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The White Sun of Angola  
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*Children, don't go to Africa to walk - the warning of wise Korney Chukovsky, author of a beautiful fairy tale, often came to mind when I was writing this book. But how can one not go? Whoever who has seen the primordial, captivating beauty of African lands wants to return there again and again, to one of the most complex and dramatic crossroads of the contemporary world, to this potentially the richest continent which has vegetated in poverty for centuries.*

*And Angola? The adventures of Captain Grant's children, and gangly Paganel's stories of butterflies, flowers and birds created the impression of a mythical country of our childhood. But in the 1970s and 1980s we collided with an entirely different reality: the Soviet Union found itself drawn into a serious civil war in the enormous spaces of Angola, half the size of Western Europe, which grew into an international conflict, second only to the degree of our involvement in Afghanistan.*

## **YESTERDAY CONTINUES TODAY**

Against the background of the escalating number of international conflicts which were mostly inter-ethnic and which included the unsuccessful attempt of the US and NATO to solve one of them by force (by this I mean the Yugoslav conflict), my thoughts return to the events which occurred 25 years ago - the successful peaceful settlement in South Western Africa. The conflict there was, I dare to say, as complicated as the Balkan one; it had a static nature, and had drawn more than a dozen countries and liberation movements directly into its orbit such as the RSA [Republic of South Africa], Angola, Cuba, the US, the USSR, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zaire, the ANC, SWAPO, and UNITA. Almost all the countries of Africa participated indirectly, as did such countries as Britain, France, Germany, Canada, India, and many others.

What is extremely important to remember: the agreements signed in December 1988 at the UN headquarters in New York did work, unlike many other international agreements. Namibia, the last colony in Africa, received independence. The RSA left Namibia and also withdrew its troops from Angola. Cuban units, too, pulled out of Angola. Events developed tempestuously in South Africa, and soon put an end to the vestiges of apartheid there. A new democratic period of the development of this country began. The entire situation in Southern Africa changed for the better.

I was fortunate (now I know exactly that this is the correct word) to participate in resolving the conflict in its final and decisive stages: in May 1986, thanks to the USSR Minister of Foreign Affairs, Eduard Shevardnadze, I was appointed as his deputy with responsibilities, among other things, for dealing with Africa south of the Sahara.

This was the time of Gorbachev's *perestroika* and we were engaged in an overall critical analysis of Soviet foreign policy in this region, as well as elsewhere. It was about readjusting our approaches to current realities, and not ideological interests of the country, in the spirit of the famous 'new thinking'. But we were intent not to throw the baby out with the bathwater.

Before this point, the African continent was not among our top priorities. In combination with the general credit-worthiness which I had with the leaders of *perestroika*, this reassessment gave me a unique ability to influence our policy, at least in Southern Africa, both in terms of its elaboration and putting it in practice.

## THE WAR SEEMED ENDLESS

What kind of situation in the south of the continent did the newly-fledged Africanist find in 1985? I had previously dealt chiefly with European problems, although as a speechwriter for Andrey Gromyko and other Soviet leaders I had switched to global studies. To begin with, a war had already been going on in this region for many years. Furthermore, this was not one conflict but several which, moreover, had become entangled with one another.

In Angola, Angolans were fighting one another, and in Mozambique – Mozambicans were also engaged in an ongoing civil war. In the Angolan theatre, one side represented a generally-internationally recognized government which was a member of the Organization of African Unity and the UN. This side was supported by Cuba and the USSR. The opposing contenders for power corresponded to the groups UNITA and RENAMO, both of which were supported by the South Africans. In the case of Angola, UNITA was also backed by the United States of America.

South Africa savagely repressed the militants against apartheid inside the country, and behaved aggressively outside its borders. It was illegally occupying Namibia,<sup>1</sup> insolently ignoring all UN resolutions which included the key Security Council Resolution N° 435 adopted in September 1978. This UNSC resolution had been devised by a so-called "Contact Group" which consisted solely of Western countries (the US, Britain, France, Germany and Canada).

The South Africans retaliated severely against the rebels of SWAPO (the South West Africa People's Organization). SWAPO's military positions in Namibia were relatively weak, the main bases being concentrated on Angolan territory. The RSA declared a 'forward' strategy: its commandos, which were specially trained raiding troops equipped with modern weapons, encountered SWAPO detachments deep inside Angolan territory.

The RSA military propagated the concept of "helicopter occupation", the use of small, highly-mobile sub-units. Everything was directed at minimizing losses of white soldiers. Such a tactic had its reverse side: when the South Africans had to fight a much stronger enemy, the Cubans, they gave up rapidly and avoided fighting.

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<sup>1</sup> South Africa seized South West Africa from Germany in 1915 and controlled it until the Second World War in accordance with a League of Nations mandate; after the war, South Africa continued its occupation despite growing international criticism. In 1966 the UN General Assembly declared the RSA trusteeship in Namibia at an end. The UN took Namibia under its supervision, but that did not change anything. Later the Security Council formulated a thesis about the illegal occupation of Namibia by the South Africans and demanded that they leave. The International Court in The Hague had previously taken a similar position

The South Africans openly helped the UNITA rebel group. This often ensured the superiority of the latter over FAPLA, the Angolan government troops. The RSA, in turn, used the UNITA rebels as their own shield, including subsequently against the Cubans. Indeed, along one front line, sparsely spread in Angolan conditions, were government troops and SWAPO fighters, plus Cubans at a certain distance, and along the other - UNITA and the SADF. Before 1975 SWAPO operated from bases in Zambia, and made use of the services of UNITA, which gave it corridors for passage into Namibia. The fronts changed when the People's Republic of Angola was proclaimed in November 1975.

The main hopes were pinned on the principle of "Vietnamization", that is, a war of Angolans vs. Angolans, especially after the US under Ronald Reagan openly intervened in the civil war. At the beginning of 1986 the US resumed an infusion of weapons to UNITA after a 10-year hiatus.

The RSA savagely oppressed armed attacks by the African National Congress (ANC), the main anti-apartheid force. The camps of its armed wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) were in Angola for the most part, but also partly in the other Front Line States, as they called themselves (FLS).<sup>2</sup> Regularly, the South Africans inflicted painful blows on these external militants, making broad use of terrorist methods. In turn, the Front Line States tried to retaliate with propaganda campaigns and calls to strengthen sanctions against South Africa. At the same time they did not avoid economic and other ties with the RSA, which were usually concealed from public view. Harsh reality drove them to this – the Pretoria regime's industrial, financial, and other military power far exceeded the abilities of the opposing countries, and was concentrated at the far edge of the continent. When one day I landed at the airport in Johannesburg, I was shocked at the multitude of aircraft from African companies. All of them underwent maintenance in the RSA.

South Africans had their own armaments industry and were even secretly working on the creation of nuclear weapons. We followed this very carefully, because we knew that South Africa had all the necessary elements to acquire its own nuclear bomb: large reserves of uranium (the country was one of the largest exporters of uranium in the world), the required technology and specialists. In addition, South Africa stubbornly refused to accede to the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We tried to go a different route, introducing or supporting the UN proposals to establish a nuclear-free zone in Africa, but they remained declarations. It is worth noting that on this issue we actually coincided with the Americans' approach, which in those days was infrequent. When in June 1977 the Soviet satellite discovered signs of preparations for a nuclear test in the north of South Africa, the first thing we did was to share this information with the United States. At the time, South Africa was forced to abandon the test, as a result of strong international pressure. Likewise, in September 1979, the United States' reconnaissance satellite "Vela" registered a doubly powerful flash of light in the southern part of the Atlantic Ocean, where there were South African Navy exercises. The Americans and we came to the conclusion that it was a nuclear weapons test: a nuclear warhead had been blown up at a height of seven kilometers, and the most likely explanation was that it was an Israeli test, with the assistance of South Africa.

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<sup>2</sup> Angola, Botswana, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Tanzania.

In 1978 the under-cover Soviet intelligence officer, Alexey Kozlov, who was later arrested in South Africa, received evidence that the apartheid regime with the help of Israel possessed nuclear weapons, but his report was not considered as completely reliable. In November 1986, when receiving a delegation of the ANC, the head of the International Department of the CPSU Central Committee, A. Dobrynin raised the issue of the danger posed by nuclear weapons in South Africa. Oliver Tambo and his associates believed that South Africa was able to produce nuclear arms.

*At the final stage of apartheid, the regime confessed that it had six nuclear devices. They were destroyed after the RSA joined the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). We pushed them to this direction as well, while they desperately tried to avoid taking this step.*

For a long South Africa manoeuvred backwards and forwards on the Treaty on Non-Proliferation, promising to join it and then refusing. This "technique" allowed South Africa, despite the pressure of African countries, to avoid being removed from the IAEA as early as in 1988; Pretoria was not in a hurry to implement its promise, because it would mean, in particular, inspections of nuclear facilities there. This was despite our permanent efforts, including messages from Shevardnadze to President PW Botha, and talks with the South Africans in the framework of the IAEA together with other signatories, the Americans and British. It happened only in July 1991, after the new president FW de Klerk's decision to demolish the SA nuclear warheads. Only in 1993 did De Klerk confirm the fact of the RSA's development of nuclear weapons and the abandonment of them.

And in 1996, when the country was already under the government of the ANC, at a conference held in the same town where the South African Nuclear Centre had been located, South Africa and 42 other African countries adopted the Treaty of Pelindaba establishing a nuclear-free zone in Africa.

In the 1980s the RSA had been turned into a unique mixture of a monster and economic miracle. The South Africans manipulated information about the military operations of both SWAPO and the ANC, consciously exaggerating the danger. Firstly, this was to justify their own, much bloodier operations, and secondly, to constantly inflate the "red threat".

Pretoria was especially invigorated by Reagan's anti-Communist crusade, declaring that the RSA was a barrier against the Soviet Union's "total onslaught". The opposing sides generally tried to politicize the situation as much as possible, and present it as the struggle between the West and East, even when it was not so.

## **WHO DREW IN WHOM?**

Pro-Western politicians advanced the theory that the USSR, using Cuba as a shock force, spread the global confrontation into Southern Africa and they together filled the vacuum formed as a consequence of Portugal's hasty withdrawal in 1975. This was closely connected with the Portuguese revolution in the spring of 1974. The Americans reproached - and still reproach - the Portuguese for their "flight from Africa", forgetting that the US itself for purely selfish motives often hastened the withdrawal of West

Europeans from their African colonies. A number of American authors directly accuse the Portuguese of delivering "the keys to Luanda" to the Marxist MPLA. The Portuguese were the first Europeans to come to Africa and were there for almost 500 years, having organized among other things a profitable slave trade, and were the last to abandon African colonies.

It is said the Soviet Union 'filled the vacuum': this is a very strained interpretation, and especially about the "use" of Cuba. A small excursion into the past would be quite useful here.

When preparing to leave Angola, Portugal reached an agreement in January 1975<sup>3</sup> with the three movements about a cease-fire, the formation of a transitional government, and the holding of elections to a Constituent Assembly.

These were:

1) The MPLA (the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola), headed by politician, poet and doctor Agostinho Neto. Cuba and the USSR sympathized with the movement but its military strength was small. The MPLA's main ethnic support was the Mbundu group, which inhabited the territory around Luanda, and included many representatives of the intelligentsia, including mulattos.

2) UNITA (the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola), headed by Jonas Savimbi, was initially supported by China and Zambia, then the US and RSA. Its tribal base was the Ovimbundu ethnic group which, according to some data, comprised 40% of the then 10-million strong population of Angola.

3) On the side of the FNLA (the National Front for the Liberation of Angola), headed by Holden Roberto, were Zaire, the RSA, the US, as well as China, North Korea and Romania (a quite strange combination!). Its strength was direct military assistance from Zaire and the support of the Bakongo ethnic group living in the north of Angola and south of Zaire. (One must not forget that the borders of Angola were drawn in the colonial period and are quite arbitrary).

Thus, the vacuum was filled even before it managed to form. All three movements were supplied by weapons from donor countries, while the US, which sharply expanded secret CIA operations in the summer of 1975, armed both UNITA and the FNLA. Britain and France had their own secret support programs. And all three movements quarreled among themselves. It very quickly became clear that a fight would not be avoided. And so it occurred.

At first the FNLA, reinforced by elite brigades of the Zairian President (among other things, Mobutu supported his relatives: the wives of Mobutu and Holden Roberto were sisters) marched on Luanda from the north. Then the RSA invaded Angola from the south, dragging UNITA in its wake, and concealing its direct aggression in every way. The nature of the fratricidal war changed sharply. China and North Korea withdrew, afraid to be accused of being accomplices of racists.

Finding itself between two fires, the MPLA called upon the Cubans for help. Initially, this came in the form of military instructors, then regular units. Their numbers grew rapidly. Luanda would not have resisted South African foreign intervention, with Cuban intervention alone.

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<sup>3</sup> The Alvor Agreement of January 1975

Somewhat later our massive military supplies began, including tanks and aircraft. This occurred after the country proclaimed its independence (in November 1975). In other words, we observed the proprieties: the weapons were delivered not to a movement, but to an established government which had been rapidly recognized. Even Zaire and Zambia later settled with the MPLA, although the former, unlike the latter, did not halt its secret aid to UNITA.

*A la guerre comme a la guerre.* Operation "Carlotta", as it was nicknamed in Havana, ended in the MPLA's favor with a decisive contribution of Cubans armed with Soviet weapons brought at the outset from Cuba. The RSA and Savimbi (they had hastened to Luanda before the date of the proclamation of independence, on 11 November 1975) were halted 150 miles south of the capital and turned back. In the north, Holden Roberto, who initially had also advanced to the suburbs of Luanda, was defeated comparatively easily.

Seeing such a turnaround, in December 1975 the US Congress blocked the financing of secret operations to the FNLA and UNITA: the jungles of Vietnam were too fresh in Congressional and popular memory to be bogged down in the savannahs of Angola. However, unlike the African countries, the Americans were not reconciled to the results of the war, which ended in March 1976. The RSA, too, withdrew its troops, confirming the thesis of the synchronicity of the two countries' actions. However, this did not continue for long. In its fight against SWAPO, the RSA increasingly penetrated into Angolan territory and renewed military and other aid to UNITA. So if one can still dispute who in this civil war called first for foreign help, the matter is clear with respect to the second round - without the support of the South Africans, the UNITA rebels could not have re-emerged out of the bush where they had been driven in 1975-1976.

Several years later Luanda actually lost control over vast areas bordering Namibia. UNITA dominated in the southeastern provinces of Angola. In 1984 Luanda made an agreement with the RSA which established a kind of "no man's land" on the south of Angola, closed to the South Africans, SWAPO and Cubans. The latter built a defensive line about 250 km to the north of the Namibian border which the Cubans never crossed, effectively restraining the enemy with the simple fact of their presence.

At first, the Soviet Politburo approved the Foreign Ministry's warning not to engage militarily at all costs in the civil war in Angola. But a few days later the Ministry received a note from the Central Committee's International Department with the signatures of Andrey Grechko (Defense minister) and Yury Andropov (head of the KGB), which suggested satisfying the MPLA's request for a "moderate" arms delivery.

In his book Georgy Kornienko, the Minister's first deputy, writes he tried to talk Gromyko out of signing the deal, but the latter was "unwilling to disagree with his colleagues", and signed his name in ink. Having given an inch, it was hard to refuse the whole yard: very soon they requested ships and planes (IL-62s made more than a hundred flights) for the deployment of tens of thousands of Cuban soldiers.

V.Varennikov, a well-known military official, confirms in his memoirs: "material supplies to Cuban armed forces in Angola was also a concern of ours". Apart from ideological motives, geopolitical interests were gaining more and more weight: the aim was to capture strategic ground in the South of the African continent to oppose the United States (supported at the time by China, I have to mention). As a result we were allowed to station our military ships and aircraft in Angola.

The Cubans - and I insist on this point - came to Angola at their own initiative. Their contacts with the MPLA were of long-standing: the first meeting of Che Guevara and Agostinho Neto dated back to 1965. Rather, it was they who drew us in, rather than we them. A regular Cuban contingent appeared in Angola without our knowledge, much less our permission.

In their memoirs, our renowned diplomats G. Kornienko and A. Dobrynin say that only by accident did the USSR MFA find out about the transport of Cuban units which began in November 1975. Many years later, Fidel Castro confessed that he had responded to an urgent request by Neto without consulting with Soviet comrades, for he feared that they would talk him out of sending troops to Angola.<sup>4</sup>

At times we were obstinate, but finally had to meet the requests, and were getting increasingly bogged down. Already a year after the proclamation of the People's Republic of Angola, the USSR had a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with it, which imposed serious obligations on us.

As declassified American documents bear witness, when talking with Soviet leaders in Moscow in January 1976, Kissinger raised the Angolan question. Brezhnev said: we don't have anything in common with this country, do not mention it to me" and left the room. Gromyko, being directly reproached for transporting Cubans troops by our planes, evaded answering. Kissinger suggested exchanging the South Africans' withdrawal with that of the Cubans. Gromyko replied: if the RSA exits, we will react. The American warned "in earnest" that the US "would never agree to eight thousands Cuban troops stationed in Angola". They had to agree to many more.

In 1986, when Fidel Castro was shown his armed forces in Angola, he counted around 40,000 in personnel. According to Soviet data (1988), the Cuban command in Angola had more than a thousand tanks, 200 armed vehicles, 5000 artillery, 70 Anti-Aircraft units and 44 fighter jets. After the war of 1975-76, the Cubans were instructed to engage in combat only in the case of an armed assault against them. Their losses over 16 years of their presence there were not more than 2000 personnel. Cuban advisors took many key civilian posts as well. Fidel was caught up in his role of global revolutionary. We paid for "the parties", but were not invited to them - something the Americans couldn't believe.<sup>5</sup>

If one could speak of victory in Angola - for the vanguard of the national liberation movement which we had supported since the '60s came to power - it would be hard to call the further developments victorious. Even with all our and Cuban advisory, military, and other support, the MPLA did not nearly solve either the ethnic issue or the socioeconomic problems. The war with UNITA, which was supported by a considerable part of the population, went on practically without interruption (and continued till 2002!)

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<sup>4</sup> This history is clearly shown in Piero Gleijeses' article, "Havana's Policy in Africa, 1959-1976: New Evidence from the Cuban Archives", published in Bulletin N° 6-9 of the Cold War International History Project of the Washington Woodrow Wilson Center. International historian Odd Arne Westad, traditionally asserting that the Soviet Union "yanked on the strings" controlling Cuba, warns against underestimating the extent to which "Luanda and especially Havana pushed successfully for Moscow's involvement in the civil war; the Angolans and the Cubans developed considerably greater ability to do this than could have been it developed that the Angolans and the Cubans had considerably greater ability to do this than could have been predicted" (an article in the same Bulletin). Coming up to recent times: In the autumn of 1985 Secretary of State Alexander Haig met Cuban Vice President K.F. Rodriguez secretly in Mexico. The latter strongly denied that Cuba obediently followed the USSR. Haig was not convinced but - judging by the approximately 12 million documents from Soviet archives which were sold to the West in the early 90s - he was wrong. (CWIHP Bulletin, issues 8-9, p.1)

<sup>5</sup> I recall that, in strong contrast with Angola, the Cubans' bid to send 12,000 of their troops to Ethiopia to repel a Somalian offensive in Ogaden was entirely backed up by us.

This was essentially a struggle for power between two political groups and their two leaders, in many respects on a purely tribal basis while it was presented as an ideological conflict between East and West. Accordingly, our relations with Angola became increasingly confined to the military sphere.

For a long time the Americans could not determine what concerned them more - a settlement in Southern Africa, or the expulsion of Cuba and the Soviet Union from there. The "Cold War" was going on and quite often anti-Communism turned out for Washington to be preferable to anti-colonialism. The widespread anti-racist and anti-colonialist sentiments in the US, which had intensified as a result of "Vietnam syndrome", forced them to the first alternative. The "black lobby" was especially active. Finally having reached the conclusion that the second was not achievable without the first, the Americans tried, with some success, to combine these two goals into a single political strategy. This occurred sometime in 1981 - that is, five years before the start of the events described above. A notorious linkage became an expression of it: the observance of Resolution 435 about the independence of Namibia had acquired a condition - the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola. Step by step, the Americans became accustomed to this idea: first Angola, then Cuba (their joint declaration on February 1982 admitted, in case of Namibian independence, a gradual withdrawal of Cuban troops). The Americans had levers of influence, or at least opportunities for direct contacts with all the main participants of the conflict, unlike the USSR. As usual, Washington's method was that of stick and carrot.<sup>6</sup> However, they never managed to achieve a decisive breakthrough.

### **Soviet policy**

By the time *perestroika* began, we were in a severe confrontation with the US. The arms race had taken on an appalling, senseless nature. Militarization had penetrated every pore of Soviet society. Soviet foreign policy, as that of its main opponent, the US, was deeply ideologized. "The land issue is being decided", one of the highest Soviet leaders said in my presence, "who will bury whom". This expression reflected the system of views which had been instilled in us for several generations. The overall background could not fail to have its effect on our actions in Southern Africa. The situation was changing more slowly in the African sector than in the others, which were regarded as more important. (Once an American diplomat lamented to me that Africa was an orphan child of American policy, too).

Our position was irreproachable from the point of view of international law. The USSR advocated the fastest possible grant of independence to Namibia without any conditions, considered it illegitimate to tie this to the issue of the presence of Cuban troops in Angola, and gave comprehensive aid to SWAPO. Like the overwhelming majority of countries, we rejected apartheid in the RSA and helped the ANC for decades, including with weapons and training fighters. The decisions of the United Nations not only did not impede but, on the contrary, encouraged this, for UN Security

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<sup>6</sup> American oil companies, such giants as Gulf and Chevron, worked in Angola even when there were no diplomatic relations. Occasionally, orthodox State Department officials tried to prevent this - after all, the gap between the official policy asserting that the government in Luanda was illegal, and practical actions when American companies served as the main suppliers of hard currency to this same government, were impressive. But nothing came of it for them - the oil companies had powerful lobbyists in the US government. As Peter Rodman, one of the main personages in the US Security Council in that period, described, they even intimidated the companies with a threat from the UNITA rebels. However, everything was "caught" (Peter W. Rodman, *More Precious than Peace. The Cold War and the Struggle for the Third World*. New York - London- Toronto, 1994. P. 385-396). UNITA did not attack the American companies in Angola. In 2000 they provide 7% of all US oil imports. This was yet another reason to support Savimbi.



Council Resolutions called for resistance to the racist regime within the RSA and its aggressive policy outside. No contacts worthy of mention were maintained with the South Africans. We had imposed an embargo on all relations with Pretoria back in 1960 without waiting for the UN decision, which followed two years later. We delivered considerable quantities of weapons to Angola, including heavy weapons. We had thousands of advisers there, primarily military. We also sent advisers to Ethiopia, to a somewhat lesser degree, and still less to some other African countries. But the overall result of the military presence was impressive.

We ourselves, thank God, did not fight (though it sometimes happened) and did not sustain casualties comparable to Afghanistan. Our Angolans veterans calculated that in almost 20 years we lost a hundred people. What was really significant were our financial losses, the dimensions have never been properly calculated.

Our use of propaganda was not bad: why could American troops be in South Korea, but not Cubans in Angola? The aggressor, the RSA, and its victim, Angola, could not be put in the same category, etc.

The main reproach which could have been addressed at our policy besides its doctrinaire nature, was that it initially vacillated between a military solution to the conflict (only partly concerning the domestic situation in Angola) and a peaceful settlement. There were several reasons for that. I am not speaking about the overall inclination for a confrontation, although that had a nearly decisive importance. Among the local factors, RSA policy came to the forefront. For decades it had stood its ground, refusing to retreat and trying to win new positions. There did not seem any diplomatic means or hard power which could change the situation. The RSA scorned the decisions of the world community, and evaded boycotts and prohibitions. In its main "argument", the use of armed force, it was head and shoulders above its opponents. Why would the ruling National Party abandon the slogan "We will not allow a red flag in Windhoek"? And why lose an external enemy, the bogeyman used (possibly, in the first place) so as not to share power inside the country, to defend its own domestic customs - *apartheid* - at far-distant borders beyond the RSA itself?<sup>7</sup> The RSA showed with all its actions: we are here in Namibia and also in Angola, for a long time, if not forever.

Our specialists were convinced that the Americans were clearly on the side of the RSA,<sup>8</sup> although they camouflaged this. Official Soviet propaganda generally branded the RSA as an ally of American imperialism. By using their veto power, the Americans did not allow the imposition of mandatory economic sanctions, which only the UN Security Council could impose. They could ignore the UN General Assembly condemnations. The idea of "constructive engagement" with the RSA, invented by Margaret Thatcher, was in vogue. The US and the UK said that a country could not be subjected to complete ostracism, because its leaders, the obstinate Boers, would become totally embittered.

It is true that a prohibition on the supply of weapons had been in effect since 1977, but it was often bypassed. For many years both the US and the racist RSA had the same client, Savimbi. At times it was as if they were competing over who could aid UNITA

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<sup>7</sup> RSA official propaganda strenuously exploited a story according to which anti-apartheid actions inside and outside the country were directed "by the hand of Moscow", which had set as its goal the seizure of the riches of the Republic of South Africa (the so-called "Total Onslaught").

<sup>8</sup> Republican Presidents, primarily Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan, were especially guilty of this.

more effectively. And how to explain that these were the only two countries among the entire international community who did not recognize the government of the People's Republic of Angola?

Later we became familiar with the nuances in US-RSA relations. Divergences did exist, but matters never reached the point of a serious quarrel.<sup>9</sup> Schematically, the confrontation appeared thus: the RSA, US and their allies, on the one side, and progressive Africa, Cuba and the USSR, on the other. Before Gorbachev we had few contacts with the Americans about African matters, and the Americans simply tried not to let us get anywhere near some problems.

Our friends, especially the Cubans, invariably convinced us that we would not achieve anything except by pressure. Of course, time was needed for this, but constant dripping wears away a stone. Force will also be required if it seriously becomes a matter of a peaceful solution. (*Here they were proved right!*) They put military methods foremost in order to get new shipments of Soviet weapons even when talks were held with the Americans behind the scenes, including on the issue of the withdrawal of Cuban troops. At times relations with some leaders resembled double-dealing.<sup>10</sup> But, I must stress, on the whole, mutual loyalty was maintained in our triangle of the USSR, Angola and Cuba.

A kind of division of labor developed in the Soviet ruling circle during Leonid Brezhnev's time (1964 - 1982). Dmitry Ustinov, who headed the Ministry of Defence (the MD), was responsible for the army and the military industrial complex. Essentially no one interfered in his portfolio, and practically everything that he proposed to the Politburo, the Soviet major ruling organ, passed without objection. Gromyko, as head of the MFA naturally oversaw foreign policy, however not all of it. His main concern was to keep up with the US in order not to allow the status of the Soviet Union as the second world power to weaken. His portfolio also included Europe and, to a lesser degree, the socialist countries. The Third World, to which the Minister displayed no special interest, remained to a considerable degree in the hands of the CPSU CC (Central Committee of the USSR Communist party) departments, for it was viewed as a reserve detachment of socialism from where the next candidates were transferred - or were recruited - to our camp. It was established practice that any important MFA papers passed through the CC departments.

In his 28 years at the head of the Ministry (1957-1985), Gromyko did not once visit a single African country south of the Sahara. The MFA itself was not unhappy with this situation. As Vladimir Shubin demonstrated in his major work, "ANC: a view from Moscow", an ANC delegation first visited the USSR MFA in 1984 (p. 270). By this time such liberation movement delegations had been coming to Moscow for over twenty years.

It is curious how the picture changed in the *perestroika* years. Gorbachev began quite actively in the African arena – he held six meetings with African heads of state in 1986. Then such meetings began to be much less frequent. In April 1988 Gorbachev rejected an arranged meeting with Sam Nujoma (Gromyko received him) and in March 1989 he did not receive Oliver Tambo, entrusting this to Anatoly Lukyanov, although events in

<sup>9</sup> Incidentally, the South Africans tried to emphasize their differences with the US. When they organized contacts with the Cubans, they told them (and others in their presence): the only thing that Cuba has in common with the RSA is poor relations with the US.

<sup>10</sup> We needed remarkable restraint, as the Americans, in their efforts to get us to quarrel with Cuba or Angola, more than once threw "dead dogs" – such as the Angolans were directly asking the Cubans to inform "the Soviets" less about Luanda's contacts with the Americans. I remember that a couple of times I simply concealed information from the Soviet leadership about the "not at all correct" behavior of our friends, knowing what form it would take when correspondingly inflated. This was, so to speak, a local specific character which had to be taken into account.

the RSA had reached the apogee. The worst fate befell Nelson Mandela, a laureate of the Lenin Peace Prize: his repeatedly announced visit to Moscow only occurred in 1999. I was already retired by that time.

As for the MD and its Headquarters, they naturally were oriented not to the MFA, but to the Central Committee. Of course, I am giving a simplified picture, but on the whole this was the system. State and Party policy did not always coincide and priority was more often given to the latter.

And, finally, who in the USSR paid the piper with respect to Southern Africa? The same people who determined the country's foreign policy as a whole. Ideological and militaristic approaches were strongly reflected in it. The military were a unique state within a state.

Here's a simple example. Our ambassador in Luanda did not have secure telephone communications with Moscow, and so in order to call the MFA quickly, he had to go to the headquarters of the Soviet military advisers. And at the height of the discussions I often had to fly from the then People's Republic of the Congo to Angola on a Soviet military aircraft especially sent for me from Luanda. It is clear that the military felt themselves masters of the situation, and they honorably and selflessly performed their duty; as for concern over a political settlement, it was not part of their immediate responsibilities.

From year to year, or rather, from one dry season to another, the Angolans together with our advisers planned offensives against UNITA. (In 1984 our chief adviser Konstantin Kurochkin said to the Cubans that it was the top Soviet military leaders, including minister of defense Dmitry Ustinov, who had given him the "go ahead" for another offensive). Each time the campaign was conducted in the same direction, to the southeast of the country. And with the same regularity these operations did not achieve the desired success, and sometimes simply failed. When UNITA was in trouble the South Africans went in action.

## **TO WORK, COMRADES!**

Such, briefly, was the picture which naturally was not immediately comprehensible when we started. I won't describe the organizational aspects - acquaintanceship with people, both inside and outside the MFA, the selection of a team, etc. I will mention only that compared to the Americans, almost all the *accoutrements* we had were several times less. This concerned money especially.

Getting tickets for foreign airline flights (Aeroflot did not fly everywhere) required exhausting bureaucratic coordination. Sometimes one had to accept unorthodox solutions. Having somehow got stuck in Accra and not wishing to ask my finance directorate to allocate hard currency for tickets on a foreign airline, we made a 14-hour car trip of many hundreds of kilometers to Lagos, to our own national carrier. Amusing incidents were encountered en route. Imagine the town of Lome, the capital of Togo. The midday African heat. The sleepy Soviet embassy, where we had barely knocked on the door before we were heard. The building superintendent on duty was frightened - of course, so many people at once and one of them also asserting that he is the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs. The guy calls someone above. The reaction is naturally: what are you, completely crazy in this heat? But several seconds later, there

is a feverish scuffling of feet - the chargé flies downstairs. The Ambassador, my good friend, Sergey Shaverdyan, was on leave. By the way, Togo isn't much: a total of 40 km of coastline of the Atlantic, and the rest of the country forms a narrow strip, from the ocean far to the north.

All this did not seem extraneous. There was a lot of enthusiasm in the romantic period of *perestroika*. Much more substantive than the organizational fuss were the political concerns: we had to select what the Soviet Union needed in Southern Africa as a State, and what was possible and even necessary to abandon.

One fact became indisputable: many of our misfortunes have their origin in confrontation in wider celestial angles of our foreign policy horizon. Firstly, of course, with the US and its allies. Whether or not this reckless confrontation was thrust upon us and we allowed ourselves to be dragged in because of ambitions or thoughtlessness, an end needed to be put to this. And in all sectors, including faraway Angola. The insane competition in the arms buildup which the USSR was losing economically threatened to put the country to the brink of ruin.

We were probably right, not only in our indignation at the injustices in the world, but also our efforts to correct them. However, there were not enough forces and resources for this. When I later fought so that unmanageable things not be undertaken, I quoted Schopenhauer, "He who has come to this world with a desire to remake it, should be glad if he manages to escape".

In relations with the capitalist West, the slogan of *perestroika* was to return completely to the Leninist principle of peaceful coexistence, although it is worth noting that the confrontation was not so total. In a bizarre way, it was combined with cooperation, not only economic and cultural, but also political, including primary problems, such as some aspects of disarmament or security in Europe. It is sufficient to mention the Final Act of the Conference for security and cooperation in Europe signed in 1975 in Helsinki. A bad coincidence: it was right then when we and the Americans rose up in Angola on different sides of the barricades.

A "return" to Lenin was justified, for one could choose from his works the points most suitable to the circumstances. Mikhail Gorbachev and his team hardly planned to abandon socialist values as such. The idea was that socialism, if "it were put on the right track, would still prove its superiority", not only in space and not only with military power. The center of gravity shifted to economics where, it was firmly believed, socialism has considerable hidden advantages. Whether or not this was an illusion, we had not advanced far in practice. The country's economy continued to flounder, if not worse.

