



Statements and Speeches

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THE SITUATION IN NAMIBIA

Notes for an Address to the Security Council by Stephen Lewis, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations, New York, June 13, 1985.

...As a member of the Contact Group, Canada has been intimately involved in the plans for Namibia's independence. We therefore wish profoundly that the United Nations' efforts to end the conflict and to replace the illegal regime should soon succeed. On that central point there is no room for doubt; our commitment to achieving independence for Namibia under UN auspices is sacrosanct.

Recent events in Namibia and Angola, however, give cause for disillusion verging on despair. We have been discussing the same plan for Namibian independence for the better part of a decade. That is frustrating for all of us...for all members of the Council. But any level of frustration which we may endure is as nothing when compared to the plight of the Namibian people and the continued denial of justice which they experience. Such denial is all the more reprehensible when it defies both international law and the international community.

Yet, as if such contemptuous intransigence were not enough, we are now informed that there is to be another interim government in Namibia. Other than wilful provocation, what purpose does that serve?

Canada has already stated its rejection of the so-called interim government which is, we understand, to be inaugurated in the coming days. On April 19 last, the Right Honourable Joe Clark, Secretary of State for External Affairs, made our position clear:

"We regard unilateral measures taken by the South African government in relation to the establishment of constitutional bodies and the transfer of power in Namibia to be null and void. Arrangements that may be established as a result of such measures cannot have any status whatsoever under the UN settlement plan."

As the Secretary-General notes in his report, Canada strongly supported the position he took on this matter. The evasive and dissembling response given by the government of South Africa was entirely inconsistent with the proposal which the five Western governments submitted to this Council on April 10, 1978. So, Seven years later, we are faced yet again with measures which are unacceptable to the international community, which challenge the UN plan, and which cannot conceivably succeed.

But that's only the half of it. While these steps are being taken in Namibia, we receive word that South Africa is withdrawing its forces from Angola — a step which we and this Council have long called for, a step we would warmly welcome, as we would welcome a total South African disengagement from Angola. However, the appearance was masked in duplicity. We now have sad and vivid evidence that