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MEETING BETWEEN A SOUTH AFRICAN DELEGATION LED BY THE
HONOURABLE R F BOTHA, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND A
UNITED STATES DELEGATION LED BY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF
STATE DR C CROCKER : PRETORIA : 16 NOVEMBER 1984

Present:

South Africa:

The Honourable R F Botha, Minister of Foreign Affairs
The Honourable Gen M A de M Malan, Minister of Defence
Dr W van Niekerk, Administrator-General of SWA

Departement of Foreign Affairs

Mr J van Dalsen
Ambassador B G Fourie
Mr D W Steward
Mr A L Manley
Mr J Stauch

South African Defence Force

Lt-Gen P W van der Westhuizen
Lt-Gen J Geldenhuys
Brig C van Tonder

Office of the State President

Dr J Roux

National Intelligence Service

Dr L D Barnard
Mr M Spaarwater

Office of the Administrator-General

Mr S C Cleary

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United States

Dr C Crocker
Ambassador H Nickel
Mr R Gelbard
Mr R Cabelly
Mr R Frazure
Mr W Stadtler
Mr T Carney
Mr J Jacobsen

MINISTER BOTHA said that South Africa had given the United States delegation documents on its views with regard to the Angolan proposals. South Africa had listed five political principles and had given its views on how they should be implemented. He had also given Dr Crocker another document on alternative approaches. He would like the United States to submit these documents or parts of them to Angola. The first document contained South Africa's counter proposals. It was a firm position which had been approved by the South African Cabinet. THE MINISTER said that he could not change it. He was authorised to suggest certain alternatives at his discretion. It would be possible to consider changes and amendments to the latter document. The first document represented South Africa's understanding with the United States. The United States had always said that South African troop reduction would take place parallel with Cuban troop withdrawal from Angola. THE MINISTER wanted to take Dr Crocker back to the meeting with Bill Clarke in 1981. At that time South Africa feared that the mere presence of the Cubans would make free elections in South West Africa impossible. The Security Council had refused to hear the internal parties at that time. They had said they would not participate in

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Resolution 435 and that they would not accept any blue helmets. South Africa had suggested that the contingents should wear their national uniforms. The United States had said that this would be impossible. THE MINISTER had then told the American delegation that there was no basis for a continuing United States role. It would be better that South Africa and the United States differ openly rather than play for time. THE MINISTER had asked for 6 - 8 months to find an acceptable solution and had reserved the right to come back to the United States if he should fail. At that stage one of the members of the American delegation had said that that the United States recognised the danger of intimidation and partiality. The United States recognised South Africa's problem and it was as a result of this that he had asked if it would change South Africa's position if the Cubans left Angola. THE MINISTER had said that it would. It would create a new ball game. Gen Malan and the Minister had then discussed the matter with the Prime Minister. Elliot Abraham had asked whether South Africa could not accept 60 blue helmets? South Africa had submitted six points to the United States which were the basis of its position. South Africa had made concessions on nearly all of these points with the exception of one. This point was Cuban troop withdrawal. South Africa continued to insist that a firm agreement with regard to Cuban troop withdrawal between the United States, South Africa and Angola or between the United States and Angola was a requirement for the implementation of Resolution 435. South Africa had not demanded the withdrawal of the Cubans before the commencement of the implementation of Resolution 435. At one time this had been South Africa's

