

NATIONAL PRESS CONFERENCE BY THE HONOURABLE P.W. BOTHA,
MINISTER OF THE RSA ON THE TALKS BETWEEN THE FIVE
ERN POWERS AND THE RSA GOVERNMENT REGARDING SOUTH WEST

CA. 19.10.1978

Ek het saam met my kollega sekere inligting om nan u te verstrek.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I shall endeavour to provide you with the necessary information on discussions of the past three days, between the five foreign ministers and representatives of the Republic of South Africa. I want to say the discussions were candid and of vital importance, but took place in a courteous and relaxed atmosphere. I can see no reason why further talks shall not take place in future. I think these discussions since Monday contributed towards better relationships. It is true that Mr. Vance of the United States and I met twice in private discussions which to my mind could help clear up a number of important matters of common concern between our two countries. I'm making available to you firstly a copy of a full statement of what I told the Five on the first day when I welcomed them to South Africa. I think a copy of that statement has been circulated. I shall quote a number of the more important paragraphs from that statement.

Secondly I shall read to you the joint statement on which both delegations agreed, and the South African Cabinet was informed on this morning. We have already made available that statement also to the ambassadors of the countries concerned. We also had discussions with representatives of most political parties from the South West Africa at a meeting we had with them last night and deliberations with them proceeded this morning under the leadership of my colleague and the Minister of Foreign Affairs. They were fully informed.

Thirdly I shall make a short but important statement on behalf of the South African Government which I yesterday submitted to the Five for their information before they left. I'll first deal with a few paragraphs of the first statement in welcoming the Five to South Africa. I started by welcoming them and then said: "It is the sincere hope of our Government and peoples that your historic visit will accomplish the rediscovery of the Cape of Good Hope its strategic importance and its friendship to the free world. I'm also very glad that some of you found it possible to visit Windhoek and to have discussions with representatives of those most directly concerned with the future of South West Africa. Before we come to specific points I should like to express my views to you as leading members of the western world on some salient factors affecting the strategic situation in Southern Africa. South Africa is part of the free world and is anxious to discuss problems that have arisen between us and the rest of a family of nations, on the basis of mutual respect. We have understanding for the points of view of others, and hope that on their part those who are animated by goodwill would appreciate the real nature of the great problems which face the Southern African sub-continent." Then I referred to the year since South Africa became a unitary state following the act of Union in 1910, and I stated further more that "It is perhaps ironical that a current dispute with the United States and the United Nations can be traced back to a war in which South African forces acting on behalf of and in concert with Great Britain seized what was then German South West Africa, and held it as captured territory until it was turned over to South Africa's

the end of the First World War. During the First World War this country brought upon itself a bloody civil war in which some of the best people of South Africa died as a result of our participation on the side of the West, and more specifically because the government of the time conquered South West Africa." I went on to say that "From that time until the present year South Africa has been concerned with and responsible for the security of the territory of South West Africa. For many decades this was not a serious problem, only in recent years as the security of South West Africa become affected by new developments in the Southern African strategic context. These new developments to which I refer concern of course the entry of Soviet Russia into Africa and more especially into Southern Africa". I doubt fully with the strategic position resulting from that, and I said that "I cannot ignore the dramatic build-up of the Soviet Blue Water Fleet in the Indian Ocean which does not concern only African strategists but from all the reports available to me, is very much a matter for concern for Nato who have drawn up contingency planning for the protection of the Oil Route around Southern Africa"

"Russian intervention in Angola through their Cuban surrogates clearly had only one purpose. This was no war of national liberation with so-called freedom fighters supported by the USSR against so-called Colonialist oppressors. The Portuguese had gone and the issue was - who was going to rule in Angola - the pro-Western UNITA or FNLA, or the pro-

COMMUNIST DISPLAY The Russians were determined to get MPLA into power, and having cocked their noses at the West, they did so." I dealt with that fully and the consequences following the Angola situation.

"South West Africa together with Angola, if the Soviets and Swapo succeed in their efforts, South West Africa together with Angola would provide the USSR with a solid block along the West Coast of Central and Southern Africa enabling it to be used at will to the detriment of Southern Africa and the free world.

