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Prime Minister.

MR. COLES

A.S.C. $\frac{26}{9}$

Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting and
Southern African problems

At lunch today Mr. Trudeau asked me what I thought would be the main subjects at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting. On the basis of my recent talk with Mr. Rasgotra I said that I thought Mrs. Gandhi expected the relations with developing countries to feature high on the list. The Indians were also wondering whether the Commonwealth could have a role in arms control matters but I saw no future in this. There were enough fora already. It was also clear that the Indians expected a good deal of attention to focus on Namibia and the problems of Southern Africa.

Mr. Trudeau then said that he was feeling increasingly uncomfortable as a member of the Namibia Contact Group. He took the view that the South Africans were using the issue of Cuban withdrawal in order to be able to stall over Namibian independence and that they had successfully pulled the wool over President Reagan's eyes. Mr. Trudeau asked whether the Prime Minister intended to raise this question with the President. He thought that it would be helpful if she did so. He (Mr. Trudeau) was unhappy with the linkage concept.

I said that I had used the line with African contacts that whatever the legalities of the position (and we accepted that Cuban withdrawal was not mentioned in the various United Nations resolutions on Namibia) Cuban withdrawal from Angola was an issue which could not be ignored and which had become a feature of the problem. Furthermore it was a respectable objective which all concerned shared. I believed that the Angolans wanted to get rid of the Cubans provided it did not endanger their security. The front line States did not want to see armed foreign intervention in an independent African country. The Contact Group and the West generally would like to see communist influence in Africa rolled back and so would the South Africans. We could therefore share the same aim. Mr. Trudeau said that this was all right provided it did not hold up independence for Namibia. In his view the two were separate issues and Angola was an independent

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country which could do what she wanted about foreign assistance. Progress on Namibia was governed by the United Nations resolutions. After three years he was increasingly disenchanted over the lack of progress in the Contact Group.

Mr. Trudeau obviously takes a line similar to the French on these matters and he is not going to be much help in New Delhi.

I certainly do not think that this question should feature high on the list of the Prime Minister's discussions with the President or Mr. Shultz though I think it might be helpful to her in New Delhi to have heard an account from the Americans of how they see things developing and whether they really expect any progress, either in their own talks with the Angolans or in the South African/Angolan contacts.

Anthony Acland

26 September 1983

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