

Yale-UN Oral History

Chester Crocker

James Sutterlin, Interviewer

July 20, 1998

Georgetown University, Washington DC

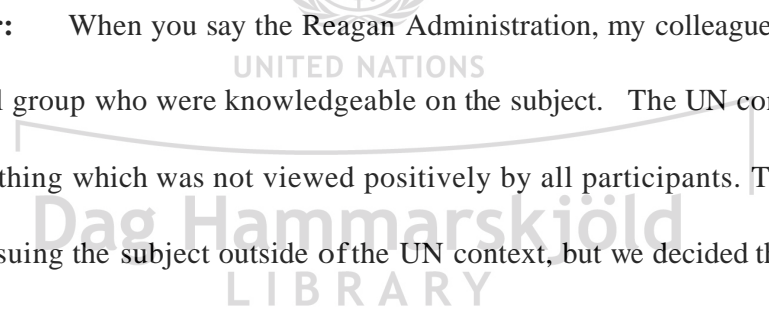
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Index: Namibia

1982 Agreement	10
African National Congress (ANC)	11
Angolan conflict	22-23
Apartheid	11,23
Bush Administration	8
Cold War	3-4,24
Communist Party of the Soviet Union	11
Congress, United States	2
Cuban Troops in Angola	1,4
Elections	16
Falklands War	7
General Assembly	2, 5, 13
Namibian Independence	1
National Party	
of Namibia	20
of South Africa	20
National Union for Total Independence of Angola (UNITA)	16,22
North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)	24
Organization of African Unity (OAU)	17
Peacekeeping	
In Namibia	1-2,4, 7, 9, 11, 13,23-25
Permanent Members	25
Reagan Administration	1-2,9, 12
Resolution 435	1-3,11,13,
South African/Cuban/Angolan peace negotiations	3-5,9-18,24
South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO)	2,9-10, 13, 17,20,24
UN Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM)	15-16
UN Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM II)	16
UN Security Council	1, 13,24
UN Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG)	22
Vietnam War	4-5

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James Sutterlin: Professor Crocker, I would like first of all to thank you for agreeing to participate in this Yale oral history project on the United Nations. I would like to start, really, by asking you a rather general question. In your book you refer to the 1981 decision to operate within a UN framework and Resolution 435 in pursuing Namibian independence. Were there wide differences among the incoming Reagan Administration on this?



Chester Crocker: When you say the Reagan Administration, my colleagues and I were a very small group who were knowledgeable on the subject. The UN connection was clearly something which was not viewed positively by all participants. There was some discussion of pursuing the subject outside of the UN context, but we decided that, in fact, our leverage would be enhanced by reliance on the plan agreed to by South Africa and approved by the Security Council. We always used the terminology that we were pursuing the independence of Namibia on the full basis of Resolution 435. There was a lively debate in the transition team, but the fact that we were prepared to operate that way gave us the ability to push for additions to 435, and to push the other side of the agenda, which was the presence of Cuban troops in Angola.

J8: When you say "additions to Resolution 435" you mean in tenus of the operational program that was developed in that relationship?

CC: Yes. For example, guarantees of impartiality by the UN during the implementation of the transition plan.

JS: Those were two questions that I wanted to pursue. This question of impartiality that was somewhat difficult, if I could say so, for the UN given the General Assembly's support for SWAPO and the various UN bodies established to protect Namibian interests.

CC: It made the whole question that I just referred to a lively debate initially.

JS: To come back to my initial question. At this particular point, the United Nations was not especially popular among some elements of the Administration and also within the Congress. Did the decision to deal with Namibia within the context of the UN spill over and influence these negative attitudes?

CC: No, I think that was part of an overall distaste. I mean, people used to ask me "Where are you feeling the heat from?" It often was from the right as well as from the left, and in the early months and years I was asked how on earth could Ronald Reagan of all people be associating himself with leftists at the UN, and so we were sensitive to that.

JS: You mentioned leverage, and that your leverage would be increased by staying within the context of Resolution 435.

