

CONFIDENTIAL

file SUBJECT DSG
cc Master.
cc John Johnson



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

SIR ANTONY ACLAND

CHOGM: HEADS OF GOVERNMENT RETREAT AT LYFORD CAY

You asked me to let you have a note about the discussion of Africa by the Heads of Government during their Retreat at Lyford Cay.

The tone and scope of the discussion was set by the Prime Minister's statement in the Executive Session on Friday. This set out squarely the case for a positive approach by the Commonwealth designed to help establish a dialogue between Government and blacks in South Africa, and rejected the case for economic and trade sanctions. This was clearly taken as a challenge by the Africans and others. Heads of Government went off to Lyford Cay with a wide gap between the UK's position and that of virtually all the others.

At Lyford Cay an informal drafting committee seems to have formed itself early on, consisting of Messrs. Kaunda, Mulroney, Hawke, Gandhi and Mugabe. It was useful they were all people with whom the Prime Minister had held bilaterals. They presumably met on Saturday morning. Subsequently Mr. Mulroney and Mr. Gandhi called on the Prime Minister at 2.00 p.m. to show her the draft text which they proposed to table. In a meeting lasting rather over two hours, the Prime Minister explained why their text was unacceptable. Their approach at that stage bordered on the naive: an expectation that the Prime Minister would join the majority out of goodwill for the Commonwealth. Their knowledge of the situation in South Africa seemed slim; and their drafting skills rudimentary. It was in the course of this meeting that the Prime

/ Minister

CONFIDENTIAL

Minister first raised the need to have in any text a firm call for an end to violence in South Africa as a condition for a successful dialogue. Both thought it would be extremely difficult to reach agreement on this.

Mulroney and Gandhi left this meeting to consult their colleagues, and subsequently invited the Prime Minister to join a wider meeting of the drafting group at 9.30 p.m. that evening. This lasted some three hours and went over much of the same ground as the earlier meeting. There was no willingness on the part of the drafting group to acknowledge the need for a more balanced text. The meeting was at times acrimonious, particularly exchanges between the Prime Minister and Mr. Hawke.

Overnight we had prepared our own text and the Prime Minister gave a copy of this to Mr. Ramphal when he called to see her at 10.00 on the Sunday morning. Ramphal was dejected about the outcome of the previous day's discussion and spoke of a damaging and perhaps irreparable split in the Commonwealth. He evinced little interest in our text but appealed to the Prime Minister to show good will. The first plenary session of Heads of Government was scheduled for 10.30. Minutes before it, the drafting group circulated the text which they had shown the Prime Minister the day before, unchanged in any significant respect. As soon as the meeting convened the Prime Minister circulated ours, but it was never actually discussed.

The meeting was a very difficult one in which a lot of harsh words were said about the United Kingdom's position. The Prime Minister was lectured on morality, on preferring British jobs to black African lives, on being concerned with pennies rather than principles, and on lack of concern for human rights in South Africa. Kaunda, Gandhi, Kibaki and the Nigerian representative seem to have been particularly virulent. She in turn reminded her critics both of their own trade and other links with South Africa and some of the less satisfactory features of their

/ societies,

societies, particularly when it comes to human rights. She pointed out the discrepancy between willingness to trade with the Soviet Union despite its appalling human rights record, and asking for sanctions on South Africa. The Prime Minister put particular stress on the importance of the Commonwealth distancing itself from terrorism and violence. No-one spoke up in support of the United Kingdom's approach, though President Jayewardene earned marks for honesty in making clear that he had no intention of scrapping Sri Lanka's tea agreement with South Africa; and some of the smaller countries - Swaziland, Uganda, Malta and the Caribbean - told the Prime Minister privately that they had considerable sympathy with her position. The meeting finally ended at 1400 with views still far apart.

During the belated lunch break, the Prime Minister decided to offer two very modest additional measures against South Africa - unilateral action on Krugerrands and withdrawal of official support for trade promotion - provided that the others would agree to a reference to the suspension of violence. She also decided to allow a reference to consideration of further measures at some future date provided it was made clear that only some member states were committed to these (and the United Kingdom categorically not). She then met the drafting committee plus Pindling and Ramphal at 1530 in what was a very chilly encounter. The Prime Minister spoke forcefully of the deep hurt which some of the remarks made at the morning session had caused. They were neither justified nor in keeping with the Commonwealth spirit of fairness. Her reaction appears to have shaken at least some of those present who urged her not to take the remarks personally. The Prime Minister then said that she was willing to make one last effort to ^{achieve} ~~receive~~ a Commonwealth position and tabled her various proposals. In putting them forward, she made clear that her own position domestically would actually be easier if her concessions were rejected. She would much prefer to defend a complete refusal to consider sanctions. If her proposals were not accepted, she would withdraw them and the United Kingdom would issue its own statement. The drafting group asked for time to reflect. Some ten minutes later a distinctly more cheerful Ramphal appeared to say that "we are in business".

/ An agreed

An agreed text was then finalised between Ramphal and Sir Antony Acland, agreed by the Prime Minister (on condition that absolutely no changes would be made) and subsequently by the drafting group. A plenary session was convened at 8.00 p.m. and approved the text unchanged, after efforts by Kibaki (Kenya) and the Nigerian representative were rejected. Several speeches were made praising the Prime Minister's positive contribution: indeed, they appear to have been orchestrated, as part of a shame-faced reaction to the morning's session, about which the Prime Minister had succeeded in making them all feel perfectly rotten. The meeting ended with a round of applause for the Prime Minister.

I think there can be no doubt that the Prime Minister played a difficult hand with consummate skill, so that some very minor concessions indeed ^{secured} seemed not only an important concession on the suspension ^{of violence} but also left the other Commonwealth states feeling that a satisfactory outcome had been achieved. Equally the Prime Minister remains considerably disillusioned by the double standards applied by a number of the Commonwealth countries (which she pointed out to them in unambiguous terms) and is more inclined to question the real value of the Commonwealth association. She is disappointed in particular by Mr. Gandhi's performance which she found posturing and shallow. He and Mulroney were obviously keen to cut a figure at this meeting, but did not really have the experience for their self-appointed role. One or two other relationships, though bruised, are reparable.

This is a very private account. It would not be right to report it more widely in full. But it could be drawn upon to construct a "mood" telegram.

I am sending a copy of this to Mr. Appleyard (FCO).

C.D.P.

Charles Powell

21 October 1985