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Prime Minister

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

The South Africans have

said nothing so far. They

24 September 1981

may well be unaware that you are

Dear Michael, leaving in the morning. And

Anglo-South African Relations

Passage deleted and retained under  
Section 3(4).

O'Wayland.

18 October 2012

We do not know what the South African Prime Minister's letter will contain. It could be about Namibia and/or the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting. But there seems a strong likelihood that it will contain representations about the current state of Anglo-South African relations, on which we have received several indications recently of South African disquiet and irritation. This includes an outburst by the South African Foreign Minister, Mr 'Pik' Botha, to our Consul-General in Johannesburg on 7 September (copy of reporting telegram attached); and probably inspired articles in the Afrikaans press eg Rapport of 6 September (copy attached) which have inter alia suggested that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office was exercising a malign influence. The latter could explain why Mr Steyn has been instructed to approach No 10 direct.

The South Africans may regard as among 'evidence' of a cooler attitude on our side the statement which was issued on 26 August deploring the South African incursion into Angola; our abstention in the Security Council on 31 August on a resolution condemning the South African incursion (the United States vetoed the resolution); our approach in South Africa on behalf of the Ten about bannings and treatment of squatters; and Lord Carrington's statement on behalf of the Ten to the Plenary of the General Assembly on 22 September, to the South African sections of which considerable prominence was given by the British press, (though not as a result of official briefing).

Should Mr Botha's message contain representations on these lines, the following points could be drawn on:

- (a) It remains our policy to have normal relations with South Africa. We have shown understanding for the problems that the South African Government faces both internally and in relation to Namibia. Our record, including in positions we have adopted in United Nations bodies, makes this clear. For example, we have consistently supported the right of all the Namibian internal parties to be heard in the Security Council.

/(b)



- (b) We have, for example, been encouraging within the Five and elsewhere efforts to take account of South Africa's concerns in relation to a Namibia settlement.
- (c) However, it is also our policy to look for and encourage peaceful change within South Africa towards a form of government based on the consent of all of the South African people and to achieve stability in Southern Africa.
- (d) Therefore our attitude towards South African Government's policies cannot be completely uncritical, especially when faced with large-scale incursions into a neighbouring African country with whom we have diplomatic relations, and against which we had earlier cautioned the South African authorities (Mr Steyn's call on the Lord Privy Seal on 7 August); and lack of movement towards internal reform about which much had been broadcast by Mr Botha when he came to office.
- (e) (If raised) As our Chargé d'Affaires explained to Mr Fourie on 1 September, our abstention in the Security Council on 31 August was consistent with our previous position on similar resolutions, and our explanation of vote clearly set out our attitude towards the unacceptable aspects of the resolution.
- (f) (If raised) Lord Carrington's recent speech at the United Nations was of course delivered in our capacity as current President of the European Community. It thus reflected the views of all of the Ten, including our own. There will be other occasions on which we shall have to make such statements in the coming months and we hope that there will be no misunderstanding that they reflect Community rather than purely national views.
- (g) (Only if appropriate - and to be used with caution without any implication of a quid pro quo) We attach importance to our economic relations with South Africa. These include interest in a number of major projects which are in the offing. (The note attached sets out the position). We hope that our chances will be at least as good as those of companies from countries which have demonstrated less understanding for South Africa's position than we have.

*Yours ever,*

(F N Richards)  
Private Secretary

*Francis Richards*

M O'D B Alexander Esq  
10 Downing St

R1

CONFIDENTIAL

GRS 483

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F: CG JOHANNESBURG 051520Z SEPT 81

TO IMMEDIATE EMBASSY CAPE TOWN

TELEGRAM NUMBER 12 OF 05 SEPTEMBER 1981

AND TO IMMEDIATE FCO, DEPT OF TRADE FOR REG COLLINS CRE 5

ANGLO-SOUTH AFRICAN RELATIONS.

