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151/16/1(Route 113)

MEETING BETWEEN THE MINISTER AND AMBASSADOR NICKEL ON
7 JUNE 1985 AT THE GUEST HOUSE, PRETORIA, AT 17h00

Ambassador Nickel commenced to say that he had been asked by his Government to convey the following TALKING POINTS. The Minister asked whether he couldn't be handed the talking points which could then be discussed but Ambassador Nickel insisted that he would merely transmit them orally, as instructed. He said that these points should be seen as the considered assessment of the policy context in which we were operating. His Government wanted the South African Government to have them before it takes important decisions next week. His first point was that we should not belabour the difference which exist re the Cabinda incident. We should "agree to disagree" on what actually transpired. The Americans had some difficulty to accept what the South African Government had come up with.

The Minister objected strongly to this approach as he had gone out of his way over the last days to provide the Americans with the full picture of what had happened. He was very unhappy about this. Had Ambassador Nickel not conveyed to Washington what he had told him recently. When the Ambassador said that he had done so, the Minister said that he could not accept this new stance and expected an apology. Dr Crocker had said to Lt-gen Geldenhuys that he was not convinced that the oil installations had not been the actual target and that this put the attack in the category of "state terrorism".

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Ambassador Nickel felt there to be no point to stress the differences and that he merely wanted to convey the talking points. The Minister stressed that while Dr Crocker was making statements of a derogatory nature there was certainly a need to discuss these points. What otherwise was the purpose of Ambassador Nickel's visit. He had seen Dr Savimbi twice since Cabinda, and Dr Crocker had seen him too.

Ambassador Nickel said that as a lawyer the Minister would accept that a jury would have to take all the evidence into account when taking a decision. When pressed by the Minister on the facts on which they based their attitude (as expressed in the first point), the Ambassador explained that the USA had difficulty with certain of South Africa's explanations - in particular the right it claimed for itself to take action against the ANC or SWAPO anywhere. The long-range action and the cross border nature thereof created problems. The Minister confirmed that that was indeed South Africa's position. Ambassador Nickel added that to some extent Du Toit's evidence had to be taken into account - the jury could not accept only one point, one version.

The Minister challenged this by asking who the judge, who the jury was. Was it the regime in Luanda - the Americans didn't know that regime. He could not look with confidence to the American evidence. Was the Ambassador not prepared to discuss their charges? He had the right to object to the impression they were creating. What was the purpose of the visit if these things could not be discussed - it showed an arrogant attitude on the part of the Americans.

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Ambassador Nickel took exception and stated that he would report the Minister's views in full to his Government. He was hoping to discuss the way ahead. The Cabinda incident was not caused by the US Government. "We would want to pick up the pieces and want to go forward.

The Minister stressed that he had gone out of his way to get the facts from Savimbi and had given them in detail to the Ambassador. What basis did he have to doubt these facts?

Ambassador Nickel said that cross-border operations were not internationally acceptable. The Minister asked whether the Americans would also have objections if South Africa did something about a Gadaffi-case?

The Ambassador said that they had taken note of the Minister's pledge i.r.o. US personnel and property. Also that he would use his influence to see that acts of that nature would not occur. The Minister corrected him and pointed out that South Africa could not give them the latter assurance. Who would attack which installation - what about FLEC for instance. South Africa had no control over them. The Americans would have to use their own contacts. The Ambassador said that they did but that he was of course talking about Savimbi. South Africa had a strong influence there. The Minister said that he had gone as far as to issue a statement after clearing it with the State President and consulting with Dr Savimbi. And now he had to listen to the Ambassador saying he "presumed" South Africa would assure that actions of that nature would be prevented.

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Ambassador Nickel said it served no purpose to continue this argument and that he wanted to return to asking the question "where do we go from here?". The MPC move and Cabinda had undercut our position internationally and fuelled the sanctions drive in the House, but more significantly in the Foreign Relations Committee of the Senate and had all been weapons for our adversaries "to hit us both". Some painful soul-searching was needed, as reflected in Shultz's statements to Dr Fourie. They were looking forward to developments i.r.o. sustained regional diplomacy (as expressed in the document of 21 March) aimed at accomplishing goals they presumed we shared. These reflected their long-standing views and policies.

It was important to look at the current mood and postures of key parties: 1. UNITA - there was no ground to believe that the military balance would shift in the near future in favour of either party. There was no mood of confident optimism from UNITA but a desire to inject momentum into the military-political process leading to progress towards a solution. These pointed to a strong desire for continued US involvement - to achieve 435, Cuban withdrawal, political reconciliation. There was rather a mood of abandonment and stalemate than one of planning for victory. 2. FLS - Ambassador Nickel continued that the FLS could inject creative momentum. Their posture was dominated by the publicly visible signs of deadlock and Soviet disinformation. They hoped that the present anti-apartheid drive in the US would lead the US Government to change its posture. They could thwart actions or initiatives of which they are ignorant or suspicious and

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they would not go along with a non-435 scenario. 3. USSR was gratefully exploiting the differences between the US and SA. Yet they were still uncomfortable about the US-led initiatives and Angolan moves in connection with Cuban withdrawal. They were still prepared to pump the necessary hardware into Angola. It was highly unlikely that the Soviets were more open to a settlement, unless they could be given a more visual and substantial rôle to play.

"Movement will come only as the MPLA and others drag Moscow along." Ambassador Nickel added that their view, their policy vis-a-vis Southern Africa had not changed. "We are concerned that you imply otherwise." They did not condone cross-border violence. The rule of law had to exist. They could not endorse South African policy of having the right to act against the ANC and SWAPO across borders. "We find public discussions of the SAG's and ANC-concerns in the aftermath of Cabinda to be unhelpful to efforts to rekindle the negotiating process."

Finally the Ambassador mentioned that we would have to take note of the fact that the climate in the Western world was of importance to South Africa's friends. To an important degree that climate was shaped by regional developments. It should be of concern to the SAG that the maintenance of a climate conducive to continued Western support and constructive involvement was being directly threatened in the USA and Europe.

The Minister concluded the meeting by stating

- that he could not accept that the USA did not go along with South Africa's right to act (against the ANC and SWAPO), and

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- that the attitude of the views conveyed was regarded as unhelpful

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