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LETTER DATED 6 MAY 1978 FROM THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES OF THE  
PERMANENT MISSION OF SOUTH AFRICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS  
ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

On 5 May 1978 the South African Government responded to requests for details regarding South Africa's limited military operation against SWAPO forces in southern Angola on 4 May 1978.

The following documents are enclosed:

1. The response of the South African Government conveyed to the Governments of the five Western members of the Security Council in response to a United States request regarding South Africa's limited military operation against SWAPO forces in southern Angola, together with the annexure referred to therein (annex I).
2. The statements by the South African Minister of Defence, the Hon. P. W. Botha, issued in Cape Town on 4 May 1978 (annex II) and by the South African Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Hon. R. F. Botha, issued in Pretoria on 5 May 1978 (annex III), concerning South Africa's limited military action in southern Angola. These statements were annexed to the above-mentioned response.

Your Excellency will recall that, when I brought the different documents to your attention before the commencement of the 2077th meeting of the Security Council on 5 May 1978, I confirmed to you on each occasion that South Africa's limited military operation had been completed and that all South African forces had been withdrawn completely from Angola. Once again I wish to reiterate these facts.

I should be grateful if this letter and enclosures could be circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) J. Adriaan EKSTREEM  
Chargé d'Affaires

Annex I

Text of message conveyed by the South African Government to the Governments of the five Western members of the Security Council in response to a United States request regarding South Africa's limited military operation against SWAPO forces in southern Angola on 4 May 1978

1. Recently, and particularly following South Africa's acceptance of the Western proposals for an internationally recognized solution in South West Africa, the intensity of acts of violence and the frequency of border violations by terrorists had increased dangerously (see annexure). This escalation took place in spite of South Africa's efforts to secure a peaceful solution and the South African Government was confronted by urgent appeals from the leaders of South West Africa for protection. They were further profoundly dismayed and shocked by Mr. Nujoma's concluding statement to the special session of the General Assembly on 3 May 1978 that "SWAPO ... will persevere and intensify the armed liberation struggle ...". South Africa could no longer continue to ignore these pleas.

The action then taken had limited objectives and was carried out with limited forces including black and white South West Africans. It was mainly directed at the two most important SWAPO headquarters used for operations against South West Africa.

2. As expected the SWAPO base headquarters, Cassinga, situated 15 kms north of the mining town Techanutete, formerly called Cassinga, was an extensive SWAPO military installation, it contained formidable defence works such as trenches, bunkers and underground shelters. It was established beyond doubt that this base constituted SWAPO's main operational centre, responsible for over-all planning, logistics, communications and strategy.

Vast quantities of weapons and ammunition were found and destroyed and considerable documentation was found and removed.

The SWAPO personnel included women, in uniform, fully armed and actually fighting in the trenches. The dead included some of these. The personnel not killed were rounded up and disarmed. As they could not be evacuated, they were released when the South African group left. There were also a number of camp followers, including women, who apparently lived in the confines of the base. Some of them might have become casualties. A number of the children who were hijacked across the border on 23 April were found and, at their request, these were going to be taken back. Unfortunately, just as the final evacuation was in progress, an armed attack from the direction of Techanutete occurred, mortar, cannon and small arms fire was directed at the camp by this force. In these circumstances it was not possible to evacuate the children.

The second base, Chetequera, was the centre for the hit-and-run operations against western Owambo. Here too a well-prepared communist-type military base with trenches and interconnecting tunnels and large quantities of arms and ammunition were found. On the way back further SWAPO elements were mopped up.

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The documentary and other evidence, found at these SWAPO terrorist bases, is being analysed and further particulars about SWAPO involvement in acts of terrorism already committed and the planning for its future campaign of intimidation, including political murders etc., will be made available.

By way of example the following extract from one of the documents illustrates SWAPO's real intentions:

"SWAPO WILL WIN  
NAMIBIA WILL BE FREE

ISSUED BY GREENWELL MATONGO, CHIEF POLITICAL  
COMMISSAR AND DIMO HAMAAMBO, COMMANDER OF THE  
ARMED FORCES.

