

Personal + Confidential



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

DD
15/9

12/8/88

Dear Charles,

Your letter of 11 August arrived just as this did (too late). Some of it is overtaken. But you might like to cast an eye over it + have a word with Stephen Wall before going back to Teltschik. The key points are, I think:

- let's get a ^{better} idea of the message before deciding on the ^{better} medium
- let's think twice about the most advantageous timing.
- we should certainly offer the first draft of a message/terms of reference.

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FROM: W K Prendergast
SAfD
DATE: 11 August 1988
cc: PS/PUS
PS/Sir J Fretwell
Mr Gore-Booth,
Policy Planning
Staff
Mr Meyer,
News Dept
Mr Dain, WED

*Private Secretary
cc PC/ Mr Chatter
mm 11/8*

Mr Fairweather

SOUTH AFRICA: GETTING THE MESSAGE THROUGH TO PW:
ANGLO/GERMAN APPROACH TO THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT

Problem

A 1. In her message to Chancellor Kohl of 29 July, the Prime Minister said that Mr Powell would contact Herr Teltschik on return from Australia to discuss how best to take forward a joint Anglo/German approach to the South African Government. I gather that Mr Powell expects to take action today or tomorrow. How should we seek to steer No 10's contact with the Chancellery?

Recommendation

2. I recommend that in speaking to Mr Powell the Private Secretary should draw on the arguments set out below; especially paragraphs 5-9.

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Message or Emissary?

3. Message. I understand that the Secretary of State inclines to a written message, rather than an emissary (who would of course be delivering a message, whether oral or written, or both). There are arguments for and against both options. A written message delivered through diplomatic channels would offer full control over the communication, greater confidentiality and would be simplest to arrange. Against these factors, the written message currency has become rather debased of late, and President Botha has shown himself adept in framing his replies to avoid the issues raised.

4. Emissary. An emissary offers potentially greater impact. It also allows slightly more scope for developing a real dialogue with PW, rather than just set piece exchanges. Equally, the President would have less scope for evading the issues. But it is a higher risk tactic. The message might be diluted - or subtly distorted - in the presentation. The possibility of a leak would be greater, with the attendant danger of unrealistic expectations and damage should the mission be seen to fail. It might also mean delay. We do not know if the front-runner - Leutweiler - is available, and we must weigh the Governor of the Bank of England's assessment of Herr Leutweiler against the views which No 10 may have of him.

B 5. Action now ↑ Meanwhile, I myself tend to favour an emissary, and I am not convinced that Herr Leutweiler's bluntness is necessarily a disadvantage - one of the problems is precisely that PW is insulated from the real world because his advisers are terrified of him. But we do not need to take a decision today on form. The Secretary of State will have to be consulted formally. The Prime Minister will have views. So will the Germans. A good deal

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will also depend on the degree of agreement we can reach with the Germans on the content of the joint message to be conveyed to State President Botha.

6. The purpose of Mr Powell's contact with Herr Teltschik should in my view be:

- a) to establish whether the Federal Chancellery have given any further thought to the respective merits of a joint written message and/or an emissary;
- b) to reserve the Prime Minister's position on this;
- c) to discuss the next bureaucratic steps. This should be for British and German officials to discuss the elements to be included in whatever message is to be sent to President Botha (which is not dependent on whether the message is conveyed in writing or by an emissary).

Embassy
I hope!
10:..

7. Consultations at official level could be done either by sending an Under-Secretary from London to talk to the Federal Chancellery or by asking our Embassy at Bonn to do so. In either event, we should offer to provide a first draft. The despatch of an Under-Secretary will be more difficult if the Federal Chancellery insist on trying to exclude the Foreign Ministry. Mr Powell might be reminded that an attempt by Herr Kohl to exclude the Foreign Ministry from a similar exercise in 1986 (the trilateral exercise) only led to confusion. Since Herr Genscher is bound to come to hear of the exercise, it would be best to involve his Ministry at an early stage.

C 8. On content, the obvious elements for a joint message are essentially those listed in the Prime Minister's post-Buthelezi letter to PW. It may not be easy to persuade the Germans to agree to confine the message to that.

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9. Timing is difficult. Mr Renwick has advised that any message should be conveyed before October (the municipal elections in South Africa). However, such a timetable may be impossible to sustain: the trilateral exercise took months. But it may not matter greatly if the message or emissary is not despatched until after the municipal elections. Indeed there could be advantages in playing the matter long:

- i) in November we shall know whether Mr Dukakis is to be President, and whether the Democrats have made further gains in Congress. If so, this would give added point and urgency to the joint message;
- ii) the Prime Minister and Secretary of State have agreed that the likely effect on the South Africans is less important than the opportunity it gives to bind the Germans in closely to maintaining the line ~~on~~ economic sanctions (in a coalition government, this is of course an argument for including the Foreign Ministry in the process). This points to our not rushing consultations, but rather using them to press home ~~our~~ ^{against} our case on economic sanctions and non-economic gestures of the kind favoured by the Germans.

*over a
prolonged
period*

W K Prendergast

W K Prendergast
Southern African Department

11 August 1988

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MS Farwell

11 August 1988