

# The Secretary of State



Press Conference

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## MAJOR TOPICS: Namibia, South Africa

SECRETARY VANCE: Good afternoon. I think you've all probably had copies handed to you now of the draft joint statement which was distributed at the press conference which was held a bit earlier today in Pretoria by the South African Government. As you have been able to see from the draft joint statement, it contains certain items on which agreement was reached and other items on which agreement was not reached. The items on which there was agreement in principle were those relating to issues where there was further clarification required. The first of those was the question of the police force. Insofar as that is concerned it appears that that no longer is a problem as the South Africans are concerned, whereas previously they had raised questions on that provision of the Secretary General's report and of the proposal.

Secondly, insofar as the issue of consultations is concerned, again, as the document which was issued earlier says, the South African delegation felt that the question of consultation now can be resolved. On the question of troops, again the issue seems to be resolved in terms of principle.

In Paragraph 3 of the document—and I might read it because I think it's an important paragraph—it's stated that the South African Government and the five foreign ministers [of the United States, United Kingdom, France, Federal Republic of Germany, and Canada] accordingly believe that it would now be ap-

propriate for the Secretary General's special representative, Mr. Ahtisaari, to resume his discussions with the South African Administrator General of Namibia within the framework of Security Council Resolution 435 which endorsed the Secretary General's report. The aim of these discussions would be to work out the modalities of the proposed elections under U.N. supervision and to fix a date for these elections. It goes on then to say the five foreign ministers, therefore, intend to recommend to the Secretary General that he should instruct Mr. Ahtisaari to proceed to Windhoek as soon as possible. In addition it was regarded as appropriate to recommend to the Secretary General that he begin consultations on the composition of the military component of the U.N. force.

The next two paragraphs indicate a clear difference of view—a sharp difference of view—between the two parties. Paragraph 4 deals with the position of the South African Government with respect to elections they have planned for December which they describe as elections that must be seen as an internal process to elect leaders. The five foreign ministers state in the joint statement that with regard to the unilateral elections in December, they saw no way of reconciling such elections with the proposal which they put forward and which the Security Council has endorsed. They further stated that any such unilateral measure in relation to the electoral process will be regarded as null and void.

Accordingly, in sum, what you have is a

disagreement on the latter two issues but an agreement in principle on other important issues which had been unresolved and a joint recommendation that Mr. Ahtisaari, the Special Representative of the Secretary General, should proceed as soon as possible to Windhoek to resume discussions with the Administrator General to determine the modalities for working out the necessary steps and procedures and the fixing of a date for elections under Resolution 435.

*Q: Mr. Secretary, aren't those two mutually contradictory in the sense that the South Africans are saying elections they're going to hold are legitimate and at the same time the five foreign ministers and apparently the South Africans are saying there are going to be other elections?*

A: The South Africans have said in their unilateral statement that they regard elections which they have planned for December as elections which are an internal matter to elect leaders. What will happen with respect to those elections, what the function of those leaders would be, whether it would be an advisory function to the Administrator General remains to be seen and it remains to be seen whether indeed in fact the elections themselves will go forward . . .

*Q: Is this comparable . . .*

A: Let me just finish, please. We both agree—both sides—that it is at the heart of the matter that we go forward to complete the process of setting up the procedures for elections pursuant to Security Council Resolution 435 and that we should get at that business immediately. So the important thing is the one election—and the only election that really counts—namely that under the Resolution enacted by the Security Council.

*Q: That's a rather flat statement, there's no way of reconciling and yet when Mr. Botha [Prime Minister Pieter W. Botha] says he will use his best efforts to persuade local leaders elected in December to go ahead with a later election, do you still find no air there—no room to qualify the very flat statement, no way of reconciling?*

A: Well, I think we're going to have to wait

and see, Mr. Schweid, what actually does happen with respect to December elections. And if they are minimized, that's one situation. The important thing is to see the implementation of the action with respect to the U.N. elections, and that is the key that we have to take a look at.

