



State House
Abuja, Nigeria

15 May, 1984.

Delivered to
Mr. Rigby by
Nigerian Acting
High Commissioner
17/V.

The Rt. Hon. Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, Q.C., M.P.,
Prime Minister of Great Britain,
No. 10, Downing Street,
London S.W.1

WAD

For note of call
and draft letter to No 1
to cover the original.

cc. PS
Sir J Leach
Mr. Square
SABD

My dear Prime Minister,

As you are no doubt aware, we were looking forward to the visit of Sir Geoffrey Howe on the 8th of May, when we were informed that at Sir Geoffrey's request, the visit is to be rescheduled. We also received the information that Mr. Pieter Botha, Prime Minister of South Africa, will be visiting Britain from the 2nd of June. It was further reported that the British Government believed in having dialogue with the South African government in order to be able to exert pressure on her to stop acts of destabilisation of her neighbouring countries, gain her co-operation in the talks on the independence of Namibia, and generally be in a position to influence her apartheid policy.

2. Madam Prime Minister, our country's opposition to apartheid is very well known. South Africa has not renounced it despite its universal condemnation. I have difficulties, therefore, in sharing the optimism that an invitation to the South African Prime Minister to visit Britain would advance the struggle against apartheid or make any appreciable difference to the search for a solution to the problems of Southern Africa or advance the independence of Namibia.

On the contrary, I am inclined to feel that a meeting with the South African Prime Minister will be viewed by a vast majority of people as conferring respectability on the regime, and giving comfort to the policy of apartheid. This will, undoubtedly, inflict damage on the anti-apartheid cause, and weaken the resistance of the many brave and dedicated men and women, young and old, who have given up their lives and, many more, who are still suffering to eliminate this pernicious and evil system.

3. I would, therefore, appeal to you, Madam Prime Minister, to reflect seriously on the effect your invitation to the South African Prime Minister is bound to have. The visit will be viewed with considerable alarm by well meaning and reasonable people irrespective of their races. I would, further urge you to consider most carefully the possible consequences on the Commonwealth of the visit, especially its impact on millions of ordinary men and women who have always found inspiration and meaning in what the Commonwealth stands for.

4. Madam Prime Minister, we are not persuaded by the argument that Germany is also inviting the South African Prime Minister for a visit. Germany is not a member of the Commonwealth. We also cannot accept the analogy of East-West conflict and the fact that the West engages in dialogue with the Soviets. The apartheid system in South Africa is a unique phenomenon which has been universally condemned.

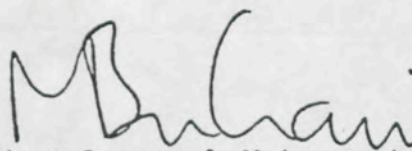
5. You will recall that in 1961, South Africa was expelled from the Commonwealth. The decision to expell her was taken after the most careful considerations. Since the expulsion, South Africa has not renounced her policy of apartheid.

On the contrary, she has grown even more arrogant and has become a bully and threat to her neighbouring countries in Southern Africa. Moreover, she has tightened her illegal grip on Namibia.

6. In the face of all these, it becomes very difficult to explain to the ordinary men and women, in and outside the Commonwealth, that the Prime Minister of a country, which was expelled from the Commonwealth and without renouncing her evil policy, is now being invited by an influential and founding member of the Commonwealth to visit Britain, a country in whose capital resides the Head of the Commonwealth. The visit is bound to be seen as an act of discourtesy to the Commonwealth community and perhaps an affront to African and world opinion as a whole.

7. Madam Prime Minister, we believe that the British Government reserves the right to choose her friends and invite anyone she wishes to visit her country. However, I trust you will find it possible to reconsider your decision because of the damage the visit could inflict on the anti-apartheid cause, its negative effect on the entire situation in Southern Africa, as well as its possible consequences on the Commonwealth.

Yours Sincerely,



(Major-General Muhammadu Buhari)
Head of the Federal Military Government
Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces.