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Soviet Ambassador to Angola Vorobiev, Conversation with Angolian President Neto

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Summary:

Soviet Ambassador to the People's Republic of Angola B.S. Vorobiev, memorandum of conversation with President A. Neto where Neto speaks about the need to understand the position of the other southern African nations in order to evaluate the national liberation movements

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

From the diary of
B.S.VOROBIEV

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Record of Conversation with
President of PRA A. NETO

4 September 1976

On 4 September 1976, I visited President A. Neto at his invitation.

Neto inquired as to whether any information had been received from Moscow regarding the Soviet position on issues relating to the national liberation movement in southern Africa, and whether that information could be imparted to him, if possible, in connection with the upcoming meeting of the presidents from five countries (Angola, Tanzania, Zambia, Mozambique, and Botswana), scheduled for September 15. I said to him in general that no information had yet been received. Based on materials received from the center [Moscow], I told him about the ongoing conference in Moscow of delegations from three national liberation movements from southern Africa.

For my part, I asked the president to share his thoughts in connection with the upcoming meeting and requested his assessment of conditions in the national liberation movement and of the position of other African countries. Neto reported that it had been determined to hold the meeting of the five presidents ahead of schedule (that is, not on September 15 as referenced above), and that in just two hours he was flying to Dar-es-Salaam. The principal theme of the meeting would be the meeting between [U.S. Secretary of State Henry A.] Kissinger and [South African Prime Minister John] Vorster and its implications for Africa. He, Neto, still did not know exactly what position to propose at the meeting, what policy to adopt. This being his first opportunity for participation in this sort of a conference (Tanzania, Zambia, Mozambique and Botswana have already met repeatedly on these issues), it is apparent that Neto needs to hear the opinions of his colleagues at the meeting, and only after that will he be in a position to formulate his position. For example, it is not entirely clear to Neto why the participation and assistance of Kissinger is necessary. He also does not understand the inconsistency of [Zambian] President [Kenneth] Kaunda on the issue of the intermediating role of Kissinger in contacts with Vorster.

Neto indicated further that, lacking a full understanding of the positions held by Tanzania and the other participants in the conference, he is presently having difficulty articulating any concepts on these issues, although after his return from the meeting, these issues will be clearer to him, and he expects to be able to inform us about them, so they can be communicated to Moscow.

In the course of our discussion I informed the president about the response received from Moscow regarding the attitude of the Angolan side toward the issue of the situation in the South Atlantic, conveyed through the Soviet Ambassador by [Angolan] Prime Minister Lopo do Nascimento.

President Neto expressed his appreciation for the speedy response. He declared his full agreement with all of the positions held by the Soviet side and emphasized that, in the recent past, new facts had emerged indicating an increased interest by the

USA in the ROZM [Republic of Cape Verde] and by France in the DRSTP [Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe].

The president further stated that the Politburo of the MPLA, by special dispensation, had empowered Politburo member and Prime Minister Lopo do Nascimento, with responsibility for all important issues of foreign policy, to prepare additional proposals on the issue over further development of contacts by the PRA with Sao-Tome and Principe. He requested the Soviet Ambassador to provide him with detailed positions of the Soviet side on the issue over the situation in the South Atlantic and relations of Lopo do Nascimento with the ROZM and the DRSTP.

Neto stated his desire for a continual exchange of information between the PRA and the USSR on international questions, in particular those concerning the situation in Africa and the South Atlantic. He stated that he intended to address these questions in his conferences in Moscow.

USSR AMBASSADOR TO THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF ANGOLA
/s/ B. VOROBIEV

[Source: TsKhSD, f. 5, op. 65, d. 2513, ll. 100-101.]