

No. 3495

**UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND NORTHERN IRELAND
and
UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**Exchange of letters (with annexes) constituting an agreement
on defence matters. London, 30 June 1955**

Official text: English.

Registered by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland on 24 August 1956.

**ROYAUME-UNI DE GRANDE-BRETAGNE
ET D'IRLANDE DU NORD
et
UNION SUD-AFRICAINE**

**Échange de lettres (avec annexes) constituant un accord en
matière de défense. Londres, 30 juin 1955**

Texte officiel anglais.

*Enregistré par le Royaume-Uni de Grande-Bretagne et d'Irlande du Nord
le 24 août 1956.*

No. 3495. EXCHANGE OF LETTERS CONSTITUTING AN AGREEMENT¹ ON DEFENCE MATTERS BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA. LONDON, 30 JUNE 1955

The Honourable F. C. Erasmus, Minister of Defence of the Union of South Africa, visited the United Kingdom from 15th to 30th June, 1955, for further discussions with Ministers of the United Kingdom Government. These resulted in exchanges of letters embodying agreements and understandings satisfactory to both Governments on the following subjects :

The need for international discussions with regard to regional defence against external aggression.

The defence of the sea routes round Southern Africa.

Transfer of the Simonstown Naval Base and arrangements for its future use.

These exchanges of letters are set out below.

I. THE NEED FOR INTERNATIONAL DISCUSSIONS WITH REGARD TO REGIONAL DEFENCE AGAINST EXTERNAL AGGRESSION²

LETTER 1

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
LONDON, S.W.1

Dear Mr. Erasmus,

30th June, 1955

I enclose a Memorandum setting out the terms of our Understanding on the need for international discussions with regard to Regional Defence.

I shall be glad if you will confirm that it represents what was agreed between us.

Yours sincerely,

Selwyn LLOYD

The Honourable F. C. Erasmus. M.P.

¹ Came into force on 30 June 1955 by the exchange of the said letters.

² The following information is given by the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland : "This exchange of letters does not contain any substantive obligations but is registered in order to facilitate understanding of the other two agreements."

MEMORANDUM ON THE NEED FOR INTERNATIONAL DISCUSSIONS WITH REGARD TO
REGIONAL DEFENCE

1. Southern Africa and the sea routes round Southern Africa must be secured against aggression from without.
2. The internal security of the countries of Southern Africa must, however, remain a matter for each individual country concerned.
3. The defence of Southern Africa against external aggression lies not only in Africa but also in the gateways to Africa, namely in the Middle East. It is therefore the declared policy :
 - (a) of the United Kingdom to contribute forces for the defence of Africa, including Southern Africa, and the Middle East ;
 - (b) of the Union Government to contribute forces in order to keep the potential enemy as far as possible from the borders of South Africa, in other words for the defence of Southern Africa, Africa and the Middle East gateways to Africa. While the Union's contribution will depend upon satisfactory arrangements being arrived at between the countries mainly concerned as to the nature and extent of the contribution which each will make, the Union Government is in the meantime building up a task force for use outside South Africa against external aggression.
4. In order to implement the above policies, the lines of communication and logistic support in and around Southern Africa must be adequate and securely defended.
5. In this connection the arrangements set out in a separate agreement for the defence of the sea routes round Southern Africa are of primary importance.
6. The adequacy and security of logistic facilities and communications within Southern Africa, and particularly along the lines of communication to the Middle East are matters which should be further considered.
7. To this end it is agreed that the United Kingdom and South Africa will jointly sponsor a conference to integrate forward and develop the planning already begun at the Nairobi Conference.
8. This would cover the technical adequacy of routes, railways, inland waterways, airfields and seaplane bases, radar facilities for screening, sea transport facilities, telecommunications and mails facilities and arrangements for their defence in the event of external aggression.
9. It would also cover base facilities, e.g., storage and stockpiling arrangements, repair facilities, etc., on the lines of communication through and around Southern Africa.
10. It is agreed that the United Kingdom and the Union will jointly endeavour, at this conference, to secure the setting up of suitable machinery to pursue the aims of the conference on a continuing basis.

LETTER 2

SOUTH AFRICA HOUSE

LONDON, W.C.2

30th June, 1955

Dear Mr. Selwyn Lloyd,

Thank you for your letter of 30th June, 1955, enclosing a Memorandum setting out the terms of our Understanding on the need for international discussions with regard to Regional Defence.

I am glad to confirm that this represents what was agreed between us.

Yours sincerely,

F. C. ERASMUS

The Right Honourable Selwyn Lloyd, C.B.E., T.D., Q.C., M.P.

II. THE DEFENCE OF THE SEA ROUTES ROUND SOUTHERN AFRICA

LETTER 3

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

LONDON, S.W.1

30th June, 1955

Sir,

I have the honour to refer to our recent discussions in London concerning the defence of the sea routes round Southern Africa and to set out the terms of the agreement which we have reached.

AGREEMENT ON DEFENCE OF THE SEA ROUTES ROUND SOUTHERN AFRICA

1. Recognising the importance of sea communications to the well-being of their respective countries in peace and to their common security in the event of aggression, the Governments of the Union of South Africa and of the United Kingdom enter into the following Agreement to ensure the safety, by the joint operations of their respective maritime forces, of the sea routes round Southern Africa.

2. The Union Government have approved a programme for the expansion of the South African Navy. The programme will be spread over a period of eight years from 1955 to 1963, and will involve the purchase of the following vessels, which will be added to the existing fleet :

- 6 Anti-submarine Frigates.
- 10 Coastal Minesweepers.
- 4 Seaward Defence Boats.

3. The Union Government will place firm orders in the United Kingdom for the purchase of these vessels, costing some £18M. The British Admiralty agree to act as agents for the Union Government in this matter.

4. After the control and administration of the Simonstown Naval Base are handed over to the Union Government in accordance with the provisions of the Agreement relating to that subject, the Royal Naval Commander-in-Chief, South Atlantic, will continue to fly the flag to which he is entitled by Royal Naval regulations in the Cape area outside Simonstown and to exercise command over any Royal Naval units in the Union.

5. He will also be designated for purposes of planning and operational command in war as Commander-in-Chief of a maritime strategic zone, the boundaries of which will approximate to those of the Royal Naval South Atlantic Station, and will include the Mozambique Channel. It will, however, exclude waters further north which fall within the responsibility of the Royal Naval Commander-in-Chief, East Indies. These boundaries will be subject to adjustment by agreement in the light of changing strategic considerations.

6. The title of the strategic zone, which the Union Government wish to call the "Southern Africa Strategic Zone", while the United Kingdom Government wish to retain the title "South Atlantic", will be decided later.

7. The strategic zone will include an area to be known as the "South African Area", which will be bounded by the coast of South Africa and a line drawn from the northern boundary of South-West Africa through positions :

<i>Latitude</i>	<i>Longitude</i>
(a) 20°S	0°
(b) 50°S	0°
(c) 50°S	55°E
(d) 30°S	55°E

to Cap Sainte Marie (Madagascar), and thence to the boundary between Union territory and Portuguese East Africa. These boundaries will be subject to modification by agreement in the light of changing strategic considerations. The Union Government will appoint the Flag Officer commanding the South African area.

8. As agreed between the two Governments, forces will be earmarked in peacetime for assignment to the Commander-in-Chief and assigned to him in time of war as defined in the Annex¹ or emergency likely to lead to such a war.

9. In peacetime the Commander-in-Chief will be directly responsible only to the United Kingdom Government and will have no executive authority over South African

¹ See p. 202 of this volume.