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LETTER DATED 25 MARCH 1976 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF SOUTH AFRICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to refer to our discussion yesterday concerning the presence of South African troops in the southern part of Angola and to confirm that the South African Minister of Defence made a statement in the South African House of Assembly today in regard to the withdrawal of the troops from Angola. The relevant parts of the statement read as follows:

As regards the Calueque area

"The South African Defence Force gave protection to the workers at Calueque in order to ensure the vital water supply to Owambo. In this connection it will be recalled that the Honourable the Prime Minister, in a statement released on 21 March, referred to assurances which we had received through a third party - incidentally, the British Government - and which broadly speaking, appeared to be acceptable to us. Before any final action on our side, however, we wanted clarity on our interpretation of these assurances.

"Since then we have obtained the necessary clarification through the Secretary-General of the United Nations. Seen as a whole, the assurances by the Government of the People's Republic of Angola amount to this - that it will not damage the hydro-electric project concerned or endanger the workers and that it will respect the international boundary. That Government has already indicated that it does not wish to harm the people of South West Africa by depriving them of the electricity supply.

"In these circumstances, the Government has decided that all our troops will be out of Angola by Saturday, 27 March 1976.

"South Africa's only interest is that the Calueque and Ruacana schemes, in both Angola and Owambo, should be secured. It is expected that after our withdrawal and when conditions in the area are again normal, it will be feasible to arrange practical matters concerning the scheme with those concerned."

As regards the refugee camps

"In order to prevent suffering when South Africa completely withdraws all

S/12024

English

Page 2

its troops from these camps, an appeal was yesterday again made to the Secretary-General of the United Nations to do everything possible to ensure a smooth and orderly takeover of the task which South Africa has had to perform alone for so long. It was very clearly put to him that the alternative will be chaos and suffering and that South Africa wished to state unambiguously in advance that it accepts no responsibility for this."

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

(Signed) R. F. BOTHA  
Permanent Representative