

PRIME MINISTER

UK POLICY TOWARDS SOUTH AFRICA

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Chief Butcher  
soon - I understand  
he is court records  
- prof*

The Foreign Secretary's paper attached - which you will want to look at over the weekend - deals with growing pressures for economic measures against South Africa and the risk of retaliation against the United Kingdom if we hold out alone against them. He envisages circumstances in which we might need to consider adopting some such measures to avoid worse.

He proposes that work be put in hand on the likely costs to us of both economic sanctions themselves and of retaliatory measures against the UK if we are isolated in opposing economic sanctions.

It may be prudent to do such work, though equally there is a real risk of leaks to the effect that we are considering sanctions - which will in turn only increase pressure on us to adopt them. One could argue that most of the necessary information to enable Ministers to take decisions is already available.

Moreover, the FCO Paper is written from a rather negative and defeatist point of view. Can a number of Black African countries really afford to retaliate against us, with the risk that we would in turn cut off aid? Can Black African countries neighbouring South Africa actually afford to participate in economic measures against South Africa? If we are driven to contemplate some action ought we not to try to focus attention on political/administrative rather than economic measures? Should we not be working harder to consolidate an alliance against economic measures (NB the State Department's assurance that the US would veto UN measures, even if it takes some limited measures of its own)? And simultaneously to bring coordinated political pressure on South Africa to avoid further incursions into neighbouring countries, which are most likely to provoke calls for economic sanctions?



There is also the consideration that your seminar in September may produce some options; we must not let the view get round Whitehall, let alone more widely, that we are resigned to economic sanctions.

You may like me to minute back on the lines of the attached.

*Y  
les mb*

*C.D.P.*

C.D. POWELL

19 July 1985