

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 I

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, tele-communications 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.

forces, establishments, or services. He will, however, have as one of his primary functions the guiding of maritime war planning in the strategic zone, and will be free to confer on these matters, in consultation with the South African Naval Chief of Staff, with the Union Minister of Defence. The position and method of working of the Commander-in-Chief as the designated supreme naval commander in war will be as described in the Annex, which is based on North Atlantic Treaty Organisation practice.

10. A joint maritime war planning committee will be set up, containing representatives of the Royal Navy and the South African Navy, one of whose functions will be to co-ordinate the use of all maritime facilities in British and South African territories in the strategic zone.

11. In a war in which both the United Kingdom and the Union are involved the Commander-in-Chief will be granted operational command as defined in the Annex of all forces assigned to his strategic zone.

12. Since on the transfer of the control of the Simonstown Naval Base in accordance with the provisions of the Agreement relating to that subject, Admiralty House and the adjacent offices and residences will be transferred to the Union Government, the Union Government will in agreement with the United Kingdom Government provide headquarters in the Cape area, but outside Simonstown, with requisite communications and operational facilities, for use by the Commander-in-Chief in peace and war. These headquarters will be at Youngsfield, or at Wingfield or any other suitable place in the Cape area at which the Union Government may decide to establish their maritime headquarters.

13. The command and control of the wireless telegraphy installations known as Slangkop, Klaver, and Cape East will be regulated in accordance with the provisions of the Agreement relating to the transfer of the control and administration of the Simonstown Naval Base.

14. It is agreed in principle that exchanges of officers and ratings between the two navies would be of advantage to both navies and should take place whenever practicable. Such exchanges will be effected by mutual agreement between the two Governments.

15. It is agreed that the South African Navy will introduce a definite programme for the recruitment, as well as the subsequent training in the United Kingdom, of Engineering and Electrical Officers in accordance with existing practice.

16. The arrangement outlined in this Agreement will not preclude the association of other Governments with the defence of the strategic zone, should all the Governments concerned so agree. In that event the Union Government would support the United Kingdom Government in the designation of the Royal Naval Commander-in-Chief, South Atlantic, as Commander-in-Chief of the zone.

17. This Agreement will remain in force until such time as the two Governments decide otherwise by mutual agreement.

ANNEX

NAVAL COMMAND STRUCTURE

Responsibilities and Powers of the Naval Commander-in-Chief Designate of the Strategic Zone

1. It is agreed between the two Governments that the Commander-in-Chief of the strategic zone will in accordance with North Atlantic Treaty Organisation practice be accorded the following powers and responsibilities, which he will exercise in consultation with the South African Naval Chief of Staff in so far as Union forces or resources are concerned :

In War

(i.e., war in which the Union and the United Kingdom are co-belligerents)

(a) The Commander-in-Chief will be responsible for the overall direction and conduct of maritime operations within the strategic zone, and will have operational command of all forces assigned to the zone by the United Kingdom Government and the Union Government respectively ; that is, he will have authority in relation to those forces to assign missions or tasks to subordinate commanders, to deploy units, both within and between subordinate commands, and to retain or assign operational and/or tactical control as he may deem necessary. It does not, of itself, include administrative command or logistic responsibility, which remains a national responsibility.

(b) He will be responsible for the co-ordination of plans and operations with adjacent allied naval authorities.

In Peace

2. The Commander-in-Chief will be responsible for :

(a) the development of plans and the necessary preparations for the execution of his wartime tasks

(b) the organisation for and conduct of combined training of such national units as are assigned or earmarked for assignment to his command in war—and which can be made available—so as to ensure that they can operate as an effective and integrated force

(c) the establishment of an efficient organisation which will be the nucleus for expansion in war for the control of the strategic zone.

3. To fulfil his peacetime functions the Commander-in-Chief will be authorised :

(a) to co-ordinate combined training of national maritime forces of the United Kingdom and of the Union earmarked for assignment to the zone in war

(b) to call for reports based on inspections, carried out by national authorities, concerned with the state of readiness and efficiency of forces earmarked for his command, but not under his control in peacetime.

Assignment and Earmarking for Assignment of Forces

4. Forces will be assigned, or earmarked for assignment in war, to the Commander-in-Chief as agreed between Governments.

5. In general, forces designed solely for local operations in coastal waters will not be assigned or earmarked for assignment to the Commander-in-Chief. By agreement, however, such forces may also be re-deployed within the limits of the zone if operational developments so require.

