GOOD NEWS--BAD NEWS
It's qualified Good News and real Bad News.
First the Good News, relative--provisional--guarded though it may be.

Relative Good News
The United Nations (UN) has announced that the South African government (SAG) has, for the first time, agreed to a cease-fire and the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 435 (UNSC-435) to bring Namibia to independence.
The cease-fire may be as early as March 1981.
That's relatively good news...relative because it is long overdue...relative because even if it happens in March, the war goes on until then and more people will be killed, more houses burned, more land mines laid.

Provisional Good News
This good news is also boxed in by provisions which are not boxed in. In other words, the SAG only agrees to implement UNSC-435 if between now and the close of an implementation

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conference scheduled for early January it can be satisfied that the UN will be impartial in its supervision of the elections, but no objective criteria have been established by which South Africa arrives at that judgment. That important aspect of the good news proclamation depends on a subjective judgment by the SAG.

In an interview with Africa News, U.S. Ambassador to the UN Donald McHenry responded to a question which asked:

What is standing in the way of a Namibian settlement?

He replied: The real question I think remains that of the political will on the part of South Africa. There really is nothing to negotiate. All of the substantive objections which South Africa has raised have been met. 'Trust' is the newest thing they've come up with, the establishment of trust. Well, it's something that can't be measured.

Guarded Good News
The proclamation is guarded (not three cheers, but one; not shouted, but whispered) because of the history of the negotiations and the danger once again of new elements intruding into the process. However, since a new "inch stone" has been reached in the negotiations, it is appropriate to set down a best-of-all-possible-worlds scenario before raising the caveats.

The Plan
Apparently the UN, SAG, the South West Africa Peoples Organization (SWAPO), the Front Line States and Nigeria (FLS-N), the Organization for African Unity (OAU), and the Contact Group (CG), which is the United States, United Kingdom, France, Federal Republic of Germany and Canada, have all agreed to a UN-sponsored meeting in Africa early in January 1981.
The UN General Assembly (UNGA) approved by postponing indefinitely a scheduled debate on the Namibia question.
The purpose of the meeting, in the words of UN Secretary General Waldheim's report, is as follows:

There have recently been a number of initiatives and approaches from various quarters for such a meeting based on the UN plan, in conformity with UNSC-435 and other practical proposals. Such a meeting could facilitate the implementation of that resolution by discussing relevant aspects of implementation with the purpose of securing the cooperation of all concerned. In this connection it will be recalled that, under the settlement Proposal, the task of drawing up and adopting a Constitution is the function of the Constituent Assembly.

It would be understood that the proposed meeting would be held in the context of an agreed time-frame, with a view to the parties themselves assisting in resolving difficulties created by distrust and lack of confidence, South Africa having reaffirmed its continuing role as the interlocutor under resolution 435 (1978).

The Scenario
Thus, in January, representatives of internal parties which expect to take part in UN supervised and controlled elections in Namibia in 1981 will meet with SWAPO in order to facilitate the implementation of UNSC-435. SAG it-
self would be present as "interlocutor" and FLS-N, OAU, and CG as observers at this conference sponsored by the UN. Their discussions will be directed toward achieving a just and peaceful independent society through a representative government in Namibia at an early date. The atmosphere and the commitment of all parties will inspire confidence and create trust among themselves and will remove all the reservations which the SAG harbors about the ability of the UN to be impartial in supervising free and fair elections. A cease-fire will be declared and the implementation of UNSC-435 will begin, resulting in the election of a constituent assembly to draft and adopt a constitution. This is a best-of-all-possible-worlds scenario. Unfortunately, we do not live in such a world. So what are the caveats?

CAVEATS

A great deal of discussion has been raised by the press and others over the words "other practical proposals" in Mr. Waldheim's report. Many feel that this opens the door for additional demands. Some even fear that these words would allow constitutional issues to be raised.

Mr. Waldheim seems to have anticipated this speculation and so emphasized that "the task of drawing up and adopting a constitution is the function of the Constituent Assembly." Mr. "Pik" Botha, South Africa's foreign minister, in a speech following the release of Mr. Waldheim's report, said, "We are not going there to participate in any decision or talks affecting the constitutional future of the territory. That is a matter for the parties to decide." That almost sounds like he agrees. The difference lies between Waldheim's use of "Constituent Assembly" and Botha's "parties".

