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10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

20 December 1985

PRIME MINISTER'S
PERSONAL MESSAGE
SERIAL No. T.236/85

Dear Prime Minister,

I should like to let you know that I met the members of the Commonwealth Group of Eminent Persons while they were in London on 12/13 December. I was impressed by the serious and responsible way in which they are approaching their task and their understanding of its sensitivity. Both General Obasanjo and Malcolm Fraser stressed their determination to do their best to make the Group's mission a success. The members clearly get on well together and have mapped a clear programme of work. They have now sent a letter to the South African Government proposing that they should pay a visit to South Africa before the end of January. I have done what I can to explain the objectives of the Group and of the Commonwealth as a whole to President Botha and to encourage him to cooperate with us. I certainly do not underestimate the difficulties of the task which we have given the Group. But their mission offers at least the chance of bridging divisions and narrowing the differences before it is too late.

In the meantime, I am sure we must do all we can to avoid exacerbating the situation in the region, which would put the success of the Eminent Persons Group's mission at risk. In this context I was frankly dismayed to hear the news that another landmine had exploded in Northern Transvaal on 15 December, this time involving substantial loss of life. The ANC have claimed responsibility. I understand that it is your policy not to allow such attacks to be mounted from Zimbabwe and hope that you will continue to use your

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influence to try to prevent such incidents. At Nassau we all agreed to work for a suspension of violence on all sides. Such violence carries the serious risk of provoking clashes between South Africa and its neighbours, and moreover simply plays into the hands of those in South Africa who are opposed to reform and have no wish for good relations with their neighbours. I should let you know, in confidence, that I have made it quite clear to President Botha that any resort to force by the South Africans could only make the situation worse. I have some reason to believe that our warnings have been taken seriously, but there are quite clearly limits to the South African Government's tolerance if these incidents continue in the future.

I know that Christopher Soames is looking forward to visiting Zimbabwe and Mozambique in January. I hope that you will be able to have a good talk with him on all these issues.

You will also be glad to know that when Lieutenant General Panguene, the Mozambican Vice-Minister of Defence, was in London last week, he quite rightly paid warm tribute to the role of your Army in Mozambique, and said how much he and President Machel were looking forward to the inauguration of our training programme for members of the Mozambican Army by BMATT in February.

I hope we can continue to keep in touch; in the meantime I take this opportunity of sending you and your wife my warm regards and very best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

Kind regards.

Yours sincerely
Rugant-Matthe

The Honourable R.G. Mugabe, M.P.



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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

20 December 1985

ZIMBABWE/SOUTH AFRICA

Thank you for your letter of 20 December enclosing a draft message from the Prime Minister to Mr. Mugabe. The Prime Minister has approved a somewhat amended version which I enclose. I should be grateful if you could arrange for it to be despatched as soon as possible.

I have mentioned to the Prime Minister Lord Soames' visit to Zimbabwe in early January. The Prime Minister thinks it unlikely that she will be able to see Lord Soames before his departure and would be grateful if the Foreign Secretary would do so on her behalf.

(C. D. POWELL)

Colin Budd, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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PRIME MINISTER'S MESSAGE

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM THE PRIME MINISTER TO MR MUGABE. GRATEFUL IF YOU WOULD PASS TEXT TO MR MUGABE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

