

S E C R E T

MEETING BETWEEN DIRECTOR-GENERAL N P VAN HEERDEN AND DR C CROCKER,
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE IN WASHINGTON ON 30 MARCH 1988

A. FIRST SESSION : SOVIET INVOLVEMENT

DR CROCKER opened the discussion by briefly sketching the history of recent contacts, since July 1987 that the US had had with the Soviet Union. At the last meeting earlier this month with Adomishan the Soviet Union had mentioned a number of points which he now wished to convey to the South African Government. This was in keeping with the undertaking he had given in Geneva.

Firstly, the Soviet Union had expressed itself in favour of political settlements to the problems of the Southern African region. They perceived many areas of conflict in the sub-continent such as Mozambique, Angola, Namibia and the question of "apartheid" in South Africa. The Soviet Union had however made it clear that they considered the question of Angola to be the one requiring immediate attention and this was to them a priority issue as far as Southern Africa was concerned.

Secondly, they had made positive remarks on the mediating role being played by the United States and wished the momentum to continue. This Dr Crocker indicated was a positive shift in Soviet attitudes which had previously felt that the role being played by the United States could not contribute positively to solving the regions problems and was doomed to failure.

Thirdly, it was clear that the Soviet Union was unwilling to enter into any commitment at this stage and avoided endorsing any specific proposals.

On the question of national re-conciliation in Angola the Soviet Union was vague. They expressed the opinion that while the time for national re-conciliation in Afghanistan was ripe they did not feel the same way about Angola. Further they believed that the many initiatives being taken by African States vis a vis bringing the MPLA and UNITA to the table should be given a chance to mature. They wished to wait and see if an

Angola talks

S E C R E T

2

African consensus could be achieved. On the specific question of current negotiations between the various parties to the Angolan dispute the Soviet Union put a number of questions to the United States:

1. They wanted an indication from the United States as to whether they intended to end aid to UNITA.
2. They wanted to know what the United States' attitude was to their demand for unconditional withdrawal of South African troops from Angola.
3. They wanted to know what role in any settlement the United States saw for the United Nations.
4. They wanted to know what structure the agreement would take ie who would sign and which parties would be involved.
5. They wanted to know what guarantees would be given iro monitoring.

Dr Crocker then conveyed the United States' reaction to these points.

1. The United States informed the Soviet Union that their relationship with UNITA was not linked to an Angolan/Namibian settlement and that any attempts to link the two would be an obstacle to progress. The United States believed that the way to end outside interference in Angola was to bring about national re-conciliation.
2. With regard to South African military involvement in Angola they conveyed their belief that this could be ended by the implementation of UNSC Resolution 435/78. However the linkage was clear - no movement towards the implementation of UNSC R435/78 and a resolution of the

Namibian question without CTW.

3. With regard to UN participation the United States believed that UNSC R435/78 was the most appropriate vehicle for UN involvement. However any future agreement between the parties could be registered in a UNSC resolution.
4. With regard to what parties would be involved the United States conveyed the view that this would depend on which parties were involved in the agreement. With regard to SWAPO the United States felt, and had informed Angola, that they (SWAPO) were accommodated in UN resolutions and any insistence by one party to include SWAPO would cause problems. Angola understood this and the question of SWAPO was not raised by the Soviet Union.
5. On the question of guarantees the United States made clear their belief that this would be enshrined in United Nations resolutions and was implicit in UNSC R435/78.

Dr Crocker proceeded to convey the United States impression as to how the Soviet Union, in broad terms perceives the issue. An important new factor to emerge was that the concept of linkage had become a cardinal principle, and had been accepted by the Soviet Union as the basis for any agreement. This he stated was a fundamental shift in their thinking and meant that linkage now had wide support internationally. The Soviet Union believed that for them there was nothing to be gained by an Angolan settlement which did not at the same time address the question of Namibian independence. In other words there was nothing in it for the Soviet Union should CTW not at the same time bring about independence for Namibia. The United States believed that the Soviet Union felt that UNSC R435/78 gave the MPLA border security in the short term as well as greater security in the long term as a result of the containment of the South African Defence Force. There was broad agreement between themselves and the Soviet Union on this point. The

S E C R E T

4

Soviet Union had asked the United States if it supported an internal settlement. Dr Crocker had told the Soviet Union that the United States did not support and would not support any form of internal settlement.