Caryle Murphy of the Washington Post reported out of South Africa, "The most crucial issue is whether the agenda should be confined to implementing the UN settlement plan or expanded to allow discussion of a constitution for an independent, black-ruled Namibia." Botha has pointed out that "the conference is not confined to the discussion of implementation of Resolution 435, but any other practical proposals can also be discussed." So the signals are a bit mixed.

Before the Waldheim report was released the Windhoek Advertiser, the English language daily of Namibia, was convinced that constitutional talks would be on the agenda. Its headline on 20 November: "Constitution Could Be Key Issue in SWA Talks." The item began:

There was an increasing likelihood that the agenda of the UN would be topped with an item to negotiate a constitution, informed sources said....

The sources said there was a growing feeling that a multi-party conference, including SWAPO, should first explore the drafting of a constitution before implementation of UNSC-435.

The settlers in Namibia have a number of reasons to press for constitutional talks, chief of which is their growing conviction and fear that SWAPO will win in a free and fair election. Their best hope for a constitution which will maintain white privilege, secure the interests of foreign enterprise, postpone the day of reckoning on the Walvis Bay issue and institutionalize tribal areas is to produce a constitution before elections. Moreover, the CG will be around to consult at the conference and all are involved in one way or another in consuming the mineral wealth of Namibia.

Other things could distract from the UN agenda, but the possibility of inserting a constitutional debate into the conference is a more distressing prospect. The Secretary General should be commended for declaring it out of bounds, and national observers should be encouraged to support that decision.

Who Are the Parties?

There's another caveat. Mr. Botha said that a South African appointee, the Administrator General of Namibia, Mr. Danie Hough, would choose the parties to be represented at the meeting. The world community regards most of the internal parties, especially the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA), as client parties of the SAG. The DTA came into power through a SAG-sponsored election in 1978, which was condemned by the UNSC. SWAPO has always maintained that its fight is with the SAG and that the DTA represents South Africa, not Namibia. It appears that in spite of South Africa's public statements to the contrary, the internal parties will be viewed as SA representatives. Mr. Waldheim's report closes by saying: "South Africa and SWAPO have been contacted concerning the composition of the respective delegations...."

SWAPO Status

South Africa has seized upon a resolution of the UNGA which recognizes SWAPO as the sole and legitimate representative of the people of Namibia and argues that because of this the UN can-
not be impartial in supervising the elections. The UN argues that the Security Council has jurisdiction in this matter and that the SC resolutions make no such judgment. SWAPO’s status at the meeting and its treatment by the chair will be scrutinized by all present. South Africa may demand that UNGA support of SWAPO, both verbal and monetary, be discontinued as a demonstration of impartiality and threaten to set everything back to square one if its demands are not met.

The Pressures

But fortunately there are many pressures for this meeting to succeed. First, the churches in Namibia have consistently supported the UN proposals to bring justice, peace and stability to Namibia. Secondly, the stakes are high in international government circles. If good faith is not demonstrated on the part of South Africa, some kind of economic sanctions will be called for. Africans and the CG want to avoid that if possible, but if all else fails the African community has no choice but to press for sanctions, in spite of the suffering it will cause them. The CG will face a dilemma because of its dependence (often overplayed) on strategic minerals from South Africa. The U.S. and its allies have other reasons to see the meeting succeed, among them the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola once the war on its southern border ends. If the conference breaks down, Lutheran World Ministries favors sanctions, even while recognizing the hardships they will bring, and urges constituency support for government action.

After reading the above, you might be tempted to say, “And that’s good news?” Everything in the political realm is relative, isn’t it?

The Bad News

Disbelief. Shock. Bewilderment. Frustration. Anger. Outrage. These greeted the bad news when it was told in the USA. What must it have been like in Namibia?

The publishing house and modern presses of the Evangelical Lutheran Ovambokavango Church were destroyed by a TNT explosion shortly after midnight on 19 November. That’s the second time in seven years. The first was 11 May 1973. Thank God, no one was killed or injured. There is a dusk-to-dawn curfew in the North due to the war, so no one was at work, not even a guard. In Bishop Kleopas Dumeni’s news release, he called on his churches to pray for the saboteurs that they might repent and be saved. We urge joining in those difficult prayers.

