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CABINET OFFICE

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From the Secretary of the Cabinet: Sir Robert Armstrong KCB, CVO

Ref. A01637

7th March, 1980

Prime Minister's Emissary to Mr. P. W. Botha

You and I saw Lord Hunt of Tanworth on 5th March; and I have seen him again this afternoon.

Lord Hunt is very willing in principle to be the Prime Minister's emissary to Mr. P. W. Botha.

There are a number of points of logistics and detail to be sorted out.

First, the Prudential Assurance Company, of which Lord Hunt is now a non-executive director, has considerable interests in South Africa, both in Johannesburg and in Cape Town. The Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the company have agreed that, while he is in South Africa, Lord Hunt should visit their companies in both places. Among other things, he will be able to explore with them whether they should now set up an office in Salisbury to handle the Rhodesian business which has hitherto been handled from South Africa. These visits will provide a cover for the other purpose of Lord Hunt's trip to South Africa. Nothing has yet been said to the Prudential offices in South Africa about this visit, however, and nothing will be said until our side of it is set up. For the time being, therefore, our Embassy in South Africa should say nothing to the Prudential offices there.

As to dates, Lord Hunt would be free to go from 3rd April and must be back in London on 15th April. During this time he will need to keep some days free for Prudential business. From his point of view the ideal arrangement would be to travel out to Johannesburg on 5th or 6th April, with a view to meetings with Mr. Botha on 7th and 8th April. That timetable could obviously slip a day. He would then go on from Johannesburg to do his other business, returning on 13th or 14th April. The alternative is for him to do his other business first, and to come to Pretoria for meetings with Mr. P. W. Botha at the end of the week beginning 7th April: say, on 10th and 11th or 11th and 12th April. Either way he would want to have time for a full background briefing from our Ambassador before going into his talks with Mr. P. W. Botha.

/Lord

Sir Michael Palliser, GCMG

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Prime Minister 9A. (2)

I am not sure whether you already know that Lord Hunt has accepted. The timing has slipped a little.

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Lord Hunt has decided that he would not want to be accompanied by a senior Foreign and Commonwealth Office official or even by a "staffer" or note-taker. He is content to go into the meetings with Mr. Botha on his own, take his own notes and write his own report. If of course the Foreign and Commonwealth Office wanted to have somebody out in Pretoria while he was there, that would be up to them; but his inclination is to think that is unnecessary, and that Mr. Leahy can provide all that is required by way of support.

Lord Hunt would like to take Lady Hunt with him when he goes. He is not of course seeking any payment by way of honorarium, but hopes that the Government would be prepared to pay Lady Hunt's fare as well as his own to Johannesburg and back.

For the purposes of his visit Lord Hunt will need briefing, which he hopes can cover the following subjects:

- (1) Intelligence assessment of Soviet intentions in Southern Africa.
- (2) Assessment of policies of the new Zimbabwe Government.
- (3) South African internal policies, and the changes we should like to see.
- (4) The state of play on sanctions etc.
- (5) The state of play on Namibia.
- (6) The degree of increased co-operation which we might be prepared to see in our relationships with South Africa on development and defence (including intelligence).

In addition he would welcome personality notes.

He would be prepared to take briefing either in written form or as a "teach-in", but would on the whole prefer it if he could be furnished in the first instance with written briefs, which could then be amplified in subsequent discussions.

I think that the next stage is for a telegram to go to John Leahy, telling him that John Hunt has agreed to be the Prime Minister's personal emissary, and asking him to find out as quickly as possible whether Mr. P. W. Botha would be willing to have talks with Lord Hunt either at the beginning or at the end of the week beginning 7th April. The telegram could also explain about the "cover" arrangements. I think that it would be convenient if I could have an opportunity of seeing the draft of such a telegram before it is actually sent out.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Michael Alexander.

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

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