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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

Date: May 29, 1988
Place: Foreign Ministry Guest House, Moscow
Participants: Chester Crocker, Assistant Secretary, US Dept. of State

Anatoliy Adamishin, Deputy Minister, USSR MFA

Priscilla Clapp, A/PolCouns, US Embassy, Moscow

Vasillen Vasev, Director, 3rd African Dept., USSR MFA

Soviet interpreter

Subject: Southern Africa

Timing and Venue of Next Quadripartite

Deputy Minister Adamishin led off with information that the next quadripartite meeting would be held June 8-9. The venue, he said, had not yet been determined because the Angolans and Cubans had decided they preferred to meet in a European rather than African capital, while the South Africans still preferred Brazzaville. Adamishin also volunteered that he had provided his version of the joint language discussed in Lisbon to Deputy Minister Bessmertnykh, who would decide in negotiation with the U.S. side how to handle the summit document.

Assistant Secretary Crocker replied that he was pleased to be in Moscow at Adamishin's invitation and reiterated the Secretary's opening message to Shevardnadze that we hoped the Summit might serve as a stimulus to progress on the Southern African question, especially inasmuch as the Cubans and Angolans had expressed a desire to reach a solution by September 29, 1988. South Africa, he said, had neither accepted nor rejected this as a target date. We saw some possible value in the idea. If we were to meet the target, however, we would have to deal with a number of issues on an accelerated basis.

Turning to the question of the next quadripartite meeting, Crocker related that an emissary from Pretoria had told us that a South African counter-proposal was nearly ready and they were expected to meet June 8-9 in Brazzaville, as had been agreed in London. It was in the spirit of this agreement that the Angolans and South Africans had met in Brazzaville in May. As of the time they had left Brazzaville, it had been agreed that

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this would be the venue for the next quadripartite. This information had been conveyed to Sassou and he was agreeable. Now we had learned that Angola was prepared to meet on those dates, but had reservations about the venue. What was the problem in Luanda with Brazzaville as a venue?

Adamishin replied that he had learned of the change from the Angolans and Cubans and did not see that it was a matter of such importance that it should present a problem to the South Africans or U.S. Luanda's concerns were that many African countries were now offering to host the meeting and to avoid offending any of them (especially Cape Verde), a European capital was the compromise. Furthermore, holding the meeting in Paris would involve the French in the enterprise and engage the Francophone African countries. A Congolese emissary (Foreign Minister and one other) was now in Luanda arguing the case for Brazzaville and he would hear directly from Luanda why they preferred a European capital at this stage. It did not make sense to Moscow, Adamishin continued, for the US and USSR to become involved in this question. Let those directly involved decide. Moscow could certainly not ask Luanda on behalf of the Americans to choose Brazzaville, and did not see why South Africa should have strong reasons to object.

Crocker replied that the sudden change in venue ran the risk of sending an unfortunate signal to Pretoria about Angolan-Cuban intentions. The original decision to meet in Brazzaville had been well received at the top levels in Pretoria. To renege on an agreement that had been reached in London could raise questions about the dates, as well, and would lead the South Africans to begin wondering about Luanda's motivations. How could this be explained to South Africa?

Insisting that the Angolans were not dragging their feet on the next quadripartite, Adamishin repeated Luanda's reasoning about venue and recommended that it be left for the Congolese and Angolans to resolve. He suggested that there might also be another motive that the Angolans had not discussed with Moscow, namely their pique with the statements by Mobutu after his recent meeting with the Congolese leader. Therefore, he thought it would not be profitable to let the choice of venue for the next meeting become an issue, in that pressure on Luanda to go to Brazzaville could cause suspicion that others were trying to interfere in Angola's relations with Congo and Zaire.

Crocker suggested that Adamishin reconsider the question over night, because the rejection of Brazzaville would be very hard for South Africa to understand. The Angolan government had already exchanged messages with Zaire about a bilateral meeting in the near future and it was not abnormal for the Congo and

Zaire to talk with each other. The change of venue was bound to send mixed signals to Pretoria. Adamishin said he expected to hear in the very near future from Ambassador Kazimirov about the state of Luanda's consultations with the Congolese representatives.

Cuban Military Activity

Assistant Secretary Crocker raised the question of continuing Cuban military action, saying that although there had been no major incidents yet, it concerned us as a potential tripwire for renewed fighting. We knew the Cubans had scouts within 15 km. of the irrigation project at Calueque and wondered whether there was a quiet understanding between the Cubans/Angolans and South Africans that this would not be allowed to ignite inadvertently.

Adamishin repeated the position he had taken in Lisbon on the right of the Angolans and Cubans to maintain security on Angolan territory. The Cubans had assured Moscow that they were not flying beyond Angolan territory. The Angolans and South Africans had discussed the Calueque situation in Brazzaville and, while Adamishin did not know whether they had in fact reached a tacit agreement, it was his strong impression that the Angolans had related the details of their Brazzaville talks to the Cubans. Both the Cubans and Angolans considered that this activity by the Cubans in the south strengthened the case for the negotiations without threatening the chances of further talks. South Africa had not made it a precondition to resuming the talks.

