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LETTER DATED 8 MARCH 1979 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ADDRESSED
TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF SOUTH AFRICA

I have read your speech of 6 March to the House of Assembly which has been circulated at the request of your Government as a document of the Security Council (S/13148). While I do not wish to comment on the wide range of points made in that speech, I feel obliged to react strongly to one of your assertions which directly affects the United Nations Secretariat. I refer to what you generally term "scheming behind the scenes" in relation to the preparation of my report of 26 February (document S/13120) to the Security Council. In this connexion you state that this report was preceded by four drafts and quote at length from one of them. You appear to suggest that I deliberately omitted any express reference to the views of SWAPO on certain matters while nevertheless accepting or adopting them into my proposals, and especially into paragraphs 11 and 12 of my report.

I have to reject this accusation categorically. In the first place, reports to the Security Council on political questions invariably go through a number of drafts and revisions and much of the material included in the earlier drafts is often excluded from the final version. This particularly applies to the detailed statements of position by the parties concerned made in the course of a prolonged process of consultation. In such a process the positions taken at an early stage usually do not represent the positions taken at its conclusion. That is true in this case both in relation to the South African position and to the position of SWAPO.

Secondly, the position taken at one time by SWAPO, which you reveal as having been contained in the fourth revised draft of my report, was in fact known to you, having been published in the South African press shortly after it was expressed in Luanda. This position was not compatible with the proposal for a settlement (S/12636) and, as you will see from the letter from the President of SWAPO to me dated 6 March, it is not included in the SWAPO reaction to my report contained in that letter. The same applies to some of the statements made by Justice Steyn to my Special Representative in the course of the recent series of talks which my Special Representative held with him and with the South African authorities which are also not reflected in my report. Other examples of such unilateral statements during these talks will certainly be known to you and your officials.

It is especially unfortunate that you should apparently have misinterpreted paragraphs 11 and 12 of my report because, as I understand the statement which you made to Parliament on the matter, you appear to base certain of your objections to it on such misinterpretations. In particular, you have interpreted paragraph 11 of my report, regarding the restriction to base of SWAPO forces inside Namibia at the time of the cease-fire, to mean that SWAPO would be entitled, after the cease-fire, to introduce armed personnel who had not previously been based in Namibia to bases which would be established by the United Nations on their behalf. I must state that such a misinterpretation is directly contradicted by the immediately preceding paragraph 10. It is the converse of the report's intended meaning. No party to a conflict may expect to gain after a cease-fire a military advantage which it was unable to obtain prior to it.

After prolonged consultations with the parties, my object in my report of 26 February was to suggest means of overcoming the outstanding obstacles to the implementation of the proposal for a settlement of the Namibia problem. I must therefore tell you that I deeply regret the interpretation you have put upon the report and the events leading up to it, as well as the implication that there was some double dealing which involved the Secretariat of the United Nations. The United Nations is an open institution and has very few secrets. The substance of the various drafts of my report was widely known, although I do not know how the South African Government came to be in possession of all of the actual drafts which are, for obvious reasons, not normally given circulation outside the Secretariat. I do not, however, think this is important. What I have to take extremely seriously is the allegation of scheming, bias or deceit on the part of the United Nations Secretariat which once again I have categorically to reject.

As I stated in paragraph 17 of my report, the effective implementation of the Proposal is dependent upon the continued co-operation of the parties. In my opinion, the possibility of such co-operation would be gravely undermined were there to be a loss of confidence by any of the parties concerned in the impartiality or integrity of the United Nations. I would therefore repeat the appeal which I made to all parties in paragraph 18 of my report that they should exercise restraint and refrain from actions which might jeopardize the settlement. For my part, I shall continue with efforts aimed at bringing about a peaceful solution to the question of Namibia.

As your speech was circulated as a document of the Security Council, I shall circulate this letter in the same manner.

.....(Signed) Kurt WALDHEIM