

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

Date: May 30, 1988

Place: Maliy Osobnyak, MFA, Moscow

Participants: Assistant Secretary Crocker, US Dept. of State
Deputy Minister Adamishin, USSR MFA
Priscilla Clapp, A/POLCOUNS, US Embassy Moscow
Vasillen Vasev, Director, 3rd African Dept, MFA
Soviet interpreter

Subject: Southern Africa/Ethiopia

Venue of Quadripartite

Adamishin began with a message from Soviet Ambassador Kazimirov on the status of Angolan-Congolese talks about holding the next quadripartite in Brazzaville. The Angolans had held to their position that they did not want to create friction with other African governments offering to host the quadripartite and therefore preferred a European venue. Although the meetings were still going on in Luanda, Adamishin did not expect Luanda's position to change.

In Lisbon, Adamishin said, he had gotten the impression from Crocker that the question of the bilateral Angolan-South Africa meeting in Brazzaville had been decided without American participation. Crocker said this was correct, although we had not been surprised by the news. He had then heard, Adamishin continued, that the message that the meeting would be held in Brazzaville had been communicated to the Congolese by the American Ambassador there. Crocker said this was not correct, the meeting had been arranged by the Angolans through bilateral channels with the Congolese. This meant, concluded Adamishin, that someone else was cheating him.

Cuban Military Movements

Adamishin had also checked on the question of whether there was a tacit understanding between the Cubans and South Africans on military activity in the south. There had been contact between them over a wounded South African who had been taken prisoner by the Cubans. The Cubans had sent the message that the sooner

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the South Africans left Angola, the lesser the chances for a renewal of serious hostilities. Border crossings and military restraint had also been discussed, and the Cubans had maintained that such agreement could only be reached through negotiations, considering the poor record of South Africa.

Format of Quadripartite

Adamishin confirmed that the Angolans would not get involved in a separate agreement with South Africa that did not deal with Namibian settlement. The Angolans wanted four-party talks that provided linkage of three elements:

- cessation of external interference in Angola;
- decolonization of Namibia based on Resolution 435;
- withdrawal of Cuban troops.

Angola will not allow them to be delinked. At the Brazzaville bilateral South Africa had departed from the position they took on Resolution 435 in London. That is, their position was more precise in London than it was in Brazzaville. Whatever the case, it would soon become clear if South Africa intended to fulfill Resolution 435.

Crocker answered that nothing would become clear if things became stalemated over the question of venue for the next meeting. Luanda's position raised questions about its good faith. He reminded Adamishin that he had warned him in Lisbon that there might be some in South Africa who would try to push Angola toward a separate agreement. There was nothing new in this. The point is whether we agree on the shape of an agreement, e.g. it must include Namibia. Adamishin retorted that it was never bad to confirm a good thing.

Internal Settlement

Adamishin explained that in approaching the question of a regional settlement, Moscow put the removal of external factors in the first place. This meant a guarantee of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Angola. The question of territorial integrity did not arise for the U.S., but he was often asked by the press whether the Soviet Union was trying to divide Angola. (Crocker remarked that the Portuguese had made this point a major breakthrough in the Lisbon consultations, even though it had not been a question between us.) Secondly, Adamishin continued, we recognize that there are internal

problems in Angola, which cannot be solved by military means. The Angolans share this view, although that does not mean Angola won't react to a UNITA counter offensive. The U.S. should verify Soviet information that UNITA is preparing a counter offensive, so that this does not become a new source of tension. These internal problems, Adamishin said, should be solved by the Angolans themselves after the cessation of external interference. There are analogies with Afghanistan. Adamishin described these points as a partial response to Crocker's question the day before about the relationship between external and internal factors.

Crocker said he had given the Secretary an interim report on yesterday's discussions with Adamishin, saying he had had, as usual, an interesting, non-polemical exchange, but was still looking for the beef. He was now wondering what he would say in his next report. He could say the Soviet position is constructive in theory, but there are many things the Soviet Union doesn't want to do to help get the process moving. And now the Cubans and Angolans, in changing venue, have created a false obstacle to the opening we created originally. The Soviet Union doesn't see a role for itself in encouraging military restraint by the Cubans and Angolans. The Soviets consider the discussion of guarantees to be premature. Is this what I should report to the Secretary, Crocker asked.

