

TEXT OF MESSAGE FROM THE COMMONWEALTH SECRETARY-GENERAL
TO THE RT. HON. MARGARET THATCHER, MP

Begins

Dear Prime Minister,

With your co-operation and that of the other Commonwealth Heads of Government identified in paragraph 5 of the Nassau Accord on Southern Africa, I have been engaged these last weeks in consultations directed towards constituting the Group of Eminent Persons. The result is as attached.

I propose to invite Mr. Fraser and General Obasanjo to be Co-Chairmen of the Group. Both have indicated their willingness to serve in this capacity.

We are now, therefore, in a position to proceed and I plan to announce the constitution of the Group as set out on Monday, 25 November with an embargo for 1200 hours GMT. In advance of that, I will communicate directly with all Commonwealth Heads of Government telling them of the constitution of the Group and related matters.

Please accept my deep gratitude for all the care you have taken over this most important development. I know how much you share my hope that it is one which, taken in the context of the Accord as a whole, will contribute in some measure to the positive resolution of problems in Southern Africa.

With deep respect,

Shridath S. Ramphal

Ends

COMMONWEALTH GROUP OF EMINENT PERSONS

1. The Rt. Hon. Malcolm Fraser, former Prime Minister of Australia - Proposed by Prime Minister Hawke
2. General Olusegun Obasanjo, former Head of State of Nigeria - Proposed jointly by President Kaunda and Prime Minister Mugabe with the concurrence of the Government of Nigeria
3. The Rt. Hon. Lord Barber of Wentbridge, Chairman, Standard Chartered Bank and former Minister of the Government of the United Kingdom - Proposed by Prime Minister Thatcher
4. Dame Nita Barrow, a President of the World Council of Churches, former President of the World YWCA and Chairperson of the International NGO Women's Forum in Nairobi - Proposed by Prime Minister Pindling with the concurrence of the Government of Barbados
5. Mr. John Malecela, former Minister of the Government of Tanzania - Proposed jointly by President Kaunda and Prime Minister Mugabe with the concurrence of the Government of Tanzania
6. Sardar Swaran Singh, former Minister of the Government of India - Proposed by Prime Minister Gandhi
7. The Most Revd. Archbishop Edward W. Scott, DD, Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada - Proposed by Prime Minister Mulroney



Commonwealth News Release

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85/31

25 November 1985

COMMONWEALTH GROUP OF EMINENT PERSONS SET UP TO PROMOTE DIALOGUE FOR DEMOCRACY IN SOUTH AFRICA

The Commonwealth Secretary-General, Mr Shridath Ramphal, announced today the establishment of the Group of Eminent Persons who are to encourage political dialogue in South Africa with a view to establishing a non-racial and representative government. The Group is one of the three central elements of the Accord on Southern Africa agreed by Commonwealth leaders at their Nassau summit last month.

The Secretary-General has constituted the Group on the basis of proposals made by the seven Heads of Government who were asked by their colleagues in Nassau to work with him on the modalities of the effort to assist the process of political dialogue in South Africa; they are the President of Zambia, and the Prime Ministers of Australia, the Bahamas, Britain, Canada, India and Zimbabwe.

Members of the Group are:

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| Mr Malcolm Fraser
(Proposed by Prime Minister
Hawke) | - | Former Prime Minister of Australia |
| General Olusegun Obasanjo
(Proposed jointly by
President Kaunda and
Prime Minister Mugabe with
the concurrence of the Govern-
ment of Nigeria) | - | Former Head of State of Nigeria |
| Lord Barber of Wentbridge
(Proposed by Prime Minister
Thatcher) | - | Chairman, Standard Chartered Bank,
and former Minister of the Govern-
ment of the United Kingdom |
| Dame Nita Barrow
(Proposed by Prime Minister
Pindling with the concur-
rence of the Government of
Barbados) | - | A President of the World Council of
Churches, former President of the
World YWCA and Chairperson of the
International NGO Women's Forum in
Nairobi. |

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| Mr John Malecela
(Proposed jointly by
President Kaunda and Prime
Minister Mugabe with the
concurrence of the Govern-
ment of Tanzania) | - | Former Minister of the Government
of Tanzania |
| Sardar Swaran Singh
(Proposed by Prime Minister
Gandhi) | - | Former Minister of the Government
of India. |
| Archbishop Edward W Scott
(Proposed by Prime Minister
Mulroney) | - | Primate of the Anglican Church
of Canada |

All will serve in their personal capacities. Mr Fraser and General Obasanjo will be Co-Chairmen of the Group.

The Group will have its first meeting in London in the first half of December when it is expected to agree upon its method of work and a timetable for the initial six-month period. Special arrangements are being made by the Commonwealth Secretariat to support the work of the Group.

The Secretary-General, Mr Ramphal, said today:

"I am very pleased to be able to announce the full list of the Group of Eminent Persons which Commonwealth leaders agreed on at Nassau. That it has taken somewhat longer than I originally hoped is indicative of the great care which Commonwealth leaders have taken in ensuring a group of the highest quality and appropriate balance. I am deeply grateful to all those concerned for their readiness to support this most important Commonwealth effort and to give it the best possible chance of fulfilling the objectives of the Commonwealth at Nassau.

The members of the Group will be acting on behalf of the Commonwealth as a whole. They will try to advance by all practicable means the objectives Commonwealth leaders expressed collectively in their Accord on Southern Africa. That Accord provides the framework and the terms of reference for the Group's work."