As regards regional conflicts, in February 1986 from the lectern of the XXVI CPSU Party Congress, the highest forum in the Soviet Union, Gorbachev firmly called for their settlement by political means. This concerned Southern Africa in full measure. The strategic choice freed the hands of practical diplomacy, but in real life we have to constantly overcome resistance, in our own home as well.

The freshly created Angolan 'brigade' drew up a list of our interests in Southern Africa:  
1. The Soviet Union does not need conflict there. Namibia's attainment of independence and the end of *apartheid* in South Africa are unquestionably noble goals worth of our

efforts, but not at all costs. And you won't get them by exclusively forceful methods. We should seriously seek a political solution.

## 2. What it might be?

- such that the independence of Namibia would be possibly closer to genuine, at least, in military and political matters (it was considered obvious that the South Africans will retain dominant positions economically);
- so as to facilitate the consistent, step-by-step, dismantling of *apartheid* in South Africa. However, by peaceful means. Reliance only on armed force as a method of achieving a goal is hopeless and counterproductive. It is no use to anyone if the only flourishing country in the region is ruined;
- so that the fundamental interests of the government in Luanda, which the USSR and Cuba support, do not suffer so that attempts at revenge by UNITA and its leader Savimbi are neutralized.

3. If this three-sided result is achieved, the Cuban military presence in Angola, large Soviet deliveries of weapons, and our bloated advisory staff will not be necessary. But there is no reason to disarm unilaterally or prematurely. As long as RSA troops are on Angolan territory, as long as they openly interfere in the civil war in Angola on the side of UNITA (added to this was American support, which was initially covert then obvious), there should be a military counterweight from our side. As I mentioned, Luanda and Havana agreed to include in the agenda the issue of the Cuban troops in Angola long before May 1986.

4. To put such a policy into practice we need to go through the United Nations and its organizations. This was to our advantage in all respects: in the Security Council we had a veto; an enormous majority of the UN had no sympathy for South Africa; and finally, serious work had been done. It included the decision of the Security Council, known as Resolution 435 of September 1978, which spoke of granting independence to Namibia and determined the conditions for this. The USSR did not vote for this resolution, considering it unbalanced and responding more to the interests of South Africa than SWAPO. Not without reason it was based on the so-called "The Western Settlement Plan". However, at the request of our African friends the Soviet Union abstained, and in this way did not block it. We believed, "If you want it as it is, you're welcome."

5. From the very beginning we used what would turn out a very important principle: what Cuba, Angola, SWAPO, ANC accept - in various combinations of these four sides - suits the USSR. We would not advance additional conditions. I will say right away that we pursued this policy to the end, trying simultaneously not to indulge our allies when they threw a monkey wrench into the works for one reason or another.

The main thing seemed clear: it was time to end our military involvement in Angola. Afghanistan was enough for us although, of course, the scales were not comparable but Angola, too, was straining the country. If decisive steps were not taken, this swamp might suck us in. The previous years had twisted the various edges of the conflict into a tight knot. Our unilateral, much less disorderly, withdrawal was unwise. A good price needs to be obtained for this, that which was designated above.

Having sketched out such an outline, which was quite distinct from the one previously adopted, and pushing it through the MFA Collegium not without difficulty (under Shevardnadze, unlike during the long years under Gromyko, the Collegium got the hang of key problems and discussed them seriously), we got enthusiastically down to work.

## AFRICA BEGINS IN PARIS

A month after officially assuming my new position on Southern Africa, I went on the first foreign trip. Not to Africa, but France. I resisted this for some time, convincing the Minister that it was unseemly to begin an African career from Paris. We agreed that I should go to an UN-organized conference on sanctions against South Africa in June 1986, but from Paris I would head directly to Angola.

The impression from the Paris conversations was stunning: hopes for a settlement were almost nil. Then UN Secretary-General Perez de Cuellar, a pleasant and clever person, told me without beating around the bush that there was no chance of South Africa accepting the UN plan concerning Namibia which had long been formulated down to the details in Resolution 435. South Africa had rejected it for many years in a row. As regards such a concession to them as the possibility of the withdrawal of the Cuban troops from Angola he, Cuellar, could not even speak of this, for the linkage was rejected by the UN. The contradiction between the *de jure* and *de facto* situation was obvious: according to UN canons, there was no question of tying the presence of Cuban troops in Angola with granting Namibian independence, although Angola and Cuba had already been admitting such a solution for several years.

De Cuellar expressed himself diplomatically but Theo-Ben Gurirab, the main person responsible for the international activity of SWAPO (in independent Namibia he became its first Minister of Foreign Affairs), declared to me that the US and South Africa would not hand over Namibia, they needed it too much - as a country rich in mineral resources, particularly uranium - as a strategic buffer zone, and as a place for the location of military bases.

Running a little forward, I will mention that the same thesis was repeated to me a few days later in Luanda by SWAPO President Sam Nujoma. He came to our embassy in the Angolan capital in clothing which left a somewhat strange impression, in sandals on bare feet, but his eyes cast a magnetism coming from an unquestionably charismatic leader. Several minutes of conversation left lasting impressions in those times; he told me of the selfless struggle against the monstrous RSA military machine; I told him of our selfless support, which in my case was not far from the truth, for the USSR actually had no special material interests in helping the Namibians. And after SWAPO headed by Nujoma came to power we earned little from this.

I had one question which I asked many people with whom I spoke. I asked: "Comrade President, when will Namibia be able to get independence?" For a long time he didn't want to name specific dates and then formulated his answer thus: "We have been fighting for a quarter of a century already and have probably traveled halfway." Please pay attention to these words, for in real life Namibia became independent three years after our conversation. The course of events accelerated sharply, and I hope to show why.

Nujoma nevertheless admitted that Namibia would become independent before *apartheid* was destroyed in South Africa. This coincided with the conclusion reached by our small group of enthusiasts - it was necessary to untangle the Angolan-Namibia knot from the confused and complex reality in Southern Africa and concentrate main efforts on it.

Some of our scholars and politicians had this thesis: since the root of all evil is the *apartheid* regime in South Africa, one cannot advance into a solution of other problems without putting an end to it; a partial, step-by-step method will produce nothing. Some Western analysts also held to a similar opinion. If such a point of view provided the basis for a practical policy, then a settlement of the Angola-Namibia conflict would have been doomed.

At the Paris conference I noticed a certain overestimation of the enemy's strength in the statements of SWAPO. According to my information, the numbers of the South African troops in Namibia were clearly inflated. I thought, this means that not only the opposing side, but ours, too, sinned by increasing numbers.

I got to know Oliver Tambo, the President of the African National Congress, and I immediately liked his smooth, intelligent manners and, the main thing, his realistic analysis of what was happening in his country. Oliver Tambo did not paint the entire RSA leadership in one color. He said that a split was appearing in the ruling National Party, and called Roelof ("Pik") Botha and, to a lesser degree, Frederick de Klerk (his evolution in the direction of peacemaker was still ahead!) as representatives of the liberal wing. It was not a matter of indifference for Tambo by what means apartheid would become a thing of the past.

Looking back now, more than a quarter of century later, I see that the ANC managed to break off the right-wing option which would have been inevitably accompanied by great bloodshed. "Right-wing" in the sense that it was nurtured by the most reactionary circles of whites in South Africa. We constantly stressed that the comrades from the ANC, knowing the situation best, would determine the tactics and strategy themselves, and we were very careful in our practical advice and recommendations. But they clearly designated their own choice against the idea of "the worse, the better" and in favor of a predominance of political methods over military ones. At the same time I agreed with Tambo's basic argument: in conditions when South African authorities were savagely repressing their own people and were not ready for talks, it was necessary to force them to them. How? By massive demonstrations - one, by military struggle - two.

An unpleasant thing at the Paris conference shocked me: in personal conversations some Africans spilled over into friendly assurances, but publicly they did not emphasize the role of the USSR. It would have been a different matter had they not singled out anyone at all, but they did laud others, those same Scandinavians. And this in conditions when our aid unquestionably exceeded anyone else's and only we helped with weapons. Usually we didn't react publicly to such unethical behavior. I decided to gamble more openly. I asked Tambo whether the ANC was declaring openly that the Soviet Union was helping it, including with weapons, or did he think that it was not very comfortable for the Congress. The President's reply was, of course, in our favor. He correctly understood the subtext of the question.

Not only the southwest of the continent worried Soviet policy then. Events in the Horn of Africa brought many headaches, where an internal conflict had flared up in Ethiopia which moreover had been quarreling with its neighbors, Sudan and Somalia. In Paris I met with Ethiopian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Goshu Wolde (Shevardnadze was right having sent me to the conference, where I immediately managed to enter the circle of the main protagonists). I will add that the Ethiopian minister fled to the US quite soon after this. But then it was thought that we would work together.

One could not be in Paris and not meet with French colleagues. At that time we had a firm practice, as we said, of consultations at a working level. I visited Francois Chatelet, the Director of the African and Malagasy Department of the MFA (the French are quite scrupulous with names). He was also pessimistic whether Namibia would soon end its status as a colony, or whether positive changes would occur in South Africa, and warned against overestimating the abilities of the ANC. For my part, I kicked around our changing approach to the southern African collisions:

- Soviet policy, affirmed by the decisions of the highest Party echelons, was directed at a collective search at untangling the conflict in Southern Africa;
- the USSR had no goals in this conflict which would differ from those which our friends - Cuba, Angola, and the South African and Namibian liberation movements - want. We would accept what was acceptable to them;
- if we helped strengthen the defensive capability of the front-line countries opposing RSA aggression, we did this at their request based on the legal right to self-defense and in full accordance with UN decisions;
- the conflict in Southern Africa ought not be viewed through the prism of the East-West confrontation, this would only complicate its solution;
- the Soviet Union favored mandatory and all-encompassing sanctions against South Africa.

In response to this last point Chatelet reproached us for fulfilling too zealously the UN decisions about a boycott of South Africa, and not maintaining contact with its authorities. He was right, for we literally had to glean information about South Africa.

At the Paris conference once again 114 countries voted to impose sanctions against the racist RSA. This unquestionably was important morally and politically. In practical terms, its significance was much less.

The finale of the trip to Paris took the shape of a baptism of fire. On the day of the flight to Angola they woke me early in the morning: "Anatoly Leonidovich, we're on fire!" While sleeping I had also smelled the odor of something burning, but only now I understood how serious it all was: tongues of open flame were escaping from the window opposite. Chargé Aleksey Glukhov, a longtime friend, had already been fighting the fire with comrades. "Aleksey, did you call the firefighters?", I shouted to him through the crackle of the fire. "No", he replied, "according to instructions we should handle it with our own people. Allowing outsiders into the Embassy is permitted only in the gravest emergency." This could be understood; the strong measures in an embassy were nightmarish (and absurd), but he answered for everything personally. What is more, a new Ambassador, Yakov Ryabov was flying in that day from Moscow. What would greet him? "Make a decision, Captain", I addressed him in the words of our kayak-paddling years. "Call the French immediately. On my responsibility, if you wish!"

The piquancy of the situation was that we were actually trapped on the upper floor of the Embassy building: as is well known, elevators cannot be used during a fire, but the stairs, again according to instructions, were tightly closed. In short, Africa could not only not be started, but it could also end in Paris.

The professional firefighters labored while they coped with the fire. But when it seemed that everything was done, a new horror: one of the members of our delegation was missing, Yevgeny Kutovoy. He had been sleeping in an apartment which was cut off by the blaze. The relief which we experienced in finding him alive and uninjured was inexpressible. He had climbed out into a little patio and waited there for the arrival of the rescuers. They nevertheless competently rebuilt the new Soviet Embassy.



## TO THE SOUTH, TO THE SOUTH...

Now, Angola. I was crossing the enormous continent of Africa for the first time. Green France quickly shot past, the dark blue Mediterranean, and then came the Sahara. The hours passed, but the picture did not change. The windows in the plane were closed, a film was showing, from time to time I raised the blind - and far below all the same yellow haze. Only in the last hours did the desert change to a green savannah.

Luanda welcomed us with a life-saving chilliness: here in June it was winter. The city seemed very beautiful to Sergey Krylov and me. We traveled a lot of African roads together. His position was "Assistant to a Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs". But this official title did not reflect the whole importance of his work. He made a brilliant career, including appointment as the Ambassador to Germany.

Right after the long flight we rushed out of the hotel to run and stretch our legs. Afterwards it was explained to us that this was careless. We could run into one of the booby-trap mines found in Luanda. Here it was a modern civil war. We might or might not be killed - probably not, but it would take a leg off cleanly. Hence the number of one-legged cripples, especially among the children.

The first meeting was with the Minister of External Relations, Afonso van Dunem, or M'binda, by name, who came from a guerrilla background. He told me, "We stopped talks with the Americans after a recent attack on Soviet merchant ships in the Angolan port of Namibe by South African saboteurs." I noted to myself: we had not heard very much about these talks while they were going on. I did not get into an argument, however, since the discussion was on a very good note. In general, conversations with the Angolans were filled with rhetoric, which was possibly our fault as well. Sometimes important things were lost in slogans. From the very start I tried to get on a businesslike footing. When M'binda insisted that Angola was a victim of aggression, while agreeing, I shifted the conversation to another subject: cargo vessels and other Soviet facilities needed for more reliable protection of the Angolan friends.

The same evening President of the People's Republic of Angola Jose Eduardo dos Santos received me and Ambassador Arnol'd Kalinin. We passed him a message from Gorbachev, a simple but effective means of paying attention to the Angolan President and raising the role of Moscow's envoy.

Tall, young, and energetic, Dos Santos made an excellent impression on me. Now in hindsight I think that, having fallen under his charm, I did not view some statements very critically. When the Angolan President spoke in favor of fundamentally improving relations between the USSR and US, this of course was OK. But I should not take at face value words about the departure of Cuban troops from Angola, as a far-fetched issue, which was absolutely unacceptable for the leadership of his Party, the MPLA, and the Americans knew this. Why have the Americans and even French troops been sent throughout the entire world, but Angola and Cuba cannot handle their own affairs in a sovereign manner? This was entirely correct, but for a number of years the possibility of the withdrawal of the Cubans was admitted and the Angolans spoke of this with the Americans.

To some degree, we followed the Angolan President when he promoted the liquidation of UNITA by force as a top-priority task, and asserted that the idea of a national

reconciliation was an American invention. Its goal was to overthrow him, dos Santos, and to bring UNITA to power. There were no doubts regarding the Americans: they not only mediated in the conflict but, by arming UNITA, were actually a participant in the Angolan war. They did not object at all to a complete change of decorations in Luanda. But did the government of Angola have the strength to first weaken, then finish off UNITA, as they expressed it? The disregard of political methods and the rejection of the slogan of national reconciliation only played into Savimbi's hands. But I decided not to say it aloud at the first meeting. I didn't object to dos Santos either when he said that if there were no outside support, the problem of UNITA would be a purely domestic matter and the Angolans could solve it themselves. But nevertheless in Aesopian language - in order not to seem a person giving unrequested advice - I mentioned our experience of solving ethnic problems in the USSR, slyly calling for this to be made use of in the case of Angola. But all this was "poetry". The main thing that dos Santos wanted to hear - and heard - was the practically complete satisfaction of Angolan requests for new deliveries of weapons and other aid which had gone into his lion's share in form of credits and, in my memory, simply not repaid. I will add, that even if there was accord to pay cash, our contracts were paid after the Western ones had been satisfied.

*Afterwards I checked up in our MFA: all Angolan debts were written off in several portions. In 2006 the matter was closed. Colleagues blinked expressively: somebody made a good deal.*

## **CUBA BEGINS IN VIENNA**

The summer of 1986 was unusually rich in events devoted to Southern Africa. In July an international conference for the immediate granting of independence to Namibia was held in Vienna. There I met Isidoro Malmierca, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Cuba, our main ally in Africa, and outside.

Malmierca soberly assessed the situation in the region. He was close to the French opinion when he warned against overestimating the capabilities of the liberation movement inside South Africa; he thought that grassroots dissatisfaction was growing faster there than practical measures, and doubted whether there was an organization or a leader capable of rallying all the enemies of apartheid around himself.

The Cuban was equally skeptical of SWAPO: its detachments had strength in numbers, no less than 10,000 fighters, but armed struggle would not lead it to power in Namibia. Such a position was extremely important for me and corroborated the correctness of our policy for a political settlement.

The Cubans knew the situation inside Angola better than us. Malmierca was not delighted either by the overall situation or by how the leadership of Luanda was handling matters. UNITA was a serious enemy, well-armed and well-trained. An interesting detail shot past - Israeli instructors also had a hand in this. The rebels had strong positions in the countryside and a solid ethnic base. Not without reason had Jonas Savimbi, (who was unquestionably an outstanding personality, although in a profoundly negative sense) for a long time used the Chinese idea, "the village against the city". (I knew from Shubin's book that in 1964 Savimbi visited Moscow, at the invitation of our non-governmental organizations, as an adviser of Holden Roberto).

But the conclusion from a realistic assessment was: first, to inflict a military defeat on UNITA and South Africa which was supporting it, and then speak about the political methods of an internal settlement in Angola. You cannot achieve the second, it was said, without the first. This means, again, war until to a victorious conclusion. The Cuban was sure that Luanda and Savimbi's people contacted one another from time to time. "But they don't tell us this", he said. "Nor us either", I replied. Malmierca was clearly giving priority to overthrowing apartheid in South Africa, for only this would make the independence of Namibia possible. From the very first meeting I disputed this approach. The consequences were too obvious: Namibian independence would have been delayed until God knows when. The Cubans would have acquired the perfect pretext to stay in Angola forever.

Those who strive to belittle the role played by the USSR in the epic struggle in South Western Africa should think about this: what would have happened if the Soviet Union had taken the above point of view? If we had waited until the collapse of apartheid or, following the Cubans, put the task of its elimination ahead of everything else, conditioning all the rest on this?

Our approach was different from the start: to begin with untying the Angolan-Namibian knot. To go in this direction step by step, creating favorable opportunities for the solution of the other problems, including the dismantling of apartheid. We firmly embarked upon this path, and were not mistaken.

This alone, in my view, refutes the arguments of those who want to show that the USSR reduced its role to just mindlessly defending the positions of Cuba and Angola.

The conversations in Vienna were perhaps notable for confirmation of the pessimism which remained about whether South Africa could be moved from its then openly obstructionist position. UN Secretary General Perez de Cuellar told me about this again. He was preparing for one more major event, a special session of the UN General Assembly on Namibia set for September 1986.

I will say in advance that this special session also did not change much in the positions of the opposing sides. But it fostered the sentiments in favor of putting an end to this anachronism, the last colony in Africa, which Namibia continued to remain. The moral factor played its role in the policy.

During the Vienna conference a number of high-ranking African leaders asked to meet me. A certain hunger for talking with the Soviet representatives was present after the Brezhnev times. We had good talks with President of Mozambique Joaquim Chissano in particular. I continued to learn, eagerly absorbing the slightest nuances.

## **THE EAST AFRICAN TOUR**

An August 1986 trip to the eastern part of the South African region was quite instructive from this perspective.

It began with Tanzania. Sergey Krylov and I flew there and encountered some adventures. Twice the pilot could not land at one of the intermediate airfields, each time notifying the passengers about his maneuvers, which understandably did not add to our

tranquility. The reason was a sandstorm. On the third attempt, announced in advance that this was the last attempt, he landed. By the way, I asked where we would have headed in case of failure. The answer was - Saudi Arabia. There they would have interned us, I thought: we didn't deal with Saudi Arabia then; diplomatic relations had formally been established, but the embassy had not opened. In the course of events my confidential meeting with a high-ranking Saudi emissary in Geneva in November 1987 promoted the organization of closer ties. Then we talked heart-to-heart for some hours with Prince Bandar bin Sultan, the Saudi Ambassador in Washington and an influential person in the Saudi hierarchy. (He represented his country in the US capital for at least fifteen years afterwards, and in 2012-14 became director general of the Saudi Intelligence Agency) That's how one intersected with another.

We arrived in Dar es Salaam late and with frayed nerves in the early morning of 3<sup>rd</sup> August. And immediately there was a surprise: Julius Nyerere, the Chairman of the Revolutionary Party (CCM) suggested we meet him. "But it is in Dodoma, his summer residence, 500 kilometers from here", our Ambassador Sergey Illarionov explained. "We are invited to lunch, so we need to hurry".

Although Nyerere had left the post of President of the country the previous year, his influence in Africa was colossal. It is he who led Tanzania into independence and, in spite of all the diversity of the tribes and ethnic groups, unlike many other African countries he made it a relatively united country. And, note, he left at his own initiative, not a frequent event, and for Africa this was altogether unique. Furthermore, he was one of the founders of the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

I shaved rapidly in the airport bathroom, changed my shirt, and left. We rushed like madmen, frightening strange enormous birds.

My impression of Nyerere remained that of a wise and even-tempered person. In those times it was very important to instill the idea that Gorbachev's team was seriously intent on changing the course of Soviet foreign policy to a "constructive direction". So a considerable part of this and many subsequent conversations were devoted to global international problems. Perestroika then encountered a "hurrah!", although not everyone liked our rapprochement with the US. It was in Africa that I first heard the saying that the grass suffers when the elephants fight among themselves or make love. The same Nyerere warned me: it is good that you'll pulling Reagan into talks. He was also interested in this. But don't be seduced into thinking you'll achieve quick success.

Speaking about the region, Nyerere highlighted the key points clearly: talks are better than war but South Africa should be forced to talk. He called upon us not to weaken our support of Angola and Mozambique, not to cut off aid to them along with the national liberation movements, even if there was no confidence it was always used for the cause.

In a word, the "*mwali*mu" - teacher, as they called him - confirmed his elevated level as leader of the state and an intellectual. Not for nothing, they say, had he translated Shakespeare into Swahili. (Right at that time, October 1999, when I was at the Washington Woodrow Wilson Center writing the part of the Russian edition of this book dedicated to Tanzania and Julius Nyerere, there came news that the "giant of African politics", as UN Secretary General Kofi Annan called him, had died in a London clinic. He was 77).

In talks with Tanzanians elements of realism were mixed with some belligerence. The Minister of Defense and Deputy Prime Minister Salim Ahmed Salim, possibly by virtue of the post he occupied, assured me that armed struggle was the most productive way to internal changes in South Africa. He admitted at the same time that the ANC did not have a rear echelon in the front-line countries. It is true that they had bases in Angola, but try and get to South Africa from there or from other places! And indeed many fighters died in UNITA ambushes on Angolan territory, for RSA intelligence was excellent.

Many African countries, Salim admitted, feared getting involved with the South Africans. He mentioned to Mozambique, especially its agreement with South Africa known as the Nkomati Accord. "Even if all the countries to the south of the Sahara could have combined their armed forces they would have been weaker than South Africa army". Behind this, however, was the conclusion that the Soviet Union should increase military aid. Likewise, I was told that the government in Luanda could not be allowed to fall even if it wasn't putting its best foot forward.

In Dar es Salaam I handed a message from Gorbachev to Nyerere's successor, President Ali Hassan Mwinyi.

The next stage was Zambia. I remembered flights within Africa for a long time. As a rule, the aircraft turned out to be old and unstable, and the airfields only approximately corresponded with their designated names. But I never heard about accidents of African aircraft. The Lord was on their side. In any event, our material base in this case too, was strikingly different from those of our American colleagues. They flew on their own aircraft.

Lusaka, the Zambian capital, is a small, practically one-story town, drowning in green, neatly divided into streets intersecting each other at right angles. As in all places they had been, the British left an imprint which could not be confused with anything else. Lusaka was especially likeable when the jacaranda was in violet bloom.

President Kenneth David Kaunda, with his analytical and emotional thinking, left the strongest impression from our meetings in Zambia. And, by the way, he was the father of nine children. "If Mrs. Kaunda could play soccer, we would have fielded an entire soccer team", he loved to say.

At that moment Kaunda was also chairman of the group of Front Line States (FLS), so the first question was about strengthening their defense potential. The Organization of African Unity recognized the legality of armed struggle against apartheid, he said, but it was senseless to enter into open battle with the ruthless South African military machine so the tactic should be "strike and hide". The peaceful path was unquestionably preferable. Here, however, Kaunda noted that neither for economic considerations nor for strategic ones – and certainly not racial ones – were the US and the West as a whole going to hand over South Africa. On top of this, it had an important role in terms of watching the Soviet Navy.

What could force it to enter into talks was the threat of an upheaval in South Africa. The pressure in the cauldron was building. About 50,000 had died in Zimbabwe because of the stubbornness of the British; in South Africa the toll would be hundreds of thousands. As if in passing, Kaunda did not fail to mention that Great Britain had backed the wrong horse in Zimbabwe: Robert Mugabe's coming to power in 1980 as a result of elections,

to which the British had agreed at the last moment, had turned out to be a complete surprise for Margaret Thatcher. I noted to myself: he was talking about the British, but hinting to us: we, too, had not bet on Mugabe. (Later I found out that in this sense we were in "good company": the South Africans had also been mistaken).

In reply to my question Kaunda explained why Marxist ideas had become somewhat widespread in Africa. First of all because the main aid to the national liberation movement had come and was coming from the USSR and China. "Along with weapons come ideas, but much time is needed for them to take root in African soil". (*This time has not come yet!*)

Kaunda critically regarded two aspects of American policy in the region. The first was linking the granting of independence to Namibia with the withdrawal of the Cubans from Angola. "Three years ago I tried to convince Ronald Reagan that such a linkage would bring the element of confrontation between East and West into the African context, but I could not (persuade him)." The four other Western members of the contact group - France, Britain, the FRG, and Canada - the same ones that prepared Security Council Resolution 435 about the independence of Namibia – were officially against linkage. ("This will also hamper our practical work". I made an internal note for myself). The second aspect: the stubborn support of Savimbi. "Sometimes I get the idea," said Kaunda, "that the Americans want to divide Angola into two parts, like Korea". "But you Zambians once supported him too", I thought to myself. "It was after the MPLA ended up in power that you quickly stood on the side of the victors."

Kaunda complained that Zambia had to comply with the International Monetary Fund recommendations. I should have remembered this well, but in those times the very thought seemed absurd that my country would ever depend on the IMF, as later happened in the early '90s.

I liked the young Zambian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Luke Mwananshiku who commented, "The armed actions of the ANC inside South Africa are pinpricks: only 500 of the 2-3,000 soldiers whom the ANC can scrape up operate in the country"; and I talked with Prime Minister, Kebby Musokotwane. With him issues of bilateral economic cooperation were discussed. I tried not to overlook this topic and we managed to make some progress for an expansion of commercial ties.

In those days Lusaka was one of the main bases of the African National Congress. I prepared seriously for a dinner in the Embassy held by Ambassador Venyamin Likhachev for members of the ANC national executive committee, Dan Tlume, John Nkadimeng and Simon Makana. The comrades substantially updated my ideas about matters which were new to me. They were firmly convinced that the people of South Africa should seek freedom through their own means. Just like Kaunda, they thought that if Pretoria did not change its policy, the scale of a catastrophe might be gigantic. (From today's position, I repeat: it is a huge achievement that, thanks to common efforts, this was avoided. They admitted that not only the South African authorities but also the ANC were advancing prior conditions for negotiations. From the government's side, this was a demand to halt the armed struggle and to expel members of the South African Communist Party from the ANC. The ANC demanded the release of political prisoners, Nelson Mandela most of all, and the legalization of all political parties. ANC members spoke of their relations with the frontline countries, the difficulties which they encountered with Mozambique, especially after it entered into agreement with South Africa, and also with Botswana.

Using their story of how the Westerners were coaxing the ANC, which was the simple truth as a sensation of future change hung in the air, I asked whether it was worth expanding Soviet contacts with the anti-racist movements in South Africa. Note, not with the government, but only with the opposition; as I was impressed by the anti-racist rhetoric, I just could not mention contacts with the authorities. But even here the response was negative. A certain debate arose. The ANC members spoke openly about how jealously they regarded everyone who went outside already-established channels. Such a monopoly did not seem to me to be useful for our state interests.

I raised the matter of the ANC's views of the future reforms inside the country. Here their position was reasonable: gradual, unforced reforms were needed. And I kept this in mind, subsequently convincing my Western (and, when the time came, also South African) colleagues that the ANC did not have the intention of radically breaking the economic system which had formed in South Africa, much less building socialism there. We encouraged their moderate approach, I stressed. (*That's exactly how they proceeded when coming to power.*)

My conversation with Prime Minister of Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe, which occurred on 13 August 1986 in Harare, became the final event of this African tour. As in other capitals, this was organized by our Ambassador, Georgy Ter-Gazaryants. And here the discussion began with the delivery of Gorbachev's message. But it dealt with non-African matters - about perestroika in the USSR, about relations with the US and the need to turn toward constructive cooperation with it. Mugabe agreed with our arguments, but his somewhat skeptical attitude was visible whether all this would work out. As concerns the South African region, there were harsh overtones in Mugabe's words: he did not believe in the achievement of a peaceful solution. I also asked him my favorite question: when could the fall of apartheid be expected? "Not in the next several years", was the answer.

In other words, few in Africa or outside foresaw that events would soon take a fast turn. But it did happen, not least thanks to perestroika in the Soviet Union which radically changed the international picture and prognosis. In all the African capitals I heard high praise of our leader and the peaceful revolution he had begun in the USSR. "This is not only yours, but also our success", as Kaunda put it. It seemed to many, wrongly, that only happy times awaited us ahead.

## THE REASONABLE BRITISH

The next point - London, talks with British colleagues on the subject of Africa. The schedule was drawn up so that I would be in the Foreign Office the next day after the conversation with Mugabe. (Eight years later, a visit to the building of imperial architecture where the Foreign Ministry of Great Britain is located in the center of London, became routine work for me as Russian Ambassador).

My interlocutor was Ewan Fergusson, Deputy Permanent Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs according to traditional British terminology, the chief person responsible for the African division. I was quickly convinced that he knew a great deal, once again traditional for British diplomacy. But not long before this knowledge was for us a closed book. Now they shared it with us. It meant that something was changing in our relations with the West. "Apartheid will not last long," Fergusson told me, "but we should do in a

way that its departure was not violent. It is not difficult to destroy a country, but how does it live then? Moreover, Britain has its own reasons for seeking a peaceful reorganization: between half a million and a million residents of South Africa have the right to resettle in Britain. Added to that, the colossal British investments, ties, and existing deep roots." This was said with disarming openness.

"The economic sanctions which you Soviets so actively advocate have not yet worked and are not working." This was the point of view of Great Britain. "The White 'tribe' - 4-5 million people - is small in comparison with the millions of blacks, but strong. One could not take it by force, and there is no such force. The frontline countries are not going to exacerbate relations with South Africa. We ought to rely on the government's efforts to introduce serious changes. But President Pieter Botha is afraid of Communism like the Devil fears holy water. This is the Evil Empire for him, as it is for Reagan. The possibility of an upheaval is small" ("Here he soothes me", I thought). "But the release of Nelson Mandela and the legitimization of the ANC are necessary. Great Britain is not helping the ANC materially. Neither it nor the other side is ready for dialogue, but in the final account they will come to this."

When I touched on the issue of linkage, here the Briton was pragmatic – "officially Great Britain does not accept it, but in real life it exists. Pretoria will not come to agreement without the departure of the Cubans." ("Pretoria or Washington, or both together?" - I asked myself.)

The issue of a so-called internal settlement in Namibia pushed by South Africa as a counterbalance to the UN plan was topical then. This was a long-held stratagem of the South Africans: we agree to independence of Namibia, they say, but without SWAPO. They were constantly trying to organize a force, an alternative to the rebel movement. The British gave firm assurances that they would not support the diversionary tactic. And they kept their word. Again it was confirmed: when the approaches (and interests) of the West and the USSR coincided, it was possible to neutralize maneuvers directed at disrupting generally-accepted decisions.

If I am not mistaken, for the first time we were probing the British about the idea of a guarantee of a future settlement. We were already thinking about this, so it is unfair to accuse us that in this period we had still not decided whether the Soviet Union needed a settlement at all and supposedly had been secretly working against it.

Fergusson reacted in a purely British way: "*Very interesting, we will study it*", that is, he did not reject the idea out of hand. This meant it had a chance of success.

I repeat: British diplomacy revealed its best side, which I suspected but which had not been encountered in practice. Naturally, a detailed message was sent to Moscow with an analysis of the statements of Fergusson and his colleagues. Such messages helped improve some of our inaccurate ideas about what was happening in Southern Africa.

Summarizing the impressions, I decided that an analysis of the situation, corrections we put in our policy, and a model of possible actions - in a word, our strategy - was basically correct from our state interests' point of view. Now a thorough talk with Americans was needed.



## WASHINGTON

Consultations with the US concerning 'regional problems' arrived at just the right time. They were called such in our diplomatic language. We suggested them, and the Americans responded quite quickly.

