



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

26 February 1980

Dear Michael,

*Original to be a cabinet
minutes? not*

Prime Minister's Emissary to Mr P W Botha

Now that the Prime Minister's reply to Mr P W Botha has been sent and Mr Botha's agreement received, the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary recommends that an early decision should be taken on the choice of an emissary of the Prime Minister to visit South Africa in late March for the proposed discussions with the South African Prime Minister and his colleagues. Whoever is chosen will need extensive briefing, and it would be useful for the Prime Minister, ourselves and the emissary himself if an early start could be made on this.

We know from HM Ambassador in Cape Town that the South Africans are thinking of a political figure rather than an official. While Lord Carrington does not think we need necessarily be bound to that view, he considers it important to select someone who can speak with full authority and who is in the Prime Minister's and Lord Carrington's full confidence. In view of Mr P W Botha's short temper and overpowering manner, the emissary will need to be someone not easily cowed or overborne.

Lord Carrington would see some advantage in choosing an emissary from within the present or recent Government service (whether an official or a political figure), to ensure that he or she will speak within the constraints of Government policy and also for reasons of maximum confidentiality. We would also wish the emissary to be able to visit South Africa and call on senior Ministers there without attracting undue attention or provoking speculation; this condition may be more difficult to fulfil.

Against this background, Lord Carrington would put forward the following names for the Prime Minister's consideration. They are set out in his own order of preference:-

- (i) General Sir David Fraser: former Commandant of the Royal College of Defence Studies and UK Military Representative at NATO. The drawback is that, if the purpose of his mission was revealed, the choice of a former member of the armed services could give rise to damaging speculation about military collaboration between Britain and South Africa.
- (ii) Mr Douglas Hurd: as a Minister he could not visit Cape Town unnoticed. We should have to find a plausible explanation for the visit which avoided mention of his

/status



status as a special emissary of the Prime Minister or speculation that he was discussing particularly sensitive subjects. The latter might not be easy, given Mr Hurd's responsibilities within the FCO for defence-related subjects.

(iii) Lord Hunt of Tanworth.

Lord Carrington would be happy to arrange for the person of the Prime Minister's choice to be sounded out on the Prime Minister's behalf.

*yours ever
Roderic Lyne*

(R M J Lyne)
Private Secretary

M O'D B Alexander Esq
10 Downing Street
LONDON

26 FEB 1960

11 12 1
10 11 2
9 10 3
8 9 4
7 8 5
6 7 6
5 6 7
4 5 8
3 4 9
2 3 10
1 2 11
0 1 12