Members of Group of Eminent Persons

Mr Malcolm Fraser, proposed by the Prime Minister of Australia. Mr Fraser was the Prime Minister of Australia 1975-83, after having held a number of cabinet positions from 1968. He entered parliament in 1955, after graduating from Oxford University in 1952. As Prime Minister, Mr Fraser chaired the Commonwealth summit held in Melbourne in 1981 and was responsible for initiating the series of Commonwealth Heads of Government Regional Meetings for the Asia/Pacific region. Lately an International Fellow of Harvard University, Mr Fraser was Chairman of the United Nations Panel of Eminent Persons which recently reported on the Activities of Transnational Corporations in South Africa and Namibia. He is a member of the Inter Action Council of former Heads of Government formed in 1983. (Co-Chairman)

General Olusegun Obasanjo, proposed by the President of Zambia and the Prime Minister of Zimbabwe, was the head of the Federal Military Government of Nigeria from 1976-79, when he handed over power to an elected civilian government, headed by President Shehu Shagari. A Fellow of the University of Ibadan from 1979, General Obasanjo served on the Independent (Palme) Commission on Disarmament and Security and he is a member of the Inter Action Council of former Heads of Government. As an officer in the Nigerian army which he joined in 1958, he served with the UN forces in Congo in 1960. He served as Federal Commissioner for Works and Housing in 1975 and was promoted Lt-General in 1976. (Co-Chairman).

Lord Barber of Wentbridge, proposed by the Prime Minister of Britain, has been Chairman of the Standard Chartered Bank since 1974. Having served as Economic Secretary to the British Treasury 1959-62, Financial Secretary to the Treasury 1962-63 and Minister of Health 1963-64, Lord Barber was Chancellor of the Exchequer 1970-74. He was Chairman of the Conservative Party 1967-70 and a member of the Falkland Islands Inquiry Committee (Franks Committee) in 1982. A graduate of Oxford University and a barrister, he entered Parliament in 1951.

Dame Nita Barrow, proposed by the Prime Minister of the Bahamas. A Barbadian national; Dame Nita Barrow was President of the World YWCA 1975-83 and has been a President of the World Council of Churches since 1983 and President of the International Council for Adult Education since 1982. She was the convenor of the Non-Governmental Organisations Forum for the World Conference to review the UN Decade for Women held in Nairobi this year. After being Principal Nursing Officer in Jamaica and Nursing Adviser to the Pan American Health Organisation for the Commonwealth Caribbean, she served as Associate Director 1972-75 and Director 1975-81 of the Christian Medical Commission of the World Council of Churches in Geneva. She was made a Dame of St Andrews in 1980.

Mr John Malecela, proposed by the President of Zambia and the Prime Minister of Zimbabwe, was Foreign Minister of Tanzania 1972-75. He later held other positions in the Cabinet (Agriculture 1978-80, Minerals 1980-82, Communications and Transport 1982-84 and Communications and Works 1984-85) until he relinquished office earlier this month. He was Vice-Chairman of the Independent (Maitland) Commission for Worldwide Telecommunications Development. As Tanzania's Permanent Representative at the UN 1964-68, Mr Malecela was elected Chairman of the UN Committee on Decolonisation in 1967. He was a Minister in the East African Community before becoming a Minister in Tanzania in 1972. He studied at the Universities of Bombay and Cambridge.

Mr Swaran Singh, proposed by the Prime Minister of India, has been in public life since 1946 and served as India's Minister of External Affairs 1964-66 and 1970-74 and as Minister of Defence 1966-70 and 1974-75. He had held a number of other portfolios in the Indian Government from 1952 onwards. A leader of the Indian delegation to the United Nations General Assembly on eight occasions, he was elected to the Executive Board of UNESCO this year. He was a member of the United Nations Panel of Eminent Persons on Regional and Inter-regional Co-operation 1982-84, and has been Co-Chairman of the Policy Board of the Inter Action Council since 1983.

The Most Rev Edward Walter Scott, proposed by the Prime Minister of Canada, has been the Primate of the Anglican Church of Canada since 1971. Educated at the University of British Columbia and the Anglican Theological College of British Columbia, he was ordained in 1942. He served as Director of Social Service and Priest-in-Charge of Indian Work in the Diocese of Rupertsland 1960-64 and Associate Secretary of the Council for Social Service of the Anglican Church 1964-66 and was Bishop of Kootenay 1966-71. Archbishop Scott was Moderator of the Executive and Central Committees of the World Council of Churches 1975-83. He was made a Companion of the Order of Canada in 1978.

*Referred
to Chaperon*

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26/11*

OFFICE OF THE COMMONWEALTH SECRETARY-GENERAL
MARLBOROUGH HOUSE · PALL MALL · LONDON SW1Y 5HX

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~~*cc Res. div.
FCO*~~

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23 November 1985

Dear Mr. Wicks,

The Secretary-General, who is in New York, has asked me to request you to convey the attached message to the Prime Minister.

*Yours sincerely
Momi Malhoutra*

M. Malhoutra,
Assistant Secretary-General.

Mr. Nigel Wicks,
Principal Private Secretary
to the Prime Minister,
10 Downing Street,
LONDON SW1.



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

Permanent Under-Secretary -

The attached telegram, and letter from Mr. Ramphal to the Prime Minister, are passed to you at the request of the Private Secretary, and Mr. Terry Curran of Southern Africa Department. Mr. Curran will make contact with you at Chequers this evening, to explain the action the Foreign Secretary proposes should be taken in response to the telegram and the letter, with Mr. Ramphal tomorrow, Sunday.

Resident Clerk

23/11/85