CC: We wanted a fresh start, and we adopted what I have subsequently come to call the "fly-paper principle." When you have a recalcitrant party that holds the keys to movement, you have to get that party into the negotiations as they evolved in the 1980s. We came to understand that we had an ability maybe to get a hearing in Pretoria that they [in the UN] didn't have, or some of them didn't have. That began to change, actually, as time passed because Helmut Kohl and Margaret Thatcher had some credibility in South Africa.



JS: Continuing that, I think in the period of the contact group, the implied leverage was essentially economic.

Dag Hammarskjöld

CC: I have never understood that leverage; I have never really seen it. The economic sanctions imposed by the US Congress on South Africa and by other people's congresses came much later. The key Western powers were seen as the people with the highest general credibility in Africa, in that part of Africa.

JS: To what extent was the winding down of the Cold War, from your perspective an important element in bringing the Angolans and South Africans to negotiate seriously?

CC: That's a question I have given a lot of thought to and as I indicate in my book, progress on Namibia was well underway by the time you could say that the Cold War ended. In a sense I think that the Soviets were joining a moving train in May 1988. It was moving because Angola had become Castro's Vietnam, and our diplomacy offered the Cubans an exit.

JS: You mentioned the Cubans. I want to get a little bit out of the chronology I have established to branch off to them for just a moment.

JS: When the Secretary-General de Cuellar visited Castro in Cuba and had a rather extensive three-days of unbroken conversation with him, Castro painted a rather different picture of his position in Angola and said that, in fact, it wasn't really costing them much and if there were other places he could send as many troops with no great problem for himself. But on the other hand, he was perfectly willing to withdraw them, he had no desire to keep them there. That differs from your perception. Yours is based on intelligence reports or on what?

CC: Well, we are talking about different years, too. I think that mission took place in 1983 or 1984...

JS: It was a little later than that, it was about 1985.

CC: I have forgotten the exact year but what I am referring to are the breakthroughs of 1987 and 1988. We had had earlier indications that the Cubans would like to bid and to

be involved directly, and for them I think the key was to be an acknowledged party in this process. They weren't about to have Americans mediating between South Africans and Angolans, they would say, about issues of direct concern and interest to the Cubans, unless they were in the room. So, they were pushing for a seat at the table. That was the way we interpreted it. And it turned out that that was, in fact, important.

Also, I think I would not necessarily put high credence in what Fidel Castro was saying at that point about how maybe he could do this in five other countries. If you look at it, this was equivalent at its peak to a larger burden on Cuban manpower than the American presence in Vietnam at its peak. And they were bringing home tales of woe, they were bringing home awful scenarios of corruption and involvement in illicit trafficking, they were bringing home diseases not seen since the 13th century from central Angola, and it was not a pretty picture. So, he may have been beating his breast a bit in that discussion.

.IS: Now, you mentioned the question -- or perhaps I did -- of impartiality on the part of the United Nations and the problems that arose from the General Assembly actions. You in your book I think comment very favorably on the capacity of the Secretary-General to maintain the confidence of the South Africans as well as the other side. In Washington, or for that matter on your part, did you always see that distinction between what one might call the United Nations in its General Assembly mode and the Secretary-General?

CC: Yes. I think that is a very important distinction. The United Nations has a series of institutions and procedures that do not always endear it, and certainly did not always endear it, to American diplomats of any administration, I might say. It was a very strange entity, and it is changing, of course, today. But in many ways the mood was distinctly anti-American, and anti- those things that we cared about too, for that matter, whether in the Middle East or in Africa.

