



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

13 August 1986

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Dear Tim,

SOUTH AFRICA: PRESIDENT BOTHA'S SPEECH

We discussed this morning the defensive line our News Department will take today, about which we have consulted Sir Geoffrey Howe, on President Botha's National Party Congress speech on 12 August. I enclose a copy of the line; an analysis of the main themes of the speech; and (for ease of reference since you should already have seen it) Pretoria Telegram Number 239 with the Embassy's comments.

The advance billing for President Botha's speech in Durban last night, unlike that for the ill-fated "Rubicon" speech exactly a year ago, did not suggest that any surprises or new initiatives were in store. This proved to be the case. With South Africa facing increasing isolation and mounting pressure abroad and greater anxiety at home, President Botha's purpose was clearly to unite the Party faithful and the Afrikaner "volk" behind his Government. He recalled their history and urged that, as the Afrikaners had surmounted great challenges in the past, so they could do so again today.

Once again, President Botha complained about the "unfairness" of the international community's, and particularly the West's treatment of South Africa. He made it plain that he remains determined to defy all such external pressures and to continue with the Government's existing policies. He announced no new steps, but placed renewed emphasis both on the role of the white community and on the policies of "grand apartheid", including the independence of the TBVC states and the idea of making "city states" of the large black urban townships. There was no mention of new reforms.

/There

T Flesher Esq
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There is little comfort for us in what President Botha said. It was less belligerent than it might have been and did not actively threaten retaliation against South Africa's neighbours. But it gave us nothing new to build on; there was no suggestion that President Botha was prepared to make any advance towards the specific steps the West has asked him to take (releasing Mandela etc). The speech set some guidelines, or rather underlined some existing ones, for South African Government policies in the coming months. You will see that the Embassy describe it as a "disappointing performance", which received only a lukewarm reception from the Party audience, who are likely to have been looking for more in the way of new ideas and a sense of urgency.

Yours sincerely,

David Reddaway

David Reddaway
Private Secretary to
Baroness Young



RESTRICTED

PRESIDENT BOTHA'S SPEECH TO THE SPECIAL FEDERAL CONGRESS OF THE
NATIONAL PARTY

DEFENSIVE LINE TO TAKE FOR NEWS DEPARTMENT, 13 AUGUST

President Botha had not been expected to announce any new initiative. The speech which was addressed to a National Party audience restated South African Government policy in familiar terms.

President Botha said that his Government is irrevocably committed to dialogue. But he did not suggest any new moves by his Government that would encourage the start of that process.

The British Government remains convinced that successful dialogue can only take place if the representatives of the full range of black opinion in South Africa are involved. We are disappointed that President Botha showed no signs of taking the quantum leap forward which is so clearly necessary. The steps we have called for together with our Commonwealth and European Community Partners (the release of Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners and the lifting of the bans on the ANC and other political parties) remain in our view the key to bringing about the dialogue which is so urgently needed in South Africa.

RESTRICTED

PRESIDENT BOTHA'S SPEECH TO THE SPECIAL FEDERAL CONGRESS OF THE NATIONAL PARTY

1. In speaking to the Party faithful, and in particular to its Afrikaner power-base, President Botha seeks to unite them in defence of the freedom for which their ancestors fought. He bolsters their faith in their ability to resist outside interference and international pressure. To a much greater degree than in his other recent speeches, President Botha emphasises the civilising role of the white man in South Africa.

A country of minorities

2. In insisting on the unique nature of South Africa, President Botha claims that the issue is not white against black, but freedom against socialist dictatorship (section 6). He reiterates again and again the familiar theme of a country of minorities where the rights of groups must be protected not merely be paper guarantees (section 26).

The internal situation

3. The State of Emergency is "temporary" but there is no hint that it will be lifted soon. "Thuggery, terror and murder" will be resisted. A claim that criminals are charged and tried in South Africa (section 28) ignores the fact that hundreds of political detainees have no recourse to the courts.

4. The references to the ANC and political prisoners are dismissive and/or hostile. No mention is made of Mandela. There is not the slightest indication of any movement towards the basic steps for which we have called (releasing Mandela and unbanning political parties). President Botha repeats (section 28) his call to opposition leaders to abandon violence and participate in constitutional processes.

