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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

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CDP 16/5

Dear Charles,

Ramphal's Views on International Economic Issues

You spoke to Colin Budd recently about Kuala Lumpur telno 167, reporting Ramphal's remarks at the South/South conference there in early May; and suggested that we should take up with Ramphal what he is alleged to have said. We have now seen the text of Ramphal's speech, and it is clear that the High Commission and the International Herald Tribune of 6 May accurately reported his remarks on "economic dominion and dependency", "political and economic control of the South" and, most objectionable of all, "the resurgence of (economic) doctrines which support dominance, and which even have a fascist flavour".

The Foreign Secretary shares the Prime Minister's irritation. Sir Antony Acland has already remonstrated with Ramphal, and we have ensured that our views are known to other members of the Commonwealth Secretariat. The Foreign Secretary recommends leaving matters at that: annoying though Ramphal's remarks are, they were not specifically directed at Britain, and a large part of his speech consisted of a call on developing countries to put their own house in order and to negotiate more skilfully in international gatherings. More generally, we want to keep Ramphal on board at this critical stage of COMGEP's discussions with the South Africans. The Foreign Secretary would be willing to tackle Ramphal informally about his speech if an opportunity presented itself, but does not think that a formal complaint is desirable in the circumstances.

Yours ever

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