

CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE : CALL BY SOUTH AFRICAN FOREIGN MINISTER

Lord Carrington has personally approved the following formula for use by the British spokesman after his meeting with the South African Foreign Minister at 5 p.m:

On the Record:

The South African Foreign Minister, Mr. Pik Botha, called on Lord Carrington at 5 p.m. today.

Mr. Botha explained the views of his Government on Southern African questions, including Rhodesia. Lord Carrington explained the progress that has been made so far and the position that has been reached at Lancaster House.

Since Mr. Pik Botha had come with a message from his Prime Minister, Mrs. Thatcher received him for a short talk at 6 p.m. this evening. Lord Carrington was present.

For Unattributable Use:

Mr. Pik Botha's visit to the United Kingdom was arranged at short notice at the urgent request of the South African Government. The South Africans seemed to be anxious about developments at Lancaster House and to have the idea that Lord Carrington was allowing the Patriotic Front to run the show. At his meeting with Mr. Pik Botha, Lord Carrington disabused him of this approach, explaining that the Constitutional proposals he had advanced required difficult concessions from both sides. Once our Constitutional proposals were tabled, no concessions were made to either side.

A major objective of the British Government is to secure the end of the war in Rhodesia.

We also wished to ensure that the outcome of the Constitutional Conference should give, and is seen to give, a genuine opportunity to the Patriotic Front to fight free and fair elections under British supervision. In these circumstances we think it right to do all we can to secure the participation of the Patriotic Front.

For use if necessary: Lord Carrington has already let it be known through Pretoria (diplomatic channels) that we deprecate talk of military intervention.