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position but it had changed. South Africa saw the program of withdrawal as follows. It had never filled in the details of the agreement which it wanted to reach. South Africa foresaw a report to the Secretary-General and then a Security Council meeting. On a given date implementation of Resolution 435 would start and within a certain period South African troops would be reduced to 1 500. South Africa's understanding was that Cuban troop withdrawal would take place simultaneously - more or less. South Africa would not argue about precise figures but insisted that when the South African forces had been reduced to 1 500 the Cubans had to be reduced to zero. Even on this point South Africa could be a little flexible and could accept an extension of two to three weeks. It would, however, be a waste of time to try to break away from the central principle. The details of the present Angolan proposal were unacceptable, without detracting from the importance of their acceptance of the principle of linkage. The Angolans wanted to withdraw a certain number of Cubans north of the 16° of latitude only 80 or 90 kilometres from the border. As the Minister understood it, UNITA was making a major thrust in the north and the centre of the country. The Angolan offer was simply a redeployment of Cuban forces which they had intended redeploying against UNITA anyway. South Africa was on the point of withdrawing its forces to the Angolan border despite the military disadvantages which this would entail. It was accordingly making it possible for the Angolans to move into the area which had been vacated. It suited the Angolans to withdraw Cuban forces to the north. The Angolans talked of a period of 24 months. UNTAG would

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be deployed in South West Africa with aircraft for only seven months. The Angolan proposal was simply a plan of the Politbureau to cut off all South African aid to Savimbi. They also wanted to talk to Zaïre with a view to cutting off any aid from that quarter. They felt that UNITA would not be able to survive without South African supplies, certainly not for longer than 24 months. The Angolans had accordingly introduced a margin of 24 months into their proposal but still intended to keep 10 000 Cubans in the north to safeguard Angolan security. If the Cubans did not beat UNITA, they would certainly not withdraw. Accordingly, although South Africa welcomed Angola's acceptance of the principle of Cuban withdrawal it totally rejected everything else because it was not a plan for Cuban troop withdrawal but for the destruction of UNITA.

DR CROCKER thanked the Minister for his generous history of the negotiations. South Africa and the United States faced a different situation today from that which had confronted them three years earlier. The situation offered very little at the beginning for the national interests of both countries. South Africa and the United States had developed a joint approach to solve the Namibian question within a regional context by addressing the question of communist involvement in southern Africa and by attempting to reduce and remove Soviet influence. South Africa and the United States shared strategic perceptions and views on how the respective roles of the two countries should be played. However, this was not a matter which concerned only South Africa and the United States but should also be

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viewed within the context of super power rivalry, the regional framework and the framework of the United Nations etc. The United States had to be able to sell its proposal. Accordingly it should not be looked at only in the context of South African/United States relations. The United States had succeeded in substantially moving the other parties involved. It was a dramatically new development that there was now a common negotiation and a unified situation. The principles of the negotiating effort had been accepted bit by bit, step by step. The United States had pushed the ball down the field and would have to continue with this approach. The question was, what were the tactical choices? During the first part of his comments DR CROCKER said that he would like to address this question i.e. when the next meeting should be held in terms of the Angolan proposal and South Africa's counter proposal. Secondly, he wanted to discuss the question of where everybody was heading. What were the common assumptions? The United States could now react to South Africa's counter proposal - but where would it lead? It was important that there should not be fundamental doubts on where the negotiations were going. The United States had never spoken in detail on Cuban troop withdrawal until it had succeeded in getting the other side to agree in principle. The United States had established a broad understanding with South Africa in correspondence between Minister Botha and Secretary Haig. Now a new ball game had begun. The other side had cracked over Cuban troop withdrawal. The United States saw a number of points in the South African document. The political principles were a satisfactory statement of views which both countries

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shared. These were positive points which the United States would convey to the Angolans. With regard to the implementation of these principles, South Africa had restated its desire for the completion of the JMC process and peace with SWAPO. Then in paragraph 4 South Africa had set out its views with regard to Cuban troop withdrawal. The United States wanted to make it clear that South Africa had told it of the discussions between Kito Rodrigues and Minister Botha during which Minister Botha had told the Angolans that he wanted rough parallelism. South Africa had said that it wasn't necessary to be precisely even. South Africa now wanted the Cubans to be down to zero by the end of 12 weeks. This would be seen as a toughening of South Africa's position, as a step backwards. However, the United States had not characterised South Africa's position to the Angolans because he had not known what it was.

MINISTER BOTHA replied that he had drawn a picture of two tanks for Kito Rodrigues. He had said that he would not count drops of water but that the tanks would have to empty at the same rate. The Cubans would have to be out after 12 weeks.

