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Prime Minister ~~CCBT~~ (2)

**PRIME MINISTER'S
PERSONAL MESSAGE
SERIAL No. T 169A/85**

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A letter from Mr. Mulroney
feeling your views on the
handling of South Africa at
CHOGM. He expects minimum
additional measures against
South Africa to be necessary
October 2, 1985

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A draft reply is in
preparation.

CDP
3/x

Right Honourable Margaret Thatcher, M.P.
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London

Dear Margaret:

The whole issue of South Africa has been much in my thought during these past weeks. Your High Commissioner in Ottawa will no doubt have been reporting on the numerous measures our government has taken recently to impress upon the South African government how urgent it is to introduce basic changes to bring about an end to apartheid. I was extremely pleased, therefore, to have had the opportunity of a preliminary exchange of views with Geoffrey Howe last Friday afternoon. I explained to Sir Geoffrey our thinking and was grateful to have had his insight regarding your own government's position. Nevertheless, following our meeting I thought it would be useful if I were to share with you my perceptions.

Canadians cannot but consider unacceptable, a regime founded on racist principles. The maintenance of apartheid over thirty-five years in the face of the consistent opprobrium of the international community does not augur well for the South African government's willingness to bring significant changes within a reasonable time-frame. There are certain limited goals which we consider as indispensable to any process of peaceful change. They include the dismantling of the legal underpinning of apartheid and an opening of negotiations, involving black leaders who enjoy wide support, aimed at majority rule with some form of constitutional protection of minority rights.

It is vital, I believe, that the South Africans should realize that effective reform can no longer be delayed. Developments in their own country and internationally have greatly accelerated, and a failure to move more quickly will expose their

country to grave dangers now and in the future. For my part, I see no prospect of reversing the international momentum towards further economic measures against South Africa or reducing its isolation, unless the South African government introduces basic reforms.

I know that you too are reflecting on this question and its importance for the Commonwealth as we approach the Nassau meeting. I appreciate the measures which your government has recently announced and am certain that other Commonwealth members have taken careful note of them. We must expect, however, that most Commonwealth members will be looking for far more ambitious measures to reflect global condemnation of systematic racial discrimination in South Africa. In speaking for Canada I will be obliged to make clear our own support for the progressive application of economic and political pressure on South Africa.

Against this background, South Africa looms very large on our agenda for the forthcoming Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM). I hope that we can remain in close touch on the question, in view of our joint commitment to the success of the Nassau meeting and its implications for the future of the Commonwealth. All participants will be deeply conscious of your own exceptional contribution to an equally critical CHOGM in 1979. It is my earnest hope that you will once again provide the Commonwealth with leadership that will enable all members to feel proud of their achievements.

At the end of the day, I realize that we may not have the same appreciation of what is an outcome acceptable to the Commonwealth as a whole. At the outset, however, I hope very much that we can maintain the frankest dialogue; in that expectation I very much hope we will be able to discuss this and other issues on the CHOGM agenda as early as possible following our arrival in Nassau. In the meantime, I hope you will let me have your views on how we can use the Bahamas meeting to encourage reasonable progress in South Africa while maintaining the integrity of the Commonwealth.

I would be particularly interested in learning whether your government could subscribe to some minimum additional measures which the Commonwealth could unanimously adopt in Nassau. Such a gesture would provide a sense of purpose and lend cohesion to our unique Commonwealth assembly. What is more, it could well be the only way of avoiding far more radical proposals. Obviously,

Right Honourable
Margaret Thatcher, M.P.

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all states are free to take whatever steps they believe best fulfill their foreign policy objectives. However, the combination of a list of commonly agreed measures, coupled with additional measures unilaterally imposed by individual members, would appear to be a reasonable and effective way of expressing common purpose, while preserving maximum freedom of individual national action. I look forward to hearing from you in this regard.

Yours sincerely,

Brian