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PRIME MINISTER'S  
PERSONAL MESSAGE

10 DOWNING STREET

SERIAL No. T28/80

THE PRIME MINISTER

14 February 1980

Subject copy filed on South Africa (June 79) 'Relations with  
SAfrica'

Dear Prime Minister,

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 so hard 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 the removal of racial discrimination and to a policy of ensuring that justice is done to all South Africa's peoples. I very much welcome your offer to discuss candidly with us the problems that face you and their

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implications for stability and peace in Africa generally.

I do not think we should set ourselves excessively ambitious goals at the outset. We both hope that a more constructive relationship can be developed between our countries. To that end we need to know where our respective analyses of the problems in Southern Africa coincide and where they diverge. Let us start by clearing the ground.

Like you, I am anxious that the process should get under way soon. But the prospects in Southern Africa will be greatly influenced by developments in Rhodesia over the next few weeks. Discussions are likely to be more fruitful if they 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 in the second half of next month.

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.

Yours sincerely  
P. W. Botha

The Honourable P. W. Botha.

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