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Shwartz



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

Prime Minister:

Very interesting.

You will be able to ask Michael Alexander for favour next week.

9 August 1985

Dear Tim,

South Africa

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It is a great advance. ? nothing about the state of emergency?

I enclose a report prepared by Mr Ewen Fergusson following his meeting in Vienna with Mr Pik Botha on 8 August.

Mr Botha expressed his gratitude that an emissary had been sent; he went out of his way to show how closely the South African Government have been following statements on South African issues by the Prime Minister and other British Ministers. It was clear that they set very great store on maintaining their relations with us, as well as the Americans and Germans.

It is also evident that President Botha attaches the greatest importance to the statement he is to make on 15 August. The key passage is couched in general terms, though Pik Botha indicated that a major effort would be made to explain in advance to black leaders how much of a step forward it was intended to represent. Assuming that it is cleared through Cabinet, the essential point in the statement is likely to be that the homelands structure, which is the basis of the apartheid system, is to be frozen, if not actually dismantled, and that there is to be a common citizenship for all who wish it within a unitary state, leading to the exercise of political rights. But beyond this, the statement is likely to be deliberately vague as to how the blacks are to be given some measure of power, since the essence of the message is that blacks should participate in working out detailed plans. Nor is any time-frame mentioned.

We are making no public comment on the substance of Mr Botha's meeting with Mr Fergusson. But we shall clearly need to think very carefully about how we respond to the South African statement when it is made and its final terms are available. The acid test, in this respect, will be the reaction of moderate blacks within South Africa. Botha told Fergusson that there was increasing awareness among activists such as Tutu, Boesak and Beyers Naude about the spread of violence. He thought that we should expect the general black reaction to be cautious and non-committal though the more radical elements would doubtless attempt to brush the statement aside.

It is in our interests to give the South African statement a fair chance. We should therefore privately urge our partners and others who are not automatically disposed to condemn

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South Africa to pause before they dismiss it as inadequate or worse. We also propose to coordinate our public reaction as far as possible with the Americans and Germans.

Subject to the terms of the statement, Ministers here consider that our initial public response will probably need to be along the lines that we are studying the statement carefully; if, as we hope, it does indeed represent a turning point in associating black people with the political process, then we warmly welcome it.

You will see from the enclosed note that Pik Botha also raised with Mr Fergusson the question of ANC activities in Lesotho. We are getting in touch with the Lesotho Government to encourage them to speak to the South Africans, while making it clear to the South Africans that we would not regard their evidence as in any way justifying military action against Lesotho.

Yr ever,

Peter Ricketts

(P F Ricketts)

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Meeting in Vienna with the South African Foreign Minister

Summary

1. Pik Botha met Fergusson for two hours on Thursday 8 August after the Americans had had six hours with him. He welcomed the meeting, outlined the main proposals for further constitutional change in the President's forthcoming speech and plans for dialogue with black representatives, asking for British support for what he described as a historic change ("crossing the Rubicon"). He expressed concern about the possible impact of the forthcoming troika visit. He criticized the present US position on Cuban withdrawal from Angola. He remained obdurate over the Gaborone raid. He gave a warning on Lesotho. He was grateful for our policy on Mozambique. After a further meeting with Crocker on Namibia on 9 August, and a meeting with the Germans in Frankfurt, he would return to South Africa.

Detail

2. After MacFarlane, Crocker and Nickel had had six hours with Pik Botha in Vienna on Thursday 8 August, Fergusson, accompanied by HM Ambassador, Vienna, had two hours further talk with him. During a short debrief after the US/South African talks, Crocker said that MacFarlane had made a forceful but "friendly" statement, in the name of the President, emphasising the need for significant political change if US policy to South Africa was to be maintained.

South Africa: Internal

3. Botha said that the President's statement on 15 August would not be finally approved by Cabinet until 14 August. He described it as "the most historic ever to be made in South Africa" and as "crossing the Rubicon" (see separate Note for a rough translation of the statement given orally). The statement would emphasise three objectives:

- This is a fundamental change*
- (a) There would be joint responsibility (ie including the blacks) for decisions affecting the country as a whole. Botha commented that, although the Government could not use the term, this meant "power-sharing" at the top level.
 - (b) Common citizenship.
 - (c) An "undivided" South Africa.

However, it would never be possible to work on the basis one man one vote in a unitary state.

4. Botha's remarks indicated that the homelands policy would be scrapped, provided that the homelands leaders could be brought on board

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(in effect, this means scrapping Grand Apartheid). Contact had already been made with Mangope (Bophutatswana) and Mpephu (Venda) and would be made with Transkei and Ciskei. Mangope had been reluctant; Botha expected the others to welcome the proposal. He added that he would be putting the proposals this weekend to a group of "radical" blacks including Bishop Tutu and representatives of black political organisations. The Government were working with Buthelezi. They recognised that visible support from blacks would be crucial both internally and for the international audience.

5. Botha commented that no South African Government had ever before offered to share authority with the blacks over major decisions. There would be a heavy political price on the white right wing with consequences for the forthcoming by-elections and a risk of white-inspired violence.

