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10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

22 July 1987

ACCREDITATION OF SOUTH AFRICAN MILITARY ATTACHÉS

Thank you for your letter of 21 July recommending that we tell the South African Embassy that the proposed appointments of a new Armed Forces Attaché and a new Naval and Air Attaché are not acceptable. The Prime Minister agrees. We shall presumably make clear that it remains open to them to retain their existing attachés.

I am copying this letter to John Howe (Ministry of Defence) and Trevor Woolley (Cabinet Office).

C D POWELL

Lyn Parker, Esq.
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

SECRET



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

21 July 1987

Agreed *ms*

Prime Minister
Agree that we should
not allow the South
Africans to accredit
new

Dear Charles,

Accreditation of South African Military Attaches

As the Prime Minister will be aware, we agreed with our European Community partners in September 1985, as part of the Luxembourg package of measures, to refuse to grant accreditation to South African Military Attaches. We have consistently maintained this policy since then, eg in answering Parliamentary Questions and letters from MPs. At the same time, we have allowed the South Africans to keep their existing Attaches in place.

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The South Africans are fully aware of our position. From our point of view, the presence of South African Service Attaches in London serves no useful purpose, since we do not cooperate with South Africa in the military field. Indeed, some of the activities of the Attaches' office (eg their involvement in recent attempts to breach the UN arms embargo, notably over Chilean Blowpipe) are clearly against British interests. We withdrew our own Service Attaches from South Africa in November 1985.

The South African Embassy have now informed us that their Armed Forces Attache is relinquishing his duties and that they intend to replace him with their current Air and Naval Attache, who would in turn be replaced by a new appointee, Colonel Snyman.

The Foreign Secretary regards this as a crude attempt by the South Africans to probe our commitment, following the General Election, to our international undertakings on this issue. Given our publicly stated position, we clearly have no option but to notify the South African Embassy that the proposed appointments of a new Armed Forces Attache and a new Air and Naval Attache are not acceptable. We shall not announce our decision publicly, but News Department will confirm it if asked by the press (as they will be, since the South Africans have already leaked the fact that they have notified us of their intention to appoint a new attache).

I am copying this letter to John Howe (MOD) and Trevor Woolley (Cabinet Office).

Yours ever,

L Parker

(L Parker)
Private Secretary

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