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Cape Town
Republic of South Africa
February 21, 1983

SUBJECT: Personal Message to
H. E. R. F. Botha, Minister of Foreign Affairs
and Information
from Under Secretary of State Lawrence S. Eagleburger

The Secretary, Chet Crocker and I have studied carefully South Africa's assessment both of the current military situation in Angola and Namibia and, of even greater importance, your assessment of the long-range intentions of Angola, Swapo and the Soviet Union. It is of primary importance to us as well as to you to understand clearly Angola's intentions in these negotiations, as well as those of Swapo and of Moscow. This will be important to clarify in your direct meeting with the MPLA as well as our own discussions with them and our continuing contacts with Swapo and the Soviets. We are, of course, disturbed when we see clear evidence of Angolan and Swapo efforts to take advantage of your military restraint to try to improve their military position in the region. (We note that the South African Defense Force has already taken measures to deal with Swapo's incursions.)

I cannot say that we were surprised that the Angolans and Swapo have done so. It has been very clear to us and to you throughout that we were dealing in part with the maneuvers of a formidable global adversary, employing both political and military stratagems to try to work its will in Southern Africa, as in the rest of the world. Angola and Swapo are also, for their own reasons, seeking to put themselves in the best military position possible in the region at the same time that they are seeking to achieve their objectives in political discussions with you and with us. As Chet Crocker has discussed with Brand Fourie on several occasions, we are fully aware that South Africa, too, has--for understandable reasons--continued to take military precautions while seeking to achieve its objectives at the bargaining table.

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In our view, however, the fact that Angola and Swapo are seeking to improve their military position underlines the absolute necessity for South Africa and the United States to continue to seek to achieve our political objectives through negotiations with the parties involved. A combination of sharp political strategy in close coordination with keen military preparedness is at the core of our own approach to dealing with the Soviet Union worldwide. Indeed, provoked as we constantly are by the Soviet Union, we have nonetheless decided that negotiations on nuclear arms reductions are in our own interests and those of world peace. So we continue to persevere. So, we believe, must you--for similar reasons.

Taking fully into account the impact of the information that South Africa has regarding Angola's actions and intentions, we nonetheless believe that it is absolutely vital that the South African delegation to the Sal talks go fully prepared to pursue the political strategy of seeking reciprocal restraint as the essential step toward meaningful progress in our broader negotiations. This counsel on our part in no way precludes making the Angolan delegation fully aware that you know what is happening on the ground. If they want to talk about a ceasefire or withdrawals, this should be encouraged while firmly putting them on notice that restraint means restraint. This is, in our view, the best way to test Angola's seriousness and its ability to deliver. So far, in advance of an agreement, it will be difficult to maintain that the MPLA has been tested.

That approach assures South Africa, the United States, and the West of our continued possession of the international political high ground that we occupy as a result of your and our willingness to negotiate seriously and in good faith ourselves with all parties to this conflict, in pursuit of peace in the region. In a word, we need to be together, the people visibly working for peace in a troubled region while maintaining readiness to deal with whatever happens on the ground.

I would like to speak directly to the point of Unita and Dr. Savimbi. It was inevitable also that the MPLA would look at their negotiations with you in terms of how any agreement they might reach with you on a limited ceasefire and movements of forces might impact on the civil war with Unita. It is equally obvious that we must take that element into account in determining our own political strategy in these negotiations. In our view, the thrust of both Unita's recent military achievements and the possibility of some regional detente between South Africa and Angola has the cumulative effect of increasingly focusing attention on the inevitability of eventual national reconciliation between the MPLA and Unita as the only realistic outcome to the conflict that has raged inconclusively in Angola since 1975. Unita states clearly that it does not seek total victory in Angola; it seeks meaningful and secure participation in the national government of that

country. MPLA's objectives in that regard are to maintain power. At the same time, it is indisputably true and becomes ever more starkly clear to the MPLA with every passing year since 1975 that it cannot eliminate Unita, that Unita is a fact of life of Angola, and that the only way to deal with Unita in the end is to reach a political compromise with it. That is the thrust of history, the reality of the situation. In these circumstances the U.S. government views its task as one of encouraging the development of conditions that further national reconciliation. Frankly, this will never happen if each negotiating move is judged exclusively from the standpoint of whether it advances Unita's immediate tactical position. We think it highly unlikely, in any event, that a stabilized situation in Cunene Province can damage Unita since such stability is likely to be short-lived in the absence of progress on the broader negotiation we are conducting.

The Secretary, Chet, and I have discussed the message you passed us through Herbert Beukes that South Africa is reconsidering its negotiations with Mozambique, begun at Komatipoort in December. We deplore and regret the results of acts of terrorism, and have made it abundantly clear publicly that we will not support any double standard on cross-border violence in Southern Africa. It may be that at some point it will be necessary to conclude that the Mozambique government is not master in its own house and thus cannot negotiate with you the question of reciprocal cross-border restraint. In our view, however, it is premature to draw any such conclusion and the relationship between the Mozambique government and the ANC is an issue that could be very usefully discussed between you and the Mozambicans. It is our judgment that they are ready to do serious business.

My comments in this message obviously cannot deal fully with either the specifics or the deeper implications of the message you provided us February 19. On our part, we feel the need for discussions soon with you on these key political and military matters at an authoritative level. I have asked Chet to communicate with you and with Brand Fourie to pursue this further with you as soon as possible after your Cape Verde discussions with the Angolans. We would have preferred to meet even earlier, but it is clear to us that much will turn on the results of those discussions, particularly your assessment of the Angolan position as they hear from you directly your concerns about what they and Swapo are up to.