

May 5, 1984

Telegram to D. Steward From Auret

Citation:

"Telegram to D. Steward From Auret", May 5, 1984, Wilson Center Digital Archive, South Africa Dept of Foreign Affairs. Included in "Southern Africa in the Cold War, Post-1974," edited by Sue Onslow and Anna-Mart Van Wyk.

<https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/118283>

Summary:

Description of a meeting between Angolan and South African delegations, the former being led by Venancio De Moura. Details discussion of troop withdrawal from Namibia, focusing on an "outburst" by De Moura.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Leon Levy Foundation

Original Language:

English

Contents:

Original Scan
Transcript - English

GEHEIM
SECRET

INCOMING
=====

Jan 17

COPY NO....OF.5..
FILE NO.....

- 1. IMMEDIATE
- 2. TELNR 79
- 3. 19840505
- 4. WINDHOEK
- 5. CAPE TOWN

DEPT. VAN BUITENLANDSE SAKKE EN INSLIGTING
REPUBLIEK VAN SUID-AFRIKA
1984 05 05- 15:00
DEPT. OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INFORMATION

SECRET

TO: D STEWATD FROM AURET

1. AS YOU KNOW GENL. GELDENHUYS AND HIS DELEGATION VISITED ONGIVA TODAY FOR DISCUSSIONS WITH AN ANGOLAN DELEGATION HEADED BY DE MOURA AND INCLUDING, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF ITS USUAL MEMBERS, ALSO MAJ. JOSE MARIA, SECRETARY FOR DEFENCE IN THE PRESIDENTS OFFICE AND MAJ. MUTINDI (?), GOVERNOR OF THE CUNENE PROVINCE.

2. AT A PRE-MEETING DISCUSSION, GENL. GELDENHUYS INDICATED THAT HE WANTED TO MAKE USE OF THE MEETING, WHICH WOULD NOT TAKE PLACE UNDER THE USUAL PRESSURES OF DECIDING TO MOVE THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE JMC OR NOT, TO INDICATE TO THE ANGOLANS THAT THE FINAL AND MOST CRITICAL PHASE OF PHASE ONE OF THE PRESENT OPERATION HAD BEEN REACHED. THE COMMISSION HAD REACHED THE FINAL POINT BEFORE THE FINAL MOVE TO OSHIKANGO, I.E. THE WITHDRAWAL FROM ANGOLA AND THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT WOULD HAVE TO BE SATISFIED THAT THE PROCESS HAD ACHIEVED ITS OBJECTIVE AND THAT A VISIBLE PEACE HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED IN THE AREA IN QUESTION (AIQ) BEFORE THE FINAL MOVE COULD BE MADE. HE WAS OF THE OPINION THAT NO SWAPO PRESENCE OR MOVEMENT IN THE AIQ SHOULD BE SEEN AS INSIGNIFICANT AND THAT IF THERE WAS EVEN THE SLIGHTEST INDICATION THAT THIS WAS THE CASE, THE JMC SHOULD NOT MOVE.

3. IN HIS OPENING REMARKS AT THE MEETING, DE MOURA SAID THAT THERE WAS NOT MUCH TO DISCUSS BUT THAT HE WANTED TO REITERATE THAT THE PROCESS IN WHICH SA AND ANGOLA WAS ENGAGED SHOULD PROCEED APACE. THE SINCERITY OF THE ANGOLAN GOVT. TO ACHIEVE SUCCESS MADE IT POSSIBLE THAT SENIOR MEMBERS OF ITS GOVT. COULD ATTEND SUCH MEETINGS TO ASSIST THE JMC IN ITS WORK. HE SAW THE PURPOSE OF THE MEETING AS EVALUATING PROGRESS WHICH HAD BEEN MADE AND PLANNING ITS NEXT STEPS. HE WOULD ALSO LIKE TO RECEIVE INFORMATION REGARDING THE TIMING OF THE NEXT MINISTERIAL MEETING THE PROPOSED AGENDA AND THE NAMES OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN DELEGATION.