It would for example control South West Africa's mineral resources including its uranium," and I dealt with a number of other aspects of the matter. Then I wish to draw your attention to page 9 where I stated: " Before concluding my remarks I wish to draw your attention to the substantial progress of South West Africa and its peoples have made under the guidance of my country.

South Africa's support is not only a matter of money, but also embraces railways, harbours, post and telegraph services, research in various directions, water supply, power supply and development. General economic development such as banking, agriculture, mining took place under the leadership of the Republic of South Africa.

Since 1961 to 1977 (not to mention earlier statistics) the RSA contributed to South West Africa development in the form of special subsidies, loans for electrical supply, building of main roads, the sum of not less than R637 million. This amount does not include the more or less R200 million we are spending annually on our peace-keeping forces to maintain the

security and peace in South West Africa against Marxist insurgency.

Let me be quite candid with you, an independent South West Africa with a responsible Government will have to take cognisance of these facts.

An irresponsible government motivated by Marxist theories, can only destroy South West Africa and its infrastructure in the same way it brought chaos, hunger, lack of health services upon and destroyed potential economic growth in Angola and Mozambique."

Then finally on the next page I said: " - let me advise you, we have a practical vision for Southern Africa.

And I explained the background for what I have to say at the end on page 11.

"We believe in a community of free nations in Southern Africa where proper health services, training of people, higher standards of living, proper housing of families, opportunities for work and economic progress will be possible.

Our neighbouring states in Southern Africa need technological scientific and other forms of assistance. They need capital for sound development. They do not need terrorists who exploit their territories.

The Republic of South Africa is capable of contributing its proper share in a positive way.

My advice is - stop shouting at us; stop creating stumbling blocks in our way.

There is a different more wise approach to deal with us.

Our different indigenous peoples, White, Brown and Black have never been slaves.

We do not intend being slaves now or in future.

That deals with the first statement I made in welcoming the Five to South Africa. I did not attend all the discussions from time to time my colleague, the Minister of Foreign Affairs led the discussions. But when they found it necessary they came to me for consultation and for advice.

I'm now going to deal with the joint statement by the South African Government and the Five Foreign Ministers regarding South West Africa.

It is dated 19th October 1978. On 25th April 1978, the South African government announced its acceptance of the proposals of the Western Five for an internationally acceptable settlement (The recording stopped here).

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JOINT STATEMENT BY THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT AND THE
FIVE FOREIGN MINISTERS REGARDING SOUTH WEST AFRICA :
19 OCTOBER 1978

1. On 25 April 1978 the South African Government announced its acceptance of the proposals of the Western Five for an internationally acceptable settlement of the Namibia problem. However, when the United Nations Secretary-General published his Report on the implementation of the proposals, the South African Government expressed concern that certain aspects of the Report were not in accordance with the Western Proposal. The areas of concern were the size of the military component of UNTAG, the question of consultations, the proposal for police monitors and the date of the elections. The statement by the Secretary-General in the Security Council on 29 September addressed itself to clarification of these areas of concern.

2. The Five Foreign Ministers and the South African Government discussed these clarifications further in order to establish common ground on the implementation of the Report of the Secretary-General.

The following main points were examined:

(i) Police Force:

While the South African delegation considered the number of civilian personnel envisaged for police monitoring responsibilities excessive, it believed that the Secretary-General's explanatory statement in the Security Council had removed South Africa's pre-occupation with the character and role of

the personnel concerned. It had become clear that the functions of the existing police forces would not be affected.

(ii) Consultation:

The Five intimated their agreement that they were committed to the principle of fair consultation, emphasizing that this has been re-affirmed by the Secretary-General in his introductory statement of 29 September in the Security Council. This would cover, inter alia, the composition and actual size of the military component of UNTAG. The Five intimated that they would seek confirmation that their interpretation coincided with that of the Secretary-General. On that basis the South African delegation felt that the question of consultation could be resolved.

(iii) Troops:

The composition and the actual total figure of UNTAG would be determined by the Secretary-General after consultation by his Special Representative with the Administrator-General in the light of the prevailing circumstances.

3. The South African Government and the Five Foreign Ministers accordingly be.....

(This was typed off the press release, not from the tape. These paragraphs were not recorded.)

