

MJ

8 September 1983

This is just to record that the Prime Minister has seen and noted your letter of 6 September about South African concern about the activities of the African National Congress in London.

TIM FLESHER

R.B. Bone, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Prime Minister

London SW1A 2AH

To note.

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6 September, 1983

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South African Concern about the ANC in London

The Prime Minister may wish to be aware that the South African Ambassador called on the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary on 1 September to make representations about the presence and activities of the African National Congress (ANC) in London.

The Ambassador asked specifically for the closure of the ANC London office, the exclusion from this country of the organisation's officers whom the South African authorities allege are involved with terrorist operations, and the banning of inflammatory ANC journals published here. He explained that he was acting on the instructions of Mr P W Botha and that his approach should be seen in the light of recent terrorist incidents in South Africa and the British government's wish for dialogue and a constructive relationship with his government. He also alluded to the Prime Minister's speech on terrorism to the British Jewish community on 21 July.

In reply the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary referred to our tradition of admitting political exiles to this country and the legal constraints on action against political organisations operating here. He promised to study the supporting material which the Ambassador passed over to see whether this revealed legal grounds for any action against the ANC or its officers.

As a first step, officials in relevant Whitehall departments are being asked to scrutinise the documents handed over by the Ambassador as evidence of ANC activities in this country to see whether they disclose any basis for possible prosecutions or administrative measures against the organisation or its members. This could include the exclusion from the UK of specific individuals. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary will keep the Prime Minister informed as to the outcome of these enquiries and his recommendations on what action, if any, should be taken. Meanwhile, I attach a note on the ANC which you may find helpful by way of background.

I am copying this letter to Tony Rawsthorne (Home Office) and to J Nursaw (Attorney General's office).

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CONFIDENTIAL COVERING SECRET

(R B Bone) *Roger Bone*
Private Secretary

THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

BACKGROUND

1. The banning of the African National Congress (ANC) in 1960 led to the creation of an exiled organisation, headed by Oliver Tambo, and a military wing which embarked on sabotage operations in South Africa in 1961. In the late 1970s the ANC gained many new recruits when thousands of black youths fled from South Africa following the Soweto riots (1976). In the past six years the ANC's guerrilla and sabotage campaign from bases in neighbouring states has intensified.

AIMS

2. The ANC's ultimate goal, as set out in the Freedom Charter (1955), is a one-man, one, vote unitary state based on socialist principles. Since 1960 the ANC has believed that this goal can only be achieved by violent, revolutionary means. Its 'Strategy and Tactics of the South African Revolution' (1969) outlined the general principles and strategy of its 'armed struggle'. Urban guerrilla warfare seems now to be the main element in this strategy.

GUERRILLA ACTION

3. The ANC has concentrated on guerrilla operations against economic and military targets in South Africa, infiltrating small groups of trained cadres from neighbouring states. Since 1977 nearly 200 instances of sabotage, clashes between police and guerrillas and assassinations have been recorded, most incidents being attributed to the ANC. Economic targets have included fuel depots, power supplies, railway lines, the SASOL oil-from-coal plants and the Koeberg nuclear power station near Cape Town. Government buildings, police stations and an SADF base near Pretoria have also been attacked. Most targets have been in or near urban centres, including Johannesburg, Soweto, Pretoria, Durban, Pietermaritzburg, Bloemfontein, Port Elizabeth and Cape Town. While the geographical distribution of these attacks has been wide, most have occurred in the Transvaal and Natal.

4. It seems unlikely that the car bomb outrage in Pretoria in May, when 19 people died, represented a change of ANC tactics following the SADF's Maseru raid (December 1982) which resulted in 42 deaths. Hitherto the ANC had not deliberately attacked white people, although it has assassinated several blacks in South Africa. In this case the South African authorities have claimed the bomb exploded prematurely, and ANC leader Oliver Tambo has denied any change of tactics. But there is undoubtedly pressure from some factions inside the ANC to take the gloves off.

FACILITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA'S NEIGHBOURS

5. The vast majority of ANC guerrillas have infiltrated from Mozambique, often via Swaziland, but some have entered from Botswana, Zimbabwe or Lesotho. Although none of these countries permits operational ANC bases, ANC personnel are present in each state, particularly in those such as Lesotho and Mozambique where there are substantial refugee populations. Botswana, Swaziland and Zimbabwe

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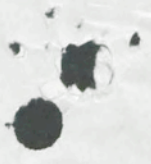
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seek to neutralize this ANC presence by applying tight controls, or in Swaziland's case by expelling ANC members. Lesotho has been reluctant to change its policy towards South African refugees since the Maseru raid though it is now apparently ready to agree to expel named activists. Mozambique, although keeping ANC personnel well away from South African borders, trains ANC recruits with FRELIMO units. However, military training of ANC cadres occurs mostly in camps in Angola (run by Cuban, East German and Soviet advisers) and Tanzania where an educational centre is also located. About 1000 ANC members are located in a camp in north-west Zambia. ANC offices in Maputo and Lusaka direct the guerrilla operations.

CAPABILITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

6. Since 1976 infiltrating guerrillas have established a number of arms caches inside South Africa. The ANC have probably also created cells in several black townships. However, the South African Police has an effective system of informers, and it has successfully infiltrated the ANC. Arms caches have therefore been discovered and saboteurs quickly detected and arrested. Although the ANC does not pose a direct threat to the survival of white South Africa, it has the capacity to erode white self-confidence by stretching manpower resources in the security forces, causing significant economic damage and undermining a complacent life-style. The South Africans expect sabotage and other attacks to occur with increasing frequency if neighbouring states continue to provide sanctuary and facilities for ANC activists. They believe the ANC now has 2000 trained guerrillas, although only a small percentage is active in South Africa at any one time.

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August 1983



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