

CONFIDENTIAL



SJ
arc
cc Robin Renwick
cc B1

10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

SUBJECT cc MINISTER

14 October 1990

Dear Stephen,

PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH PRESIDENT DE KLERK
OF SOUTH AFRICA

The Prime Minister had a talk at Chequers this morning with President de Klerk lasting rather over one hour. The President was accompanied by the South African Ambassador. Sir Robin Renwick was also present. The climate of the discussion was as good as the weather. President de Klerk detailed some of his grievances against the ANC in the early stages, but then got on to talk constructively and frankly about his plans for the future.

Some of the material in this letter is of a sensitive nature and it should be given only a very limited distribution to those with a strict need to know.

Visit to Washington

President de Klerk began by saying that his visit to Washington had gone well, as the Prime Minister had predicted it would. He had had a warm reception from President Bush and Secretary Baker, and helpful assurances about support in restoring access to IMF/IBRD funds once the remaining steps had been taken to get rid of apartheid.

The ANC

President de Klerk then talked about the ANC. he was worried that Mandela seemed to be losing his grip under pressure. At their last meeting, he had told Mandela very frankly that he simply must take decisions, even if it did mean losing some support among his followers. The Prime Minister agreed that Mandela often seemed to bear the imprint of the last person to talk to him. She thought the basic problem was that the ANC were not yet ready for serious negotiations. President de Klerk said that he was worried about the ANC's conference in December. There were signs of divisions within the movement, with the internal leadership feeling it was not getting its due. It could reach the point of expulsions at the conference. There was a deep uncertainty within the ANC. The Prime Minister said that, for 20 years, the ANC's only function had been to hit out. Now they had to turn from being a destructive organisation to a constructive one, and they were finding that difficult.

CONFIDENTIAL

The Prime Minister continued that she had been cross with Mandela for his allegation that the security forces were provoking the violence between rival black organisations. President de Klerk said that efforts by the ANC to implicate the security forces in the violence were indeed part of the problem. Mandela was unable to control his own supporters, and therefore tried to shift the blame to the government. The more fundamental problem was that some of the ANC saw suspension of the armed struggle as no more than armistice, and were refusing to hand in their weapons. There was clear evidence that caches of weapons remained in South Africa, with plans to bring in more. That was why two members of the ANC had been detained in August, one of them being Mac Maharaj. The Prime Minister said that she hoped Maharaj would be charged soon. President de Klerk said that he was pressing for this. The President continued that he had no option but to put his foot down on the issue of illegal arms. The Government could never accept that a political party should have its own private army. The ANC had advanced in some respects: for instance they no longer referred to the South African government as an illegal, racist organisation. But they were not living up to their promise to suspend violence and all related activities.

President de Klerk continued that the ANC remained reluctant to accept competition from other black organisations. That was at the root of the ANC/Inkatha problem. But no one could ignore the Inkatha: Chief Buthelezi had at least 50 per cent of South Africa's Zulus with him. Buthelezi's aim was to find an expression for Zulu nationalism within a South African framework. Unfortunately his behaviour was a bit erratic, explicable partly by the fact that he was a diabetic. He could be irrational and had been through a bad patch lately. That was why Dhlomo had left him. But he himself had a good relationship with Buthelezi. He thought Buthelezi's position had been strengthened as a result of recent events. The Prime Minister said that she would see Chief Buthelezi when he came to London in November. The crucial thing was that he should not put himself in the wrong.

The Prime Minister asked about Chief Mabuza. President de Klerk said Mabuza had felt piqued because Mandela had treated him as unimportant. But he was now getting his balance back and playing a useful role.

Returning to his catalogue of the ANC's sins, President de Klerk said that he was constantly reminding Mandela that the ANC's association with the South African Communist Party was an albatross round their necks. They should distance themselves from socialism. More generally, some way had to be found to bring home to blacks in South Africa how devastating had been the effects of socialism elsewhere on the continent. All they ever saw was pictures of black heads of government standing at the end of red carpets: they needed to see the starvation, the poverty and the misery. Sir Robin Renwick commented that the President had moved Mandela quite a long way, as was evident in his recent interview denying that he was a socialist. President de Klerk said the problem remained that Mandela could not exert proper control over the ANC. He had promised that violence would be

stopped, but in fact Hani and others were going on recruiting and training. It was possible that Mandela did not know about this. But there was an inner core of the ANC, with a hidden agenda, and they constituted a real problem.

Sanctions

President de Klerk said that this led him on to the illogicality of continuing sanctions. The South African government was getting in step with the rest of the world. But a lot of countries were continuing to support those in South Africa who were out of step and wanted to continue with violence. During his visit to the United States, he had the strong impression that President Bush wanted the Europeans to take the lead in relaxing sanctions. The Prime Minister said it was not worthwhile having a big battle about this in Europe. In practice many countries were ignoring sanctions and they were becoming almost irrelevant. The main difficulties were caused by France, Spain, Ireland, Denmark and the Netherlands. President de Klerk commented that the Netherlands' position had evolved: he had been invited there on an official visit next week. The main effect of continuing sanctions was to deprive South Africa of the capital it needed. He thought the bankers were looking to European governments to give a signal before resuming lending. The Prime Minister said that other European governments would want to see further steps towards lifting apartheid before they would agree publicly to lift sanctions. But she would certainly raise the matter with Signor Andreotti the following week and at the European Council in December. President de Klerk said that Mandela was watching the evolution of international thinking of sanctions closely. Once he was convinced they would be lifted anyway, he would give the signal to do so. That way it would appear to be in response to the ANC's request.

