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Subject
cc ops
Master.

10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

25 January 1984

PRIME MINISTER'S
PERSONAL MESSAGE
SERIAL No. T14184

Dear Mr. President:

I wish to take this opportunity to express to Your Excellency my pleasure at learning from Her Majesty's Ambassador Your Excellency's decision to exercise an act of clemency in the near future for the British mercenary prisoners. This humanitarian gesture will be deeply appreciated not only by the relatives of the men concerned but also widely among British parliamentarians and public.

Yours sincerely
Margaret Thatcher

His Excellency President Jose Eduardo dos Santos

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cc MASTER
OPS.

PRIME MINISTER'S
PERSONAL MESSAGE
SERIAL No. T14/84.

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FM FCO 201700Z JAN 84

TO IMMEDIATE LUANDA

TELEGRAM NUMBER 90 OF 20 JANUARY

INFO PRIORITY CAPE TOWN, PRETORIA, WASHINGTON, UKMIS NEW YORK

MIPT: PRIME MINISTER'S MESSAGE TO PRESIDENT DOS SANTOS

BEGINS:

I WISH TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO EXPRESS TO YOUR EXCELLENCY
MY PLEASURE AT LEARNING FROM HER MAJESTY'S AMBASSADOR
YOUR EXCELLENCY'S DECISION TO EXERCISE AN ACT OF CLEMENCY IN THE
NEAR FUTURE FOR THE BRITISH MERCENARY PRISONERS. THIS
HUMANITARIAN GESTURE WILL BE DEEPLY APPRECIATED NOT ONLY BY THE
RELATIVES OF THE MEN CONCERNED BUT ALSO WIDELY AMONG BRITISH
PARLIAMENTARIANS AND PUBLIC.

ENDS.

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MR SQUIRE

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

24 January 1984

Please type both letters.

A.S.C. 24/1

John Jones,

Messages from President Dos Santos to the Prime Minister

Thank you for your letter of 20 January. As you requested, the substance of the Prime Minister's message to President Dos Santos on the question of the British mercenary prisoners has been incorporated in a separate message. As you agreed with Peter Ricketts, both messages have been despatched by telegram: and our Ambassador in Luanda has sought a call on the President.

It was agreed that we would follow up with signed versions. I enclose copies of both texts.

*Yours
R B Bone*

(R B Bone)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street

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TEXT OF LETTER FROM PRIME MINISTER TO PRESIDENT DOS SANTOS (1)

I have read with interest and sympathy the letter of 8 December, which Your Excellency conveyed to me by His Excellency the Minister of Planning, as well as Your Excellency's later letter of 30 December. I am grateful to you for sharing your views with me in this way. I warmly reciprocate Your Excellency's comments about the importance of maintaining and developing the relations between our two countries. I share your conviction that opportunities exist for further deepening our friendship and economic co-operation. My Government is ready to work wholeheartedly with Your Excellency's Government to this end.

In this regard my Government welcomed the visits to the United Kingdom last year by His Excellency the Minister for External Relations and His Excellency the Minister of Planning, and appreciated the cordial reception given in Angola to our Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs. The recent visit to the United Kingdom by representatives of the Angolan oil industry, and the planned visit next month to Angola by Lord Jellicoe, Chairman of the British Overseas Trade Board, are further examples of our strengthening bilateral ties.

X I fully share Your Excellency's anxieties about the conflict in Southern Angola and your wish to re-establish conditions of peace and stability. We were glad to support the UN Security Council's Resolution No. 545, which was adopted in December last year and which called for the withdrawal of South African forces from Angola. We have naturally viewed with deep concern the recent South African Military operations in your country. We have in public strongly deplored these attacks on Angolan sovereignty and territorial integrity. I wish Your Excellency to know that my Government has also raised the issue direct with the South African Government and urged the speedy withdrawal of South African troops from Angolan territory.

/I note



- 2 -

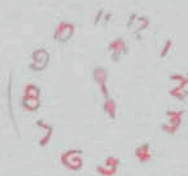
I note that the South African Government has said that it has pulled back the forces which were engaged in the recent operations. I have also noted the diplomatic proposals, particularly your own offer of a truce, which are on the table. My Government has made clear to the South African Government, as well as to the United Nations Secretary-General and other interested Governments, our strong desire that everything should be done to bring these developments to a positive conclusion. It seems to me that we have reached a very significant stage in the search for a solution. The opportunities need to be seized. My Government will continue to help in any way possible.



TEXT OF LETTER FROM PRIME MINISTER TO PRESIDENT DOS SANTOS (2)

I wish to take this opportunity to express to Your Excellency my pleasure at learning from Her Majesty's Ambassador Your Excellency's decision to exercise an act of clemency in the near future for the British mercenary prisoners. This humanitarian gesture will be deeply appreciated not only by the relatives of the men concerned but also widely among British parliamentarians and public.

2^o JAN 1984





10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

20 January 1984

Messages from President Dos Santos to the Prime Minister

Thank you for your letter of 19 January.

The Prime Minister agrees that a message on the lines of that enclosed with your letter should be conveyed from her to President Dos Santos. But, since she undertook to the Angolan Minister of Planning that her reply to the President's letter of 8 December would not mention the mercenaries, she would like the substance of the final paragraph of your proposed text to be incorporated in a separate message which HM Ambassador in Luanda could deliver or not deliver according to his best judgment at the time.

