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TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELNO 545

OF 031230Z DECEMBER 85

Copy to No 10

FOR HEAD OF SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEPARTMENT

YOUR TELNOS 308 AND 309: VISIT OF LORD BARBER

1. LORD BARBER IS RETURNING TO LONDON TONIGHT AND INTENDS TO RING EWEN FERGUSSON TOMORROW, WEDNESDAY.
2. I UNDERSTAND THAT HIS MEETING WITH PRESIDENT BOTHA YESTERDAY AFTERNOON LASTED FOR ONE HOUR AND WAS ATTENDED ALSO BY PIK BOTHA AND HEUNIS. IT WAS DEVOTED ENTIRELY TO THE EMINENT PERSONS GROUP.
3. LORD BARBER WILL OFSCOURSE GIVE YOU A FULL ACCOUNT. BUT HE TOLD ME AFTERWARDS THAT THE SAG CLEARLY EXPECT TO ESTABLISH CONDITIONS WITH THE COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT ON WHICH ANY VISIT WILL TAKE PLACE. THE PRESIDENT WARNED AGAINST THE GROUP'S TERMS OF REFERENCE CONTAINING ANYTHING OFFENSIVE TO THE SAG, LIKEWISE THE TERMS IN WHICH ANY PROPOSAL FOR A VISIT IS PUT FORWARD. HE WELCOMED A REFERENCE BY LORD BARBER TO THE POSSIBILITY OF A SELF-DENYING ORDINANCE BY EPG MEMBERS TO REFRUIN FROM PUBLIC STATEMENTS DURING DVEIR MISSION.
4. TWO POINTS CAME UP ON WHICH I BELIEVE WE SHOULD REFLECT FURTHER:
  - (A) TIMING OF VISIT SEMICLN
  - (B) CHANNEL FOR CLEARING THE BASICS WITH THE SAG.
5. ON THE FIRST POINT, PIK BOTHA REFERRED TO THE PRESSURE OF BUSINESS IMMEDIATELY BEFORE AND AFTER PARLIAMENT REOPENS AND MENTIONED LATE FEBRUARY AS THE EARLIEST CONVENIENT TIME FOR A VISIT. I SAID TO LORD BARBER AFTERWARDS THAT I PERSONALLY HAD ASSUMED THE EPG



WOULD WISH TO SHOW THAT THEY WERE GETTING TO GRIPS WITH THEIR TASK FASTER THAN THAT, WHICH MIGHT POINT TO A FIRST VISIT IN JANUARY. AS AGAINST THIS, HOWEVER, I RECOGNISED THAT THE SAG WOULD NOT WISH TO LET IT APPEAR THAT ANY FORWARD MOVEMENT ANNOUNCED IN THE PRESIDENT'S SPEECH AT THE OPENING OF PARLIAMENT RESULTED FROM PRESSURE BY THE EPG.

6. I THINK A DECISION ON TIMING DEPENDS PARTLY ON WHETHER THE EPG ARE TO MAKE MORE THAN ONE VISIT. WITHOUT HAVING GIVEN MUCH THOUGHT TO THE MATTER, LORD BARBER SEEMED TO BE WORKING ON THE ASSUMPTION OF A SINGLE VISIT. I GAVE HIM MY OWN VIEW THAT A FIRST VISIT WOULD INEVITABLY BE SOMETHING OF A REKONNAISSANCE ENABLING MEMBERS OF THE EPG TO MAKE CONTACT WITH THE PRINCIPAL PEOPLE HERE, AND THAT THEY WOULD PROBABLY FIND IT NECESSARY TO RETURN LATER HAVING DIGESTED THEIR FIRST IMPRESSIONS IN ORDER TO FOLLOW UP ANY PROMISING LEADS.