August. According to an old Soviet custom, Shevardnadze was on vacation by the sea in a blessed place, Ldzava - although afterwards it was thoroughly ruined, like all Abkhazia. (*Now it is an independent state with rebuilding in progress*). Before heading to the US, I coordinated our position with him by telephone: there were secure connections at all government dachas.

So, on 26 August 1986 I was in Washington. Naturally, there was some concern: I had to speak about practically all regional conflicts, and for the first time with the Americans.

My interlocutor, Deputy US Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Michael Armacost, was very kind: "You were tired after the flight, and there's the time difference; we'll talk tomorrow more in detail". I nevertheless had time to insinuate to him some flavor, so to speak, of the Soviet approach in conceptual terms, for the most part in the form of questions:

- Do I understand correctly that the USSR and US would not only like to improve bilateral relations but to normalize the international situation as a whole?
- Does the US agree that regional conflicts cannot be allowed to spill over into open confrontation between the two superpowers?
- Do you want a settlement of all regional conflicts or do you prefer to keep some of them going on?
- Is the US ready to take into consideration the interests of other countries and peoples, their right to self-determination, and independent development without outside interference? For neither the USSR nor the US can be supreme arbiters.

Possibly the questions sound pathetic. But behind them was a subtext of no little importance: the new Soviet policy was trying to discover at least something in common in the ideology of an approach to regional conflicts, especially against the background of the considerably hardened American position under Reagan. His doctrine of fighting "Soviet imperialism" in the "Third World" proclaimed a year before in a speech at the UN on 24 October 1985, provided direct support, including military assistance, to the mujahedin in Afghanistan, UNITA in Angola, the Contras in Nicaragua, etc. Over the next two years, Savimbi received weapons worth tens of millions of dollars, including the famous Stinger missiles.

You can't beat Armacost without using your wits, however. He reacted briefly: We are practical people and are trying to go from the specific to the more general, and not the reverse. Me: a purely pragmatic approach cannot always provide the necessary result.

The next two days, 27 and 28 August, were packed full of conversations. They touched on the Middle East, including the Americans' recent bombing of Libya, the Iran-Iraq conflict, Afghanistan, and the Asia-Pacific region, but here is no place to recount them. I will say only that I drew the serious attention of the American side (in the Afghan context) to Pakistan's nuclear research. This did not concern Mr. Armacost then.

Regarding South African affairs, the nucleus of my insistence was: this is a conflict where joint Soviet-American efforts are possible. I mean, a common work for a just

(special emphasis was placed on this word) political settlement. This needs to be sought sooner rather than later, for the alternative might be a bloodbath which should be avoided at all costs.

On the whole, the Americans found my analysis "interesting"; they didn't decline to search for common ground, but a number of differences immediately appeared which hindered our mutual understanding in the future.

The Americans reproached us for an inclination toward a military, rather than a political settlement inside Angola. Possibly this was their logic then. However, they refused to understand that our position ensued from our support for what Angola and Cuba were doing. Our friends were afraid - and not without foundation - that the Americans were striving not for an armistice with UNITA but about yielding power to it. We took our obligations to Angola and Cuba seriously, as these were formalized in treaties with both, and deferred to Angolan and Cuban leaders. We continually told them about the need for political work, too, but did not impose our opinion.

The Americans did not promote moving the intra-Angolan problem onto a peaceful course, and also stubbornly did not wish to establish official relations with Luanda. Fulfilling dos Santos's request, we raised this question. They said that the MPLA did not deserve this, it had come to power illegally, not as the result of elections. But did UNITA, I asked, deserve it? Why such political bias? To try to recoup the 1975 failure to bring Savimbi to power?

I said that Angolan internal affairs should be arranged by the Angolans themselves, I characterized UNITA as a creature of South Africa and its extended weapon, and blamed the Americans for having received Savimbi recently in Washington (they welcomed him practically as a head of state). I noted that Africa's hostile reaction. Many American leftists, and not only leftists, considered support for UNITA by the United States immoral. No wonder: in this sense the US was in harness with the racist RSA.

Armacost spoke in favor of the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Angola and Namibia, that is, of both Cuba and South Africa. We did not oppose this in principle; we knew that the Angolans were not shunning such a discussion with the Americans. They would seek an agreement which suited them, and we would support it. The Americans wanted more - namely, our constant pressure on Angola and Cuba. And although we thoroughly argued our point of view to our friends concerning a political solution, we did not especially hurry to tell the Americans about this.

Moreover, there was a legal subtext here; Angola had not violated international legal norms in inviting in the Cubans; the South Africans had trampled them in sneaking into Namibia and then Angola.

When during a conversation about the Asian-Pacific Region Assistant Secretary of Defense, Richard Armitage asserted that all the Asian countries welcomed the presence of American troops in South Korea, I parried: All the frontline countries in Africa approve of the Cubans deterring the South Africans in Angola. The US I said, should have stopped the occupation of Namibia even before Cuban troops had appeared in Angola, and even before Angola itself had become independent. Resolution 435, which by then was eight years old, is the fruit of particularly Western creativity. The US prided itself that it had been one of the co-authors. Now the US is violating its own resolution with

additional linkages, and we, who had wanted to veto the document, are defending it in the original form.

The problem was not only in the moral and legal aspect of the matter. We had no confidence that even if linkage was realized that South Africa would either fulfill its part of the obligations and leave Angola, or not obstruct the independence of Namibia. American guarantees in this respect were lip-service rather than genuine, whereas we were completely serious in our international commitments. (I note in parentheses that in the final analysis, both the Cubans and the South Africans left Angola and Angola/Namibia respectively, but the armed forces of the United States remain in South Korea and are in no hurry to leave).

"Why are you so afraid of offending South Africa?" I asked the Americans. "Why do you so stubbornly reject economic sanctions? For all the misfortunes come from South Africa. You happily pressure other 'bearers of evil'. Take Libya. South Africa is blackmailing you with the threat of Communism, although there isn't a trace of it in this region. It will continue this way until you cast off your ideological blinkers."

In spite of sharp divergence, we came to agreement on some important things - not to view or highlight the conflict in South Western Africa as the East - West confrontation; not to add fuel to the fire; to keep the existing points in common, trying to bring them closer; not to turn Africa into an arena of outside forces' combat. In all, not much, but not bad for a start of a possibly common work.

Where we seriously clashed was Central America, but fortunately I don't need to describe it here. To conclude, I asked the Americans to give me a complete list of their vital interests in the world to which they constantly referred. Of course, I did not receive it. Then I quoted Gorbachev: "The world is not anyone's domain", but for the Americans, that was no more than hot air.

## **THE YEAR 1986 COMES TO AN END**

In September 1986, having arrived for the next UN General Assembly session, our Minister met with President Ronald Reagan and Secretary of State George Shultz. The subject of Southern Africa was not touched on at all in the conversation with the President, although it figured in the papers we prepared. (Each MFA department tried to push their particular issues for talks at high level - sometimes this allowed it to go ahead more quickly.) Then Afghanistan and Nicaragua dominated in regional conflicts. Nor was "our" topic was discussed with Shultz, which was a bad sign: the Americans and possibly our Minister did not include the Angola-Namibia knot among the priorities. The Americans were actively pushing Reagan's three stage plan for settling regional wars: in the first stage, a national armistice and a withdrawal of foreign troops should be accomplished. We defended our own concepts, and the Americans theirs, although they said that they did not believe in theoretical constructs.

According to the tradition of those times, on the 69<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the October Revolution leaders of countries and national liberation movements friendly to the Soviet Union came to Moscow. Among them were many participants of current military and future political battles in Southern Africa. Gorbachev received the President of the African National Congress, Oliver Tambo on 4 November 1986. This was a considerable event for all of us who worked in the African field although, as before, the

MFA was practically out of the framework of discussions. The CC International Department called the tune, but by this time our relations with CC colleagues at the working level were in almost total concord. Apart from one aspect: on contacts with South African authorities. The General Secretary noted with pride that we did not react to the South Africans knocking on our door. He assured Tambo that we would take every step in this direction only after consultations with the ANC. (The latest approach occurred in the middle of these days: the President of Mozambique, Samora Machel, died under as yet not fully explained circumstances. His Soviet-made and -piloted aircraft crashed on the border with South Africa, and the South African authorities which conducted the investigation tried in every possible way to get in contact with us, going beyond the bounds of this tragic event.)

Why was an issue handed back, albeit to friendly hands, where we had our own interests? As a result, we could not meet with South African leaders while Oliver Tambo himself was in contact with the chief American negotiator, Chester Crocker and was preparing for a meeting with Secretary of State George Shultz, which occurred in January 1987.

Even a year later in the fall of 1987 the new Head of the CC International Department, Anatoly Dobrynin, who held realistic views, did not manage to completely dissuade Tambo from the prohibition on our contacts with official RSA representatives. No wonder: he had such a trump card as Gorbachev's statements.

The day after the conversation in the Kremlin, a considerable part of the delegation accompanying the ANC President was in the MFA (hurrah!): the General Secretary of this organization, Alfred Nzo; the Commander of the People's Army, Umkhonto we Sizwe, Joe Modise; its Chief of Staff, Joe Slovo; and Commissar Chris Hani, who did not live until victory over apartheid. The titles sound impressive, but the Army itself was not large.

The analysis of the ANC leaders was, as usual, quite realistic, although made in the terminology which we used then. It spoke of the revolutionary situation in South Africa, recognizing, though, that it was still far from final victory. Searches for peace should be combined with armed struggle, but negotiations unquestionably were preferable. The West, as has been said, was actively preparing for a political settlement phase, for they had lost faith that South African President Pieter Botha could control the situation by force. In this context we, the Soviet Union, were called upon to be more active in the region, however, without contacting with South Africa government.

Alfred Nzo noted especially that the ANC favored a non-racial, democratic, non-aligned South Africa.

### **A THREE-SIDED DISCUSSION**

At the end of 1986 we, together with the Cubans and Angolans, summed up the results of combat operations against UNITA. They were assessed as being successful on the whole, although the government managed only not to allow UNITA to expand the positions which they had won in 1984-1985. The rebels had then crept from their lair in the southeast of Angola and launched painful blows against almost the entire territory of the country, thereby refuting the argument that Luanda was always the initiator of combat operations.

We told the Angolans that as UNITA was a strong enemy upstaging us in some aspects, the internal situation could not be solved by military means alone. In frank conversations our military people pointed out the huge defects to the Angolans: the poor management of operations by the Ministry of Defense of Angola; a shortage of officers, especially flight personnel; poor material supply, etc. All this played its ruinous role later, in the fall of 1987 (for Angolans, residents of the Southern Hemisphere, this was spring.)

By this time the issue of the railroad connecting Zaire and Zambia with the Angolan port of Benguela was again discussed in our three-sided consultations. Many countries of the region were interested in this access to the Atlantic Ocean for their export products. But it required some arrangement with UNITA, for Savimbi's forces controlled the Benguela Railway in many of its sectors. Together with the Angolans and Cubans we decided: better not to do this, at least at the present time.

As always, the officially expressed position differed from what happened behind closed doors. I will refer to the earlier visit of dos Santos to the USSR in May 1986. The joint statement adopted was an example of the revolutionary phrases, "The US is the class enemy", "The anti-imperialist struggle is intensifying", "The sovereignty and independence of Angola and its independent foreign and domestic policy cannot be the subject of bargaining", etc. And the more concrete: "The USSR and Angola firmly reject Pretoria's attempt to link independence of Namibia with withdrawal from Angola of Cuban internationalists". Of course, such stereotypes did not help in practical work, but it didn't do too much harm either.

## **ARMS DELIVERY**

Since we agreed of necessity to keep an armed force in the south of Angola against the aggressive operations of South Africa, the demands of both the Angolans and the Cubans were natural: more arms. Why not ask if everything is going to be practically free? Once Fidel Castro said candidly to Shevardnadze: "Deliver weapons to the Angolans under long-term credits and forget straight away that they might be paid off". No fitting reaction followed from our Minister. I can confirm, however, that at the initiative of the MFA we more than once turned to the CC with a proposal to reexamine the conditions of our military-technical cooperation with developing countries, including those of a so-called socialist orientation, in terms of greater restraint and more compensation. This was finally successful, to some degree.

Sometimes we just hung back - reduced the amount of military equipment requested and lowered their qualitative level. Thus, we did not give the Cubans the MiG-29, although they repeatedly asked for them. We did give other aircraft, explaining that they were no worse than the Mirages, which South Africa had.

We did not agree to send aircraft with Soviet crews to protect the airspace over Angola, as well as the ships in Angolan territorial waters. We were asked about this especially after the explosion of Soviet merchant ships by South African saboteurs in the Angolan port of Namibe in June 1986. We limited ourselves to sharp protests and what was evidently more effective, serious warnings directly to the South Africans repeated through KGB channels. We consistently held to the "stay out" line, politely declining calls to bomb or otherwise hit South African bases in Angola or airfields in Namibia

during an aggravation of the situation. Whereas South Africa was intimidating American Reagan-ites with the specter of Communism, our allies were calling upon us to loosen our purse strings to support "socialist transformations". It doesn't matter that they, like the Communist specters which South Africa threatened, were not seen even on the horizon. Usually we were told: if you don't give weapons, the whole revolutionary process in the region of Southern Africa will be endangered. But was it there?

The debt to the Soviet Union grew constantly; the Angolans did not intend to repay it and requested new credits and new extensions. According to some agreements they had to begin payment only after 1991. The USSR did not survive until then.

According to Angolan calculations, by the beginning of 1986 their debts, mainly for the delivery of weapons, were over two billion dollars.<sup>11</sup> It was practically hopeless to speak to Angolans about timely payment of the debt. At a certain time we rapidly started not to have enough money ourselves, so we lost a more modest sum than could have been the case. The Americans supported the defensive capability of their clients while spending much smaller amounts. South Africa, which took on itself expensive aspects such as logistics, supplies and gear, training the guerillas, intelligence, air cover, and at times, direct participation on battles, did this instead of the US.

Three-sided consultations were usually preceded by Soviet-Cuban bilateral meetings. One of these was in December 1986. The MFA was represented by Leonid Il'ichev, my predecessor for African affairs, and the meeting was devoted to military issues. The same song was repeated: the Cubans asked for more weapons, specifically such and such, and we replied that we had already delivered much and it was planned to deliver more. They cut what was requested, but in the final account we provided something. On occasion the Cubans threatened to leave Angola, if we did not increase our expenditures. Usually they were one-third of what we spent on the Angolans. Regardless of the numbers, our military deliveries actually turned into a bureaucratic rubber-stamping process, and much effort had to be exerted to at least significantly slow it down.

## THE PB APPROVES

Not everyone remembers now that this abbreviation means the CPSU CC Politburo, the highest Soviet institution. There on Thursday, 13 November 1986, I reported the MFA proposals which had been agreed upon with other departments. Thursday was "Politburo Day", for which we carefully and quite nervously prepared. I slept badly for the two nights preceding my first encounter.

Passing through the long Kremlin corridors where documents were checked at almost every turn, you arrived in a huge room with a large round table in the middle, and adjacent rooms where one could drink coffee or tea. At the doors leading directly to the conference room, the location of an organizer "armed" with a dozen telephones. He was filled with great self-importance. No wonder: at his command those who were waiting in

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<sup>11</sup> This contrasts sharply with the data quoted by the Americans. For example, in *Gorbachev's Third World Dilemmas* published by Curt Campbell and S. Neil MacFarlane (Routledge, Chapman and Hall, 1989) the following assessment of Soviet military supplies to Angola was cited on the basis of CIA reports made at various US Congressional hearings: 1974-1979 - \$1.2bn; 1980-1985 - \$3.1bn; total - \$4.3bn. (p.75). This is more than double the Angolans' calculations. Evidently Chester Crocker also relied on this data in his book, *High Noon in Southern Africa* (W. W. Norton and Company, New York - London, 1992) when, without citing the source, he writes that in the first ten years of independence, [that is, 1975-1985], Angola received \$4.5 billion of weapons, 90% of which from the USSR (p.52).

line for "their" issue rushed to the door. Let's say, the seventh issue is announced and those who have been summoned are already crowding at the prized entrance, colliding with those who are leaving after the sixth issue.

Members and candidate members of the Politburo are seated at a long table strictly according to rank. Chairing on "my" day was CPSU CC General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev, behind a desk situated perpendicular to the main one. Along the walls are chairs for guests. On the left, in a far corner, is a lectern for speeches. At a certain moment (the heart almost bursts from the chest) I, too, climb up to it.

In a word, if not a baptism of fire, as in Paris, then a full program of the jitters. The main thing we managed to get was the approval of a policy to increase the role of political factors to the detriment of the military ones. And to restrain the latter. This did not happen without difficulty. The Ministry of Defense seriously resisted during the preparation of the papers, although we were not calling for very radical steps. However, a certain transformation occurred in the Politburo itself: a big military leader was present there who (later) tragically ended his life, so I don't want to mention his name; not only did he not object but he even shouted from his seat, "Correct!" They clearly felt the sentiments of the General Secretary. Gorbachev, in those days running meetings with an iron hand, leaned toward the more "dove" position of the MFA.

It is remarkable that at the same Politburo meeting a final decision was at last adopted to leave Afghanistan. And even Andrey Gromyko, one of the ringleaders of the Afghan adventure, admitted: we had not calculated everything well in 1979.<sup>12</sup>

## RELATIONS WITH FRIENDS

The next Soviet-Angolan-Cuban consultations were held in Moscow in March 1987. The MFA was represented by First Deputy Minister, Yuliy Vorontsov. This was good inasmuch as it demonstrated a growth of the importance which we had given to this regional conflict.

There were the ritual criticisms of the US, which viewed South Africa as a stronghold of imperialism in Africa, and Washington's and Pretoria's attempts to undermine and overthrow independent governments in Southern Africa were denounced. It was also said that it was impermissible to play up to the imperialists. This was clearly addressed to the Angolans: be careful about contacts with the Americans. The idea promoted by Luanda and Havana, to inflict a military defeat on UNITA before entering into political negotiations with it, remained in force.

But words also resounded that not only military methods, but political, ideological, and moral influence too, should be used. Moreover, in the spirit of our own tendencies, the Angolans were advised to use more broadly the possibilities of the traditional and private sector. It was also singled out that with all the aid from the USSR, the main role in solving their problems belonged to the Angolans.

The discussion about military matters was based on the strategic operations plan adopted by the Angolan leadership. As far as I understand, the mechanism was as

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<sup>12</sup> By that time Gromyko had already left the post of Minister of Foreign Affairs, which he had occupied for almost thirty years; a year and a half previously he had been moved upstairs as Chairman of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet, which was in reality a rather nominal post.

follows. An operation was planned by the Angolan military with the involvement of the Soviet (which was often decisive) and rarely Cuban advisers. Then the plan was submitted for approval to the MPLA top leadership, its Politburo headed by dos Santos. This means that in the main concept - to defeat UNITA, and how it should be done - the last word was given to Luanda. Neither we nor even the Cubans played the leading role. The situation changed somewhat in 1988 with respect to Cuba when its units began to move to the south. Throughout, we were more advisers, suppliers, and financiers.

The format of the consultations allowed bilateral meetings to be broadly used. I held a dinner for the Angolan Minister of Foreign Relations, Afonso van Dunem M'Binda. His second title was of equal, if not greater importance - Politburo member and Secretary of MPLA Central Committee.

The Angolan gave his explanation for why the US clung so much to its invention, linkage. In his words, Reagan promised that if elected, he would get the Cubans out of Angola. By the same token, a point about support to UNITA was included in Reagan's election campaign platform. So American diplomacy was fulfilling the instructions of its main chief with full force.

Aid to UNITA was done through Zaire in order not to depend very much on South Africa, with which the Americans were competing for influence on Savimbi. As regards the possible resumption of the Benguela Railway, the Minister said that here the economic aspect had no importance, but there was an American desire to draw the Luanda leadership into talks with Savimbi. "Since imperialism wants this, then we should be against it. Before coming to terms with UNITA it is necessary to defeat it as an organized counterrevolutionary force.

I would add that in the already quoted book by Rodman, there is a vivid description of how this linkage "which caused great doubt" was set up (the linkage method itself belongs to Kissinger, under whom Crocker had served), how South Africa initially did not want to accept it, how the Angolans utterly rejected it in 1981, but agreed in 1984 (the same month Reagan was reelected), how neither the West European allies of the US, nor African governments, nor the UN accepted the linkage, etc. (pp. 361-362). How difficult it would have been in these conditions, which were flagrantly in contrast to formal logic for the Soviet Union, to introduce a similar element in our practical policy. A remarkable common sense was displayed, which in many respects cleared the way for agreements.

When informing Mengistu Haile Mariam about these three-sided consultations a few days later at the instruction of the Soviet leadership, I mentioned the unanimous recognition by all present of the main goal - to crush UNITA. Another thing was said, however: the government's army could boast of great successes, in spite of all the aid given to it by the Soviet Union and Cuba. A purely military solution was impossible. We had to travel a certain path before the word "purely" could be removed, but it would be traveled quickly.

## **SWAPO**

South Africa attempts to sidestep the UN plan granting Namibia independence, through democratic elections, were still there. It wanted to push a so-called internal arrangement by means of specially-selected stooges, including black ones. The USSR, Angola, and



Cuba were united: we would not allow this. The US and the other Western partners took a similar position. Encountering general resistance, South Africa retreated. Unfortunately, such an alignment was rare.

An official SWAPO mission opened in Moscow in April 1987. This was a serious political step on the part of the Soviet Union. The friends had long sought this. The difficulties were organizational: to find suitable premises was then rather difficult. I met an old friend, Theo-Ben Gurirab. Possibly by virtue of the solemn event, the Namibian was very optimistic. FAPLA, the Angolan government's army, he said, had changed the military situation in its favor and controlled practically the entire southern part of the country, where the enemy's main military bases had been previously located. Against this background PLAN (the SWAPO armed forces) detachments were conducting successful military operations. By this time I already knew the situation in Angola well enough not to take his word for it. But it still wasn't usual to argue with friends. So, no serious discussion resulted.

In the spring of 1987 Shevardnadze met in Moscow with the ministers of foreign affairs of the frontline countries. This was a very important event for us "Africanists": our friends on the continent constantly complained of insufficient attention to them.

Zambian Luke Mwananshiku spoke mainly. The words "socialism" and "imperialism" constantly resounded, the first applied to the frontline countries, and the second, to South Africa. Drawing a picture in only two colors, the Zambian declared that linking the independence of Namibia with the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola was an ideological diversion. But we had already learned to divide phraseology from practical politics.

Stereotypes concealed an important meaning: many of our African friends believed that they would succeed in bringing independence to Namibia without the Cubans leaving Angola. Cuba was a guarantee against South Africa's absolute dominion, and also the only one. The Soviet Union was paying for such "conveniences". I had trouble reproaching the friends for this - they were pursuing their own interests. But we had to be concerned about ourselves. As a settlement gained momentum certain different readings with the friends began to be perceptible, as we shall see.

The Angolans informed us about their resumption of discussions with the Americans. We never obstructed such contacts as such. But where were they leading? Not all of us were happy with them but the final conclusion was: let them meet, let them talk.

## **THROUGHOUT WESTERN AFRICA**

In April 1987 I made a big trip through Western Africa, expanding the circle of acquaintances with African leaders. I will tell about one of them, the Gabonese Omar Bongo, although this meeting had little relation to southern Africa matters. Rather it was an illustration of the specific character of the work.

Our ambassador in Libreville had made a mistake and Shevardnadze decided to announce his recall to Moscow to the Gabonese authorities on the spot. Even though the country is small it deserves respect. There was another reason as well: our foreign trade organizations were looking at the valuable varieties of timber produced in Gabon.

And so Sergey Krylov and I happened to go to the fancy Presidential palace. Bongo was sitting on a raised platform, somewhat reminiscent of a throne, and all the rest were below, including the guests. He listened to me absently, at a certain moment he sort of "dropped off to sleep". I pretended that I didn't notice anything but in turn resorted to an "Asiatic trick". Bongo could not fail to "wake up" when I said to him, "Mr. President, we are having a confidential conversation anyway. But I suggest continuing the conversation one-on-one, for there is something I want to tell only you, personally".

Bongo made a lightning-speed gesture and his entire entourage disappeared in the blink of an eye. Sergey, however, remained. He spoke French, the language of the conversation, much better than I. Now we were in the numerical majority. The goal had been achieved - a conversation actually on the same subjects as before went smoothly. We parted in an almost friendly manner. In any event, Bongo gave us his aircraft to fly to a game reserve teeming with living creatures. This strongly appealed to me then. On the return trip we were caught by a terrifying African thunderstorm.

Now to Abidjan. Why? First, the Ivory Coast, and this is no secret to anyone, supported Savimbi. Second, President Felix Houphouet-Boigny is one of the oldest and wisest leaders in Africa. They led us around the presidential palace for a long time, impressing us with the innumerable riches. I opened a curtain in one of the alcoves which reminded me of a museum: it was stuffed to the top with gold coins.

The conversation with the elderly president did not disappoint, but rather from the philosophical point of view. He told us about the advantages of the pluralistic society which he was trying to build in his country, although a one-party system was being preserved in it. He thinks that Africa does not need industrialization; its business is agriculture and preservation of the vegetable and animal kingdoms. "Look, how my country has soared on cacao". Obviously, he was not interested in dealing with purely practical issues. We talked more about the substance of these with Simeon Ake, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and were glad to hear that the Ivory Coast had stopped aiding UNITA.

A brief respite in Moscow, where I met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Burkina Faso. We talked with him about Chad; all the conflicts south of the Sahara, large and small, were then "mine".

In June 1987 I was again in West Africa to talk in the two Congos. One, with the capital in Brazzaville, was friendly to the Soviet Union and held Angolan matters close to its heart. The second was then called Zaire. Its capital, the city of Kinshasa, was separated from the first by a huge and swift river, the Congo. And now I saw entire little islands of green ripped from the banks sweep down its entire length. Here was another camp, almost openly helping Savimbi.

President of the People's Republic of Congo, Denis Sassou-Nguesso played a prominent role in the Angolan settlement. A young, likeable person, he said that he saw shifts in the African policy of the Soviet Union: in the two years of Gorbachev's leadership, more African leaders had been received in Moscow than in the previous 10 years. Regarding Angola and Southern Africa, the positions of our two countries, at least as formally expressed in words, were practically identical. There was also a special discussion with Sassou-Nguesso on bilateral relations which were quite advanced.

On the other side of the river, I encountered an unexpected welcome: differences in approaches are one thing, but civilized relations, another. It even put me on my guard how sweetly State Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Kabala Kiseka Seka and State Commissar, Ekila Liyonda, the majestically beautiful dark-skinned beauty (this attractiveness ruined her career), "sang". In their words, Zaire intended to maintain very friendly relations with the Soviet Union. Rumors about aid to the rebels, they said, were greatly exaggerated. Try to control the border with Angola, for it's 2600 kilometers in length. Tribes close to those on which UNITA relied are well-disposed toward Zaire. We had another point of view. We knew for certain that Zaire was one of the main staging areas through which American weapons go to UNITA.

In those times Zaire was outwardly a quite strong country, especially against the background of Angola, in whose affairs President Mobutu actively interfered. If only the Zairians had known then what awaited them in a few years, the convulsions their country would pass through (and is still passing), and how important relations with Luanda were for it. Mobutu then supported forces hostile to the Angolan government. But afterwards, the same government, the same President, dos Santos, was helping the person who replaced Mobutu – Kabila - including with the use of troops.

President Mobutu Sese Seko (his full name was very long) with whom we naturally wished to meet, failed to appear in Kinshasa. He spent most of the time in Western Europe. Later, in 1989, I talked with him in his strikingly rich and overly-guarded residence in Paris. It was already after the Namibian settlement. Then we were actively bringing MPLA and UNITA together, and the Zairian offered himself as an intermediary.

We left Kinshasa in the evening. The airport was plunged into semi-darkness, automatic weapons all around, and the expression of the dark-skinned people was not very benevolent, with their fingers on the triggers. Passing through their formation onto the Sabena aircraft (we would fly home after consultations in Belgium) we landed in another world. The softly illuminated passenger cabin, the music turned down. We took off with a sigh of relief. Immediately after climbing to altitude, attentive stewardesses covered the folding tray tables with snow-white napkins. The foretaste of a delicious dinner and relaxation after difficult talks filled Sergey and me with bliss.

Alas, it was not for long. The pilot warned that a storm front was approaching with such power that it could not be avoided. Random cutlery, and all sorts of miniature salt and pepper shakers which had just been set down disappeared. And the drama began. The end of the world seemed the most likely outcome. Lightning flashed and burst at the very windows, each time threatening that the next fiery tentacle would reach you. The metal body of the aircraft pitched from side to side like a wood chip, its body buzzed and vibrated. And in a literal sense, the sky seemed as if it was going to come crashing down on our heads. Compared to this the Gabonese thunderstorm was a childish prank.

Finally, everything quieted down. The tables again advanced from their storage area in full abundance of food and drink. We resorted to the classic method of the Russian when he wants to forget about scrapes. And we went to sleep in full confidence that for the next several hours, at least to Brussels, calm was assured. Not a chance. An intermediate stop in Lagos in the middle of the night. Quite unexpectedly, our ambassador in Nigeria climbed on board. I was glad to see him, although my eyes were so tired this was painfully difficult to convey. "Why are you up in the middle of the night? Do you have urgent information?" And I found to my horror that it was not just the ambassador who had awakened at the crack of dawn. The entire diplomatic staff had

been gathered in the Embassy. The ambassador was clearly proud of his initiative; it was unusual for an assessment of our African policy to be heard directly from a deputy minister. The aircraft stopped in Lagos for two hours, so we would be able to hold a productive meeting. I looked at Krylov with one last hope. He, as always, put duty first: we shall go. With a gigantic effort of will, I brought myself into more or less working condition as we rushed to the embassy along the nocturnally deserted road. The impromptu meeting was held without any notable flaws, but when we finally got back to the Sabena flight, the aircraft seemed to us to have become the best attraction of the entire West African coast.

## CONTACT WITH THE AMERICANS

The first meeting with Chester A. Crocker, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, occurred on 2 July 1987. London, at the height of the Wimbledon tennis tournament, allows for a combination of the pleasant with the useful. I and Vladilen Vasev, my principal teacher and adviser on African affairs, carefully prepared for the upcoming conversation: Chet, as everyone called him, was an experienced wolf. All his life he has been dealing with Africa, first as a professor, now as a diplomat. He had been "in" the Angolan-Namibian conflict since 1981.

In our introduction which opened the consultations, I said:

- For the time being, the Soviet-American dialog comes down to a presentation of positions, but does not lead to them becoming closer.
- We suppose nevertheless that both powers are striving for a political settlement in Southern Africa. In this event, what path is most likely to lead to peace?
- With respect to the elimination of apartheid, it is unlikely we will come to any agreement about joint actions; the closeness, if there is any, is more moral. The USSR has few levers for influence, and they have already been put into action. (Here Crocker noted that one of our weaknesses was the lack of contacts with South Africa authorities). The US has greater opportunities to influence South Africa, but they are in no hurry to use them.
- The security of the frontline countries is one of the most important elements of the situation. But here it is difficult to imagine cooperation on a practical level as the positions of the USSR and US are too different.
- There remains Namibia. The US is one of the authors of the 1978 Security Council Resolution 435 granting independence to this colony, the last in Africa. Maybe (we should?) concentrate on putting it into effect?

We guessed the Americans' reply: yes, the resolution creates international legal preconditions but does not provide a specific formula for realization. Translated to ordinary language, this means that additional conditions are needed. A known linkage comes to light: the independence of Namibia in exchange for the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola.

There wasn't a trace of a legal basis here, but international problems are unfortunately rarely decided in accordance with law. (A. Gromyko, with whom I worked closely for more than two decades, loved to say, "It's not who's right, but who has more rights"). The Americans justified linkage by the fact that the Angolans and Cubans recognized it in their proposals, which received the name "the 1984 Platform".<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> The "1984 Platform" envisioned: the withdrawal of South African troops from Angolan territory; the beginning of observance of UN Security Council Resolution 435; and a halt to RSA aid to UNITA. After these conditions were met, Angola might discuss with Cuba

What is the reason, asked Crocker, that after such a radical shift, there was no further movement for a number of years? The Soviets' pressure on Angola? In turn, I asked: who insisted on linkage, the US or South Africa? Here Crocker avoided a direct answer, although he pointed more in the direction of the South Africans - they would not agree to leave Namibia in exchange for only unclear guarantees about the Cubans. We did not argue, for the linkage was on the Americans' conscience, was their invention, which completely suited South Africa.

Vasev and I, of course, tried to dissuade Crocker from the linkage. Without success, of course.

We suggested some new organizational ways: strengthening the role of the UN, possibly an international conference on the model of a Middle Eastern one. The Americans turned a deaf ear to arguments about the internationalization of a search for a settlement. Exclusive intermediation and their direct contacts with Angola, approved by the Organization of African Unity, as they proudly mentioned, completely suited them. This policy was in no way at a dead end, Crocker assured us; the Angolans were promising new constructive ideas.

I countered that the Angolans had no international obligations regarding a withdrawal of the Cuban troops. Their 1984 platform, which the Soviet Union supported, was a goodwill gesture. And it might be completely changed; here I repeated what the Angolans had asked us to say, when we consulted with them before leaving for London.