DR CROCKER replied that South Africa's public position had been that the Cubans would all have to be out before independence. He was not rejecting South Africa's position but was telling the Minister what the Angolan reaction would be. The MPLA was coming out of the closet. They wanted to make a flexible contribution. They were doing everything they could think of to put the ball into the United States and South African courts. They distinguished

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between the United States and South Africa to a degree. They wanted to hold the high ground. It was necessary to be very frank. South Africa and the United States should not be pushed onto the defensive. The United States felt that it knew what kind of reaction it could expect but it would continue to carry the mail. The United States would not endorse the Angolan position just as it would not endorse South Africa's.

MINISTER BOTHA said that he had a problem. He wanted to know what proposal Dr Crocker was going to support. Dr Crocker didn't support Angola or South Africa. Therefore, he had to hold a position somewhere in between. Dr Crocker had raised a very important point. 12 Weeks after implementation the Cubans would have to be reduced to zero. THE MINISTER could see that this would present severe difficulties for Angola. To get 30 000 troops out within three months would be difficult. Could both sides therefore not talk about a different schedule for the reduction of South African troops? Dr Crocker had said that all the Cubans should be out by independence. Would it not be possible to have a definite schedule for parallel South African withdrawal or would this create problems by tampering with Resolution 435?

DR CROCKER said he would like to go back to his first point. The question was, what should be the next immediate move? The United States was not asking South Africa to change its basic document. It hoped that it would be able to put the ball back into the Angolan court but feared that they would look on the South African document as a step

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backwards. South Africa's general position in parliament had been that the Cubans would have to be out by the election.

MINISTER BOTHA said that South Africa had always insisted on parallelism. Kito Rodrigues could not have misunderstood what the Minister had told him concerning the two tanks on the 17th of August 1984. It would not be possible to agree on the details, but South Africa could not say that it could make concessions on the program which it had presented to the United States. Why did Dr Crocker not go and test it with the Angolans?

DR CROCKER replied that the MPLA was trying to prove that they were flexible. If they saw the South African counter-proposal as unreasonable, there was a risk that they might try to capitalise politically on this.

MINISTER BOTHA said that there seemed to be a misunderstanding between the United States and South Africa. He read an extract from the minutes of a meeting between Kito Rodrigues and himself on 17 August 1984 which indicated that he had clearly informed Minister Rodrigues that all Cubans would have to be out of Angola 12 weeks after the commencement of the implementation of Resolution 435.

After listening to the Minister's comments DR CROCKER noted that the United States had never spelled out its position to South Africa. The United States had to act as an intermediary.

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MINISTER BOTHA then quoted President Reagan to the effect that Cuban troop withdrawal and the reduction of South African forces in South West Africa would have to be simultaneous. He added that South Africa had always spelled out its position to the United States in detail.

DR CROCKER repeated that the United States had never spelled out its own position. All it had said was that the Cubans had to be out of an Angola by the end of Phase III which ended with independence. The United States had presented Angola's proposal to South Africa. South Africa had put forward a strong position but it was not the United States' position. The United States could not say what common ground there was between the two sides. It could discuss what these different positions might lead to. It could convey the South African position to the Angolans. The United States understood the questions which this raised in the Minister's mind as to where the negotiations were going. How, for example, did South Africa know that the negotiations would not destroy UNITA or affect its basic security?

AMBASSADOR FOURIE mentioned that South Africa had always adhered to the principle of concurrent and parallel withdrawal. South Africa had accepted the agreement on this basis and had asked what would happen if the Cubans did not withdraw. The response was that South Africa would stop its own withdrawal. AMBASSADOR FOURIE had also made the point to the Secretary-General that there would be concurrent and parallel withdrawal.