7. ON THE SECOND POINT ABOVE I AGREED INITIALLY WITH LORD BARBER THAT RAMPHAL SHOULD COMMUNICATE THE PROPOSED BASIS FOR A VISIT THROUGH WORRALL. CLEARLY RAMPHAL WOULD NEED TO ESTABLISH A DIRECT LINE TO THE SAG, AND USING WORRALL WOULD ENABLE THE TWO OF THEM TO DISCUSS ANY PROBLEMS IN PERSON. ON REFLECTION, AS I TOLD LORD BARBER AFTER HIS MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT, I BELIEVE THE BALANCE OF ADVANTAGE WOULD LIE IN THE COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT CONTINUING TO USE THE THREE AMBASSADORS HERE AS THE CHANNEL WHICH WOULD SUIT US BEST. THE DISADVANTAGE OF A LINE THROUGH WORRALL IS THAT WE MIGHT NOT BE KEPT FULLY IN THE PICTURE. ALTHOUGH RELYING ON THE COMMONWEALTH AMBASSADORS LOOKS A BIT CLUMSY IT WOULD HAVE THE MERIT OF OUR BEING ABLE TO PUT IN A PRIVATE WORD OF OUR OWN AT EITHER END IF WE SAW THINGS BEGINNING TO RUN OFF THE RAILS AS THEY WELL MAY. I FEEL SURE THAT THE AMBASSADORS WILL IN ANY CASE HAVE TO BE INVOLVED IN THE NITTY-GRITTY OF A PROGRAMME ONCE THE BASICS HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED BETWEEN THE COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT AND SAG.

8. LORD BARBER INTENDS TO TELL RAMPHAL THAT HE HAS SEEN THE PRESIDENT. I ENCOURAGED HIM TO CONTACT FERGUSSON BEFORE DOING SO IN CASE YOU WISH TO FEED IN ANY IMMEDIATE THOUGHTS, ESPECIALLY ON THE TWO POINTS MENTIONED ABOVE.

MOBERLY

YYYY

POHPAN 3493

PRIME MINISTER

**SOUTH AFRICA**

I have spoken to Lord Barber and suggested that he get in touch with Laurens Van Der Post. This he will gladly do: they met some years ago. I have also warned Laurens to expect a call.

EDP

mt

CDP

6 January, 1986.



CONFIDENTIAL

FILE  
JA  
03



*Handwritten signature/initials*

10 DOWNING STREET

*From the Private Secretary*

1 November 1985

EPG

Thank you for your letter of 31 October about the nomination of Lord Barber to take part in the Group of Eminent Persons on South Africa.

The Prime Minister is content that the announcement should be made simultaneously with Mr. Ramphal being informed at 1500 this afternoon. We propose to make the announcement from No.10 in the following terms:

"The Commonwealth Secretary General has been informed that Lord Barber (Baron Barber of Wentbridge) is the British nominee on the Group of Eminent Persons established by the Commonwealth Heads of Government in Nassau."

(Charles Powell)

L.V. Appleyard, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

*Handwritten initials JA*

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COMMENT BY LORD BARBER

Prime Minister  
You may be  
interested to see  
this.

CDP  
1/21

"I have over the years made abundantly clear, both here and in South Africa itself, my opposition to apartheid. My overriding objective in accepting the invitation to join the Group is to do what I can to help to bring peace and stability to South Africa, an end to apartheid, and a fair deal for all the people who live there."

"Because I do not want to prejudice that objective, and my work with the Group, I think it best to say nothing further at this time."

## BACKGROUND

Standard Chartered operates in more than sixty countries around the world and has been in Africa for well over a century. It is one of the major banks in both black Africa and South Africa. Since becoming Chairman of the Bank in 1974, Lord Barber has visited all sixteen countries where the Bank operates in Africa:-

Botswana  
Gambia (The)  
Ghana  
Kenya  
Lesotho  
Malawi  
Mozambique  
Namibia  
Nigeria  
Seychelles  
Sierra Leone  
South Africa  
Swaziland  
Uganda  
Zambia  
Zimbabwe

Standard Chartered has a substantial minority interest in the Bank in South Africa and [Lord Barber has stated] that the policies and practices of the bank in South Africa are entirely non-racial, that all staff facilities are integrated and that the employees enjoy equal treatment in every respect, including benefits and promotion, without distinction of race.