

The General Assembly will recall that Resolution 385 embodies in its terms the following essential elements: It calls for free elections, under the supervision and control of the United Nations, to be held for the whole of Namibia as one political entity in order that the people of Namibia may freely determine their own future; it envisages the establishment of the necessary machinery within Namibia by the United Nations for the supervision of such elections, and of conditions that would enable the people of Namibia to organize politically for the purpose of such elections; it envisages the withdrawal of the illegal administration of South Africa and a transfer of power to the people of Namibia with the assistance of the United Nations; and it demands that South Africa, in the interim, comply with the provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights — release all Namibian political prisoners, abolish the application of all racially-discriminatory and politically-repressive laws and practices, and accord unconditionally to all Namibians currently in exile for political reasons full facilities for return to their country without risk of arrest, detention, intimidation or imprisonment.

From the outset, our five governments have recognized that we had no mandate to enter into negotiations or to make any agreements regarding Namibia. We were acting as a result of the responsibilities we bear as members of the United Nations Security Council. We have acted as an informal contact group and it has been our intention, clearly expressed to all parties, to bring this exercise within the scope of the Security Council at the earliest feasible time.

I believe it would be useful for me to provide to the Assembly a résumé of our experience over the past 12 months and of the evolution of this matter. At the outset, our efforts were greeted with mistrust and suspicion on all sides and, in particular, on the part of the principal interested parties, the Government of South Africa and SWAPO. Indeed, each was convinced that our efforts were designed to deliver Namibia into the hands of the other without regard for their interests, or for the interests of the Namibian people as a whole. I wish to emphasize this fact as it serves as a benchmark for measuring the distance we have come since that time (and that distance is very considerable).

On April 7, 1977, our five governments presented to South African Prime Minister Vorster an *aide-mémoire* expressing our belief in the necessity of a Namibian settlement in keeping with Resolution 385 and thereby acceptable to the international community. We emphasized that the activities of the Turnhalle Conference did not meet those standards and informed the Government of South Africa that, in the absence of an early South African agreement to pursue an internationally-acceptable solution, the five would be obliged to consider very seriously the measures to be taken. Initially, the South African Government indicated that it would be willing to engage in further talks with the five governments but that it would not interfere with the Turnhalle process.

After further informal exchanges, the five determined it would be necessary for them to form a contact group and to embark upon more detailed discussions with South Africa on the possibilities of moving towards the stated objectives. To this end, a contact group comprising senior officials of our governments and including senior