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MINISTER

MEETING WITH DR JONAS SAVIMBI : PRETORIA
12 APRIL 1984

1. I met with Dr Savimbi at the suggestion of the South African Defence Force in Pretoria on 12 April 1984 to discuss with him general developments concerning Angola as well as the compilation of letters which he plans to send to various African and other leaders.
2. I gave Dr Savimbi a full review of recent Foreign Affairs developments concerning Angola and UNITA. He was particularly interested in international reaction to his recent speech as well as reports of tension between the Soviet Union and the MPLA Government. I also described to him in detail our talks with the Cape Verdean Government and their perception that the MPLA Government is serious in its intention of removing the Cubans from its territory. In addition I gave Dr Savimbi a review of recent developments at the JMC, including the background to South Africa's decision to move the JMC Headquarters south to Evale. I also told him of recent discussions which I had had with Mr Rogers, the United States' National Intelligence Officer for Southern Africa and with Mr Jeremy Varcoe, the Southern Africa Desk Officer at the British Foreign Office. I told him that the United States was particularly concerned about recent activities of UNITA and was anxious that the JMC should succeed. I said

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that from Mr Varcoe's comments it was clear that the British still have an unrealistic perception of developments in Angola.

3. Dr Savimbi then gave me a briefing on recent developments in Angola. He said that during the past week or so UNITA had noted that Cuban and Russian elements were no longer involved in operations against his organization. Earlier there had been incidents when the Cubans had apparently refused to come to FAPLA's assistance. The situation around Texiera da Sousa was particularly significant and it was clear that a major battle was developing for the town which is strategically situated on the Benguela railway and the Zaïre border. The FAPLA defenders were not being assisted by the Cubans or the Russians and had been ordered by the Government in Luanda to defend "the motherland of Augustino Neto". This was apparently the same order which had been given to the defenders of Cangamba just before it fell. Dr Savimbi said that he had been in contact with members of the Central Committee of the MPLA since February. Many members of the Central Committee favoured negotiations with UNITA and this question was regularly discussed within the Committee. However, on each occasion Rodrigues Kito had spoken against any rapprochement with UNITA because of his claim that the JMC process would soon lead to the implementation of Resolution 435, which would in turn cut off UNITA from its South African sources of supply. Dr Savimbi said that he gained the impression

that the MPLA really wished to ensure that the JMC process would succeed and that it was exerting pressure on SWAPO in this regard.

4. Dr Savimbi then raised the question of the letters which he planned to send to members of the Contact Group. I said that there was a natural reason why he should write to them. Dr Savimbi had pointed out in his speech that Cuban withdrawal was the only obstacle to the implementation of Resolution 435, and that the civil conflict in Angola was the main obstacle to the withdrawal of the Cubans. It was therefore reasonable that the Contact Group countries, which had an interest in the implementation of Resolution 435, should as a practical matter seek to address this question by supporting discussions between the MPLA and UNITA. I added, however, that there was very little advice which South Africa could give to Dr Savimbi on how to present his case. Dr Savimbi thanked us for the notes which we had prepared for his speech, which he said had been helpful.

5. Dr Savimbi then asked what our views were on how he should deal with the British. Members of the Foreign Office had already been in contact with his representative in London with regard to the release of the British prisoners whom he held. They planned to send Sir James Scott-Hopkins, a member of the European Parliament, to visit him to secure their release. Dr

Savimbi's attitude was, however, that Sir James was his friend and did not have official status. He would accordingly prefer it if the British could send a Foreign Office official to see him. At the same time, he realized that the apparent holding of hostages did not help him with the promotion of his image in Britain and in Western Europe. He accordingly wanted to arrange the release of the prisoners as soon as possible and stressed that they were not hostages but had been captured by him for their own protection. I agreed that it would be in his interest to release the British prisoners as quickly as possible, particularly if they could then tell the press after their release of how well they were treated by UNITA and what the real circumstances were in Angola.

6. Dr Savimbi then asked what should be done with regard to the Czech hostages whom he still held. Five of the Czechs were ill and the others had not adapted well to captivity. He wished to get rid of this problem since it was now becoming counter-productive. It was suggested that he might seek to bring about a release through the good offices of the West German Government. It was recalled that Mr Genscher had expressed a personal interest in this matter and it was thought that by using this tactic UNITA might improve its relations with Bonn. UNITA's representative in Bonn was recently expelled and it might be possible to change this situation.

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7. At the end of our discussion Dr Savimbi expressed his satisfaction with the exchange of views which had taken place. He said that developments often worried him but that these worries were dissipated as soon as he had had the opportunity to speak with his South African friends.

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