

August 20, 1979

**Telegram from UK Ambassador to South Africa Sir
David Scott Conveying Text of Letter to South
African Defence Minister PW Botha**

Citation:

"Telegram from UK Ambassador to South Africa Sir David Scott Conveying Text of Letter to South African Defence Minister PW Botha", August 20, 1979, Wilson Center Digital Archive, UK National Archives, FCO, PREM 16/1879, South African Nuclear Intentions. Obtained and Contributed by Or Rabinowitz.
<https://digitalarchive.umd.edu/document/116892>

Summary:

UK Ambassador to South Africa Sir David Scott conveys the text of a letter he sent to South African Defense Minister P. W. Botha about UK concern that South Africa is developing a nuclear weapon.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Carnegie Corporation of New York (CCNY)

Original Language:

English

Contents:

Original Scan

IMMEDIATE

CONFIDENTIAL

Handwritten: 22/8

0258

CIPHER CAT A

PRETORIA 201109Z AUG

CONFIDENTIAL

TO IMMEDIATE FCO TEL NO 670 OF 20 AUGUST
INFO IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON.

DN+068

I.P.T.

SOUTH AFRICAN NUCLEAR INTENTIONS.

FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF MY LETTER TO BOTHA DATED 20 AUGUST.

BEGINS.

I HAVE BEEN INFORMED BY MY AMERICAN COLLEAGUE OF THE EXCHANGES
HAS HAD WITH YOU CONCERNING RECENT PUBLIC ALLEGATIONS THAT THE
SOUTH AFRICAN NUCLEAR PROGRAMME IS NOT DEVOTED EXCLUSIVELY
PEACEFUL PURPOSES.

MY SECRETARY OF STATE ATTACHES SO MUCH IMPORTANCE TO THIS
MATTER THAT HE INSTRUCTED ME TO RETURN TO SOUTH AFRICA AHEAD
MY PLANNED SCHEDULE IN ORDER TO RAISE IT WITH YOU. DR OWEN
HAS ASKED ME TO POINT OUT URGENTLY THAT IN THE VIEW OF HER
Majesty's GOVERNMENT THE CONSEQUENCES WOULD BE DISASTROUS TO THE
CHANCES OF ACHIEVING PEACEFUL SOLUTIONS FOR THE PROBLEMS OF
SOUTHERN AFRICA, IF SOUTH AFRICA WERE TO PRODUCE, AND STILL MORE
TEST, A NUCLEAR DEVICE. IT WOULD BE HARD TO IMAGINE AN ISSUE
WITH GRAVER IMPLICATIONS. SECURITY COUNCIL ACTION COULD WELL
BE CALLED FOR IMMEDIATELY, WITH ALL THAT WOULD ENTAIL.

THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT ACCORDINGLY URGE THE SOUTH AFRICAN
GOVERNMENT TO GIVE IMMEDIATE AND CONVINCING PROOF THAT THEY
HAVE NO SUCH PLANS, IN ORDER TO ALLAY WIDESPREAD AND GENUINE
INTERNATIONAL ANXIETY. IN THIS CONNECTION THEY WISH TO REPEAT

CONFIDENTIAL

/THE IR

CONFIDENTIAL

THEIR STRONG ADVICE THAT SOUTH AFRICA SHOULD ACCEDE TO THE
 NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY WITHOUT FURTHER DELAY.
 SINCE YOU ARE AT PRESENT IN CAPE TOWN I AM TRANSMITTING
 THIS LETTER THROUGH MR FOURIE IN PRETORIA. I HAVE MADE IT CLEAR
 TO HIM, HOWEVER, THAT I AM ENTIRELY AT YOUR DISPOSAL TO TRAVEL
 TO CAPE TOWN SHOULD YOU THINK A PERSONAL DISCUSSION DESIRABLE.
 ENDS.

DAVID SCOTT

FILES
 CSAD
 ACDD
 ACDRU
 EESD
 N AM D
 PS
 PS/PUS
 SIR A DUFF
 MR GRAHAM
 MR MANSFIELD
 MR HALL

-2-
CONFIDENTIAL