



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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From the Secretary of State

Dr Bishop Huddleston

I have now had the opportunity to study the Anti-Apartheid Movement Memorandum, "Britain and Namibia" which you presented to me during our meeting on 1 May. I should like to comment on a number of points in the Memorandum and set out the reasons why, although we agree on the importance of securing the implementation of SCR 435, our views differ on the means by which that can be most effectively achieved.

First of all, we do not accept, as the Memorandum suggests, that the United Kingdom has, or had, any responsibility for the original League of Nations Mandate. In 1920 this was conferred on "His Britannic Majesty" to be exercised by South Africa and was accepted by "His Britannic Majesty for and on behalf of the Government of the Union of South Africa". As South Africa was in practice an independent and sovereign state by 1920 (it was formally recognised as such in 1926), the United Kingdom did not, even from its inception, have any responsibility for the Mandate.

We do, however, believe that, because of our membership of the UN Security Council and the Contact Group, we have a responsibility, along with our partners, to do

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The Rt Rev Trevor Huddleston CR



all we can to bring about Namibian independence on the basis of the UN Plan.

Our policy towards Namibia has been consistent with that responsibility. We have never recognised, "de facto" or otherwise that South Africa has a right to administer Namibia. As you know, trade by British companies with the territory, which we regard as a matter for their own commercial decision, does not conflict with any of the United Kingdom's international obligations and in our view there is no reason to prohibit it. Nor have we ever "granted recognition" to the representatives of any internal administration in Namibia. We have stated quite clearly, both in respect of the former internal administration and in respect of the recently proposed interim government in Namibia, that we regard any unilateral transfer of power by South Africa to administrative bodies established by it in Namibia as null and void. In our view the UN Plan provides the only agreed basis for the establishment of a lawful administration in Namibia. We shall continue to maintain informal contacts with members of the MPC just as we maintain contacts with SWAPO and all shades of political opinion in Namibia. This does not imply recognition of any official status such parties may claim to have.

In our view, the setting up of the proposed interim government in Namibia, or administrative changes which may be made in the military police and security forces structures, cannot "erode" or affect in any way the provisions of the UN Plan. The only way that the UN Plan can be

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altered is through changes negotiated and agreed by all the parties concerned. The provisions under the UN Plan designed to deal with the demobilisation of locally raised forces and the suitability of the police for their duties during the transitional period will still apply to the South West African Territorial Force and Koevoet on implementation, no matter what form or name they may adopt. We shall regard it as a matter of particular importance that all the provisions of the UN Plan are strictly applied during the transition to independence.

Finally, I should like to deal with the Memorandum's criticism of our recognition of 'linkage' as a political reality, and our policy of support for the American led negotiations between South Africa and Angola. We do not, as you know, accept that there should be a link between the withdrawal of Cubans from Angola and Namibian independence. But South Africa is formally committed to implementing SCR 435 without further delay if agreement can be reached on Cuban withdrawal. In practice, therefore, negotiations towards such an agreement offer the best prospect of achieving Namibian independence on the basis of the UN Plan. Continued Angolan participation in these negotiations and the proposals put forward last year by the Angolan government in an effort to assist progress towards a Namibia settlement support this. Yet the Memorandum, whilst urging US (p4) to recognise the importance of the Angolan proposals as creating a "basis to resolve this outstanding matter", nevertheless asks us (p2) to reassess our policy of support for the very negotiations which are aimed at reaching a settlement on the basis of these proposals.

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The American negotiating team have been working extremely hard to achieve a settlement. We can expect that, in the coming months, they will continue their efforts to establish common ground between the Angolan and South African positions. These negotiations keep South Africa locked into the search for internationally acceptable independence for Namibia on the basis of SCR 435. In the South African announcement last month on the new internal arrangements in Namibia P W Botha said that, as long as the negotiations "held any realistic prospect of bringing about genuine Cuban withdrawal" South Africa would continue to negotiate towards internationally recognised independence for Namibia on the basis of the UN Plan. We must test South African good faith.

Far from "refusing to take any effective measures to pressurise South Africa", we have chosen to support these negotiations precisely because we see them as the most effective means of bringing pressure to bear on South Africa to implement SCR 435. As you know, I have no faith in the effectiveness of sanctions, and believe they would be damaging to other countries in the region and counter-productive. Nor should you regard our support for SCR 539 or the recent statement by the Commonwealth Committee on Southern Africa as committing us to sanctions. In both cases we made very clear that we did not support such a policy.

G. Howe
Geoffrey Howe