



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

13 December 1983

*Jan John,*

*Type letter pl.*

Lesotho

*A.S.C. 13/12.*

You wrote to Peter Ricketts on 30 November enclosing a copy of a letter received by the Prime Minister in Delhi from the leader of the Lesotho delegation at CHOGM. Since then Dr Jonathan has sent a further message to the Prime Minister seeking her intervention with the South African Foreign Minister when he was in London. I now enclose a draft letter for the Prime Minister's signature in reply to both the Lesotho messages.

Firstly the message of 1 December. Relations between Lesotho and South Africa are endemically difficult and characterised by deep mutual suspicion and distrust. They worsened considerably following the South African raid on Maseru last December, and our intervention with the South Africans has been repeatedly sought by the Lesotho government. We condemned the Maseru raid in forthright terms and have taken appropriate opportunities to remind the South Africans of our attitude towards their pressure tactics. But we have carefully avoided being drawn in as intermediaries.

The range of pressures the South Africans have brought to bear on Lesotho (of which Prime Minister Jonathan complains in his message) were primarily intended to force the removal from Lesotho of a certain number of South African refugees which the South Africans consider to be ANC activists planning or conducting raids into South Africa. The South Africans have been largely successful in this. The alleged ANC activists are being removed from Lesotho with UNHCR assistance.

We consider that in his message Dr Jonathan both exaggerates the extent of present South African pressures on his country and understates, probably deliberately, the progress that is being made in resolving differences through negotiations between the two governments. Reports suggest that border restrictions have now been lifted and that most at least of the arms consignments, about which Dr Jonathan complains, have been released. There have been several constructive meetings between officials from the two countries and we think that relations, at least for the moment, are now on a more even keel. Nevertheless, South Africa can be expected to reapply pressures if Lesotho fails

/to meet





to meet South African concerns. This was implicit when Mr Botha told Sir Geoffrey Howe on 2 December that the South Africans believed that ANC personnel were returning to Lesotho and that the organisation still had a functional structure there. Lesotho's recent expansion of its relations with the Communist countries has also increased South African distrust. Against this background, Sir Geoffrey recommends that the Prime Minister's reply to Chief Jonathan should express sympathy for Lesotho's problems whilst reaffirming our conviction that Lesotho and South Africa can only reach a modus vivendi through direct contact. He considers we should scrupulously avoid the role of mediator.

The Commonwealth Report. The Lesotho Government's request for a Commonwealth Mission to examine its problems, together with other uncoordinated appeals for assistance, reflect anxiety to obtain maximum international support in the face of South African pressures. The report covers well-trodden ground and fails to take account of the assistance already being provided by ourselves and other donors. Our aid programme (at about £5 million a year) is already deeply engaged in projects and manpower assistance in the fields of industry, health and agriculture, as well as some of the road improvements identified in the report. It is unlikely that in present circumstances we shall be able to provide extra resources in response to this report. However, it has been agreed at official level to allocate an additional £200,000 for Lesotho in the next financial year out of the Unallocated Reserve: we may be able to apply some of this to areas recommended in the report.

(R B Bone)  
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq  
10 Downing Street



**DRAFT:** minute/letter/teleletter/despatch/note

**TYPE:** Draft/Final 1+

**FROM:**

Reference

PRIME MINISTER

**DEPARTMENT:**

**TEL. NO:**

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

**TO:**

Your Reference

Top Secret

The Rt Hon Dr Leabua Jonathan KCOM  
Prime Minister of the Kingdom  
of Lesotho

Secret

Confidential

Restricted

Unclassified

Copies to:

PRIVACY MARKING

**SUBJECT:**

.....In Confidence

Thank you for your message of 1 December conveyed through your High Commissioner here.

CAVEAT.....

We have been following with close and sympathetic attention the difficulties your Government faces in its relations with South Africa. The South Africans are well aware of our view that they, as the other countries in the Region, should conduct their external relations on the basis of non-violence, non-interference in the internal affairs of neighbouring states and respect for the sovereignty of those states. We have deplored South African attacks and coercive pressures against its neighbours, just as we condemn the use of violence by the ANC or any other political groups to attain their political goals. We have long been convinced of the need for contact and dialogue between the countries of southern Africa. We have therefore been encouraged in recent months to learn that there has been a series of meetings between representatives of your Government and the South Africans to discuss differences and problems between the two countries.

Enclosures—flag(s).....

/I did



I did not myself see the South African Foreign Minister when he came to London but Sir Geoffrey Howe ~~did~~ raised with Mr Botha the concerns you express in your message. Mr Botha did not agree that South Africa is creating worsening problems for Lesotho. At the same time, he said he believed that outstanding problems between his Government and your Government could be satisfactorily resolved through further negotiations, and expressed the hope that relations would continue to improve. This response leads me to hope that in spite of current difficulties, you and South Africa can, given good will on both sides, reach a settlement of your differences. I am equally convinced that this is best achieved through patient and continuing contact between your two Governments free from outside interference. We have urged the South Africans in this sense and my Government will continue to give every encouragement to this process in the hope that a satisfactory understanding can be reached.

When I was in New Delhi last month for the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting, your Foreign Minister kindly sent me a summary of the report of the Commonwealth Mission <sup>which</sup> ~~with~~ Secretary-General Ramphal sent to Lesotho in August. The report is still being studied by officials but I am pleased to note that our bilateral technical assistance to your country is already mainly directed towards the sectors identified in the report as of priority. We will be looking for ways in which we may be able to respond to the report's recommendations within the framework of our existing programmes of assistance.

/I can

I can assure you that we shall continue to watch developments in your country with particular attention and that our policies will continue to be directed towards the achievement of greater stability and prosperity in the region as a whole.

100  
13.  
12





file 10

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

30 November 1983

LESOTHO

I enclose a copy of a letter which the Prime Minister received in New Delhi from the Lesotho Foreign Minister, together with the report to which he refers.

SK /  
I should be grateful if you could let me have a draft reply, for signature by the Prime Minister, in due course.

A. J. COLES

Peter Ricketts, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

82



✓ For A/C or return

COMMONWEALTH  
HEADS OF GOVERNMENT MEETING  
New Delhi 1983

LESOTHO

*Madam Prime Minister,*

28th November, 1983.

On the instructions of my Prime Minister the Rt. Hon. Dr. Leabua Jonathan, who, with regret was not able to attend the present Heads of Government Commonwealth Summit, due to pressing matters of State at home, I have the honour to present to you a Confidential Summary of Report on Lesotho by the Commonwealth Secretariat on his behalf for your kind consideration.

The study, which was necessitated by the constant destabilisation of our country and other neighbouring states by the Republic of South Africa, has suggested areas of assistance which would help Lesotho to withstand, somewhat, the pressure from South Africa.

/2.....





COMMONWEALTH  
HEADS OF GOVERNMENT MEETING  
New Delhi 1983

LESOTHO

28th November, 1983.

I should be most grateful if Your Excellency would examine the Report with a view to deciding, within your means, on the area or areas your Government would be willing to assist Lesotho.

Please accept, Your Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

EVARISTUS RETSELISITSOE SEKHONYANA  
FOREIGN MINISTER OF THE KINGDOM OF  
LESOTHO

The Rt. Hon. Mrs. Margaret Thatcher, M.P.,  
Prime Minister of Great Britain.





file 10

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

30 November 1983

LESOTHO

I enclose a copy of a letter which the Prime Minister received in New Delhi from the Lesotho Foreign Minister, together with the report to which he refers.

SK /  
I should be grateful if you could let me have a draft reply, for signature by the Prime Minister, in due course.

A. J. COLES

Peter Ricketts, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

82