

Malan Says S Africa's Neighbours are "Playing with Fire"

(a) Johannesburg television in Afrikaans 1600 gmt 30 Oct 86

Text of report (ME/8404/ii):

The Minister of Defence, Gen Magnus Malan, has said that accusations that South Africa was responsible for the plane crash in which President Machel died, are now going too far. Gen Malan warned countries like Zambia, Zimbabwe and Mozambique, which are spreading this propaganda, that they are playing with fire. Speaking at a colour parade at Pietersburg's air force base, Gen Malan said no one can afford this transparent propaganda and it is clear that South Africa was not involved in the plane crash. He appealed to neighbouring states to stop revolutionary activities from within their territories.

[Malan:video recording] South Africa still chooses the road to peace. Therefore my appeal to these states is simple. I have asked them to see that the export of revolutionary activities against the Republic of South Africa is stopped, that it is stopped before the people of the subcontinent are subjected to greater misery. It is time for us to build in southern Africa, time to stop accusations, to stop allowing destruction. It has become time for reason to temper emotion. Hostile campaigns and revolution are playing in the hands of those with evil intentions [end video recording].

(b) SAPA in English (i) 0954 (ii) 1026 gmt 30 Oct 86

(i) Text of dispatch datelined Pietersburg, 30th October:

South Africa had not been involved in any manner in the crash of Mozambican President Samora Machel's aircraft on South African territory on 19th October, the Minister of Defence, General Magnus Malan, reiterated today. Speaking at a colours parade for the air force's 89 Combat Flying School in Pietersburg, he warned frontline heads of state, Dr Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia and Mr Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, that the propaganda campaign accusing South Africa of being responsible for President Machel's death was "going too far". They and others who were continuing the propaganda while a full investigation was in process were "playing a dangerous game".

Gen Malan said he had not intended referring in his speech "to the sick propaganda against South Africa about the death of President Machel. But since I repeated the government's standpoint at the weekend that South Africa was not involved in the crash, the accusations, insinuations and blamings are continuing ... [agency ellipses] the flood of propaganda is becoming thicker and more vicious." Most of the insinuations and accusations came from Zambia, Zimbabwe and Maputo, but from elsewhere, too.

Two "examples" were the accusation the ill-fated aircraft had been lured off course by a radio beacon on the South African side of the border, and that President Machel had lived for four hours after the crash while South African authorities at the scene had not lifted a finger to help him. The second accusation was "too crazy, too absurd, to react to ... [agency ellipses] the man was so mutilated he had to be identified by his teeth" Gen Malan said. The first accusation was a transparent attempt to blame South Africa and its army and air force for the crash. "This technique of transferring blame is a known tactic in the sphere of propaganda, misleading and disinformation", he said.

"South Africa was not involved in the crash - in no way. Let this be clear to everyone now. Secondly, the whole matter is going too far. Leaders like President Kaunda and Mr Mugabe and others who are spreading propaganda, or allow it to happen, must look a few truths in the face. I say to them ... [agency ellipses] they are playing a dangerous game, what they are trying to do to South Africa is not child's play. This applies to all the so-called frontline states. This sort of fanning of suspicion, hate and doubt is to nobody's honour or advantage ... [agency ellipses] it is destructive and even provocative. Those who engage in it are making themselves guilty of sweeping the masses into hysteria. This sort of manipulation of President Machel's death to throw mud at South Africa can be afforded by no one ... [agency ellipses] it is transparent, it is scandalous, and it is now going too far", General Malan said.

(ii) Excerpts from dispatch datelined Pietersburg, 30th October:

Facts did not count in the total onslaught against South Africa, the Minister of Defence, Gen Magnus Malan, said. . . He said South Africa was the accused and that any reasonable case it offered was simply tossed aside. "We are the accused and some, with the United States in the lead, have already begun with punishment, while others urge further punitive action." With all this it was understandable South Africa was in a tension-filled situation. "We are not insensitive."

General Malan said, however, it had to be remembered the tension was caused mostly from outside the country because the Republic's image was being presented as one of a regional destroyer, and oppressor and an ignorer of human rights. In this process certain countries who were "singing in the choir" against South Africa, but whose people were living in suffering and oppression, were the "good guys" only because they had chosen sides against the "bad guy", which was South Africa.

Addressing himself to "certain southern African states who simply cast aside our repeated efforts to stabilise our region", he said it was important the government's

standpoint that it wanted peace, co-operation and progress with Zimbabwe, Zambia "and all the others", was made clear.

"We fully realise our political systems differ. While we in South Africa are actively working on broadening democracy, Zimbabwe is on its way to a one-party state. Zambia has already been a one-party state for years and only time will show what will happen to Mozambique under its new leader. Although South Africa rejects the Marxist political system or the one-party state, we are prepared to walk a political path of peace with all these countries. . . [agency ellipses] We are prepared to respect their political systems", Gen Malan said.

It should also be clear that trade would always be welcome, and that South Africa was keen to make its expertise and means available for development. The export from these countries of revolutionary ideas and actions was, however, unacceptable. "It has to be realistically accepted that South Africa, as a result of its good information gathering, has a very good understanding of what is being planned against our country". It often had the information even before the plans were finalised.

It should be clear South Africa still chose the path of peace and its appeal to these states was simply that they see to it revolutionary activities from their territories against the republic were stopped. "Stop this before our subcontinent's people are subjected to more suffering." It was time to start building in South Africa and time to cease the accusations and destruction.