2. QUOTE.

I SHOULD LIKE TO LET YOU KNOW THAT I MET THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMONWEALTH GROUP OF EMINENT PERSONS WHILE THEY WERE IN LONDON ON 12/13 DECEMBER. I WAS IMPRESSED BY THE SERIOUS AND RESPONSIBLE WAY IN WHICH THEY ARE APPROACHING THEIR TASK AND THEIR UNDERSTANDING OF ITS SENSITIVITY. BOTH GENERAL OBASANJO AND MALCOLM FRASER STRESSED THEIR DETERMINATION TO DO THEIR BEST TO MAKE THE GROUP'S MISSION A SUCCESS. THE MEMBERS CLEARLY GET ON WELL TOGETHER AND HAVE MAPPED A CLEAR PROGRAMME OF WORK. THEY HAVE NOW SENT A LETTER TO THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT PROPOSING THAT THEY SHOULD PAY A VISIT TO SOUTH AFRICA BEFORE THE END OF JANUARY. I HAVE DONE WHAT I CAN TO EXPLAIN THE OBJECTIVES OF THE GROUP AND OF THE COMMONWEALTH AS A WHOLE TO PRESIDENT BOTHA AND TO ENCOURAGE HIM TO COOPERATE WITH US. I CERTAINLY DO NOT UNDERESTIMATE THE DIFFICULTIES OF THE TASK WHICH WE HAVE GIVEN THE GROUP. BUT THEIR MISSION OFFERS AT LEAST THE CHANCE OF BRIDGING DIVISIONS AND NARROWING THE

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DIFFERENCES BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE.

IN THE MEANTIME, I AM SURE WE MUST DO ALL WE CAN TO AVOID EXACERBATING THE SITUATION IN THE REGION, WHICH WOULD PUT THE SUCCESS OF THE EMINENT PERSONS GROUP'S MISSION AT RISK. IN THIS CONTEXT I WAS FRANKLY DISMAYED TO HEAR THE NEWS THAT ANOTHER LANDMINE HAD EXPLODED IN NORTHERN TRANSVAAL ON 15 DECEMBER, THIS TIME INVOLVING SUBSTANTIAL LOSS OF LIFE. THE ANC HAVE CLAIMED RESPONSIBILITY. I UNDERSTAND THAT IT IS YOUR POLICY NOT TO ALLOW SUCH ATTACKS TO BE MOUNTED FROM ZIMBABWE AND HOPE THAT YOU WILL CONTINUE TO USE YOUR INFLUENCE TO TRY TO PREVENT SUCH INCIDENTS. AT NASSAU WE ALL AGREED TO WORK FOR A SUSPENSION OF VIOLENCE ON ALL SIDES. SUCH VIOLENCE CARRIES THE SERIOUS RISK OF PROVOKING CLASHES BETWEEN SOUTH AFRICA AND ITS NEIGHBOURS, AND MOREOVER SIMPLY PLAYS INTO THE HANDS OF THOSE IN SOUTH AFRICA WHO ARE OPPOSED TO REFORM AND HAVE NO WISH FOR GOOD RELATIONS WITH THEIR NEIGHBOURS. I SHOULD LET YOU KNOW, IN CONFIDENCE, THAT I HAVE MADE IT QUITE CLEAR TO PRESIDENT BOTHA THAT ANY RESORT TO FORCE BY THE SOUTH AFRICANS COULD ONLY MAKE THE SITUATION WORSE. I HAVE SOME REASON TO BELIEVE THAT OUR WARNINGS HAVE BEEN TAKEN SERIOUSLY, BUT THERE ARE QUITE CLEARLY LIMITS TO THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT'S TOLERANCE IF THESE INCIDENTS CONTINUE IN THE FUTURE.

I KNOW THAT CHRISTOPHER SOAMES IS LOOKING FORWARD TO VISITING ZIMBABWE AND MOZAMBIQUE IN JANUARY. I HOPE THAT YOU WILL BE ABLE TO HAVE A GOOD TALK WITH HIM ON ALL THESE ISSUES.

YOU WILL ALSO BE GLAD TO KNOW THAT WHEN LIEUTENANT GENERAL PANGUENE, THE MOZAMBICAN VICE-MINISTER OF DEFENCE, WAS IN LONDON LAST WEEK, HE QUITE RIGHTLY PAID WARM TRIBUTE TO THE ROLE OF YOUR ARMY IN MOZAMBIQUE, AND SAID HOW MUCH HE AND PRESIDENT MACHEL WERE LOOKING FORWARD TO THE INAUGURATION OF OUR TRAINING PROGRAMME FOR MEMBERS OF THE MOZAMBICAN ARMY BY BMATT IN FEBRUARY.