"...lieve that it would now be appropriate for the Secretary-General's special Representative, Mr Ahtisaari to resume his discussions with the South African Administrator-General of Namibia within the framework of Security Council resolution 435 which endorsed the Secretary-General's report. The aim of these discussions would be to work out the modalities of the proposed elections under United Nations supervision and to fix a date for these elections. The Five Foreign Ministers therefore intend to recommend to the Secretary-General that he should instruct Mr. Ahtisaari to proceed to Windhoek as soon as possible. In addition, it was regarded as appropriate to recommend to the Secretary-General that he begin consultations on the composition of the military component of UNTAG.

The South African Government stated that the planned December elections must be seen as an internal process to elect leaders.

The South African Government will thereafter use its best efforts to persuade them seriously to consider ways and means of achieving international recognition through the good offices of the Special Representative and the Administrator-General.

In implementation of this goal the Special Representative would consult with the Administrator-General on all aspects of the Secretary-General's Report (including the fixing of a further election date).

The Five Foreign Ministers stated with regard to the unila-

teral elections in December, that they saw no way of reconciling such elections with the proposal which they put forward and which the Security Council has endorsed. Any such unilateral measure in relations to the electoral process will be regarded as null and void."

That brings me now to the final statement I wish to make and this has been submitted to the Ministers of the Five. So they have seen it already yesterday and they knew that I was going to make it on behalf of the Government of South Africa and the Cabinet endorsed it this morning.

1. "The South African delegation stressed that the reduction of South African troops in South West Africa would only commence if and when a complete and comprehensive cessation of hostilities have been brought about.
2. Secondly, a continuation of violence can therefore interrupt and delay indefinitely the reduction of South African troops and therefore conceivably also the holding of elections.
3. To prevent any party from unilaterally delaying the holding of elections it is therefore necessary that a firm election date be fixed. This date must then be adhered to irrespective of whether there is a cessation of hostilities and the consequent reduction of South African troops.

I thank you, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Q. You give no guarantees here, Sir, on behalf of the South African Government, do you, that there will be United Nations elections in Namibia if politicians in Namibia don't want them?

PM It has been agreed ... in the joint statement that there will, after consultation, be a fixed next election.

Q. You say you will use your best efforts to persuade them seriously to consider ways and means ...

PM As I know the South West African Leaders, they are anxious to have international recognition, they are wise people and I have full confidence that they will co-operate with the South African authorities.

Q. Will UN elections take place, Sir. Do you believe they will?

PM If we deal with these matters in a friendly way and in a spirit of good will, I think we can solve the problems.

Nicholas Ashford from the LONDON TIMES. With reference to paragraph 4 in the Joint Statement, what will be the status of the leaders who are elected in the December elections? Will they form a constituent assembly with the aim of drawing up a new constitution?

Under the proclamation it is possible; but the South African Government has the final say in these matters.

Prime Minister, you made special reference to the private meetings with the Secretary of State - could you go into a bit more detail about whether you feel there is a special change in the relationship between South Africa and the USA or in fact whether there is any substance to the speculation about whether you may meet privately with the President?

I am not prepared to divulge at this moment what has been discussed by Mr Vance and myself. I don't think it would be wise, all I wish to say is that I think we understand each other, we are prepared to talk to each other and I hope that this will lead to further talks.

Just to sum up your position, if I may ask you to sum up your position again; from your last statement you seem to say that the date for the first election must be adhered to presumably that refers to the December election?

Right.

Are you then saying that after that you will then have a further UN sponsored election?

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I say that after proper consultations between the Secretary-General's Representative and the Administrator-General of South West Africa we will do what we said in this Joint Statement on page 3: The South African Government will thereafter use its best efforts to persuade the elected leaders to consider ways and means of achieving international recognition through the good offices of the Special Representative and the Administrator-General.

Q. Just to follow that up. Do you think that there is a possibility that if you hold the December election, the United Nations is then going to consider it null and void and might then not be interested in a further election?

PM No, I can't see, if the door is open for consultation and deliberation why the United Nations will suddenly decide to close the door.

Q. So you think that you can hold both elections with UN approval?

PM It is possible.