This struck Crocker. He began to reproach us for pushing Luanda toward a military solution. That the USSR was supplying weapons to Angola, taking from it enormous amounts of money, as did Cuba. (He hardly knew that we spent dozens of millions of rubles and got kopecks back. Cuba was in a somewhat better situation. It contrived to extract something from the Angolans). Here is where, he said, the income from the oil goes. He should have added that American companies got this oil, so I asked not without a sneer: How will the American oil companies in Cabinda and in other places be protected if the Cubans leave?

When the discussion touched the military aspects, the Americans asserted that the Cubans had lost ten thousand men as a result of combat operations. According to our information, that figure was about 10 times too high, if not more.

It was completely wrong, we told Crocker, countering his statements, to claim that the Soviet Union was pushing the Angolans into battle. *We were telling the truth, we did not deceive the Americans!* Better look how you behave with respect to UNITA. There was a period when it was left without support and almost ceased to exist. You and the South Africans have revived UNITA, stirring the fighters up against the legal government. We are not jealous of your contacts with Angola, but don't be surprised at lengthy interruptions in these links with the MPLA government. While you are flirting with Luanda, you are simultaneously supplying weapons to its bitterest enemy, Savimbi, from both the south and the north, through the Kamina base in Zaire. The Soviet Union does not instruct the Angolans how they are to solve their domestic problems. If

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the issue of a gradual and conditioned reduction of the Cuban contingent, including that one of the groups would leave the country. The Americans thought that this was only the first step - a fundamentally important one as it recognized linkage - but it was far from the final position. They constantly insisted on the complete withdrawal of the Cubans, which initially was not in the position of Angola and Cuba.

recognition of Savimbi is forced on Luanda, then it is for the Angola government itself to judge how to react. We're not pushing them in one direction or another.

One of our arguments was: the US interests in this region considerably exceed ours, so you will suffer more if an upheaval happens by virtue of the stubbornness of South Africa. The Boers want to keep everything, but most often in such cases they lose everything. Advise them to be more accommodating.

Crocker admitted that South Africa was actually pursuing an aggressive policy towards its neighbors but said that the Americans were trying to limit it, although "they did not have a button to press which could stop South Africa". In no way did he want to understand that we have no such button with respect to Cuba and Angola. "Once the USSR signs the accounts, it has to direct the music!" The reality, however, was that we were the financial backers, but made decisions together with our allies. After all, they were the ones who were fighting. Although, as I see now, at times we should have shown greater toughness. On the rare occasions when we did this, matters moved ahead more quickly.

Soviet weapons deliveries provoked South Africa, the Americans told us. We replied that we could not leave the frontline countries, primarily Angola and Mozambique, unarmed in the face of aggression from without and the actions of subversive forces from within. But we added: we don't like either the increase of the American or the Soviet military role in Africa. The USSR is for a peaceful solution; we have stated this definitively. However, it has to take into consideration the interests of all the sides and not be a separate decision. Linkage alone was not enough for you, Americans; now there is one more - Luanda, in the American version, has to share power with Savimbi, if not hand it over to him completely. Even if the provisions regarding the Cubans are fulfilled, where are the guarantees that new conditions will not arise? Are you not asking too much for the independence of Namibia which should be granted without any conditions, in accordance with a Security Council resolution prepared by yourselves?

In this regard Crocker was quite specific: South Africa will leave Namibia if the Cubans leave Angola; it will not be permitted to advance other conditions. Here he unconsciously blurted out that support to Savimbi and the persistent wish to divide power between the MPLA and UNITA were purely an American invention. As to South Africa, we should have actually have taken his word. Oh, how a frank discussion with South Africa was necessary.

It was good that the Americans were against the so-called internal settlement - the imaginary independence of Namibia, as we justly called it. Another positive aspect was the expanded exchange of information. Crocker in particular shared his impressions of what was happening in South Africa, although in measured doses.

## **ANGOLA AND CUBA**

In August 1987 Andrey Urnov, Deputy Chief of the CPSU CC International Department, was sent to the Angolan capital as Gorbachev's personal representative. We worked hand in hand with him. The main purpose of Urnov's mission was to explain the results of the latest CPSU Central Committee plenum, at the center of which were our domestic affairs. We considered *perestroika* to be a direct continuation of the October Revolution, a return to the sources which had been distorted for decades. We were restructuring our

country to have not less socialism, but more. This was the overall context in which our foreign policy shifts were presented, including those in Southern Africa.

Andrey had an immediate excellent opportunity, talking with dos Santos and then publicly to favor contacts between Angolans and Americans. He also publicized our key formula: the USSR was for a mutually acceptable and just solution in Southern Africa. That is, what would suit all sides.

Meanwhile, by the autumn of 1987 relations between the Cubans and Angolans had become strained. The Cubans, leaning towards the American approach, were clearly dissatisfied with many aspects of the issues discussed between the US and Angola. They suspected Angolans of plotting with the Americans behind their backs. The issue of including the Cubans in Luanda's discussions with Washington's emissaries became more and more pressing.

In October 1987 Shevardnadze was in Cuba on a visit. I wasn't present at these conversations, but I know from my comrades that Fidel Castro was very firm. He was afraid that the Angolans and the Americans together would kick the Cubans out. If the matter went that way, if the Cubans did not take a direct part in the Angolan-American dialog, declared Fidel, then Cuba might withdraw its troops unilaterally.

My *chef* tried to calm the waters. In his view, future agreements, however they might be assessed on the basis of the first verbal agreements, would look in the end entirely appropriate. It was hard to assume that South Africa and US would agree to this.

Castro let it clearly be known that the Cubans were ready to stay in Angola until the very end, final victory over apartheid. (That's where the practical side of the point ended: that without the elimination of apartheid there was no way for solving other problems of Southern Africa!) The Cuban leader openly admitted, though, that the Angolans were of another opinion, and they were impatient to come to agreement with the Americans more rapidly. The Angolans reluctantly revealed their intentions both to the Cubans and to us, but it was clear that in exchange for the withdrawal of the Cuban contingent they hoped to get: a) diplomatic relations with the US and economic concessions, primarily through the channels of international financial organizations where then (as now) the Americans were in command; and b) from South Africa - a withdrawal from Angola and Namibia. And the discussion was now not about a partial withdrawal of the Cubans, but about their complete exit, although over a quite lengthy period, of perhaps four to five years. It was subsequently sharply reduced to 27 months. In reality, the Cubans withdrew their troops even before the agreed dates.

Literally a couple of weeks later, at a meeting with US Secretary of State George Shultz in Moscow, our Minister requested him not to object to the addition of the Cubans to Angolan-American contacts. The Americans reacted unenthusiastically, although they hinted that it was not precluded. They clearly wanted to get a *quid pro quo* for Cuban participation: whether an improvement (from their point of view) of the schedule for the withdrawal of the Cuban troops, or pushing Luanda toward contacts with Savimbi, let's say under the pretext of opening the long-inactive Benguela Railway. As a result, the Americans probably got something from the Cubans; since that time their bilateral contacts have become private and constant.

(Shultz later affirmed that in return for a seat at the negotiating table, the Cubans paid with the consent to withdraw their troops. This version is in contrast with the facts and

their chronology, but in full accord with the Americans' desire to ascribe to themselves all the merits of the conflict settlement.)

## **THE 70<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION**

The leaders of Communist and worker's parties and, as we then called them, countries of a socialist orientation, came to Moscow for this anniversary. Fidel Castro and dos Santos came among others. We used this opportunity to soothe the Angolans with the Cubans on the basis of a two-fold approach: talks with the Americans were needed as a constituent part of a political settlement, but the Cubans should participate in them. Moreover, after some quarrelling with the Americans, we managed to turn vague discussions into full quadripartite talks: Angola – Cuba - RSA - US. This was designed to prevent the Americans of getting concessions from the Angolans without revealing the South African position.

The four-side format suited us: our allies were satisfied and the Americans lost their exclusive role: how could they present themselves as staying above the fray when relations were so firmly tied with South Africa and their military and political support of UNITA? One thing speaks for itself: of the main protagonists of the conflict, Reagan had received only Savimbi. Let Castro be excluded from such an "honor", but neither dos Santos nor even RSA President PW Botha deserved it.

From the spring of 1988, the four-side talks started with full-fledged Soviet participation, even if formally we had stature of observers. I should mention that over the following eight months, the agreements which put an end to the conflict were been prepared and signed.

## **MILITARY MATTERS**

...were closely intertwined with political ones.

We were determined to overcome a situation when UNITA dictated the tempo, nature, and level of the conflict. Furthermore, its sporadic attacks over the enormous territory of Angola were disrupting the weak Angolan economy.

In 1986 Luanda only managed to stabilize the situation on the (military) front. Great hopes were placed on the 1987 dry season. An offensive was planned which practically all American authors refer to as organized "by the Soviets", supposedly even commanded by a Soviet general. It is possible that a similar misrepresentation was indirectly connected with the fact that the Cubans participated less than usual in this operation, until a certain moment. They supposedly even did not advise on its implementation, and when a failure occurred they asserted that they bore no responsibility. Then, however, as we will see, they entered into combat operations on a previously unmatched scale.

The information I have shows that the sequence was as before: the political decision - to pursue or not pursue a large-scale military operation - was made by the top leadership of Angola, its President and Politburo. The operational planning was done by us, in contact with the Cubans, in as much as the Angolans simply did not have enough specialists. These plans were approved by the Angolans and they were the ones who put them into effect.



In 2000 I spoke with such key knowledgeable people as then USSR Minister of Defense Dmitry Yazov and Chief Military Advisers Konstantin Kurochkin and Pavel Gusev. They described the situation precisely. "There was no pressure, as one of our military expressed it; 'they went into battle themselves'." In the same time Gusev confessed that he had convinced dos Santos that the operation would be successful.

The offensive of the government troops did not begin badly, although numerical superiority was on the side of UNITA. According to American data, there were about 10,000 men in the government army, FAPLA, supported by 300-400 tanks and armored personnel carriers. They were opposed by 10-15,000 UNITA troops with another 15-20,000 irregulars in the second echelon (P. Rodman, op. cit., p. 603). But, as in 1985, South Africa saved Savimbi by throwing in forces unprecedented to that time - two mechanized brigades, two artillery battalions, making a total of no less than 3,000 men. South Africa Olifant tanks were used in Angola for the first time. The government forces were halted several dozen kilometers from the final goal, the city of Mavinga, Savimbi's hideout. A tank brigade, which had tried to bypass the UNITA position on the swampy banks of the Lomba River and which had reached the rear of the enemy, was left without fuel and became an easy target for South African aircraft and artillery.

To a large extent, this was only an episode, but the government units hurriedly retreated to Cuito Cuanavale, with great losses by Angolan standards. This small town, besieged by South Africa and UNITA from November 1987, became a symbol of subsequent military events. In the very first days, until the Cubans arrived, Cuito Cuanavale held out in no small part through the heroic efforts of the Soviet military men, who in accordance to a recent order by the Defence Minister had to be in combat formations of Angolan units. During the entire time we were in Angola, we suffered the greatest number of casualties at this point.

Savimbi enlarged upon the effectiveness of the American military supplies. The President of the Republic of South Africa reviewed a parade of his troops deep inside Angolan territory. He said: We are staying here until Cubans are out of Angola. In hindsight, however, many military observers think that, having pushed the beaten FAPLA forces back to Cuito Cuanavale, the South Africa army made a mistake by trying to inflict irreparable damage on it. This time it had gone too far from its bases, over-extended communications, and exposed its flanks.

Maybe the game was worth the political candles - the idea was so tempting of creating an enormous, completely controlled zone ("Savimbistan"), almost a quarter of Angolan territory, in which UNITA would proclaim a government alternative to that in Luanda. Remember Kaunda's words to me about a possible division of the country!<sup>14</sup> I have not found documentary proof, but I can guess that the vulnerable position of South Africa and the situation in Angola as a whole had been discussed at the November meetings in Moscow. In any event, immediately after his return to Cuba, Castro decided to send to Angola his best troops, up to 20,000. As usual, we were brought up to date only after some delay: the USSR would not refuse assistance to the revolutionary fellow combatants. Indeed, we helped transport part of these troops.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> R. Davis, 'South African Regional Policy Before and After Cuito Cuanavale'. *South African Review*. Johannesburg. N.5, p.171

<sup>15</sup> See Piero Gleijeses, *Cuba y Africa, historia comun de lucha y sociales*, Havana, 2007, p.57

## THE TUNE BEGAN TO CHANGE

Somewhere around the end of 1987 and the beginning of 1988, our leadership got around to the painful subject of Soviet military supplies to developing countries. Previously this subject was taboo: even in the most "relaxed" periods, the "Third World" was taken to be beyond detente with the West. Coexistence with capitalism was one thing; support to liberation movements and those regimes which they had created, was another. In practice, of course, compromises were reached, sometimes in one, sometimes in another sector where contestation was the hottest, like the Korean War of the '50s, the Vietnam War of the '60s and '70s. But these compromises didn't change the fundamental approach.

A good illustration of such an approach is the letter which the CPSU CC sent to the ANC and other friendly organizations in December 1987 after Gorbachev's meeting with Reagan. It said in particular: "Never and in no circumstances will we depart from a policy of supporting the rights of peoples to independent development, and we will never make any agreement with the Americans at the expense or to the detriment of the peoples of the developing countries. Solidarity with those who are fighting for national liberation against imperialism and neocolonialism remains a constant factor for us and is not subject to changes for momentary advantage".<sup>16</sup>

Review of weapons supply issue began with the sector which I handled, Africa. Having lost a considerable amount of military equipment during the unsuccessful 1987 operations, the Angolans turned to us with the next portion of requests. They knew how to appeal - right at the highest level. Dos Santos sent a special message to Gorbachev.

We in the MFA thought that this was a good moment both for a sharp reduction of military supplies to Angola and also to raise the question in broader terms. The outline of our proposals submitted for the highest approval was the following:

- a) we shall give weapons, for the Angolans have suffered losses and are repelling attacks of regular South African units and UNITA groups;
- b) Luanda's initial request - and we carefully checked what they are asking for - is to be reduced in the most sweeping fashion.

Serious justifications were needed for such decisive steps. We singled out the economic side of the matter, and cited calculations which showed that during the 10-12 years of supply, the Angolans had paid less than 1.5% of the cost of what had been received. For purely financial considerations it could not continue further this way. But political factors also spoke in favor of a fundamentally different approach. As soon as a purely military solution was ineffective, a serious rethinking of the entire nature of our military aid, its scale, structure, and effectiveness, was required. First of all, not to send so much for offensive as for defensive purposes; to devote greater attention to maintaining equipment in proper condition, and not to new supplies; and to give only what was dictated by real need.

Angola, as Afghanistan, was a striking example of how difficult, if possible at all, it is to inflict defeat on an insurrection. An insurrection usually has great regenerative abilities, and given the support of the population or at least part of it, it could stubbornly wage a war of attrition for a long time, especially if it is based in relatively inaccessible territory.

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<sup>16</sup> Quoted from the aforementioned book by V. Shubin, pp. 341-342.

On the other hand, this movement was not in a condition to beat an organized force. A political solution was needed.

Compare these proposals with what was practised earlier, and it becomes clear that fundamental changes were being planned and in their main features were realized. What could demonstrate more eloquently the policy of a peaceful settlement adopted by the Soviet Union? And, finally, what could more effectively influence the position of Angola, Cuba – as well as others. Had we continued the previous policy, when would we have reached political solutions? We made use of the Angolan, and also the Ethiopian, situation in order to present a new concept of military cooperation with friendly countries as a whole.

## **A POLITICAL LEVER**

Our recommendations to the Angolans and Cubans also took on another character. They were reflected in Gorbachev's message to the Angolan President at the beginning of 1988. Our leader shared his impressions from recent conversations with Reagan and complained that, on Southern Africa, the Americans had not exhibited a constructive approach.

Why, we asked ourselves? The answer was that the meeting with the American President had occurred when Savimbi, a "freedom fighter", was still riding high. The government's army had suffered defeat. The Cuban military factor had not yet been mobilized in full force. In such conditions, Savimbi's supporters began to prevail in the US. Hence, the Americans' confidence that they could do without the Soviet Union. Later information revealed that both South Africa and UNITA were pushing Americans toward a military option.

Nevertheless, in his message Gorbachev supported talks between Luanda and the US, and advised how to hold them correctly. He confirmed the usefulness of direct contacts with South Africa to get its position first-hand and to check how this position was being presented by the Americans (we asked them constantly, how much of what you are selling in the name of South Africa actually represents the facts?); and to neutralize American attempts to be a monopolistic supplier of information.

A new aspect was extremely important. The Soviet leader was speaking in favor of correcting the tactics of Luanda's struggle with UNITA. The word "tactics" was used for diplomatic purposes. In fact, this was something much more serious - the Soviet leader asked (our) Angolan friends to weigh the idea of a ceasefire proposal to UNITA.

Here it is worth turning back somewhat to earlier developments. On 13 September 1987 a new Soviet Ambassador to Luanda, Vladimir Kazimirov, was appointed. We were completely of one mind on how to get out of Angola. Volodya immediately got to work. Knowing that his back was covered in the MFA, he began to push the Angolan leaders with greater persistence toward national reconciliation, although this term itself was not used. As a result, President dos Santos declared that the internal problems of Angola were to be solved by political means, re-integrating UNITA supporters into a national process. This was a colossal step forward, especially as it was supplemented by the idea of a ceasefire on the front line with UNITA.

*In the final account, it happened this way, but this was 15 years later. The US with its stubborn - and failed - attempts to bring Savimbi to power is fully responsible for this long and excruciating delay.*

Dos Santos and Kazimirov then added one more suggestion - Savimbi should leave Angola to make an agreement between the MPLA and UNITA easier. This also was quite sensible, but unfortunately it did not happen. In the final analysis, Savimbi deceived everyone.

Kazimirov sent a special dispatch to the MFA, and we reported it to the Minister in the best possible light. The latter sent it to members of the Politburo, CPSU CC Secretaries, and other leaders. From there to Gorbachev's message, with which I began this chapter, was a matter of technique.

## **COMBAT OPERATIONS**

And now, against this critical background, we return to Cuito Cuanavale, where 8,000 UNITA soldiers and 4,000 South Africans were pinned down. They consisted of black and white draftees, including the Namibian so-called "South West African Territorial Force". Trench warfare was going on, and an exchange of artillery and missile strikes. Later the South Africa military wrote that they could have taken Cuito Cuanavale, but they would have had to lose up to 300 white soldiers. Such a price was unacceptable. To which would have to be added up to 2000 of the Namibian territorial forces. Possible UNITA losses were not precisely counted; evidently they didn't count.

The South Africans decided on a couple of attempts to storm the city. Having repelled them, the Cubans and the Angolan army, who had clearly improved their fighting qualities, went over to the offensive. South Africa found itself in danger of being outflanked. Sudden UNITA diversionary attacks in other parts of Angola failed. An "independent withdrawal" of South African units was already announced at the beginning of December 1987 as if they had performed operational functions. With their cautious actions the Cubans did not prevent this. Having lifted the siege, the South Africans remained near Cuito Cuanavale until August 1988, when they started a complete withdrawal from Angola on the basis of agreements reached by that time.

Somewhere at the end of 1987 the Cubans crossed the previous front line which they had not done before, and, in March of the next year, moved decisively to the south in large numbers. Their fresh reinforcement of 40,000 men, as Fidel Castro revealed later, plus the Angolan and SVAPO detachments, had been re-equipped with our weapons, including several dozen MiG-23's, helicopters and hundred of tanks. Moreover, the Cubans had moved their air bases south. Air defense was set up, also based on Soviet military equipment. As a result, for the first time ever Mirages lost air superiority, which had always been a trump card of the South Africans. The Cubans soon achieved maneuvering space, and by the end of May 1988, had taken positions on a line close to the Angolan-Namibian border. None of their enemies knew where they would stop.

In supporting and arming the Cubans, we simultaneously influenced them so that they were not over-zealous. The use of power levers in a situation requiring political decisions was necessary, but had its limits - this was our position. We had an agreement with the Cubans that they would not cross the border with Namibia. In this case, the RSA would be compelled to react; its Headquarters had already mobilized

140,000 reserve troops. But there was no reason to declare our intentions for everyone to hear. Castro said publicly that he could not give a guarantee that Cuban troops would not cross the border in any circumstances.

The Cubans' advance was based on an assumption which turned out to be basically correct that South Africa did not want to be involved into a large scale fight. The Cubans also were not consumed with a desire to rush into battle, but were prepared for various turns of events.

Crocker pressured me, seeking to stop the Cubans. He used to say that almost all the Cuban troops had moved to the border with Namibia, that they were just 40 miles from it, etc. etc. I usually replied, avoiding any assurances, that the Cubans' movements inside Angola were completely legitimate and were not supposed to satisfy South Africa.

Political support for the Cuban advance was also well-thought out. At the initiative of the Soviet Union, in November 1987 Security Council Resolution N° 602 was unanimously adopted, which demanded the immediate withdrawal of South African troops from Angola by mid-December. Even the Americans could not vote against it. Yet the American position was two-faced. On one hand, they could not fail to express an opinion "in public" in favor of implementing the Security Council decision, but on the other, they did not want to reject such a trump card in the negotiating process as the military presence of South Africa. The ultimatum demands of the international community were not observed in these timeframes, but life became more complicated for South Africa.

Who knows how long South African die-hards would have remained in Angola, if not for Cuban military pressure. The fear of losing white soldiers' lives constantly weighed upon them. Toward the end a clash between the South Africans and the Cubans happened nevertheless<sup>17</sup> and after the loss of a small number of their people, the South Africans did not try again. Battles ceased in the summer of 1988. South Africa occupied a new "defensive" line at Namibia's border with Angola. As subsequent events showed, this was not for long: they had to leave from there, too. The first priority goal was achieved - they were pushed out of Angola while the Cubans were still there.

## MINISTERIAL DIALOG

Now we had to convert a military success into political dividends. Here the merit goes to Shevardnadze. Meetings of ministers of foreign affairs, up to 10 a year, were a characteristic feature of Soviet-American relations of that period. Increasingly the problems of Southern Africa came to be discussed with greater frequency and in more detail. With the start of 1988 this subject was practically constant. The same topics were repeated at top level that were covered in the contacts at working level. The approach evolved both from our side and from the American side.

In February 1988 Shultz put the priorities in this order:

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<sup>17</sup> On 27 June 1988, a South African mechanized armored column came across a Cuban detachment and, taking advantage of surprise, killed between 200 and 300 men, according to South African information; 150, according to American data; and 10, according to the Cubans. Allegedly, the South African commander acted at his own initiative. Cuban MiGs immediately launched a strike on the Calueque Hydroelectric Station, which is on the Kunene River. Eleven or 12 South African soldiers died. This hydroelectric station has great importance for supplying electric power to northern Namibia. See the books of Crocker (p. 372) and Rodman (p. 382).

- a complete withdrawal of the Cuban troops to which, he said, Luanda had already agreed in principle, so it was only a question of pinpointing a specific schedule;
- talks between Savimbi and the Angolan authorities about national reconciliation. The former was ready for this and, if a favorable result were achieved, then Savimbi would have no further need for military aid from South Africa (the issue was silent about the Americans). Luanda was not able to get the better of UNITA by military means. Savimbi had proved it by his military achievements;
- if the first two points were realized, then the South Africans would have to treat seriously their responsibilities regarding independence to Namibia.

Thus, the doctrinal diagram of conflict resolution proposed by Reagan was re-iterated and even strengthened. Angola and Cuba had to make serious concessions in exchange for shadowy assurances that South Africa would behave well in the future. Such a one-sided position was clearly non-negotiable; it only dragged out the talks. Shevardnadze said this in a conversation with the American Secretary of State. It was true, he said, that the time was propitious for finding a solution; it should not be missed, but the solution itself had to suit all sides, not just the Americans and South Africans.

We thought from the start that the main thing was to force South Africa to withdraw its troops from Angola. After this in our sequence of tasks was observance of Resolution 435 and then the departure of the Cubans. In real life it happened that way. As regards national reconciliation, this issue, as we thought, was for the Angolans to solve themselves. The Minister took a swipe at the Americans: it was abnormal that the US had arrogated to itself the right to support armed formations throughout the world which opposed legal governments (the only reason he didn't call them bandits was out of courtesy).

In conclusion, however, he praised the Americans for talking not only with the Angolans but also with Cuba. I have already mentioned, that as a result of our insistence, starting at the end of January 1988 the Cubans sat down to talks at the same table with the Angolans. Before this, at best they were somewhere in close proximity to the premises where the Angolans and Americans had secluded themselves. "Cuba does not intend to remain in Southern Africa forever" was the formula of Shevardnadze in the conversation with the American Secretary of State.

A month later, in March 1988, history repeated itself in Washington. Shultz stood his ground: first of all, national reconciliation in Angola and a schedule of the withdrawal of foreign troops from there. Now, however, this meant not only the Cuban but also the South African units. The topic was passed for me to consider with Crocker. We talked for four hours, but we agreed on one thing only - rejection of the apartheid regime. But even here we differed on measures to eliminate it. We were for comprehensive sanctions and the Americans were against.

When reporting to the two ministers we both had a pessimistic tone, Crocker more so than me. Having heard us out, Shultz again emphasized the idea of national reconciliation, arguing that Savimbi was supported by 40% of the entire Angolan population. But we felt that the US position was changing: they had begun to speak of a package that would contain the obligations not only of Angola and Cuba, but also of South Africa. This package had to be filled out in a balanced fashion.

Our minister said that the Soviet Union was striving for parallel actions with the US in Southern Africa. He called for not forcing the process of national reconciliation, letting it

be known that Luanda was not ready for this. I added to this the assertion that the Angolan government was pursuing a policy of clemency and national harmony, and this was close to what the Americans were proposing. We tried to sound out the issue of whether Savimbi could be dispensed with if Luanda would talk with UNITA (Kazimirov's idea!). The Americans did not react to this.

We drew the conclusion that the Americans had not yet traveled their half of the road. Their plan had to be reversed: first, an Angolan-Namibian settlement and then, in more favorable conditions, an agreement between the warring sides in Angola. Our design turned out to be more realistic, and in the final account the Americans accepted it.

Much later, when more cards were spread out on a table, it became clear that Crocker, opposing more hard-line Americans, maintained an order of actions close to that which we had proposed. But "in the field" we knew little about internal American differences; they managed to conceal them. Incidentally, as we did our own internal disagreements at that time.

## **RONALD REAGAN**

The March stay in Washington has a special memory for me: Reagan held a breakfast for Shevardnadze and I was among those invited.

Before this I had only met the American President in passing, but this time, in the White House, I considered him properly. And I will say without exaggeration - at times I admired him. He was a very charming person and, characteristically, he didn't want to talk about business at all. He preferred to tell stories and anecdotes, brilliantly, with fine self-deprecating humor. For example, he asks his people (George Bush, the Vice-President in those years; George Shultz, the Secretary of State; and others): "Did I never tell you the story about Mrs. Mitterrand?" "No sir", they reply, straight-faced. "Well, it's interesting". And a really brilliant story comes out how Reagan was standing with Mitterrand's wife, drinking an aperitif before dinner, how they were invited to the table, but she did not go, murmuring something to the President, who didn't understand French. Finally, an interpreter jumped up and explained that Mrs. Mitterrand could not move, for the Presidential shoe had pinned her skirt to the floor.

The "bad" Shevardnadze shifted the discussion to business subjects, and Reagan was evasive, and only when it became impossible to decline persistent attempts, Shultz grunted, "Mr. President, in accordance with your instructions we told the Russians..." and then held the conversation himself. This did not bother Reagan. At times he successfully put in a word.

I received an invitation to this breakfast at the very last moment, and being caught in surprise I said: "I have got a tennis game at this time." The State Department official reacted coldly: "you will have to decide where to go." My gaffe had an unexpected positive effect. Two days later I approached the same official asking for permission to use Baltimore airport to fly via Mexico City to Cuba (restrictions on the movements of Soviet citizens were still in effect). "Impossible", he replied, "but I cannot refuse a person who wavered whether he is to play tennis or go to breakfast with the President of the United States."

## A CONVERSATION WITH FIDEL CASTRO

Thus, by a circuitous route via that fascinating country, Mexico, I landed in Cuba. My mission was to inform our Cuban friends about Shevardnadze's talks with the Americans. On 28 March 1988 one of the most interesting meetings in my diplomatic life occurred, with Fidel Castro.

He was in a green uniform and cap which he never removed, although he sweated beneath it. He started out by listening to me quite absent-mindedly. The reason turned out to be simple: he had just awakened after his siesta, and yawned at times. However, he constantly wrote down what I recited to him by heart, pointedly without delivering a single paper from my folder. God knows, there were few papers in there.

He asked questions distractedly, but skillfully. Immediately after the end of my information he began to talk about Angola himself, and his monologue lasted practically four hours. Alexander Kapto, the Soviet Ambassador in Havana, who knew Castro better, then said to me: such a long conversation is an indication that the Cuban leader is interested in a discussion with a Soviet representative, both in practical and intellectual terms.

Even with all my deference to Fidel Castro I was not over-awed. I did not need to justify the policy which we were pursuing in Africa; I was confident in its correctness. So I managed to concentrate on the more important aspect: to understand better the Cuban way of thinking and action as he was describing it first-hand. He spoke very vividly and gesticulated at the same time, jumped up and walked in circles (the first time I, too, tried to rise, he said "Sit"), and drew diagrams on paper and on a map. At the end I asked for this map and he signed it at his own initiative.

I wrote down the discussion with Fidel, although in fragmented notes, while I was flying from Havana to Luanda on a well-traveled route across the Atlantic Ocean. Here is a part of those notes: Angola, rather the fight with apartheid, is the cause of his life. He wants to go down in history for this: Cuba beat the racists. *And he did it!* He knows Angolans affairs thoroughly, is totally engaged, oversees comparatively small military operations himself, and when necessary openly criticizes his, or our, people. One has the feeling that he is giving his main effort and attention to Angola with consequences for domestic Cuban affairs, especially the economy, which are well-known.

After long hours of speaking to us - at the end he apologized that he had not offered tea or coffee, saying that the time had passed quickly - he and Risquet headed off for an operational conference on Angolan matters. These lengthy meetings occurred every day, and even often took place twice a day.<sup>18</sup>

At one point: Castro – the South Africa military are deceiving President Botha.

I: But yours are telling the whole truth?

Fidel nodded toward cables, operational reports with stamps "*muy secreto*", quoted them in great detail, then, rushing to the telephone, he let me read a just-received cable

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<sup>18</sup> Jorge Risquet Valdes - I don't remember his official title - was Castro's main adviser on Angolan affairs. We met with him more than once and it seemed to me we found a common language. During one of his trips to the USSR, to familiarize him with the signs of a new time, I led him into the first private café opened in Moscow. Risquet liked it very much. In Havana his preferences were more traditional - the La Bodeguita del Medio restaurant, which Hemingway also used to visit.



about a conversation between the Cuban Ambassador in Addis Ababa and Mengistu, etc.

Of course, the impression he produced was enormous: a giant, with dark magnetic eyes, brown as coffee, logical, speaking with conviction and with frequent calls to common sense.

What was the downside? Excessive self-confidence - the South Africans are panicking, they are not brave, they are bluffing, etc. I tried to ask him concrete questions: is not the north and center of Angola exposed? Will the enemy himself not choose a place for a retaliatory strike? Etc. Etc.

He: we calculate each step, we provide for everything, we have prepared alternatives.

He was especially proud of the situation in Cuito Cuanavale, which had become a symbol of Angolan-Cuban courage. "We have an impregnable defense there. South Africa is getting the worst of it. What fools, they attacked back on March 23<sup>rd</sup> when we were already going south on the 17<sup>th</sup>, hitting them in the rear."

## **LUANDA, DOS SANTOS**

Here I informed the President of Angola both about the discussions in Washington and about my conversation with Castro. Our mutual understanding was superb this time: it wasn't worth halting the Cubans, they were doing a useful thing. Only provided that they did not go too far. If it was true that a military solution in Southwestern Africa did not exist, then that was true for everyone. Finally, South Africa understood, or in any event, had to acknowledge this truth. Of course, the South African army remained a threat capable of continuing military operations; only a small part of it was fighting in Angola, but it had reckoned not only with increasingly large casualties among its white soldiers, but also with the social and political consequences. The embargo on military supplies was in effect despite all the "holes": South Africa was forced to manage its equipment carefully, which was a particularly complex challenge; it was not easy to replace losses.

At my request, dos Santos signed the operational map given to me by Fidel. Later I collected on it the signatures of almost all the figures involved in the conflict. I kept this souvenir for a long time, but finally lost it because of endless moves.

## **SAM NUJOMA**

In Luanda I talked with SWAPO leader Sam Nujoma, the future President of independent Namibia, informing him, too, about the Soviet-American discussions in Washington. I singled out two thoughts: a stage of active diplomatic struggle for a settlement in Southern Africa was coming; the Soviet Union took a position of support for such a solution which would satisfy Angola, Cuba, and SWAPO; we were not seeking additional dividends for ourselves.

