

February 1980

Telegram, from Steward New York to Secextern FA, Kaapstad, Meeting with T Kangai, ZANU's representative in New York

Citation:

"Telegram, from Steward New York to Secextern FA, Kaapstad, Meeting with T Kangai, ZANU's representative in New York", February 1980, Wilson Center Digital Archive, South African Archives, Department of Foreign Affairs, BTS 1/156/3 SADFA BTS 1/156/3 Volume 18. 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/118668>

Summary:

T Kangai assures that ZANU has a majority support in Zimbabwe, and that if they form a majority government they will establish stability in the state. South Africa and White Rhodesian's have nothing to worry of a ZANU victory.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Leon Levy Foundation

Original Language:

English

Contents:

Transcript - English

Telegram from Steward New York, to Secextern FA, Kaapstad
No. K87. Geheim
Secret

(Reference his lunch with T Kangai, Zanu's representative in New York)

As expected, Kangai's purpose in requesting the meeting was to sound us out on SA's likely reaction to the outcome of forthcoming elections. Steward accentuated points of PM Botha of 19 and 22 Nov 1979—People of Rhodesia must decide on their gov. SA would be concerned if any party attempts to seize power by armed force against clearly expressed wishes of majority of population.

As in case of Mozambique, we are prepared to co-exist with our neighbours despite political differences. However, should such neighbouring states interfere in our external affairs, or should they permit their territories to be used for terrorist attacks against us, we would take whatever steps necessary to defend ourselves.

In reply Kangai made following points:

1. ZANU confidently expects to win election outright. Their latest estimates indicate they will win 55 seats. However, should they not win a majority, and should Muz and Nkomo form a coalition against them, the war will continue 'because ZANU will find it very difficult to control its younger officers.' The result of any such outcome would also be rejected because it would have been achieved through intimidation and rigging permitted by Lord Soames. It would be unacceptable to independent African countries. Should war break out again Kangai believes that ZANU would win. Muz's auxiliaries would present little problem and Nkomo's forces would soon be overcome. The present Rhodesian forces would continue to be far more formidable proposition, particularly if they are supported by SA. In this regard Kangai was worried about the continued presence of SA troops in Rhodesia...

2. If ZANU comes to power it will try to ensure that there is no chaos. In such circumstances whites would be welcome to stay and there would not be a large-scale refugee problem. ZANU was not nearly so extreme as we imagined. Mugabe was more tolerant and democratic than Nkomo. The whites would have nothing to fear.. Should Muzorewa and/or Nkomo supported by war and Rhodesian forces, attempt to execute a coup d'etat then there would be civil war and chaos and SA could expect a serious refugee problem.

3. (denied ZANU received Russian aid, or unlikely to invite foreign forces in). However, if the war were to start the possibility that ZANU might be assisted by other African countries could not be excluded.

4. A ZANU government would not interfere in South Africa's affairs and would adopt the policy that SA's problems should be solved by SA. Kangai indicated that ZANU would not permit terrorists to operate against SA from Zim.

5. Kangai concluded by stating that it was not in SA's interests to support Muz/Nkomo coalition:

ZANU enjoys support of large majority of Zim

It has much more powerful army and thus the only party that can end the war and ensure stability.

The rest of Africa will recognise only a ZANU victory...