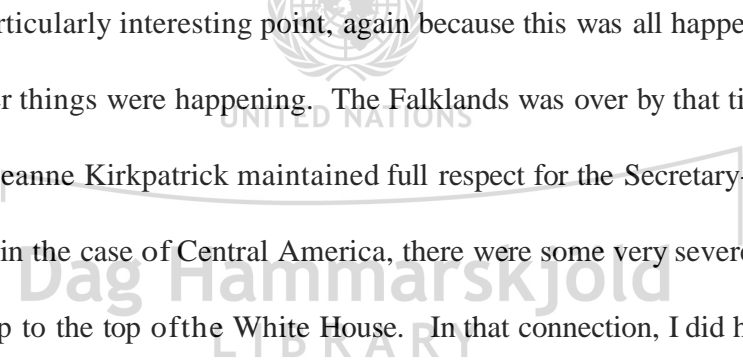
But leaving that aside, there were and there are some highly competent people in the UN system. There are also some fools and some inept people as there are probably in many systems -- and some corrupt people, I might add. But we found the Secretary-General and two or three others to be very, very helpful as, if you will, sounding boards, as partners, as people that you felt you could take into your confidence, provided they understood that we didn't want an army of others in the room at the time -- because we knew that there were agents inside that building, unhelpful people who would just pass every conversation back to their favorite East German lawyers for transmission to Luanda or wherever.

So, we took them, those we thought were interested in getting the job done, we took them very seriously. We visited with them quite regularly, we listened to what they had to say and I think they listened to what we had to say. They became part of a network, if you will, an informal network. I went out of my way to stay in touch with them. I think there probably were times when people would say, in Washington, "Why are you going to the UN again?" Well, I was putting money in the bank, quite frankly. I was putting money in the bank. I knew that this was appreciated in New York. We took de Cuellar seriously. Equally important, Jeane Kirkpatrick took him seriously, and

she was running our UN mission up there at the time. She thought it was worthwhile, and I think her successors did, *so...*

JS: Jeanne Kirkpatrick did?

CC: Yes. Because of Perez de Cuellar. Not because of "the UN." I mean, there is no such thing as "the UN" when you stop and think about it. It is like saying "There's a telephone call: it's 'The White House.'" You know? Who in the White House? It's the same in the UN.



JS: This is a particularly interesting point, again because this was all happening at the same time that other things were happening. The Falklands was over by that time, but I think it's true that Jeanne Kirkpatrick maintained full respect for the Secretary-General at that time, too. But in the case of Central America, there were some very severe problems that reached right up to the top of the White House. In that connection, I did have a question here. Then-Vice President Bush called the Secretary-General several times in connection with Namibia, more frequently in connection with Central America, but I'm talking about Namibia now. Was he involved in your team, so to speak? Did he have a special role?

CC: I wouldn't say he had a special role, but he was very much *au courant*. We briefed him regularly and he would give us his views. He did take a couple trips to Africa during my watch and he did a lot of helpful effort to get our case across at the highest

level or very near the highest level. He believed in what we were doing, and I think he liked to think he could help along here and there. He met a lot of visiting Africans, hosted them in his home as well as in the White House, and as you say he would reach out to people in the UN system as well -- which was basically helpful to us. I think it was important for people not to have the illusion that no one above my pay grade cared about these issues. We were working as an administration on a lot of issues, as you said, and these African issues were not always front-and-center, so it was helpful to us. I recall times when we were trying to bring parties into Washington who were very skittish about dealing with us, and we would take them right over to the Vice President's office. So, it's an example.



JS: Could you be a little bit more expansive on the value that you found in keeping in pretty close contact on a confidential basis with the Secretary-General throughout this rather long period?

Dag Hammarskjöld
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CC: It was part of the information exchange.

JS: You did get information from the UN -- from him?

CC: From him. But also from others. I don't want to make this sound only like it was about him, because it clearly wasn't. There were a couple of world-class people circling around this issue in the UN system for some very substantial period of time.

1S: I think you mentioned Omayad for one.

CC: Yes. And another of course there is the current president of Finland, who is an outstanding public servant, Martti Ahtisaari. And there were others. I mean, initially it was...

CC: Brian Urquhart -- who actually taught me a good bit of what I knew about the UN plan when I first came. And Brian would listen to and then after he'd had enough of listening to us he would tell us what he thought. Brian was very helpful, especially in the first Reagan term. After that, when he retired, he was less in the picture.

