

**November 8, 1985**

**Cover letter from South African Foreign Minister Pik Botha to US Secretary of State George Shultz**

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**Summary:**

Letter from South African Foreign Minister R. F. "Pik" Botha to U.S. Secretary of State George Schultz contesting American arguments against supporting UNITA.

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MB 10/1/31(a)

G E H E I M

8 November 1985

Geagte Kollega

BRIEF AAN STAATSEKRETARIS VAN DIE VSADokumentasie:

A. Brief gedateer 8 November 1985.

Aangeheg is 'n afskrif van 'n interim skrywe wat ek vandag aan staatsekretaris Shultz gerig het in antwoord op die VSA se voorstelle in verband met Kubaanse onttrekking.

U sal ook belangstel in die volgende verslag wat ek van ons Ambassadeur by die VVO ontvang het oor moontlike verwagte Russiese optrede en taktiek in Angola.

Telegram nommer 537 van 30 Oktober 1985.

"Our contacts in UN circles are of the opinion that the Soviet Union's heightened activities in Angola may be ascribed to the following:

Gorbachev, since his accession to power, has been at pains to place his own activist stamp on international affairs which has resulted in less covert support for Soviet long term goals in areas such as Afghanistan, Ethiopia and Angola.

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The Soviets have decided to probe United States willingness to aid UNITA in the light of the repeal of the Clarke-amendment. In the Soviet view the United States will be reluctant to give overt assistance to UNITA for fear of being publicly associated with South Africa, more particularly since the Minister of Defence's admission of South Africa's support for Savimbi.

The Soviet Union believes that the present internal unrest in South Africa should be exploited by forcing the South African security forces to over-extend themselves.

The strategy is thus to tempt South Africa to come to the aid of UNITA in a series of conventional rather than guerilla contacts with the Angolan forces, thereby creating an escalating Vietnam type situation from which South Africa will find it increasingly difficult to disengage. In particular, so the argument runs, the strategy is to engage the South African Air Force in view of our vulnerability with respect to replacement of fighter aircraft.

The Soviet strategists further believe that if they succeed in drawing South African forces actively into the Angolan conflict and are able to inflict heavy casualties in terms of South African lives, this will have a backlash effect in South Africa which will add to the situation of internal instability, as they perceive it.

The Soviets believe that as the internal security situation in South Africa continues to deteriorate, as they believe it must, so the temptation will increase to settle on South West Africa even if Cuban withdrawal cannot be achieved and even if this should result in the installation of a SWAPO Government in Windhoek. Therefore, the pressure on South Africa's ally UNITA must not only be maintained but increase."

Met vriendelike groete.



R F BOTHA

Africa



## MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

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8 November 1985

Dear Mr Secretary

I should like to address a number of points which have arisen during the current debate in the United States on the provision of assistance to UNITA.

On 29 October 1985 commenting on proposals that the United States should assist UNITA, Assistant Secretary of State Crocker told the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa that he believes that the American people would not want to see the United States involved with South Africa in a regional alignment in the Angolan conflict. South Africa cannot see how the provision of assistance, particularly humanitarian assistance, to UNITA would involve the United States in any such "regional alliance". A number of other countries in Africa and elsewhere give aid to UNITA without there being any question of their involvement in an alignment with South Africa.

South Africa has also taken note of reports that the State Department is using the argument in Washington that any assistance to UNITA at this stage would upset the negotiations on Cuban withdrawal which have regained momentum after the recent talks between South Africa and the United States in Vienna and Washington.

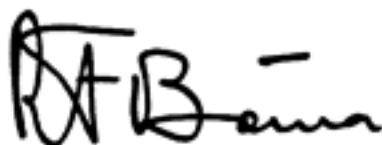
It has never been South Africa's view or intention that the current negotiations should be used as a reason to deny assistance to UNITA. We have consistently held the view that UNITA should not suffer any disadvantage as a result of the negotiation/settlement process. Nor do we believe that such assistance would necessarily jeopardise the negotiations. On the contrary, it would exert pressure on the MPLA to enter into serious negotiations. We have reason to believe that moderate elements in the MPLA who favour Cuban withdrawal and national reconciliation would be encouraged by such assistance to UNITA since it would strengthen their position against the radicals in the

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party. The granting of assistance to UNITA would also be welcomed by moderate African States which are looking for signs of Western resolve in counteracting Soviet expansionism in Africa. Finally, a decision to aid UNITA would send a clear signal to the Soviet Union concerning its expansionist policies in southern Africa. Such a signal at this time is more urgent and critical than ever. There are strong indications that the Soviets and the Cubans might be planning to renew the offensive against Mavinga within the coming days. There is a possibility that one or two Cuban regiments might participate directly in the initiative. Any such development would entail the risk of a serious escalation in the conflict in southern Angola.

South Africa, like the United States, supports the ideal of negotiated settlements. But negotiations which are not backed up by resolution or which are divorced from the realities of power, will not achieve our common objectives. After consultations with UNITA this week South Africa is now in the process of completing its reply to the United States on the points which were raised during our talks in Washington at the end of September 1985.

Yours sincerely



R F BOTHA  
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

The Honorable George Shultz  
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WASHINGTON DC  
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Yours Sincerely

[signature]

R.F. Botha

Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of South Africa

The Honorable George Shultz

Department of State

Washington DC

20520