I also touched on the question, which had constantly worried me, of direct contacts with South Africa. By this time both the Angolans and the Cubans had agreed to this, although with the stipulations that only individual contacts would be useful (read: those which they approved in advance). Nujoma evidently thought more broadly: as a

permanent member of the Security Council, the USSR can contact anyone it desires in the interests of the resolving the problem. The ANC problem remained, however: as before, the South African friends objected.

This was not the only aspect on which SWAPO exhibited a constructive attitude. They agreed to talks on a ceasefire, which also moved the settlement process forward.

## A LITTLE ABOUT ETHIOPIA

Those spring weeks were quite hectic. Washington - Havana - Luanda. I just had time to come back Moscow, when there was a new mission, at the other end of the African continent: it flared again in the Horn of Africa, but this time it was more intense than usual. Mengistu ended up between two enemies who acted in conjunction - Somalia from the south and the Eritreans, supported by Sudan, from the north.

I flew immediately to Addis Ababa and was there by 6 April. We discussed with Mengistu a crisis plan of first-priority actions. Then I went to Khartoum, and from there across Kenya to Mogadishu, to convince the Sudanese and Somalis to reduce the aggression. I'll leave out the details, for our topic is Southwestern Africa, but I'll note two aspects, one routine, the other political.

Having met with President Siad Barre in the Somali capital and encouraged by shifts in his position, I hurried back to Moscow. However, there was no opportunity to fly. Our aircraft landed here once every two weeks on the route from Dar es Salaam to Moscow, but this was the "wrong" week. We got in touch with Moscow. Faithful comrade Yury Yukalov promised: we'll turn around the aircraft from Tanzania. We relaxed before leaving for the airport, and suddenly a code clerk came up to the Ambassador with a telegram which had just been received: "Aeroflot" is asking for \$10,000 for the landing, and the MFA has no such money. Remember I was a special representative of the Soviet leadership. I recalled the despair with which we looked at the "Aeroflot" airliner passing in the completely empty sky from the flat roof of the embassy. Whomever who has been in Mogadishu knew just how boring it was there anyway. (*Not now, I guess*). How on earth could we get away from there? Long flights via the United Arab Emirates were chosen: Westerners no longer flew to Somalia, and the Somalis had literally only one flying aircraft, albeit with difficulty; another was being repaired.

On return from the trip through three warring African countries - Ethiopia, Sudan, and Somalia - I told Shevardnadze with complete frankness just how bad Mengistu's situation was, and our mistakes which would need to be corrected. Having listened to me closely, the Minister asked, "Are you prepared to repeat all this at the Politburo commission on Ethiopia?" I assessed his concern: he was giving me an opportunity to avoid reporting, which could have unpleasant consequences for me in terms of MFA relations with the military and the party departments (my ex-chief, Gromyko liked to infer that internal diplomacy was more complex and important than foreign diplomacy).

At the 15 April 1988 meeting of this commission I added more gloom to the picture. Alexander Yakovlev, who chaired the commission, and several other comrades supported both the report and its conclusions. We proposed for Ethiopia approximately the same as we were already doing in Angola: not to hope that Mengistu's government would win a military victory, to try to push him to political solutions. He was stubbornly resisting them, assuring us that he was just about to beat his domestic enemies, just

give him more weapons and make it so that outside forces, Sudan and Somalia, don't help insurgents. The military men, who were present at the commission, did not take the floor, limiting themselves to exclamations from their seats such as "we are selling out the Ethiopian revolution".

Only Georgy Korniyenko, the long-time First Deputy Foreign Minister who was working at this time in a high post in the CPSU CC, was openly opposed. In spite of his impressive authority, this time they did not listen to him. That evening Yakovlev called me to tell that I was right not to use evasive phrases. "There is no other way to climb out of this hole."

The comic thing is that this didn't lead to changes. The note with our suggestions, prepared by the MFA and sent to the Central Committee, came back after a while. Evidently, those in our upper echelons who unconditionally supported "a natural ally of the socialist camp", which Mengistu's Ethiopia was in their eyes, could still influence foreign policy. Especially when such acts were concealed by complete anonymity. No one explained to you why "No decision was made"; even now I do not know the reasons. Perhaps, perestroika leaders themselves did not want to open one more front with the orthodox.

In May 1991 it ended with our tremendous fiasco. Mengistu suffered crushing defeat, abandoned everyone and fled to his friend Mugabe where supposedly he lives now. Hundreds of our military people and civil specialists had to be evacuated quickly. We lost all our money given in credit, amounting to approximately \$6 billion. I remember, how Mengistu was telling me with tears in his eyes: "We will sell the last shirt, but we give your money back."

The far-sighted Cubans left Ethiopia on time.

I would add: in this conflict too we tried to cooperate with the Americans. They chose an obstructive way. Crocker called Mengistu "a paranoid dictator with whom it is impossible to deal" and thought only about removing him. But Mengistu had once graduated from a US military school. It would seem that for ideological reason, the US could not support the "Marxist Eritreans". In 1950, when the US had excellent relations with the Emperor, they had voted in the UN for including Eritrea in Ethiopia. Nevertheless, in the final account a desire to take revenge for the loss of Ethiopia and its "move" into the Soviet camp prevailed.

No one can now prove what would have been better - to keep Ethiopia as a united country or dismember it - but "clusters of hatred" remained there which constantly produced flare-ups and often escalated into war. Eritrea's breakaway has not led to peace in the region, at least not yet.

I would tell another story in order not to end this chapter on an unhappy note. A visit of Mengistu Haile Mariam to Moscow was being prepared. According to MFA custom, we opened up archival documents, including those from before the revolution, when the head of the Ethiopian state was to arrive to St. Petersburg. "An Aide Memoire ", as it would be called in today's terminology, had been prepared for Tsar Nikolay II. He wrote in the file: "Is he really not asking for anything?" Unfortunately, this had no relation to the visit for which we were preparing.

## FINAL STAGES

In the spring of 1988 I met with Crocker in London. Officially this was called "Soviet-American working contacts to prepare the next summit meeting". It was to be held sometime later in Moscow. I had another mission in London - to inform British Foreign Secretary Sir Geoffrey Howe about the agreement concerning Afghanistan which had just been signed: our troops were finally leaving this country. The wound which had bled for many years had begun to be healed. It had a huge beneficial influence in promoting the solution of other regional conflicts.

The meetings with the Americans were held in turn in our, then the American, embassy, and both sides took care that protocol was not violated. On 29 April I received Crocker in our embassy residence at 13 Kensington Palace Gardens, not suspecting that six years later I would be brought from this building in an open carriage drawn by a pair of strong horses to present my credentials as Ambassador to Great Britain to Queen Elizabeth II. But no longer of the Soviet Union, but instead of Russia.

I congratulated Crocker on having managed to bring South Africa to the negotiating table with Angola and Cuba. We had an approved negotiating position. No other way had been examined. It made nonsense to reject the mediation services of the Americans after they had already performed this function for seven years and all sides were satisfied. As far as we were concerned, we were in a position to control the situation.

The main thing, of course, was our interest in ridding ourselves of this conflict. So I meant what I said that the Soviet Union seriously intended to help the sides directly involved in the negotiations to untie the Gordian knot. Up to this point they were unable to do this.

From now on, we invariably advocated a continuation of negotiations in the format in which they had begun in London and on which we ourselves had insisted. We knew that difficulties were inevitable. It turned out that way. From the start we were intent on neither breaking off the negotiations nor changing their configuration.

There was one more proof of our desire to maintain negotiations in their original makeup. When in March 1988 the South Africa Minister of Defense addressed the USSR through the mass media: as long as you're leaving Afghanistan, why should South Africa and the Soviet Union not directly come to agreement about Angola? We ignored this approach.

An unofficial Soviet representative, Vladilen Vasev, who was one of our best professional Africanists, at the outset in London took part in practically all the quadripartite meetings; he was acting behind the scenes, but was no less effective for that. On occasion the Americans reproached him for supporting excessively the Angolan-Cuban position, including the most important aspect - the timeframe for the withdrawal of the Cuban troops. But whose position did we need to defend? The South Africans, as often happened, was in common with the Americans. It was quite another matter that in our private contacts with our friends that we spoke a different language; we noted in particular that the four years withdrawal schedule officially advanced by Cuba and Angola was not realistic. We had other levers of influence, which I have mentioned, specifically arms supply.

## THE US AND UNITA

At the London meeting (in May 1988), Crocker distinctly explained to me why the US supported UNITA quite so strongly. I had consistently pushed him on this key issue, trying to convince him that American interests would in no way conflict with switching to the legitimate government in Luanda. What is more, that government dreamed of coming to agreement with the Americans. But the Americans demanded a particular reward for establishing diplomatic relations. This was the spice cake with which they were enticing the MPLA government/Luanda.

According to Crocker, the US had three motivations for supporting Savimbi. First, there was domestic public opinion in the US, and Congress was reflecting this. The anti-Castro lobby was especially zealous. Second, this was a counterbalance to Soviet aid to Luanda. Third, it was desirable to get UNITA out of the monopolistic control of South Africa. Savimbi was supposedly fed up with Pretoria's tutelage.

I think that there was also a fourth, although unnamed, but a main point. This was Reagan's clear attitude of support for those who "counter Soviet expansionism throughout the entire world".

Crocker was categorical: if the Angolans raised the issue of American aid to UNITA during the negotiating process, the talks would break down. We held a diametrically opposite position: let them continue despite the difficulties encountered.

Of course, the USSR was not an opponent of national reconciliation in Angola. We simply thought that an appropriate platform should be advanced by the Angolan government and not imposed by us, much less the Americans. Luanda had no difficulty with this. Whilst delicately chivvying this along, we saw the main task to be settling the exterior aspects of the conflict - to achieve the independence of Namibia and to ensure the withdrawal of all foreign troops. It should facilitate a solution of the domestic problems by the Angolans themselves. Essentially, we objected to American claims that a double price should be paid for the independence of Namibia - one, the withdrawal of the Cubans and two, a division of power in Luanda. "No to dual linkage": this was our logic and in the final account it prevailed.

The future course of events showed how difficult it had been for dos Santos and Savimbi to reach agreement in the lack of, or with a substantially reduced influence of the other actors. Indeed, the war continued with interruptions into the next millennium despite the fact that both South African and Cuban troops had gone, our military advisers came back to Russia and America ceased military supplies. That meant nursing such a monster as UNITA and its head, Savimbi.

## AFTER LONDON

...matters unfolded more rapidly, but not strictly in one direction.

On 13 May the Angolans and South Africans met in Brazzaville without witnesses. As far as I remember, Luanda did not inform us of this. The Angolans generally did not like to say anything in advance. It did not bother me very much for we ourselves had been advising the Angolans to sound out the South Africans. Contact was especially necessary in the conditions of the Cuban movement in the south. I did not particularly

believe that the South Africans would impose a bilateral deal on the Angolans. But the Cubans, who found themselves to be out of touch, were not very happy. The Americans, too, were upset.

Even after the start of the quadripartite talks, the Cubans from time to time had complaints against the Angolans. Most of all, they feared separate contacts about the timeframe for the withdrawal of Cuban troops, and a deviation from the 1984 platform. There was a moment when the Cubans threatened that they would withdraw all their troops, if things continued that way, and rapidly.

The Angolans were in the same uncomfortable position: caught between several fires. The Americans, in whose hands was 90% of Angolan oil production (the country's wealth of diamonds was also under Savimbi's control), were threatening the MPLA government with sanctions, the economy was in crisis, and there was no end in sight to the war with UNITA.

The next time Shultz and Shevardnadze met was in Geneva in May 1988. They only fleetingly touched on the subject of Southern Africa. But the Soviet minister assured the American of one thing: Angola and Cuba wanted agreements, and this also concerned the withdrawal of the Cuban troops. He passed on Castro's attitude: the Cubans might leave but it should not seem like running away. If the Cubans left Angola, it would be with heads held high, since the Cubans had not been beaten on the field of battle.

*Note: In preparing the second edition of this book, I learned that, according to Castro, Cubans had received the following intelligence: "South Africa is studying the possibility of delivering a powerful air strike and that it has several nuclear bombs. This was communicated to the leadership of Angola and the Soviet Union. We have emphasized that any massive and sudden strike of the enemy from the air must be given an immediate response".*

*The Cubans troops, before they started to move to the Namibian border, were equipped with the latest Soviet weapons, including several dozen MiG-23 and Su-22. Most importantly, a Soviet-made air defence system had been established, so for the first time the South Africans lost their superiority in the air. It was known that the South Africans had the means of delivering nuclear charges (bombers and assault jet-fighters "Mirage", "Buccaneer" and "Canberra", as well as self-propelled howitzers G-5 and G-6). But I never heard about the threat of using nuclear weapons, although it is difficult that I would have missed the information of this kind. To double-check I called Marshal Yazov, who in 1988 was the Soviet Minister of Defence. He remembers that time well. He, too, had never heard of such threats against the Cubans.*

*Shortly before the end of the apartheid regime, its leaders confessed that the country did have six nuclear charges. Some scholars have argued that their existence played an important role in the development of events in the region, particularly in deterring the Cubans. In my opinion, it is "an attractive hypothesis," nothing else. The South Africans would not have dared to launch a nuclear strike. A close and powerful determinant was there: the Soviet Navy in the Indian Ocean with nuclear weapons on board. At any rate, the question of South African nuclear capability was never raised on either side during the negotiations for a peaceful settlement in Angola and Namibia.*

**LISBON, MAY 1988**

After the Geneva meeting of our two foreign ministers, Crocker and I met in Lisbon on 18 May 1988, saying in the press conferences that we did this at the direct instruction of our chiefs. For the first time I publicly declared that parallel or even joint steps between the USSR and US to promote a settlement were possible.

I arrived in the Portuguese capital beforehand to meet with the hosts. By tradition the Portuguese are well-informed people. After all, approximately a million Portuguese still remained in Southern Africa, including those hundreds of thousands who left Angola in 1975-1976 when it became independent. Jumping ahead, I will say that there is a reason the so-called troika (Portugal, the US, and Russia) operated on an intra-Angolan settlement since 1992, although this has been episodically.

The Soviet Ambassador Valentin Kasatkin (in the mornings we still managed to squeeze in a couple of sets of tennis) and I talked with the Portuguese Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Jose Manuel Durao Barroso; then he was a pleasant and interesting interlocutor (to tell the truth, we liked him much less when he became a big shot in the European Union). I repeated our favorite idea: the Soviet Union will accept what suits our friends, and we were ready to guarantee future agreements. The fact that we offered ourselves as guarantors was our important diplomatic card: the negotiations had just begun in earnest, but we were demonstrating our confidence in a successful outcome. Two months later, the participants in the negotiations turned to the permanent members of the Security Council – ie, also to the Soviet Union, with a request for guarantees.

I insisted on the distinction between legal and practical foundations: in accordance with the first, South Africa had to leave Namibia without any conditions; in accordance with the second, Angola and Cuba had the right to discuss a schedule for the withdrawal of the Cuban troops. Since the Cuban troops arrived in Angola at the invitation of the legal government of the country, the two countries could decide the issue of their future presence. But what would South Africa look like if its President held an inspection of his troops illegally located hundreds of kilometers from their own border, and visited the headquarters of the rebel UNITA? And all this under the pretext of the need to stop "Russian aggression".

"How does the USSR regard contacts between South Africa and Angola?" asked the Portuguese. "We are not opposed. Angola is a sovereign country and can decide itself with whom to deal. This involves anything except capitulation", I replied. Our military support of the frontline states - and almost all of them were indebted to us - was one of the means of making the South African nationalists see reason, and for us to demonstrate that a political settlement was in their interest. We were not against South Africa as such; at one time our sympathies were on the side of the Boers. We were also not stirring up the nationalist passions of a certain portion of the black population. What the Soviet Union objected to was Pretoria's policy. It was in its own interests to change apartheid, I said, in the hope that this all would be passed to the South Africans. A message of necessary change was usually communicated in this way.

The Portuguese had one more question: are you looking for solutions to Angola's domestic problems? Yes, to do this we are trying to create favorable external conditions. We are not out to replace the directly interested Angolan parties. In conditions where Luanda does not want to talk with UNITA, since they consider it a continuation of the armed occupation of a foreign country, we proceed step by step. The

first is the creation of a suitable environment. The second is an agreement between the Angolans themselves. I had in mind President dos Santos, who assured me that with such a sequence of events, a solution would quickly be found. Unfortunately, reality turned out to be more complex.

The Portuguese, firmly declaring that they were not helping the rebels, said that after a settlement in the South the problems of Angola would be shifted to the north. The role of Zaire was growing. It was through Kinshasa that the Americans were trying to outbid the South Africans for UNITA. So, you're right, my Portuguese colleagues said to me, when you don't completely identify the United States with the Republic of South Africa. Possibly the military operation undertaken by the South Africans near Cuito Cuanavale had one of the goals of showing who was boss in the region.

On the meeting with Crocker. Naturally, he raised the question which was of top priority to the American side - the continuing advance of the Cubans toward the border with Namibia. Chet characterized it as a dangerous game, which it indeed was in many respects. It was in the Americans' interests was to stop it, but not in ours. We helped the Cubans, providing that the offensive did not get out of control. He added that South Africa was concerned that detachments of the Namibian liberation movement would advance under the protection of the Cubans. This also had a ring of truth, but again there was no reason to prevent it. Crocker asked that we influence our friends. Behind the scenes we actually called for caution, but why should I tell it to the Americans? So, my reaction was self-evident: the Angolans had recently confirmed to the South Africans that they had the sovereign right within their national borders to the free movement of their troops, and also of the Cuban units which were in Angola on a legal basis, whether it was convenient to the South Africans or not. We could not and would not influence our friends.

Crocker got angry: if you don't have influence on your allies, then why are we sitting here? He had unwittingly given himself away: this is what the Americans wanted to reduce the role of the Soviet Union to. We do have influence, I replied, but the USSR does not intend to use it to restrain SWAPO from fighting for the independence of Namibia; or likewise, to dissuade the Cubans from pushing the South Africans from Angolan territory. We could do much to aid a settlement but this was not always what the US wanted. You Americans are building up Savimbi's muscles and declaring that you won't stop this in any circumstances, even at the cost of wrecking the negotiations. The Angolans and Cubans tell us that a halt to American aid to UNITA is a preliminary condition for any agreement (later, under American insistence they removed this demand).

I frightened Crocker that South Africa might enter into direct agreements with Angola, leaving the Americans on the sidelines. This not only would create a threat to the quadripartite negotiations, there might be fundamental damage: the South Africans could try to swap their relations with UNITA for the presence of the Cubans in Angola. Such a danger really existed. We knew that this alternative was being considered in some South African circles. It did not suit us, for the independence of Namibia hung in the air. Crocker accused us and Cuba of pushing the Angolans toward a direct agreement with South Africa. This was hardly fair with respect to the Cubans and absolutely not true as far as we were concerned. I repeated our support to the quadripartite, and no other negotiations.



Even if it was not said openly, the Americans began to understand that the USSR was playing a decisive role. This strengthened their interest in our greater involvement not only in the negotiating process, but also in the following future agreements. Hence Crocker's persistence in raising of the issue of guarantees. We were first to put it forward; now we exchanged places with the Americans.

And although I stipulated that it was difficult to speak of guarantees when the outlines of what needed to be guaranteed were not too evident, I mentioned two possibilities: the Security Council could assume responsibilities *in corpore*, or its permanent members, including the Soviet Union, would be charged. Based on the experience of other conflicts we suggested the idea of UN forces to separate the antagonists. It would also need to work out a mechanism to monitor the troop withdrawals.

What we could not agree upon was the problem of UNITA. Crocker said, "We will never abandon supporting it". Tell it to Andrey Gromyko, I thought. He constantly instructed us: a diplomat should never say "never". "Why", Crocker exclaimed, "should the United States stand aside and Soviet military aid continue to flow uninterrupted?"

With one hand the US was almost working for a settlement, and with the other - they pressured the government of Angola. Here's where the divide lay between us: the Soviet Union was on the side of a government recognized by everyone except the US and RSA, and the Americans were on the side of the rebels. This was the mildest definition - among ourselves we called UNITA a terrorist organization. It often actually resorted to terror. There was one more name for it, "armed bandits", by analogy with the Afghans. Although we had no illusions that the Americans would leave their dual track, we kept telling them that we saw their game, and warned that it could drag out the settlement and lead to serious consequences in the future.

Crocker countered with: the Americans were not in favor of forming a government of UNITA alone. But, he said, they have a right to a share of power. This ensues from the Alvor agreement achieved in 1975. A government of Angola, not solely of the MPLA, should sit in Luanda. And (Crocker kept the main argument in reserve) the Angolan leaders themselves do not consider American support to UNITA a hindrance to negotiations.

Possibly this was so, I calculated, but they were telling us something else. They wanted concessions to be made not through us but directly to the Americans, and this was right; everyone thinks about his own interests.

"Okay", I said aloud, "American logic is strange to us; your aid to Savimbi is not a hindrance to negotiations, but the advance of the Cubans to the south of Angola is." At the crest of what we called the de-ideologisation of our foreign policy, I accused the Americans of catching the banner which we had dropped - a pseudo-ideological one. The Americans were excessive in their support of the rebels. They were possibly seeking a tactical gain to prevail upon Luanda. In strategic terms, as further events showed, they definitely lost. But this became clear (including to the Americans themselves) many years later.

However, there were leaders in the US even in the period described who vigorously opposed aid to UNITA. They included such prominent congressmen as Lee Hamilton. "Reliance on Savimbi will only prolong the sufferings of the Angolan people", "Savimbi is a Chinese Marxist; it won't be easier for America even if he comes to power". Such

were their arguments and these were not without foundation. But in the Reagan administration they considered Savimbi "his own man".<sup>19</sup>

And history weighed on both us and the US. The Americans clearly did not like how matters had developed in 1975. They dated the internal conflict in which their stooges lost out from the coming to power of the "Marxists", and at the end of the '80s they tried to take revenge when the victors were in a difficult position.

A plus from our discussions with Crocker was that we both were firmer in the thought that no military solution in Angola existed. And I did not tire of adding, not a unilateral political solution. The Americans still wanted to hang the relations between dos Santos and Savimbi on the Angolan-Cuban-South African-Namibian knot. To the already existing linkage, the departure of the Cubans, I repeatedly said, you added one more - internal changes in Angola. You want a double reward for the withdrawal of South Africa from Angola and Namibia. At Luanda's direct request, we shelved intra-Angolan matters until the creation of favorable outside conditions, first of all the withdrawal of the South Africans. Such a stratagem reduced the likelihood of shifting the East-West confrontation into a conflict in Southern Africa, but did not remove it entirely.

Understanding some secret mechanisms probably more than I did, Crocker opened the cards: "What you're talking about, is Luanda and Savimbi already maintain contacts". Whether it was a bluff or not, I was not too disturbed: we ourselves had been pushing the Angolan government toward greater flexibility. I replied to him, that our Angolan friends are telling us of not having such contacts. In any event, is it our issue with you, dear Chet?

This was the mix of polemics and constructiveness we had, with a gradual shift to the positive.

Afterwards I more than once thought why Luanda reacted so reluctantly to our arguments (not to mention the Americans') about a reconciliation with UNITA. First, the enemy was of course very strong and had powerful protectors. One could not guess how a division of power would end up; the matter was very, very laborious in African conditions.<sup>20</sup> Second, there was hope on the asymmetry of the withdrawals of the South Africans and the Cubans. The first were to leave sooner than the second. So Luanda thought to settle scores with UNITA while the Cubans were still there, although far from areas of possible combat operations. If this didn't happen (as it didn't happen) they could switch to political dialog. As in the Italian saying, "There is always time to pay and to die". There was logic in their reasoning and we supported our Angolan friends. A treaty between the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of Angola was not a piece of paper. No playing into Savimbi's hands.

## **MAY 1988, MOSCOW**

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<sup>19</sup> see: *Peter W. Rodman*. Op. cit. pp. 368-369

<sup>20</sup> By the way, not only in African conditions. I learned from Kissinger that not a single civil war in history had ended in the formation of a coalition government. Kissinger left out the experience of the intra-Tajik settlement, where the government at certain stage shared power with the opposition. Vladimir Shubin, who has read the Russian edition of my book in manuscript and have given me invaluable aid, cited one more example indicating an error by the Master - South Africa. Sue Onslow points out, this was also the case in Zimbabwe in 1980, although this government of national unity led by Robert Mugabe's ZANU-PF did not last.

I met Crocker for the third time just one month later, preparing the next Soviet-American summit in Moscow. The equation was the same: the decolonization of Namibia on UN conditions, the complete withdrawal of Cuban troops within agreed timeframes, as well as the South Africans commandos, a cessation of their aid to UNITA. The issue of American support was increasingly put outside the framework due to the persistent American pressure on Cuba and Angola. External destabilizing factors eliminated - the solution of the internal problems by the Angolans themselves.

The Americans were still adamant. "How is it" Shultz used to say to Shevardnadze, "in Afghanistan, Cambodia, and Nicaragua you support national reconciliation, but not in Angola?" Our minister countered: "In the countries you named the idea of national reconciliation was advanced by the governments and accepted, in one degree or another, by the other sides. In Angola no platform of this kind has been formed. The Soviet Union does not consider it suitable to force this process".

At our expert level Crocker insinuated the idea of a joint Soviet-American appeal to Luanda to set a political dialog with UNITA. I declined: as before, we remained loyal to the MPLA, although *inter nos* we did not quite understand their reluctance to openly declare what they had probably already been doing privately.

Crocker again raised the issue of the Cuban advance to the south. "They are already only 15 kilometers from the Calueque-Ruacana border reservoir, and Namibia depends heavily on the system of dams in Angola. SWAPO detachments are advancing behind the Cubans. In the last eight months the Cubans have increased the strength of their Angola contingent by almost 50 percent."

This worried the Americans for two reasons. A threat had been created to their protégé, Savimbi, although the Cubans were trying not to touch him. And Crocker was afraid that South Africa could lash out, undermining or at least obstructing agreements which were being so laboriously produced. Besides, the possible combat successes of Namibian rebels increase their chances in future elections. And these should determine who would rule Namibia when it got independence.

I recall that we had an understanding with the Cubans that they would act cautiously and would not cross the Angolan-Namibian border in any circumstance. (*They did not*). We also had not been giving them the direct combat support for which they repeatedly appealed. But our internal consent was one thing, and what I was telling the Americans was another: the Angolans could do on their territory as they saw fit. The Cubans were their allies on a legal basis. South Africa was also not dozing; with its aid UNITA held positions in the center of the country which it had not previously.

In spite of differences we were advancing to the finish line. In Crocker's opinion, an agreement could have been reached by the end of September. We decided to set this as a "target date". It was not fulfilled, but the method of promoting negotiations was good. The Americans were in a hurry: Reagan's second term was coming to an end, nobody was sure that the Republicans would win the November 1988 elections, so Crocker naturally longed to finish the multi-year operation himself. To his credit, he did not conceal this. But we, too, had reasons to be in a hurry. The window of opportunity, as it was fashionable to say, could shut at any moment, including thanks to our domestic situation which was becoming tense; alarm signals were coming in from various ends of the foreign policy front.

When we reported the results of our discussions to the ministers, Crocker exaggerated: the USSR, he said, either does not want to or cannot aid a settlement. We were reproached for not promoting military restraint, for supporting only what Luanda and Havana had proposed, while much more was expected from us. The Americans' "logic" was not very subtle: once you shout from the rooftops that you're professing a policy of new thinking then you should show this in practice. In what manner? Very simple, switch onto the American position.

The dispute was still going on about the sequence in an external and internal settlement: the second after the first, as we proposed, relying on the Afghanistan experience, or in parallel, as per the American version. The Americans' relations with UNITA were another stumbling block. Why do you need Savimbi, I insisted to Crocker, when you can come to good terms with Luanda? Do you want us to settle it in a triangle, the USSR-Angola-US? (The Angolans had asked us to suggest such a tripartite version). The Americans did not agree to this. One of their windfalls (if not to say tricks) of that time was called positive symmetry, that is, a mutual limitation of military aid - of the Soviet Union to Luanda and the US to Savimbi. But we couldn't put the government and the rebels in the same class; moreover, while the question of South Africa's support to UNITA was unresolved.

The Americans also viewed a schedule for the withdrawal of the Cubans through the prism of their relations with the rebels, fearing that the time difference between the exit of the South Africans and the Cubans could provide an opportunity for Luanda to suffocate UNITA. The US, Crocker exclaimed pathetically, would never allow this. Often he hid behind South Africa: the timeframes named by the Angolans and Cubans did not suit them. When I asked him what would satisfy them, as a rule he avoided an answer, leaving himself freedom of maneuver.

## **DISTANT CONSEQUENCES**

"They have become obsessed with this Savimbi", we said amongst ourselves. Usually the Americans assured us that they did not want to replace dos Santos with Savimbi, they only asked that Luanda would share power. When we spoke to Angolans, they said that it was exceptionally difficult, if not impossible, to form a coalition government with those who had been warring for many years, especially to share power among the leaders. Two roosters in one henhouse - this is not an African tradition. One had to leave the field of battle.

The quadripartite negotiations began only after everyone agreed to exclude the internal issues of Angola from the agenda. The Americans sought this to remove their aid to Savimbi from discussion. Privately, as I mentioned, we tried to "educate" the Americans, but failed miserably. They had such a trump as a tacit agreement with the Angolans. In the final account the internal problems of Angola did not find reflection in the final documents signed in New York and it had heavy consequences.

## **BISHOP DESMOND TUTU**

With perestroika, international contacts with South African public figures increasingly expanded. One remarkable event was the visit to Moscow in June 1988 of Archbishop Desmond Tutu of the Anglican Church, invited to the millennium of Christianity in

Russia. Note, a Nobel Laureate. Besides this, he was also President of the All-African Conference of Churches.

His position turned out to be harsher than I thought. Tutu said that apartheid in South Africa could not be reformed, that it was an evil which a majority of churches declared a heresy. Hence his pessimism about a Namibian-Angolan settlement: how could one come to agreement with the racists about anything? Rather, I seemed like a liberal when I affirmed that the independence of Namibia could be achieved under "living" apartheid. As to the domestic development in South Africa, I supposed that it could go along one of three paths: the first, an explosion, which would destroy everything; second, deep reforms; or third, an attempt to keep everything as it was.

Desmond Tutu replied that the government was going with the third alternative, passing it off to world public opinion as the second. Now he began to speak like a liberal, declaring that he was restraining young South Africans, for they were for the first one, the violent path. "If I were in their place, I would have asked Archbishop Tutu to get out of the way long ago." In his words, in the near future everything would remain unchanged. He did not think that the reforms carried out in South Africa had brought any significant results. Tutu had tried to convince me that apartheid would remain unchanged for the next 10-20 years. By this time we were no longer accustomed to take such assertions on faith. Without excluding the possibility of a catastrophic turn of events, I said that Soviet policy was aiming at avoiding this. We repudiate the principle, "the worse, the better". What was built by the South African people would be useful for all Africa.

Of course, I raised with Tutu a question about official contacts with South Africa. It was illogical, I told him, to extend hatred of apartheid to contacts with its representatives if they are to our benefit. Tutu did not object, and became one more of our allies on this matter.

The Archbishop of Berlin, Exarch of the Russian Orthodox Church in Central Europe, took part in my conversation with Tutu. A high representative of the Church in the MFA was also a sign of perestroika.

## **THE CC GIVES APPROVAL**

In June 1988 we got permission from the Central Party Committee for an unofficial Soviet representative to take part in the quadripartite negotiations. In the first round in London, we did it ahead of the CC's permission. But there were new rounds to come and it was better that the CC be informed and sanction the future events.

There were a lot of positives in such a practice: to report and to receive high-level approval. It strengthened discipline, forced a more careful analysis of events and a formulation of positions. It allowed the involvement of fresh intellectual forces.

In June we received something more - permission not to shun unofficial contacts with South Africa. Of course, this was accompanied by conditions, which in our view were quite absurd. The initiative had always to come from the South Africans and mandatory preliminary agreement was required from Angola and Cuba every time. An experienced diplomat, however, could always act in order to have his cake and eat it, too.

## THE CAROUSEL STARTED TO SPIN

The Geneva round of the negotiations in August made progress on a whole series of substantial positions:

- 1 September 1988 was announced as the start of the Resolution 435 implementation; Namibia was to gain independence by the middle of the following year.
- By the same date, Angola and Cuba were to provide a schedule for the complete withdrawal of the Cuban troops, and South Africa, a schedule to withdraw its troops from Angola.
- Angola, Cuba, and South Africa took on commitments to sign a tripartite settlement agreement no later than 10 September 1988.
- What was extremely important: a ceasefire and military disengagement in Southern Africa were achieved, and a mixed military commission was created to monitor it.

The Geneva military agreements worked. The South African troops began to leave Angola on 10 August and left it completely within the agreed timeframes. The Cubans, remaining not far from the southwest border of Angola with Namibia, in fact only indicated their presence. They refrained from attacks on UNITA. According to some information, the Cubans began to establish contacts with Savimbi's people.

