

SECRET

MEETING BETWEEN CAPE VERDE AND SOUTH AFRICA:
PRAIA, 23 FEBRUARY 1983

PRESENT:

CAPE VERDE

Gen. Pedro Verona Pires
Prime Minister of Cape Verde

Col. Silvino da Luz
Minister of Foreign Affairs

SOUTH AFRICA

Mr J van Dalsen
Ambassador B G Fourie
Mr D W Steward

THE PRIME MINISTER welcomed the South African delegation and said that Cape Verde recognized that South Africa was an African country. Solutions to African problems should be found in Africa and resolved between ourselves. He had requested this meeting because of the change in the status of our delegation. This development had caused apprehension within the Cape Verde Government. Cape Verde was interested in searching for peace. The Prime Minister was also worried about the press statement which had recently been issued by the South African Foreign Minister to the effect that the talks with Angola had only a tenuous chance of leading to an agreement. This did not accord with the interest in a settlement which was evident from South Africa's letter of 18 February 1983. The Prime Minister said that he had also contacted his "Angolan brothers" to find out whether they foresaw any problems with regard to arrangements for the talks and they had the same concerns about South Africa's new position as Cape

Verde had. However, their own attitude towards the talks had not changed. The Prime Minister said that he hoped that South Africa would analyse and appreciate Cape Verde's role in trying to bring about peace.

MR VAN DALSEN conveyed South Africa's thanks for Cape Verde's interest in promoting peace in the border area between Angola and South West Africa. South Africa was dedicated to obtaining peace on the basis of free and fair elections. This was the message which Foreign Minister R F Botha had conveyed during the last talks. That position had not changed. Our letter of 18 February 1983 set out the reasons for the change in our delegation but this in no way implied a change in our desire for peace. It would simply not be opportune for South African Cabinet Ministers to participate in talks while innocent people were being killed as a result of the escalation of SWAPO terrorist activities. It would be difficult to justify this before South African public opinion.

AMBASSADOR FOURIE pointed out that after the previous talks the South African Foreign Minister had appeared on television and had said that chances were good for peace and prosperity. If terrorist violence escalated while Cabinet Ministers were in SAL for discussions, the South African Government would have been laid open to criticism.

MR VAN DALSEN said that the South African Foreign Minister had instructed him to discuss this matter with Angola to find out whether talks could not be held in future to establish a climate for peace. South Africa was still very much dedicated to a settlement but had to address the problems which had arisen before proceeding with the matter which had been discussed on 7 December. Cape Verde was aware of the large measure of agreement which had been achieved in December. However, his delegation was not

empowered to discuss the implementation of these proposals. Instead it would concentrate on the creation of an atmosphere in which both parties could later proceed with the initiative.

THE PRIME MINISTER said that Cape Verde was now better informed with regard to South Africa's position. He thanked the South Africans for coming to Praia - something which surely had political significance. At least the South African Government believed that Cape Verde could be helpful. The Prime Minister pointed out that we live in a difficult world, plagued with economic and security problems. Local conflicts were being used in the struggle for zones of influence. The great powers were not interested in peace. What then should the role of small countries be? The world was certainly heading for disaster if people could not understand one another. Within this context Cape Verde believed that it could help to promote peace in southern Africa and thereby help to preserve world peace. He was grateful for the delegation's visit particularly in view of Cape Verde's insignificance. Another reason why Cape Verde wished to talk to South Africa, lay in its wish, not only to stop the war, but to prepare for the future. How could we prepare a basis for the future - through military means and the humiliation of defeat or through compromise? Cape Verde accordingly promoted direct contacts between South Africa and Angola. However, some people were worried about these contacts. Not everyone agreed with this process, including some who were considered to be South Africa's friends and some who were the friends of Cape Verde and Angola. Cape Verde was worried that it would not be able to defend its role in promoting direct contacts between South Africa and Angola if these countries no longer had the political will to proceed with the negotiations. Cape Verde would soon be attending the Non-Aligned Conference and would be in a

difficult position if positive guarantees were not forthcoming. Even Cape Verde's friends would be critical. Cape Verde, Angola and South Africa were destroying the myth that the world had to depend on Moscow or Washington. But these powerful countries did not forgive easily. Cape Verdeans had a saying that whenever the sea breaks upon the rocks it is the mussels which suffer. Cape Verde maintained a strict policy of nonalignment. The Angolans were open to discussion - the atmosphere was very good and Cape Verde wished to encourage this spirit of confidence in the hope that things would go smoothly.

MR VAN DALSEN expressed his thanks and said that Cape Verde had already been a great help. In fact, the South Africans felt that they were among friends and would be grateful if they could make use of Cape Verde's facilities in the future. South Africa certainly agreed with the Prime Minister's analysis of the world situation but it had to address the particular problem in its own part of the world. South Africa wanted peace as soon as possible. It didn't want a process of experimentation - it wanted permanent peace. Angola needed peace more than any country in the area. The purpose of the present meeting would be to create the atmosphere in which we could go forward.

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