

CONFIDENTIAL

NOTE OF A MEETING HELD IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S SUITE IN THE HILTON HOTEL, MELBOURNE, ON WEDNESDAY 30 SEPTEMBER 1981 AT 0930 HOURS

Present

Prime Minister
Mr. Clive Whitmore

His Excellency Mr. Shridath
Ramphal

Gleneagles Agreement

The Prime Minister said that the Gleneagles Agreement was not a watertight document. It was open to interpretation and the basis of it was that Governments would use their best endeavours to see that its spirit was applied. The Prime Minister said that she hoped the CHGM would not try to clarify it for to do so would only result in acrimonious and inconclusive discussion.

Mr. Ramphal said that there had previously been signs that a number of countries were going to try and get the Gleneagles Agreement strengthened at Melbourne but he had succeeded in forestalling such attempts. He believed that he could continue to keep in check those African and Caribbean countries who might wish to toughen up the Agreement but they would reject such restraint if they thought that Mr. Muldoon was going to try to water down the Agreement. Unfortunately he had now heard from Mr. Fraser that Mr. Muldoon proposed to raise the subject over the weekend in Canberra in order to obtain what he called a conclusion on the interpretation of the Agreement. This would be a recipe for disaster. He proposed to see Mr. Muldoon to tell him the Africans would not attack him over the Springbok tour of New Zealand and the Gleneagles Agreement unless he attacked them. Nor would they threaten to boycott the Commonwealth Games in Brisbane ~~if~~ New Zealand was ^{not} barred from taking part in the event. His message, in short, to Mr Muldoon would be "let it be".

/Namibia

Namibia

The Prime Minister said she did not want the Conference to cut across the efforts of the Contact Group to make progress towards a solution to the problem of Namibia. False comparisons were drawn between the process of bringing Rhodesia to independence and the situation in Namibia. The United Kingdom had had sole responsibility for Rhodesia but she was not responsible for Namibia. Moreover, the relationships between all the parties interested in the future of Namibia were more complicated than those in the case of Rhodesia. She could not really see what the CHGM could contribute to the search for a solution in Namibia. Did the Front Line States attending the Conference have detailed proposals themselves to offer?

Mr Ramphal said that during the run-up to the CHGM he had been urging everyone to let the Contact Group have a clear run in the hope that their efforts would provide a basis for negotiations and an agreement. President Nyerere had told him that the recent Lagos meeting of the Front Line States had had only praise for the work of the Contact Group. There was, therefore, an opportunity in Melbourne to get the Front Line States behind the Contact Group's proposals. He hoped that the Prime Minister would be prepared to discuss the matter with the Front Line States. It would put them in some difficulty if the UK and Canada took the line in Melbourne that Namibia was a subject to be discussed only in the United Nations context and could not be considered by the CHGM. The question of Namibia would in any case come up in the session next Monday. He believed that it would be very helpful if, in order to prepare the ground for that occasion, the Prime Minister, Mr Trudeau, the four Front Line States present, Mr Fraser and he could have a discussion on the basis of the Contact Group's proposals during the weekend in Canberra. She would find that the Front Line States did not have a rigid and predetermined position or any detailed proposals to offer. But they would approach such a discussion positively.

The Prime Minister said that she would like to discuss this suggestion with Lord Carrington.

/Pakistan

Pakistan

Mr Ramphal said that Pakistan's approach to Mr Fraser about their possible readmission to the Commonwealth had got into serious difficulties. Mr Fraser maintained that the ground had been properly cleared before Pakistan raised the matter with him, but it was clear that this was not so. Mrs Gandhi was making it very plain that she was embarrassed that the question of Pakistan's re-entry into the Commonwealth had been raised. She maintained that she ^{had} warned Mr Fraser that she could not agree to let Pakistan return and that by proceeding in the way he had, Mr Fraser had made things more difficult for her and not easier. Mr Fraser, on the other hand, claimed that Mrs Gandhi had signified her acquiescence in the matter being raised but had now changed her mind. Wherever the fault lay for the misunderstanding between Mr Fraser and Mrs Gandhi, the position now was that Pakistan could not rejoin the Commonwealth without India being deeply distressed. There was a risk that we might regain Pakistan only to lose India. In this situation the Conference should play for time. He thought it might be possible for the meeting to take the view that before they could consider the specific question of Pakistan's readmission, the procedures for readmission generally should be looked at. For example, should an application for readmission be automatically be allowed, or should the Commonwealth require some evidence of support for a Government's application from the "body politic" of the country concerned? Was there a risk that if it was thought that readmission was something easily accomplished, Member States might ^{often} leave the Commonwealth in protest safe in the knowledge that they could return without difficulty when they chose to do so? All these issues could legitimate be discussed in order to avoid getting down to the particular question of Pakistan's membership. Such a discussion might conclude by remitting the question for examination by senior officials between the present CHGM and the next one. If we proceeded in this way it would avoid the immediate rejection of Pakistan's approach, and at the same time Mrs Gandhi would not be put in a difficult position.

/The Prime Minister said

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The Prime Minister said that she agreed that it would be wrong to put Mrs Gandhi in a situation where she had to black-ball Pakistan. On the other hand, from the point of view of the Commonwealth as a whole it would be very unfortunate if they cold-shouldered Pakistan. If Pakistan's application was not discussed at all in Melbourne this would be a snub. Equally, if it was discussed and there was no agreement, Pakistan would be snubbed. Some things could be accomplished only at one moment in time. She believed that this was one. If Pakistan was snubbed now, she would not apply again for readmission. On the other hand, it would be just as bad if India was offended. The fact was that Pakistan should never have made an approach without being absolutely certain that it would be accepted. We were in this mess because Mr Fraser had misinterpreted Mrs Gandhi's original response. We had to keep her tied in to the Commonwealth. Perhaps we did have to play for time, but she was not sure that the way of doing so which Mr Ramphal had suggested would work. In any case, if the next CHGM was held in India as was proposed, it might make the question of Pakistan's readmission even more acutely difficult for Mrs Gandhi than appeared to be the case at the moment.

Melbourne Declaration

The Prime Minister said that she was not at all happy with the Draft Declaration which Mr Fraser hoped would be issued at the end of the Conference. Either it would raise expectations that could not be fulfilled and people would be disappointed. Or it would immediately be dismissed as hollow rhetoric. If Mr Fraser insisted on having a declaration and wanted it to go out from the meeting as a whole, it would have to be amended, but it would be very difficult to reach agreement on the necessary changes. An alternative approach was for him to issue it on his own authority as the Chairman of the meeting.

Mr Ramphal said that most of the people he had spoken to would like a Declaration more or less on the lines proposed by Mr Fraser. The Indians wanted to add to it by including an East/West dimension. President Nyerere had said that he could live with the draft and did not want to change it. The Nigerians, on the other hand, liked the concept of the Declaration but were looking at its contents. He thought that it would not be a good idea for the Conference to consider the Draft and then to remit it for revision

to a drafting committee, for there would be no knowing what would emerge from this process. He had therefore suggested to Mr Fraser that at the end of Friday morning's discussion on the world economic situation he should offer to try to pull together the ideas they had been considering and then circulate his Draft Declaration in the afternoon, with the suggestion that they should all be prepared to discuss it during the weekend in Canberra.

The meeting ended at 1025 hrs.

haw.

30 September, 1981