1S: Yes. And then it was somebody else. And his successor, in fact, paid a visit to Angola, just before April 1st, and was told by Nujoma at that point that SWAPO had bases in Namibia, which the United Nations did not believe. What was your impression on this, I mean on his claims as far as the presence of SWAPO troops in Namibia?

CC: It was fantasy -- it was the sheerest fantasy. SWAPO never liberated a square centimeter of Namibian territory. That whole April 1 fiasco was an effort, ex post facto, to rewrite the history books, to rewrite the diplomatic history, and to use diplomacy as a means to achieve something on the ground that had never been achieved in the war. It

was just a pack of lies, is what it was. And there are an awful lot of people out there prepared, because of their distaste for South Africa or their political correctness or whatever, to try and find some way to interpret April 1 on the basis of misunderstandings. Well, there was an agreement reached in 1982 which covered all this, and SWAPO was in the room and was party to it with its front-line state brothers and sisters, and it was a done deal. SWAPO may have thought better of it afterwards, or have found difficulty selling it. Maybe people inside the movement were not fully informed by their UN people of what they had agreed to. Any number of explanations are possible; they all involve essentially violating agreements.

JS: Right. And as you say, there were differing interpretations of this, which extended into the United Nations. Were you aware that there was considerable criticism within the UN Secretariat of the actions of Ahtisaari at the time of this breakthrough because of his agreement that released the South African troops?

CC: Well, it is totally predictable that there would be, because competent people of integrity are always going to have enemies in any system. And you had this gaggle, this solidarity-rally of people, who were always taking the side of SWAPO, and some of them were in effect inside the system. Some of them were simply in the diplomatic networks. But this all eventually passed, and once Ahtisaari was able to rely on the splendid diplomatic talents of Joe Legwaila to reach out to the African constituency first-hand, from the position of deputy, that this passed.

IS: And you welcomed Legwaila's appointment?

CC: Oh, *loe* was superb, absolutely superb. Yes, that was a good idea, although to have it *imposed* on you because of people nattering behind your back in New York, probably wasn't very pleasant for Martti, but Martti and *loe* were quite capable of working it out.

JS: That's true. Going now to the question of sanctions. In the United Nations, of course, there was constant pressure for ever-increasing sanctions against South Africa, partly because of Namibia, partly, of course, because of apartheid. What was the effect of this, these campaigns? They resulted, at least in the earlier period, in one or two US vetoes. What was the reaction, though, in Washington to this constant chorus in the UN calling for sanctions?

CC: It was seen pretty largely as exactly that, a chorus, an orchestrated chorus, and part of an understandable historical lobby effort, part of the effort of the ANC and its network and its friends, to isolate South Africa diplomatically and to keep the heat on through boycotts of all sorts, some of which had more impact, I think, on white South Africans than others. And of course this chorus was also well-subsidized by the European left, and by churches of various kinds, and by the Soviets -- by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union to call it very specifically what it was. And, you know, we saw it as kind of a phalanx coming down the road, and we would deal with it as we felt we had to. I suppose you could say that it had a residual value as pointing out to the South Africans that they

were in fact in the global dog-house, in case they needed reminding of that fact. And that only cooperation with the Reagan administration could get them out of that dog-house. So it did have that backdrop quality to it, you know: "There's the dog-house, OK?"

JS: And they had nothing to expect from the UN?

CC: Right, yes.

JS: You could say... In your book, I think you indicate that in the final phase you favored an even earlier date than April 1st as the date of the cease-fire coming into effect, of 435. Actually, the date proved to be very dangerous because the UN wasn't quite prepared -- and that was partly because of disputes over the cost, in which the United States played its usual role. Did you see, at the time, the problem that this could cause, that is of an ever-decreasing time-span?

