



Hendrik Witbooi, Founding President Sam Nujoma, Daniel Tjongarero, Dimo Hamaambo, Peter Nanyemba, Vicky Uutoni and Maxton Mutongolumbe.

Omugulu-gOmbashe

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combatants were to be confined to bases in Namibia, in accordance with Resolution 435. The South African troops were to be confined to bases at Grootfontein or Oshivelo, or both, commencing on 1 April 1989.

We had repeatedly informed the UN Secretary-General that SWAPO had forces inside the country, but there was no written detailed information or instruction in the UN plan as to the procedure our combatants should follow in handing themselves over to UNTAG for confinement to bases on the designated date. The South Africans always pretended that they were not fighting a large-scale war against SWAPO inside the country. In the words of the "legal analysis" put out by the US State Department in favour of South Africa:

"South Africa categorically rejected any implication that SWAPO bases existed on Namibian territory and made it crystal clear that the South African Government would not permit such bases to be established as part of the UN Plan."

That referred to South Africa's position as it had been in 1978-79, and did not take into consideration our own account that PLAN, the SWAPO military wing, had grown in strength from battalions to mechanized brigades — but all of which we deliberately kept mobile.

Though our forces had been engaged in many fierce battles with the South African troops and local counter insurgency units such as SWATF and Koevoet, they had never, since the launching of the armed liberation struggle at Omugulu-gOmbashe on 26 August 1966,

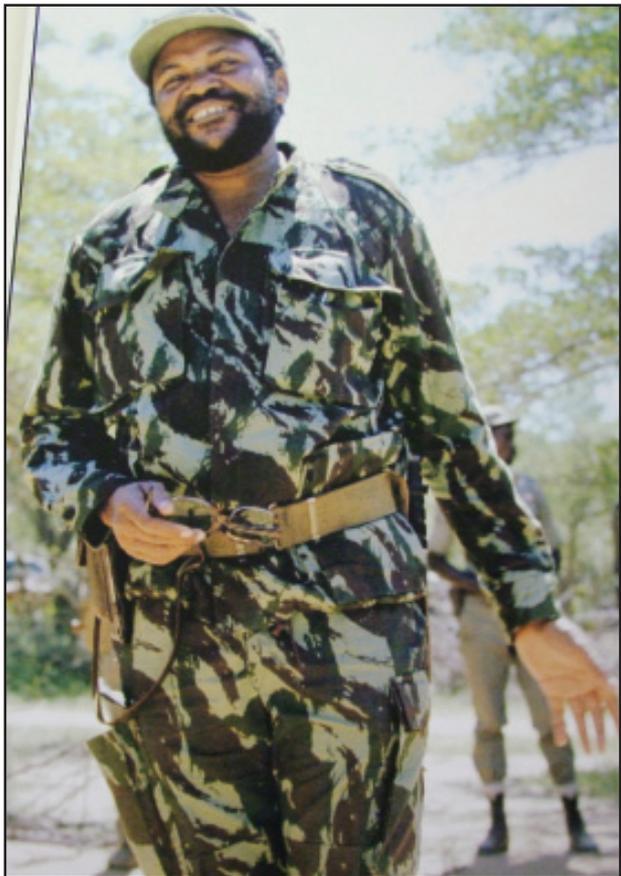
been overrun. They had adopted scientific guerrilla tactics and maintained absolute vigilance and mobility, moving in sections and platoons. They constantly carried out surprise attacks, and caused heavy enemy casualties with minimum losses on our side. In later years this mobility was achieved not only by their tough training in covering long distances rapidly on foot, but was also aided by the use of bicycles which enabled them to move even faster, and even to carry heavy weapons such as 122mm rocket launchers and ground-to-air missiles.

Nevertheless, as 1 April 1989 drew nearer, the South Africans were in a better position than ever before to identify the location of PLAN fighters. In October 1989, a journal called *Top Secret*, quoting London press

sources, wrote:

"At the beginning of March the CIA had provided the South African military intelligence service with the latest surveillance data gathered by plane and satellite concerning SWAPO bases within Namibia. It was clear to both Washington and Pretoria that there already SWAPO units in Namibia. Moreover, some of their bases had been clearly identified."

Our men lay low even after South Africa had separately, on 22 March 1989, signed the cease-fire letter drawn up by the UN Secretary-General's office. They would not meet us to sign the cease-fire jointly in a proper manner because South Africa still pretended that SWAPO did not exist. Not for one moment did we trust the South African government to honour its un-



The legend. SWAPO Secretary for Defence, Peter Nanyemba. He died in a car accident in Lubango, Angola, in April 1983.

dertakings under the Tripartite Agreement or Resolution 435 without attempting to derail the UN Plan. We always expected that South Africa would use more delaying tactics and dirty tricks. We had prepared several options, each with its alternatives and fall-backs, to ensure that South Africa would be kept in line with the UN plan."

One of these options was to retain our combatants in their northern and eastern regions inside the country, ready in their positions, while the UN peace-keeping force of UNTAG military and civilian components commenced with the process of full implementation of UN Resolution 435. However, I made it categorically clear that if the South African apartheid regime were allowed to continue to torpedo the implementation, the armed liberation struggle would continue and would intensify.

