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LETTER DATED 20 MARCH 1976 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF SOUTH AFRICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE
SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to enclose the text of a statement issued by the Honourable B. J. Vorster, Prime Minister of the Republic of South Africa, at Cape Town on 21 March 1976 in regard to the question of the withdrawal of South African troops from the area of the Calueque dam in Angola.

I should be grateful if you would be good enough to have this letter (and annexes) circulated as a Security Council document in the usual way.

(Signed) R. F. BOTHA
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex I

Statement by the Honourable B. J. Vorster, Prime Minister
of the Republic of South Africa

It will be recalled that on 9 August 1975 while the Portuguese were still legally responsible for and were in fact the governing power in Angola, South Africa was, because of the complete breakdown of law and order, forced to occupy the Calueque dam site. We did this solely for the purpose of protecting the lives of the workers and of safeguarding the installations.

Immediately thereafter, the South African Government informed the Portuguese Government of the steps taken and urged them to take over this task. The Portuguese Government could not do so at the time and requested South Africa to continue its protective measures and to remain in situ until such time as they could assume this responsibility.

The South African Government has on a number of occasions stated its position clearly, namely that it was there only for the protection of the workers and the works and would withdraw from the area as soon as assurances were received that no harm would come to the workers, that the work would continue and that the flow of water to Owambo would be assured. It will be recalled that the Minister of Defence,* the Minister of Foreign Affairs, as well as myself, clearly stated South Africa's position. As recently as Sunday, 14 March, I outlined our position succinctly in an interview with the "London Sunday Telegraph". I stated that:

"they asked us to hang on until such time as they could do it. They never came. So it is solely for that reason and not for any ulterior motives that we are still there.

"We will withdraw our troops immediately steps are taken to safeguard lives and property; the moment that is done we will get out."

We have during the past few days received, through a third party, assurances which in general terms appear to be acceptable to us. We are checking whether we are interpreting these assurances correctly, and if this is so, South Africa will withdraw its troops also from the Calueque area not later than 27 March.

* The statements of the Minister of Defence of Friday, 12 March 1976, and of Monday, 15 March 1976, on the withdrawal of troops from refugee camps are contained in annexes II and III.

Annex II

Text of statement by Minister of Defence
released Friday, 12 March 1976

All the refugees in southern Angola whom the Portuguese Government found acceptable for repatriation to Portugal have now been transported out of Angola.

The remaining refugees who stayed in the four centres, Chitudo, Pereira d'Eca, Cuangar and Calai, are now gathered in Cuangar and Calai, near the South West African-Angola border.

Here the International Red Cross is caring for the refugees while the South African Defence Force is assisting with medical treatment and food supplies.

The International Red Cross is trying to find a solution with regard to these refugees within a couple of weeks.

With the refugee responsibility in Pereira d'Eca carried out without any interference, the South African forces, with the exception of elements at Calueque and Ruacana, now find themselves south of the border.

R.S.A. forces are still protecting the workers at Calueque and Ruacana and ensuring that the work continues until satisfactory arrangements can be made to maintain order there.

Obviously, the South African Defence Force is still positioned for the protection of the South West Africa border.

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Annex III

Supplementary statement by Minister of Defence on 15 March
(with reference to press reports that the International
Red Cross would take over two refugee camps in South Angola,
and to the subsequent statement by the International Red
Cross that it was not in control of the camps)

I reiterate the explanation as furnished to the press on Friday. The South African Defence Force has done more than its duty in connexion with refugees. We shall provide no further services at the two refugee camps after Saturday, 27 March.
