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10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

13 June 1984

Dear Bishop.

Thank you for your letter of 2 June about Mr. Botha's visit. When we discussed Mr. Botha's visit on 30 May, I made clear that this visit signalled no change of policy by the British Government, and that while I felt very strongly about apartheid and wished to see it changed, I firmly believed in dialogue as the best way to influence South African policies, and to bring about the sort of changes we all want to see.

In the event, as I have explained in Parliament, I had candid and comprehensive discussions with the South African Prime Minister and was able to express to him my views on a range of Southern African issues. On Namibia, I made clear our desire to see early progress towards an enduring settlement, for which SCR 435 provides the internationally accepted plan. Our views on South Africa's policies towards its neighbours are well known, and I stressed that the only agreements which were likely to last were those that were freely entered into without duress. On South Africa's internal policies, I stressed my strongly held views on apartheid, and the need for early progress towards a system of government which has the consent of the South African people as a whole. I expressed concern at the continued detention of Nelson Mandela and my hope for early progress on this; and also at the practice of forced removals, citing the specific case of the KwaNgema community who had earlier written to both The Queen and to me. I stressed our determination to uphold our international commitments under the Arms Embargo and the Commonwealth Statement on Apartheid in Sport.

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My discussions with Mr. Botha enabled me to raise many important issues, in some cases issues which people in Southern Africa, such as the people of KwaNgema, had asked me to mention. It is in this constructive way that we and other Western and African governments must continue to press for the sort of changes in South Africa, and the reduction of tension in the region generally, which we all wish to see.

Lastly, you ask about the possibility of export licences for maritime surveillance aircraft. The position on this remains that we have received no export licence application, nor has the South African Government approached us, and we cannot give decisions on hypothetical proposals. But should we be asked to consider such an application, I can assure you that we will honour our obligations under the UN Arms Embargo.

Yours sincerely  
Nanjandhahita

The Most Reverend Trevor Huddleston, CR, DD