The Soviet Union had also tested the idea of a joint public platform iro the internal situation in South Africa. In this regard they probed the possibility of a joint statement condemning the recent "crackdown" on black opposition in South Africa. The United States had rejected this proposal.

In addition the Soviet Union had indicated to the United States that while they considered the recent Statement by General Malan interesting they were not intending to respond.

In conclusion Dr Crocker stated that he believed that the Soviet Union saw a potential for progress on the issue and wanted to be seen to be engaged and to be supporting the process. However it was clear that at this stage they were not in favour of becoming involved in a practical way. Rather they were still in a stage of consultation with Angola and Cuba and had not decided how to play their cards. They appeared content to negotiate through the Cubans and MPLA and only possibly to become directly involved at a later stage. The Soviet Union would continue to support it's allies and live up to its treaty commitments. However there appeared to be a window of opportunity to make progress on the issue.

The DIRECTOR-GENERAL thanked Dr Crocker for the depth of his briefing and his frankness. He reminded Dr Crocker of what the Minister had said in Geneva to the effect that the United States had a role to play in talking to the Soviet Union. Only the United States could engage the Soviet Union at that level and therefore US influence could be pivotal to Cuban withdrawal from Angola. The Soviets had an important role to play in influencing its ally Cuba to abandon its Angolan adventure. The Director-General wanted clarity however on whether the Soviet Union was

S E C R E T

5

serious in its approach to the question of CTW. Dr Crocker had given some indications as to their (USSR) thinking on the subject but nothing specific.

DR CROCKER pointed to the fact that the United States had spoken to the USSR on the inadequacies of the Angolan proposals and had asked them to use their influence on both Cuba and Angola to ellicit a more realistic offer. The Soviets had taken note of this and Dr Crocker believed that the Soviet Union would persue the matter.

Another example of Soviet interest in the issue was their efforts to ensure Cuban participation in talks on the subject. They (USSR) had sent numerous messages to the United States and had considered Cuban involvement important. The previous United States position on the matter was that they (USA) would deal only with the sovereign states in the region. The United States had come to realize that this was wrong. Angola was better able to make progress with Cuban participation. This had led the United States to accept Cubans as part of the Angolan delegation when the subject of Cuban troop withdrawal was discussed.

The DIRECTOR-GENERAL stated that from our vantage-point the inclusion of Cubans at formal discussions may be counter-productive. The elevation of their position in this way could be a strong incentive to them to become engaged in other adventures. The recognition of the Cubans as a party to the negotiations may well send them the wrong message - namely that through their involvement in Angola they have achieved a certain international standing. It was our belief that the Cubans should never have been in Angola in the first place that they are owed no quid pro quo.

DR CROCKER stated that the United States only negotiated with the Cubans on the question of CTW and on no other issues. This concession by the USA was severely embarrassing to Angola and had all types of implications wrt their sovereignty. The United States felt further that giving the Cubans this opening had resulted in a major concession coming from them (Cuba). Previously

Cuba had strongly rejected the concept of linkage. This they had now accepted. Dr Crocker added that it was his belief that their participation had led directly to their acceptance for the first time of total CTW. This has meant an abandoning by them of such previously stated positions as "the maintenance of residual forces until Apartheid has ended".

DR KOORNHOF has asked if the Soviets had undertaken to report back to them after their discussions with the Cubans and Angolans.

DR CROCKER stated that this was possible. However it was always difficult judging how the Soviet Union would act. It was possible that they would come back with a statement as to what they feel would make a settlement work. They had heard that the Soviets had met with the Cubans last weekend (24 and 25 March). It was possible that the Soviet Union would respond indirectly.

MR NAPPER remarked that after the talks with Castro a Russian diplomat had called on him under instruction to say that the USSR supported the United States' negotiating effort and would say as much to the Cubans. It was possible that this would be the only feedback that the United States would get.

The DIRECTOR-GENERAL commented that there was an idea current in South Africa that the Soviet Union's commitment to a solution in Angola was not strong.

DR CROCKER responded by saying that it was his belief that there was an emerging Soviet/American agreement on the need for a resolution to the conflict.

The DIRECTOR-GENERAL enquired as to what the United States' view was on the prospect of national re-conciliation (or a political settlement) and how this would effect UNITA's position.

