



South Africa² VMB
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10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

10 September 1979

Dear Mr Hughes,

Thank you for your letter of 3 September about Plessey Limited and South Africa.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary replied to the letter from Mr. Abdul Minty on 3 September. I enclose a copy for convenience. I think this covers the points in your letter to me.

I confirm that the Government fully accepts its responsibility to implement the United Nations arms embargo.

Yours sincerely
Margaret Thatcher

Robert Hughes, Esq., MP.

JS



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

3 September 1979

Jean D. N. N. N.

Thank you for your letter of 29 July. I am also taking account of the points in Mr Terry's letter to Sir Ian Gilmour of 2 August about Plessey Limited.

The radar air surveillance equipment in question was first licenced by the previous Government before the UN mandatory arms embargo was imposed in November 1977. We understand that the equipment is to be used in the South African combined civil and military air control system. Integration of the operation of national air traffic control systems is standard practice in most countries. The licence was later reviewed following the imposition of the embargo in November 1977, when the previous Government were satisfied that the export of the equipment in question was not a breach of the UK's international obligations under the UN arms embargo. We have carefully looked into the matter and see no reason to take a different decision.

In a contract of this nature it is normal to include provision for training and customer supervision of the contract. We understand that the majority of the South African personnel who have been in this country under the terms of the contract are civilians, although three of them were members of the South African Defence Force under the leadership of a civilian technical expert. All three have since left the country. The only personnel now here are civilians. Though I do not regard the presence of the SADF personnel as having constituted a breach of the Government's policy of non-collaboration with the South African Government on military matters (since they were here as part of a private arrangement directly between the Company and their customer), to remove any

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possible misunderstanding we have advised the Company that it would be preferable if in future SADF personnel did not come to this country in connection with the contract. I understand that no more SADF personnel will in fact come to Britain.

Sincerely
J. Carrington
(CARRINGTON)

Mr Abdul A Minty