

Pik Botha Invites International Participation in Machel Crash Inquiry

(a) Johannesburg home service in English 1600 gmt 20 Oct 86

Excerpt from report:

The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Pik Botha; the Commissioner of Police, Gen Johan Coetzee; the Chief of the Air Force, Lt-Gen Dennis Earp; and officials of the

Mozambican government visited the scene in the eastern Transvaal this afternoon where President Samora Machel of Mozambique was killed in an aircraft accident last night. . .

(b) Johannesburg television in Afrikaans 1830 gmt 20 Oct 86

Text of recorded report on news conference held at Komatipoort by South African Foreign Minister Pik Botha, presented by Riaan Van Cruywagen on the "Network" programme:

[Cruywagen] Mr Pik Botha arrived at Komatipoort late this afternoon and held a news conference, at which he gave more details of the air crash. Nico Van Burick was at the Rob Ferreira hospital when the first of the injured arrived, and he also attended Mr Botha's news conference.

[Van Burick - video recording] The injured in the crash were brought by helicopter shortly after 0800 [local] this morning to the Rob Ferreira hospital here at Nelspruit. Among the 10 injured there was a Soviet pilot who was treated at the hospital and thereafter, possibly due to the nature of his injuries, transferred to Pretoria. One of the other injured is in a critical condition while another was able to return to the scene of the accident to assist the police in identifying the bodies. Some of the bodies are still trapped in the wreckage and are now being removed in the presence of Mozambican officials. A tired Mr Pik Botha gave details of the scene and of the dead late this afternoon.

[Botha - in English] It is the normal practice as you know, in the case of an aircraft crash or accident - the Department of Transport, that is their usual function, automatically investigates the causes of accidents of this nature. So, from the South African government's point of view, the Minister of Transport already early this morning ordered the normal investigation, and on top of it, I have offered today to the Mozambican authorities to include experts from their side, and the State President indicated that he would welcome experts from the International Civil Aviation Organisation, also to be included in the investigation. I am now awaiting the response of the Mozambican government. Minister Vieira [Mozambican Minister of Security] has returned in the meantime to Maputo. He is due back here this evening, in which case Gen Coetzee and himself will probably finalise the composition of the investigation team.

[Unidentified reporter - question indistinct]

[Botha] Pardon? President Machel's body? On arrival here today our police had already put his body into a coffin. The body was there when we arrived and has in the meantime been taken back to Maputo, together with the bodies of Mr Honwana, who was assistant to the President, a man we know well from past discussions, together with Prof (?de Braganca's) body. Prof de Braganca was due to visit me this week. It would have been a very important visit, but he is dead now. And then the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, his body has not yet been identified. There are still bodies, apparently within pieces of the wreckage. The police will now, in the presence of the Mozambican government members, lift those pieces of the wreckage in which there are bodies to take them out and the whole process of removing the bodies to Maputo is at present being carried out and they agreed that the pathologists of South Africa could attend any post-mortem examinations in Maputo that might follow.

[Van Burick - in Afrikaans] Mr Botha also revealed that the South African Air Force was aware of the movements of the plane and that the flight recorder has been found and sealed.

[Botha - in English] I am informed that our air force was aware of all flights, including this one.

[Unidentified reporter] I was just wondering perhaps it gave any indication of what had gone wrong?

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ME/8396/B/5

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[Botha] You must put that question to General Earp. I am not aware of anything of that nature. According to our information, at a certain stage the flight faded.

[Unidentified reporter] You have no idea of what the cause is?

[Botha] According to the air force, this aircraft was in Mozambique's air space all the time, but for the last few moments when it crashed 200 metres inside South African territory. But it was in Mozambique's air space all the time. Boxes which normally record flight details on board the aircraft and conversations have been recovered and sealed in the presence of the Mozambique Deputy Minister of Transport and will of course be handed over to those persons that will investigate this whole tragic event.

[Unidentified reporter - in Afrikaans] Mr Botha, how will the investigation be carried out?

[Botha - in Afrikaans] Concerning the investigation, Gen Coetzee and his policemen will ensure that all materials connected with this wreckage are preserved for handing over to the Investigation team [end of video recording].