4. GELDENHUYS POINTED OUT THAT IT HAD BECOME A ROUTINE FOR HIM TO VISIT THE JMC AT REGULAR INTERVALS IN THE PAST. ALTHOUGH A PRECISE PERIOD COULD NOT ALWAYS BE DETERMINED, EVERY OPPORTUNITY SHOULD BE USED TO ASSIST THE JMC IN ITS WORK. HE AGREED THAT THERE WAS NOT MUCH TO DISCUSS SINCE THE LAST MEETING HAD TAKEN PLACE ONLY A FEW DAYS AGO AND THE JMC HAD ONLY JUST MOVED TO ONGIVA. WITH REGARD TO THE EXCHANGE OF PRISONERS HE INDICATED THAT THIS MATTER WOULD SOON BE FINALISED SINCE THE MECHANICS HAD BEEN SET IN MOTION. TURNING TO THE JMC, HE SAID THAT HE WISHED TO RAISE ONE IMPORTANT AND SERIOUS POINT. A CRITICAL STAGE OF THE PROCESS AGREED TO AT LUSAKA HAD BEEN REACHED. THE NEXT MOVE OF THE JMC WOULD BE THE LAST PHYSICAL STEP IN THIS PROCESS.

2/-

THE MOST IMPORTANT POINT OF THE LUSAKA AGREEMENT, WHICH EMBODIED A PEACE PLAN FOR THE AIG. IN A WEEK OR SO THE TRUTH WOULD HAVE TO BE FACED AND THE QUESTION ASKED WHETHER OR NOT THE LUSAKA AGREEMENT HAD WORKED. THE GENERAL FEELING, ALSO AMONGST THE SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLIC, WAS THAT PROGRESS HAD BEEN MADE. THE ACTIVITIES OF THE JMC HAD BEEN MADE PUBLIC THROUGH THE PRESS, RADIO AND TV, AND THE PUBLIC WAS AWARE OF THE VARIOUS MOVES OF THE JMC FROM OUELAI, SOUTHWARDS. EVERYONE WAS EAGERLY WAITING TO SEE WHAT WOULD HAPPEN WHEN THE JMC MOVED TO OSHIKANGO.

THERE WAS EXPECTATION WHETHER OR NOT THERE WOULD BE PEACE. THE LUSAKA AGREEMENT AND THE JMC ACTIVITIES HAD BEEN PRESENTED IN A POSITIVE LIGHT, ALSO IN A TV PROGRAM WHICH HAD BEEN FACTUAL AND NON-CONTROVERTIAL AND HAD BEEN SEEN BY THE JMC. THIS HAD ADDED TO THE EXPECTANCY, ALTHOUGH NOT EVERYONE IN SOUTH AFRICA WAS POSITIVELY DISPOSED TO THE AGREEMENT. THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT (SAG) HAD TO CONSIDER ALL THESE FACTORS IN JUDGING THE RESULTS WHICH HAD BEEN ACHIEVED. THE SAG WAS ADAMANT THAT

EVERYTHING SHOULD BE DONE TO MAKE THE AGREEMENT WORK. IF, IN THE NEXT WEEK OR TWO, EVENTS SHOULD SHOW THAT ALL WAS NOT WELL, THIS COULD HAVE A SERIOUS EFFECT ON THE PROCESS. THE SAG COULD BE PLACED IN AN EMBARRASSING POSITION AND FUTURE STEPS AND PROGRESS COULD BE NEGATIVELY INFLUENCED. THE SAG REQUIRED THE JMC TO DO EVERYTHING IN ITS POWER TO ENSURE SUCESS.

SUCCESS AND THE EVALUATION THEREOF COULD NOT ONLY BE BASED ON THE GOOD CO-OPERATION WHICH EXISTED BETWEEN THE COMPONENTS OF THE JMC, BUT ON WHETHER THE TERMS OF THE AGREEMENT HAD BEEN AND STILL ARE BEING OBSERVED. THE QUESTION WHICH HAD TO BE ASKED WAS WHETHER THERE WERE SOUTH AFRICAN, CUBAN OR SWAPO TROOPS IN THE AIG. THE SAG WOULD NOT GIVE ITS BLESSING TO A MOVE TO OSHIKANGO IF A SITUATION IN WHICH THE TERMS OF THE AGREEMENT HAD NOT BEEN FULFILLED.

5. AT THIS STAGE I SAID THAT I HAD NOT YET RECEIVED ANY INFORMATION REGARDING THE MINISTERIAL MEETING BUT I WOULD BE IN A POSITION TO RESPOND EARLY NEXT WEEK.