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MINISTER BOTHA said that this raised important questions for him. On 3 September 1982 he had set out his Government's position on Cuban withdrawal in clear terms in a letter to Secretary Shultz. The Minister then quoted in detail from the letter in question. Did this not imply that unless the United States replied and disagreed with South Africa's position, that it was in fact the correct position in accordance with the legal principle of acquiescence?

DR CROCKER replied that the United States had not been able to provide such a clarification at that time.

MINISTER BOTHA said that South Africa had made it clear that by the time of the elections, there could be no Cubans in Angola. The United States had never questioned this position.

DR CROCKER asked how such details could have been discussed as early as 1981?

THE MINISTER said that South Africa had thought that the United States and it were ad idem on this point.

AMBASSADOR FOURIE asked what the difference was between withdrawal during Phase III and by the election date?

DR CROCKER said that he already saw three definitions of parallelism. One by election date, one by the date of independence and one at some time as yet undefined.

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MINISTER BOTHA then quoted from the Secretary-General's report of 29 August 1983 in which the Secretary-General had given an accurate reflection of South Africa's position on Cuban troop withdrawal.

DR CROCKER said that the United States had consistently maintained that it and South Africa should not get dragged into a debate on precise definitions. The question was where could South Africa and the United States go from here? It could take the South African counter proposal to the Angolans although there was clearly a great gap between the two positions. The United States' position was that the Cubans would have to be down to zero by the date of independence. That was the United States position.

MINISTER BOTHA asked whether this would be so even when it came after one month?

DR CROCKER repeated that this was his position. He suggested that the two sides look at the gap. Everybody had said that the Angolan proposal had been inadequate. It did not represent their last word. The United States would have to test how far the Angolans would be able to go. He would have to put the onus back on them to do some hard thinking. Their present proposal was clearly out of the ball park.

MR FRAZURE said that based on recent conversations with the Angolans he was sure that it was now necessary to reinforce a central dynamic. The United States would have to nail

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their feet to a treadmill. They would have to accept a sequence of inevitable realities. The United States had remained firm. As a result, the Angolan position had cracked and it was necessary to nail the Angolans down on that. The Angolans would go along with that but it was premature to talk of numbers. The Angolans were doing things now which they would not have been able to do before. It would be necessary to keep on co-opting them bit by bit.

MINISTER BOTHA then asked, if one looked at the details, what the United States saw in the Angolan proposal which indicated a step forward? Was it not merely a military plan?

MR FRAZURE replied that it was indeed a military plan. This was a good description but the matter went further. It was both a peace plan and a war plan. South Africa and the United States would have to change the plan so that it would be less of a war plan and more of a peace plan.

DR CROCKER suggested that the two sides look at the Angolan proposal again. They had admitted that there were 30 000 Cubans in Angola. Beyond that the United States would not endorse anything in the Angolan proposal. South Africa's proposal was its official position. However, it was important to focus on the most unacceptable points. Perhaps the most serious aspect was the open ended nature of the Angolan proposal.

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MINISTER BOTHA replied that this was so but the whole proposal was unacceptable. It was a war plan and his Government could not be party to the destruction of UNITA. The stage has now been reached where Dos Santos would settle only if he defeated UNITA.

DR CROCKER observed that there was no possibility of a defeat of UNITA.

MINISTER BOTHA replied that there was if the Cubans remained. There was nothing to say that the Russians would not support the MPLA's plans.

DR CROCKER said that it was nevertheless clear that the MPLA was not winning at the moment.

THE MINISTER replied that they would win in terms of this proposal.

DR CROCKER insisted that the United States would not accept such a development. The United States would tell the Angolans where their proposal was unacceptable but it wanted to get the Angolans to move in the right direction.

MINISTER BOTHA then quoted from a letter from Secretary Haig dated 21 May 1982 in which Secretary Haig had stressed that Cuban troop withdrawal from Angola simultaneous with the departure of South African forces from Namibia was essential. MINISTER BOTHA then suggested that Dr Crocker take the South African proposal to the Angolans and discuss it with them.

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DR CROCKER confirmed that this was what he wanted. He wanted to push the Angolans in the right direction.

