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From the Private Secretary

26 April 1980

Lord Hunt

As you know, Lord Hunt called on the Prime Minister on Thursday 24 April to de-brief after his recent visit to South Africa. Since Lord Hunt has already discussed his journey at length with the Department, I will not in this letter record his remarks about South Africa in any detail.

Lord Hunt said that he had formed the impression that Mr. P.W. Botha intended to continue with his efforts to introduce some movement into the internal situation in South Africa. He would for instance continue the effort to remove petty discrimination. However he had no clear idea about his ultimate destination. Lord Hunt said that he himself could see no viable solution to South Africa's problems. He did not think that Mr. Botha would allow his party to split.

The most important way in which HMG could help Mr. Botha would be to try to diminish his sense of isolation. (Lord Hunt compared the feeling in South Africa with that in East Germany). There would not be a great deal that we could do, but small gestures would help. Mr. Botha had already abandoned the idea of the staff discussions envisaged in his original letter to the Prime Minister. But it would be helpful if, for instance, the Prime Minister could send a message; if the South African Ambassador could be seen by the Prime Minister from time to time; and if senior officials, such as Sir Michael Palliser, could go out to South Africa from time to time.

The Prime Minister agreed with Lord Hunt's recommendations. She said she would try to arrange to have Dr. de Villiers down to Chequers at some point.

MIA

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