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LETTER DATED 31 MARCH 1976 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE  
OF SOUTH AFRICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE  
PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to refer to the statement by the Permanent Representative of Portugal in the Security Council this morning (1905th meeting) in connexion with the protection of the Calueque Dam in southern Angola.

That statement did not disclose any substantial divergence in the viewpoints of South Africa and Portugal on the principal issues relating to this aspect of the debate currently in progress in the Security Council, although there was a clear difference in emphasis, some differences of interpretation and several omissions in the statement. I wish to focus the attention of the Council on the elements about which there would appear to be no dispute:

Firstly, the Portuguese authorities were requested as early as April, 1975, to provide protection for Calueque Dam in terms of the international agreement on the development of the Cunene River, between Portugal and South Africa and they were unable to comply;

Secondly, the note delivered by the South African Ambassador in Lisbon to the Portuguese Government at the beginning of September, 1975, and copied to the Secretary-General on 5 September is, as far as we are aware, not disputed. In it South Africa welcomed the Portuguese decision that Portuguese troops were at that time in a position to protect workers in the area concerned; undertook to withdraw the South African personnel concerned in co-operation with the Portuguese commander, and commented on the practical question of provisioning the Portuguese force from South West Africa. An important fact to be noted in this letter is that South Africa expressed readiness to withdraw from Angola on 5 September 1975, long before Angola became an independent State;

Thirdly, the Portuguese in fact never came to Calueque in a protective capacity.

Because the Portuguese Government found themselves unable to assume this role, South Africa had no choice but to protect the workers and the construction work at the dam. After the Portuguese departure from Angola, the works and workers at Calueque still required protection. Immediately assurances on this, and related matters, were received, South African troops were withdrawn.

The Permanent Representative of Portugal apparently implies that because contacts between his and my Government concerning Calueque had been "at the highest level, through the diplomatic representatives accredited to the two capitals", South Africa could not rely on "imaginary statements of an unknown emissary of the High Commissioner in Luanda". I find it difficult to reconcile this attitude with paragraph 4 of the note of 2 September 1975, handed by the Portuguese Government to the South African Ambassador in Lisbon, and referred to both by the Portuguese Permanent Representative today and by me at yesterday afternoon's meeting. The extract I quoted then (S/PV.1904 at p. 53) reads as follows:

"4. If at the start it was not immediately possible for the Portuguese authorities to transfer military units to the above-mentioned area, they meanwhile had direct contacts in Windhoek between representatives of the High Commissioner in Luanda and the Pretoria Government. At present the Portuguese are at Calueque".

In other words the Portuguese authorities themselves admit that contacts took place between representatives of the High Commissioner in Luanda and the South African authorities.

I wish to reiterate that arrangements were made with the Portuguese authorities for them to assume protection of the Calueque Dam, and for South Africa to carry out the task until they arrived.

I should be glad if this letter could be issued as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) R. F. BOTHA  
Permanent Representative

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