CC: Yes, it is hard to say what's the chicken and the egg, here. I was uneasy about all the efforts at the last minute to sort-of-rewrite the plan, and the compromise that was come up with -- you know, "we'll use 4800 [peacekeepers] but we'll have more if we need them" -- was a classic diplomatic finesse, I guess you could say. What did concern me was not letting the thing drag on such that UN would not be able to deploy, and that's of course what ultimately happened. You can say it was the fault of the West, or certain members of the Western community, for raising the issue, but since the West pays for virtually everything that the rest of the world lives off of, and free-rides I suppose the

West has a right -- and I will say this with emphasis for your record -- to raise questions of cost: It is our tax-payers, our money. We don't owe it to anybody. We do it because we are citizens of the world. I don't like being in arrears, but let's face it, we are the ones paying the freight, and others are the ones coasting. So, I think we had a right to raise those questions.

The delays were occasioned in part by activities in the General Assembly, as you know, as well as the Security Council. I don't think we covered ourselves in glory, or anybody else either. The net result for de Cuellar was he was stuck with this, and with a date, and he didn't want to violate the date. It was agreed to go forward. None of us could have foreseen the depth of the strategic stupidity of SWAPO's move on April 1, or for that matter the ability to be looking the other way of the Angolan government, which could hardly have been unaware of what was being planned, or for that matter the Cubans and the Soviets.

We called them all on it at that meeting in Mount Etjo, Namibia, in April 1989, and said, "Where were you guys? What were you doing?" And we were told, and this was fascinating, that Fidel Castro was angrier than we were, that he was things at his subordinates, saying "What are you doing to my peace plan?" He was He saw the whole thing going up in smoke, and he didn't want that to happen because he wanted the deal done.

JS: Mount Etjo raises the question which actually goes back to before Mount Etjo: the implementation of 435 and other aspects were really dependent on the United Nations, for better or worse. But the UN role was usually that of observer in the meetings that took

place. A Secretary-General other than de Cuellar might well have objected to that, and I wondered what was the reason for that? Why was the UN kept off to the side, so to speak?

CC: We are talking about the very end of the process, or all the way along?

JS: All the way along, really.

CC: Well, the UN, as such, doesn't exist, as I mentioned, except through its representatives, and it would have been very difficult I think, for us, to include the UN in bilateral conversations with the two separate sides in the period before we got to direct talks. I wouldn't have wanted it, I would not have been confident -- I'm not sure *they* would have wanted it because we were dealing mostly with the issue of getting the parallel movement on the Cuban issue...

JS: Which the UN could not acknowledge.

CC: ... and the UN could not acknowledge it or at least it appeared that way. So, how would you do this? How would you have the UN involved? Very tricky. The UN -- I mean, I have ferried in my plane IJN people to meetings, they were there. We talked to them as often as we talked to the Russians, which was often at 2 in the morning or even later. Everybody was networking with everybody. People learned a lot -- because the UN people who really counted on this issue were masters of the game, they knew the

diplomacy, they knew not just the diplomacy in the abstract sense, but the personalities. They knew not just that you should call Tanzania if you want help on X, or Mozambique if you want help on Y, but *who* in Tanzania to call. That kind of expertise is rare, partly because some of these folks have been in their jobs a long time, whereas diplomats in Western governments tend to turn over every two, three, four years. So, they were involved, but as you say they were not involved officially.

Mount Etjo ... I have forgotten which of the parties, maybe it is in somebody's memoir... asked that they be brought in, and the UN was helicoptered in to the Mount Etjo meetings kind of toward the end of those discussions. But if it makes anybody feel good, we weren't involved in those discussions much either. We were there to make sure they came out right, but we and the Russians had a good time off in the corner by ourselves. The three parties -- Cuba, Angola, South Africa -- were the ones who worked out the Mount Etjo understandings.

JS: The one I had in particular in mind, besides Mount Etjo, was the meeting in Brazzaville, where I think Martti Ahtisaari was present.

CC: Very much so. I have got a of him on the plane with me, so I know he was.

JS: But at that meeting I think the plans for UNAVAM were developed, right? In the end, those plans didn't work very well, and I wondered to what extent was Martti able to participate as you were developing the ideas for UNAVAM there at Brazzaville?

CC: In what respect did UNAVAM not work very well?

