



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

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Request for an Interview with the Prime Minister
from the Editor of "Beeld"

The Editor of the leading South African Afrikaans newspaper Beeld has approached HMA Pretoria to ask whether the Prime Minister would be prepared to be interviewed by him, either shortly before 27 October or shortly after 10 November. Mr Renwick has expressed the hope that, despite all the pressures on her time, the Prime Minister might agree to be interviewed.

Beeld is the leading daily newspaper for Afrikaners. Of late the newspaper has carried some courageous editorials criticising the slow pace of reform. Most notably an editorial calling for Mr Mandela's release provoked a sharp response from the South African authorities.

An interview with Beeld would allow the Prime Minister to set out clearly her opposition to apartheid and to stress the need for the SAG to grasp the reform nettle. All too often the Afrikaner press and South African Broadcasting Corporation selectively quote the Prime Minister, drawing attention to her opposition to punitive sanctions without mentioning her calls for an end to apartheid, the release of Mandela etc.

Format will therefore be important. Beeld have told Mr Renwick that they would give notice of the questions they would wish to raise. The best approach might be to ask Beeld to prepare written questions, to which written answers could be given. The Prime Minister could then give a short follow-up interview.

Mr Renwick is pursuing separately the proposal which arose out of the call on the Prime Minister by Chief Minister Enos Mabuza of KwaNgwane in March for an interview with her by up to three black South African journalists working for leading black newspapers. The Embassy would ensure that any dates which were tentatively discussed with the other journalists were at a suitable interval should the Prime Minister agree to be interviewed by Beeld.

Yours ever
R N Peirce
Private Secretary

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