

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 representatives of our New York missions, went to South Africa during the period April 27-29 for discussions of most of the issues associated with the Namibian question and of the elements embodied in Resolution 385. At the conclusion of those discussions, in an important development, South Africa indicated the intention to forgo the implementation of the Turnhalle Constitution through the proposed legislation; to instead establish a central administrative authority in Namibia; and to hold territory-wide elections, with direct United Nations involvement for a constituent assembly, whose task it would be to decide upon a constitution for Namibia.

I wish to emphasize that during the period April 1977 until January 1978, our five governments took no position whatsoever on elements which might lead to a practical implementation of Resolution 385. We made clear to each of the principal parties and to all others that we were exploring attitudes and ideas and that we would take no position. Our means of consultation and exploration evolved as the exercise progressed. For example, following the first round of discussions by the contact group in South Africa, we subsequently engaged in discussions with SWAPO, the United Nations Secretary General, representatives of Tanzania, Zambia, Mozambique, Angola, Botswana and Nigeria, and as well other internal Namibian groups on the results of the initial exploratory talks with South Africa. Those early consultations were particularly important in providing us with an understanding of various concerns. Further talks took place in Southern Africa and in New York between the contact group of the five and the principal interested parties as follows: with South Africa in Capetown June 8-10, 1977, with SWAPO in New York August 8-11, 1977; with South Africa in Pretoria September 22-26, 1977; and with SWAPO in New York October 14-19, 1977. Following each round of discussions, we again provided full briefings to all parties and states concerned, including the members of the Security Council and the Council for Namibia.

In late November and early December, the contact group carried out an exhaustive round of consultations and discussions with African countries in a position to assist in the effort to bring about a negotiated settlement in Namibia.