DR CROCKER stated that the Soviet Union did not feel that it had its back to the wall in Angola. Any moves by the Soviet Union into a settlement should therefore be viewed in terms of a Soviet

desire to influence United States/Soviet relations. However they were prepared to wait for an equitable, in their terms, solution vis a vis their allies. They have a considerable investment in Angola and Cuba as well as in terms of the UN and require a solution which would give them some return on these investments. The Soviet Union has been saying new things on national re-conciliation. While they feel the time is ripe for Afghanistan they do not feel the same about Angola. They can however accept both positions.

MR FREEMAN commented that there could be no doubt that the Soviet Union believed the Angolan issue to be a major problem in Southern Africa. However for the Soviet Union the Angolan adventure was a relatively cheap one and they were therefore prepared to hold out for the best, in their terms solution. They would therefore not be prepared to negotiate behind the backs of the MPLA and would also not be prepared to deal directly with South Africa. They would also not be prepared to do a deal which would not include a solution for Namibia.

DR KOORNHOF asked whether the United States had a picture of what the Soviets considered a fair settlement.

DR CROCKER responded by indicating that the Soviets would not be inclined to any solution which could bring about the fall of the MPLA Government and so will look for one which allows it to continue.

The DIRECTOR-GENERAL commented that it was clear that the most convincing reason for the Soviet Union to co-operate in the search for a settlement is the advantage they see in terms of their relationship with the United States. The notion of the Soviet Union, with its history of interventionism, pushing for a fair and equitable solution is not one which would be readily received in South Africa.

It was also surprising that the Soviet Union appeared happy to see a major role being played by the United States and indeed

S E C R E T

8

encouraging such a role. However all the signals we receive indicate that the Soviet Union and Cubans are on the offensive in the region and have engaged in an arms build-up. From this it would appear that they would only settle for something which would to them constitute a major success.

MR FREEMAN then outlined what the US believed were the incentives for the Soviets to seek a settlement in Angola. The history of their involvement in Angola was of interest. It coincided with a series of interventions in the Third World during the early 1970's. None of these interventions, aside from Central America, had brought any real benefits. It was the perception of the United States that after 13 years in Angola the Soviet Union had achieved little. They were on a treadmill and more of the same was not attractive. They were therefore looking for a way out. However they do not want to be seen to be throwing away 13 years of intervention. If the Soviet Union could therefore achieve a settlement in Angola which would be directly linked to one in Namibia it would give them the opening they required to extricate themselves. Should the MPLA want national re-conciliation the Soviet Union could go along with them while at the same time looking after their (MPLA) interests.

The Soviet Union was not interested in what it could lose in Angola but rather in what it could get out of a settlement.

The Soviet Union it was felt also had a more realistic understanding of South Africa's staying power and did not believe that a revolution in South Africa was imminent.

MR NAPPER, with regard to the Angolan issues relevance to the USA/USSR agenda, believed the agenda to be crowded with issues and the issues that were receiving close attention were those issues on which it was possible to make progress. The possibility of movement on the Angolan issue in terms of this agenda was the major motivating force behind the Soviet Union's interest. However before further progress could be made it was vital to

ensure that all parties were serious and a real desire was present on all sides to reach a negotiated settlement.

MR FREEMAN stated that at their most recent meeting the Soviets had tried to get the United States to state publicly the areas of agreement between them on Angola. This the United States had refused to do.

However it was clear that the Soviets believed that an agreement with the Regan Administration was important for two reasons. Firstly they felt it was an insurance policy for the future and secondly they needed to show that they could do a deal with a conservative administration.

DR CROCKER commented that this once again indicated that the Soviets were not acting as a result of being pressured but rather as a result of incentive.

The DIRECTOR-GENERAL attended to a comment made earlier concerning the crowded agenda between the USA and Soviet Union and wished to know how prominent the Angolan issue featured on this agenda.

DR CROCKER responded by indicating that he believed it was of growing importance but not yet as important as the Afghanistan issue or the Iran/Iraq war. However its salience was rising.

MR AURET referred to a statement made by Dr Crocker pertaining to increased Soviet realism on the Angolan question and enquired whether this could be applied more broadly to Southern Africa in general.