I HOPE WE CAN CONTINUE TO KEEP IN TOUCH SEMI-COLON IN THE MEANTIME I TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY OF SENDING YOU AND YOUR WIFE MY

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WARM REGARDS AND THE VERY BEST WISHES FOR CHRISTMAS AND THE NEW
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MR JOHNSON

COPIES TO:

PS / No. 10 Downing St.

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

20 December 1985

*Dear Charles,*Zimbabwe/South Africa

Thank you for your letter of 17 December saying that the Prime Minister wished to send a message to Mr Mugabe about the recent landmine incidents in the Northern Transvaal.

The Foreign Secretary was about to recommend such a message himself. He believes that there is a strong case for a message, both for the reason given by the Prime Minister and in order to underline to Mugabe our commitment to the work of the Eminent Persons Group (EPG). As you know, since Nassau Mugabe has been making anti-British noises about our policy towards South Africa. We see a need to damp down this criticism by stressing our mutual interest in making a success of the EPG.

Tactically the Foreign Secretary considers that the most effective course would be for the Prime Minister to begin with the subject of the EPG and then go on to mention her concern about the recent ANC violence and its adverse effect on the Commonwealth Accord.

The South African Government have asked that we should intervene with the Zimbabweans. They have done this twice - in President Botha's letter of 14 December to the Prime Minister and when our Ambassador in Pretoria called on the DFA on 16 December with his Australian and Canadian colleagues to hand over the letter from the Eminent Persons Group. The Acting Director-General of the DFA told Mr Moberly and the Australian and Canadian Ambassadors that Pik Botha had instructed him to ask the three Commonwealth governments to help bring home to the Zimbabweans how essential it was for them to prevent the ANC from using their territory as a base for operations against South Africa.

Until very recently we believed (and according to what they told us so did the South Africans) that the Zimbabwean Government had forbidden ANC operations from their territory. The ANC have admitted responsibility for the landmine operation but claimed that it was the work of a cell in South Africa and not mounted from Zimbabwe. The police forces and armies of both sides cannot prevent infiltration in either direction so the operations could have been carried out without Zimbabwean knowledge.

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OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT

If the South Africans believe that the latest explosion resulted from the same operation as the earlier ones, and are satisfied with the assurances they receive from Zimbabwe, then they may do no more. The press of 18 December reported a meeting on 17 December between South African and Zimbabwean "local military commanders" to discuss preventive measures. And Pik Botha issued a statement, following a meeting of officials in Harare, that "the Government of Zimbabwe reconfirmed that [it] would not let its territory be used for the planning or execution of acts of violence against South Africa". There may be further meetings in the near future. They may contain the situation for the time being. However, Northern Transvaal is a right wing stronghold and there will be strong pressure on President Botha to be seen to "do something". The Zimbabwe Government has said that it fears retaliation by South Africa. If there were further incidents and the SADF took action, such a development could only have the effect of raising the temperature dangerously, as the Prime Minister warned President Botha in her letter of 9 December.

In addition to stressing the need for both sides to do everything they can to prevent any further cross-border attacks, and underlining our commitment to the work of the EPG, the draft message refers to certain positive aspects of our bilateral relations. Lord Soames will be visiting Zimbabwe and, briefly, Mozambique, during January 1986. This will provide us with another useful opportunity to put our views across to Mr Mugabe and President Machel in advance of the European Community/Front Line States meeting (Lusaka, 3-4 February) at which our policy will again be subject to critical examination.

Lord Soames leaves for Harare on 10 January. If the Prime Minister were able to have a word with him before his departure that would in the Foreign Secretary's view be most useful: there could be no better way of ensuring that the Prime Minister's views are relayed direct to Mugabe.

*Yours ever,
Colin Budd*

(C R Budd)
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq
10 Downing Street

FROM: PRIME MINISTER

TO: The Honourable R G Mugabe MP
Prime Minister of Zimbabwe

I think it is very important for us to keep closely in touch on events in South Africa. I am very conscious of the fact that since we met in Nassau more than a hundred people, the large majority of them black, have died violently there.

