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S Africa, Oct 79, visit by

S Africa Foreign Minister Mr. P. Botha

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RECORD OF A DISCUSSION BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE
FOREIGN MINISTER OF SOUTH AFRICA, MR PIK BOTHA, AT
10 DOWNING STREET ON 17 OCTOBER AT 1800

Present: Prime Minister
Foreign and Commonwealth
Secretary
Mr. M. O'D B. Alexander

Mr Pik Botha
H.E. Dr. Dawid de Villiers

After an exchange of courtesies, Mr. Botha said that he had been asked by his Prime Minister to say that he very much hoped it might be possible to arrange a meeting between himself and the Prime Minister at an opportune moment. Mr. P.W. Botha considered that it would be extremely useful for the two Prime Ministers to be able to discuss their common problems and to get to know each other better. The Prime Minister recalled that she had met Mr. P.W. Botha when he was the South African Defence Minister. She said that it would be virtually impossible for her to meet Mr. P.W. Botha in the months immediately ahead. Her diary was already overcrowded. Mr. Botha made it clear that his Prime Minister was thinking of a visit to London rather than of a visit by Mrs. Thatcher to South Africa. He did not attempt to pursue the matter further.

Mr. Botha said that his Prime Minister had asked him to make clear how grateful he was for the Prime Minister's response to his initiatives in South Africa. Mr. P.W. Botha's ambition was to bring the leaders of the black and the Asian communities to share his vision of Southern Africa. This was based on a belief that South Africa could and should play a bigger role in the social and economic development of the entire region. The region contained 40 million people. It possessed a good infrastructure and a large internal market. It was in every sense the most highly developed region in Africa. It had enormous resources of gold and other minerals, of the various metals and of water. South Africa's knowledge and

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expertise e.g. in the areas of agriculture, treatment of disease, and industry was tailored to the African situation. The region was one of great importance. Given the chance, the present South African Government aimed to show the other African countries that co-operation with them would be worth seeking. Within South Africa the Government's objective was to convince the whites that the blacks were their natural partners. If Mr. P.W. Botha's policies succeeded, the result would be a solid and stable region in Southern Africa which it would be easier for the West to support.

The Prime Minister said that she needed no convincing about the importance of South Africa. She considered that Mr. P.W. Botha's efforts had not received enough recognition in the West. His recent initiatives were part of a continuing process. The setbacks he had encountered in the recent by-elections had underlined how courageous his policies were. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary said that he agreed with the Prime Minister. Mr. Botha's point about making it easier for Western Governments to support Southern Africa was of particular importance. The greater the movement to which they could point within South Africa, the better.

Mr. Botha said that despite the difficulties, the South African Government had the will to complete their programme. But they would be unable to do so if the Marxists won in Zimbabwe/Rhodesia. The Prime Minister said that everyone would be lost if the Marxists won. It was essential to have moderate Governments, supported by the white population, in both Zimbabwe/Rhodesia and in Namibia. Britain's objective was to achieve a lasting solution in Zimbabwe/Rhodesia of the type secured in Kenya. This would allow the country to flourish, would give the neighbouring countries a better chance and would make co-operation with South Africa easier. We would try to get others to share our view of the situation in the region as a whole. A constitutional settlement supported only by South Africa and

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the United Kingdom would leave Zimbabwe/Rhodesia isolated. There had been two aspects of Bishop Muzorewa's Constitution which had had to be rectified because they had no parallel in any other Constitution granted by Britain. Both points had been put right. There was now a Constitution which was in all respects similar to those we had granted to many other countries on gaining independence. Britain recognised that what Rhodesians wanted was an end to the war: we intended to offer the ballot in exchange for the bullet. Great difficulties remained and progress at the Conference had been too slow. Bishop Muzorewa had been away from Salisbury too long. None the less we were on course. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary added that it was essential that Britain should be seen to be being reasonable in the conduct of the negotiations. As it was he had already been accused by many of attempting to wreck the Conference.

Mr. Botha said that it was important that Bishop Muzorewa's position should not be weakened. There was no-one in Rhodesia who would look after his interests. His power base lay in his link with the Security Forces. If this were to be severed, the Bishop would be a laughing stock in the country. Access to the levers of power/^{was what} mattered in African politics. Looking further ahead, Mr. Botha said that he was concerned about the possibility that Mr. Nkomo would be allowed to participate in the elections even though he had not accepted any agreement in London. If this happened, Mr. Nkomo would have a platform that would enable him to destroy Bishop Muzorewa. He would say that he had sought a better agreement in London but that the Bishop had sold out to the British. The Prime Minister said that there was force in Mr. Botha's point but that in our view Mr. Nkomo should not be allowed to participate in the election unless he accepted the Constitution. As regards Bishop Muzorewa's position, the aim would be for him to return to Salisbury with definite achievements e.g. the lifting of sanctions and the return to legality, to his credit.

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Mr. Botha said that South Africa had a military presence in Rhodesia at the Bishop's request. This consisted of equipment rather than men. South Africa was also giving financial support to the tune of some 40 million rand per month. If they were to decide to end their presence, they would wish to do so soon. South Africa could not afford a repetition of what had happened in Angola where they had appeared to capitulate under external pressure. (It had evidently been Mr. Botha's intention at this point to describe the alternative course of action which South Africa might pursue if the situation deteriorated and they decided not to withdraw. However, in the event the conversation took a different direction and he never returned to the point.)

The Prime Minister expressed the hope that South Africa would not decide to pull out of Rhodesia. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary said that it was entirely reasonable for Bishop Muzorewa to have purchased the South African equipment. If there were a British presence in Zimbabwe/Rhodesia during the interim period, no questions would be asked about the equipment.

Mr. Botha said he was concerned that the United States Government might try to exert pressure on the British Government. The Prime Minister said he need have no concern on that score. We would do our best to bring the Americans along and would remind them of our extensive experience in the problems of the region. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary said that he did not believe the American Government could afford not to follow HMG's line. Mr. Botha referred to intercepts available to the South African Government of President Nyerere's conversations with colleagues. President Nyerere's interpretation of what he had been told by the Americans did not altogether square with the Prime Minister's view. It was of course possible that President Nyerere had misunderstood what the Americans were saying. The Secretary of State said that he thought President Nyerere was probably wide of the mark. The only

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worry was that the Americans might not regard the interim arrangements as fair. But they could probably be brought round.

At the end of the conversation Mr. Botha reverted to his Prime Minister's vision of the development of Southern Africa as a whole. He said that Mr. P.W. Botha intended to have a meeting with South African industrialists and financiers on 22 November at which he would be seeking financial support for his grand design. The meeting ended at 1835.

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