Q. You say that, in your statement on page 3, that you will use your best efforts to persuade the elected leaders - the men who come out of the December elections - to go along with the UN proposals for UN elections. Did you give the Five a guarantee that you would be able to persuade them? And if so, what was it?

PM How can I give anyone a guarantee that I can persuade another man? I cannot guarantee that I can persuade you.

This aspect of the plan, it was acceptable, I take it?

This whole plan, this whole approach, took place with the Five in a spirit of goodwill. We explained to the leaders of South West Africa last night and this morning that we are going forward in a spirit of goodwill and open doors - and open options - and I believe that as wise men, who are determined to do the best for their territory, and in their own interest in South West Africa, they will act accordingly. I have no doubt about their wisdom and their determination to do the best for their country.

Have you had any indication from the West as to what its attitude would be if there are moves to introduce sanctions against South Africa in the Security Council?

I want to reply to that question in this way. Firstly, I cannot see any reason for sanctions if you deliberate, if you still consult. Secondly, if sanctions are applied against South Africa it will be a question of cutting off your nose to spite your face.

I understand that this last statement is the South African position, presented to the Five yesterday, but that there is not agreement on it?

I specifically stated that this is a statement made on behalf of the South African Government with the knowledge of the Five, not with their agreement.

You refer here to the necessity for consultation between Mr Ahtisaari and Justice Steyn. Does that mean that there must be agreement?

Well, if they act in a wise way, they will try to come to terms with each other and it always remains South Africa's right to say whether South Africa agrees with it or not.

Mr Prime Minister, I refer to paragraph 3 of the Joint Statement on the fixing of the date. Before September it appeared that the Secretary-General had recommended an unilateral date for election. Is it now clear that a date can be fixed only bilaterally both by South Africa and SWA?

I think that it is the understanding that they shall have a mutual agreement on the date in a proper way.

Mr Prime Minister, what will be Justice Steyn's position in the territory after the December elections?

He will be Administrator-General.

Sir, referring to the last paragraph of your Government's statement, is it conceivable then that if hostilities do not cease and if South African troop presence is not reduced, that the South African Government will convene a second round of elections? In effect again?

Yes

(Inaudible)

You see, the position is this. This is an attempt to come to terms with the West first of all, and to come to terms with the international community, but surely South Africa cannot escape its responsibility to guarantee the security of the people of South West Africa? And that is why we made the

statement that we are going to see that peace and good order is maintained in that territory.

Q. So this election then would be for an independent government of the territory ...

PM If it is agreed upon, yes.

Q. And possibly without UN troops in the territory?

PM No! No! You have it all wrong. No, I never said so. I refer you to the Joint Statement on which we have agreed.

Q. Mr Prime Minister, point five of the Joint Statement where the Five Foreign Ministers say they see no way of reconciling the December elections with the original proposal and the Security Council endorsement of that; would you comment on that and what would the implications be?

PM They are entitled to their opinion and we respect it - and I hope that they respect our opinion too.

Q. What does it mean when they say that they will regard the elections as null and void?

PM That is their opinion in terms of the United Nations decision.

Q. The UN plan for independence specifically calls for a cease fire before elections. Now your statement says that elections will take place irrespective of a cease fire. Are you therefore not pre-empting the UN plan?

PM We also made proposals and we married some of the proposals. I hope it will lead to a marriage between us and the Free World.

Q. If you get as far as elections supervised by the UN - if SWAPO won those elections - what would your reaction be?

PM Any political party that takes part in a constitutional way, which registers as a party and takes part in that election in a constitutional, peaceful way, will be allowed to go to the polling booth with its supporters - and they have the right and the possibility of winning the election.

Q. But what would your attitude be if they do win the election?

PM My attitude would be to accept the verdict of the people of SWA but I am not going to allow foreign interests to foist a minority government with guns on the majority of the people of SWA.

Q. Mr Prime Minister - regarding paragraph 2 of the South African statement - as regards the reduction of South African troops - has there been any discussion on what happens to Namibian troops - I mean to Owambos - or the commandos - and local home-guards?

PM No that is a matter for discussion and we are training SWA's own defence units.

Q. So they are not part of the South African Army?

PM They are not part of the South African Army - we only train them for the purpose of letting SWA have their own defence force.

