

PRIME MINISTER

## SOUTH AFRICA: STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

The attached papers describe an exercise which has gone wrong.

We agreed to some very confidential discussions with the Americans and Germans to consider the principles which might underlie an eventual solution in South Africa. The intention was to use the resulting document discreetly with the parties when the moment came.

A text has been agreed (Flag A). It is not too bad.

Unfortunately the others, and particularly the Americans, have now changed its purpose. They want it to be issued as a declaration by the Economic Summit in June.

This is a great pity. The last thing we need is more declaratory diplomacy. It will have no useful impact at all except perhaps on American domestic opinion. It will tie our hands for the future. And the text is bound to deteriorate once the French, Canadians, Italians and Japanese get their hands on it.

The Foreign Secretary is to have a talk about this with Mr. Shultz on 9 April. You may want to urge him to remonstrate that the purpose of the whole exercise will be lost if it simply ends up as just one more public statement. Agree?

C.D.P.

C.D. POWELL  
24 March 1987

*This would be a  
disaster*