I have the honour to confirm on behalf of the Government of the United Kingdom the terms recorded above and should be glad if you would confirm their acceptance by your Government. This letter and your reply to it would then constitute an agreement between our Governments.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

Selwyn LLOYD

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

LETTER 4

SOUTH AFRICA HOUSE

LONDON, W.C.2

30th June, 1955

Sir,

I have the honour to refer to your letter of 30th June, regarding our recent discussions in London concerning the defence of the sea routes round Southern Africa and to confirm that the terms recorded in your letter as set out below are acceptable to my Government.

[See letter 3]

I hereby confirm that your letter and this reply of mine to it constitute an agreement between our Governments.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

F. C. ERASMUS

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

III. TRANSFER OF THE SIMONSTOWN NAVAL BASE AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR ITS FUTURE USE

LETTER 5

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 transfer of the Simonstown Naval Base and to set out the terms of the agreement which we have reached.

AGREEMENT RELATING TO THE TRANSFER OF THE SIMONSTOWN NAVAL BASE

1. Consequent upon the intention of the Union Government to expand the South African Navy as described in the Agreement on defence of the sea routes round Southern Africa, and in order that the Union Government may be able to provide adequate logistic support for their expanded Navy, the United Kingdom Government agree to hand over to the Union Government the administration and control of the Naval Base at Simonstown in accordance with the provisions which follow and will also transfer the title to certain property to be agreed.
2. It is agreed that the Royal Navy will continue to require the use of facilities at the base in peace and in war. The Union Government agree that the facilities of the base will be available for use by the Royal Navy in peace and by the Royal Navy and ships serving with the Royal Navy and by navies of allies of the United Kingdom in any war in which the United Kingdom is involved.
3. In a war in which the Union is a co-belligerent, priority in the allocation of space and facilities in the base between the two navies will be settled by mutual consultation between the Commander-in-Chief of the strategic zone referred to in the Agreement on the defence of sea routes round Southern Africa and the South African Naval Chief of Staff, as strategic and operational needs may require.
4. The expansion of the South African Navy will necessitate the provision for use in war of naval facilities beyond the capacity of Simonstown, so as to ensure that the facilities of the base will in fact be available, to the extent required, for use by the Royal Navy and its allies in any war in which the United Kingdom, but not the Union, is involved. To this end the Union Government will take, if necessary in peace, any measures required to ensure the availability of additional facilities elsewhere in the Union for use by the South African Navy in a war in which the United Kingdom, but not the Union, is involved.
5. The Union Government will maintain the facilities of the base at Simonstown in a state of efficiency not inferior to that existing at the time of transfer.

6. The Union Government agree to expand the facilities of the base to the extent necessary to ensure the fulfilment of this Agreement, taking into account the expansion of the South African Navy referred to in the Agreement on defence of the sea routes round Southern Africa.

7. It is agreed that the Royal Naval Commander-in-Chief, South Atlantic, will retain his present responsibilities for, and authority over, the wireless telegraphy installations known as Slangkop, Klaver, and Cape East until a date to be decided by mutual agreement, when the South African Navy can provide the officers and senior ratings together with the majority of the remaining communications personnel. After the transfer of the wireless telegraphy installations, the Union Government will continue to fulfil the requirements of the world-wide wireless organisation of the Royal Navy and will provide the Commander-in-Chief with the necessary facilities for that purpose ; they will also continue to employ Royal Naval personnel for the maintenance of equipment at the two transmitting stations until, by mutual agreement, the South African Navy are able to provide all the officers and men required for this purpose. The Union Government will, in the event of a war in which the United Kingdom is involved, place the command and control of the wireless telegraphy installations in the hands of the Commander-in-Chief.

8. It is agreed that the necessary detailed preparations for the transfer of the base will be put in hand immediately upon the signing of this Agreement and will be completed as soon as possible. It is further agreed that transfer of administration and control will take place as soon as all the necessary preparations have been made, but not later than 31st March, 1957. Nevertheless, should it become apparent that all the necessary preparations cannot be completed by that date, the two Governments will consult together on the measures to be taken.

9. This Agreement will remain in force until such time as the two Governments decide otherwise by mutual agreement.

I have the honour to confirm on behalf of the Government of the United Kingdom the terms recorded above and should be glad if you would confirm their acceptance by your Government. This letter and your reply to it would then constitute an agreement between our Governments.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

Selwyn LLOYD

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

LETTER 6

SOUTH AFRICA HOUSE
LONDON, W.C.2

30th June, 1955

Sir,

I have the honour to refer to your letter of 30th June, regarding our recent discussions in London concerning the transfer of the Simonstown Naval Base, and to confirm that the terms recorded in your letter as set out below are acceptable to my Government.

[See letter 5]

I hereby confirm that your letter and this reply of mine to it constitute an agreement between our Governments.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

F. C. ERASMUS

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