



10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

24 February 1984

Dear Tuliwa,

Thank you for your letter of 1 February. I have read it and the enclosures carefully and am grateful to you for setting out your thoughts so fully.

I am concerned that the basis of our policy towards South Africa should be better understood. As I have made clear in the past, we want to have as fruitful a relationship with South Africa and all its people as is compatible with the balance of our interests, our international obligations and the realities of the situation in the region. We have very substantial interests in South Africa and have made clear our determination to maintain our important links with that country and to foster contact in nearly all fields (the military and sporting fields being important exceptions).

Our readiness for political dialogue with South Africa is evident from the Ministerial exchanges we have had recently. Geoffrey Howe had talks with the South African Foreign Minister in December; Malcolm Rifkind, as you say, visited South Africa earlier in the autumn. Several other South African Ministers have called on their counterparts here over the past year. Our readiness to have such exchanges reflects the value we attach to our relations with South Africa. We are sometimes criticised at home and overseas because of these links. But I am sure we are right to maintain our contacts. Indeed a number of Commonwealth and other African Governments value this. So we often argue patiently at international meetings for a more realistic and less bombastic approach to South Africa. We also acknowledge changes

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in South Africa's policies where we believe these to be in the right direction. We are encouraged by recent reports of improved relations between South Africa and Mozambique, and of renewed hope of progress towards a Namibia settlement and we have said so publicly.

Against this background I do not see a need at this stage for the full review of our policy and attitudes which you advocate. Despite many conflicting pressures we have maintained a workmanlike relationship with successive South African governments which reflects our common interests as well as our divergences. This remains the basis of our approach.

It is impossible in a letter of this kind to comment in detail on your two memoranda but Geoffrey Howe will be pleased to discuss with you these and the wider issues which they raise if there are particular points that you wish to pursue.

Y
Lansdown
Raymond

The Rt. Hon. Julian Amery, M.P.