Adamishin declared that he agreed with all of this, but first wanted to suggest a preliminary summary. Without characterizing the tone of the talks, he would say there were some points of agreement and some of disagreement. On the side of agreement, the US and USSR believe the problem in Southern Africa is susceptible to political solution. The Angola/Namibia juncture of this problem is now at the center of attention. We are directing our efforts toward practical talks. The USSR supports the four-party talks that the US initiated through its good offices as a mediator, and would like to see these talks achieve success as soon as possible. On these points, Adamishin said, there should be an unconditional convergence of views. Crocker said he could agree with them as a statement of intention.

The questions -- or points of difference -- between us, Adamishin continued, concerned the formula for reaching settlement. The Cuban-Angolan formula contained three interrelated elements. The U.S. was trying to remove one element, the cessation of external interference and the termination of military assistance to UNITA. Crocker objected that we did not define the formula in those terms. Adamishin agreed that this was where we began to have differences.

Resolution 435, Crocker contended, addressed the principal question of Angola's security by providing for settlement in Namibia. The U.S. did not equate South African activity in Angola with the fact that the US and USSR were involved indirectly in Angola. The goal was to move South Africa, Angola, and Cuba to a settlement.

Adamishin argued that he was not trying either to magnify or belittle the differences between us, but rather to understand them better. Others had been asking Moscow about them and they wanted to be able to clarify their position. To state the U.S. position in stark terms, the U.S. wanted to sell Namibian independence for Cuban troop withdrawal. Adamishin could not agree to this, because it did not provide a solution to the security of Angola. Crocker pointed out that the solution to Angolan security was the same as the solution of the internal problem. Adamishin said we diverged on this point as well. The U.S. wanted the MPLA to reach agreement with Savimbi before ceasing U.S. aid to UNITA, but refused to consider the reverse order. If the U.S. was seeking a regional political settlement, it would be much easier. Instead they were advocating the removal of South Africa from Namibia in return for Cuban withdrawal from Angola.

Crocker charged Adamishin with deliberately misinterpreting the U.S. position for the purpose of suffocating UNITA. What the Soviet Union was advocating would not eliminate U.S.-Soviet confrontation from the situation. Adamishin asked rhetorically what business it was of the U.S., since the end result would be friendly relations with Angola and no Cubans. There was no need to look at the situation as a matter of U.S.-Soviet confrontation; we should remove it from the sphere of U.S.-Soviet confrontation.

Returning to the practical question of how to proceed, Crocker reminded Adamishin that it had been the Cubans who suggested in London that the negotiations should aim to implement the package by September 29, 1988. Was this just public relations or was it a real target? Should we make it a mutual effort? This would mean a lot of work. Was there still too much disagreement for this to be a practical objective? Adamishin saw no reason for not adopting September as an objective. Soviet policy was to reach agreement as soon as possible. The goal was whatever would satisfy Angola, Cuba, and SWAPO. The Soviet Union had no additional requirements of its own. It was the United States who was posing additional demands.

Crocker repeated that Adamishin was distorting the U.S. position. In effect, Adamishin was calling for the U.S. to join the Soviet Union in the destruction of UNITA by saying the

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internal problem had to be solved at UNITA's expense. There had to be parallel tracks for internal settlement and removal of outside forces. Otherwise the Cuban withdrawal would become an argument of the military balance between UNITA and MPLA. It would also leave us with the problem of US-Soviet competition through respective military support to the MPLA and UNITA. This was why we had to know Soviet thinking on sequencing and the definition of national settlement. Adamishin responded that Crocker seemed to have moved one stage in his position on internal settlement. Even though the U.S. did not accept that political settlement should come first, at least he was now saying that it should be parallel (as opposed to sequential). In effect, this brought the U.S. and Soviet positions one stage closer. Crocker asked how much time would come between removal of external factors and internal settlement in the Angolan formula. Adamishin said this could only be answered by the Angolans. Right now they were simply saying that if external factors were removed, they would find political settlement. The U.S. was saying that if external aid were removed, UNITA would be suffocated. He recommended that we ask Angola for its views.

