

SECRET



Prime Minister

*I would not leave it later than mid-March*  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
*otherwise - it is too much*  
London SW1A 2AH

*You have discussed this with Lord Carrington. If you are content with the draft, I will despatch the telegram &*

12 February 1980

*Dear Michael, submit the text for your signature*

South African Proposal for Discussion with an Emissary of the Prime Minister

*of 2/11*  
*brush-off*  
*not*  
*Point-like*  
*1 1/2 drafts*  
*out*

The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary has carefully considered the letter of 5 February to the Prime Minister from Mr P W Botha in Cape Town.

Lord Carrington sees both opportunities and risks in Mr Botha's proposal that the Prime Minister should send an emissary to South Africa for discussions with Mr Botha of the broad global topics which are the subject of the letter. We should suffer serious harm internationally if it became known that we were engaged in this kind of strategic planning with the South Africans, who would not hesitate to leak it if and when it suited them.

However, Lord Carrington considers that talks with the South Africans at the right time and with the right agenda might offer useful opportunities to bring our influence to bear on them. The timing of the talks will be important. A visit by the emissary before the Rhodesian elections could be misrepresented as collusion in planning how to deal with the situation after the election (and Lord Carrington has already told Pik Botha that it would not be appropriate for them to meet before independence). It would be difficult for the emissary to be talking discreetly to Mr Botha during the first part of March when a United Nations team will be in Cape Town for discussions with the South Africans on Namibia.

Lord Carrington therefore recommends that the Prime Minister might offer to send an emissary (who could be selected later) for talks in the latter part of March or early in April. Such an offer, if made now, might serve to encourage the South Africans to act in a constructive way over Rhodesia and Namibia during the next few critical weeks.

/Lord Carrington

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Lord Carrington also recommends that we should make it clear that we would envisage a much more limited scope to the discussions than Mr Botha has suggested, both to avoid being drawn into an inopportune commitment to the South Africans without any guarantee of having anything to show for it, and also to protect ourselves against the risk that the South Africans might one day be tempted to leak the text of the Prime Minister's letter.

/ I enclose a copy of a draft reply to Mr Botha from the Prime Minister which is designed to avoid either an unwise commitment to the kind of dialogue which the South Africans want, or a rebuff to a proposal which offers potential opportunities as well as dangers for us. I should be grateful if you would let me know soon whether the Prime Minister agrees. I suggest that we should telegraph the text of the Prime Minister's reply, as approved, to Cape Town for delivery by the Ambassador, with the signed original following by bag. I  
/ enclose a draft telegram to Mr Leahy for this purpose.

*yours ever*

*Roderic Lyne*

(R. M. J. Lyne)  
Private Secretary

M O'D B Alexander Esq  
10 Downing Street  
London

SECRET

171 FEB 1980



CONFIDENTIAL

Registry No.

DRAFT LETTER

Type 1 +

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

Top Secret,  
Secret.  
Confidential.  
Restricted.  
Unclassified.

To:- The Hon P W Botha  
Prime Minister  
CAPE TOWN

From  
The Prime Minister  
Telephone No. Ext.  
Department

PRIVACY MARKING

..... In Confidence

I have read your letter of 5 February with great care and interest, and I am grateful for the way you have set out your thinking and your concerns so fully and clearly.

We share your concern about Soviet ambitions in Africa and elsewhere. We regard them as a threat, both to our interests and to our way of life. We are determined that our response to that threat shall be vigorous and effective. The international reaction to the invasion of Afghanistan has helped to dispel any tendency towards complacency on the part of other countries and governments which, for the most part, now begin to understand the dimensions of the threat.

We are convinced that the most effective way to counter the spread of communist influence is to find peaceful solutions to problems which might otherwise give rise to violence and conflict and thus provide the pretext for communist intervention. This is one of the reasons why we have worked <sup>so hard</sup> ~~tirelessly~~ for an end to the Rhodesian conflict and have actively engaged with the rest of the Five in the effort to defuse the situation in South West Africa/Namibia.

