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LETTER DATED 9 OCTOBER 1981 FROM THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I. OF
THE PERMANENT MISSION OF SOUTH AFRICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS
ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

At the request of the South African Minister of Foreign Affairs and
Information, the Honourable R. F. Botha, I am enclosing the text of a letter he
has addressed to Your Excellency on 9 October 1981.

I should appreciate it if this letter could be circulated as a document of
the Security Council.

(Signed) David W. STEWARD
Chargé d'Affaires a.i.

Annex

Letter dated 9 October 1981 from the Minister of Foreign Affairs
and Information of South Africa addressed to the Secretary-
General

The South African Government yesterday received a protest from the Government of Lesotho alleging an attack "at 1.15 a.m. on the 8th instant by mortar shells and machine guns fired from South African soil and directed at the barracks of the para-military unit", and informing the South African Government that "in the circumstances Lesotho has no alternative but to put its case before the Security Council at an early date".

The South African Government rejects this unfounded allegation and the inference that South Africa could in some way be implicated in such an act.

It is common knowledge that Lesotho's Prime Minister, when his party was defeated 11 years ago at the first and only election held in his country since independence, suspended the constitution and established government by decree. The smouldering opposition which has persisted since then has recently grown in intensity and become more sophisticated and better organized, leading to acts of violence directed at the Lesotho Government. Opposition groups have openly claimed responsibility for such incidents. To find the perpetrators of the latest incident, the Lesotho Government would be well-advised to look for them nearer home. Whether the Lesotho Government, by blaming South Africa, will succeed in temporarily distracting attention from its own internal problems is an open question, but it will not eliminate the causes of those problems.

In contrast with Lesotho's policy of harbouring subversive elements which operate against South Africa, the South African authorities have consistently acted against armed persons or groups endeavouring to traverse South African territory en route to Lesotho. South Africa's practical co-operation in containing the security threat against Lesotho is known to that Government. In fact the South African Government has on several occasions apprehended armed Lesotho citizens when it determined that these people were plotting physical action from South African soil, and has delivered them to the Lesotho Government.

Co-operation between South Africa and Lesotho in various important spheres is public knowledge. It is ironical that the preposterous charge should have been fabricated to coincide with the current programme of co-operation to increase food production in Lesotho. Perhaps for the first time in its independent history Lesotho is expected to enjoy sufficient food for people this year. This feat has been made possible by the combined efforts of Lesotho and South Africa, Lesotho farmers and South African farmers' associations.

The South African Government requests that Your Excellency despatch a fact-

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finding mission to the area to find out what is actually happening. Such a mission will be given every facility by the South African Government, which will also guarantee its safety on the South African side of the border. The South African Government assumes that such a mission would also take into account the whole range and value of benefits which Lesotho derives from South Africa and from agreements with South Africa.

R. F. BOTHA
Minister of Foreign Affairs and Information