Crocker asked whether the Angolans had any idea of what UNITA was offering by way of political settlement. It was his impression that they had never tried to find out. They had had communications with UNITA at low levels, but was this reliable? As a responsible power, the Soviet Union should be providing Angola with ideas. Adamishin returned to his argument that a settlement could be reached on other factors and, with implementation, internal settlement could begin. In the Afghanistan case, the Soviets had agreed to guarantee the Geneva accords without internal settlement. Angola could follow the same pattern, reaching agreement among the four parties, with internal settlement to begin from the date of implementation.

Crocker argued that the Soviets would have to be more precise about the internal problem and what was involved in internal settlement. Adamishin said they were not prepared for this. The harsh reality was that they had commitments to the Angolans. They were asking the Soviets to ask the Americans to solve the security problem. Stated in simple terms, Crocker said, there were two parties in Angola. There was recognition by the party not in power that the party in power could become the instrument of reconciliation. This situation did not exist in Afghanistan. UNITA did not want to push the MPLA into the ocean. It could work with a two party situation. Adamishin retreated to his argument that the Angolans must decide for themselves. Luanda's position -- which seemed fair -- was that Angola would be able to find an internal settlement sooner if the U.S. had the courage to cease aid to UNITA and allow them to find settlement through peaceful means. Instead the U.S. was stepping up aid to UNITA.

Mobutu was complaining to his African friends that the U.S. was pressuring him to act as a conduit to UNITA.

Adamishin asked whether the U.S. wanted Moscow to tell the Angolans that the U.S. was interested in how they intended to resolve the internal problem, when, and what the relationship would be between external and internal solutions. Depending on how the Angolans answered, this could affect the U.S. decision on aid to UNITA, it seemed. Crocker replied that this would not be necessary in that the U.S. could talk with Luanda directly.

Making another attempt at definition, Adamishin said the Soviet Union was interested in settlement. The question was what kind of settlement. The settlement proposed by the U.S. did not suit the Cubans and Angolans and we could not have a settlement that did not meet their concerns. If the basis for settlement could only be the U.S. plan, then there was no basis to proceed. We would have to find a balance of interests through direct talks among those concerned. The US and Soviet Union could not invent the solution. They could only help.

Crocker asked Adamishin where he would start, if he were in Angolan shoes and had a real desire to solve the problem. Adamishin replied that he knew the answer but could not give it to him now. He knew where he would start. But the Soviets were not sitting still, he claimed, they were looking for a balance without seeking to impose one. The situation required many good ideas, Crocker argued, and the parties were all open to this. Adamishin agreed that it was acceptable to feed both sides ideas. The U.S.. could work with both. The Soviets could feed their ideas on one side.

Ethiopia

Adamishin suggested that they not get into a detailed discussion of Ethiopia because this always led to quarrels and that might spoil the Summit atmosphere. However, he had just received information that morning that the SYG's talks with Mengistu had resulted in an agreement to improve cooperation between the UN and Ethiopia on food assistance and its distribution to the population. The agreement provided for:

- increasing UN personnel up to 15-20 representatives for food distribution;
- Ethiopian participation in possible meetings with donors;
- Ethiopian concessions to ICRC, allowing them to work in two provinces adjacent to Eritrea and Tigray;

-- transfer of ICRC vehicles to other organizations.

In addition, at the end of last week, Ethiopia had met the demands of the EC to allow their representatives to visit Eritrea and Tigray. Thus there had been some movement on Ethiopia's part, and Adamishin hoped the U.S. would take this into account. Crocker replied that the agreement appeared to contain some things that were significant in principle. The proof would be in the implementation.

Adamishin said the Soviets shared the concerns of others about Ethiopia and had transmitted these concerns to Mengistu. It had not been pleasant. He thought that if Ethiopia were invited to a donors' conference it could change their attitude, Right now they were very sensitive to the prospect of interference in their internal affairs and should be treated responsibly. The Eritreans, for example, had captured hostages from the NGOs who had served as military advisors to Eritrean organizations. There was also evidence that the NGOs had been used to bring help to the Eritreans. Ethiopia was jealous of its internal affairs.

Crocker rejected the implications of Adamishin's remarks for U.S. policy and Adamishin claimed he was not accusing the U.S. beyond stating that U.S. policy was hostile to Ethiopia.

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