Q. If sanctions were to be imposed - do you feel that South Africa could withstand them?

PM You know that is a very hypothetical question because that depends on what type of sanctions we have in mind. You can have selective sanctions - you can theoretically have general sanctions applied by the whole world but do you think that that is possible? I don't think so.

Q. Then you are not at all concerned?

PM Oh! I am always concerned when people threaten us - because I believe that by deliberation you can avoid applying sanctions in the interests not only of South Africa - but in the interests of the Western World too - because they need South Africa.

Q. Are you frightened about the possibility?

PM I am not frightened, Sir. I am interested in peace.

Q. I want to get back to the question of consultation on troops in Namibia - does the figure of 7500 no longer exist?

PM The figure of 7500 has never been accepted - that is a question that can be determined after proper discussion.

Q. Does that mean that the West are now prepared to change this figure?

PM No - I think that the West must be seen to be prepared to discuss the matter with us.

Q. Prime Minister, what was the reaction of the Western Five to your statement that no South African troops will be removed without peace?

PM They took note of it.

Q. Mr Prime Minister could you give us in practical terms what the process would be after the December elections before a possible second election could be held under United Nations' supervision? What are the practical steps that would be taken?

PM Well, as I see it, my colleague can add to it, if he so wishes, we have the first elections, they elect their leaders, we call those leaders together and we advise them as we promised to do. But in the meantime the discussions and deliberations between the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the Administrator-General also take place. I hope so. I fervently hope so and then I hope that that would lead to an agreement on when the next stage could be reached and what steps should be made and taken to achieve it.

Mr Prime Minister could I have your clarification on two points in terms of the negotiating process with this new body to be elected in December? One is, what status does this group have as far as there is a Secretary-General in the territory and their relationship? Two, is there any problem or contradiction in your mind between having the Big Five or the West or the UN negotiating through a body that they have already said that they will not recognise?

Let me put it to you why we would like to have this December election. The United Nations adopted on different occasions motions stating that Swapo is the sole representative of the Namibian people. In South West Africa different political parties deny that and they say that they are the representatives of the people. In South West Africa there are also already elected forms of government stating that they are representing the people. The South African Government for its part says that we believe that there are recognised leaders other than Swapo representing the majority of the people. So what is now better, than to call a general election and to allow the political parties to put their cases to the 90% already registered voters and allow the voters to decide who their leaders are? What more democratic can you expect? What more fair approach can you expect than to allow South West Africa to decide for itself?

After the December election who or which party will have sovereignty in South West Africa and what would be the status of the Administrator-General thereafter?

PM. No party will have sovereignty until South West Africa is a sovereign independent state, but you can have a majority party in the country.

Q. And when would South West Africa become a sovereign state?

PM. When the people decide after all these steps that have been agreed upon have taken place.

Q. After the December election or after the UN election?

PM. I hope that we will have discussions on these matters as we promised on page three of our joint statement.

Q. This has still to be decided?

PM. But I can't decide for South West Africa when they must be independent. I want the people to decide.

Q. ... Mr Prime Minister, do you intend to go to the United States to meet President Carter and if you are invited do you believe that the present statement could affect that invitation?

PM. I'm not prepared to say what President Carter wrote to me in a letter addressed to me. To whichever country I go, I will go only on one condition. I go there as an equal and self-respecting representative of a free country.

Q. Mr Prime Minister, Mr Prime Minister, is South Africa happy with the outcome, did it meet your expectations?

PM. I think that we have made progress and as long as you make progress in life, you must be optimistic about the future.

Mr Prime Minister have you been able to give any guarantee to the West that you are not simply buying time to avoid sanctions and are to ultimately reject the UN proposals?

I gave only one guarantee to the West and that is the guarantee published in my first statement which you have in your possession.

... can you say when you expect further conversations with the Five?

Well, they're busy people and we're busy people.

Has there already been agreed to have further discussions possibly?

I said so in my introductory remarks that I hoped it would lead to further discussions.

Prime Minister do you think you have given the Western Powers enough ammunition to stave off sanctions against you by the United Nations?

I am not trying to give the Western Powers ammunition to stave off sanctions. I'm trying to come to terms on a reasonable basis of mutual respect with the rest of the Free World.