I certainly do not underestimate the difficulties of the task which we have given the Eminent Persons Group. It is one that will call for the utmost skill, firmness and discretion. But we are now at a decisive moment in the history of South Africa. The Eminent Persons Group offers at least the chance of bridging divisions and narrowing the differences before it is too late. I know you share that view, and that you were particularly determined to have strong African representation on the Group. The very high standard of all the nominees ^{shows} share the seriousness with which the Group has been treated by the Commonwealth countries.

I firmly believe that we must do everything in our power to bring apartheid to an end. President Botha is now beginning to accept this. The start of a real dialogue between the South African Government and the representatives of the black population will be one of the key steps along that road. I do not underestimate the difficulties. But there is a real chance that the Group may be able to play a significant role in this. Tony Barber will, I know, do everything he can to contribute to its success.

I have done all within my power to persuade the South African Government to cooperate with the Group. I thought it right to make it clear to President Botha that it would be a great mistake for him to reject it. I think that he now has a clearer idea about its objectives. He is still of course very sceptical about whether it will achieve these objectives but I hope he will be prepared to talk to the Group.

As you know, the Group held its first meeting here in London on 12/13 December. They all came to call on me and I was impressed by the serious and responsible way in which they are approaching their task. Both General Obasanjo and Malcolm Fraser stressed their determination to do their best to make the Group's mission a success. They have now sent a letter to the South African Government proposing that they should make an early visit to South Africa. We all await Prime Minister Botha's response.

In the meantime, I am sure we must do all we can to avoid exacerbating the situation in the region, which would put the success of the EPG at risk. I was frankly dismayed to hear the news that another landmine had exploded in Northern Transvaal on 15 December, this time involving substantial loss of life. The ANC have claimed responsibility. I know that it is your policy not to allow such attacks to be mounted from Zimbabwe. I hope you will continue to use your influence to try to prevent such incidents. At Nassau

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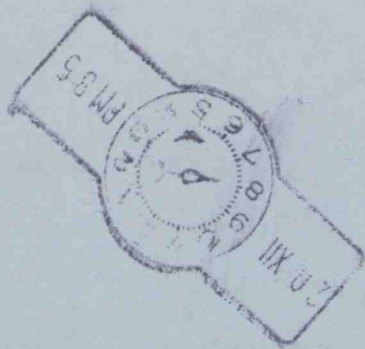
we all agreed to work for a suspension of violence on all sides. Such violence carries the serious risk of provoking clashes between South Africa and its neighbours, and moreover simply plays into the hands of those in South Africa who are opposed to reform and have no wish for good relations with their neighbours. I would like to let you know, in confidence, that I have made it quite clear to President Botha that any resort to force by the South Africans could only make the situation worse. I have some reason to believe that our warnings have been taken seriously, but there are quite clearly limits to the South African Government's tolerance if these incidents continue in the future. I know that Christopher Soames is looking forward to visiting Zimbabwe and Mozambique in January. I hope that you will be able to have a good talk with him.

You will also be glad to know that when Lt General Panguene, the Mozambican Vice-Minister of Defence, was in London last week, he quite rightly paid warm tribute to the role of your Army in Mozambique, and said how much he and President Machel were looking forward to the inauguration of our training programme for members of the Mozambican Army by BMATT in February.

I hope we can continue to keep in touch; in the meantime I take this opportunity of sending you my warm regards and very best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

Relatives : SOUTH AFRICA

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10 DOWNING STREET


From the Private Secretary

17 December 1985

ANC ACTIVITY IN SOUTH AFRICA

The Prime Minister thinks it would be appropriate for her to send a message to Mr. Mugabe expressing grave disquiet at the activities of the ANC, apparently emanating from Zimbabwe, in planting mines in South Africa with consequent loss of life. The message should draw attention to the serious risks which this carries and remind him of the commitment undertaken by Commonwealth leaders at the Commonwealth heads of Government Meeting to work for a suspension of violence on all sides.

I should be grateful for a draft message in these terms by 1700 hours on 18 December.

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CHARLES POWELL

Colin Budd, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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