International pressure for change

5. South Africa reflects in microcosm historical racial conflicts throughout the world (section 11). President Botha condemns the intolerance and double standards displayed by the West (section 9)



for South Africa's attempts to resolve its problems. There is specific mention of the five acrimonious questions put to the Secretary of State during his recent visit including the suggestion that Patrick Magee was equally a "political prisoner".

6. Strong criticism is meted out to the Commonwealth for the attitude it has adopted (section 24). The international recognition enjoyed by tiny Commonwealth states is contrasted bitterly with the ostracism of the "independent" homelands. Their existence is one of the "basic realities" of South Africa (section 28). There is no suggestion that South Africa may be stepping back from this central pillar of "grand apartheid". Indeed the speech reasserts his commitment to such policies. But KwaNdebele's reported decision to reject independence will have undermined President Botha's defence of his homelands policy.

7. Sinister motives lie behind the international campaign against South Africa. The objective is to stifle freedom and substitute a Marxist regime whose resources would benefit "greedy world powers" (section 5).

Sanctions

8. The success in overcoming the United Nations Arms Embargo and the OPEC oil embargo are cited as evidence that South Africa will survive sanctions and will emerge economically stronger (section 29).

Neighbouring States

9. President Botha does not adopt an aggressive stance towards South Africa's neighbours. He warns them again that they will be the principal victims of sanctions (section 30) but reaffirms South Africa's wish for greater economic cooperation. "We must all throw off the yoke of negative foreign interference and build our future together" (section 32). President Botha accuses the SADCC of attempting to undermine the economic cooperation of Southern Africa and repeats the offer he made to the Secretary of State: to discuss regional economic development with the neighbouring states and with

the UK, the US, France and the FRG (section 31). But he does not suggest that such a conference would address the central problem of South Africa's internal situation.

The Reform Programme

10. Those who look for promises of further reforms in the speech will be disappointed. The general commitment to reform is re-stated but there is no mention of possible amendment of remaining apartheid legislation, eg the Group Areas Act. The proposed National Statutory Council is again held up as the vehicle for dialogue (section 26). But little is said about its form. There is a vague reference to autonomy for black communities close to large metropolitan areas (section 25) (the creation of mini city states is not a new idea). But no details are given of any of these proposals. The Congress is, however, expected to provide guidelines on these matters to the provincial Congresses which takes place over the next few weeks (section 26).

11. There is a commitment to dialogue which will recognise the need for protection of minority groups but "nobody has the right to demand that I should commit suicide" (section 2). If negotiations take place and constitutional changes are mooted the voters would be consulted, perhaps "sooner than most people expect" (section 26); whether by election or referendum is not stated. He also apparently said (not in the text we received) that he would expect black leaders to consult their constituencies.

Southern African Department
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
13 August 1986

PIWE MINISTER FROM TIM FLESHER

PRESIDENT BOTHA'S SPEECH

FOLLOWING IS THE ANALYSIS BY THE FOREIGN OFFICE OF WHAT MR BOTHA SAID

'THE ADVANCE BILLING FOR PRESIDENT BOTHA'S SPEECH IN DURBAN LAST NIGHT, UNLIKE THAT FOR THE ILL-FATED 'RUBICON' SPEECH EXACTLY A YEAR AGO, DID NOT SUGGEST THAT ANY SURPRISES OR NEW INITIATIVES WERE IN STORE. THIS PROVED TO BE THE CASE. WITH SOUTH AFRICA FACING INCREASING ISOLATION AND MOUNTING PRESSURE ABROAD AND GREATER ANXIETY AT HOME, PRESIDENT BOTHA'S PURPOSE WAS CLEARLY TO UNITE THE PARTY FAITHFUL AND THE AFRIKANER 'VOLK' BEHIND HIS GOVERNMENT. HE RECALLED THEIR HISTORY AND URGED THAT, AS THE AFRIKANERS HAD SURMOUNTED GREAT CHALLENGES IN THE PAST, SO THEY COULD DO SO AGAIN TODAY.