JS: Well, it worked very well during the withdrawal of the Cubans but later when its functions changed to allegedly monitoring, Angolan monitors of the encampments of UNITA and government forces, didn't work very well at all.

CC: But that was a completely different process, as you know. UNAVAM II had a different mandate.

JS: Right, it did.



UNITED NATIONS

CC: And that whole different set of agreements was poorly handled from the get-go.

Half the agreements were never implemented; they went ahead and held the election anyway. I can give you chapter and verse on that. It's really a different diplomacy:

UNAVAM I worked well enough that the Cubans left ahead of schedule. I think it was a modest confidence-building measure essentially, which internationalized, for Castro's benefit, the dignity of a Cuban-approved withdrawal schedule, and internationalized, for South Africa's benefit, the parallelism of the two tracks. It got the job done. Just to make sure it would, we had our own national technical means watching.

JS: You didn't fully trust the UN monitors?

CC: We wanted to make sure we could figure out who is counting whom.

IS: Initially I believe there was a Spanish commander. He was not happy at first because he felt he had not been given sufficient ability to monitor directly under the agreements that had been signed.

CC: No, there was some concern about that. He is standing at the gate there, you know, counting Cubans as they get on the boat -- but what about nighttime? Are they coming back at night? I think there was a bit of a problem there. So, the only way you could really be sure was by watching the Cuban baseball fields from satellites as they get grown over with grass.

JS: As you say, going back now to this question of the SWAPO encampments before April 1st: It was your understanding on the American side that they were being monitored by the Angolans?

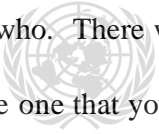
CC: Yes. That there was a requirement that they be monitored by the Angolans. Yes. Not the Zambians, because they had left Zambia by then, pretty much. But by the Angolans, yes.

JS: And did you have any doubts about that? That they were doing it?

CC: Well, the proof is in the eating in something like this. We didn't want to go into it presuming bad faith. The Angolans have a very special quality of efficiency, I guess is

the way I would put it, and so we had maybe some skepticism that it would work the way it might have worked had it been conducted in Holland. But they had an obligation and they had a lot at stake: getting the South Africans out of their hair.

JS: Going now to the OAD. The OAU was extremely unhappy at times with Martti Ahtisaari and because of that with the actions of the United Nations in the end phase. Did the *GAU* cause problems for you?

CC: No. I would say not. There was a network within the OAU. The *GAU* as such, again, is sort of like the UN. It depends who. There were various voices inside the OAD, but the one that was most strident was the one that you would hear from maybe the Zimbabweans, who were on this one maybe fronting for somebody else. You wouldn't necessarily hear from the Senegalese, who were amazed at watching Africa shoot itself in the foot in this  The real concern we had was with the front-line states as a group because they were the ones on the ground in the region. The OAU didn't bring any additional troops or diplomats, really, to bear. So, I'd look at it as part of the chorus, again -- the term you used earlier.

JS: And you give in your book rather full profiles of the front-line state leaders. I wondered if you would expand a little bit, though, on Dos Santos? The impression which de Cuellar has of him was that he was not a very effectual person, that he had a very hard time making decisions and when he did make decisions he didn't necessarily

carry them out -- although they had a good relationship because they could speak together in Portuguese. Would you agree with that? How would you characterize him?

CC: Well, he is a survivor, that's for sure. He was a compromise candidate when he came in. You know when Neto died unexpectedly, at the hands of Soviet medicine, Dos Santos was a young fellow, a Soviet-trained petroleum engineer and nobody thought he had a power base. He probably didn't have much of one initially, but throughout that long period -- I am talking now, twenty years -- he has moved amongst the different camps and factions, the dynasties, the clans as they call them, within his party, and established his authority and done pretty well for himself. But there were times that I totally agree with the characterization that you mentioned, where I would just shake my head and wonder if there was any capacity for decision. He just wouldn't make up his mind. Maybe that's partly because no decision is itself a decision. Maybe it's partly because he was unable, literally unable, to do what he would have liked to have done. He may have been prevented from doing what he would have liked to have done by hard-liners or by Cubans or by Russians, who knows. It was a very obscure system, to us, very hard to read, and there were very definitely different views within it.

