

representatives of our New York missions went to South Africa during the period April 27-29 for discussion 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 forego the implementation of the Turnhalle Constitution through the proposed legislation, to establish instead 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 that 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. During the period November 21 – December 12, they met in the relevant capitals with President Nyerere of Tanzania, Foreign Minister Chissano of Mozambique, President Khama and Vice-President Masire of Botswana, President Kaunda of Zambia and Prime Minister do Nascimento and Foreign Minister Jorge of Angola, and with Head of State Obasanjo of Nigeria. They met once more with South Africa and twice during that period with SWAPO.

Following this exhaustive round of consultations and discussions, the five governments determined that the areas of concern of the different parties had become so apparent – and the differences between them so narrow – as to make it advisable for the five to take a position on what they considered to be a pragmatic, reasonable and fair means of implementing Resolution 385. Therefore, during the month of December, the five governments invited South Africa and SWAPO to participate in discussions with them in New York. Each party was informed that it was the intention to hold similar discussions in New York during the same period with the

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