ONCE AGAIN, PRESIDENT BOTHA COMPLAINED ABOUT THE 'UNFAIRNESS' OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY'S, AND PARTICULARLY THE WEST'S TREATMENT OF SOUTH AFRICA. HE MADE IT PLAIN THAT HE REMAINS DETERMINED TO DEFY ALL SUCH EXTERNAL PRESSURES AND TO CONTINUE WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S EXISTING POLICIES. HE ANNOUNCED NO NEW STEPS, BUT PLACED RENEWED EMPHASIS BOTH ON THE ROLE OF THE WHITE COMMUNITY AND ON THE POLICIES OF 'GRAND APARTHEID', INCLUDING THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE TBVC STATES AND THE IDEA OF MAKING 'CITY STATES' OF THE LARGE BLACK URBAN TOWNSHIPS. THERE WAS NO MENTION OF NEW REFORMS.

THERE IS LITTLE COMFORT FOR US IN WHAT PRESIDENT BOTHA SAID. IT WAS LESS BELLIGERENT THAN IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN AND DID NOT ACTIVELY THREATEN RETALIATION AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA'S NEIGHBOURS. BUT IT GAVE US NOTHING NEW TO BUILD ON SEMI COLON THERE WAS NO SUGGESTION THAT PRESIDENT BOTHA WAS PREPARED TO MAKE ANY ADVANCE TOWARDS THE SPECIFIC STEPS THE WEST HAS ASKED HIM TO TAKE (RELEASING MANDELA ETC). THE SPEECH SET SOME GUIDELINES, OR RATHER UNDERLINED SOME EXISTING ONES, FOR SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT POLICIES IN THE COMING MONTHS. THE EMBASSY DESCRIBE IT AS A 'DISAPPOINTING PERFORMANCE', WHICH RECEIVED ONLY A LUKEWARM RECEPTION FROM THE PARTY AUDIENCE, WHO ARE LIKELY TO HAVE BEEN LOOKING FOR MORE IN THE WAY OF NEW IDEAS AND A SENSE OF URGENCY. (END QUOTE)

THE FOREIGN OFFICE LINE TODAY WAS TO STRESS THE NEED FOR DIALOGUE AND TO EXPRESS DISAPPOINTMENT THAT PRESIDENT BOTHA SHOWED NO SIGNS OF TAKING THE STEPS WHICH WE REGARDED AS NECESSARY (THE RELEASE OF MANDELA AND THE LIFTING OF THE BAN ON THE ANC).

I WILL SHOW YOU A DETAILED ANALYSIS OF THE SPEECH AT THE WEEKEND. AS YOU WILL HAVE SEEN THE POINTS PICKED UP IN THE PRESS INCLUDE

- A HINT OF EARLY ELECTIONS

- AN OFFER TO DISCUSS REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WITH THE NEIGHBOURING STATES AND THE UK, US, FRANCE AND GERMANY. IT WAS THIS OFFER THAT PRESIDENT REAGAN IS REPORTED AS HAVING INTERPRETED TO INCLUDE WILLINGNESS ON BOTHA'S PART TO DISCUSS SOUTH AFRICA'S INTERNAL SITUATION WITH OTHERS. BUT PRESIDENT BOTHA'S SPEECH DIDNOT SUGGEST THAT SUCH A CONFERENCE WOULD HAVE APARTHEID ON THE AGENDA

- THE REFERENCE TO MAKING 'CITYSTATES' OUT OF THE BLACK URBAN TOWNSHIPS IS NOT A NEW IDEA. INDEED HELEN SUZMAN WHO WAS ASKED ABOUT IT ON THE RADIO THIS MORNING SAID THAT IT HAD BEEN AROUND FOR MANY YEARS AND HAD NEVER BEEN TAKEN SERIOUSLY.

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Pine Mountain 2
 A detailed analysis
 of President Botha's
 speech

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4. The references to the ANC and political prisoners are dismissive and/or hostile. No mention is made of Mandela. There is not the slightest indication of any movement towards the basic steps for which we have called (releasing Mandela and unbanning political parties). President Botha repeats (section 28) his call to opposition leaders to abandon violence and participate in constitutional processes.