DR CROCKER said that the United States was seeing new thinking in Moscow. Candid thinking and honest thinking. There was a more sober analysis of the South African issue - this could be seen on their position vis a vis the armed struggle.

MR NAPPER commented that the Soviets had adopted a much more sober and analytical view on South Africa.

The DIRECTOR-GENERAL stated that South Africa was aware of these changes. However there is much suspicion in South Africa as to the motives behind the Soviet Union's recent moves. There is a strong feeling that one would be naive to fall for their propaganda.

DR CROCKER realized that this was a problem. Washington had what it thought was a very realistic view of Soviet designs. However one had to consider where Gorbachev was leading the Soviet Union. It was clear that he wanted to build it up into a true Superpower and not only a military superpower. For this reason it was essential that the Soviet economy expand rapidly. It was possible that they (Soviet Union) had now come to believe that 3rd World adventures were not what being a superpower was all about. This is what was meant by the "window of opportunity".

However all sides still had to be tested. It was possible that the Soviet Union and Cuba were posturing and building up a negotiating record. Should negotiations fail they could then blame the failure to achieve a settlement on the RSA. They could be using this period to cast blame on South Africa to set the stage for the next Administration. Another possibility is that they were seeking to trap South Africa in an Angolan quagmire. This may explain the recent influx of crack Cuban forces.

It was important therefore that South Africa be engaged as should the negotiations fail the blame must not be placed at the door of the United States or South Africa.

B. SECOND SESSION : ANGOLAN PROPOSALS

DR CROCKER handed the Director-General a copy of the Angolan proposals. He was doing this he indicated at the express request of both Angola and Cuba. They had specifically asked the United States to present the document to South Africa and to ask for a response. Dr Crocker then invited the South African delegation to peruse the document.

DR CROCKER then conveyed to the South African side his Government's comments on the document. He stated that it was written in the style of a UN document and contained a great deal of rhetoric. The United States had made it quite clear to the Angolans that the document was unacceptable to them (US) and further that the inclusion of SWAPO would create problems. The Angolans had indicated that the question of SWAPO was not considered a problem thereby intimating that they could be excluded from further proposals. The US was clearly under the impression that the document represented an opening bid and should be seen as such. Dr Crocker stated that the document clearly reflected three major Angolan priorities namely:

- the pressure they face as a result of a South African military presence in Angola and that this pressure must be terminated,
- that they seek a commitment from South Africa to respect Angolan Sovereignty and territorial integrity,
- that they are committed to UNSC R 435/78.

DR CROCKER then pointed to numerous contradictions in the document the most glaring being the insistence on South African action prior to any CTW. Article 5 contained the Angolan position on CTW. Article 4 was unacceptable due to an incorrect sequence.

What was however of interest was that the document for the first time enshrined the concept of total CTW. Also of interest was the potential contained in the idea of a South to North withdrawal. The problem with the Angolan proposal was the time-frame.

DR CROCKER reiterated that the document was transparently an opening bid from the Angolans. The United States had informed

the Angolans that in order to engage the South Africans they would have to shift their position substantially.

MR CABELLY then commented that in his discussions with the Cubans they had raised a number of points iro the document. Firstly they had confirmed that it was an opening bid. Secondly they made much of the fact that it contained a provision for total CTW. Thirdly that they, after receiving South Africa's reaction, were prepared to present a new time-table. Fourthly that it contained the concept of verification.

MR NAPPER commented on the concept of South to North withdrawal. The reason for this given to him by the Cubans were mainly logistical. He had been able to ascertain that the Cubans had already carefully researched the logistical aspects of a withdrawal. Their planning made provision for a departure of troops from northern airfields and equipment from northern ports. They did not wish to withdraw (west) from Southern conflict areas.

On the question of verification the Cubans acknowledged the need for on-site inspection including inspection at embarkation points. It was significant that the Cubans had made such studies and the United States felt that it pointed to the seriousness with which the Cubans were approaching the issue.

DR CROCKER pointed out that the Cubans were the key players on the question of details and time-frames. They had indicated that it would be necessary should proximity talks take place to include military experts in the talks. Both from the United States and South Africa.

Referring to the Angolan document Dr Crocker made two further comments. The United States considered it significant that the Soviet Union did not comment on the proposals. This could indicate that they believe it to be insignificant. With regard to SWAPO involvement the United States believes their position to be covered by UNSC R435/78.

