

May 19, 1981

**Letter from South African Minister of Foreign Affairs
R.F. Botha to US Secretary of State A.M. Haig Jr.**

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Summary:

Letter from R. F. "Pik" Botha to Alexander Haig, noting that the United States and South Africa have parallel goals in Namibia: the establishment of an independent state without a Marxist-socialist government. Lays out a list of qualities that the South African government wants to see in the new Namibian state.

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The Honorable Alexander M Haig Jr.

Secretary of State WASHINGTON, DC

Dear Mr. Secretary

I have the honor to refer to our discussions on 14 and 15 May in Washington regarding independence for South West Africa/Namibia.

It is my Government's understanding, based on my discussions with you, that the United States and South Africa share a goal in respect of South West Africa/Namibia, specifically, the achievement of internationally recognized independence for that territory, under a government which does not subscribe to Marxist-Leninist doctrines and which does not pose a security threat to neighboring countries.

It is our understanding, moreover, that both the United States Government and the South African Government recognize that this joint goal can only be achieved within the ambit of stabilization of the Southern African region and the exclusion of Soviet and Soviet-surrogate forces.

On the basis of our discussions I have, moreover, been able to communicate to my Government my understanding of your Administration's assessment of its broader interests in Southern Africa, including specifically: the maintenance of access to the critical minerals of the region; the preservation of the security of the Cape sea route including the Mozambique Channel; the containment and progressive elimination of regional conflict, leading to the emergence of a stable regional environment; the normalization of South Africa's relations with the United States and respect for South Africa's rights as a sovereign state.

Against the background of this understanding, the South African Government is prepared to seek an internationally acceptable settlement that recognises the following elements:

1.(a) The non-acceptability to the major democratic parties and to the South African Government of the military component of UNTAG. The reasons were explained during our discussions, one of them being that the people of the Territory have by now acquired an entrenched view that the military component of UNTAG would be the most glaring symbol of U.N. partiality towards and alignment with SWAPO. The mere presence of a military component of UNTAG would be seen as a SWAPO victory.

The recent meeting of the Security Council-the body under whose ultimate authority that component of UNTAG will operate-when the DTA was denied a hearing, confirmed the people's worst fears of U.N. partiality towards SWAPO. As I have pointed out in more than one letter to the Secretary General of the U.N. dating back to December 1978, the South African Government has consistently maintained that the successful implementation of any proposal designed to achieve a peaceful solution will be seriously jeopardized if all the parties were not treated on an equal basis.

(b) The South African Government believes, however, that it might be possible to overcome resistance to a U.N. presence and to persuade the major democratic parties to accept civilian observers, to be constituted in consultation with all the parties, who could testify to the fairness of the process leading to independence. Due regard should be paid to the civilian nature of the functions as was the case on previous occasions where the U.N. had to deal with an electoral process.

2. The establishment and maintenance of a ceasefire to be dependent on an agreement being reached between South Africa and the states bordering on South West Africa. If there is a genuine desire on the part of such states to see a successful conclusion they should be prepared to accept a legal obligation to ensure that SWAPO does not infiltrate the territory and violate the ceasefire. The South African security forces, if and when satisfied that the threat had receded, would reduce their numbers in the light of the conditions prevailing on the ground. The question of a ceasefire and progress towards a situation of peace would be a matter for mutual arrangement between South Africa and the states concerned.

3. Guarantees of a non-aligned and neutral position for an independent South West Africa with regard to world power blocs and world and regional conflicts.

4. Guarantees of continued adherence to democratic procedures, such as regular elections based on universal franchise, the secrecy of the poll and the freedom of peaceful electoral action by political parties.

5. Guarantees for certain fundamental rights, such as respect for private ownership of property, the independence and inviolability of the judicial system, freedom of speech and of peaceful association.

6. □Guarantees for the rights of minorities inter alia by guaranteeing representation in the supreme legislative body of at least two representatives of each ethnic group to be chosen by the groups themselves.

7. □The inclusion of the Republic of South Africa in such group of guarantors as may be assembled for the purpose of the foregoing.

8. □In addition to the South African Government's efforts, the United States Government individually or collectively with the Western Contact Group would elicit details as to the formulation and extent of these guarantees in consultation with the major democratic parties before the commencement of the independence process.

9. □The question of the use of Walvis Bay by a future government of an independent Namibia to stand over until such a government is elected and it could then be discussed between that government and the South African Government.

My Government, Mr. Secretary, has been encouraged and heartened by the spirit and content of our discussions, which indicate a new understanding of our problems of our position in Southern Africa. We trust that we can move forward in a positive way on the issues we have discussed.

With warm personal regards

Yours sincerely

R.F. BOTHA, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INFORMATION