MR FRAZURE said that the United States knew that the Angolan proposal was a war and peace plan. This reflected the divisions within the MPLA in Luanda. Some elements wanted to defeat Savimbi militarily and others knew that this was not possible. It was necessary to change the mixture in the plan and to strengthen the hand of those who wanted peace.

MINISTER BOTHA said that it would not serve any useful purpose to try to iron out the differences between South Africa and the United States. Dr Crocker should first test the Angolans. He then asked Dr Crocker what he thought of the alternative proposals suggested by South Africa.

DR CROCKER replied that the Minister had said that he would leave it up to the United States to decide how to deal with the alternative proposals. If South Africa so desired he would convey the principles contained in the alternative proposals including the principle of national reconciliation.

THE MINISTER replied that there had been a time when Veloso fully rejected any idea of South Africa mediating between RENAMO and FRELIMO. Perhaps there was a parallel in the Angola situation.

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DR CROCKER said that Bob Frazure had observed that there was a coalition between those who believed in a military solution and those who did not. The MPLA had told the United States that it was not interested in talking peace with Savimbi. However, behind the scenes they thought of nothing else - particularly members of the peace party. However, these people were not coming out of the closet yet. Nevertheless, there was a real dynamic within Angolan political circles. The United States would be prepared to tell them that South Africa would be prepared to play a mediating role. Of course they might tell the United States to go to hell.

MR FRAZURE observed that the analogy between Mozambique and Angola was interesting. He asked what would have happened if South Africa had laid the idea of political accommodation between FRELIMO and RENAMO on the table before the Nkomati Agreement. His own feeling was that there then would probably never have been an agreement.

MINISTER BOTHA said that this was correct.

MR FRAZURE said that South Africa had nailed FRELIMO down to a treadmill. There might be a similarity in the Angolan situation. It would be necessary to play the situation very carefully so as not to overload circuits.

MR GELBARD observed that it had been very painful for the Angolan Government to reach the present consensus. It had not been easy to get rid of Paulo Jorge. However, this had lead to a coalition of the peace and war parties. He was

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convinced that the MPLA was not yet ready to talk about national reconciliation.

MINISTER BOTHA asked whether the United States shared the objective of bringing about national reconciliation?

DR CROCKER replied that that United States and South Africa shared the objective of getting the Cubans out. They shared the objective of a deal which would not destroy UNITA and the United States wanted reconciliation between the people of Angola. However, it could not put national reconciliation on the agenda as a precondition for a South West African settlement. This would follow Cuban troop withdrawal anyway.

MINISTER BOTHA said that the United States must now go back to the Angolans. It would be appreciated if the Americans could put the South African alternatives to them. He asked why the United States should not test them.

DR CROCKER replied that this was fair enough. He would put it to them. South Africa had in any case already spoken to them about most of these points.

MINISTER BOTHA said that he had not yet raised the possibility of South Africa's playing a mediating role. He had raised the question of the ANC and of an all party conference but these questions were not part of the Cuban troop withdrawal question but were bilateral issues. The Angolans should be under no doubt concerning South Africa's resolve not to allow the ANC to remain on its territory.

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South Africa reserved the right to take out the ANC. He had told Kito this. THE MINISTER said that he could not commit himself. The Angolan were harbouring thousands of ANC members.

DR CROCKER observed that a new element was the South African offer to mediate.

THE MINISTER continued that South Africa could not allow Angola to keep the ANC there indefinitely but if it attacked Angola there would be hell to play. South Africa knew where the camps were. They were now close to Luanda. If South Africa found it necessary to go in, they would say that it was part of a combined UNITA/South African attack. The nearer the ANC camps to Luanda, the greater the danger for such an attack.

DR CROCKER asked what the next development would be with regard to the JMC?

MINISTER BOTHA replied that South Africa had told the Angolans that it would meet them on the 19th. South Africa's Generals could not just wait around at the convenience of the Angolans, so it had now set a firm date for the 19th.

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