We agreed that you would consider a suitable text for the second message. Both would then be despatched by telegram and we would follow up with signed versions. I should be grateful if you could let me have the draft of the second message as soon as possible.

BR

A. J. COLES

Roger Bone Esq
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

BR

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Prime Minister.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

If you agree with the message to President Dos Santos, we will telegraph it and follow up with a signed version.

19 January 1984

Dear John,

Agree message?

A.F.C. 49/1

Yes but - As I promised not to mention the mercenaries - could this point be put in a separate letter so that our Ambassador could deliver the separate letter or not - all to his latest advice not

Messages from President Dos Santos to the Prime Minister

During his call on the Prime Minister on 14 December, Sr Do Nascimento, the Angolan Minister of Planning, delivered a letter from President Dos Santos. He also conveyed an oral message from the President about the release of the British ex-mercenary prisoners in Angola.

We have delayed submitting a formal reply in order to avoid coinciding with the contentious Security Council debates on Angola/Namibia. The prospects for some progress over Namibia seem now to have improved and this would be a favourable moment for the reply to be sent.

In the meantime, President Dos Santos sent a further letter to the Prime Minister on 30 December, which seeks our assistance in ensuring respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Angola. I enclose the original, together with a copy of Luanda telegram number 917 containing an unofficial translation. Similar letters were sent to a number of other Heads of Government. On 4 January, the President confirmed orally to our Ambassador that the British mercenary prisoners will be released by the end of February. The President asked that this be conveyed to the Prime Minister.

I attach a draft reply from the Prime Minister to President Dos Santos. The Prime Minister's message will be important in persuading President Dos Santos to keep to his undertaking to release the British prisoners despite our abstention over Security Council Resolution 546 (on the South African attack into Angola). If his reaction to the message is positive our Ambassador may be able to obtain from him a firm date for release. The message also provides an opportunity to assist the United States in their discussions with Angola (to take place on 20 January) to prepare the ground for the disengagement of South African forces from Southern Angola which could lead on to an agreement over Cuban withdrawal. The draft message is therefore rather longer

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street

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and the explanation of our policy more detailed than would otherwise have been the case. Our Ambassador in Luanda has confirmed that he believes it strikes the right note to influence President Dos Santos in the Direction we wish.

The draft message includes a specific reference to the release of the British prisoners. Although the Prime Minister told Sr Do Nascimento that she would not mention the prisoners in her reply to the President's first letter, the subsequent confirmation by President Dos Santos that he would release them marks a major development and it would look strange to him if the letter contained no reference to this.

The draft does not contain a specific reference to our abstention on Security Council Resolution 546. Our Ambassador in Luanda considers that it would be better not to raise this point of contention. Mr Goulding will respond orally if President Dos Santos himself raises it.

I should be grateful for your confirmation that the Prime Minister would be content for this message to be conveyed. Our Ambassador has asked for instructions as soon as possible. It would be as well to act before there is another round in the Security Council and while President Dos Santos is studying the results of the meeting with the Americans. It would, therefore, be most useful if you could let me have a response by telephone.

Tom
we,
PP. (R B Bone)
Private Secretary

Peter Ricketts

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DRAFT: minute/letter/teleletter/despatch/note

TYPE: Draft/Final 1+

FROM:

Reference

DEPARTMENT:

TEL. NO:

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

TO:

Your Reference

- Top Secret
- Secret
- Confidential
- Restricted
- Unclassified

Copies to:

PRIVACY MARKING

SUBJECT: SUGGESTED TEXT OF MESSAGE FROM THE PRIME MINISTER TO PRESIDENT DOS SANTOS

.....In Confidence

BEGINS.

CAVEAT.....

I have read with interest and sympathy the letter of 8 December which Your Excellency conveyed to me by His Excellency the Minister of Planning, as well as Your Excellency's later letter of 30 December. I am grateful to you for sharing your views with me in this way. I warmly reciprocate Your Excellency's comments about the importance of maintaining and developing the relations between our two countries. I share your conviction that opportunities exist for further deepening our friendship and economic co-operation. My Government is ready to work wholeheartedly with Your Excellency's Government to this end.

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Enclosures—flag(s).....

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I fully share Your Excellency's anxieties about the conflict in Southern Angola and your wish to re-establish conditions of peace and stability. We were glad to support the UN Security Council's Resolution No 545, which was adopted in December last year and which called for the withdrawal of South African forces from Angola. We have naturally viewed with deep concern the recent South African military operations in your country. We have in public strongly deplored these attacks on Angolan sovereignty and territorial integrity. I wish Your Excellency to know that my Government has also raised the issue direct with the South African Government and urged the speedy withdrawal of South African troops from Angolan territory.

I note that the South African Government has said that it [REDACTED] has pulled back the forces which were engaged in the recent operations. I have also noted the diplomatic proposals, particularly your own offer of a truce, which are on the table. ^{The initial} ~~my~~ Government has made clear to the South African Government, as well as to the United Nations Secretary-General and other interested governments, our strong desire that everything should be done to bring these developments to a positive conclusion. It seems to me that we have reached a very significant stage in the search for a solution. The opportunities need to be seized. My Government will continue to help in any way possible.

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Ends.