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From the Private Secretary

2 June, 1984.

Visit of South African Prime Minister

The Prime Minister's talks with Mr. Botha began with a tete-a-tete conversation which lasted some 40 minutes. No notetakers were present.

The Prime Minister said afterwards that Mr. Botha had stated that it was never possible for South Africa to satisfy international opinion. No credit was given for the country's rapid rate of growth, nor for the advance in the social conditions of the blacks, particularly in the education and health fields. He was trying to create new political structures which would facilitate change while maintaining stability. This effort was attracting considerable criticism from right-wing political opinion.

Mr. Botha then said that South Africa possessed a good deal of information about Soviet behaviour in the area of Southern Africa - Soviet activity was at a high level. With regard to the security of the Cape, the Shackleton Maritime Reconnaissance aircraft had nearly reached the end of their life. Without suitable aircraft, South Africa could not maintain surveillance of the Southern Atlantic or the Indian Ocean. But it would be prepared to provide airfields and other facilities if Western countries wished to use their own aircraft for this task. The Prime Minister made no comment on this suggestion, nor did Mr. Botha state that South Africa wished to purchase replacement aircraft. He did, however, say that aircraft of this kind would only be used for reconnaissance purposes. South Africa could produce everything it needed for the maintenance of internal security.

Mr. Botha asked that the ANC office in London should be closed. The Prime Minister said that we could not do this under our law, and there was no evidence that the office personnel had been guilty of illegal activity.

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The South African Prime Minister then raised the case of the South African citizens who had been arrested in this country on a charge of contravening the arms embargo. The Prime Minister explained that this was a matter for the courts, and there was nothing that the Government could do.

With regard to sporting contacts, the Prime Minister took the line that the Gleneagles Agreement, which was a matter for the Commonwealth, would continue to apply.

Mr. Botha said that he had made it plain in the South African Parliament that he was against the forced removal of blacks. The Prime Minister made it clear that this was one of the aspects of South Africa's internal policy which caused most concern in this country. She took the opportunity to raise the case of Nelson Mandela. Mr. Botha said that he noted the Prime Minister's remarks, but that he was not able to interfere with the South African judicial process.

I am sending copies of this letter to Richard Mottram (Ministry of Defence), and Hugh Taylor (Home Office). Its contents should be closely protected.

JOHN COLES

Roger Bone, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.