6. IN HIS COMMENTS ON GELDENHUYS'S REMARKS, DE MOURA LAUNCHED IN A LONG AND RAMBLING EXPOSITION OF HIS POINT OF VIEW. APART FROM REHASHING HIS KNOWN AND NEGATIVE VIEWS ON VIOLATION OF ANGOLAN SOVEREIGNTY, HE SAID THAT SA HAD TRIED TO PROPAGANDIZE THE INFORMATION WHICH IT HAD RELEASED ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE JMC. HE REFERRED ALSO TO THE QUESTION OF UNITA BANDITS AND SOLUTION TO PROBLEM OF NAMIBIA. AT THIS POINT GELDENHUY'S INTERRUPTED DE MOURA AND SAID THAT HE WAS NOT PREPARED TO CONTINUE DISCUSSIONS IF DE MOURA PERSISTED IN SPEAKING SUBSTANTIVELY ON MATTERS FALLING OUTSIDE THE AMBIT OF THE LUSAKA AGREEMENT AND IN USING OFFENDING LANGUAGE. DE MOURA RESPONDED THAT HE HAD HAD NO INTENTION OF OFFENDING. GELDENHUYS REJOINED AND AMONGST OTHERS POINTED OUT THAT OTHER FORUMS HAD BEEN CREATED TO DISCUSS THE POINTS DE MOURA HAD REFERRED TO.

HE REPEATED THAT THE POINT AT ISSUE WAS WHAT THE POSITION WOULD BE WHEN THE JMC REACHED OSHIKANGO. WOULD THE PEACE WHICH HAD BEEN CREATED BE MAINTAINED AND WOULD THE TERMS OF THE LUSAKA AGREEMENT BE CONTINUED TO BE RESPECTED. THERE SHOULD BE NO SWAPO, CUBANTROOPS OR SA FORCES IN THE AIG. IF THERE WERE ANY VIOLATIONS IN THIS REGARD IT SHOULD BE BROUGHT TO THE NOTICE OF THE JMC. HE WANTED TO STATE THAT IN HIS VIEW THE JMC SHOULD CONTINUE TO OPERATE IN THE PAST UNTIL SUCH TIME AS FUTHER MINISTERIAL DISCUSSIONS TOOK PLACE AND OTHER DECISIONS HAD BEEN REACHED. THE DISCUSSIONS WERE THEREAFTER ADJOURNED WITHOUT SETTING A DATE FOR THE NEXT MEETING.

SECRET
SECRET

CONFIDENTIAL
SECRET

- 3 -

7. DE MOURA'S OUTBURST IS PERHAPS TYPICAL OF WHAT WE HAVE COME TO EXPECT OF HIM BUT HE CLEARLY EMBARRASSED THE OTHER MEMBERS OF HIS DELEGATION WHO WERE, IN MY VIEW, RECEPTIVE TO THE POINTS RAISED BY GELDENHUYS. HOWEVER, IT IS PATENTLY CLEAR THAT POLITICAL QUESTIONS SUCH AS UNITA, WHICH FALL OUTSIDE THE PURVIEW OF THE JMC, ARE BECOMING INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT TO THE ANGOLANS AND THAT SUCH QUESTIONS AND OTHERS WILL HAVE TO BE DISCUSSED AT A FUTHER MEETING AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL. THIS, I BELIEVE, SHOULD TAKE PLACE SOONER RATHER THAN LATER. EVEN THOUGH THESE MATTERS ARE NOT DISCUSSED AT JMC LEVEL, I FEAR THAT THE CONTINUED REFERENCE TO THEM AT THIS LEVEL WILL TO

A LARGE EXTENT NEGATIVELY INFLUENCE THE ATMOSPHERE IN THE JMC. I DO NOT THINK THIS IS CONDUCIVE TO THE FUTURE ACTIVITIES OF THE JMC, ESPECIALLY NOW WHEN WE ARE ABOUT TO CONCLUDE THE FIRST '30-DAY' PERIOD AND TO PROCEED WITH THE SECOND PERIOD OF 30 DAYS. GELDENHUYS MADE THIS POINT CLEARLY AND EFFECTIVELY IN HIS REACTION TO DE MOURA, BUT I BELIEVE THAT WE SHOULD SERIOUSLY CONSIDER A FUTHER MINISTERIAL MEET AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