I repeat: all this became possible only after the South Africans were convinced that they could remain dominant only at the cost of much blood. Soon it also became clear that Namibia could be held by armed force. Military activity died down, for both sides knew that either victory could not be achieved, or that they would have to pay an unacceptably high price for it. Serious negotiations accelerated.

The timeframes of the political agreements were not met. But this was about bumps on a road, the end of which was already visible. There was a small celebration on our side: our schedule for the settlement of one of the most difficult regional conflicts had worked. That is, the problems of Angola and Namibia were brought to the forefront and not the elimination of apartheid in South Africa, nor national reconciliation in Angola (a term that Luanda did not accept at the time, even lexically). This was a triumph of a pragmatic approach cultivated by Soviet foreign policy of the time, although it was not employed in all of its sectors. South Africans told us after Geneva that such rapid progress would have been impossible without the positive changes brought by perestroika to the international situation.

In August 1988 Vasev and I held a special press conference devoted to the Geneva round. The lasting conflict in south western Africa seems to have given way to a political solution - that was the refrain.

Touching on our talks with the Americans, I said that our positions were not far apart on a number of issues. But neither the USSR, nor the US, nor the UN could replace the interested countries, or think up a settlement option for them. They could only help find it, and that was exactly what we and the Americans were dealing with.

In spite of the fact that the Soviet Union had very good relations with the MPLA government, as was said, we did not have the right to give it advice about what policy to pursue. In a recent speech, Angolan President J. E. dos Santos remarked that some African leaders do not understand the policy of clemency and national accord which the

Angolans are pursuing inside the country and consider it possible for themselves to intervene in the internal affairs of Angola. The USSR would not do this.

## THE CLEVER SWISS

Every time I came to Switzerland I tried to meet with Edward Brunner: we formed a good relationship from the time when we were preparing the European Conference Final Act. By 1988, that is, 15 years after our first contact, Brunner was the Swiss State Secretary for Foreign Affairs and one of my guides in the intricate world of Western diplomacy.

As a rule, the Swiss were very well informed about events in various corners of the world, even if they were not taking a direct part in them. They have a traditionally strong diplomacy, plus some information came through the Red Cross whose people are scattered throughout the entire planet. One touch: Nelson Mandela, who was then still in prison, used the Swiss doctor Heinrich Herzog.

The subject was about the upcoming US presidential elections. It was no secret that all the participants of the quadripartite negotiations were highly conscious of their importance, although with different feelings. Brunner's opinion was resolute: on the South African issues the Democrats sounded preferable. Dukakis spoke of halting aid to UNITA, rejecting linkage, and a toughening of relations with the RSA. But he had no chance of winning. The Bush-Dukakis duel ended with Bush's overwhelming victory.

## THE USSR AND THE USA

In September 1988 Michael Armacost, the third-ranking person in the State Department, came to Moscow. We both evaluated the Soviet-American cooperation in untying the Angolan-Namibian knot as 'satisfactory'. But as the odds of achieving a solution were increasing, so was the struggle on what conditions it would be achieved. The Americans wanted us to influence Cuba and Angola, primarily to shorten the terms of the Cubans' exit. We replied, diplomatically, that we favored a realistic and mutually-acceptable schedule. In turn, we pushed the Americans not to let go of their friendly embrace of the South Africans. It remained not entirely clear to us whether the latter really wanted a solution or, as had already happened, they would back out at the last moment. The Americans told us that they harbored such doubts with respect to Angola and Cuba. The mutual mistrust was still strong.

By this time the implementation of Security Council Resolution 435 had been postponed to 1 November 1988. But even if the Americans were in the mood to close the game before their presidential election and "jumping over" the October elections in South Africa, this deadline failed as well.

When Shevardnadze met Shultz in Washington in September 1988 the discussion on Southern Africa was more productive than before. The Secretary of State singled out progress in the talks as well as the constructive role of bilateral Soviet-American cooperation, probably a model for the future. For the first time at such a level, the Americans definitely agreed with the sequence of actions which we had always proposed: first, the withdrawal of South Africa from Angola and Namibia, and Cuba from Angola; then, the solution of domestic Angolan problems in a more favorable *ambiance*.

As regards domestic Angolan matters, Shevardnadze was, as usual, quite accurate: this concerned delicate matters and unnecessary Soviet influencing the leadership in Luanda might have negative consequences. In sum, let's not weigh down the current, still fragile, balance sheet of the settlement. So we agreed not to include national reconciliation in Angola in the overall package. The new situation was reflected in Shultz's statement that immediately after the withdrawal of the Cuban and South African troops, direct talks between Luanda and Savimbi should start. That is, not before, nor in parallel with this.

During Savimbi's latest trip to Washington in the summer of 1988, he publicly supported the quadripartite negotiations. Savimbi did not participate in them, and he had to be constantly reminded both on the battlefield and in politics. The Americans had to indulge him so that UNITA did not block the negotiating process. Those on the right wing of the US political spectrum demanded a halt to the negotiations if UNITA did not take direct part in them. Crocker did not yield.

### **ON VACATION TO AFRICA**

Given the tense rhythm in which we worked, I could not devote sufficient attention to the African countries which had not been directly drawn into conflict. The calm countries, so to speak. But the Soviet Union also had its interests in them. So I decided to spend my 1988 vacation in Tanzania and Kenya, combining talks with trips to the national parks for which these regions were famed. Their names, Ngorongoro, Serengeti, and Amboseli, still sound like music in my ears. With the special permission of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and a CC department, I took my wife with me: perestroika is perestroika, but restrictions continued to be harsh - and stupid.

In Dar es Salaam I met an old acquaintance, deputy premier Salim Ahmed Salim, and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Benjamin Mkapa. Both later made brilliant careers. The first became General Secretary of the Organization of African Unity and the second, President of the United Republic of Tanzania. We wished a successful conclusion to the negotiations for a settlement in the Southwest of Africa.

In Nairobi my interlocutor was Deputy Foreign Minister Chris Obure. The Kenyans, who were traditionally restrained in relations with us, became somewhat warmer this time, praising our role in the solution of a whole set of Southern Africa problems and inviting us to act in the same spirit.

Twenty days in Africa hardly brought much from the business point of view. But they strongly fostered that emotional factor without which political work could hardly be successful.

### **DOS SANTOS IN MOSCOW**

The Angolan President arrived in the Soviet Union in October 1988 on a short visit. The culminating phase of the negotiations had come which required coordinating positions at the highest level. What worried Luanda most of all was how the USSR would behave after the settlement, the contours of which had appeared much more distinctly. Our leaders again gave assurances that possible future negotiations between the



government of Angola and UNITA were the prerogative of Luanda. That time, though, a certain persistence was exhibited in pushing dos Santos toward national reconciliation, taking into account the lessons of Afghanistan. But, as before, we left the final word to the Angolan government.

Gorbachev behaved no less staunchly with regard to our eventual contacts with the South African government. He repeated what he had told Tambo earlier: we will pursue them only after Namibia receives independence, consulting in advance with the ANC. We were overly soft with our allies, although at times we did bypass strict prohibitions "from above".

## **THE NOVEMBER ROUND IN GENEVA**

On November 10, before the round started, we met with Crocker to check what could be done to facilitate the talks.

There the last unresolved issue of a large package: the schedule for the withdrawal of all the Cuban forces had been agreed. It should be completed in 27 months. Back in March Cuba and Angola had insisted on a four-year period, while South Africa was demanding that it would not exceed seven months. The positions converged approximately halfway between the two endpoints. In real life, as already mentioned, the Cubans left several weeks early, on 1 July 1991. A staged movement of the Cubans to the north was also agreed in Geneva (for they were almost on the Namibian border), first to the 15<sup>th</sup>, and then to the 13<sup>th</sup> parallel.

At a briefing in the MFA, I singled out the political realism which all the participants had exhibited, permitting a compromise. I emphasized that Vladilen Vasev, an unofficial Soviet observer had been present at all nine rounds of the quadripartite negotiations. By general opinion, his role was active and constructive.

## **CONTACTS WITH SOUTH AFRICA**

The more the matter reached the climax, the more pressing became the need to deal with South Africa at a governmental level. Three of our four main allies, Angola, Cuba, and SWAPO, no longer objected, but not ANC. More than once the MFA turned to Party channels, but we were given permission at a snail's pace. However, something shifted quietly.

In the autumn of 1988 an "Izvestiya" correspondent was sent to Pretoria (before that, contacts with RSA public figures could be held only outside this country). This was Boris Pilyatskin. His reporting from the place of the events made an impression. He showed that in recent years apartheid had been softened by a number of anti-racist laws, and that the social mosaic of South Africa was more complex than it seemed at first glance. Moreover, he had special permission to meet with officials. He brought to Moscow the clearly expressed wish from South Africans to increase the level of contacts with Soviet representatives.

After numerous delays a long-awaited CC decision finally came. It stated definitely that a settlement in Southern Africa could not be achieved without the RSA government. We have to convey to the RSA government the Soviet point of view and to find out its position firsthand. Thus direct contacts could no longer be avoided. A multitude of

rhetoric accompanied this decision: the USSR condemns apartheid, supports the UN decision to isolate it, we are not ignoring the South African authorities only in order to promote a settlement. In addition, various restrictions were imposed on the MFA: the contacts have to be covert, the initiative could only take place outside from South Africa, and every one of them requires coordination with our allies.

Looking back, this seems absurd. The Americans influenced all the participants of the negotiations. They freely communicated with one another. And we missed an exceptionally important link, South Africa. I don't know whether it was an exaggeration, but some of our African friends (the Americans, too) told us that the South Africans would not approve a solution without direct contact with us. With their Boer suspiciousness they would constantly fear that they were being deceived somewhere. Let's say, they leave Namibia, but the Cubans stay in Angola under some pretext. South Africa negotiators demanded that their leadership, the President first of all, be presented with "assurances of the Soviets" that new thinking was not the latest baloney, but a serious and long-term policy.

Later, when contacts had been established, my new South African colleagues told me that, lost in conjectures as to why the USSR was spending enormous amounts of money on Angola and Mozambique, they sometimes came to the conclusion (*an absurd one!*) that the USSR needed these two countries as outposts in order to seize the rich natural resources of South Africa with the aid of the ANC.

Better late than never. A frank discussion was held between officials of the USSR and RSA, and I am still proud to having represented the Soviet side. This occurred in Brazzaville on 3 December 1988 during the next-to-last round of negotiations. In full accordance with what our directives required: a) a contact was requested by South Africa delegation (after they got a signal from us); b) I discussed the matter with the Cubans and Angolans, they had no objection; c) we asked for the Centre's "go ahead" for this concrete meeting and received it; d) I had the instructions in my pocket, or rather in the safe of our ambassador to the Congo, Vladimir Lobachev; e) we told our partners in advance that this meeting should be confidential; "we are not talkative", they replied (and immediately afterwards, they made it public).

How scrupulous we have been towards our friends!

We met in the Mbamou Palace Hotel. In almost every African country, even in the poorest, there is such an oasis among general poverty. Minister of Foreign Affairs Roelof Botha, a dove in South African thinking (although "Pik", as he was more often called, came from the nickname "penguin") and Minister of Defense, M. Malan, a hawk, came together, evidently to preserve political balance. There were also two of us, Sergey Krylov and myself, both from the same "flock". The South Africans were somewhat late and when Botha apologized, referring to the fact that he had been talking on the phone with his namesake, the South Africa President, I replied, "We and you haven't talked in 32 years; a few minutes aren't important".

The conversation was held in the apartments of the South Africa delegation, which were clearly more luxurious than the rooms in which we were housed. A powerful and turbulent river flowed beyond the wide windows at which we sat in chairs. On its other bank, one could make out the skyscrapers of Kinshasa. I say this because Pik Botha, who loved to express himself poetically, more than once compared events in Southern Africa with this rushing current.

I tried, when listening to the interlocutors, to convey to them as convincingly as I could that in the Soviet Union we were seriously rethinking our domestic affairs and changing foreign policy. In terms that were used then I stressed the mutual need to avoid narrow ideological approaches and to search for a balance of national interests on the basis of common human values. Our behavior in Southern Africa was folded into this frame. Although we were not participants to the negotiations, nor intermediaries in them, we would do our best to assure their success. The USSR worked as a single unit with Angola and Cuba, being friends of our friends, and firmly knowing that Luanda and Havana wanted an agreement. Of course, they would fulfill the obligations to which they committed themselves. Our representative, although he was called unofficial, was stewing in the same pot. The fact that the Soviet Union was ready to guarantee future agreements with its authority showed how serious we were.

At this point, Pik Botha said that South Africa would like to see not only the US but also the USSR in the future joint commission to monitor the agreements. I replied that the Soviet Union was ready to take part in such a commission. (We obtained CC approval in advance, getting permission even for a Soviet representative to go to South Africa and Namibia, if necessary. This proved necessary, and quite rapidly.)

I will say honestly, I continued, that we had doubts in regard to your intentions. Now it seems, that you have made a political decision in favor of an agreement. Considering our friends' readiness for a compromise, this means that the process will take on an irreversible character. Botha, for his part, tried to create the impression that South Africa would do its part.

When the discussion turned to the future of Namibia, I called upon Botha not to prevent SWAPO from coming to power by peaceful means. If South Africa acted otherwise and tried to put a "puppet" government in power, it would be bloodshed, a long guerrilla war. I described Sam Nujoma as a reasonable and moderate leader ready to find a common language with the South Africans: "SWAPO leaders tell us that they do not intend to build socialism in an independent Namibia and we accept this. The Soviet Union under Gorbachev does not impose its ideological views".

The South Africans were worried whether the rights of the white minority in independent Namibia would be guaranteed. I assured Botha and Malan of this, referring to the position of the SWAPO leadership. And so it happened, the whites suffered very little.

Just shortly before this, the Soviet leadership introduced an important position that the USSR did not promote the breaking of traditional historic ties between mother countries and former colonies, if these relations acquired a fair and equal nature. I used this thesis to the maximum with the South Africans.

In response, both ministers declared definitively that South Africa would not impose its will on Namibia by armed force and would not interfere with SWAPO. They favored a painless transitional period in their former colony. They said that they would cooperate with the liberation movement if it won the elections: "They will be obliged to deal with us". Botha lamented at the same time that an "ungrateful" Namibia would cost South Africa more than now, when South African troops were there.

The progress of withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan worked for me, too. I used this to try to convince Botha and Malan of the impotence of military power.

My call not to interfere in the internal affairs of Angola, to stop delivering arms to UNITA, did not receive a good response. I said that the government of Angola was increasingly switching to a political solution of internal problems. However, I could not exclude that the South Africans had other information.

Botha agreed that the process which had begun was irreversible. Here he pointed out the high water beyond the window, exclaiming, "Too much water has accumulated in the river for it to be stopped".

Botha reproached me for the Soviet Union helping the African National Congress. "It is carrying out acts of terrorism, killing innocent people with Soviet weapons; where is your new political thinking? Many, if not all the white people in my country think that the USSR wants to destroy us."

I refuted this as best I could, and told Botha that it depended most of all on their government to stop the violence. "You're not entering into talks with the ANC, you're pressuring them, and in these conditions we continue to give aid to the persecuted."

Botha (Malan was more silent) expressed regret that there were practically no contacts between the USSR and RSA. "We are poorly informed about one another, although we regard perestroika and glasnost with sympathy (he pronounced these words in Russian) and are striving to follow what is happening there."

The South Africans called for our greater understanding of their problems. Apartheid, in their words, was far from how it was presented in the Soviet Union. Only the extreme right-wingers clung to it. The rest understood, you won't get far with such a regime. The South Africa government was looking for the possibility of a political settlement, but the other side was preventing this. "If we released Mandela right now", Botha exclaimed pathetically, "he would be immediately killed by the blacks themselves."

I in turn said that, if changes were happening there, they were too slow. "With the system of apartheid, you yourselves put your country in the position of a social outcast. The sooner it is dismantled, without explosions and violence, the better. Then South Africa will take a proper place in the international community. We do not want to bury you."

Botha remarked that the US presented a greater threat to South Africa than the USSR. "In the event of a world conflict, the Republic of South Africa will not join a front against the USSR. We are an African country with a colonial past. It was in the war against the Boers that the British invented concentration camps. If they had not put our women and children there, they would not have defeated us." I was not so naive as not to understand why such statements were made.

But when Botha predicted that difficult years awaited Africa, for AIDS was spreading with terrifying speed, he was hardly being hypocritical. I asked him whether a new Chris Barnard would be found in South Africa, this time one who would invent a medicine against the monstrous disease.

Here the South Africans, this time both of them, began to talk about how desirable cooperation between the two countries was both in the field of health and in everything

else, especially in trade. For we supply the same goods - diamonds, platinum, gold, etc. Why not talk over this entire complex?

In a word, the conversation worked out, in spite of some discordant notes. During this hour and a half I felt: the South Africans are re-examining their ideas; they want to escape international isolation and are looking for contacts with us. Obviously we can do business with them about an Angolan-Namibian settlement. I hoped that they did believe me that our country really wants solution.

I left the hotel in a beautiful evening - as is well known, the best time in Africa - and ran into a British journalist I knew, Tony Robinson. He naturally asked, "What's new, Anatoly?" I had an abundance of new things and, only with some difficulty, I restrained myself from sharing it with a new friend. But even in this improbable event, the first thing would be to send a telegram to Moscow.

It turned out that I did not know all the news. After literally half an hour, a sensation: the President of South Africa had recalled his delegation from Brazzaville. The South Africans' tardiness to our rendezvous was not diplomatic. He was dissatisfied that the delegation had seemingly exhibited excessive spinelessness in the quadripartite negotiations. But I only found this out later, when the Americans assured me that "the young Botha will overcome the old" (behind his back, they call the latter a crocodile). As it was, the matter seemed so to me: the first, albeit private, Soviet-South African contact had been held at a government level, at least from their side, and my interlocutors had left the negotiations. Good talk, nothing to say!

## **THE HALFWAY POINT IN BRAZZAVILLE**

However, it was already impossible to stop the stream. Several days later the South Africans returned to the negotiations - no doubt refreshed after having considered the Soviet position brought to them first hand. Agreement was reached in the same Brazzaville meeting in the concluding 12<sup>th</sup> round. It said that the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 435 should begin on 1 April 1989. This date, already the third such stipulation, finally seemed firm. Namibia would receive independence in the form envisioned by the United Nations plan adopted more than 10 years before. It quite clearly defined how Namibia's transition to independence should be accomplished, including the creation of a constituent assembly, the framing of a constitution, and the formation of a government.

Angola, Cuba, and South Africa consented that a tripartite settlement agreement would be signed in New York on 22 December. Angola and Cuba were to sign an agreement on the withdrawal of the Cuban troops at the same time; this issue affected only the two of them. Both agreements were more or less ready, although disputes continued until the last hour. The creation of a joint commission with Soviet and American participation became a reality.

This was not simply a breakthrough; a sole step separated us from the finish. A mood close to euphoria reigned at the concluding ceremony. President Denis Sassou-Nguesso gathered together practically his entire government and parliament at the ceremony, and invited the diplomatic corps and television cameras. In the middle of this celebration, I suddenly felt that something was going wrong here. Whereas Chester Crocker, who spoke first, mentioned "the close, practical, and effective cooperation with

our Soviet colleagues", neither in the speech of the Congolese President nor in these of our Angolan and Cuban friends, let alone in the statement of Pik Botha, was there anything good, nor even a single word was heard about the Soviet Union. It was as if our generous and uncompensated aid to the friends had never been, nor our contribution to the present agreement. Moreover, no one planned to offer the floor to the head of the Soviet delegation, that is, me. For the same formal reason that we were not a participant of the negotiations, as were the three parties, or official intermediaries, like the Americans. At least, the chief of the Congolese ceremony, who was running this merrymaking, explained it to me in this way.

Endure such jokes? Why? I asked Sergey Krylov straight away:

"Can you translate into French what I'm going to say?"

"I can, but it's awkward to break protocol", he replied.

"It's not," then I turned directly to Sassou-Nguesso:

Comment comprendre (How to understand), camarade President, that they don't let the representative of the Soviet Union speak?

"Let him speak", said Sassou, and the protocol officers very reluctantly indeed let me go to the microphone.

I began by saying that I would like Russian to be heard in this room along with English, Spanish, French and Portuguese. Naturally, I made no complaints about the forgetfulness of our friends. I did not put forward the role of the Soviet Union, but emphasized how well our Angolan and Cuban friends had conducted the entire operation and what close comradely relations had formed between Angola and the Soviet Union, Cuba and the Soviet Union. Thus, possibly naively, I tried to shame them. This was a usual story when in private conversations they sang praises to us, but publicly they were shy about repaying an elementary debt of gratitude.

Several hours before this, while warmly receiving me, President Sassou-Nguesso had emphasized that the Namibian problem has not been solved in spite of all the "contact groups", in spite of all the many years of effort of Crocker. "So we are entirely obliged to you for the outwardly inconspicuous, but decisive role of the Soviet Union."

## **THE MINISTERS SUM UP THE RESULTS**

Shultz and Shevardnadze met in New York on 7 December 1988 and summed up Soviet-American cooperation in settling the conflict in Southern Africa. Only 10 months had passed since the first discussion on this subject, but how the tone and substance of the conversation had changed.

The Secretary of State highly appreciated the efforts of the Soviet Union, which allowed the negotiations to move forward to the level of a practical agreement. Both we and the Americans were convinced that in no event could the signing of the agreements be delayed, that they needed to be carried out at the time recorded in the Brazzaville protocol, that is, 22 December. There was a mood to postpone the signing, primarily from South Africa, but not only from them.

We also agreed that the process of granting independence to Namibia ought to begin immediately. Regarding the internal affairs of Angola, Shultz expressed the hope that

the two powers would also act together. This did happen, although far from as successfully as was desired.

## **AT THE LAST MINUTE**

It seemed that after Brazzaville the job was done. However, the final part of the negotiations abounded with dramatic turns.

The signing of the documents was set for the UN headquarters in New York. The UN responsibility for Namibia, the role which it had played in this entire process, and would play to implement the agreements, was thereby underlined. My minister flew across the ocean on a special flight directly to the ceremony; I had to get here a day earlier. It turned out it was difficult to have tickets - too many people were hurrying to the same place. Moreover, the event was close to Christmas. I was put on a waiting list for the Pan American flight from Frankfurt. Such a procedure is a touch-and-go matter, so I called my long-time friend Nick Il'in, the son of a famous Russian émigré, who dealt with public relations for Lufthansa. He did the impossible: got me a seat on their airline to New York and I already had an Aeroflot ticket to Frankfurt.

The West German aircraft delivered me safely to Kennedy Airport. Comrades from the Soviet UN Mission met me. We were driving in the car. The radio was on as usual. And here's the news: a Pan American Boeing flying from Frankfurt had blown up in the sky in Scotland over a place called Lockerbie. Several direct participants of the African epic had died, including the Swede Bernt Carlsson, UN Commissioner for Namibian Affairs. This was a terrible shock.

The gasps and moans did not last long, however. There was a request from the Cuban friends to get in touch with them immediately upon arrival. I called, and they said: "Comrade Adamishin, could you come to us right away; it's an urgent matter and not a conversation for the telephone." We went together with Alexander Belonogov, our Permanent Representative to the United Nations. They greeted us at the entrance to the Cuban UN Mission, led us through the long inner labyrinths of the building through numerous security posts to what is usually called in diplomatic missions "the bunker". A windowless facility, as a rule, tightly closed to preclude eavesdropping. It was that way in some of our embassies, too, and it was intolerable to work in such rooms because of the stuffiness. The Cuban facility was little different from ours, and the hour we spent there could have seemed endless if not for what they presented to us.

Around the table sat nearly all those familiar from common work. Malmierca took the bull by the horns: "We want to warn the Soviet comrades through you that tomorrow Cuba will not sign either the tripartite agreement with South Africa and Angola, nor the bilateral agreement with Angola about the withdrawal of Cuban troops. They are not in accord with our interests. We spoke about this earlier, but hoped to set things right at the final stage of the negotiations. Unfortunately, this has not happened. In the form in which it is now, the document contains too many concessions to South Africa and the US which are unacceptable to Cuba", and further in that same spirit.

With the first phrase pronounced by the Cuban, I was tensely thinking how to react. The easiest way is to say that I have to send this dramatic message to Moscow. But what might it give? Just several hours remain before signing. The Minister is already in the air on the way here. I tried to look attentively at the members of the Cuban delegation. The

expression of their faces was in keeping with the moment, gloomy and focused. And only in the eyes of a young fellow with whom we had established almost friendly relations did I see how an almost ineluctable signal flashed - calm! This confirmed my assumption about this whole performance. I could request a short break to consult with the Soviet comrades present. But this would rather have smoothed the effect from what I was going to say, and I began: "It is the sovereign right of Cuba to sign the agreements or not. During all the negotiations our position was that you know what suits you and what does not. If you think that the agreements do not meet Cuban interests, don't sign. I am confident that in this event, too, the Soviet Union will support Cuba as it has always done". I paused for greater effect, and continued: "But let's think, what consequences there will be from Cuba refusing to sign at the last moment". And then I drew a picture, as eloquently as I was able, of what would happen the next day. Having listed all the possible negative effects for both the Cubans and us - and this was evident to the naked eye - I ended: "Decide for yourselves, what you will do. I am sure, the Soviet Union will be on your side".

As best I remember, the conversation ended here. The Cubans were silent or said something like, we'll think or we'll report to Havana.

Arriving back at the Mission, I nevertheless forced myself to lie down and sleep, asking to be awakened if the Cubans called, but nothing more occurred. The next morning, the first thing I asked was whether the Cuban Minister of Foreign Affairs had gone for the signing. The people following this replied, "Yes, he did".

More than once I asked myself what had caused this small show. One thing, there were people among the Cubans who were not thoroughly convinced that it was worth it for Cuba to leave Angola. But by the evening of 21 December 1988, a decision in principle could not be made. So that it was hardly an intention to wreck the agreements. Rather, it was an attempt to delay the signing. A calculation was probably made that I would begin to persuade and offer my services for a discussion with the Americans, get drawn into the substance of the demands, striving to save the situation. But this would be a completely fruitless undertaking. We had to come to agreement not with one, but with several participants. As a result, the signing could have actually been delayed, but likely not through Cuba's fault. So the solution I found "at the board", as chess players say when they encounter an unknown variation, perhaps turned out to be optimal.

I will add that we indeed never used to press the Cubans. At any rate, I am not familiar with a single episode. Much later I knew that the CIA men wrote to Washington that the "Soviets" (they meant our team) refused to press their allies. I felt really bad to read in 2005 Fidel Castro's words: "The Soviets, preoccupied by an eventual American reaction, strongly pressed us for a speed exit (from Angola). We strongly objected, but had to yield, at least partially". ("Granma", December 2, 2005).

The signing itself was held on time and without surprises, but with some hint of nervousness. The problem was that Pik Botha did not speak very correctly about the Soviet Union, although he knew that in several minutes he would have a historic meeting with the chief of the Soviet foreign policy department. (It was almost friendly. Shevardnadze praised South Africa for their "difficult decision" to agree to withdraw from Namibia, called this a first step to its return to the international community, and promised a gradual development of relations with South Africa as apartheid was dismantled.)



Here I want to recall US Secretary of State George Shultz. He offered me the floor, although strictly speaking he was not obliged to do this. So, emphasizing the role which the changes in Soviet foreign policy, our perestroika, had played in settling the conflict, I went through Botha's statements in passing. The hall noticed this and reacted with laughter which lowered the tension.

One way or another, on 22 December 1988 the big enterprise concluded in New York: from that time forward, there existed international legal documents providing for a complex honest and fair settlement, as soon as all the participants signed it. It was exactly what the Soviet Union had put at the top of the list from the very beginning. Subsequently, in political science the agreements of this kind received the name "peace without losers". South western Africa paved the way.

But the agreements, however good they were, existed only on paper. Ahead was no less difficult a task - to ensure their implementation.

### **SET THE MECHANISM OF IMPLEMENTATION IN MOTION!**

First, to prepare and approve a UN Security Council resolution based on the New York agreements. Quite serious differences with our allies arose, primarily with SWAPO, but also with Cuba. They concerned the strength of the UN contingent which was being sent to Namibia to ensure the peaceful process of the transfer to independence and, accordingly, the expenses for it. We opted for reasonable sufficiency and tried as best we could to limit our financial burden. We slowly learned to count the money which we increasingly did not have.

In January 1989 in Moscow I had a relatively sharp talk on this topic with SWAPO Secretary General, Andimba Toivo ya Toivo. He said in plain terms that the Soviet Union was working against their interests and turning its back to them at a decisive moment. The word "betrayal" was not pronounced, but it hung in the air. You could not trust the Boers, insisted Toivo, the number of UN troops in Namibia, should be much more since the country was huge and very lightly populated. I tried to convince him that not everything depended on the USSR, an agreement with the other members of the UN Security Council had to be sought. We were working on a mutually-acceptable solution and consulting with all sides for these purposes, including the SWAPO representative in New York. There was not so much money in the United Nations. If the operation in Namibia was too large, then it might simply collapse, for one of the permanent members of the Security Council would veto the resolution under the pretext of economy.

Replying to Toivo, matching candor with candor, I said that UN troops would hardly bend over backwards to bring the liberation movement to power. Much more important is to rely on your own resources, on political work.

Many countries supported SWAPO on the issue of UN expenses; they weren't going to pay for it. So Shevardnadze had to meet with ministers of foreign affairs of the frontline states. This occurred on 7 January 1989 at a conference on chemical weapons in Paris. Our Minister was genuinely concerned that the matter was presented as a division between the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement (we fussed over it very much then) and the permanent members of the Security Council.

He defined as unfair accusations that the Soviet Union favored revising Resolution 435. In our internal decisions Shevardnadze managed to insist that we would make some concessions to the Africans. He was riled that we were accused to be too friendly towards the Americans, and even that we were hand in glove with South Africa.

By the way, I was also reproached for my meeting with Botha and Malan which in spite of our accord became known, as I mentioned. "But do you, SWAPO, have contacts with South Africa?" I asked Toivo in turn. "No", he replied. I advised him to establish them.

It is worth noting that China, our longtime competitor in Africa, supported our position, although in general terms. This was also a sign of the times: Gorbachev was able to reestablish, after a long period of tension, good relations with the Chinese.

## **CONCERNING THE ANC BASES IN ANGOLA**

One more delicate question was our relations with the African National Congress. Already in January 1989 its leadership had declared that, in order to facilitate realization of the New York agreements, it began to dismantle its bases in Angola. However paradoxically, Toivo, like some others, blamed us for this. I had to explain in detail that the issue of ANC people in Angola was not a topic of the quadrilateral negotiations. Nothing was said about it in the documents which were signed.

There is a direct consent between Pretoria and Luanda which, as far as we know, is verbal, not written. Due to it, military aid to UNITA and accordingly to the ANC, stops, with the understanding that other support remains. I repeated to Toivo our message to the Angolans: be more careful. The ANC would go, but UNITA will remain. Isn't there a danger that South Africa will resume supplies to Savimbi? (So it turned out, by the way. Officially everything was honest and above board. But supplies of weapons went through channels of semi-governmental organizations, private firms, and special services. In any event, in 2000 (!) South African President Thabo Mbeki declared that everything would be done in order to close down the channels of military aid to UNITA. Evidently, for some time, the ANC government of South Africa could not arrange for proper control in this sphere.)

As regards the Soviet Union, its support of the African National Congress remained unchanged, including the special supplies, though weapons dropped to the minimum as the use of these could have a destructive side effect. ANC activists and property were ferried from Angola to Tanzania and Uganda free of charge on our aircraft and ships.

Plato is dear to me, but the truth is dearer still: I had to show some of our friends, with documents in my hand, that they did not see correctly some points of the New York agreements. Concerning, let's say, the withdrawal of the South African troops: the fact that they had to leave Namibia in seven to twelve months seemed too long for some leaders. But this was stipulated by a UN plan of many years' vintage, which entered into force thanks to the New York agreements. They added nothing to this plan, talking about the deadlines for the exit only of the Cuban troops; at any rate, these deadlines are considerably more protracted than for the South Africans.

Essentially the Africans were complaining of the imperfection of Resolution 435, the same resolution we had not vetoed 10 years before at their request. When the matter came down to realizing it in practice we were blamed for its defects. For example, that

the administration which ruled Namibia for the entire transitional period had been appointed by South Africa.

"Why did you agree with leaving the Walvis Bay enclave in South African hands?" Toivo asked me. "Because your President agreed to this, declaring that this issue would be decided by a future government of an independent Namibia."

Such extremely frank discussions helped eliminate many misunderstandings. Especially since they occurred against the background of our continuous material support to the Namibians, including transporting the people and equipment required for an election campaign. All this once again confirmed that in helping friends, we were quite far from permitting ourselves a commanding tone. But, as subsequent events showed, not everything was completely cleared up.

