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OF 251445Z FEBRUARY 86

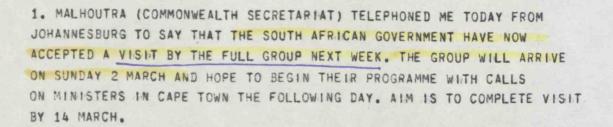
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PRETORIA TELNO 8: COMMONWEALTH GROUP



2. ACCORDING TO MALHOUTRA, PIK BOTHA HAS TOLD THE CO-CHAIRMEN AT THEIR SECOND MEETING LAST WEEK THAT A VISIT IN THE EARLY PART OF MARCH WOULD NOT BE CONVENIENT FOR THE GOVERNMENT AND HAD URGED THE GROUP TO COME LATER IN MARCH. THE VISITORS HAD EXPLAINED WHY THIS DID NOT SULT THEM. THE PRESENT DECISION THEREFORE SUGGESTS THAT THE GOVERNMENT ON REFLECTION ARE DISPOSED TO BE HELPFUL OVER FITTING IN WITH THE GROUP'S OWN PLANS.

3. MALHOUTRA SAID THAT THE QUESTION OF MEETING PRESIDENT BOTHA WAS STILL IN THE AIR, WITH NO COMMITMENT FROM THE GOVERNMENT SIDE.

4. AS WITH THE CO-CHAIRMEN'S VISIT, MALHOUTRA THOUGHT THAT THE FULL GROUP MAY WISH TO MEET THE THREE COMMONWEALTH AMBASSADORS ON THE EVENING OF THE DAY THEY ARRIVE. I SHOULD WELCOME THIS ALTHOUGH IN RETROSPECT I REALISE THAT OUR SESSION LAST WEEK WAS NOT SO MUCH A BRIEFING ON THEIR PROGRAMME AS AN APPEARANCE BY AMBASSADORS AS FIRST WITNESSES BEFORE THE PANEL.

SENT 2 5 FEB 1986

MR CLG MALLABY , CABINET OFFICE

PS/NO 10 DOWNING STREET

15.11.84