

**October 31, 1977**

**Restricted Teleletter from J.E. Holmes, UK Embassy  
in Moscow, to R.B. Bone, 'South African Nuclear  
Intentions'**

**Citation:**

"Restricted Teleletter from J.E. Holmes, UK Embassy in Moscow, to R.B. Bone, 'South African Nuclear Intentions'", October 31, 1977, Wilson Center Digital Archive, UK National Archives, FCO45-2131. Obtained and contributed by Anna-Mart van Wyk.  
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**Summary:**

J .E. Holmes, at the UK Embassy in Moscow, reports on Soviet news coverage of the South African nuclear controversy.

**Credits:**

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**Original Language:**

English

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31 OCTOBER 1977

FOLLOWING FOR R B BONE, EESD, FCO

FROM J E HOLMES, MOSCOW

SOUTH AFRICAN NUCLEAR INTENTIONS

1. THE SOVIET PRESS HAS NOT MISSED OUT ON THE OPPORTUNITIES PRESENTED BY THE REVIVAL OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN NUCLEAR ISSUE FOLLOWING VORSTER'S TELEVISION INTERVIEW (FCO TELNO 495 TO PRETORIA). THE PRAVDA WEEKLY REVIEW OF 30 OCTOBER, QUOTING PRESIDENT CARTER'S PRESS STATEMENT OF 23 AUGUST ON SOUTH AFRICAN ASSURANCES (WASHINGTON TELNO 3847), AND CONTRASTING THIS WITH RECENT ASSERTIONS BY BOTH VORSTER AND BOTHA THAT SOUTH AFRICA HAD NOT GIVEN ANY PROMISES TO THE US ABOUT NOT DEVELOPING NUCLEAR WEAPONS, CONCLUDED THAT THIS EXPOSED THE "INSINCERITY" OF WASHINGTON'S POLICY. PRAVDA CONNECTED THIS WITH PARTIAL US RELIANCE ON SOUTH AFRICA FOR STRATEGIC MATERIALS SUCH AS CHROME AND VANADIUM, AND LINKED SOUTH AFRICA NUCLEAR INTENTIONS WITH SIMILAR ISRAELI INTENTIONS, REFERRING TO ATTEMPTS IN THE US TO COVER UP THE DISAPPEARANCE AND DESPATCH TO ISRAEL OF A QUANTITY OF ENRICHED URANIUM BELONGING TO AN AMERICAN COMPANY. PRAVDA OF 31 OCTOBER ALSO REPORTED VORSTER'S AND BOTHA'S REMARKS, BUT SOMEWHAT SOFTENED THE CRITICAL APPROACH TOWARDS THE US TAKEN BY THE WEEKLY REVIEW, IN PARTICULAR BY QUOTING PRESIDENT CARTER'S STATEMENT OF 30 OCTOBER TO THE NATIONAL PRESS ASSOCIATION CONGRESS THAT HE WAS MOST CONCERNED BY VORSTER'S RECENT ASSERTION SINCE THE ORIGINAL PERSONAL MESSAGE TO HIM FROM VORSTER HAD STATED QUITE UNMISTAKEABLY THAT SOUTH AFRICAN WOULD NOT DEVELOP, PRODUCE OR TEST ANY NUCLEAR DEVICES.

2. I AM COPYING THIS TO PRETORIA, WASHINGTON, PARIS, BONN AND UKDEL NATO. EESD REGISTRY PLEASE PASS BY BAG TO ALL EXCEPT PRETORIA.

03/06/2010 14:23

J E HOLMES