The involvement of SWAPO under the Cuban umbrella, Crocker continued, through which SWAPO was building arms stocks in Angola for use in Namibia, was another element that could derail the process. This was simply a practical reality and not a matter he was raising on principle. Adamishin agreed that it was important for us to share our analyses and said he well understood these concerns of the U.S. as a mediator. If Moscow were to warn the Angolans and Cubans, however, on behalf of the Americans to stop this activity, they would ask where the Americans had been when South Africa had crossed into Angolan territory. Dos Santos firmly believed that the Cuban military activity had brought the South Africans to the negotiations. He might be wrong, but there was nothing we could say to convince him otherwise. When chided by Crocker for sitting on his hands, Adamishin rejoined that the Soviets were in constant contact with Luanda and the Cubans, and had checked immediately when we raised questions about Cuban overflights of Namibia. It was determined that they were not flying beyond Angola, but that they had strong arguments for the military activity in which they were engaged.

U.S.-Soviet Guarantees for an Angolan Settlement

It was time, Crocker said, to explore further the Soviet proposal that we give serious consideration to the question of U.S.-Soviet guarantees for a settlement. The Angolans and Soviets talked about an internal political settlement, but it was not clear to us what they had in mind. Did Adamishin have any further thoughts on the meaning of this term?

Adamishin replied that he had gone against his principles in passing to Luanda the message that the U.S. wanted them to speed up the issue of national reconciliation before they were overtaken by events. They did not take it well even though he had told them he personally believed this would be counterproductive. They had not taken everything negatively, however. For example, they had agreed with the U.S. assessment that the situation after London remained fragile and that Luanda should not be attracted by South African attempts to lure them into a separate agreement that excluded Namibia. They agreed they should remain in the four-party talks, even though they might continue to have bilaterals from time to time. Adamishin thought that when the Angolans did not like our advice, it was better not to give it.

As for the question of internal settlement, Adamishin explained that when the Soviets discussed this with Angola, they said the following:

- internal problems do exist in Angola;
- there are no military solutions;
- a political solution must be found.

The Angolans agree with these three propositions. The question then became how to find a political solution. The Angolans believe that the first task is to create favorable external conditions by bringing an end to UNITA's activity as an arm of South Africa. When external interference ceases, internal problems can be solved. Luanda can deal with UNITA when it ceases to be a "mercenary" organization of South Africa and the U.S. The Angolans are strongly motivated to solve this problem, not least of all because they want a cooperative relationship with the United States. In fact, Adamishin said, Luanda had asked Moscow to tell the U.S. during the Summit that Angola was ready for trilateral economic cooperation with the U.S. and Soviet Union in three specific areas: diamonds, gold, and ferrous metals. (Adamishin asked that Crocker keep this to himself until it had been raised at higher levels in the course of the Summit.) Thus the Angolans wished to achieve peace, but they had good reason not to trust South Africa on the basis of previous experience. The U.S., as a mediator, should bear this in mind, as well as South Africa's concerns.

Adamishin declared that the Soviet Union would welcome the idea of the U.S. and USSR guaranteeing an Angolan settlement to ensure that South Africa fulfilled its obligations. It was still too early to talk of guarantees, however, because the terms of the agreement were not yet clear. They would at least want to see South Africa's counterproposal. They would assure us that they were serious about guarantees.

Sequencing of Internal Solution

Crocker asked Adamishin how Luanda envisioned the timing of an internal solution and whether Luanda had given Moscow its definition of political solution. Adamishin said he would have to consult with the Angolans and think over the first question before answering it. With regard to the second question, the Angolans had not shared their thinking with Moscow, but Moscow had no reason to doubt their assurances that they would find a solution. The Soviets felt this was the business of the Angolans, just as it was the business of the Afghans in Afghanistan. In Afghanistan the Soviets had originally held that withdrawal of Soviet forces could only come after the creation of a coalition government. They had then changed their position. It was the same in Angola: if you made internal settlement a precondition, you ran the risk of delaying Cuban withdrawal.

Crocker argued that if there was not parallel progress on internal political settlement, we ran the risk of creating an impasse in the 435/CTW talks, as well as the broader problem of U.S.-Soviet confrontation. The only alternative was positive symmetry, as had been developed in the Afghanistan case. Adamishin interjected that Moscow had never accepted the concept of symmetry in Afghanistan and would not in Angola either. Perhaps if we had another type of symmetry in mind, that could be considered.

Adamishin remarked that as long as apartheid existed in South Africa, there would be no broad solution to the problems in Southern Africa. What we were looking at in Angola was a partial solution, which the Soviet Union was now prepared to support. However, the U.S. interest in the internal situation in Angola threatened to raise the question of apartheid in South Africa. Did we want to expand the task or break it down into workable parts? Crocker reminded Adamishin that we were not dealing with the problem of apartheid here.

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