



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

8 February 1985

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 Dear Charles,

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Southern Africa

During 1984 we were able without undue difficulty to maintain our established approach to the major issues facing us in Southern Africa. However, the Foreign Secretary believes that Southern African questions will pose greater difficulties for British policy in 1985.

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 Prime Minister  
 There is nothing very concrete here. But CHOGM will certainly be a pressure point.

In South Africa itself, for instance, the recent and serious black urban unrest, a steady worsening economic situation and growing doubts about the new constitutional arrangements have underlined the urgency of making progress on some of the country's basic problems. These issues, and especially Namibia, are likely to figure prominently at CHOGM, where there could be serious criticism over the lack of progress and British 'inactivity'. They may also come up in other meetings which the Prime Minister has planned, e.g. her discussion with President Reagan later this month, and possibly with our European partners.

The Foreign Secretary would like to draw the Prime Minister's attention to the following major aspects of this subject.

NAMIBIA

Under US pressure the Angolans broke the log jam over linkage in September 1984 when, for the first time, they formally tabled proposals for the withdrawal of the Cubans. The South Africans have tabled counter proposals. The Americans are trying to draw the two sides closer together and may themselves put forward a compromise.

But the gap is wide and there are powerful factors working against an agreement: the UNITA threat in Angola is strong and the MPLA very nervous, and divided over its response to US pressures; the Soviet Union will be supporting the hard liners; while in South Africa President Botha is preoccupied with the internal scene, to which Namibia takes second place, and - despite the stress which he laid on the cost of Namibia to South Africa, when the subject was discussed at Chequers - his assessment of the South African interest may lead him to continue to avoid the final implementation of SCR 435.

/ Progress ..





Progress is therefore likely to be slow and certain to be insufficient to contain the frustration of many Africans and others at the delay in implementing the UN Plan originally agreed in 1978. The Foreign Secretary was struck by this during his recent African visit. There is some pressure, though at present limited, for renewed activity by the Contact Group, or even by the UK alone, in the hope that this would somehow short-circuit the delays imposed by linkage. We can expect to be fiercely criticised at CHOGM for our alleged failure to put pressure on those concerned (ie the South Africans and the US).

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Our policy has been to support the US-led negotiations as offering the only real prospect of progress, while condemning? formal linkage. The Foreign Secretary believes that this approach continues to be right, and that it is defensible, provided that progress goes on being made. Angolan participation in the negotiations, to make them impossible for other Africans to dismiss, is vital. But if the negotiations drag on without positive developments, our position would be much less comfortable.

The Foreign Secretary believes that we should watch carefully to identify possible initiatives which we might usefully take, either in support of the US effort or to pick up the pieces should it be seen to fail. We should aim to act in cooperation with all or some of our major partners (e.g. the Contact Group of Five). We have talked to the French, and are consulting the Germans and the Canadians. It of course remains imperative that any action which we take should not cut across US action or damage our relationship with the Americans, since if the issue should blow up in the UN, our interests (e.g. over mandatory economic sanctions) are likely to be closer to theirs than to those of our European partners, or anyone else.

#### SOUTH AFRICA

President Botha's important speech of 25 January, opening the first full session of the new Parliament, paid much attention to black affairs, indicating greater flexibility and airing a number of new proposals to deal with some of the problems. Inevitably, these fall far short of black demands for full equal political rights; but if implemented they would nonetheless represent a significant step forward. They are likely to confront P W Botha with a difficult task in managing his own constituency. Putting them into effect will take time.

/ The new ...





The new South African constitution, as you know, makes no immediate concessions to blacks, and has attracted widespread international criticism. Against that background, we shall have continued difficulty in convincing our critics (including Nigeria, where the Dikko affair and tension about oil-pricing continue to loom large) that our relationship with South Africa is genuinely being used to influence internal developments and, particularly, the welfare of the black community.

In the coming months our own attitude may be contrasted unfavourably with that of the US Administration, if the latter yields to pressure to adopt a tougher approach, and if the Congress puts forward legislation. President Reagan has reviewed US policy and put his weight firmly behind Dr Crocker's approach of constructive engagement. But the Americans may yet feel obliged to make concessions to the anti-South Africa lobby. Any shift in US policy would make our already exposed position more uncomfortable. Our basic policy of using our links and contacts to encourage a process of peaceful change in South Africa obviously remains right. But the Foreign Secretary is considering a number of ways in which we could strengthen the public presentation of that policy, e.g. by making clearer our opposition to measures such as forced removals and influx control.

The South Africans are no doubt looking for external approval of the delicate path which they are treading and a more critical public stance would inevitably have repercussions on our bilateral relationship with South Africa, unless it was matched by private explanation to the South Africans. At the same time therefore we should ensure that the South Africans understand the many positive elements in our policy towards them, such as our continuing support for trade and investment (as much in their interest as ours) and our many strands of dialogue, private and governmental. By doing this we shall aim to safeguard our essential commercial and economic interests in South Africa.

#### MOZAMBIQUE

The Nkomati Accord continues to offer a major opportunity to reduce Soviet influence in Mozambique. But Mozambique's stability is still being threatened by the severe economic and administrative disruption caused by Renamo. Unfortunately, having built up Renamo, the South Africans have been unable to suppress it. They have tried to mediate, but so far Renamo show no sign of moderating their political demands to an acceptable level. We believe the South Africans have cut off official assistance, but some unofficial support may still be reaching Renamo from South Africa. Renamo may also have sources of unofficial assistance in Portugal, Malawi, the FRG and elsewhere. In any case South Africa is blamed, and the credibility of the Nkomati process is threatened. President Machel is concerned, but he is standing firm in his commitment to Nkomati and so far his leadership remains secure. He believes that his policy will succeed, given time.





The Foreign Secretary considers that we should provide wholehearted support to Nkomati and to President Machel through the next difficult months. We are doing what we can to discourage foreign support for Renamo, and working for an EC Ministerial statement of support for Nkomati. President Banda's State Visit will provide another important opportunity to deploy our influence. We are also looking again at our bilateral aid, both developmental and military, but constraints on our resources make any significant further expansion difficult.

The Foreign Secretary has instructed officials to assess, on a continuing basis, the scope for taking new steps to promote Nkomati. This is an area where we have a common interest with the South Africans and where any support we can give will help to balance our necessarily more critical view of their internal affairs.

#### CONCLUSIONS

The Foreign Secretary believes that on all three issues the basic tenets of current policy are sound, but that some modifications may be necessary along the lines now being considered. He also believes that it would be helpful occasionally to deal with Southern African issues in Ministerial speeches with the aim of securing greater support for our policies. This will be particularly important as we approach CHOGM.

I am sending copies of this letter to the Private Secretaries of other members of OD.

*Your ever,*

*Les Appleyard*

(L V Appleyard)  
Private Secretary

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