JS: To what extent did the South Africans come to you and complain about the UN? About various acts... again I realize I am talking generically now, but about "The UN is causing us problems...." In fact, Pik Botha wrote extremely, extremely critical letters to the Secretary-General, so... Well, did they bring their complaints to you?

CC: Sure they did. More in some years than in others. It would depend on whether they saw the prospect of something imminent happening that was important. It also depended on the nature of politics inside the National Party. A lot of this was domestic, and a lot of it was the Namibian wing of the National Party stirring up the South African wing of the National Party. What they were looking for was, you know, to score some points for essentially domestic reasons. Quite often the abrupt letters that would How into UN headquarters were a part of Pik Botha, the Foreign Minister, his effort to demonstrate at home that he was being tough on the UN, which was a whipping boy. But they would quite often bring their concerns to us. And vice versa -- we also heard a lot from the UN system about matters that the South Africans were about to do A, B, and C, and "What are you going to do about it?" kind of thing.

JS: Well, that brings me to the next question -- what, if anything, did you try to do to control the South Africans in that period, immediately following the SWAPO incursion, when the SWAPO were taking fairly aggressive actions, to put it mildly.

CC: Oh, you are talking about 1989?

J8: Yes. Did you try to, as the Secretary-General was trying to do, did you try to restrain them at all, or not?

CC: Well, we pointed out to them that they were right on the edge, you know. I think it's fair to say that Margaret Thatcher, at that point, probably had more stroke with the South Africans than we did. She was there on April 1.

JS: She was in Windhoek, right?

CC: Yes. She was in Windhoek, and she made a terrific difference in the way this *whole* thing played out, both because she didn't want the whole thing to go down the drain, and she was very tough on that point with the South Africans. And because she was quite clear in her commentary to the Secretary-General and to Martti Ahtisaari. These people had broken the agreement, therefore she was very direct.

JS: She was very direct and very supportive of the release of the South African troops. But there was in that following weeks and even months, there was the problem of the so-called Koevoet people, who allegedly had been disbanded but who were there. Did you have conversations, as the Secretary-General did, with the South Africans about this particular problem?

CC: Yes -- we said "Follow the agreements." We pushed them to follow the agreements, and that in fact it served their interest not to be seen as the people that everybody was complaining about but rather the party that was going along with their commitments under the plan. I have to say to you that I left public office on April 20,

1989, so a lot of the history after that I was not directly involved in. I tracked it closely but I wasn't in office.

IS: I know, that's why I am not including any questions about the actual performance of UNTAG, because that was after you had left.

CC: Although, on balance, it was not a bad show, not a bad show at all, one of the best UN performances overall.

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JS: Moving now to the different but related problem of the internal situation in Angola, de Cu611ar felt that reconciliation of the Government and UNITA was essential if there was to be peace in Angola. He pushed this thought in various conversations with Dos Santos and with several front-line state leaders. Did the United States, with its considerable influence on Savimbi, try to bring the two sides together?

CC: We tried very hard to move the issue of reconciliation and see if it couldn't become an *African* issue, recognizing that to have a Western super-power demanding something of the Angolans might not be as easy for them to swallow, but if Africans step forward and say "We will oversee a process of national reconciliation between African brothers in Angola" maybe it could get somewhere. There were some efforts made in that direction in the early 1990s and 1989, but it didn't really get anywhere. But the sequence

of these things was to get foreigners out of these countries first, and then let the countries deal with their internal problems. That was the sequence which we had as a premise from the very beginning in 1981. You don't push the apartheid issue first; apartheid cannot be the number one issue, sequentially. Now, who am I quoting when I say that? I am quoting Julius Nyerere and Kenneth Kaunda. On my first orientation trip to the region as Assistant Secretary, they said, "Mr. Crocker, do Namibia first, and then we'll talk about how we are going to cope with the issues of racism and apartheid." And that was the sequence we did. But we did it our way. We said we have got to solve the regional issues, cross-border warfare, South Africans in Angola, Cubans in Angola, and so on. And once you do that, then there is no more excuses. And that was the sequence that was followed in Angola and then it was followed again in Mozambique, and of course in South Africa itself.

