

September 8, 1977

Letter from J.S. Wall to Bryan Cartledge, 'South African Nuclear Intentions'

Citation:

"Letter from J.S. Wall to Bryan Cartledge, 'South African Nuclear Intentions'", September 8, 1977, Wilson Center Digital Archive, UK National Archives, FCO45-2131. Obtained and contributed by Anna-Mart van Wyk.

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Summary:

J.S. Wall of the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office reports on a conversation with David Aaron of the US National Security Council on concerns about South Africa's possible nuclear testing facility in the Kalahari desert.

Credits:

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

Original Language:

English

Contents:

Original Scan

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

8 September 1977

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RECEIVED IN ASSISTANT NO. 30			
13 SEP 1977			
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INDEX			

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Mr. Davison, F&A

Dear Bryan,

Please refer to John Meadway's letter of 25 August.

South African Nuclear Intentions

Mr Jay put the question raised by the Prime Minister to Mr David Aaron of the National Security Council over lunch on 29 August.

Mr Aaron told the Ambassador that he did not think the Americans would want to ask the South Africans to explain what the Kalahari facility is for, if it was not intended for nuclear testing, at least until their immediate exchanges with the South Africans over Rhodesia were completed. He said that the Americans were more concerned with suggestions that South Africa might consider acceding to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, provided that other points such as the hold-up in supply of US nuclear fuel and the problem of South Africa's position in the IAEA were settled at the same time.

This does not take us much further on the unresolved puzzle of the Kalahari facility, to which we will ask the Embassy to revert at an appropriate stage in the course of further discussion with the State Department about the related issue of South Africa and the NPT.

Meanwhile, the South African Government have now confirmed to HM Ambassador the assurances which they had already given the Americans, as we were told at the time, that:-

- (a) South Africa does not have or intend to develop nuclear explosives for any purpose, peaceful or otherwise;
 - (b) there will be no nuclear explosive testing of any kind in South Africa.
- I am sending a copy of this letter to Dennis Morris (Cabinet Office).

Yours ever
Stephen

J S Wall
Private Secretary

Bryan Cartledge Esq
10 Downing Street

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