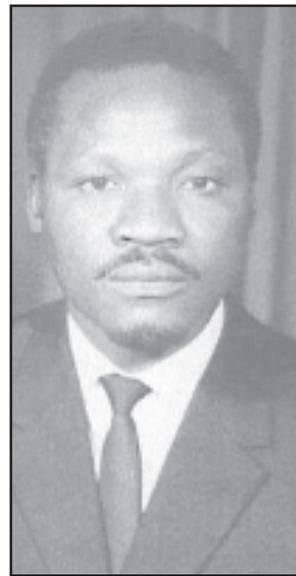
Some critical arithmetic:
7,500 minus 3,500 = 4,000

We struggled hard, assisted by many friendly governments and support groups, to defeat the proposal that the peace-keeping force be reduced. It was the Americans who initiated the reduction of the UN peace-keeping force from the full complement of 7,500 down to 4,000. They claimed that the UN had no money to pay for a force of that size, and succeeded in getting all the permanent members of the Security Council on their side. The Reagan administration took advantage of the changes in the new USSR leadership: Gorbachev leaned towards the West and was less supportive of the national liberation movements in Africa, in contrast to his predecessors who would have opposed any attempt at torpedoing the implementation of UN Resolution 435.

All the Western Permanent Members of the Security Council made it clear that their governments were not prepared to pay for the cost of the full 7,500 UNTAG military and civilian components to remain in Namibia unless the Chinese government was prepared to share the expenses. Thus, the Chinese were compelled to concur with the rest of the Permanent Members of the Security Council.

In an attempt to prevent further delay in the implementation of Resolution 435, SWAPO approached the UN and offered to repay the full UNTAG operational costs after independence — for both military and civilian components — repaying the UN with its own resources. Our offer was not accepted. Our campaign against the reduction of UNTAG peace-keeping forces was fought and lost. This reduction, of course, seriously down-graded the potential effectiveness of the peace-keeping forces in an emergency situation, given the sheer size of the land which Namibian territory constituted.

On 16 February 1989, the implementation of Resolution 435 was finally authorized by



Late Cde. Tobias Hainyeko

UN Security Council Resolution 632. Although the Security Council agreed to the reduction of the UNTAG military component, we had won the concession that the 3,500 forces which had been subtracted from the full original strength of 7,500 would be held in reserve. Resolution 640, later in the year, required the disbandment of Koevoet, but this, unlike the cut in UNTAG numbers, was not carried out.

The weeks we had lost while we and our friends had done all in our power to retain the full strength of the peace-keeping force inevitably delayed UNTAG's arrival in Namibia, with further consequences that assisted those intent on torpedoing the implementation of Resolution 435. General Prem Chand, in command of the military component of UNTAG, arrived in Windhoek on 26 February 1989. But by the end of March, on the eve of the final cessation of hostilities, fewer than one quarter of the 4,650-strong UNTAG force were in place, and of these scarcely a handful were in the northern Namibian war zone.

My own movements were restricted in the early months by the need to be with our military forces at Headquarters in Lubango and with the SWAPO Political Headquarters in Luanda. So much of our fighting had been done by men and women politically motivated, that we had to do all in our power to explain to them the full implications of their approaching demobilization. Some of the commanders expressed strong misgivings about our agreeing to the demobilization of PLAN and the ending of the armed liberation struggle.

There was a huge task awaiting us back home and we could lose no time in preparing the way, particularly in facing the economic problems confronting the country. I addressed the Council of Ministers of the Southern African Development Coordinating Conference (SADCC) in Luanda on 3 February 1989, and outlined the future role we could play in cooperation with Angola, Botswana and Zambia, particularly in dealing with the region's transport problems. I also warned that apartheid South Africa would do all in its power to "undermine and predeter-

mine the outcome of the transition to independence" in its favour and install a puppet government in Namibia. An international businessman arranged for me to meet, in London, senior directors of the Anglo-American Corporation, which I did at the Ritz Hotel on 9 February. The Consolidated Diamond Mines (CDM) of South West Africa, a key subsidiary of DeBeers, is a major contributor to the Namibian economy through its gem diamond mining operation north of the Orange River mouth. CDM had made scarcely any attempt in the past to show any interest either in contact with SWAPO or in the democratic future of the country. Nevertheless, we wanted to make it clear to the directors of such major companies that we had no wish to disrupt their operations, only to ensure that a proper return went to the Namibian people, through taxes, wages and the localizing of subsidiary activities. I found Mr. Nicholas Oppenheimer and his colleagues receptive and friendly and relations have been cordial since independence.

Perhaps because Rio Tinto Zinc (RTZ) had so flagrantly defied UN Decree No. 1 in exporting Namibian uranium from the mine that they managed and mined at Rossing, near Swakopmund, this company had done much more for the country than CDM. They had set up the Rossing Foundation, which contributed to research, education and training in agriculture and other fields, and seemed much more interested in the future of the country than was CDM, despite the latter's much longer involvement in exploitation of Namibian resources.

It was not true, however, as was reported from time to time, that I had had personal meetings with RTZ Chairmen over the years. This rumour must have come from their own public relations officials, or was at least kept alive by them, as they never contradicted it, though SWAPO did. Their breach of UN Decree No. 1 took place under the Labour administration in Britain. They claimed that they were dependent on the uranium from Rossing and that the ore they extracted illegally at Rossing was the richest and was indispensable to Britain's nuclear power programme.

Though my meeting in February 1989 with RTZ was off the record, the Press got wind of it. I gave an interview to the *London Times* in which I announced that independent Namibia would join the OAU, SADCC and UN and that we were also considering membership of the Commonwealth.

There was never any doubt that we would join the Commonwealth, simply that the procedures had to be followed. We valued the great support SWAPO had received over many years from the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation, which has continued since our independence to fund and administer training programmes over a wide field.