## **AGAIN ABOUT THE ANC**

After the New York agreements and a secret accord between Angola and South Africa which went in close tandem with these, much effort was required to maintain confidential relations with the African National Congress. After all, it was losing its bases in Angola. The ANC leadership hopefully understood that everything was correct from the strategic point of view: the departure of the South Africans from Namibia, the probably victory of the national liberation movement there, improved ANC chances inside South Africa. Whereas elections would be held in Namibia according to a generally accepted - one man, one vote - system and not a segregated one (with privileges for the white population), then why not to do this in South Africa, too? But the first tactical step was so unfavorable for them. Were not the Soviet friends behind it?

There was another moment that caused their concern. Leaving Namibia, that is, losing their actual fifth province (the right-wingers in South Africa openly cried treason in this regard), the South Africans released some resources for use inside the country. Couldn't they use them to the detriment of the ANC?

In March 1989 Oliver Tambo came to Moscow at the head of perhaps the most representative delegation in the more than quarter-century of relations with the Soviet Union. Gorbachev did not receive them, charging Anatoly Lukyanov, First deputy chairman of the Soviet Supreme, with meeting him. The next day Tambo and his comrades came to the MFA. And here, too, a lowering of the level of reception occurred - from the Minister to me, his deputy. The reasons were obvious: the situation inside the country was heating up and the position of our leaders had become more difficult. A very important event, elections of the Congress of People's Deputies was just around the corner. Where are you, years, when Africans were received more actively?

I greeted them with the words, "I am glad to see the future government of a free South Africa, including a representative of the white minority". It was Joe Slovo, the head of the Communist Party. My joke turned out to be prophetic: Tambo was accompanied by the then chief of the international department, Thabo Mbeki, in future President of the Republic of South Africa. Slovo himself became a minister in 1994. Nelson Mandela was still imprisoned, which had already lasted 27 years.

Tambo began with reproaches of the South African government, which had promised to release Mandela and had not kept its promise. In his words, the authorities were still trying to perpetuate apartheid while oppressing the ANC in every possible way.<sup>21</sup>

To this I replied that their movement was our most faithful ally in Africa and we were not lessening our support to it. And this was the honest truth. According to a number of parameters our aid, for example, in the training personnel, including through military channels, was even more than it had been previously. "One should be frank with friends, so my firm opinion is: you won't take apartheid by purely military means. I know, you see it this way. Military methods are part of a strategy to force the government to negotiations."

As usual, the comrades pursued the idea that the Soviet Union should not relax its attention toward events in Southern Africa, especially against the background of increased Western activity. I said that the USSR does not plan to leave Africa to the control of the West, but we are not going to force it out or undermine the ties which have formed over the centuries.

I asked Tambo how he regarded our contacts with South Africa government. This time his reply was: "favorably".

### **A LITTLE ABOUT IDEALISM**

The basis of our relations with the ANC was neither selfish nor material, but rather based on principles. Many of us sincerely believed in the power of unanimity, especially among friends in a common struggle. Now it may seem an atavism, but look how it was in real life. We helped the ANC, not asking them for an accounting and they did not let us down: what was supplied went as intended, it "did not stick" to the hands.

And we did not teach them how to live. We expressed our opinion, of course, but practically never imposed it. Since the ANC had the most responsibility for what was happening in the country and knew the situation in it best of all, it was up to them to take decisions. As a rule, their analysis was accurate.

From the very start we were skeptical that armed combat could eliminate apartheid in South Africa. Later I read the published diary of Anatoly Chernyaev, an assistant to Gorbachev, and how the latter in his heart did not believe that we were facilitating a peaceful solution in South Africa in supplying the ANC with weapons. But, cautioning against getting carried away with the slogan "take up arms", we supported to the end the tactics of the ANC. Until the day they decided: enough, we'll declare a cease-fire, we'll meet the government halfway as soon as it accepts some of our important demands like lifting the ban on the Congress and the Communist Party. The path of negotiations is the most productive, we constantly told them. But you know better when to begin them.

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<sup>21</sup> The only time I saw Mandela was in London in 1996, where he had come on an official visit as President of South Africa and was received by the Conservatives with exceptional solemnity. But one newspaper made a digest of what several of their predecessors had declared ten years earlier. Margaret Thatcher then used to say: who thinks that the ANC will rule the country, lives in a delirious world. Others openly called for Mandela to be hanged. At the dinner the British, knowing my African past, sat us together, somewhat violating protocol, and we talked for an hour and half. Mandela made a strong impression.

I will especially note our aversion to what could be classified as terrorist acts. One of the conditions of our supply of weapons was an unspoken agreement that the use of these weapons would not entail civilian casualties.

At a certain stage we did not object to see ourselves as mediator between the Congress and the authorities. There was logic in this: none of the foreign partners was more closely associated with the ANC than us, although the Swedes probably were almost as close. On another hand, we had formed reasonable working relations with the liberal part of the ruling RSA hierarchy. But when the ANC told us that the authorities did not want mediation, this was for us the ultimate truth.

I do not mention how long the ANC did not permit us to enter into contact with South Africa government. We dutifully followed their advice, which did not answer our own interests.

I want to think that the friends saw all this. Once Tambo publicly characterized the USSR as "a sincere, genuine ally of the ANC not having a selfish interest or desire to establish a sphere of influence".<sup>22</sup>

I can imagine how difficult it was for the comrades (and not only them) after decades of one way of our behavior to switch to another. And how difficult was for them to accept the actual cessation of our political and material support at the end of 1991. Or to find out only at the last moment about the establishment of diplomatic relations between Russia and South Africa in February 1992 - not without violating UN decisions still in effect. Mandela was told about this by Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia, Kozyrev as practically a *fait accompli*.<sup>23</sup>

Four months later then-President de Klerk was received in Moscow on a state visit. Such haste (we strongly counted on big dividends from cooperation with South Africa authorities and got very little from this) could hardly have been to the friends' liking. When the Congress had come to power, all this backfired on us, not just in the moral and political, but also in the material sense. ANC representatives limited contact with us for some time (but possibly we also with them). Thabo Mbeki and Joe Modise came to Moscow only in May 1993. They talked in the MFA with me, as First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia.

As to Mandela, he visited Russia only in 1999, towards the end of his presidency.

#### *Authors Note:*

The history of our relations with the ANC is described in detail in a book by V. Shubin, the South African edition of which I refer to in the beginning of this work. While I was finishing it the book came out in a Russian edition: Shubin, V. G. *Afrikanskiy national'nyy kongress v gody podpol'ya i vooruzhennoy bor'by. RAN. Institut Afriki. M[oskva]*. (The African National Congress in the Years of the Underground and Armed

<sup>22</sup> I cannot help quoting Gennady Shubin, the second generation Africanist in his family - "Oliver Tambo was a person who did more than anyone else to dismantle apartheid. For long years he selflessly worked to achieve this goal. But it has transpired that all merit has gone to Nelson Mandela. Tambo died in 1993."

<sup>23</sup> Technically, relations had not been broken off: when in February 1956 South Africa demanded the closure of our Consulate in Pretoria, it was suggested that diplomatic and trade relations be maintained through London. This was no less than an excuse from their side. For curiosity: the non-compliance by our consulate with a South African law about alcoholic beverages, the consumption of which by black people was prohibited, was one of the reasons to which the South Africans referred when forcing us out of the country.

Struggle. The African Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences Publishing House, Moscow, 1999.) [При необходимости можно указать издание на английском].

## **FAREWELL, AFRICA**

My last trip throughout Africa took place at the end of March and the beginning of April 1989. We now were working actively on the political solution in Mozambique, trying also to reconcile the warring sides in the Horn of Africa, mainly the Eritreans and Mengistu.

Pik Botha, with whom a quite good mutual understanding had been established, let me know that he had "fresh ideas" about peace in Mozambique. A war had been going on in this country for many years between the government and the RENAMO rebel organization. Attempts to involve the Soviet Union and the United States in a settlement had collapsed. Honestly, I don't know what finally happened, but Mozambique surely suffered from this. Agreements were achieved only three years later, in 1992. Inasmuch as this was done with the mediation of the Italians, by that time I was Russian ambassador in Rome and I vividly recalled my African experiences when I was present at the ceremony of the signing of the intra-Mozambican accords.

On arrival in Maputo, I met with the President of the People's Republic of Mozambique, Joaquim Chissano. Among other things we discussed how I was to behave the next day with Botha, who had secretly visited Mozambique for our meeting. The idea was this - to achieve a breakthrough in the Southeast of the continent after the December agreements on the Southwestern Africa. No way, unfortunately.

When speaking to me, Botha did not let slip a word about the initiative for which he had actually invited me to come. Instead he told me how well Margaret Thatcher thought of us, saying that the USSR was determined to "get rid of" regional conflicts (I corrected this: settle them); asked that Nujoma be influenced by us, since SWAPO wouldn't be able to do without South Africa, for 90% of the entire national exports goes there; and insinuated that a whole series of African leaders, proclaiming aloud the "revolutionary role" of Cuba, had asked him to seek the Cubans' exit from Angola, etc.

As regards the domestic situation in South Africa, Botha was saying that he was personally seeking the release of Mandela (a year passed before this happened) and declared quite emotionally, "We will destroy apartheid ourselves not overnight, but in a series of successive actions. We want to stay in our homeland and remain where we have been living for 300 years. We fought for this land and have nowhere to go."

This time Botha recognized that support of the ANC was the right of the Soviet Union, even if they didn't approve it. He hinted that he and the other liberals were working on a rapprochement between the government and the Congress.

For my part, I approved the position regarding a step-by-step and peaceful dismantling of apartheid, since no one needed the South Africa economy to be ruined. By the same token, no one gained from continuing the wars in Angola and Mozambique. The USSR was working to stopping them. In accordance with instructions, I officially notified Botha that the Soviet Union was ready to help a fast and possibly less painful elimination of apartheid, if they would ask us about this. Here was concealed a proposal about our mediation between South Africa government and the ANC. Botha said that they would consider it. But then they kept silence.

Finally, I could not restrain myself: "Why do you say nothing about possible Soviet involvement in the intra-Mozambican process?" From Botha's confused explanations, it ensued that neither the Americans nor Chissano himself had wanted this. So, essentially, he had removed the issue, thanks to which the meeting was arranged. On the other hand, he gave assurances that the current government in Maputo completely suited South Africa, cursed RENAMO, the support of which South Africa had officially abandoned. He had bad words about UNITA, as well. If, he said, Savimbi heads the government in Angola, he would immediately refuse to have anything to do with South Africa. "Let him leave Angola for a couple of years."

I don't know whether Botha was sincere in this or playing with us, but such a pullback would be a suitable way out of the situation. Unfortunately, this was not realized. Once more, Savimbi outmaneuvered everyone, including possibly his South African friends, if he wasn't acting together with them.

### **SOUTH AFRICA AIR FORCE HELICOPTER**

My trip schedule was such that I had to fly from Mozambique to Lusaka, where a meeting was set with Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda. We never had any special aircraft for us, while practically the only route to Lusaka lay through Johannesburg. There I saw aircrafts of the frontline (and not only the frontline) African countries which had been serviced in South Africa. Of course, Botha found out about the trip, and while I was waiting for a Zambian aircraft he called me up by telephone suggesting meeting him in Pretoria. I declined, besides there was little left for a discussion after our unsuccessful conversation in Maputo. Since the sanctions on South Africa were still in effect, I declined as well an offer to take a car and see the city.

Then the inventive Pik suggested a helicopter. "You won't set foot on South African ground." My ability to resist was exhausted so I took a flight over apartheid for an hour and a half. From above it seemed proper - a blooming, developed country. Besides, I somewhat changed my ideas of racial intolerance, looking at how the blacks and whites dealt with one another at the airport. Botha let me down after all: a fuss from my trip infiltrated (at home) and I received a scolding from Shevardnadze for the unsanctioned aerial outing. Next time I had occasion to visit South Africa was in 2001, by a cruise.

### **KAUNDA AND THE ANC**

Traditionally, a meeting with Kaunda was a good occasion. He did not conceal his satisfaction that we had taken his advice on a Angola-Namibian settlement and spoke about the enormous contribution to it by the Soviet Union. Next come the changes in South Africa. How they go will very much depend on the situation in Namibia, where the South Africans are going through a testing period. The positions of the USSR and Zambia about peaceful dismantlement of apartheid were publicly confirmed. "We don't want war in South Africa, even war of liberation", said Kaunda. And, of course, it was good that the low-intensity war, which had been going on for many years, had not grown into a large one.

The most important appointment in Lusaka was to meet with the ANC people - Oliver Tambo, Alfred Nzo and Joe Slovo. I informed them about my talk with Botha. The

friends certainly appreciated such confidentiality. But I would add that they did not support the idea of our participation in the internal settlement in Mozambique. Obviously they could not forgive FRELIMO for those agreements with South Africa which at one time had practically deprived the ANC of the ability to operate from Mozambique.

"The government of South Africa is our enemy", the ANC declared, "but there are moments where it can behave honestly. Moreover, there are people in the ruling party with differing views." They repeated what they had told me recently in Moscow, that nothing was changing inside the country. Rather, it was cosmetics, called upon to improve the country's appearance abroad. The Congress was interested in open contact with the government, for this would mean its recognition, but the other side also understood this and was not entering into public contact.

As before, the ANC insisted on such conditions as the release of Nelson Mandela, the end of the state of emergency, and the legalization of all democratic parties being fulfilled before the start of talks. The government's demand to stop armed warfare could only be satisfied as the result of negotiations and not a preliminary condition. So the government took the first step, forced by how the situation had developed both inside the country, in the region of southern Africa, and in the world as a whole.

The ANC were closely following how our contacts with RSA government figures were developing. Joe Slovo asked me directly whether the USSR intended to establish relations on a permanent basis. I reassured him: "We have not had diplomatic relations with South Africa for more than 30 years and don't plan to reestablish them until apartheid is destroyed. (As it turned out, I was a poor prophet. However, one need to clarify what ought to be considered the end of apartheid.) At the present time this might only be about the establishment in South Africa of an office of one of the Soviet newspapers. The Soviet Union was also not tempted by any enticing proposals about economic cooperation." We were still maintaining loyalty to old friends and faithfulness to the UN obligations.

## **LUANDA**

From Lusaka, together with Sergey Krylov, we flew to Luanda. Along the way we counted how many times we had visited this beautiful city, although this was scarred with the traces of war, and ever more neglected. It turned out, ten times in less than two years. We had dramatically increased the overall average number, considering the sparseness of such contacts in the pre-perestroika period.

I was received, if one cites his full title, by the Chairman of the MPLA - Labor Party, President of the People's Republic of Angola, Jose Eduardo dos Santos. We met, if not as old friends, then as already good comrades. The atmosphere in his presidential palace on the outskirts of Luanda was close to festive: a great burden had been lifted from the shoulders with the signing of the December agreements. Of course, it still needed implementation, but now we talked no more about military operations or weapons deliveries, but about how to solve the political problems which were still maintaining the tension in Southern Africa.

And the issue of UNITA was discussed in another key. We became more persistent in pushing the Angolan toward a political solution. I did not get a big response this time too. Dos Santos resorted instead to rhetoric: "The imperialists are pressing both us and



the Mozambicans to talk with the bandits. We will not sit at the negotiating table with Savimbi. It is high time for him to leave Angola." Jose Eduardo argued that a one-party system was more acceptable for young African countries.

He reacted favorably to my suggestion to observe military restraint, but stipulated that UNITA were conducting offensive operations to which the Angolan army could not fail to respond. "Savimbi will simply be at a loss if he does not fight." Here he probably got to the root.

Dos Santos revealed a little of his plans. According to the New York agreements the Cubans were to remain until the middle of 1991; it was during this period he thought to come to agreement about UNITA with the South Africans and Americans. I replied that we did not pressure our allies in the course of the negotiating process, avoiding rifts in Soviet-Angolan relations. So the USSR would support the decision of the Luanda leadership for a peace settlement of internal Angolan problems. Nevertheless, decide faster.

I confidentially informed dos Santos about my conversations with the Mozambican President, the South Africa Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the ANC representatives. In turn, Jose Eduardo expressed his fears about SWAPO: it devotes too much attention to the military side of the matter and too little to the political forms of struggle, mobilization of the masses, etc. The Angolans, I thought, are now saying what we at one time were telling them. Neither I nor he - in any event I guessed so - knew what a surprise awaited us literally four days later.

## UNPLEASANT NEWS

On 31 March 1989 I was in Harare talking with President of Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe, who was at this time Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement. I "sang" to him about the possibilities that the non-aligned countries had, being in the ranks of active opponents of apartheid and racism, a reliable detachment of peace loving forces, etc. Of course, we were discussing current matters, primarily the situation in Mozambique, where Zimbabwe played a significant role, and how to put an end to outside aid to armed bands.

And suddenly there came the report: the situation in the north of Namibia had sharply worsened. Using various means we reached Luanda, which we had left only several days ago. We got to know here that bloody fighting between SWAPO detachments and the South Africans (together with local "South West Africa Territorial Force" they controlled) was going on in the northern regions of Namibia next to the Angolan border. What had happened? According to the American version, about 1,600 armed fighters had crossed the Angolan-Namibian border a day before the agreed date when the Security Council resolution had to begin its implementation.

The British ambassador in Luanda with whom we had developed good contact supposed that the SWAPO men were trying to create a vast "*pied a terre*" completely controlled by them. And to demonstrate that it was force of arms which had led the country to independence. I thought, that things were more complex. Unquestionably some formations had come from Angola but a considerable part of the fighters were evidently concentrated in Namibia. Otherwise it would be hard to explain how neither the Angolans nor the Cubans knew of such a penetration. Even the Americans, hinting

that it couldn't have happened without Cuban-Angolan protection, did not directly accuse them of this. In any event, the expectation that South Africa would not respond to such an action was not justified.

How could it be? Ambassador Kazimirov and I, as Gorbachev's special representatives, had talked with Sam Nujoma in Luanda on only 29 March. Why had Nujoma not mentioned a word about something like this? Some fine relations of trust. Could it be that Nujoma did not know what his field commanders were contemplating? For, when talking with us, he had said that the culminating moment was coming, the switch from armed actions to the political struggle. We had both agreed that, due to the December 1988 agreements, Namibian independence had become real. A long and difficult path had been traversed, the goal was near, why the hell risk it this way? But I did not see Sam Nujoma again, and my questions stayed with me.<sup>24</sup> (We might not have seen anyone any more: Volodia Kazimirov, when we reminisced about these days, recalled an episode when the driver of our "Volga" miraculously dodged a military truck on a Luanda street rushing ahead at top speed, according to their custom.)

President dos Santos and I, judging the situation to be explosive, publicly spoke out for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire and a return to the political process. We also assailed South Africa whose units, nearly concentrated in military bases, had left them with the direct permission of Martti Ahtisaari, the chief UN official responsible for Namibia, and taken ferocious massacre on SWAPO.

## JMC GOES INTO ACTION

Everything that had been prepared for years and months appeared threatened. And the problem was not just in the ill-considered actions of SWAPO but in the excessive harsh reaction by the South Africans. It was far from clear what else would follow from their side. Here the foresightedness to create a Joint Monitoring Commission was displayed completely. The Soviet Union, which had actively advocated for such a mechanism, participated in the commission, formally as an observer but actually on an equal basis.<sup>25</sup> Though this was more by chance than design, I arrived in Luanda before Crocker, so I suggested to him how to act. An extraordinary meeting of JMC was urgently convened, moreover on Namibian territory. The South Africans, who were still in command there, selected a wonderful (I hope it is still flourishing) hunting ranch, Mount Etjo, near the Namibian capital of Windhoek. (Remember the CC decision permitting us visits to South Africa and Namibia!)

The next two days, 8 and 9 April 1989, I remember not only for tense talks – with representatives of South Africa, Angola, Cuba, the United States, the Soviet Union, and also the UN, including the just-created United National Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) headed by Martti Ahtisaari, - but also for evening excursions to protected areas full of African wildlife. For example, while we were at late dinner on an open

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<sup>24</sup> *You never know what life will present you - in May 2013, at the reception at the Italian Embassy in Moscow, I met the Namibian Ambassador who had been in SWAPO military structures during the times I am describing here. He recalled this sortie very well, since many of SWAPO's best troops perished, and told me that it was Nujoma who personally took the decision. The military command tried to talk him out of it. Then he addressed directly to the soldiers. "And he was for the Namibians almost like God". I said to myself: I, too, was struck by Nujoma's charisma, which was strongly reminiscent of a shaman's appeal and authority.*

<sup>25</sup> The Joint Commission played a useful role as a channel of communication between us and South Africa while we, adhering to the UN resolutions, did not have diplomatic relations with this country. The Commission passed on, in particular, our appeals to the Government of South Africa to "join the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as soon as possible."

terrace, the roaring of lions was heard quite close by. This was in complete harmony with the situation in which the talks had begun.

As a result of a two-day vigil, the agreements were rescued, Nujoma agreed to take back to Angola those who came some days early, the settlement process returned to the normal course. It was shown that if the agreements meet the fundamental interests of the sides, if there are suitable instruments for solving conflict situations, then it will pass the pressure test.

In a word, a small victory. How to report it to Moscow? The South African satellite communications seemed the summit of technical perfection then. I tried to call through to Shevardnadze, unsuccessfully, not because the equipment did not work, but because they could not find the Minister. I left my report in his secretariat, convinced one more time that Moscow shouldn't be bothered with Africa. Their own passions were raging there in the spring of 1989.

Only a year and a half remained until the collapse of the USSR. Thus the action in Southwestern Africa was one of the last diplomatic successes of the Soviet Union. It inscribed into the overall context of the efforts undertaken to lessen our involvement in the complex processes in the "Third World", which were as a rule far from our vital interests and which we rarely understood well. Of course, Angola was not Afghanistan. But the improvement of the situation in the region of Southern Africa could, I think, be put in the same rank as analogous events in Cambodia, Nicaragua, the ceasefires between Iran and Iraq and in the Western Sahara. The year was productive for the settlement of regional conflicts, often with a decisive role of Soviet-American cooperation.

This would hardly been achieved if not for fundamental changes both in Soviet foreign policy on the whole, and as applied to each specific sector. In a number of cases (not all, unfortunately) the American position, too, had retreated quite far from previous points of reference.

## **HOW WE WERE CHANGING**

I will try in more documentary form, to show how the Soviet policy in Southern Africa evolved.

What were the guidelines for it in May 1986, when I was appointed to a new post?

Their main premise was the need for collective searches for ways to unblock the conflict situation in Southern Africa. This was a paraphrasing of the more general guideline of the 27<sup>th</sup> CPSU Congress and sounded positive.

But how was it proposed to act in practical terms? Here's the scheme:

- closely follow the development of the situation in Southern Africa, do not allow - insofar as it depended on us - a further worsening of the military-political situation;
- actively defend the interests of the USSR and countries friendly to us;

- oppose the aggressive policy of the imperialists and racists, their attempts to overthrow the progressive regimes in Angola and Mozambique and suppress the national liberation movements in Southern Africa;
- strengthen solidarity with the struggle of the peoples of Namibia and all of Southern Africa, counter-acting the growing support from the US for the Pretoria regime and the counter-revolutionary forces in Angola and Mozambique;
- increase international pressure on the racist RSA regime and expose its overt and covert allies.

In other word, the general directive was one thing, but what ought to be done specifically was something else. In the initial period of perestroika we proceeded from the logic which we had followed for many decades - the logic of confrontation. And, of course, it was not only us. The positions of the other side were no less rigid.

Accordingly, we viewed the Cuban presence (primarily military) as a defense of the territorial integrity of Angola, which meant practically a guarantee of the very existence of the MPLA regime. The CC International Department, which was approaching the end of the 25-year period of its leadership by Boris Ponomarev, put to the top place organizational and ideological consolidation of this party and increasing its leading role. Exactly, like the CPSU, but with savannah as background.

In the military field we sought a decisive breakthrough in the fight against the UNITA bands, supposing that this was entirely possible. The weapons we supplied to Angola and Cuba had to achieve this aim. Our military advisers were actively helping the Angolans both in planning operations and in the combat training of the troops.

Talks between the Angolans and the US were seen as mainly a tool to win time and expose American attempts to overthrow the government of Angola. I remember the phrase that Shevardnadze said to one of the high-ranking Angolan representatives: "The US has thrown off the mask of mediators and has openly joined the ranks of the enemies of the Angolan revolution together with South Africa".

Now compare what we submitted to the MFA Collegium in December of that same year:

1. The forces of national liberation in Southern Africa have entered into direct confrontation with South Africa, which is being supported by the leading imperialist powers. It has taken on a protracted character, gone beyond the bounds of the region, and is worsening the situation in the world as a whole. The course of events is not favorable to the national liberation movements.
2. The minimum goal is to preclude a military confrontation of our country with South Africa and the US; do everything to prevent an expansion of the conflict. Work to reduce our involvement in the war and accordingly our obligations of an economic and military nature.
3. There are three key interconnected problems of the region: the apartheid regime in South Africa; the decolonization of Namibia; the security of the frontline countries, first of all Angola and Mozambique. The granting of independence to Namibia is the most promising of these for a political solution. It is on this area that the main efforts need to be concentrated.
4. The United Nations cannot cope with the situation alone, but this does not mean that it has to stand on the sidelines. At the present stage, it is important to get a dialog started with the US. Then the Soviet Union and the United States can play the role of guarantors of a settlement within the framework of the UN Security Council. (We were already thinking about guarantors then!)

5. Military support from the USSR has been relatively ineffective in the sense it cannot stabilize the situation of our allies. A struggle for power is going on between the government and rebel groups both in Angola and in Mozambique. Soviet aid, along with the presence of a considerable Cuban military contingent in Angola, will help keep the MPLA in power, but no more. The same is true for FRELIMO in Mozambique. There is no military solution to the internal problems of Angola and Mozambique.

6. The ideas of socialism have been discredited in these countries and the (Angolan) economy has been ruined by war. What is left has been completely bound to the West and South Africa (the Angolans have told us that they are 80% dependent on the West). Soviet-Angolan trade is practically non-existent, for our exports are weapons or equipment for the armed forces of Angola, while Angolans exports to the USSR are zero. Whereas previously we could have caught fish in Angolan waters licensed fishing has now been suspended. The total of Angola debts have been entered into our budget plans but it is unrealistic to expect that they will actually pay them.

7. Feelings are growing in the region in favor of political settlement. The frontline countries are increasingly reluctant to support national liberation movements, for the confrontation with South Africa is too costly to them. The positions of the West and South Africa in the region are still much firmer than those of the Soviet Union and our friends. Thus a future settlement can only be achieved on the basis of a compromise. Its approval by our allies ought to be considered a criterion of fairness of such a compromise.

8. A deep crisis is developing inside South Africa, but apartheid is still far from collapse. Its overthrow by armed force is not achievable.

9. Our support of the frontline countries and national liberation movements gives us political, propaganda, and moral points. But they are costly. The repayment of debts, measured in billions of rubles, is in practice infeasible. The US is making use of the situation in the region to slow the solution of problems in the areas of our considerable interest, including disarmament.

Our main conclusion was firm: due to its geographic remoteness and the limited nature of our interests, the region of Southern Africa has limited importance to us. Our policy needs serious corrections. They have to take into account the balance of power in Southern Africa and our real capabilities.

On top of everything, we have to hurry: the favorable conditions for solving the conflict which are there now, might not be repeated in the future.

Having said "a", say "b". We were trying to define our practical actions.

As regards the ANC and SWAPO, it was proposed to support their struggle further, but with the assumption that they were to step up political activity inside South Africa and Namibia respectively.

A refusal to support the frontline countries of Southern Africa at this stage would not meet our interests. But it was necessary to encourage mutual cooperation between the FLS, even so far as regional military-political and economic integration. The goal was to increase the weight of the African countries in the processes occurring in Southern Africa. We were even thinking about creating a special settlement group like the Contadora, which dealt with Central American matters. Nothing came of this, but an attempt was made.

We suggested influencing the Angolan leadership more energetically to search for an internal settlement; to call upon it to expand the social and, what was especially

important, ethnic base of the regime by including in the ruling circles representatives of the Ovimbundu peoples, the largest in Angola, on which UNITA relied; and to seize the slogan of national reconciliation from Savimbi.

We mentioned that the ANC had already allowed us contacts with the South African opposition community, and tried to go a bit further: if official representatives of South Africa turn to us, not to reject a meeting with them. We also should persist with the established secret contacts by representatives of the Committee for State Security with their South African colleagues. As a rule they took place in New York, the location of the UN, or in Vienna, "under cover" of the IAEA, the international nuclear energy agency.

Having prepared what we considered to be realistic ideas, we impatiently awaited a session of the Collegium. To our enormous disappointment, we were met with a halfhearted reaction. On the one hand, we were accused of exaggerating the troubles and on the other, of rushing ahead. An especially unwelcome reproach was heard: you have insufficiently coordinated all this with the CC departments. But then those had a more orthodox position. In short, we were turned away.

As I see now, we actually slightly overdid it. An unquestionably correct direction was found, but the devil was in the details, and needed to be worked out.

Unfortunately, a long pause came - the approval of a new position dragged on for several months for reasons independent of us. This hindered work. But we pursued a policy in which we believed. For example, who could prevent reporting a particular topic to the Minister or, if he lacked the authority, to the CC and Politburo, settling it and thereby changing the overall picture? Who could prevent the formation of a new *de facto* reality by practical actions, which would be approved *de jure* later?

At our Minister's initiative, in the first months of 1987 we proposed to the CPSU CC to restructure relations with the African countries with a socialist and national-progressive orientation, as they were called then. A long-prepared paper demanded coordination with more than 30 different agencies, ministries, CC departments and commissions. This was an integral part of the enormous work done in those years to put our foreign policy house in order.

Unfortunately, much of what was elaborated was just left on paper. Sometimes there was simply not enough time and energy for a practical realization of what had been devised. At times, events developed so rapidly that they outstripped even far-reaching intentions. But these undertakings were unquestionably beneficial; they prompted viewing events with a fresh eye to pursue a pragmatic policy, as close to the real state of affairs as possible. We succeeded in moving something from a standstill, although it became harder with each passing year. Our notes were increasingly held up, more and more time passed until they were returned to us approved. Some proposals - I am judging from my sector of work - were returned to the MFA covered with dust at various echelons and with a notation "removed from discussion".

We also critically rethought our economic cooperation with the Africans. We saw that they increasingly turned away from us as the conflicts died down, turning their gazes to the West. We were good at the stage of struggle for freedom, supplying weapons, giving moral and political support, and generally being with them in the one anti-colonial camp. But when political independence was won and economics came to the fore, increasingly often we seemed inadequate. The attempts were made more than once to

change the situation, to overcome the military slant, and move personnel and resources to the economic front. But how this was to be done when we were floundering ourselves?

At the very end of 1987 our small group submitted a new "opus" for the consideration of the Collegium. This time we were luckier. The discussion was very lively: 14 of the 24 people present spoke - over the past year we had managed to interest the ministerial elite in the South African problem area. Our proposals were approved as a basis for a note to the CC. We were charged with polishing the draft basing on Gorbachev's ideas expressed in a conversation with Zambian President Kenneth Kaunda on 27 November 1987. Fortunately, we had placed in the *aide memoire* prepared for this meeting the topics that met difficulties passing through Party channels. No one dared to oppose passages spoken out at the highest level.

I submitted the final version of the note to Shevardnadze on 21 February 1988. It was signed reasonably rapidly by the Minister and then sent to KGB Chairman Victor Chebrikov, Minister of Defense Dmitry Yazov, and Chief of the CC International Department Anatoly Dobrynin for signature, although it had already been coordinated in these organizations at the working level. The paper "left" the MFA on 14 March. The CC decision came out five months (!) later, and only after repeated reminders.

What was the Soviet position at the concluding stage of the settlement?

Now the fate of apartheid came out to the forefront. We reported to the CC that its elimination as a result of a popular uprising was unrealistic. Process would more likely go along the path of a more or less peaceful evolution, as was already happening. Some odious racial laws had been repealed in South Africa in recent years. We opted for talks between the authorities and the opposition, but warned that South Africa government was not ready for real negotiations.

We ruthlessly analyzed the domestic situation in Angola, underlining that the country's economy was on the verge of collapse. The proclaimed way of building the foundations of a socialist society was discredited. We pointed directly to the mistakes in the forced implementation of socio-economic reforms and did not conceal that this was a consequence of our own incorrect advice and actions.

(The times of perestroika were good for honest statements; it's a pity that they passed quickly!)

We suggested reducing the number of military advisers of high rank to a minimum and looking at what our civilian specialists were doing, whether there were more advisers in Angola than "advisees". Finally, why were the industrial and agricultural facilities being put into operation with our participation taking so long? There were about 30 of them, including a mausoleum for the former leader of Angola, Agostinho Neto. (Now there is a museum in that grandiose structure).

We posed the question bluntly: a substantial review of all our cooperation with Angola was needed, especially in light of the impending political settlement.

We dared to say openly that, considering the balance of forces, an internal settlement in Angola favorable to only this country's leadership was unachievable. Here, too, a compromise is needed, as well as an incentive for national reconciliation between MPLA and UNITA.

