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10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

8 January 1986

PRIME MINISTER'S
PERSONAL MESSAGE
SERIAL No. T5A/86

Dear Mr. President

Thank you for your letter of 23 December as well as for your earlier letter of 14 December which crossed with mine of the same date.

I greatly appreciate the positive and constructive way in which you have responded to the approach from the co-Chairmen of the Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group. The Commonwealth Secretariat are pursuing the question of dates for the visit with the Group and will no doubt be in touch with your Government shortly.

I am also much encouraged by your comments both to me and to the co-Chairmen about your determination to proceed with reform and begin negotiations. You may recall that in my letter of 31 October I urged the importance of presenting your proposals as a major new initiative. Events since then have only strengthened my view on this. I am sure that you do not need advice from me about how to handle the expectations which are building up for your Opening Speech. Yet a forthright bringing together of your policies, including a firm timetable for new legislation which would remove important aspects of discrimination, could have a great impact. If it was then followed by a successful visit by the Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group, the international

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climate towards South Africa might be considerably altered. Support for peaceful change would be vindicated and that for coercion and violence weakened.

I have urged others not to prescribe exact solutions to South Africa's problems and shall not presume to do so myself. You will know what measures you need to adopt to transform the situation. My letter of 31 October made various suggestions about what would have the greatest international effect. But it must be for you to judge. Let me simply underline the crucial importance of what you do for the policies of others in the coming year.

I very much regret that the end of last year and the beginning of this should have been marked by an upsurge of violence against civilians within South Africa. There can be no sympathy or justification for acts of indiscriminate violence and we have condemned them firmly. At the same time, I suspect that your enemies may be seeking through the planting of landmines and other such incidents to provoke you into military reprisals against your neighbours. These would inevitably cause a new wave of international protest and increase the pressures for sanctions. I hope very much that you will seek diplomatic solutions to the problem as you have done recently with Zimbabwe, despite the strong feelings which such wanton attacks naturally arouse.

May I extend my best wishes to you for the New Year and to say how valuable I have found it to be able to correspond frankly and confidentially with you. Let us continue to do so.

Yours sincerely
Raymond Stanger

CCPC



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

7 January 1986

Dear Charles,

Mark Addison forwarded with his letter of 24 December a letter of 23 December to the Prime Minister from President Botha to which he asked for a draft reply.

President Botha's letter is a reply to the Prime Minister's letter of 14 December urging him to agree to an early visit to South Africa by the Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group. He enclosed a copy of the message of 23 December which he had sent to the co-Chairmen of the EPG indicating that he would be prepared to receive the Group providing they did not come until mid February.

President Botha's letters both to the Prime Minister and to the co-Chairmen are phrased in encouragingly positive and constructive terms. The Commonwealth Secretariat are now considering how to reply. Ramphal has been away but at working level they do not foresee a problem in delaying the Group's visit until mid February. However, they are considering the possibility of a preparatory visit by a couple of Secretariat officials to South Africa this month.

For the moment therefore the EPG remains on course. Unfortunately, the atmosphere in South Africa is becoming even more difficult. For instance, the South African Government's attitude towards the ANC is hardening further as a result of the recent violent attacks against white civilians; and, among the more radical opponents of the government, Mr Boesak in a television interview on 3 January expressed suspicion about the EPG being a British plot to avoid sanctions. These conflicting pressures mean that the EPG's visit to South Africa will need to be handled with great care.

In addition to responding to President Botha on the subject of the EPG, the Foreign Secretary recommends that the Prime Minister should take the opportunity to raise two further matters with him in her letter.

First, Sir Geoffrey recommends that, on the lines of the Prime Minister's letter of 31 October, she should encourage him to announce concrete reforms at the beginning of the new Parliamentary session at the end of this month.

/As the Foreign

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As the Foreign Secretary noted in his minute of 20 December to the Prime Minister, how President Botha presents his Government's policies in the early part of 1986 and in particular what he says in his major speech at the State Opening of Parliament at the end of January will be of crucial significance for South Africa's internal problems. And it will also have an important bearing on South Africa's relationship with the world outside and on our own ability to maintain our present policies.

