



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London S.W.1

Prime Minister  
has seen & approved. Tels  
sent for despatch.

6 December 1979

Dear Michael,

to Prime Minister  
6/12/79

Rhodesia: Messages to the South African Government

As you know, we have had a number of exchanges this week with the South African Government over the role of their forces in Rhodesia following the arrival of a British Governor.

Mr Laurens van der Post has helped us to explain to the South Africans the reasons why we would not wish any identifiable units of the South African forces to remain in Rhodesia following the arrival of the British Governor. Mr van der Post called privately on Lord Carrington today. He said that the position over South African forces and equipment was now clearly understood in Pretoria. Mr van der Post strongly recommended that the Prime Minister and Lord Carrington should send private messages to Mr P W Botha and Mr Pik Botha as soon as possible, thanking the South Africans for their help and restraint. There was no need for the messages to deal with the details of military support for Rhodesia.

Mr van der Post said that such messages would have a very useful psychological effect, as the statements which we had been obliged to make in public about South African forces had left South African Ministers feeling that their positive efforts were going unrecognised. He was certain that the South Africans would be discreet about private messages from Mrs Thatcher and Lord Carrington.

Lord Carrington thinks this is a very helpful and sound suggestion, and recommends that the Prime Minister should send a short personal message of appreciation to Mr P W Botha as soon as possible. Such a message would help to balance the representations we have had to make about the need for the South Africans to remove identifiable military units from Rhodesia; and the public statements we have been obliged to make in response to Mr P W Botha's recent oblique reference to the presence of South African forces there. Although at times during the Lancaster House Conference the South Africans have had an unhelpful influence on its proceedings and on the Salisbury delegation, and continue to have doubts about whether we are pursuing the right course, in the past few weeks they have exercised considerable restraint and have taken a generally

/constructive

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constructive line. We hope that sympathetic messages will encourage them to continue to do so. The South African Government are also said by Mr van der Post to have done all they can to contain and isolate Mr Ian Smith.

/ I enclose the texts of draft telegrams of instruction to HM Ambassador at Pretoria which, if the Prime Minister agreed, we would hope to despatch early tomorrow.

*yours ever*  
*Roderic Lyne*

(R M J Lyne)  
Private Secretary

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