socialism in the first stage, then the struggle for a national democracy and finally a fully-fledged people's democracy (e.g. Angola and Mocambique) - all in the Africa context. Important steps in the development were the introduction of scientific socialism, creation of party organs and armed forces and the developing of ties with socialist countries. Notwithstanding these steps, it was important to note that capitalism still had some role to play in economic development. Finally, he made the point that it had not been clear from the US analysis what was considered reversible in Africa and what not. More clarity was needed on this aspect. A number of quotes from Soviet speeches on their objectives were also given to demonstrate the South African evaluation.

Dr LEISTNER concentrated on the economic difficulties in and economic viability of southern African states. Factual aspects of economic decline, the causes for the decline and how the decline affected South Africa's interests formed the basic outline of the address. Regarding the causes for decline, reference was made to the population growth, a low ceiling of achievement and the tendency of Africans to preserve the economic status quo. Money was used by governments to build a "power-house" but no reinvestment in the economy took place. Even the SADCC had started with the firm undertaking to avoid all the trappings of a bureaucracy but already had several committees, commissions etc. The research of a Kenyan professor which had proved that African languages generally only made provision for a future tense covering nine months, was food for thought. Added to this was the fact that even well-trained and westernised Africans often visited their witch doctors for advice before making decisions. It was clear from the above and the performance of the West on the ground in Africa, that these things were seldom understood.

/.....

In parts of the region, and in South Africa in particular, things were changing but since the Soviets were quick to fish in troubled waters, South Africa had every reason to want stable neighbours. The South African Prime Minister had stated this in SADCC context. The West should however not use aid to SADCC to cause polarisation - it should rather serve as a stimulus for the region as a whole, notably to draw investors and to prevent disease and refugees from spreading.

Dr CROCKER agreed with the analysis and added that Africa was faced with bad policies, poor colonial models and at present, the worst crisis in the post-colonial era. Lessons were to be learned from this. There was a fragility in Africa's institutions which made every threat a struggle for survival. The Soviet Union was not offering these countries any real opportunity and the United States and South Africa should try to do so. The region in question was already integrated economically and destruction of that would destroy the region.

PROF A VAN RENSBURG described African leaders as marginal men. Not only were they well versed in their own culture and traditions, but also in those of the West. He was at home in two worlds which made it easy for him to be very flexible. A brief description of Messrs dos Santos, Masire, Jonathan, Machel, Nyerere, Kaunda, Mugabe, Nkomo and Mobutu was given. Members of the U S delegation posed questions on the position of Mr Mugabe as leader of Zimbabwe and Prof Van Rensburg responded that he was under tremendous pressure from inside his own ranks. Without that pressure, he would probably be the best man to lead Zimbabwe. In response to a question about President Machel's revolutionary fervour, reference was made to his intellectual limitations, and to the fact that he was a charismatic person and good orator. Certain members of his Cabinet were probably more well-disposed towards South Africa.

Regarding the possibility of changing the minds of leaders such as Machel and Dos Santos, it was mentioned that they would change at the risk of their own political future and that a lot would depend on Soviet pressure.

ADM. N DU PLESSIS subsequently started his briefing on the security in Southern Africa with special reference to Soviet East Bloc and Cuban forces and arms in the region. Reference was made to the fact that FAPLA and SWAPO were virtually integrated forces and operated jointly in seven different ways, inter alia logistics and information. SWAPO was also used to fight against UNITA. On the question of the Angolan government, it was mentioned that the MPLA needed the Soviet Union to

stay in power and that, in the event of Cuban withdrawal, UNITA would control 60-70% of Angolan territory.

In Mocambique, the RNM controlled 9 provinces, which is more than FRELIMO controlled in 1974/75 when they took over the government from the Portuguese. The situation in Zimbabwe and Lesotho was also described.

DR CROCKER responded that the briefing had not touched on three important aspects, i.e. South Africa's own military position, South Africa's role in key countries and the question of South Africa as a conventional target. Regarding the latter, it was evident that at present an attack on South Africa was unlikely and that there was no serious challenge for South Africa.

AMBASSADOR COHEN mentioned that he had a number of aspects to add to the South African facts which corresponded largely to U S information. There was evidence of Cuban casualties arriving in Cuba - the Cubans in Angola therefore were obviously involved in skirmishes of some sort. Evidence also came to hand that Cuban veterans were returning to Angola for a second tour of duty. Regarding the RNM, the U S evaluation was that the movement could not survive without outside support because it had no liberated area which it controlled. It was also the U S evaluation that Cuban troops could rapidly be brought in from the Horn of Africa to support the FRELIMO regime.

Mr D SIMPSON asked Adm. du Plessis how he saw the position of UNITA in 2 to 3 years if the Cubans were not removed from Angola. The ADMIRAL responded that it was difficult to say but that there would probably be a thrust towards the Zairean border.