*Q: I'm sorry, I don't know what you mean by "minimize."*

A: Well, we don't know actually, if such elections are held, what the function of the so-called leaders would be. If it were an advisory function, that would be one thing; and it would have a minimal effect so that I think if they're talking about that kind of a thing, then it means one thing; and if they show that they are determined to go forward and to work with Mr. Ahtisaari to bring about final and complete elections which would lead to an independent Namibia under the U.N. Resolution, then that's something different.

*Q: Is it clear to you whether South Africa intends to maintain sovereignty over Southwest Africa after they have the December elections and the leaders are chosen? Is it clear that they will continue to be responsible for the actions of those chosen leaders, or is the possibility now being left open by South Africa that those leaders will have the right to determine the course of Southwest Africa themselves? Is that implicit in saying they will try to persuade them . . .*

A: No. It is not. South Africa will retain sovereignty.

*Q: It has committed itself to that?*

A: That is clear. Yes.

*Q: Mr. Botha is being quoted this morning saying that the outcome of the December elections, South Africa will remain in charge of the territory, enabling the United Nations to effectively disregard the poll. Now why would they have an election and then enable the United Nations to disregard the poll?*

A: It is up to them to decide how they want to handle their own internal affairs. The important thing is, how are we going to go forward and carry out the elections under the Security Council Resolution which will lead to a fair and independent election pursuant to

which an independent Namibia can come into being.

*Q: Do you have a target date for elections?*

A: Well, we have stated we thought that elections could be held in May or June and one of the important things which Mr. Ahtisaari would be discussing would be the fixing of a date.

*Q: These clear sharp differences of view that you referred to, where do those differences lead you in reference to the possibility of the imposition of sanctions? When you get back to the States this question is certainly going to come up at the United Nations.*

A: I think at this point one has to see what happens with respect to the question of Mr. Ahtisaari going out to Southwest Africa—to Namibia—to have his discussions with Mr. Steyn—Judge Steyn. And until we see what happens there I don't think we get to the question which you raise.

*Q: Do you have a commitment from the South Africans that Justice Martinus Steyn will continue to be the Administrator General after the December elections?*

A: No.

*Q: Do you have an agreement on a date for independence?*

A: A date for independence? The date for independence will be dependent upon the procedures set forth in the proposal. I'll ask Mr. McHenry [Donald F. McHenry, Deputy Representative to the U.N. Security Council] to speak to that.

AMBASSADOR McHENRY: Well, the date for independence was left open in the proposal because much will depend upon what the constituent assembly decides to do. It could, conceivably, decide that it was agreed upon the nature of a constitution and turn itself into a new government in which case the independence would be very early. Or, it could decide to draft a constitution, submit that constitution to another election—that is to approve the constitution—in which case the date for independence would be further off. But it was left

open there because one had to get the views of the constituent assembly.

*Q: This is the constituent assembly that follows out of the United Nations . . .*

A: SECRETARY VANCE: U.N.-supervised elections.

*Q: Are you in a situation here which is roughly comparable to Rhodesia in the sense that once the internal election is held, then the other side—SWAPO—will say that since they have constituted themselves as a government, that they are unwilling to come in on the terms laid down by that government for elections, very much in the way that the Patriotic Front now refuses to . . .*

A: No, I don't think that's the case and I certainly don't accept that assumption. I think the common aim of all the parties is to try and move forward to a date at which there can be final elections to set up an independent government.

*Q: When was the language in the joint communique agreed? What was the process that occurred after you left Pretoria—can you just give us an outline on that?*

A: We made a number of proposals which we left with them—several proposals. I would put it—and one of the proposals was a proposal to—in the exact form that we have here. They said that they would want to discuss among themselves and with such other people as they would wish to call in to meet with them the various proposals which we had made and then would be in touch with us with respect to what their determinations were after such consultations. We had agreed with them in advance that all of the proposals which we made remain on the table so that we would be willing to accept any of those proposals including this particular proposal.

