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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

4 May 1984

Visit of the South African Prime Minister

Thank you for your letter of 3 May.

As I told you on the telephone this morning, the Prime Minister agreed that an announcement of Mr. Botha's visit should be made today and our press section duly announced it at 4 p.m. this afternoon. In consultation with the FCO department concerned, we deleted the reference to Chequers in the announcement in order to avoid attracting unwelcome attention on the day.

A. J. COLES

R.B. Bone, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

CONFIDENTIAL

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

Prime Minister

Agree this announcement
tomorrow, at a time to be
settled?

3 May 1984

John [unclear],

AT 315

Yes [unclear]

Visit of the South African Prime Minister

When I wrote to you on 30 April, I said that the Foreign Secretary planned to tell the Nigerian Government of Mr Botha's visit to the UK during his visit to Lagos on 7-9 May. The need for this advance warning was underlined by a comment by the Nigerian Permanent Representative to the UN in London on Monday, when he made a point of expressing to Sir Geoffrey Howe the hope that Mr Botha would not visit the UK. As I think you now know, Sir Geoffrey has decided to postpone his visit to Nigeria. When he informed the Acting Nigerian High Commissioner of this this morning, he thought it right in the circumstances to tell Mr Dimka of Mr Botha's visit, to say that he had hoped to have a word with Dr Gambari in confidence about it, and to ask him to let Dr Gambari know.

Now that the Nigerians and the Germans (who were told during the Anglo-German Summit yesterday) both know of Mr Botha's visit, the Foreign Secretary thinks that news of this may leak quickly. He suggests it would be better to pre-empt this by ourselves making a formal announcement in the very near future. We should also inform other major African governments before an announcement is made.

We have asked our Embassy in Cape Town to consult the South Africans about an early announcement. The Embassy do not expect the South Africans to object: the agreement not to announce was largely at our own request.

If the Prime Minister agrees, I enclose a form of words together with some defensive points which your press office may wish to use. I should be grateful for advice as to when an announcement might be made. Perhaps late tomorrow afternoon might be right (which would enable us to confirm instructions to other African posts first).

I should also let you know that although the South Africans initially told us that Mr Botha and his party would fly in and out of the UK on 2 June, they have now suggested that for logistic and programme reasons, Mr Botha may wish

/to stay



to stay over privately until 4 June. They have asked our advice, and we are urgently considering this. In the meantime, we have carefully phrased the draft announcement so that it refers simply to a visit to Chequers, and not a visit to the UK.

Yes
R B Bone

(R B Bone)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street

VISIT OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN PRIME MINISTER: PRESS ANNOUNCEMENT

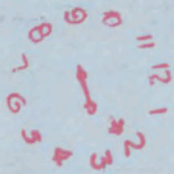
Mr P W Botha, the South African Prime Minister, will visit Chequers on 2 June for a working lunch with the Prime Minister.

Defensive Points to Make

1. Mr Botha is visiting a number of European capitals. This provides a natural opportunity to explain our policies to the South African Government at the highest level.
2. At whose initiative? The Prime Minister invited Mr Botha to have lunch with her. It would have been wrong not to take this opportunity for a meeting.
3. The Government's policy is to maintain a dialogue with South Africa. The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary saw the South African Foreign Minister in London on 2 December 1983; the Minister of State, Mr Rifkind, visited South Africa in November 1983. Mr Botha's visit is fully consistent with this approach.
4. The meeting indicates no change in our policy towards South Africa or the region generally. Our commitment to peaceful internal change in South Africa, a Namibia settlement, and to a reduction of tensions in the region at large is well known.
5. The timing of the visit, close to the Economic Summit, is coincidental.

/6. The

6. The last visit of a South African Prime Minister to the UK was by Dr Verwoerd in 1961 (when he attended the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference and announced South Africa's withdrawal from the Commonwealth). The long gap between that visit and Mr Botha's is not in itself significant. South African Prime Ministers have not been frequent travellers abroad.



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