1. THE FOREIGN MINISTER REPRESENTED THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT DURING PRINCESS MARGARET'S TRANSIT STOP AT JAN SMUTS LAST EVENING. AFTER HER DEPARTURE, PIK BOTHA VOLUNTEERED SOME THOUGHTS ON BRITAIN'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS SOUTH AFRICA WHICH HE CLEARLY EXPECTED ME TO REPORT.
2. HE PROFESSED TO BE VERY DISAPPOINTED AT BRITAIN'S ABSTENTION IN THE RECENT SECURITY COUNCIL VOTE ON THE SOUTH AFRICAN INCURSION INTO ANGOLA. OTHER MEMBERS OF THE CABINET HAD BEEN EVEN MORE INCENSED AND HE HAD HAD DIFFICULTY IN DISSUADING THEM FROM ISSUING A PUBLIC STATEMENT CONDEMNING BRITAIN. BRITAIN SHOULD HAVE VETOED WITH THE US, SOUTH AFRICA'S FRIENDS (SIC), AND NOT HAVE TRIED TO SIT ON THE FENCE BETWEEN THE AMERICANS AND THE EUROPEANS. HIS INFORMATION WAS THAT BRITAIN HAD LOBBIED THE AMERICANS AGAINST USING THE VETO. BRITAIN SHOULD RECOGNISE WHERE HER BEST INTERESTS LAY IN SOUTHERN AFRICA (MEANING THAT SHE SHOULD SUPPORT THOSE WHO WERE RESISTING AN EXTENSION OF SOVIET INVOLVEMENT) AND AVOID A REPETITION OF OUR MISTAKES IN ZIMBABWE.
3. WHEN I PROTESTED AT THIS HARSH JUDGEMENT ON OUR EFFORTS TO FIND COMMON GROUND BETWEEN THE PARTIES INVOLVED IN A NAMIBIAN SETTLEMENT, MR BOTHA REITERATED THAT THE SOUTH AFRICANS FOUND IT DIFFICULT TO PERCEIVE WHAT THE BRITISH REALLY WANTED IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. AT LEAST THEY KNEW WHERE THEY STOOD WITH THE FRENCH AND, ALMOST IN THE NEXT BREATH, HE WAS ILLUSTRATING THE NATURE OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN RELATIONSHIP WITH THE FRENCH BY REFERENCE TO QUOTE SEVERAL CONTRACTS WE HAVE GIVEN THEM LATELY UNQUOTE. WHEN I ASKED, WITH MATIMBA IN MIND, WHETHER THIS MEANT THAT THE AWARD OF MAJOR PUBLIC SECTOR CONTRACTS MIGHT BE INFLUENCED BY GROUNDS OTHER THAN COMMERCIAL MERIT, MR BOTHA

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INSISTED THAT COMMERCIAL CONSIDERATIONS ALONE COUNTED, BUT QUICKLY ADDED QUOTE BUT I CANNOT SAY WHAT THE POSITION WILL BE NEXT WEEK UNQUOTE.

4. COMMENT. EVEN THOUGH THE BOMBAST WAS UNDOUBTEDLY FOR MY BENEFIT, THE IRRITATION ABOUT OUR ABSTENTION APPEARED GENUINE ENOUGH. MR BOTHA WAS HOWEVER IN NO MOOD TO LISTEN TO ANY EXPLANATION OF OUR POSITION. THE MENTION OF CONTRACTS FOR THE FRENCH WAS, I SUSPECT, A GENUINE SLIP AND COULD REFER NOT ONLY TO FRANCE'S SUCCESS OVER THE BOILERS FOR MATIMBA BUT ALSO TO SOME AS YET UNDISCLOSED UNDERSTANDING WITH THE FRENCH ABOUT FUEL FOR KOEBERG. IN ANY EVENT, MR BOTHA'S REMARKS WOULD SUGGEST THAT COMMERCIAL COMPETITIVENESS MAY NOT BE ENOUGH TO ENSURE THAT WE SECURE THE TURBINES FOR MATIMBA OR STATION C. IT MAY NOW BE LATE IN THE DAY TO DO ANYTHING ABOUT THIS BUT I HOPE THAT THE IMPORTANCE TO BRITISH INDUSTRY OF FUTURE POWER STATION BUSINESS IN SOUTH AFRICA WILL BE BORNE IN MIND WHEN TACTICS FOR THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY DEBATE ARE BEING DECIDED.

