

October 19, 1978

**Statement by South African Prime Minister P.W.
Botha Regarding Talks with the Western Five
(excerpts)**

Citation:

"Statement by South African Prime Minister P.W. Botha Regarding Talks with the Western Five (excerpts)", October 19, 1978, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Included in "Southern Africa in the Cold War, Post-1974," edited by Sue Onslow and Anna-Mart Van Wyk. <https://wilson-center.drivingcreative.com/document/118229>

Summary:

Excerpts of a statement by P.W. Botha discussing South Africa's concern with the independence and security of its neighbors. Emphasizes South Africa's wish and ability to provide Namibia with continued money and infrastructure and warns against the threat that a Marxist Namibia would pose to the free world.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Leon Levy Foundation

Original Language:

English

Contents:

Transcript - English

... Thirdly I shall make a short but important statement on behalf of the South African Government which I yesterday submitted to the Five for their information before they left. I'll deal first with a few paragraphs of the first statement in welcoming the Five to South Africa. I started by welcoming them and said: "It is the sincere hope of the our Government and peoples that your historic visit will accomplish the rediscovery of the Cape of Good Hope-its strategic importance and its friendship to the free world. I'm also very glad that some of you found it possible to visit Windhoek and to have discussions with representatives of those most directly concerned with the future of South West Africa. Before we come to specific points I should like to express my views to you as leading members of the Western world on some salient factors affecting the strategic situation in Southern Africa. South Africa is part of the free world and is anxious to discuss problems that have arisen between us and the rest of the family of nations, on the basis of mutual respect. We have understanding for the points of view of others, and hope on their part those who are animated by goodwill would appreciate the real nature of the great problems which face the Southern African sub-continent." Then I referred to the year since South Africa became a unitary state following the act of Union in 1910, and I stated furthermore that "It is perhaps ironical that a current dispute with the United States and the United Nations can be traced back to a war in which South African forces acting on behalf of and in concept with Great Britain seized what was then German South West Africa, and held it as captured territory until it was turned over to South Africa's administration as a mandate from the League of Nations at the end of the First World War. During the First World War this country brought upon itself a bloody civil war in which some of the best people of South Africa died as a result of our participation on the side of the West, and more specifically because the government of the time conquered South West Africa." I went on to say that "From that time until the present year South Africa has been concerned with and responsible for the security of the territory of South West Africa. For many decades this was not a serious problem, only in recent years as the security of South West Africa become affected by new developments in the Southern African strategic context. These new developments to which I refer concern of course the entry of Soviet Russia into Africa and more especially into Southern Africa". I doubt fully with the strategic position resulting from that, and I said that I cannot ignore the dramatic build-up of the Soviet Blue Water Fleet in the Indian Ocean which does not concern African strategists but from all the reports available to me, is very much a matter for concern for Nato who have drawn up contingency planning for the protection of the Oil Route around Southern Africa."

"Russian intervention in Angola through their Cuban surrogates clearly had only one purpose. This was no war of national liberation with so-called freedom fighters supported by the USSR against so-called Colonialist oppressors. The Portuguese had gone and the issue was-who was going to rule in Angola-the pro-Western UNITA or FNLA, or the pro-communist MPLA? The Russians were determined to get the MPLA into power, and having cocked their noses at the West, they did so." I dealt with that fully and the consequences following the Angola situation.

"South West Africa together with Angola, if the Soviets and SWAPO succeed in their efforts, South West Africa together with Angola would provide the USSR with a solid block along the West Coast of Central and Southern Africa enabling it to be used at will to the detriment of Southern Africa and the free world. It would for example control South West Africa's mineral resources including its uranium," and I dealt with a number other aspects of the matter. Then I wish to draw your attention to p. 9 where I stated: "Before concluding my remarks I wish to draw your attention to the substantial progress of South West Africa and its peoples have made under the guidance of my country.

South Africa's support is not only a matter of money, but also embraces railways, harbors, post and telegraph services, research in various directions, water supply, power supply and development. General economic development such as banking, agriculture, mining took place under the leadership of the Republic of South Africa.

Since 1961 to 1977 (not to mention earlier statistics) the RSA contributed to South West Africa's development in the form of special subsidies, loans for electrical supply, building of main roads, the sum of not less than R637 million. This amount does not include the more or less R200 million we are spending annually on our peace-keeping forces to maintain the security and peace in South West Africa against Marxist insurgency.

Let me be quite candid with you, an independent South West Africa with a responsible Government will have to take cognizance of these facts.

An irresponsible government motivated by Marxist theories, can only destroy South West Africa and its infrastructure in the same way it brought chaos, hunger, lacks of health services upon and destroyed potential economic growth in Angola and Mozambique."

Then finally on the next page I said: "-let me advise you, we have a practical vision for Southern Africa." And I explained the background for what I have to say at the end on page 11. "We believe in a community of free nations in Southern Africa-where proper health services, training of people, higher standards of living, proper housing of families, opportunities for work and economic progress will be possible. Our neighboring states in Southern Africa need technological scientific and other forms of assistance. They need capital for sound development. They do not need terrorists who exploit their territories.

The Republic of South Africa is capable of contributing its proper share in a positive way. My advice is-stop shouting at us; stop creating stumbling blocks in our way."