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LETTER DATED 29 APRIL 1976 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE  
OF SOUTH AFRICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE  
SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to attach an extract relating to the question of South West Africa from the statement delivered by the Honourable B. J. Vorster, Prime Minister of the Republic of South Africa, in the House of Assembly, on 23 April 1976.

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

(Signed) R. F. BOTHA  
Permanent Representative

ANNEXURE

EXTRACT FROM THE STATEMENT DELIVERED BY THE  
HONOURABLE B. J. VORSTER, PRIME MINISTER OF  
THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA, IN THE HOUSE  
OF ASSEMBLY, ON 23 APRIL 1976

The idea is milling around very persistently in my mind that, since we transferred the administration of Walvis Bay to South West Africa in 1922, we should give very serious consideration in the recess to whether we should not repeal that Act. I am saying this for the simple reason that there are people in South West Africa, and in the outside world in particular, who adopt the standpoint that Walvis Bay belongs to South West Africa. I do not want there to be any misunderstanding whatsoever about this. Walvis Bay belongs to South Africa. At this moment I am saying no more than that this is simply an idea I have. However, it is an idea to which I shall give very serious thought during the recess.

For the rest my standpoint is still that the Conference is a matter for the people of South West Africa. My Honourable friend asked me, however, why I cannot act in South Africa as I am acting in South West Africa. Surely one cannot place these two on an equal footing with each other. Let us consider only a few of the facets of the situation now. South West Africa has a particular international character. Whatever our standpoint on the Mandate may be, and however we may differ in regard to it, the fact remains that South West Africa has a particular international character and that one may not ignore this. Times without number I have had to listen to the reproach that it is the fault of the Government that various peoples are living in various places in South West Africa, although those people have been living there since before the German occupation. My colleagues can confirm that the reproach has also been levelled at us that we are deliberately keeping the people of South West Africa separate and are not affording them an opportunity to become acquainted with one another. I said to Dr. Escher: very well, if that is the reproach - something which is not true - I shall go out of my way to bring the leaders of South West Africa together, for it is my policy that they should work out their own future. There is one thing I want to make very clear here today. If those leaders have worked out a future for themselves, even if I do not like the way in which they have done so, I shall accept it, for it is their land and their future. South Africa does not want that territory for itself. South Africa makes no claim to it. I said years ago at Keetmanshoop that the future of South West Africa would not be worked out in Pretoria or in the glass palace of the United Nations, but that it would, as far as the whites were concerned, be worked out in the Legislative Assembly of South West Africa. I was attacked on that standpoint, but it is the correct standpoint to adopt. I can inform this House today that I have not interfered in the composition, the agenda or the discussions, of the Conference, not in any way - directly or indirectly.

If I had done so, I would have violated the principle that the people of South West Africa must work out their own future. I cannot state it as my

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standpoint that South West Africa must work out its own future alone and that I shall not allow the United Nations to interfere, if I interfere in that regard myself. Until the peoples of South West Africa tell me that they have worked out their future, however, South Africa regards itself as being responsible for the law and order and security of the people of South West Africa. Therefore South Africa will not hesitate to take action or even to make laws to protect the public peace in South West Africa. There must be no doubt whatsoever about this. For the sake of the record I want to reiterate that South Africa is not there as an occupying power. South Africa is there as an administrative power, until such time as the peoples there decide their own future. As soon as the peoples of South West Africa tell me that they no longer want us there, South Africa will pack its bags and leave. But until that time arrives, South Africa has a task and a duty to fulfil, whatever the United Nations may decide.

I come now to the composition of the Conference. They themselves decided on a certain modus operandi. That modus operandi is theirs. If they want to bring in other people - whether I like it or whether I do not like it - it is their business. I am not going to interfere with that. I want to state my standpoint in that regard so that there need be no misunderstanding whatsoever about it. Because I believe that the peoples of South West Africa are aware of their responsibility, I do not believe that they will take any foolish decisions for South West Africa. They will have to realize that there is an enormous budget for which they will have to find the funds. They will have to realize that the services which South Africa is rendering there are services which they themselves would otherwise have to render. I believe that they will go about their task in such a way that they will not harm the future possibilities of South West Africa. It is a territory with infinite possibilities, particularly if one is able to provide the territory with water. This will, however, cost an enormous amount of money. Consequently I, personally, believe in the future of South West Africa. I do not believe that the peoples of South West Africa will allow the same situation as the one which arose in Angola to arise in that territory. I also believe that the peoples of South West Africa are alive to the need to ensure that chaos and anarchy do not arise in South West Africa.

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