TITCHENER

[COPIES SENT TO NO 10 DOWNING STREET]

SOUTHERN AFRICA STANDARD

C AF D  
S AF D  
OADs  
M AND C D  
UND  
NAD  
WED  
ECD  
ES & SD  
CABINET OFFICE

SWA

1. World reports that considerable progress has been made in the last few days with the attempt to iron out differences between SA and the Western contact group on the future of SWA, which is encouraging at a time when the SA incursions into Angola have made things difficult. EEC sources say that the Americans told them last week that progress had been made after five months' worth of intensive discussions between SA and the US government. The progress was announced after there were fears last week that tension among the Western group could wreck their joint action on SWA. A British government spokesman said that he could not comment on the conditions and guarantees which SA had asked for, and suggested that this would be discussed when the five foreign ministers meet later this month. It is generally accepted that the progress is in fact a return to the position held by SA before contact with the five worsened seriously in 1978. One of SA's reasons for resuming talks about accepting 435 may be the greater confidence it has in the Reagan administration. SA's major difficulty in the past was the partiality of the UN, and the more realistic approach of the Reagan administration has made it possible for the US to play a decisive part in the search for an internationally acceptable solution.

SA/UK relations

2. Rapport (6.9) reports from London that relations between the SA government and the FCO are souring fast, and informed observers say that they have hit a low comparable to the days of the Labour government and Dr David Owen. If relations deteriorate further, Mr PW Botha and Mrs Thatcher will have to meet in order to avoid a crisis. The blame is laid on Lord Carrington; he and his department are making SA their scapegoat in Africa and accusing SA of furthering destabilisation by its across-border raids. It would appear that the FCO is keeping Mrs Thatcher at arms' length as far as Africa policy is concerned. Lord Carrington is so strong in the Conservative Party that he is not only allowed to go his own way, but there is practically nobody who will oppose him. Diplomatic circles frowned at the response from Sir Ian Gilmour to Mr Marais Steyn when he complained at the Granada programme; before Lord Carrington had been properly briefed about the Angolan incursion, he was one of the first foreign ministers to summarily condemn SA's

action. Lord Carrington is apparently quite clearly not very pleased with the Reagan administration's view of Southern African affairs, and he seems to think that SA's actions are so provocative that they play into the hands of the Communists. By having Britain abstain in the Security Council, he is trying to butter his bread on both sides, with black Africa being told that Britain wants to act as a bridge-builder and exert a moderating influence on America and its view of SA and its place in the world. Part of this "realism" would be to make the US understand that by openly inclining towards SA it would drive black Africa into a joint anti-Western huddle which would be to Russia's advantage. There are people close to Lord Carrington who would like to persuade the US that the Cubans and Communists are in Angola because the SADF is illegally in SWA, and not the other way around. Some of the harshest criticism of the direction being taken by the FCO comes from Mr John Carlisle, who sees the hand of the FCO behind Mr Heath's speech in Johannesburg. Mr Carlisle described the speech as unhelpful and an embarrassment for the Conservative government and Mrs Thatcher.

#### SALIA congress

3. Rapport (6.9) says in a background article by a Coloured columnist that there was nothing really new in what Mr Heath said apart from the fact that he himself has said it. The French professor, De Montbrial, came closest to the truth and hit the hardest, and it took a philosopher to do it. He said that the trouble with SA is that our system of values is wrong. It is out of step with the West, and the values espoused, though not necessarily followed, by the Soviet Union are closer to the West's than are SA's, which seek to subordinate basic human dignity to the criteria of race and colour and to entrench this in law. Is this not enough of itself to make us look again at the basic values we apply to our coloured fellow-citizens and decide their lifestyles with by means of legislation? Or are the French, and indeed the Germans, English, Dutch and Americans, all out of step and we alone are right?



## MAJOR CONTRACTS IN SOUTH AFRICA

Matimba Power Station

None of the prime contracts will now come to the UK. French, German and US companies have either been awarded contracts or letters of intent have been issued. Northern Engineering International (NEI) will however probably pick up sub-contract work worth between £50-£100 million.

Station C

GEC's efforts are now concentrated on the generators for station C for which they have a very good chance of being awarded the contract and which would be worth perhaps between £300-£400 million. GEC has been asked to revalidate its bid by 2 October. The Contract is likely to be awarded between the end of October and the middle of November.

Station D

Station D is likely to be a copy of Station C but is too far in the future for any estimate to be made of UK prospects.

RESTRICTED