Negotiations on a new Constitution

The Prime Minister invited President de Klerk to tell her something of his plans for the future. She assumed he would announce further important measures in his speech at the opening of parliament early in 1991. President de Klerk confirmed this, but added that he did not have that many cards left to play. He could tell the Prime Minister, in strict confidence, that he hoped to lift the state of emergency in Natal in the not too distant future. Violence could be dealt with under other legislation, without a state of emergency. He thought this decision would have a considerable psychological effect. The other main issue in the period immediately ahead was the return of exiles. The intention was to carry this through in phases, with completion by the end of April 1991. But an announcement had been suspended following an intemperate attack on the government by the ANC last week. Sir Robin Renwick commented that these steps should put President Bush in a position to say, by next April, that the conditions for easing sanctions had been met.

The Prime Minister asked about the timetable for negotiations. President de Klerk said he still hoped they could start early next year. Indeed he had wanted a third round of

informal talks with the ANC on constitutional principles by now. The truth was that neither side could afford a protracted period of negotiations. That would only enable the hard-liners to emasculate them. What he had tentatively in mind was partial implementation of changes as negotiations made progress. This might take the form of bringing individuals into the government, but would not be an interim government as such. It would be important to have some early results. You could not negotiate for two or three years without any visible progress. The Prime Minister commented that the ANC would be wary of anything which did not put them at the end of the red carpet. President de Klerk said that his tactic would be to make the ANC ask for participation. Mandela was in a hurry because of his age. It was interesting for instance that Mandela was now talking of black elections to decide who should negotiate. Six months ago he had been flatly opposed to this. The Prime Minister said that great care would be needed to ensure that such an election was free from intimidation. There would need to be observers. President de Klerk said that the South African government would control the election and ensure that it was done properly in terms of South African electoral law. For his part he had four years of his mandate left. He could not see himself going to the country again under the present constitution.

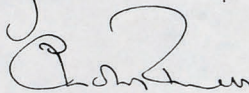
The Prime Minister asked about sources of constitutional advice. President de Klerk said that Mr. Viljoen was the main source of ideas. But the Law Commission had been instructed to work out alternative constitutional frameworks. The Prime Minister asked who was advising Chief Buthelezi and the ANC. Was this an area in which we could help? President de Klerk said that Buthelezi certainly needed better advice and the South African government might itself help him obtain it. In these constitutional discussions, he was trying to avoid talking about models, sticking instead to basic principles. The main principle had to be power sharing in the executive. Under a future constitution, no one person could have as much power as he had now. The system would have to enforce cooperation. In some respects the Swiss federal cabinet was a guide. In practical terms he was saying that both he and Mandela would have to be in a future government, as would some of the other leaders. One of the biggest problems, to which he at present saw no answer, would be control of the security forces.

The Prime Minister said that once negotiations started, it would be important to keep other African governments regularly informed. They might be persuaded to bring pressure to bear on the ANC at crucial stages. We had used this tactic successfully during the Rhodesia negotiations. President de Klerk said that he was getting the message from several African governments that they did not want South Africa to be destabilised, which meant in effect that they did not want power simply to be handed over to the ANC. The Prime Minister observed that this reflected the importance to them of South Africa's economy. President de Klerk commented that Mugabe was adopting a more sensible position, and the two of them might meet fairly soon. He had been assured privately that the girl being held by the Zimbabwe government would be released shortly.

Rugby Tour

As the meeting was adjourning for lunch, President de Klerk commented that the one thing which would help him more than any other against his right wing opponents would be a British Rugby tour of South Africa.

I am copying this letter to John Gieve (HM Treasury), Simon Webb (Ministry of Defence), Martin Stanley (Department of Trade and Industry) and Sonia Phippard (Cabinet Office).

Yours sincerely,


(C. D. POWELL)

Stephen Wall, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

NOTE FOR THE RECORD

POSSIBLE VISIT BY THE PRIME MINISTER TO SOUTH AFRICA

During her talks with President de Klerk at Chequers today the Prime Minister commented that she would love to come to South Africa, but thought it better not to do so for the time being. It would be prudent to wait at least until there had been substantial progress in negotiations. President de Klerk said demonstrating that the South African Government's guest house was being got ready for the Prime Minister. He would like her to come sooner rather than later. But it would be important to gauge black South African, and in particular ANC, reaction. What happened over sanctions would be crucial. It would be better for the Prime Minister not to come while she appeared in the eyes of the ANC as their main opponent over sanctions. But once most sanctions were lifted, he thought their attitude would be different. He would keep in touch with the Prime Minister about the best timing for a visit. He repeated his hope that it could be sooner rather than later.

C.D.P.

(C. D. POWELL)

14 October 1990

c:\wpdocs\foreign\SA (srw)



3

10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

14 October 1990

Dear Robin,

I enclose copies for you of my letter recording the Prime Minister's talk with President de Klerk: and a brief note - which I am not sending to the Foreign Office - about the possibility of the Prime Minister visiting South Africa.

Yours ever
C. D. Powell

(C. D. POWELL)

His Excellency Sir Robin Renwick,
K.C.M.G.

SECRET AND PERSONAL