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Southern African Department
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
13 August 1986

CONFIDENTIAL

FM PRETORIA

TO DESKBY 130800Z FCO

TELNO 239

OF 130615Z AUGUST

INFO IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON, HARARE, LUSAKA, PARIS, BONN

INFO PRIORITY MAPUTO, LUANDA, DAR ES SALAAM, MBABANE, MASERU

INFO PRIORITY GOBORONE, NAIROBI, ADDIS ABABA

OUR TELNO 229 (NOT TO ALL): NATIONAL PARTY FEDERAL CONGRESS
SUMMARY

1. THE STATE PRESIDENT'S OPENING SPEECH WAS DEVOID OF ANY NEW THINKING. IT WAS A DEFIANT CALL TO THE PARTY TO RALLY BEHIND THE GOVERNMENT. REAFFIRMATION OF COMMITMENT TO REFORM AND DIALOGUE WAS IN ONLY GENERAL TERMS. THE EMPHASIS WAS ON GROUP RIGHTS, HOMELANDS AND AUTONOMOUS BLACK URBAN AREAS. THE STRUCTURE FOR NEGOTIATION WAS LEFT UNCLEAR. HOWEVER, A REFERENDUM OR GENERAL ELECTION 'COULD TAKE PLACE SOONER THAN MOST PEOPLE EXPECT'. THE SPEECH GAVE NO HINT OF ACCELERATED OR MORE FUNDAMENTAL REFORM.

DETAIL

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2. PRESIDENT BOTHA'S SPEECH AT THE OPENING OF THE CONGRESS ON 12 AUGUST LASTED FOR SOME TWO HOURS. IT RECEIVED A LUKEWARM RECEPTION FROM THE DELEGATES.
3. IN THE SPEECH PRESIDENT BOTHA AGAIN GAVE VENT TO HIS ANGER AT FOREIGN INTERFERENCE IN SOUTH AFRICAN DOMESTIC AFFAIRS 'WHICH IS OFTEN PORTRAYED AS DIPLOMATIC ATTEMPTS TO BRING ABOUT NEGOTIATION IN SOUTH AFRICA'. THE COUNTRY MUST UNITE IN RESPONSE TO PRESCRIPTIONS, INTERFERENCE AND THREATS FROM ABROAD.
4. ON REFORM THE SPEECH WAS DEVOID OF NEW IDEAS. IT REHEARSED SEVERAL FAMILIAR THEMES: THE NEED FOR A UNIQUE SOLUTION TO MATCH SOUTH AFRICA'S MULTI-CULTURAL SOCIETY, FOR ADEQUATE TIME FOR THE EVOLUTIONARY PROCESS, AND FOR THE PROTECTION OF MINORITY RIGHTS AND GROUP SECURITY. 'FOR THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT, NEGOTIATION DOES NOT MEAN THE ABOLITION OF THE WHITE MAN'S RIGHTS IN HIS OWN FATHERLAND'.
5. THE SPEECH GAVE ONLY A FLIMSY PICTURE OF THE STATE PRESIDENT'S CONCEPT OF LIKELY POLITICAL STRUCTURES. HE EMPHASISED THE IMPORTANCE OF THE INDEPENDENT HOMELANDS WHICH ARE 'SYMBOLS OF THE POLITICAL FREEDOM WHICH EXISTS IN SOUTH AFRICA'. THE SELF-GOVERNING HOMELANDS WERE TO FORM IMPORTANT COMPONENTS OF FUTURE POLITICAL STRUCTURES. SELF GOVERNMENT FOR BLACK METROPOLITAIN AREAS WITH THE REPUBLIC WAS TO BE NEGOTIATED, TO GIVE THEM FULL AUTONOMY AS CITY STATES (A PHRASE NOT OFTEN HEARD RECENTLY BUT WHICH DATES BACK TO THE LATE 1970S). STRUCTURED AREAS TO BE CREATED AT ALL LEVELS FOR

REPUBLIC WAS TO BE NEGOTIATED, TO GIVE THEM FULL AUTONOMY AS CITY STATES (A PHRASE NOT OFTEN HEARD RECENTLY BUT WHICH DATES BACK TO THE LATE 1970'S). STRUCTURES WERE TO BE CREATED AT ALL LEVELS FOR NEGOTIATION AND DECISION-MAKING ON THE BASIS OF CONSENSUS.