The State Department have told us that President Reagan will be sending a message to President Botha with a similar aim in view via Mr Crocker who will be seeing the State President on 13 January.

Secondly, the Foreign Secretary considers that it would be right for the Prime Minister to refer to the recent attacks on white civilians in South Africa - the landmine incident near the Botswana border on 4 January and the bomb explosion in the Durban shopping centre before Christmas - and while making clear our rejection of such violence, urge President Botha not to be provoked into military reprisals. Any military action by South Africa will inevitably lead to increased international pressures for sanctions.

I enclose a draft reply on these lines from the Prime Minister to President Botha.

Yours ever,

Le Appleyard

(L V Appleyard)
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq
No.10 Downing Street

CONFIDENTIAL

DRAFT: minute/letter/teleletter/despatch/note

TYPE: Draft/Final 1+

FROM:

Reference

Prime Minister

DEPARTMENT:

TEL. NO:

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

TO:

Your Reference

- Top Secret
- Secret
- Confidential
- Restricted
- Unclassified

President Botha

Copies to:

BKS

PRIVACY MARKING

SUBJECT:

.....In Confidence

Thank you for your letter of 23 December as well as for your earlier letter of 14 December which crossed with mine of the same date.

I greatly appreciate the positive and constructive way in which you have responded to the approach from the co-Chairmen of the Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group. The Commonwealth Secretariat are pursuing the ~~matter~~ *question of dates for the visit* with the Group and will no doubt be in touch with you ^{shortly}.

I am ^{also} much encouraged by your comments both to me and to the co-Chairmen about your determination to proceed with reform and begin negotiations. ~~[I was particularly struck by your frankness in saying that you were reconciled to the eventual disappearance of white domination and that there would be an end to racial discrimination.]~~ *You may recall that* In my letter of 31 October I urged the importance of ~~your~~ presenting your proposals as a major new initiative. Events since then have only strengthened my view on this. ~~I am sure that you will agree that only the announcement of confidence-building measures and substantial reforms will create the climate for real~~

Enclosures—flag(s).....

/political

~~political dialogue.~~ Much attention has already been paid to the ~~prospects~~ for the new Parliamentary session. I am sure that you do not need advice from me about how to handle the expectations which are building up for your Opening Speech. Yet a forthright bringing together of your policies, including a firm timetable for new legislation which would remove important aspects of discrimination, could have a great impact. If it was then followed by a successful visit by the Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group, the international climate towards South Africa might be ~~changed~~ ^{considerably altered}. Support for peaceful change would be vindicated; ~~that~~ for coercion and violence weakened.

I have urged others not to prescribe exact solutions to South Africa's problems. ~~I~~ ^{and still} will not presume to do so myself. You will know what measures you need to adopt to transform the situation. My letter of 31 October made various suggestions about what would have the greatest international effect. But it must be for you to judge. Let me simply underline the crucial importance of what you do for the policies of others in the coming year.

I ~~deeply~~ ^{very much} regret that the end of last year and the beginning of this should have been marked by an upsurge of violence against civilians within South Africa. There can be no sympathy ~~for~~ ^{or justifying} acts of indiscriminate violence. ~~We will continue to condemn such acts and to urge the support of all governments in the region for the call in the Commonwealth Accord for dialogue and the suspension of violence.~~

/I suspect that . . .

I we have
condemned
them fully.

At the same
time

/1

I suspect that your enemies may be seeking through the planting of landmines and other such incidents to provoke you into military reprisals against your neighbours.) ~~I very much hope that you will not allow yourself to be provoked in this way since military reprisals would inevitably cause a storm of international protest and increase the pressures for sanctions. I strongly urge you to seek diplomatic solutions to the problem as you have done recently with Zimbabwe,~~

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frank wankon attacks naturally arouse.

May I extend my best wishes to you for the New Year and to say how valuable I have found it to be able to correspond frankly and confidentially with you. Let us continue to do so.

Ch.

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