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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

30 November 1989

Dear Charles,

R. A. Smith
cc/c

Statement on Southern Africa at European Council

The Prime Minister will wish to be aware that the French Presidency have launched a proposal for a statement on Southern Africa at the European Council. (They are also pushing ahead with ideas for statements on other Political Cooperation subjects, including East/West and the Middle East.)

The Presidency have circulated an outline which is for the most part unobjectionable. It begins with a passage on Namibia along acceptable lines (transition process going well, appreciation of UN Secretary General's role, elections a true reflection of Namibian people's wishes, EC aid for an independent Namibia). After a short piece on Angola and Mozambique, the text covers South Africa. This refers in rather grudging terms to recent positive changes there, restates EC objectives of a peaceful negotiated end to apartheid and refers to the positive measures programme.

Foreign Ministers discussed the Presidency outline at the EPC meeting on 27 November. There was no possibility of dissuading the Presidency from the idea of a statement altogether. The Foreign Secretary emphasised that any statement on South Africa should be constructive and forward looking. He suggested that it should recognise that significant change in South Africa should lead to a relaxation of international measures. He proposed that, in calling for negotiations, the statement might include a positive reference to the Commonwealth Eminent Person's Group 'negotiating concept'. He also insisted that an unhelpful sentence referring to the impact of 'pressure' in changing attitudes in South Africa should be deleted.

There were notably helpful interventions from the Portuguese (who spoke first and argued that the statement should include an incentive for change) and the Dutch (who agreed that the sentence on the impact of sanctions was unhelpful). Happily the Dutch did not mention their "statement of Principles", despite having done so to the Foreign Secretary during his recent bilateral with Mr Van den Broek and at a recent meeting of officials.

On the basis of this discussion, Political Directors will meet on 30 November to agree a draft. We would prefer not to have a statement, but the French are clearly committed to the

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idea. We expect to be able to avoid language which raises suspicions in South Africa of outside intervention. The inclusion of a reference to incentives and to the EPG 'negotiating concept' would usefully commit the Community to a realistic approach to negotiations on South Africa. It would be helpful in the UN Special Session on Apartheid in New York, which begins three days after the Strasbourg Council. The Africans are expected to try to have the UN endorse the ANC/OAU 'Harare Declaration' on negotiations, which conflicts with the EPG negotiating concept.

Yours,
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