6. WHILE EMPHASISING HIS IRREVOCABLE COMMITMENT TO DIALOGUE, THE STATE PRESIDENT LEFT UNCLEAR HOW THIS WAS TO TAKE PLACE. THE NATIONAL COUNCIL WAS PLAYED DOWN AS ONLY ONE OF SEVERAL POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVE FORA. IN THE MOST INTERESTING PASSAGE OF THE SPEECH HE SAID: "THEREFORE, IF OUR NEGOTIATIONS LEAD TO DRASTIC CHANGES TO OUR COUNTRY'S CONSTITUTION, I WILL KEEP MY PROMISE TO CONSULT THE VOTERS BEFOREHAND. IN ANY EVENT, ANYTHING ON WHICH WE REACH AGREEMENT DURING SUCH NEGOTIATIONS WILL HAVE TO BE SUBJECTED TO THE DECISION OF THE WHITE VOTERS. I ASSUME THAT BLACK LEADERS WOULD ALSO WANT TO CONSULT THEIR FOLLOWERS, OR WHAT THEY REFER TO AS THEIR 'CONSTITUENCIES'. SUCH CONSULTATION ON OUR PART, WHETHER BY MEANS OF A REFERENDUM OR BY MEANS OF A GENERAL ELECTION, COULD TAKE PLACE SOONER THAN MOST PEOPLE EXPECT."

7. A NUMBER OF ITEMS WERE TOUCHED ON ONLY SLIGHTLY. THE DISMISSIVE NATURE OF THE REFERENCES TO THE ANC AND POLITICAL PRISONERS AND THE FAILURE EVEN TO MENTION MANDELA BY NAME SUGGESTED NO HOPE OF ANY MOVEMENT IN THAT DIRECTION. THE STATE OF EMERGENCY WAS REFERRED TO BRIEFLY AS "TEMPORARY" BUT WITH NO INDICATION OF AN EARLY END. SANCTIONS WARRANTED ONLY A SHORT MENTION EMPHASISING THE DETERMINATION TO SURVIVE. THE PASSAGE ON SOUTH AFRICA'S NEIGHBOURS UNDERLINED THE NEED FOR CLOSE COOPERATION, AND REPLAYED PRESIDENT BOTHA'S PROPOSAL FOR DISCUSSIONS WITH HEADS OF GOVERNMENT FROM WESTERN COUNTRIES AND FRONT LINE STATES. THE DEARTH OF NEW IDEAS THROUGHOUT THE SPEECH IS EPITOMISED BY THE REPETITION OF THE CHALLENGE TO BRITAIN TO FREE PATRICK MAGEE. THERE WAS NO REFERENCE TO THE POSSIBLE AMENDMENT OF THE GROUP AND SPECIAL AMENITIES ACTS.

COMMENT

8. EVEN THOUGH EARLIER HIGH EXPECTATIONS OF A NEW IMPULSE FOR REFORM HAD BEEN LOWERED BEFORE THE CONGRESS, THE STATE PRESIDENT'S SPEECH WAS A DISAPPOINTING PERFORMANCE. THE HARDLINERS WILL BE REASSURED BY THE ABSENCE OF ANY NEW IDEAS OR FEELING OF URGENCY. HOWEVER, MANY PARTY SUPPORTERS WOULD HAVE BEEN HOPING FOR SIGNS OF A MORE DECISIVE LEADERSHIP AND MORE IMAGINATIVE THINKING. IT IS SIGNIFICANT THAT THE APPLAUSE THOUGH RESPECTFUL WAS SHORT (ONLY 15 SECONDS).

9. THE SPEECH LEAVES THE FUTURE PATH OF REFORM QUITE UNCLEAR. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER GREATER CLARITY EMERGES FROM THE RESOLUTIONS TO BE DEBATED ON 13 AUGUST WHICH ARE TO PROVIDE GUIDELINES FOR FUTURE NEGOTIATIONS. THE SPEECH ALSO FORESEES MORE DETAILED DISCUSSION AT THE FORTHCOMING PROVINCIAL CONGRESSES. HOWEVER, THE MAIN MESSAGE FROM THIS SPEECH IS THAT THE HATCHES ARE TO BE KEPT

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