GENERAL J COETZEE proceeded to furnish the U S delegation with background information on the ANC, the links between the ANC and the South African Communist Party (SACP). Reference was also made to infiltration sorties through Mocambique to Swaziland and Lesotho and finally South Africa, as well as to training centres in the Soviet Union, East Germany and Angola. Mention was made of the help given to the ANC by Communist Embassies in London regarding false identity and other papers to facilitate entry into southern Africa. He concluded that the ANC was in fact operating from outside South Africa and not from within South Africa.

D. GROUP DISCUSSIONS, 18 MARCH 1983

During the afternoon, groups were formed to discuss matters concerning Angola, Mocambique and thirdly the rest of the region with emphasis on security.

MOCAMBIQUE

The discussions on Mocambique were co-chaired by Mr VAN DALSEN and AMBASSADOR WISNER. The latter opened the session with reference to the South African delegation's analysis of the RNM and stated that the U S views were largely similar (except the chances of the RNM to govern). The U S view was also that FRELIMO leadership had largely been sobered by reality and that the situation presented an opportunity to achieve a truly non-aligned country. It was a fundamental U S objective that an event which would enable the Soviet Union to implant itself more firmly in the country, should not happen. The U S was keen to make a series of offers to Mocambique in the hope of advancing and it would be useful to have the South African view.

Mr VAN DALSEN referred to the contacts which had taken place between the two Governments and the subsequent events surrounding ANC actions in Bloemfontein. Mr WISNER, who had been to Maputo during the period before the talks, was aware of the background.

GENL. COETZEE added that informal contacts with Mocambican officials had been frequent but that the role of Mocambique in ANC strategy was still very important. It was difficult to accept that Mocambique was unaware of ANC activities or unable to stop them. The positive side about Mocambique/South African relations was however the fact that there were no Cubans in that country. There were a number of fields in which South Africa could extend help to Mocambique, especially through private firms.

Mr VAN DALSEN mentioned the fact that South Africa was still making export credit (guarantees) available for trade with Mocambique while, after the departure of the Portuguese, South Africa had done nothing to disrupt the new Mocambican authorities. During official talks between the two Governments, Mocambique had, however, made it clear that no change of ideology could be expected.

Mr LOWENKOPF enquired whether it was not perhaps President Machel's idea to "play tough" on ideology and in the process get his more radical opponents in his government involved in peace-making efforts with South Africa and to impress Moscow.

GENL. COETZEE remarked that the Russians were annoyed when it became known that Mocambique had been trying to buy arms and ammunition from Portugal. He added that an ANC leader in Maputo, J. Slovo, had permanent access to Pres. Machel.

Mr VAN DALSEN added that the ANC had been a principal point of discussion at the last Komatipoort meeting.

ADMIRAL DU PLESSIS pointed out that Mocambique was in a key position vis-s-vis Swaziland, Zimbabwe and Malawi. But the fact that FRELIMO was in the seat of government because of the Soviet Union, was a problem.

AMBASSADOR WISNER commented that the U S and South Africa nevertheless saw the present government as the de facto government of Mocambique. The solution was to proceed step by step to influence that government and to test them all the time.

Mr VAN DALSEN drew the U S members' attention to the fact that South Africa was not doing anything to make that government fall but would not do anything to keep it in power either.

On a question of Genl. COETZEE about the ANC route through Swaziland, AMBASSADOR WISNER answered that he had personally talked to President Machel about Swaziland and the President knew that he was being watched. The President had also mentioned that he was moving the ANC from Maputo to an area more north in order to control them.

Mr VAN DALSEN mentioned that the South African government had not yet decided, finally, whether to proceed with another round of ministerial talks. The Cabora Bassa problem was also to be discussed at a stage.

On a remark by ADM. DU PLESSIS that the West should look closely at its alternatives in Mocambique, Mr WISNER stressed that the U S Government was interested in real stability in the region - it was no use to worry about the arranging of furniture when the house was on fire.

Mr VAN DALSEN said that the Mocambicans had been told at Komatipoort that the arrival of Cubans in Mocambique would not be tolerated.

ADM. DU PLESSIS added that a long-term solution was necessary. Short-term steps were not enough.

AMBASSADOR WISNER reacted that the Mocambicans should be influenced by talking to them.

ADM. DU PLESSIS asked how the Soviet Union was influenced by the Mocambican talks with South Africa.

AMB. WISNER replied that, if the Russians decided to cut off President Machel's arms supplies, he would be hurt. It was known that the President's recent welcome in Moscow had not been too warm. He added that the U S Government was keen for the talks between the two governments to continue and enquired how the Mocambican Government could be helped.

Mr VAN DALSEN and GENL. COETZEE gave some examples of trade, tourism and other ways of cooperation, but pointed out that South Africa was unlikely to take the initiative at this stage. Mr VAN DALSEN also asked how the Chinese viewed developments in Mocambique.

AMB. WISNER replied that they were bitter about their exclusion from Mocambique and reiterated that the U S was very interested in getting the talks between South Africa and Mocambique on the road again.

The Session was adjourned and a plenary session recommenced.