

From

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MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
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Primi Primitus

(2)

Dear Prime Minister,

Primi Primitus

NAMIBIA

Before dinner yesterday you said you would  
like to have my impressions.

I shall send you a short note tomorrow.

I believe you may be seeing General Slabcut  
shortly.

Yours ever,

John

|| Thank you for last night. I much enjoyed  
your apt and witty speech - as did everyone. ||

CONFIDENTIAL



*Prime Minister*

*MA 19/ix*

18th September 1980

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Note by John Biggs-Davison, M.P., for the Prime Minister  
on his Southern African tour, 24th August to  
6th September 1980.

Herewith a note on my Southern Africa tour as promised in my letter of yesterday.

SOUTH AFRICA

Together with Jim Spicer, I visited South West Africa/Namibia via the Republic. Your visit to the Cape is remembered with pleasure.

We attended a Southern Africa Forum in Johannesburg between European and South African parliamentarians. The possibility was discussed of links between the Southern Africa region and the EEC, which would be loath to co-operate publicly with South Africa, as such.

Appreciation was expressed of your willingness and that of HMG to give the South African Government credit for reforms made and the more fundamental changes in prospect. Unfortunately, Pretoria's decision to consult black representatives through a Council separate from the President's Council (white, coloured and Asian) has brought deadlock and made the position of the coloured community even more difficult.

Delayed hopes and rising expectations can be potent causes of disorder. Not that one need doubt the South African Government's capacity and will to govern firmly and suppress revolt. The South African economy is, moreover, strong and moderation and non-violence still predominate, if precariously, among the urban blacks.

NAMIBIA

I am uncertain of South Africa's political strategy. Perhaps the South African Government is also unsure of the best course to pursue.

One might say that Namibia, with its inter-racial, but ethnically elected, administration, is at a "Muzorewa stage." Dirk Mudge and his black colleagues of the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA) know that they need to show results. This Bishop Muzorewa failed to do in Rhodesia-Zimbabwe. The DTA can point to the abolition of apartheid; the local Defence Force (though the South Africa Police is still the only police force); the equalisation of white-black pay.

SWAPO's power rests on terror, Soviet bloc arms and aid, UN and other international endorsement and assistance and the Ovambo tribe (46.7 per cent of the population). Nevertheless, another election would be likely to produce a SWAPO majority.

There appear to be two alternatives before Pretoria:

1. To continue to back the DTA and carry on the war, striking into Angola where necessary and using Jonas Savimbi's UNITA to exert pressure on Luanda against Soviet-Cuban-East German influence.

The appointment of an almost unknown Administrator-General suggests that Pretoria wishes to give the local (DTA) administration greater prominence.

Jim and I toured the operational area in Ovamboland. As in the earlier phases of the Rhodesia struggle, the conflict is confined to the frontier and the expanse of desert (Namib) gives security to the interior and to such installations as Rössing Uranium Mine. This we visited and saw something of the racially integrated training, educational and social activities of Rio Tinto Zinc (RTZ) and the Rössing Foundation and their model townships.

2. The second option would be to defend South Africa on the Orange River rather than the Cunene and proceed with UN-supervised elections after the West German and US elections, from which perhaps too much is hoped.

I do not say that Pretoria should, but am inclined to think that it will, go for the second alternative. No great decision will presumably be made until there either have, or have not, been changes in the Federal German Republic and the US. South Africa is concerned at the threat of UN sanctions, although they would hurt black Africa more.

South African Defence Force doctrine stresses the primacy of political and psychological over military factors in the struggle with SWAPO and there are many who wonder why South African conscripts should die for a territory already being separated from the Republic.

We saw the Foreign Minister, "Pik" Botha, when he was putting the final touches to his last letter to the UN Secretary General. That letter condemns the Organisation for its partiality but is conciliatory in the matter of new elections. Botha indicated to us that South Africa wished to extricate herself "with honour". He also said: "Send us Lord Soames and a British Force." The retiring Administrator-General made clear to us, as he had to the media, that he would like the "front line" states to contribute to an "African solution." He suggested that Mr. Mugabe might preside over a conference.

Whether or not HMG involves itself directly, there is one way in which British influence can be increased. In the Republic, there is a shortage of English teachers. In Namibia there is a desire to replace the present lingua franca, Afrikaans, by English. So far as Namibia is concerned, objection would be less likely to arise from South African officialdom than from the UN-dictated isolation of the territory. It seems absurd that we should not be able at least to have consular and cultural representation.

Be that as it may, there should not be serious international opposition to the propagation of English at the expense of the language spoken by the wicked Afrikaners.

I am sending a copy of this to Peter Carrington but have already written to Neil Marten and Richard Luce on the question of English teachers.

John Bigg-Davison