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From the Private Secretary

13 February 1987

**SOUTH AFRICA: LETTER TO THE FOREIGN SECRETARY
FROM PIK BOTHA**

Thank you for your letter of 10 February enclosing a draft of the reply which the Foreign Secretary proposes to send to Pik Botha's letter of 6 January.

The Prime Minister continues to believe that the concept of matching commitments is the only basis for progress. But she disagrees with the tactics of the proposed reply. It is quite clear that there is going to be no move forward in South Africa before the elections. It is open to question whether there will be any change thereafter. But that is the time when we shall have some prospect of influencing the South African Government. We should keep our powder dry until then. The Prime Minister thinks that the draft enclosed with your letter is a harangue which will do no good now and will actually deny us influence after the elections. She would strongly recommend a much shorter and simpler reply at this stage, for which the constructive last paragraph of the FCO draft would provide the basis.

CHARLES POWELL

Lyn Parker, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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