



10 DOWNING STREET
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THE PRIME MINISTER

29 July 1988

Dear Mr. President,

Chief Minister Buthelezi called to see me in London this week. I was able to ask him about the reform process and the prospects for further political progress of a kind that would carry conviction within South Africa and in the Western world.

I know of the new initiatives you have taken by opening up the possibility of appointing a black representative to the Cabinet and creating a National Council in which black leaders will be invited to discuss future constitutional arrangements. These are potentially important steps and I am most concerned that the opportunity should not be missed to produce convincing results. But it was clear from what Chief Buthelezi told me that he will himself feel unable to participate in negotiations about the future while Mr. Mandela remains in prison.

You know my deep concern about this matter. Mr. Mandela has now spent 26 years in prison. The longer he stays there, the more of a legend he becomes. His death in prison would have very damaging consequences, not only for South Africa's relations with the outside world, which I am anxious to see preserved, but also for the prospects of peaceful change within South Africa. I am therefore asking you once again to take the steps necessary to enable Mr. Mandela to be released.

DSB

I believe that Mr. Mandela's release would make a crucial difference to the chances of political progress along the lines you wish because it would make it easier for representatives of moderate black South African opinion such as Chief Buthelezi to take part in negotiations. If they are not drawn in now, they will surely lose ground to the extremists, and an opportunity will be lost.

You know the strength of my commitment to policies which will help to make things better in South Africa and not worse, and of the many battles I have fought in that cause. But we are approaching a watershed. At the turn of the year, we shall have a new United States Administration. Whoever is elected will want to re-define US policy towards South Africa. I will exert my influence with the new President to try to ensure that he pursues policies which will not further complicate the task of those committed to reform and peaceful change in South Africa. I am most anxious to avoid further economic damage being inflicted on South Africa of a kind that would make all the problems harder to solve.

But my ability to exert effective influence on an incoming US Administration on this issue will depend on developments in South Africa and between South Africa and her neighbours in the meanwhile. Without visible, concrete progress on reform and towards peace in the region, the difficulty of my task in Washington will be enormously increased. It would be particularly damaging if the Promotion of Orderly Internal Politics Bill, or a variation of it, were to be adopted early next year. You know our views on the Bill. Its adoption would put the West under heavy pressure to take action, with serious consequences both for your interests and ours.

I am following with great attention the negotiations now under way on Angola and Namibia. A solution to these problems does not of course lie in South Africa's hands alone and I know that the South African delegation has played a constructive role in the negotiations. It is our objective

to see a withdrawal of foreign forces from Angola, and an internationally recognised settlement in Namibia. My position on this is known to Mr. Gorbachev, as well as to the Cubans and Angolans.

I have also been informed of the important steps you have taken to try to achieve a return to the spirit of the Nkomati Accord in your relations with Mozambique. I welcome these and will welcome any other positive initiatives you are able to take. It is a time when leadership is more than ever required. There will be much at stake over the next few months.

Yours sincerely

Ryan and Shaker

The Hon P.W. Botha