*Q: Can you tell us what the other proposals were?*

A: No, I'm not going to go into that now.

*Q: Mr. Secretary, have you been in touch with Dr. Waldheim on this?*

A: Yes, I have.

*Q: Before the formal statement was issued, the things that you say here that you're going to recommend to him you've already talked over informally?*

A: I talked to him in the most general terms yesterday about this because before there was agreement I didn't feel it was appropriate to discuss with anybody what the various particular elements of the proposal were. I have been in touch with his office this morning and I have discussed the specific elements with some of his colleagues, and I will be talking to him directly later on, after this press conference.

*Q: With Mr. Ahtisaari—have you dealt with him directly?*

A: No, I have not—with the Under Secretaries, yes.

*Q: Can you confirm whether or not President Carter invited Mr. Botha to come to the United States and what the conditions are?*

A: No, I don't want to get into anything having to do with the exchange of correspondence between the President and Prime Minister Botha. As you know, insofar as personal letters between heads of government are concerned that's up to the two heads of government to decide whether or not they want to make those public and I have no authority at this point to indicate the . . .

*Q: It was said this morning on BBC that the invitation was extended.*

A: Well, that's BBC's comment.

*Q: Mr Secretary, could you give your interpretation of the unilateral South African statement. It seems they're talking about the U.N. elections, that is a really firm commitment to those.*

A: On the unilateral statement as you know, we have issued what we call an additional statement of the Five in response to this unilateral statement and there we point out that it is necessary to provide a firm framework for the electoral process and to reduce uncertainty.

We go on to say that insofar as a date is concerned, that no one can be allowed to delay unilaterally the holding of U.N.-supervised elections. And then we went on to point out that if the agreed date of the election appeared

to be at risk through acts of violence or intimidation or any other failure to carry out the provisions of the proposals, it would be for the Secretary General to bring the matter immediately to the Security Council and that the governments of the Western Five undertook to support necessary action in the Security Council. We then went on to point out further that the five Western governments also undertook to maintain observers in Windhoek during the transitional period and to do everything possible to insure the implementation of the proposals which we have put forward. We concluded by stating that we were confident that the Security Council would respond promptly and effectively to any situation where the agreed date of the election appeared to be at risk and would maintain the election date and that, therefore, there would be no case for any unilateral action. We think that completely answers the unilateral statement issued by the Prime Minister.

*Q: Mr. Secretary, do you have any doubt that there will be a U.N. supervised election?*

A: We'll have to see what happens when we have further conversations between Mr. Ahtisaari and the Administrator General.

*Q: To turn it around, there are no assurances, though?*

A: There are no assurances at this point.

*Q: Mr. Secretary, don't you think that the reaction of the United Nations is going to be that this is much less than satisfactory?*

A: I don't know what the U.N. Security Council is going to say. I believe that what has been proposed here is, or reflects, a step forward. I believe it clearly reflects a desire on the part of the parties to see whether we cannot move forward to complete the process under Security Council Resolution 435 and that is a positive sign. There may be differences of view with respect to this in the Security Council and we'll have to see when the discussion of that takes place.

*Q: Is it inaccurate to describe this as a standoff?*

A: (Laughter) I don't want to characterize it

as a standoff or use any other single word to characterize it. What I would like to say is that I think that it indicates some progress. We'll have to wait and see whether or not it works out.

*Q: Mr. Secretary, have you been in touch with any of the black African countries which had earlier talked about seeking economic sanctions if full acceptance by South Africa had not come by next Monday? Have you been in touch with them on this situation which has now been developed to see whether they are intending to continue to push for sanctions next Monday?*

A: We, the Five, have either been in touch or will be in touch today with all of those countries. I informed one of them last night on my way back of what had happened during the three days of discussions.