6. The proposals themselves were deliberately general, since the intention was that details should be worked out in collaboration with black leadership. Any premature blueprint would inevitably be rejected.

7. Botha appealed for our support. It would be exceptionally difficult to create the momentum to encourage "the intimidated" to participate in what would be difficult decisions, in particular because of the differences of view among the blacks. External understanding, especially from the UK, could be very helpful. The South African Government had been grateful for the policy pursued by HMG. They understood the pressures and hoped that next week's statement would not disappoint expectations.

8. Fergusson referred to the main difficulties which South African policies and the events of the past year had presented to HMG in maintaining a sensible working relationship with South Africa. He emphasised our wish to see a genuine dialogue with the black community. The crucial element in our response to the President's proposals would be the seriousness with which the speech was taken by the black community and their willingness to join in genuine discussions. We saw black involvement as indispensable for the fulfilment of our aspirations for stability and prosperity in the region. He referred to the Secretary of State's speech and the proposals in it, especially the release of Mandela. Botha said in terms that the South Africans saw the advantage of releasing Mandela if some way could be found of finessing the very real difficulties which his release might create (Mandela's failure to renounce violence, the encouragement of further disorder and the risk that Mandela might be forced by others in the ANC to implicate himself in violence so that the South African Government had no alternative but to arrest him again - that would be catastrophic). As for the ANC, while he spouted routine condemnation of the agents of Moscow, he did not exclude the possibility of co-opting ANC representatives into the forthcoming discussions. If, however, the South African Government mishandled the Mandela/ANC problem, it would undoubtedly fall.

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South Africa/EC

9. Botha claimed that the Luxembourg Foreign Minister had required clearance from all Ten before a meeting would be possible in Europe. Although the Italians had been willing to meet him, he was not now planning any meeting in Europe with the troika. He was indeed becoming increasingly nervous about the prospect of the troika visit to South Africa at the end of August. In the aftermath of the President's speech and in the prospect of very delicate negotiations with black leaders he feared that the activities of the three, especially the Netherlands Foreign Minister (he spoke very starkly of the present SA/Netherlands relationship), would risk adding an unwelcome extra complication. The speech would create a new situation. Could the UK not take the lead in looking at the question again? Fergusson said that the Ten had taken a collective decision and there would continue to be a strong EC interest in the visit's going ahead.

SA Regional

10. Botha tried at length to justify the raid on Gaborone along the lines of the President's message to the Prime Minister. He added that Mogwe had since then confirmed his support for the South African action. Fergusson repeated our strong condemnation of the South African action. Whatever excuse the South Africans might use to justify it, we could not accept a military incursion and the deaths of innocent civilians, as our Security Council vote had indicated. Moreover, that action and the Cabinda episode had made our task in resisting the pressures for action against South Africa immeasurably more difficult. Surely the penalty in international reaction outweighed any short term gain?

11. On Angola/Namibia Botha complained vociferously about present US policy, arguing that the Americans were reneging on firm written commitments over Cuban withdrawal. Fergusson emphasised the importance to us of getting forward movement started again towards the goal of an internationally recognized settlement, and emphasised our continuing support for US efforts.

12. Botha referred to ANC activity in Lesotho and to the pressure for military action, which he had countermanded (reported separately). Botha took a very gloomy view of the deterioration of the situation in Mozambique. The South Africans were doing what they could both to sustain Machel and Frelimo by military and civil help and to get some control over Renamo activities. He welcomed UK support for Mozambique and asked whether urgent humanitarian assistance could be given to help curtail the flood of refugees from Mozambique now entering the Transvaal.



Draft South African Constitutional Proposals

The President would refer to the continuing process of regular adjustment in internal political arrangements (the new constitution etc). Blacks had never been excluded from the process and the President had made clear in the past that the new constitution was not the end of the reform process.

The facts that had to be accommodated were:-

- (a) the "independent" states,
- (b) the self-governing states,
- (c) local management systems (presumably local authorities, tribal chiefs etc),
- (d) regional service councils.

It was now intended to have a common South African citizenship for all who wanted it, though close relations would continue with those independent states that did not take the offer.

In recent times there had been unnecessary confusion over the definition of particular concepts such as "unitary state", "federalism", "power sharing". It was essential now to look to the substance rather than the terminology. The Government were proposing the following guidelines and would enter into discussion about them with any responsible black leader who was willing to come forward:

- (a) The decision to take independence was the free choice of any self-governing territory. If that choice were not exercised, the state would remain part of the Republic of South Africa;
- (b) Because the states concerned would have to be accommodated within the RSA, their citizens concerned must remain citizens of the RSA;
- (c) Every individual would have the right to participate in decision-making procedures which affected his life as a SA citizen. This already applied at local level. The realisation of the right to participate at higher levels must now be negotiated.
- (d) There must be cooperation on general affairs in all constitutional entities, to include the independent states, so that there can be common responsibility for general affairs. The President looks forward to creating a system of government acceptable to all citizens.