END

HUN

To: D. Stewart from Auret

1. As you know Genl. Geldenhuys and his delegation visited Ongiva today for discussions with an Angolan delegation headed by De Moura and including, with the exception of its usual members, also Maj. Jose Maria, Secretary of Defence in the President's Office and Maj. Mutindi (?), governor of the Cunene Province.
2. At a pre-meeting discussion, Genl. Geldenhuys indicated that he wanted to make use of the meeting, which would not take place under the usual pressures of deciding to move the headquarters of the JMC or not, to indicate to the Angolans that the final and most critical phase of Phase One of the present operation had been reached. The Commission had reached the final point before the final move to Oshikango, i.e. the withdrawal from Angola and the South African Government would have to be satisfied that the process had achieved its objective and that a visible peace had been established in the area in question (AIQ) before the final move could be made. He was of the opinion that no SWAPO presence or movement in the AIQ should be seen as insignificant and that if there was even the slightest indication that this was the case, the JMC should not move.
3. In his opening remarks at the meeting, De Moura said that there was not much to discuss but that he wanted to reiterate that the process in which South African and Angola was engaged should proceed apace. The sincerity of the Angolan government to achieve success made it possible that senior members of its government could attend such meetings to assist the JMC in its work. He saw the purpose of the meeting as evaluating progress which had been made and planning its next steps. He would also like to receive information regarding the timing of the next ministerial meeting, the proposed agenda and the names of the South African delegation.
4. Geldenhuys pointed out that it had become a routine for him to visit the JMC at regular intervals in the past. Although a precise period could not always be determined, every opportunity should be used to assist the JMC in its work. He agreed that there was not much to discuss since the last meeting had taken place only a few days ago and the JMC had only just moved to Ongiva. With regard to the exchange of prisoners he indicated that this matter would soon be finalized since the mechanics had been set in motion. Turning to the JMC, he said that he wished to raise one important and serious point. A critical stage of the process agreed to at Lusaka had been reached. The next move of the JMC would be the last physical step in this process.

[Excised], which embodied a peace plan for the AIQ. In a week or so, the truth would have to be faced and the question asked whether or not the Lusaka Agreement had worked. The general feeling, also amongst the South African public, was that progress has been made. The activities of the JMC had been made public through the press, radio and TV, and the public was aware of the various moves of the JMC from Cuvelai, southwards. Everyone was eagerly waiting to see what would happen when the JMC moved to Oshikango.

There was an expectation whether or not there would be peace. The Lusaka Agreement and the JMC activities had been presented in a positive light, also in a TV program which had been factual and non-controversial and had been seen by the JMC. This had added to the expectancy, although not everyone in South Africa was positively disposed to the agreement. The South African Government (SAG) had to consider all these factors in judging the results which had been achieved. The SAG was adamant that everything should be done to make the Agreement work. If, in the next week or two, events should show that all was not well, this could have a serious effect on the process. The SAG could be placed in an embarrassing situation and future steps and progress could be negatively influenced. The SAG required the JMC to do everything in its power to ensure success.

Success and the evaluation thereof could not only be based on the good cooperation which existed between the components of the JMC, but on whether the terms of the agreement had been and still are being observed. The question which have to be asked was whether there were South African, Cuban or SWAPO troops in the AIQ. The SAG would not give its blessing to a move to Oshikango if a situation in which the terms of the agreement had not been fulfilled.

5. At this stage I said I had not yet received any information regarding the ministerial meeting but I would be in a position to respond early next week.

6. In his comments on Geldenhuys's remarks, De Moura launched a long and rambling exposition of his point of view. Apart from rehashing his known and negative views of violation of Angolan sovereignty, he said that SA had tried to propagandize the information which it had released on the activities of the JMC. He referred also to the question of the UNITA bandits and solution to problem of Namibia. At this point Geldenhuys interrupted De Moura and said that he was not prepared to continue discussions if De Moura persisted in speaking substantively on matters falling outside the ambit of the Lusaka Agreement and in using offending language. De Moura responded that he had had no intention of offending. Geldenhuys rejoined and amongst others pointed out that other forums has been created to discuss the points De Moura had referred to. He repeated that the point at issue was what the position would be when the JMC reached Oshikango. Would the peace which had been created be maintained and would the terms of the Lusaka Agreement be continued to be respected. There should be no SWAPO, Cuban troops or SA forces in the air. If there were any violations in this regard it should be brought to the notice of the JMC. He wanted to state that in his view the JMC should continue to operate in the past until such time as further ministerial discussions took place and other decisions had been reached. The discussions were thereafter adjourned without setting a date for the next meeting.

7. De Moura's outburst is perhaps typical of what we have come to expect of him but he clearly embarrassed the other members of his delegation who were, in my view, receptive to the points raised by Geldenhuys. However, it is patently clear that political questions such as UNITA, which fall outside the purview of the JMC, are becoming increasingly important to the Angolans and that such questions and others will have to be discussed at a further meeting at ministerial level. This, I believe, should take place sooner rather than later. Even though these matters are not discussed at JMC level, I fear that the continued reference to them at this level will, to a large extent, negatively influence the atmosphere in the JMC. I do not think this is conducive to the future activities of the JMC, especially now when we are about to conclude the first '30 day' period and to proceed with the second period of 30 days. Geldenhuys made this point clearly and effectively in his reaction to De Moura, but I believe that we should seriously consider a further ministerial meeting as soon as possible.

End