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From the Private Secretary

2 August 1985

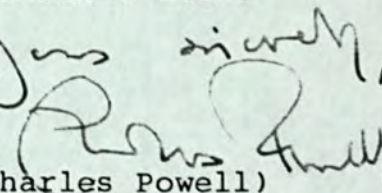
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Prime Minister's meeting with Mrs. Helen Suzman on  
2 August at 1500

The Prime Minister had a brief meeting with Mrs. Helen Suzman, Opposition Member of the South African Parliament, this afternoon.

The general burden of Mrs. Suzman's remarks was that the South African Government was much stronger than most people outside South Africa recognised. Moreover the majority of whites were not ready for one-man one-vote in a unitary state. Action to isolate South Africa or to impose economic sanctions would actually be counter-productive. But progress could be made by steady diplomatic pressure on the South African Government on issues such as forced removals, abolition of the pass laws and an end to attacks on neighbouring countries. She believed that the South African Government was ready to make "incremental changes" and Western governments should push for these. Progress would never be fast. But one should not underestimate the advances which had already been made. One should recognise, too, that economic and industrial progress were the strongest forces for breaking down apartheid.

Mrs. Suzman noted that radical blacks in South Africa increasingly identified apartheid with capitalism, and were thus turning to Marxism. She expected unrest to continue for some considerable time and the Government to respond with oppressive measures. But she did not think it was the beginning of revolution in South Africa, and returned several times to the theme of "incremental changes" as offering the best hope of progress, provided there was sustained pressure from outside to achieve them.

Yours sincerely,  
  
(Charles Powell)

Colin Budd, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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