

CONFIDENTIAL

PRIME MINISTER

SOUTH AFRICA: MEETING OF MINISTERS

There is to be a further meeting of Ministers tomorrow morning to consider South Africa. You will have spoken to Chancellor Kohl shortly beforehand. At the end of the meeting you will need to decide whether to go to OD on Tuesday as well as Cabinet on Wednesday.

There are two new papers for the meeting:

1. A draft OD/Cabinet paper by the FCO;
2. An annex examining in more detail the implications of the measures discussed at the last Ministerial meeting.

You will also want to see the telegrams elsewhere in your box.

Draft OD paper

This is a defeatist and disappointing document. The priority is set as establishing a comfortable position in an EC consensus rather than converting others to our point of view. It is taken as read that we shall have to agree to further measures. The only question is which. Sparse credit given to the steps already taken by the South African Government and no attention is given to the real impact of measures on South Africa. The arguments against taking measures at the European Council are not there; and there is no suggestion that we should try to rally support in advance from the Germans, Americans and perhaps others against taking measures.

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|| The alternative strategy which you have advanced of going for positive measures (extra aid for Black South Africans: support for a constitutional convention); a diplomatic initiative (Presidency mission to South Africa and consultations with main OECD partners); and postponement of decisions on negative measures emerges as a pale afterthought.

Your aim might be to get your colleagues' agreement that the paper should be rewritten before Cabinet in a way which makes the strategy above the main thrust of the paper, with consideration of measures as a fall-back, with a clear commitment to oppose a ban on fruit and vegetable imports (and coal).

Draft Annex

This shows that there are quite severe objections to a ban on coal imports (it would throw out of work 15,000 Black South Africans); and a ban on steel imports (contrary to GATT, just at the time we are trying to strengthen it). This leaves - if we have to consider measures - a voluntary ban on new investment and a ban on the promotion of tourism as the most acceptable.

CDP.

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PRIME MINISTER

SOUTH AFRICA

There is to be a meeting of a small group of Ministers next week to consider the way ahead on South Africa. You may like to see over the weekend:

i) The attached minute by the Foreign Secretary. This suggests that we need to identify fairly quickly measures which we would be prepared to see adopted and try to rally others behind them, to pre-empt worse. At the same time we need to canvass ideas for alternatives to the Eminent Persons Group as a means of promoting dialogue in South Africa.

ii) A paper by MISC 118. This is a purely technical exercise which identifies a host of possible measures against South Africa, and their likely impact and cost to the United Kingdom. There is a useful summary at the front which is all you really need to read at this stage. It rapidly becomes clear that the great majority of them would hurt blacks in South Africa and/or damage our economic interests considerably. That still leaves a number which would convey a sharp signal to whites in South Africa without serious cost to us. I have in mind a ban on new investment, a ban on government procurement and introduction of a visa requirement for South Africans. But even these open up the risk of setting us on a downward path leading inexorably and at a gathering pace, to more extensive trade and economic sanctions.

C.D.P.

C.D. POWELL
13 JUNE 1986

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Wed 18.
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PRIME MINISTER

SOUTH AFRICA

Following your remarks in Cabinet we clearly need an early meeting of Ministers to consider the way ahead on South Africa. It might be best to make this, initially, a small group before moving subsequently to OD. I suggest:

- The Lord President
- The Foreign Secretary
- The Chancellor
- The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry
- The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster
- The Chief Whip

There is be something to be said for adding Employment but I believe that Lord Young is away next week and you might prefer not to have Mr. Clarke. I do not think we need involve Defence yet. The Foreign Secretary would like to include the Home Secretary whom he sees as an ally but I think this would be hard to justify if others are to be kept out.

Agree to this composition?

The Foreign Secretary is keen to have a fairly early meeting. Since he is going to be in Europe on Monday and the Debate is on Tuesday, the earliest possible date seems to be next Wednesday (unless you are prepared to have a meeting on Sunday evening: but I am not sure we would have our ideas together by then).

Agree to a meeting on Wednesday?

Yes mt 1/4

C.D.P.

C D POWELL

12 June 1986

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MR POWELL

*Back you
19/6*

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MEETING ON SOUTH AFRICA

BF || This is confirmed for 10 o'clock on Monday
23 June and the following will be attending:

Lord President
Foreign Secretary
Chancellor of the Exchequer
Chairman
Secretary of State for Trade?
Sir Robert Armstrong
Mr Mallaby

The Chief Whip is in Switzerland on Monday.

CR

CR

19 June 1986

MR

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20 JUN 1986

cutting dated.....19

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The tide of fate

THE GOVERNMENT has now made it plain that it will have nothing to do with economic sanctions against South Africa if it can possibly help it. If Commonwealth and European pressure becomes intolerable, Britain may eventually become a less than wholehearted party to some "measures". The Prime Minister, with her intense dislike of anything that smacks of cant or hypocrisy, is reported to be thoroughly disgusted by the heavy odour of both that pervades the response of many countries to recent events in Afrikanerdom.

All this is entirely understandable. We have argued in these columns that this country has no responsibility to commit economic suicide to support unworkable sanctions, nor any reason to accept a share of historic responsibility for worsening the case of the land of Mr Botha and Bishop Tutu. But the Government also has another responsibility, which thus far it has failed to meet: it must demonstrate, incontrovertibly, its abhorrence of the South African Government's continued refusal to concede the principle of political rights to its black majority. If Mr Botha had, at any time, declared his intention to grant such rights, he might now be able to stand upon the argument that his State of Emergency was designed merely to maintain public order.

As it is, however, the State of Emergency is perceived by the world as a desperate measure to shore up the crumbling edifice of white supremacy. As such it is indefensible and it is essential that the British Government should be seen to condemn it as such. The argument that such a condemnation would split the Conservative Party, bring out the battalions of the old Right, will not suffice. If the Conservatives wish to win the next election, they must maintain the support of millions of people in the middle ground of politics, who find apartheid deeply repugnant. It is those people who today look for an appropriate sign of the British Government's distaste for censorship, imprisonment without trial, ruthless and unmonitored action by the security forces in the townships, all that is being done in the name of the State of Emergency. This is a rare case where uncompromising rhetoric, at which the Prime Minister excels, may play a more critical role than empty gestures.

Lacking such rhetoric, many people in Britain, as well as abroad, are left to conclude—however unjustly—that the Prime Minister retains at least a vestige of sympathy for Mr Botha and his government's actions. From both a moral and political standpoint, this is regrettable. Whatever individual sympathies there may be for the determination of the Afrikaners' last stand, it seems historically inevitable that white minority government in South Africa will pass within our lifetimes. It will be a misfortune for the Conservative party, as well as for Britain, if we are perceived to be resisting the tide of fate.