



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

13 December 1983

John Taylor

Possible Call by Sr Nascimento, Angolan
Minister of Planning, on the Prime Minister,
14 December 1983

I enclose a short brief on the lines
we agreed.

John Taylor
R B Bone

(R B Bone)
Private Secretary

A JColes Esq
10 Downing Street



CALL BY ANGOLAN MINISTER OF PLANNING ON THE PRIME MINISTER -
14 DECEMBER 1983

STEERING BRIEF

1. This brief is for contingency purposes. A call on the Prime Minister will only be recommended if it is clear from the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary's discussions on 14 December that it might tip the balance on the release of the British prisoners.

2. It is recommended that the Prime Minister should make the following two main points:

- i) concern for the release of the British prisoners;
- ii) need for the Angolans to respond to the US wish for detailed negotiations in the search for a Namibia settlement.

The Prime Minister might also emphasise the importance we attach to increased trade with Angola.

3. Sr Nascimento's visit follows that to the UK in February this year of the Angolan Foreign Minister, Sr Paulo Jorge (he called on the Prime Minister), and Mr Rifkind's visit to Angola in November.

4. Sr Do Nascimento, a former Prime Minister, is one of the ablest of the Angolan Ministers and has in the past been one of the most influential. He is carrying a letter to the Prime Minister from President Dos Santos. He has told our Ambassador that the President had told him to deliver the letter personally.



Our Ambassador has been told that a summons to President Dos Santos is imminent, which suggests that the prisoner issue has reached a critical point. Sr Do Nascimento has indicated only that the letter was about Namibia and the British ex-mercenary prisoners in detention in Luanda. He said it contained ideas which President Dos Santos hoped the Prime Minister would study.

5. He is likely to be accompanied by Sr Luis de Almeida, Angolan Ambassador to France, who was also present for Sr Paulo Jorge's call.

CALL BY ANGOLAN MINISTER OF PLANNING ON THE PRIME MINISTER:

14 DECEMBER 1983

LINE TO TAKE

A) BRITISH EX-MERCENARY PRISONERS IN ANGOLA

Main Arguments

- i) Cannot disguise great disappointment at lack of progress on their release; we face increasing public and Parliamentary pressure, particularly since hopes raised by Sr Jorge's statement that he hoped "'opportune moment'" could be found this year; difficult for public and Parliament to understand why release (a humanitarian gesture) linked to progress on Namibia.
- ii) Domestic pressure might make it difficult to resist future offers of exchange of prisoners Savimbi might make. I know you appreciate our position. But where do we go from here? We also understand pressures on Angolan Government but it could be in their interests (vis a vis UNITA's hostage taking) to release them.
- iii) It is unrealistic to make other demands on us. We had understood that the Angolans approved our consistent position that this is a bilateral policy. Our case rests on humanitarian and equity grounds. We would if the prisoners are released, do our best with the South Africans to obtain release of the Czechs (although we could not of course give a commitment that we would succeed). The prior release of our men would enable the Angolans to avoid any appearance of a deal with UNITA. With the same reservation, we would be prepared to approach the South Africans about the release of Angolan prisoners.

/iv)

iv) (If raised). Public and Parliamentary pressure on the question of the prisoners precludes us from signing a General Cooperation Agreement at present time. If the problem could be solved, General Cooperation Agreement could be signed, and door opened to progress on all bilateral fields.

B) NAMIBIA/SOUTH AFRICA

- i) Our vote on Security Council Resolution 539 makes clear our rejection of linkage. Cubans a sovereign matter for Angolans. But fact is that a settlement depends on this being addressed. Time running out. Urgent need ~~to begin~~^{for} serious negotiations with US.
- ii) We have called for South African withdrawal from Southern Angola as essential first step. Is this your major priority?
- iii) We have urged South Africa to be flexible. Mr Rifkind's visit to Pretoria; Mr Botha's visit to London.
- iv) French have not withdrawn from Contact Group, nor sought its dissolution. CG has done vital work in the past; could do so again. Important that it remains in being.