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## EDITORIALS

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### MORE BRINKMANSHIP

The very thing which, in the wake of the assassination of Clemens Kapuu, we hoped would not happen, has happened. On May 4th, Ascension Day, as everybody now knows, the South African army staged a massive raid on a SWAPO camp at Cacinga, 250 kilometres inside Angola. The justification for the raid was that SWAPO was disrupting political life in Namibia by violence and that it must be taught a lesson, and the lives of innocent Namibians protected.

Our fear in the past, and particularly after the death of Mr Kapuu, was that the conflicting parties in Namibia would embark on a course of strike and counter-strike which would make it impossible to achieve a reasonably smooth transition to majority rule there. We still have this concern, but to it must now be added another, which stems from the timing of the South African raid. How seriously does the South African Government want a solution on anything but its own terms?

The South -African-appointed Administrator - General's security clampdown in Namibia in mid-April and his detention of numbers of prominent SWAPO supporters must have come close to wrecking the Western plans for a solution to the territory's future. The clampdown could hardly have come at a worse time, in the week preceding the meeting at which South Africa was to give its reply to these plans, and it was only the South African acceptance of them at that stage which, to our mind,

prevented the whole initiative from collapsing. Any further procrastination on South Africa's part, coupled with the security clampdown, would have put an end to it. As it was for a brief moment after the acceptance, the South African Government suddenly, for the first time in 30 years, found itself on the side of the angels, its statesmanship being applauded not only in the West but even in parts of the Third World. And so, for a few heady days, it continued — until the Cacinga raid.

The raid took place on the very day preceding the next scheduled meeting between the Western negotiating powers and SWAPO. At that meeting SWAPO, which was obviously embarrassed by the sudden South African acceptance of most of its conditions, would have been hard put to it to refuse the Western proposals without appearing completely unreasonable, certainly to the West, and perhaps to a growing number of other people as well. As it was, the South African raid suddenly swung back to SWAPO any sympathy or support it was in danger of losing. The SWAPO negotiators must have received the news of Cacinga, almost with a sigh of relief.

As the British Ambassador told a Cape Town audience shortly after the raid, it 'could scarcely have been more unfortunate from the point of view of the Western initiative' The South African Government obviously knew this. So the question immediately arises. Do they really want this initiative to succeed? □

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