14 February 1978  
Moscow.

Notes taken during the address of MCC and youth leader,  
Cde. Ndali Kamati, at the Parade, Cassinga, R.P.A.

Comrade Kamati slogan-ed, then expressed his gratitude for having stayed in Cassinga for seven days.

- (a) He continued by remarking that the coming of many comrades abroad, is testimony to the great momentum with which the revolutionary trend is sweeping over Namibia. The celebration of 26 August, Namibia Day, right inside, testifies that the armed liberation struggle is also lived in by the non-armed comrades inside the country.
- (b) The Gang of Five - South African talks in New York

Commander Ndali said SWAPO has also been invited to the talks. He then said that the occupation of Namibia is actually led by the Gang of Five, U.S.A., Canada, United Kingdom, France and Germany. These are the same people who initiated the talks, these are the same people exploiting our mineral resources. These are supposedly now forcing South Africa to quit Namibia. Their move, however, follows realization that SWAPO would have to win. They would not like to see what happened in Angola being repeated in Namibia, as this could be detrimental to their economic interests in Namibia. They hope to get South Africa out peacefully and win the favour of SWAPO and to continue their exploitation of our resources.

In short, no genuine attempt can be made by imperialists to free Namibia ...

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... It is clear that no real independence can be gained plain sailingly. Countries like Malawi, Zambia, Zaire have only false independence symbolized by flags. Their economies are ran by their former colonizers. We must abide to our decision to fight even for 10 to 20 years if need be. Who is not determined should go and join the Turnhalle ..."

3. An urgent appeal is made to the international community to insist that SWAPO immediatcly cease further acts of violence against the Territory and the people of South West Africa. SWAPO cannot follow a dual strategy, i.e. to appear to be negotiating and at the same time delaying their reply and continuing brutal acts of violence and terror against the people whom they claim to represent.

4. In these circumstances it is urged that finality on the implementation of the Western proposals be reached as soon as possible. The sooner this is done the sooner the international community will be in a position to keep itself fully informed on what is happening in the Territory and for the speeding up of the process leading to free democratic elections and to independence by the end of the year.

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Annexure to annex I

Summary of incidents since January 1978

On 5 January this year the body of an Owambo man was found after he had been shot by a gang of terrorists. The body was found on a fence and a number of AK47 cartridge cases were later discovered near the body.

On 8 January a private car with 10 civilian passengers detonated a Russian landmine. Four of the passengers were killed outright and six were seriously injured. This and other mine incidents forced the Chief Minister of Owambo, Pastor Ndjoba, at the time to call for stronger action against the terrorists.

On 7 February the Owambo Minister of Health, Mr. Shiagaya, was assassinated with a Russian-made pistol after a political meeting in Owambo.

On 21 February a group of terrorists abducted 119 children and their teacher from the St. Mary's Mission School in Owambo. Three children later escaped and could tell how they were forced over the border and taken to terrorist training camps. Once again Pastor Ndjoba called for firmer action by the security forces.

On 3 March Sub-Headman Nangola Kanyala was killed by a group of terrorists. His body was mutilated and his wife and children abducted.

On 25 March another Sub-Headman, working for the South African police, was shot by terrorists using a Russian-made pistol.

On 27 March two terrorists assassinated the leader of the Herero people, Mr. Clemens Kapuuo. The attack took place at his home in Katutura just a short while after he and his tribal council decided on asking the Administrator-General for better protection of the political leaders of South West Africa. Before his death Mr. Kapuuo was a strong supporter of the total destruction of terrorist bases across the Angolan border.

On 18 April two Owambo children were killed by a Russian hand-grenade set by terrorists for a patrol of the security forces.

On 21 April an attempt was made on the life of Owambo's Minister of Justice, Mr. Tara Imbili, when a terrorist tried to plant a mine on the road leading to his house.

On 22 April a bus was hijacked on the road between Oshakati and Ruacana. The bus with about 70 to 80 people on board was taken to Angola.

On 24 April South African forces made contact with 20 terrorists approximately 10 km south of the Angola-South West African border. After a fire fight the enemy withdrew northwards over the border.

