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the issue should not delay the long-sought-after independence of Namibia. We consider that all aspects of the question of Walvis Bay must be subject to discussion between the South African Government and the elected government of Namibia. We have, furthermore, obtained assurances that the strength of the South African force in Walvis Bay will not be increased during the transitional period and that Namibians in Walvis Bay will be able to participate in the political life of the territory during the transitional period, including voting in the elections.

The Governments of Britain, Canada, France, the Federal Republic of Germany and the United States of America give our unreserved backing to the proposal we have transmitted to the Security Council. We believe that the proposal provides an effective and pragmatic basis for implementing Resolution 385, while taking account of the interests of the parties involved and of the special circumstances associated with the decolonization of Namibia. So far as we are concerned, South Africa's presence in Namibia is illegal and must be ended. At the same time, we have to recognize the facts of life — that South Africa controls and remains in Namibia and has done so for 60 years. The proposal is the result of lengthy and intensive consultations with the interested parties.

Our five governments are now presenting this proposal not as a basis for negotiation but as a practical means of implementing Resolution 385 and therefore bringing about the independence of Namibia in an internationally-acceptable manner and in the very near future. We believe it is essential now to proceed urgently in order to forestall any counterproductive developments that might precipitate an internal settlement with all the repercussions for peace in the area that would follow and that would result in the continued suffering of the Namibian people.

We are fully aware that our proposal will, in one element or another, cause difficulties to the principal parties. Nonetheless, in our discussions, we have narrowed the differences between the parties to the point where the reasonable middle ground has clearly emerged. It has been embodied in our proposal. It is now a question of political will; South Africa, SWAPO and all other Namibian groups must decide whether to accept this proposal as a means for an early and peaceful resolution of the question, or face the tragic alternative of many years of violence and turmoil.

We must appeal to all members of this Assembly to devote their energy to what is possible. We are not asking anyone to sacrifice principles; we are not advocating the perpetuation of current abhorrent practices. On the contrary, we urge all members of the international community to seize this opportunity to bring to a very early end what we have repeatedly condemned in this hall. We wish to see within the next few months the people of Namibia — all of the people of Namibia — enjoy their fundamental right to a peaceful, freely-determined existence within an independent and sovereign Namibia. We, for our part — and, we hope, with the assistance of every member of the international community — shall continue to exert every effort to this end. Let us not fail to answer the call of the Namibian people in their hour of need.

Shortly before arriving in this hall this morning, I was informed that formal acceptance of our proposal by the South African Government was communicated to

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