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MINISTÈRE DES AFFAIRES EXTÉRIEURES

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ADDRESS BY  
AMBASSADOR MICHEL DUPUY,  
CANADA'S PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS  
DURING  
SECURITY COUNCIL CONSIDERATION  
OF THE QUESTION OF NAMIBIA,  
NEW YORK,  
APRIL 27, 1981

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Mr. President,

My delegation wishes to thank you and, through you, the Council for permitting Canada to participate in this debate the outcome of which may be of critical importance to the lives and futures of many people.

At the outset, Mr. President, my delegation wishes to express its appreciation for the statesmanlike manner (which in numerous cases has called forward your excellent sense of humour) with which you have presided over these deliberations. The relations between our two countries have always been warm and friendly -- in part measure due to the close family links of so many of our peoples.

Mr. President, as one of the initiators and drafters of the settlement plan for Namibia in 1978, it is with the deepest regret that, three years later, we find the Security Council is still having to consider this issue. Namibia should long since have become independent and joined us in the United Nations.

Since the inception of the effort to achieve an internationally accepted settlement, Canada has worked closely with France, the Federal Republic of Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States. The efforts of the Western Five, as we have become known, have profited from the support of the Secretary General, the United Nations Secretariat and from close co-operation with the African Group, particularly the Front Line States and Nigeria.

Canada regrets the failure of the Geneva talks and is deeply concerned over South Africa's intransigent attitude which has blocked implementation of the United Nations' settlement plan and heightened tensions throughout Southern Africa. Without an internationally accepted settlement in Namibia, the situation can only deteriorate, leading inevitably to an intensification of the armed conflict and to growing regional instability. The South African position is legally, politically and morally untenable and cannot be long maintained.

While referring to the question of propriety, however, my delegation does feel obliged to express its concern that the Council chose on the opening day of its deliberations on this issue not to allow all concerned parties to the Namibian question to address the Council under Rule 39 of the Provisional Rules of Procedures. Canada believes strongly in the principle of universality as an underlying tenet of the Council's role for impartial deliberations and settlement of disputes.

Mr. President, Canada remains fully committed to the pursuit of a negotiated settlement in accordance with the principles of Resolution 435. However, it has become apparent that progress towards a settlement will only be made if the transitional process is fair and the result satisfactory to, and respected by, all Namibians. Accordingly, Canada, with our colleagues in the Five, will be examining possibilities for strengthening the existing plan in order to give greater confidence to all parties in the future of an independent Namibia.

Active consultations among the Western Five are continuing to determine how a negotiated settlement might best be pursued. The complexity of the situation calls for carefully considered judgments on the part of every participant. The next steps in the effort could affect the course of events in Southern Africa for some time to come.

Canada believes that the way must be left open for the pursuit of an internationally acceptable settlement. It is with that in mind that we contemplate with deepest concern the call for sanctions before this Council. Such a course, we believe, would probably put an end to United Nations' efforts and could indefinitely delay progress towards Namibian independence.

The frustrations of the international community over the failure to bring the United Nations' effort to a successful conclusion are fully shared by Canada and our colleagues in the Western Five. At this time, when the chances of early progress seem low, the negotiation process must be intensified and every effort made to build on the substantial body of work which has gone into the issue so far. It is essential to retain support for a negotiated solution and to avoid unnecessarily putting obstacles in that path. My Government urges the Security Council to reiterate that support and reaffirms its own commitment to the ultimate goal of self-determination for the Namibian people.

Thank you, Mr. President.