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Confidential

Notes on Meeting with Mr. Guy Penne, Adviser to the
President of France on African and Malagasy Affairs
(1 March 1982, 9:00 a.m.)

Chairman

The Special Committee decided to send missions to a number of Western countries. It saw fit to send the first mission to France because it has a new Socialist Party Government.

Even before the Socialist Party came to power, it made positive statements and showed goodwill towards the Special Committee. Soon after coming to power, Foreign Minister Cheysson made an important statement at the Sanctions Conference.

We realize that this is a new Government and needs time to find its feet. There is the problem of the civil service tuned to a Conservative outlook. There is also the influence of businessmen.

While we expect so much from the Government, we realize the obstacles. We are confident, however, that in the long run, the new Government will do much in accordance with its policy. We know that the Socialist Party has good intentions and determination.

France occupies an important position in Europe. It is a power and a force - historically, economically and politically. We believe that France will set the pace which other European countries will follow.

I am confident that we will be successful in this mission to France.

As to specific points, I could refer to the following.

1. In the past there was a lot of nuclear collaboration between France and South Africa. When the new government came to power, some contracts were already in force. We recognize that it is difficult to change them - even though they are against the policy of the Socialist Party.

But we hope that in the future, there will not be a repetition of such contracts.

2. As regards military cooperation, the Government had already said that it will strictly implement the arms embargo. We request the tightening of any loopholes - e.g. supplies through third parties, supplies of spare parts.

We request France to take the lead in the Security Council to ensure the strict application of the arms embargo.

3. We also hope that the French Government will seriously consider stopping investments and loans in South Africa.

Since the Government has now taken over some of the major banks, such a measure could be feasible.

These will amount to some form of sanctions against South Africa.

France, of course, also has some trade with South Africa. I believe that French trade with the rest of Africa, including even Nigeria, will increase if France withdraws from South Africa. Trade of France with rest of Africa is much greater than trade with South Africa. Trade with Nigeria is increasing.

Only recently, Nigeria placed an order in France for supersonic aircraft worth \$135 million to \$170 million. This is a beginning of things to come.

There is a tremendous amount of goodwill for France in Africa. You only need the right government, like the one now, to exploit that goodwill.

Looking at South Africa on a global scale, it appears that people have a shortsighted view. Countries have interests and investments in rest of Africa also. It is a question of choice between South Africa and the rest of Africa. People should think not only of immediate gain but also of long-term profit.

South Africa will be free one day. Is it not reasonable to cultivate the goodwill of future leaders?

If the Western Powers want South Africa not to be under the influence of another power, they should improve relations with the people and provide an alternative.

I, therefore, appeal to the new French Government so that there may be a change for the better and that France can give the lead.

The Special Committee decided last month to send a special message to the President of France because of the important role that France can and, we hope, will play. This was the first time that such a message was addressed by the Special Committee to a Head of State.

Guy Penne

Thank you for your visit and your kind words.

The ideals and principles of Mr. Mitterand as leader of the Socialist Party have not changed with his assumption of office as President of the Republic.

In southern Africa, we are dealing with Namibia and the fight against apartheid.

The Foreign Minister has declared in all fora our strong support to Security Council resolution 435. The question of withdrawal from the Contact Group has been on our mind. If we have stayed, it was at the specific request of African States.

In Ottawa in July 1981, we succeeded in drawing the Federal Republic of Germany to our position.

We are now thinking more of not staying in the Contact Group than of staying. If we conclude that our presence is used as an alibi, we would rather withdraw.

The policies of France regarding South Africa and frontline States are rather complex. I went recently to the frontline States and met the Presidents. I realized that their economies are all linked with South Africa though their political stand is determined.

The firm Inter Agra, managed by a member of the French Communist Party, Mr. Dumag, is opening an abattoir in Namibia to export meat to USSR.

Since you have honoured us with your first visit, I would like to tell you that we would be honoured if we could see you after your tour of Europe.

We cannot equate moral attitudes with commercial relations - Nigeria has a certain level of absorption of trade with France and it cannot go beyond that level.

Chairman

In Africa we are little concerned with ideologies. We are concerned with development. We need to get technical help wherever we can get it.

There is an opportunity for Western States to help frontline States - and at the same time all African States politically.

Mr. Penne

President Mitterand said that policy of France on Africa will, in general, be that of OAU - e.g. on Chad, Western Sahara, Namibia, apartheid.

Never again will any French military personnel be sent to Africa unless French nationals are in danger.

Economic assistance to Africa and the third world will be increased significantly.

Chairman

We welcome greater cooperation with France in all African countries. We welcome economic and political cooperation of France.

Mr. Penne

The Socialist Party calls for solidarity nationally and internationally. We tell the United States that East-West confrontation should not mark North-South confrontation.

You raised two points - nuclear and military.

Let me say there will never again be contracts with South Africa on nuclear cooperation.

There will never be new arms trade contracts. The arms embargo will be strictly implemented.

In a few weeks, the President will take important decisions on South Africa and will ask European countries to face the problem of South Africa. He will tell them what France will be.

A policy group of the Socialist Party - including Mr. Curiel who went to frontline States in the delegation of the Socialist International - has come up with some proposals.

Mr. Pisani, Commissioner of EEC, has taken a number of decisions on EEC attitude to South Africa.

Americans and Angolans met a few weeks ago in Paris. They may be meeting again. We are watching.

When I was in frontline States, I met Sam Nujoma at SWAPO Headquarters. There is no equivocation in our policies and feelings.

Mr. Curiel suggested that there should be a special tax on European investors in South Africa, to finance training of southern African students in Europe.

When you return after the tour of Europe, I will see that the President will receive you.

Chairman

We have started well.

France will be my centre of attention and I will come again.