The DIRECTOR-GENERAL informed the United States delegation that the South African side would not be providing a detailed response to the proposals while in Washington. However he wished to make some comments. The document clearly cannot be expected to be acceptable to the South African Government. It is promising that details are receiving attention by the Angolans even though they are not acceptable. The South African Government shares the United States view on SWAPO and understands the need to look beyond the rhetoric contained in the document.

The DIRECTOR-GENERAL drew Dr Crocker's attention to the change in the strategic balance in Southern Angola since 1984. Both UNITA's position and that of the RSA's have strengthened considerably. The new realities created by the military situation must be reflected in any agreement. The SADF had lost 35 lives in the conflict. These, and the emotional impact they have on the body politic cannot be discounted.

The DIRECTOR-GENERAL noted that the Minister's proposal in Geneva still remains our position ie 80% plus 20%. This will however no doubt be reflected in any response from the South African Government. The reaction to the US document presented in Geneva had been dismissive in South Africa. In the light of that response the Angolan proposals cannot have much potential.

The DIRECTOR-GENERAL reminded Dr Crocker of the United States' commitment to UNITA and asked him how he saw their position should an agreement on CTW be reached and UNSC R435/78 be implemented.

DR CROCKER stated that the American bottom line was the pursuit of two goals namely CTW and the implementation of UNSC R435/78. The achievement of this they felt would strengthen the prospects for national re-conciliation in Angola. Should the Cubans leave Angola and Namibia become independent the United States, after careful analysis of the issue, believed that UNITA's position would be strengthened.

The DIRECTOR-GENERAL questioned this analysis in view of the superiority of the FAPLA forces wrt technology and Soviet commitment to the delivery of hardware. What would Dr Savimbi's chances be under such a scenario?

DR CROCKER responded by saying that Dr Savimbi does not share this view. He believes that Cuba is essential to the MPLA. That they do everything for the MPLA and can do nothing for themselves. Ironically the Cubans shared this view.

MR NAPPER pointed out that nothing in the current proposals of either the Americans or the Angolans made reference to a cease-fire between UNITA and the MPLA.

MR FREEMAN stated that the United States was satisfied that the military situation should agreement be reached would go in favour of UNITA.

DR CROCKER stressed once again the need for South Africa to respond to the Angolan proposals.

The DIRECTOR-GENERAL enquired whether a non-response on the Angolan document did not necessarily mean South African non-participation. The United States document was still on the table.

DR CROCKER suggested that the best way to test the Angolans and Cubans would be to give them a clear sharp response on the specific details of CTW. This would place the ball firmly back in their court. Dr Crocker urged the South African Government to reflect on the South to North re-deployment proposal as this was a new element.

MR FREEMAN speculated on the possibility that the Cuban command structure had changed the ATS and ATN distinction and now have changed their command structure. This would indicate a possibility for progress on the "plataforma" iro South North

withdrawal leading to total CTW.

DR CROCKER was of the opinion that the progress made towards CTW would not have been possible without the role played today by the SADF. They had been a crucial factor and although the United States could not say so publicly should CTW become a reality it would be largely due to their successes in Southern Angola.

DR CROCKER then turned to the question of "proximity talks". The United States had no specific idea as to what form they should take or at what level they should take place.

The DIRECTOR-GENERAL asked Dr Crocker as to what the United States' response was to Minister R F Botha's statement iro proximity talks.

DR CROCKER stated that it appeared to be a chicken and egg situation. The United States believed that the gap between the parties could not be narrowed without proximity talks yet our petition that this gap had to be narrowed before talks. Dr Crocker believed that the Angolans would at such talks be capable of making serious decisions while the whole concept could accede safe the movement towards an agreement. He also felt that the possibility existed that talks could begin at an official level.

The DIRECTOR-GENERAL agreed that the potential existed for an initial "softening round" at which officials could attempt to bring the sides closer together prior to the introduction of a more senior political input.

DR CROCKER suggested that various options and formats could be explored. The parties would conceivably consist of USA, Angola (with Cuban representatives as part of the Angolan delegation), and South Africa. The United States did not envisage SWAPO at all nor UN participation initially.

The meeting then adjourned.