~~I am heartened by your commitment to justice and the eradication of racial discrimination in South Africa itself, and I very much welcome your offer to discuss~~

/candidly Dd 0532000 800M 5/78 HMSO Bracknell

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*The removal of racial discrimination + to a policy of human rights that protects all South African peoples*

*Not  
Critic  
Critic - not  
because  
it is not  
attached*

candidly with us the problems that face you and their implications for stability and peace in Africa generally.

I do not think we should <sup>set ourselves excessively</sup> adopt <sup>goals</sup> too ambitious a target at the outset.

~~By our exchanges over the past months I think that we have developed a much clearer understanding of each other's point of view. I am sure that we can build on that to establish a more constructive relationship. There will be value in defining the main differences between us even if we cannot resolve them all at once.~~

I therefore suggest that the discussions you have in mind should focus on an analysis of the potential sources of conflict, discontent, and instability in central and southern Africa; the means available for defusing them; and the extent to which they may be exploited for the spread of communist influence in the area.

Clearly the prospects in southern Africa will be <sup>greatly</sup> much influenced by developments in Rhodesia over the next <sup>few weeks</sup> month. ~~Such~~

~~Discussions~~ <sup>would be likely to</sup> might therefore be more timely and fruitful if they ~~were to~~ take place after, rather than before, Rhodesia has completed the election process and is launched as an independent country. It would also help to provide a firm basis for the discussions if they were held at a time when there were clear signs of progress towards the early implementation of the Five's Proposal for South West Africa/Namibia. I suggest therefore that

we might aim for the start of the discussions ~~towards~~ <sup>in the second half</sup> the end of next month, ~~or at the beginning of April when the position and prospects in both Rhodesia/Zimbabwe and South West Africa/Namibia should be clearer.~~

We both hope that a ~~the basis of the~~ more constructive relationship ~~which we both hope can be~~ developed between our countries. <sup>To that end we need to know</sup> ~~we need to know~~ ~~of~~ where our respective analyses of the problems in ~~South~~ Africa coincide ~~where they~~ diverge. Let us start by ~~clearing the ground.~~ Like you I am anxious that the process should ~~get under way~~ <sup>start</sup> soon. ~~But the prospects~~

/I have

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I have not yet settled on my choice of emissary. But I shall wish to send a senior figure who can speak with complete confidence on my and the Government's behalf.

I hope you will be able to confirm that you would be content to proceed on the basis I have suggested. If so I shall ask Mr Leahy to let you know whom I intend to nominate as my representative for the discussions and to discuss dates for his arrival.

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File No. ....  
 Department SAFD .....  
 Drafted by BARDER  
 (Block Capitals) .....  
 Tel. Extn 233 5189 .....

SECRET  
 OUTWARD  
 TELEGRAM

Security Classification
SECRET
Precedence
IMMEDIATE
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 (Security Class.) SECRET (Caveat/  
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To IMMEDIATE CAPE TOWN Tel. No.....of.....  
 (precedence) (post)

AND TO (precedence/post) .....

AND SAVING TO .....

REPEATED TO (for info) .....

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Distribution:-

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Copies to:-

(TEXT)

Your telno 103: P W BOTHA'S MESSAGES TO THE PRIME MINISTER.

1. MIFT contains the text of the Prime Minister's reply to Mr P W Botha. You should arrange for this to be delivered as soon as possible. Signed original follows by bag.
2. In delivering the Prime Minister's reply you should stress the importance of maintaining the confidentiality of these exchanges and of the proposed talks. Any disclosures would be bound to arouse damaging speculation and suspicion, perhaps to the extent that it would become impossible for the talks to take place. If the South Africans express disappointment about the suggestion that the talks should not begin until late March or early April

/you

you should point out that it could not be sensible to discuss these matters until we have a better idea of how things will turn out in Rhodesia, and this will only be after the elections and formation of a government. Moreover, it would clearly be inappropriate for the Prime Minister's emissary to be in Cape Town for talks with Mr Botha simultaneously with the South African talks in Cape Town with the UN team on Namibia. In any case, progress on both Rhodesia and Namibia would provide the best possible basis for the proposed discussions.

3. See MIFT.

NOTHING TO BE WRITTEN IN THIS MARGIN