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On 24 April a vehicle of the South African forces was ambushed by SWAPO terrorists approximately six kilometres south of the Angola-South West African border. Security forces returned fire following which the terrorists withdrew to the safety of Angola territory. A South African soldier was killed in this incident.

On 28 April a South African Defence Force (SADF) patrol was attacked from a Cuca shop approximately 25 km east of Ruacana.

On 29 April shots were fired at the border post at Ruacana. Fire was not returned.

On 29 and 30 April landmines of communist origin were set to explode at the new homes built for the members of the Owambo Cabinet and the Legislative Assembly building at Ongwediva.

On 30 April a SADF patrol was attacked by approximately 10 SWAPO terrorists 45 km east of Enana. One SADF member was killed.

On 1 May heavy fire was brought down on a SADF patrol approximately 43 km south-east of Enana. A follow-up operation was mounted and the enemy fled over the Angolan border.

On 2 May the water pipeline running between Ondangua and Oshikango was sabotaged. This pipeline is essential for the livelihood of the local inhabitants.

On 3 May heavy fire was directed at the guard post and buildings at Ruacana, including structures of the water scheme. Several buildings were damaged. Fire was not returned.

Latest intelligence reveals that SWAPO has recently established three new bases in southern Angola close to the border. This confirms the pattern of consolidation which is a prerequisite for increased terrorist activity against South West Africa.

Over the period 1 to 3 May several landmines had to be lifted in the border area.

Annex II

Text of statement issued by the South African Minister of Defence,  
the Hon. P. W. Botha, in regard to South Africa's limited military  
operation in Angola

As a result of the ominous build-up of SWAPO forces in southern Angola and the extensive campaign of intimidation of the local inhabitants and the murder of political leaders in South West Africa, as well as the large number of border violations during the past few weeks, a limited military operation against SWAPO forces has been carried out over the border.

The limited operation was embarked on after large numbers of heavily armed SWAPO terrorists recently crossed the border, attacked our forces on Owambo and fled back to safety in Angola.

The Ruacana power station was also fired on and the buildings extensively damaged.

After the attack, the latest since SWAPO intensified its hostilities, we were forced to resort to follow-up actions.

I trust that the limited operation will leave those who wish to threaten us under no illusions.

We have already leaned over backwards to seek the solution along other lines and will continue to do so in the interest of peace in this subcontinent.

But the South African Government can no longer allow, with self-respect, emergency calls from peaceful leaders to remain unanswered.

We have a moral duty towards the people of South West Africa and cannot sit silently and with folded hands and see how peaceful citizens and leaders of this remote area are murdered, assaulted, kidnapped and threatened and intimidated by other methods of terrorism.

I have in the past while repeatedly expressed the hope that military bases will not be made available to terrorists in southern Angola but this apparently has fallen on deaf ears.

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Annex III

Text of statement issued by the South African Minister of  
Foreign Affairs, the Hon. R. F. Botha, in regard to South  
Africa's limited military operation in Angola

In all our negotiations, the Western Powers placed great emphasis on the necessity of achieving a cessation of violence. The core of the Western proposals is that the continuing violence and intimidation should cease in order to provide the people of South West Africa the opportunity to exercise their right to self-determination freely and without fear.

South Africa remains willing and ready to implement the Western proposals for a settlement of the South West African question, but we also insist that the terrorists cease their acts of violence.

It should be emphasized that SWAPO has not only proceeded with its preconceived programme of terror following South Africa's acceptance of the proposals, but it has expanded and intensified its violence on a broad front. SWAPO's response to our acceptance of the proposals for a peaceful settlement has been to commit more violence. Indeed, SWAPO prides itself on continuing and expanding its attacks.

I once again appeal to the Western Powers to urgently pilot their proposals through the Security Council. The people of the Territory are entitled to now embark upon and conclude the process which will lead to independence. In the meanwhile, South Africa cannot shirk its duty to provide the necessary protection to the people of the Territory. Without that protection they will be totally vulnerable and they will be the prey of ruthless repression through physical violence.

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