*Q: At the point of being in touch simply to explain what happened or to seek their understanding of waiting a little longer than beyond next Monday, or what?*

A: Our objective is to explain what has happened, to answer their questions and to urge them to let the process which we are recommending go forward.

*Q: If I might address . . .*

A: Sure.

*Q: This is hypothetical and also a step back a couple of years in time. In your experience with American business, and on our needs for certain manganese and other valuable imports from South Africa, should there be sanctions, simply—and maybe simple-mindedly put—would it hurt South Africa or us more?*

A: I really don't want to get into that question. That is a hypothetical question. Obviously, the question of sanctions has been looked at in the past and evaluations have been made on such issues as you raise but I—the issue—is not before us at this moment and I prefer not to bring it up.

*Q: Has there been any consultation with American business leaders about the possibility or at least the*

*consideration of sanctions—any informal readings or consultations?*

A: The only work which has been done in this area over the past has been basically discussions within the government itself.

*Q: Had you hoped, before you went to Pretoria, to be able to talk the South Africans out of the December elections?*

A: The answer is yes. I had hoped to. But we were unable to do so.

*Q: Are you disappointed?*

A: (Laughter) I think the situation speaks for itself.

*Q: Mr. Secretary, we didn't have any details of what actually went on Monday and Tuesday. Can you give us any help on that? What you started in on, how you proceeded along, just fill in . . .*

A: Yes, I can fill you in briefly on that. We started in, as you know, with a meeting with the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister, the Foreign Minister, the Secretary of State, and General Mallan were at the meeting on behalf of the South African Government, and the five foreign ministers were present representing our respective countries. We started off with a general discussion of the overall situation, each of us expressing our views with respect to the general situation. We then began to discuss some of the more specific aspects of it. Following that the Prime Minister turned the meeting over to a discussion between the Foreign Minister and his colleagues and ourselves and from there on it was a question of discussions and negotiations between the Foreign Minister and his colleagues and ourselves.

However, as I pointed out—no, I don't guess I did—but the fact is that the Prime Minister joined us from time to time during the two days that followed that first day. He joined us at dinner where we had a working dinner—substantive dinner—where we discussed these issues, and from time to time during our discussions the five of us together with the Foreign Minister joined the Prime Minister to discuss the issues. So he participated in the

discussions as well as people at the ministerial level.

*Q: I have one on the discussions and then a more generalized followup.*

A: Sure.

*Q: At any time during the discussions did you discuss the South African domestic racial problem situation?*

A: I had general discussions covering a whole variety of issues with the Prime Minister.

*Q: The followup was, whether or not you see a successful resolution of the Namibia conflict as leading to a more normal relationship between the United States and South Africa that would involve implicitly an attempt by the United States—by the Carter Administration—to have greater understanding of South Africa's problems?*

A: I think that a satisfactory resolution of the Namibian problem would have a beneficial effect not only in Namibia and in the relationships in the region in general but obviously it would help in terms of the atmosphere between the United States and the Government of South Africa.

*Q: Mr. Secretary, you have spoken in the past of*

*the relationship between Namibia and Rhodesia.*

A: Yes.

*Q: Does the mixed success that you had here retard in any way your hopes for making progress on Rhodesia?*

A: On the Rhodesian situation, we will know a little bit more about it when we have the meetings with Mr. Smith on Friday in Washington. Again, the situation is not very clear as to what the facts actually are but I hope we'll have some further clarification as a result of the meetings on Friday. I continue to believe that it is very much in the interest of all of the parties; first, to bring the bloodshed to an end in Rhodesia; secondly, to move as fast as possible towards free and fair elections; and thirdly, in that process, that this be done by an all-parties conference. I would certainly agree that any such all-parties conference must be a well-prepared conference at which all the parties could sit down together, then the chances of arriving at a peaceful solution—a solution which resolved the differences among the various parties—is much greater than the situation we face now where there is just no conversation between them.

*Q: Thank you, Mr. Secretary.*