Replacement costs have not been ascertained, but the cost of plant and equipment after the last bombing was over $450,000. When ELOC decides to rebuild, money will come. (A friend in the U.S. State Department sent a check by return mail when he heard the news.)

There are bigger problems. One is the replacement of materials. The bishop said that the school books for next year were being printed at the time. In a land where education is hard to come by, this is a devastating blow.

Hopes were shattered as well as steel. The bishop said in an interview, “My heart wants to cry. Why must my country and my community suffer like this? The owner of that over there (pointing to the press) is not us, but Jesus Christ... How can we now, after this, still comfort the people? There is bitterness in the hearts of the people after this sabotage.”

The pattern of non-assistance to the church by the police was similar to that following the first explosion. The police were contacted at 1:30 AM and showed up at 10:00 AM. An investigation has been promised.

Bishop Dumeni’s reactions follow:

The activities of the church press are stopped for the time being....The person or persons who were involved in preparing this destruction must be hurt in their conscience and we ask the church members to pray for them. Jesus Christ, the Lord of the Church, cannot be destroyed. He lives.

All the day people from far and near are coming to comfort each other in the sorrow of us all.

Details of the movements in the hours preceding the blast were given in his report, noting times and places. At 9:00 PM army vehicles were in the neighborhood and soldiers were unloaded. Movements of armed persons in and around the vicinity of the press were sighted between 10:00 PM and midnight. Then the bishop observed:

The above information was given to me in a confidential spirit. The people who gave the information are not prepared to reveal their names for security reasons. I confirm that this information is nothing else but the truth. Oniipa, 19.11.80 K. Dumeni, Bishop of ELOC
A few weeks earlier a disturbing event took place which also ended up penalizing the church and community and forcing Bishop Dumeni to confront the government. Mr. Lisias Aluuma, a patient in Nakayale Hospital and leader of his community, was murdered.

Nakayale Hospital’s administrator is Miss Kovanen, a Finnish missionary nurse serving in Namibia since 1954 and granted a permanent residence permit. For 10 days before the murder she had been reporting to local government officials and the SA army about incidents during the night involving gunfire.

On 31 October at 11:50 PM, Miss Kovanen was awakened by gunfire and moments later was informed that Aluuma had been shot. She and her staff tried to save him. Police and army were also notified at 12:30 AM and an army ambulance requested. No help was received. No police came. Mr. Aluuma died at 5:20 AM.

What did Miss Kovanen receive for her prompt reporting of incidents, faithful medical care and risking her life to save a wounded man? Unsupported allegations by press and radio of being a collaborator in the murder! Expulsion from Owamboland! Pressure to revoke her work permit!

Bishop Dumeni publicly set out the facts and appealed to officials in behalf of Miss Kovanen, closing with these moving words:

ELOC requests that the allegations branding Miss Kaino Kovanen as having collaborated with the murderers be corrected.

In conclusion, expelling missionaries, refusing to grant them entry visas, detaining people, torturing them, forcing them to comply with the systems, murder and killings will never bring the problem of this country to an end.

We plead to all who have authority or say in the Namibian dispute to give the people of this country a chance to have a free and fair election under the supervision and control of the UN without any further delays, so that the will of the majority will be made public as they elect their own government according to their wish. The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government. Thus the church continues to pray, so that by the power of the Almighty God, this problem may come to an end by peaceful means.

The reader may wish to take some action.

1. Prayer—for Namibians, for their leaders, for the enemies of the church and all people of Namibia, for the UN sponsored conference.

2. Expressions of Solidarity:
   
   Council of Churches in Namibia
   Rev. James Kauluma, President
   Rev. Albertus Maasdorp, General Secretary
   Box 57, Windhoek 9100 SWA/Namibia

   Rev. Kleopas Dumeni, Bishop, ELOC
   Oniipa, P/Bag 2018, Ondangua, SWA/Namibia

3. Expressions of Political Concern:
   
   President Jimmy Carter, The White House
   Washington DC 20500

His Excellency Mr. Donald McHenry
Permanent Representative of the U.S. to UN
799 United Nations Plaza
New York NY 10017

President-Elect Ronald Reagan
Office of the Transition Team
1726 "M" Street
Washington DC 20036

Mr. Martti Ahtisaari
Special Representative for Namibia
The United Nations, Room A-3170
New York NY 10017

Senators and Congressional Representative
United States Senate, Washington DC 20510
House of Representatives
Washington DC 20515