JS: And from that point of view, the UN connection again was useful because the UN could be useful in connection with Namibia. As far as the internal situation in South Africa: more difficult. Right?

CC: More difficult. Because of Article 2, paragraph 7.

JS: A final question. And I really would appreciate a very frank answer. What problems did you have with the UN in connection with Namibia?

CC: The UN was a stage in which -- in addition to the people we have talked about -- but it was a stage in which a drama was being played out, a drama of what you might call 'non-aligned diplomacy.' As well as cold war diplomacy -- both together. And the problems we faced were to win our battles. And we won some and we lost some; we had a mixed record in terms of the way debates would unfold and resolutions would be recorded. But I look back at the summer of 1982 when we were able to go up to New York, we camped out for six weeks, we got front-line states' governments to send their best people to New York for a similar amount of time, and SWAPO and the South Africans, and we in fact negotiated all those 82 understandings informally in the corridors of the UN or in various UN missions in New York. People would say at the time that I was nuts to spend all that time up there, but we got things done because we were associating ourselves with the aura of legitimacy, if you will, that the UN represents. And that's a price I was prepared to pay.

JS: Do you think that has potential carry-over effect to other crises around the world?

CC: Well, these days, we are ten years later, it is so much so that maybe it's overkill. Because there may be times when the UN could become an obstacle to getting something done if you can't get unanimity on it. For example, should NATO be able to act in Kosovo? That is an interesting question to consider. I would never want to be the American official who said that other members of the Security Council have a veto power over American foreign policy. So, that's a tough issue.

JS: And yet there is the question of legitimacy, which you just raised.

CC: That's right; that's right. When you are who we are, you will probably want to have the best of both worlds.

JS: My final question relates to that: the enabling resolution was sponsored by the five Permanent Members. How was this stage-managed? Was this an American idea, that the five should in fact be the ones that did it, to get them all involved?

CC: Yes -- you may have to ask somebody else that question. It may have had to do a bit with the Russians pushing themselves in as co-equal godfathers on this one. I don't know who would have opposed it apart from non-Permanent Members. It's one of those things that the big powers are fond of asserting their prerogatives. But as to exactly how the conversations unfolded and who resisted and so on, I really don't have the detail in my head.

JS: Do you have any other general comments or specific comments that you would like to record for history here that relate to your experience in connection with Namibia and the UN that we haven't covered?

CC: I think we have covered a lot. I didn't maybe mention as much as I might the fact that often other countries assigned their very, very best people to New York and that was where the action was, rather than London or Washington, and so that was an additional

reason to be up there. When I would go up there and pay courtesy calls on the Secretary-General or others in the UN system I also usually touched based with some of those key permanent reps from other countries, because they were serious people worth talking to. And maybe those same countries did not have serious people in Washington, not worth talking to. So, it's a question of different countries' decision-making systems. The repository of real expertise on Namibia might in other governments often be in New York, whereas in our government it was in the African bureau. But it's just a function of history and circumstance, really.

JS: But it is an interesting point, and it's true in other cases as well.

CC: Oh, I'm sure. Yes.

JS: Thank you very, very much.

CC: You are most welcome.



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Name Index: Namibia

Ahtisaari, Martti	9-11, 15, 17, 21
Botha, Pik	19,20
Bush, George	7-8
Castro, Fidel	4-5, 13, 16
dos Santos, Eduardo	17-19,22
Kirkpatrick, Jeane	6-7
Kohl, Helmut	3
Legwaila, Legwaila Joseph	10-11
Neyere, Julius	23
Nujoma, Sam	9
Omayad, Hisham	9
de Cu611ar, Javier	4-8, 13-14, 17-22,26
Reagan, Ronald	2,9
Savimbi, Jonas	22
Thatcher, Margaret	3,21
Urquhart, Brian	9



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