We asked not to exclude the possibility of a symmetrical reduction of military aid - we to Luanda and the US to UNITA. At least on this point the delay that I mentioned had a negative effect. Knowing that it was included in our proposals, we hinted (it was no more than that!) to the Americans that if they halted their military aid, we could think about Soviet supplies to the government of Angola. It finally happened, but much later, somewhere around the spring of 1991. As a result, all measures to settle the conflict which we had reported to the CC ended up being implemented, except the point about the US halting military aid to UNITA. They did not stop it even after the official RSA drifted away from UNITA. The main cause was that the Americans twisted the hands of the Angolan government, putting their relations with Savimbi outside the framework of negotiations.

A relatively important conclusion was also drawn, of why we found ourselves in such a situation in Southern Africa. In the beginning of the '70s, we pointed out, we didn't have any important interests in this region. However, as a result of decisions made by the Soviet leadership in the period when Angola and Mozambique obtained independence and immediately after it, events pulled us into the vortex through their inertia as if in spite of ourselves. As a result, the Soviet Union ended up deeply involved in a large-scale conflict without getting any tactical benefits or strategic advantages.

Summing up: a short time passed, but a deep reexamination of our policy in Southern Africa was made. We kept up with the demands of perestroika. The issues of our withdrawal from Afghanistan, of the Vietnamese from Cambodia, the Cubans from Angola, and the South Africans from Namibia arose in practical terms.

It was about stopping the "Cold War" in the Third World, which had been exhausting our resources. Even more radical steps were made in these same months and years to stop the arms race. As a result, the situation in the world changed rapidly. A transition from confrontation to cooperation was a conscious choice. And a choice without alternatives, if one remembers to what end the Soviet Union came in the arms race. But no one from the outside could have forced us to change policy. If not for perestroika, who knows how long the Cold War would have continued. One can argue about who started it, but who first displayed initiative to stop it is evident.

## **THERE WOULD HAVE BEEN NO AGREEMENT WITHOUT USSR**

Some authors, the same Crocker, are clearly striving to belittle the Soviet role in the settlement of the conflict. Others, although they are a clear minority, recognize that a solution to the problems which had arisen in Southern Africa would not have been achieved without the USSR. It goes without saying that I am in the latter group.

Of course, the key mission in searching for a solution belonged to the directly interested parties - Angola, Cuba, and South Africa. The Americans did much in order for them to come to agreement. These are two large components, but were they sufficient? Most likely they were not. Without the contribution of the Soviet Union, the New York agreements, in the form in which they were achieved, would have long remained an unfinished draft.

I quote such a specialist as American Professor Melvin Goodman. Here's what he writes: "Gorbachev used every opportunity to reduce Moscow's involvement in the



conflicts in Africa and lower the tension in relations with the US. The turning point was 1988, when the Soviets played a backstage role in stopping the 13-year presence in Angola of the Cuban expeditionary corps, in the withdrawal of South Africa from Angola, and the South African administration from Namibia". "If not for Soviet pressure (*I would say, influence*) both on Luanda and Havana (*and not only on them!*) the US could not have brought the matter to the agreement signed at the UN in December 1988 with its mediation efforts. The Angolan issue, the symbol of the collapse of détente in 1975, became an example of Soviet-American cooperation in the solution of disputes in the Third World".<sup>26</sup>

It is curious that approximately the same expressions were used by Chas Freeman, who was directly engaged in the negotiations as Crocker's deputy. He spoke of Soviet-American joint efforts as "a symbol of creative diplomatic cooperation".<sup>27</sup>

Kurt Campbell, who is considered a leading specialist in Southern African affairs, described the situation as follows: "At the end of 1987 and the beginning of 1988 Cuban and Soviet pressure in the South of Angola rose sharply, in spite of previously-suffered losses. At the same time senior Soviet diplomats signaled that they were interested in a negotiated settlement in Angola and Namibia. Subtle Soviet moves behind the scenes of the negotiations helped breathe new life in the shuttle diplomacy of Chester Crocker."<sup>28</sup>

In fact, for many years all attempts to stop the war in this region had not led to success. Things began to improve, and quickly (compare the pessimism of 1986 and even 1987), when the Soviet efforts were applied to this heavy load.

It is entirely accurate that the roots of the settlement traced deeply back to local soil - Angolan, Namibian, and South African. This was where the conflict arose and it was here that its solution developed. But the preconditions could still have taken a long time to ripen if one of the participating parties, and particularly the USSR, had raised unacceptable conditions or slowed the search for a compromise. The Americans were sure, and not without justification, that the contending parties would hardly have reached agreement themselves without American brokering.

But what nature would the agreements have had if there were no Soviet counter-balance? And how long could they have withstood the test of time? How much easier it would have been for the US and RSA to twist the arms of Angola and Cuba if the Soviet Union had not stood behind them. The USSR and the USA removed from this conflict their confrontation component. Then the Soviet Union provided the key element - a balance of interests. This is what allowed the agreements to hold.

I cannot say that the positive assessment of the Soviet Union's role is shared by many researchers. Another opinion predominates – that the Soviet mission was auxiliary. Yes, it helped the US, but it was the Americans who did the job. They could have done it entirely without the "Soviets", who came to the settlement table too late. But, perhaps the Americans very quickly came to the conclusion that they ought to cooperate with the USSR in Southern Africa?

<sup>26</sup> Goodman, Melvin A. *Gorbachev's Retreat. The Third World*, 1991. p.114.

<sup>27</sup> Freeman, Chas W. The Angolan Namibian accords. *Foreign Affairs*. Vol. 68. N3, Summer 1989.

<sup>28</sup> K. Campbell, *Gorbachev's Third World Dilemmas*. p. 220.

I recall that when in December 1987 Gorbachev began to speak with Reagan about Soviet-American cooperation in Southern Africa, the latter did not respond. And this "non-response" was repeated once more. In other words, even in the period of perestroika, the Americans still did not have the conviction that it was necessary to work with the USSR. At least, not all Americans did.

Kurt Campbell asserts that at the end of the '70s and the beginning of the '80s the Soviet Union was not allowed to join the talks about either Rhodesia or Namibia.<sup>29</sup> Probably, we, too were not in a hurry for cooperation with the Americans.

Why was the Soviet Union satisfied with the role of an "off-stage singer", and not an official participant or mediator at these negotiations? Although we did not get a direct invitation to speak in the first or second capacity, including from our Cuban and Angolan friends, we probably could have "organized" such a full-blooded status. We had discussed this scenario; moreover, we have got CC permission in this regard. But the Angolans and Cubans remained silent, no suggestion was made, and we opted for conscious self-restraint.

Was this not a mistake? It is right to pose the question. But we were right. I was sure of it then, and I think the same now. Not to mention that it is not very productive to have two mediators (subsequent attempts to operate that way in the Middle East have confirmed this). The function of unofficial representative provided a greater freedom of action. Not sitting right at the negotiating table allowed us not to be excessively committed to discussion, and we remained above many clashes. At the same time we did participate actively in the negotiation process, using the entire arsenal of diplomatic resources, at times including the wording of documents.

The role of the USSR in the settlement in Southern Africa was "structurally important", noted Professor William Zartman, an expert on crisis management, in conversation with me in Washington on 17 December 1999. "This deal would never have taken place without Soviet-American cooperation". In the professor's words, the main thing was that we pushed our friends toward an agreement, and not out of it. Could you have been able to achieve the agreement if the USSR had suddenly decided to obstruct it?

Of course, our attitude toward the mediation of the Americans and accordingly the degree of cooperation with them, went through different stages. I do not deny that it was cool before 1986 and we were occasionally putting monkey wrenches in the gears. A confrontational logic was in effect, but this operated on both sides. Moreover, a position of a complete freeze on the negotiating process was never ours.

It appeared very quickly that the main difference was not whether a settlement was needed or not, but on what terms what it would be. At the start both sides, as it usually happens, made initial demands. I think that the Americans retreated from them later than we did, and to a larger degree than ourselves. Their ultimate goal provided not only a solution of the main nucleus of the problems (the withdrawal from Angola of both South Africa and the Cubans plus the independence of Namibia), but an additional prize - Savimbi coming to power or at least a division of it. Finally, the Americans lowered their stakes.

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<sup>29</sup> Op. cit. p. 208.

We constantly believed that what was beneficial to our friends would suit us. Right from the start we said that we would not request anything above this. And we maintained this policy to the end. Thanks also to this approach, we kept in power a government in Luanda friendly to us and did not spoil relations with the Cubans.

My conclusion is as follows: if Gorbachev's perestroika had not come, Crocker could have searched for a resolution to the South Africans' and Angolans' (plus Cubans!) standoff for a long time; Nujoma could have waited doubly the length of time to independence; Mandela and Klerk would hardly have got the Nobel prize so quickly; Fidel Castro would have continued to move the revolutionary process ahead, which was slow going; and Angola's suffering would have gone on.

But ought one think that our policy was without error? I hope to have shown that this was not so. The biggest blunder was made at the end of the '70s when we "climbed" into Angola without further ado and became entrapped there, unable to help solving the emerging problems. Thus, Angola triggered the further sequence of events, which went far beyond the bounds of the southern African region, worsening a broader global confrontation with the US. The Angolan "performance" had an additional negative effect for it increased the illusion that a confrontation with the West in the "Third World" could be won.

At first, after 1975, according to information which has recently become known, the Cubans were thinking about withdrawing from Angola. The Moor had done his duty. But the situation swallowed them up: how to leave, if UNITA revived by the South Africans was again raising its head. And they, in turn, feared that the Cuban military presence in Angola would create serious problems for them. South Africa began to further strengthen UNITA. Actions caused counteractions, and they were already difficult to stop.

American historians are incorrect when they almost unanimously assert that the USSR acted in Southern Africa in the '70s without encountering any resistance from the United States, depicted as a naïve adherent of détente. Yes, the Americans halted open military support to one of the contending sides for a time. But not because they had sworn an oath to détente.

Their allies in the region had suffered a military defeat and the Americans had not made up their minds to stay on their side to the end: the multi-year tragedy in Vietnam was too fresh in American memory to jump into a new adventure far from their own shores. The necessity has been presented as a virtue. In their propaganda US actions were described as a noble pursuit of the principles of détente which the "perfidious Soviets" had betrayed.

Such a turnaround clearly encouraged our then leadership and threw another weight on the scales in favour of those who took as a starting point the unavoidability of a confrontation, and who considered maximum efforts and casualties from our side to win it were equally unavoidable. No surrender.

Our military interventions in Hungary and Czechoslovakia graphically showed the limits of peaceful coexistence with capitalism. Based on such logic, the "Third World" was also eliminated from the game according to the rules of détente. Angola 1975 facilitates Afghanistan 1979.

All over the world we were convinced that we were defending a just cause and did not take the cost into consideration. In the final analysis, the latter dragged us to the bottom, along with many other weights. But whatever one says, we promoted positive changes. The truth is that our efforts to promote national and social progress turned out to be a greater benefit for others than us.

This also concerns Southern Africa. Every cloud has a silver lining: our "blunder" had nevertheless considerable positive consequences. Had we not helped the MPLA in Angola, 7,000 kilometers from our borders, who would have gained? There is little doubt that it would have been South Africa. Would it not have interfered in the internal affairs of Angola?

The South African columns were stopped in the immediate vicinity of Luanda. What were they doing there? They were bringing their stooge, Savimbi, to power. On what grounds? What turn would succeeding events have taken if the racist RSA had seized Angola in addition to Namibia? How much longer would its forcible domination in the region have continued? How many more years would apartheid have lasted?

13 years later, in 1988 the basically still racist South Africa would hardly have withdrawn from Angola of its own free will if it had not encountered a dilemma: to fight the Cubans on a large scale, to announce a general mobilization, to risk much white blood, or to seek a compromise. The track record of South Africa, its permanent reliance on force, says that these were not far-fetched considerations.

The Cubans had sharply increased the price which South Africa would have had to pay for the military option, and forced it to look more closely at the advantages of the peace process and, in the final account, to be inclined toward it. It is clear that the Cuban factor was not the only one; the South Africa government was forced to constantly examine the domestic situation in the country. But Cuban military pressure led to the establishment of an equilibrium on the field of battle, a reliable portent of the subsequent negotiations. The role of Cuba became effective only with our support, primarily including supplies of weapons.

Thus our mission in Southern Africa was complex and contradictory, as in the "Third World" as a whole. But on day one, one needed to stop and think, over how long there was the strength to defend a just, but unmanageable, cause. To look, how all this is reflected on the situation inside the country. To determine which, fundamentally, are the national interests - to carry the ideals of socialism to the world, or to improve the economy of one's own country and the welfare of the people.

## **SOME METHODOLOGICAL CONCLUSIONS**

I cannot refrain from the temptation to draw up some sort of "short checklist" concerning the resolution of regional conflicts on the basis of the experience of Southern Africa.

The first thing that is needed is the firm political will to unravel the conflict tangle. If instead there is only a vague desire to get out of an uncomfortable situation, it is better, figuratively expressed, not to resort to arms. You'll give up at the first difficulties.

The intent to achieve a positive result should naturally involve all the direct actors and, what is the main thing, those who bear the main responsibility for the country's policy.

Here I would place the selection of a team of like-minded people which would go all the way to accomplish what they were entrusted.

The matter begins with a possibly more realistic and impartial analysis of the situation. Lord, deliver us from self-deception from the start. It is especially important to accurately assess the alignment of the contending sides, identify firm allies, and also those on whom one can rely only from case to case and, of course, those whose resistance will have to be overcome.

As a rule, there are several participants in a conflict. One has to determine whether they all want a settlement and what are the inner driving forces of their behavior, which are often different and contrasting with respect to one another. If such a desire is not general, if one of the sides still hopes to achieve its goal by force, you will have to either convince them one way or another, or stall and wait for all the opponents to come to the conclusion that there is no other way than a political solution. This practically happens at the moment when a military option reaches a dead end, for neither of the sides is able to overcome the opponent.

The peacemaking efforts would hardly have led to success if the diplomacy had no levers of influence on the opposite side. The stark reality is that political influence alone is surely never enough, especially if your counterpart has a broader assortment of resources. You or your allies will need to have stronger measures. Their choice naturally depends on the specific situation. But it is necessary to have them in both the military and economic sectors, if worst comes to worst - at least one of them. Otherwise you will have to note your presence rather than realistically influence the solution. I think this was convincingly shown by the attempts of our participation in the settlement of conflicts in the territory of the former Yugoslavia, where for the most part we had to satisfy ourselves with an auxiliary role, if not do the dirty work for others.

As regards a proper negotiating process, I would quote the two most needed qualities - pragmatism and honesty. The first means putting one's own interests ahead of all ephemeral factors. By no means can you permit yourself to be guided by ideological or other considerations. Of course, these interests should be carefully determined beforehand. In other words, it is necessary to know firmly what we want: what parameters of a settlement we are seeking, what negotiating tempo you would prefer, etc. It is very important in the process to choose the nucleus which could turn out to be the most effective. In other words, construct a chain of priorities, first this, then that, etc.

The second quality, honesty, is critically necessary for a diplomat in general, and is especially valued in multilateral negotiations, where everything is checked and re-checked back and forth. A common opinion, that a diplomat has the right to lie for the good of the country, is not true at all. "Once you lie, who will believe you?" This old Russian rule should be strictly obeyed. If friends don't trust you and enemies don't have respect, you can easily say goodbye to your professional career. I do not sin against the truth in asserting that I never told my partners a deliberate untruth during the 40 years of diplomatic service. I never once lied knowing in advance that it was a lie.

But to chatter freely, this is a silliness which is worse than theft. One can use the formula adopted in British courts where they swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. So, in my view, it is permissible depart from the formula in one of its elements: you are not a witness and are not obligated to tell the entire truth.

I would further name that any diplomatic craft requires:

- look into all the aspects of a situation in which you are working as best you can;
- be maximally informed about the positions not only of all the main participants of the negotiations, but all those who have become stuck in the conflict in one way or another;
- know the history of the issue and especially of the negotiations' process, and follow how the approaches change;
- it is extremely important to have a detailed and at the same time compact dossier (now in the computer age, this is not so difficult; in our time it was quite laborious);
- establish good, preferably confidential, contacts with the key actors; the broader their circle, the better; try to get their sympathy by an even-tempered, amicable attitude: nervousness, and what is more, irritability is absolutely contraindicated;
- establish a strong mutual understanding and, still better, trust with your direct superiors; do not regret the time spent to interest possibly more people in your "synopsis" at the working level;
- distribute responsibilities within the team correctly and try to create an atmosphere of common involvement in the solution of the assigned problem; bring up for discussion not tertiary, but actually important issues more often; in such collective activity I think that elements of a game and humor are permissible in order to work more happily and not under strain;
- devote constant attention to work with the mass media. This was important at the end of the '80s and is doubly important today in the era of the information revolution.
- finally, as in a certain story that the secret of good tea is not saving on tea leaves: the results are directly proportional to the amount of effort invested. No one has yet managed to get around this rule.

## **THE WORKING ROMANCE WITH PERESTROIKA**

In those veiled romantic years we really worked hard. In contrast to the late period of the gerontocracy, when as a rule Andrey Gromyko was no longer in the building on Smolenskaya Square at 6.00 pm, Saturdays and Sundays were considered holy days, and Politburo members officially had two vacations a year. Our old leaders did not work physically hard enough; was this not one of the reasons that the country was sinking?

We, too had a huge amount of free time during the "blessed" years of mustiness and stagnation. And we were not working below the "MFA average". Rather above it. But there was enough time for everything - the sauna, hunting, soccer, the rich cultural life in Moscow, and other entertaining diversions, especially that which was with a dissident "flavor". There was even time left for moaning: how bad it was all around.

It ended, it seemed from naiveté, irrevocably in 1985 with the arrival of Mikhail Gorbachev. Immediately the workloads increased repeatedly. We worked excitedly. There was no gap between your convictions, your ideas about state interests, and what you were doing. Especially as we managed to achieve something important.

## **EPILOGUE**

The fates of the main participants of the Southern Africa drama developed in different ways.

The withdrawal from Angola in a military sense was to our country's advantage. The militarized flux was overcome, although not suddenly. After the signing of the New York agreements we (then still the USSR) supplied combat weapons for two and a half years, then Russia and the US stopped it by mutual agreement, each with respect to "theirs" of the warring sides. After a short interval, with UN permission we resumed supplies, now on a commercial basis.

The "black hole" disappeared into which millions were pumped, including for navy and aviation activity and which became obsolete after the Cold War ended. My military colleagues lamented that there was no longer a training ground for thousands (taking rotation into account) of military advisers which had passed through it. One might ask: "Well, what have we achieved? Our influence in this part of Africa has noticeably declined". This is true. But whether influence of such a sort is at all necessary.

The US achieved the goal which their strategy pursued, exchanging the independence of Namibia for the withdrawal of the Cubans. They failed in their attempts to replace a MPLA government friendly to the Soviet Union and Cuba. They were not permitted to do this. We did not cast the friends to the mercy of fate but American stubbornness in supporting Savimbi cost Angola dearly.

Back then a policy of not considering the interests of others showed through in the American approaches. But this was just a beginning. At the end of the '80s the United States were still ready to accept a reasonable solution.

Left as the sole superpower, the US experienced a strong temptation to impose its will and build the world on the American model and semblance, a "Pax Americana" in practical terms. There are, however, many sober voices warning that even the US may not have the stomach if it takes on burdens beyond its strength. Paradoxically, the Americans are repeating one of our mistakes of those years when we brought ideas into the surrounding world designed to make humanity happy. The Americans, like us at one time, will have to understand that countries and peoples are amenable to transformation from the outside only with great difficulty, that the world will resist being completely uniform, and does not want to live according to somebody else's will.

Very briefly about Cuba. I think the return to national borders brought it greater pluses than minuses in the long term, although it would be no bad thing to ask the Cubans about this. Later I learned, that in thirty years which passed from the Cubans' revolution victory to Cold war end, Cuba sent abroad more troops, than the USSR.<sup>30</sup> The settlement of the conflict in the Southwestern Africa gave the most positives to Namibia and South Africa.

No more special dramatic tension was noted in the first of these after the bloody clashes of the spring of 1989. About 40,000 refugees, the overwhelming majority of them SWAPO supporters, returned to the country for the elections to the Constituent Assembly held in November of that year. We helped with air and sea transportation, as always at no cost. This influx helped SWAPO achieve a convincing victory in the elections which were held quietly and with very high voter activity, gaining more than half the votes and seats. This was done - it turned out that we were right! - with less

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<sup>30</sup> P.Gleijeses, op. cit. p.2

funds through UN channels, and our payments, respectively than what our African and Cuban friends had sought.

The South Africans kept their word given to me in Brazzaville: the RSA did not hinder SWAPO in a violent way. Namibia got independence without war.

On 21 March 1990 the Namibian flag was raised in Windhoek, not the red one with which the South Africans had frightened for many years. Only then was an end put to the military presence of South Africa, which had lasted three-quarters of a century. Sam Nujoma was unanimously elected as president by the first parliament.

I did not accompany Minister Shevardnadze to the festive ceremony since I had been transferred from Africa to European problems. So, unlike practically all my main partners in the negotiations, I could not see the final triumph. I will say, incidentally, that during perestroika it was not customary to distribute ranks and awards. Everything that we deserved for the three years of work were the Minister's words: "The whole operation was done subtly and with dignity". (The next accolade I got was in 1996 from British journalist ,Tony Robinson: "You have been among those who contributed to the changes in this region, and they are such that touched the destinies of millions of people").

We said goodbye to what we spent helping SWAPO for so many years. I will mention another point of view: the fish caught in Namibian waters during various years reimbursed our expenses. However, I have not seen the figures on this.

South Africa quite rapidly put an end to apartheid. It is unquestionably one of the most important consequences of the Angolan-Namibian settlement. This country did not explode, was not thrown back as happened with several others, although it went through a deep transformation. The African National Congress feels good in power.

In this case too, insofar as I can judge, we did not win special laurels from the organization which we supported for decades and which ended up at the helm of the country's government. First, at the concluding stage, as noted above, we spoiled our reputation in the eyes of the ANC. Second, by virtue of our own difficulties in the '90s, we did not manage to take advantage of even those small opportunities which were still being presented us.

A sense of gratitude? It is rarely encountered in politics, although in my view the comrades from the ANC are not without it. In any event, Russian-South African relations are completely normal and correct.

Angola "got lucky" least of all. This is a brief chronicle of events.

January 1989. New US President George Bush publicly declares that aid to UNITA, including military supplies, will be continued at \$50-60 million per year. This is two weeks after the signing of the New York agreements!

In the same January, Luanda offered to include UNITA leaders in the government on a personal basis, but not Savimbi - he should leave the country. This possibility, I recall, was not excluded, even by the South Africans.



In March Savimbi replied that they agree to a cease-fire, proposed that free elections be held in two years and a government of national unity be created based on it. He promised that he would not seek participation in the government for himself. The theme of elections on the long-standing insistence of the Americans became a key one.

In June 1989 a historic, as it was so described, meeting between Dos Santos and Savimbi was held in the small Zairean city of Gbadolite. In the presence of the leaders of 20 African countries and the chief mediator, Zairean President Mobutu Sese Seko, they shook hands and announced a cease-fire between government troops and UNITA detachments.

However, it quickly became clear that Mobutu's mediation was done as if purposely to spoil everything. Savimbi violated the agreement several days later exploding a power station in Luanda. The efforts of the American and ourselves to save the agreement did not lead to a result (it was for this reason that I met with Mobutu in Paris on 7 July 1989).

The MPLA responded to Savimbi's treachery with a new and, as everybody hoped, last offensive. Troops again move southeast from Cuito Cuanavale along a familiar route. The weapons and advisers are still Soviet. Although South Africa left UNITA large stores of weapons and munitions when withdrawing direct support from it, by the middle of January 1990 its situation is becoming desperate. In February Mavinga is captured: Angolans and our military advisers tried many times to get this Savimbi den. In Luanda they are celebrating victory, possibly prematurely.

The US comes to UNITA's aid, organizing an airlift to ship weapons and even fuel. Faithful to a previous rebel tactic, Savimbi shifts fire to rear areas, including the capital. By March and April the military situation is again in equilibrium, rather in a bloody stalemate.

After a meeting between Shevardnadze and Baker in Windhoek (March 1990) the Soviet Union and the US increase pressure in favor of a peaceful solution in Angola. In December 1990 two Ministers agree about "crossing encounters": the Soviet meet Savimbi and the American meet dos Santos.

At their congress the MPLA officially abandons Marxism-Leninism and opts for democratic socialism and a multi-party system. This is doubtless due to the events then taking place in the USSR.

In April new negotiations begin between the government and UNITA, this time with a more serious mediator, a Portuguese, my longtime acquaintance Jose Durao Barroso. They last 13 months under the unremitting attention of the Soviet Union and the United States, and conclude on 31 May 1991 with the signing of agreements in the Portuguese capital.

The new USSR Minister of Foreign Affairs, Alexander Bessmertnykh, is present at the ceremony, since Shevardnadze has resigned. The USSR and US finally accept an obligation not to supply weapons to the warring sides. Other types of support are not prohibited. For the past year I have followed all these upheavals from the Soviet Embassy in Rome; within seven months it then becomes the Russian Embassy.

On 29 September 1991 Savimbi victoriously, at least as the American press describes it, returns to Luanda; it is announced that in a year "free elections" are to be held, the *idée-fixe* of the Americans who are completely convinced that their client will win; otherwise, what was the sense of insisting on them?

The elections are held on time in September 1992. But within a year Savimbi loses most of his aura. His dictatorial manners and rumors that he physically removed competitors in his own camp play a decisive role. Savimbi get about 40% of the vote against almost 50% for dos Santos. And then there is a sharp turnabout. The UN and the American government consider the election result to be fair, although the right-wingers in the US cry the opposite.

Savimbi, the "democrat", do not agree with the United Nations nor the official position of the United States. Not admitting defeat, he resumes hostilities. Savimbi is not interested in a division of power, as the Americans assured us at one time, but wants all of it. He also believes that there can't be two roosters in one henhouse. According to the evidence of even the Americans, UNITA have farsightedly disarmed to a lesser degree than the MPLA which had relaxed its military capability, relying on the Lisbon agreements. (Herman Cohen, who had replaced Crocker in the post of Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, told me about this in the fall of 1999).

Dos Santos declares that he would no longer trust Savimbi, although in 1994 he would again be inclined to compromise with him. And again the UNITA leader would commit treachery.

Meanwhile there is a change of the boss in the White House: Democrat Bill Clinton is less indulgent toward Savimbi than Bush. Diplomatic relations are finally established with Luanda. The MPLA government essentially remains the same as it had been in previous years, all headed by the same President. But after the elections it is no longer illegal to the US. The presence of American oil companies in Angola for the first time in many years acquires a legal basis.

Throughout my country did not change its approach: we supported Luanda, the MPLA government, President dos Santos, and condemned UNITA and its leader, Savimbi. We hold to this. As to the Americans, they have moved from non-recognition of the MPLA government to cooperation with it, and from support of Savimbi to halting aid to him, at least through official channels. And then, also to condemn him. The Americans were even advocating tightening sanctions against UNITA.

If one believes the London *Economist* (7 October 2000, p. 64), the Americans intercepted the rebels' radio transmissions and passed the information to Luanda: the radio stations used by UNITA were at one time supplied by the US. And the British Foreign Office compared Savimbi with Saddam Hussein and Slobodan Milosevic.

Another characteristic feature: the world-famous company De Beers pledged not to buy the diamonds which UNITA dealt in order to purchase weapons, although Angolan diamonds are considered some of the best in the world.

It was only in 2002, and only with Savimbi's death - he was killed in a shoot-out with governmental troops - that civil war in Angola came to the end. It lasted more than a quarter of a century, had taken from a half million to one and a half million lives and

ravaged a potentially very rich country. The sun over Angola was white, not only from the heat but from human suffering, too.

This tragedy has many roots, but if it is viewed through the prism of Soviet-American, now Russian-American, relations, I would say that in those areas where we and the Americans found a common language the agreements persisted. Where we could not achieve mutual understanding, the conflict continued. And the reason is evident - American policy in regards of Savimbi. Finally, the Americans did recognize the blunder, but their obduracy cost the Angolans dearly.

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I dedicate this book to my comrades and the colleagues with whom we worked in the African division from 1986 to 1989: the late Vladilen Mikhaylovich Vasev, Vladimir Nikolayevich Kazimirov, Arnol'd Ivanovich Kalinin, Valentin Petrovich Kasatkin, Vladimir Sergeyevich Kitayev, Pavel Ivanovich Krylov, Valery Nikolayevich Lipnyakov, Sergey Borisovich Krylov, the late Vladimir Konstantinovich Lobachev, the late Lev Davydovich Mironov, Vladimir Nikolayevich Rayevsky, Alexander Petrovich Smirnov, the late Valery Yakovlevich Sukhin, Georgy Artashesovich Ter-Gazaryants, Andrey Yur'yevich Urnov, Vyacheslav Aleksandrovich Ustinov, the late Yury Alekseyevich Yukalov.

In my view, none of them has described this episode in the diplomatic history of the Soviet Union of the time of perestroika, and this is a pity. The Soviet veterans of the Angolan war lamented to me that it was never mentioned in the Soviet mass-media and nowadays is entirely forgotten.

I hope that I have somehow filled this gap.

Photo captions:

(following page 96):

Prime Minister of Zimbabwe R. Mugabe views the ANC mission building in Harare attacked by the South Africans. RSA state terrorism had a long hand.

The First President of the People's Republic of Angola, Agostinho Neto. In long-ago 1975, the proclamation of the country's independence.

Work with journalists is an important part of business.

This picture does not finally convey the beauty of Luanda, the Angolan capital, but this is how it looked in 1986.

Tanzanian President Ali Hasan Mwinyi and Soviet Ambassador in Dar es Salaam Sergey Illarionov, August 1986.

Savimbi and his assistants pose in front of the lens of a Time weekly magazine reporter before the start of a provocative sortie.

Arrival in Brazzaville for the next round of negotiations. To my left is our Ambassador to the PRC [People's Republic of Congo] V. K. Lobachev; behind is the Ambassador in Luanda, V. N. Kazimirov, and S. B. Krylov.

When in Moscow, you often don't get out of the airports. This time, the departure ceremony for Zambian Prime Minister K. Musokotwane.

After the signing of documents. Right in the center is Yu. A. Yukalov, one of main participants of the Soviet team.

Here she is, the beautiful Liyonda Ekila, State Commissar of Zaire for Foreign Affairs. Kinshasa, June 1987.

Moscow, April 1988. Cooperation between the two ministers begins.

This is the meeting in the White House (23 March 1988) which I described. There are the autographs of two presidents, Ronald Reagan and George Bush (the senior, of course). The shining head of George Shultz also stands out.

This is in March 1988, when a meeting was held with Fidel Castro. Photographs were not taken during the conversation. But there is a photo with Risquet (left foreground) in the famous Bodeguita del Medio, Old Havana.

This photograph is noteworthy because I was photographed by the Americans without our knowledge whilst out running in Luanda with Sergey Krylov. A year later when we became friendly, they presented it to us, joking, "You are always under our constant view".

On the left, Nathan Shamuyarira, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Zimbabwe, a country which chaired the Non-Aligned Movement in that period.

Here are we who lost the game with Mengistu: Eduard Shevardnadze, Anatoly Dobrynin, and yours truly. Behind Andrey Urnov is also visible. Moscow Aeroport Vnukovo, April 1987.

To rescue Mengistu, I try to convince Prime Minister of Sudan Mahdi. Spring, 1988. Next [to me] is Soviet Ambassador Valery Sukhin, who later described this meeting in verse.

(following page 128):

President of Somalia Siad Barre, Mogadishu, spring of 1988. This is all about the same thing, how to make peace between Somalia and Ethiopia.

This is when Mikhail Gorbachev could not receive Sam Nujoma, President of SWAPO, entrusting Andrey Gromyko with this. April 1988.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu, not in the MFA reception rooms, which was described in the book, but on the simmering streets of Cape Town at the head of an anti-apartheid demonstration, September 1989.

Who says that Africa has no future?

The presidential palace in Brazzaville where an interim agreement of the negotiations was achieved.

One has to look closely to see the leopard.

If you keep looking you can see a small harem.

Roadside sketch.

This is the remarkable Ngorongoro crater in Tanzania.

Like all landscapes, the photograph is amateurish and cannot do justice to the view.

This is an elegant giraffe.

In the background is the Mbamou Palace Hotel where I met the South African ministers. The Congo River is beyond it.

Angolan President Jose Eduardo dos Santos, young and handsome.

This is how I saw Johannesburg from a South African helicopter.

President of Zambia Kenneth Kaunda in Leningrad, November 1987. In his hands is a white handkerchief with which, in my memory, he never parted.

It is already July 1990, the first legal rally of the South African Communist Party. SACP General Secretary Joe Slovo, with Nelson Mandela.

Also for the sake of this moment - the flag of an independent Namibia is raised - so many spears were broken.

The Cubans leave, January 1989.

I wouldn't have included this picture of Frederick de Klerk and President of Zaire Mobutu in August 1989, but in the middle, bowing his head, is "Pik" Botha, and this is the only picture of him in my archive.

"The Centenary Diamond", of de Beers, of course.