

SECRET

FM PRETORIA

DESKBY 071030Z CAPE TOWN EMBASSY

TELNO 14

OF 070830Z MARCH 1986

AND TO DESKBY 071030Z FCO (PERSONAL FOR FERGUSSON)

PERSONAL FOR AMBASSADOR

YOUR TEL TO FCO NO 139: COMMONWEALTH GROUP

SUMMARY

1. LORD BARBER SUGGESTS YOU MIGHT CONSIDER REPRESENTATIONS TO THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT (SAG) IN SUPPORT OF IDEAS PUT BY THE GROUP TO MINISTERS IN CAPE TOWN. A NEGATIVE OR PREVARICATING RESPONSE BY THE SAG WOULD LEAD TO A HIGHLY CRITICAL REPORT WEIGHTED STRONGLY IN FAVOUR OF SANCTIONS.

DETAIL

2. I CALLED ON LORD BARBER AT HIS HOTEL ON THE EVENING OF 6 MARCH AND SHOWED HIM YOUR TEL UNDER REFERENCE. HE SAID THAT THE GROUP HAD PUT TO MINISTERS IN CAPE TOWN A 'CONCEPT' OF THE SORT OF MEASURES WHICH MIGHT LEAD TO ANC AGREEMENT TO NEGOTIATE. THESE WERE AN END TO THE STATE OF EMERGENCY, TROOPS OUT OF THE TOWNSHIPS, RELEASE OF POLITICAL PRISONERS, UNBANNING OF THE ANC AND A STATEMENT OF INTENT TO ELIMINATE APARTHEID. THESE POINTS HAD NOT YET BEEN CLEARED WITH THE ANC BUT WERE BASED ON TALKS WITH THEM IN LUSAKA. IN RETURN THE ANC WOULD HAVE TO AGREE TO USE THEIR BEST ENDEAVOURS TO SUSPEND VIOLENCE AND ACCEPT AN OPEN AGENDA FOR THE NEGOTIATIONS (MINISTERS HAD CONFIRMED THAT THE SAG COULD ACCEPT THE LATTER POINT). THERE COULD BE SIMULTANEOUS ANNOUNCEMENTS OF ACCEPTANCE BY THE TWO SIDES.

3. LORD BARBER INITIALLY PASSED THIS ON FOR YOUR OWN CONFIDENTIAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION. HOWEVER HE TELEPHONED ME EARLY ON 7 MARCH TO SAY THAT THE 'CONCEPT' HAD BEEN EXPLAINED BY THE GROUP IN SOME DETAIL TO GAVIN RELLY AND A SMALL GROUP OF OTHER BUSINESSMEN OVER DINNER THE PREVIOUS NIGHT, WITH A REQUEST THAT THEY SHOULD USE THEIR INFLUENCE WITH THE SAG. RELLY DID NOT SAY YES OR NO, BUT LEFT THE IMPRESSION HE WOULD ACT.

4. LORD BARBER HOPES THAT THE SAG COULD BE PERSUADED TO GIVE A POSITIVE RESPONSE TO THE GROUP'S PROPOSAL AND REQUEST THE GROUP TO TRY IT OUT ON THE ANC. HE EMPHASISED TO ME THAT THE DETAILS OF THE PROPOSAL WERE NOT IMMUTABLE AND IT WAS OPEN TO THE SAG TO SUGGEST MODIFICATIONS OF WORDING TO THE GROUP. FRASER WAS DETERMINED TO PRODUCE THE GROUP'S REPORT BY MID-JUNE. IF THE SAG DECIDED THEY NEEDED TIME TO THINK, THE LATEST PRACTICAL DATE FOR A RETURN VISIT BY THE GROUP WOULD BE APRIL.

*1. think we should take up this suggestion but it will need careful thought and clear indication that we are open to be helpful in their interest.*

*1/5.*

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5. LORD BARBER FEARED THAT WHEN THE GROUP AGAIN MET WITH MINISTERS NEXT WEEK THE LATTER WOULD IN FACT GIVE A LARGELY NEGATIVE RESPONSE OR ATTEMPT TO PREVARICATE. IF SO, HE WAS SURE THE RESULT WOULD BE A REPORT HIGHLY CRITICAL OF INADEQUATE PROGRESS TOWARDS REMOVING APARTHEID AND REFLECTING THE SO FAR UNANIMOUS SUPPORT OF BLACKS THEY HAD MET FOR WIDE-RANGING SANCTIONS. FRASER WOULD BE OUT TO 'BASH' THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE GROUP (WITH THE EXCEPTION OF LORD BARBER) WOULD GO ALONG WITH HIM.

6. LORD BARBER HAS ASKED OBASANJO IN STRICT CONFIDENCE WHETHER HE SHOULD INFORM YOU OF ALL THIS AND OBASANJO HAD AGREED. LORD BARBER WAS NOT MAKING A FIRM REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE, BUT HE WOULD BE GRATEFUL IF YOU WOULD CONSIDER MAKING REPRESENTATIONS (FOR EXAMPLE TO VON HIRSCHBERG) IN SUPPORT OF THE GROUP'S PROPOSAL. HE COMMENTED THAT YOU WOULD CLEARLY HAVE TO CONSIDER VERY CAREFULLY HOW THIS COULD BEST BE PUT TO THE SAG. HE CONFIRMED THAT YOU COULD REVEAL KNOWLEDGE OF THE PROPOSAL AS DESCRIBED IN PARA 2 ABOVE, AND IF YOU JUDGED IT NECESSARY COULD MENTION HIM AS A SOURCE. BUT HE ASKED YOU NOT TO REFER TO OBASANJO AND NOT TO REVEAL ANY OF THIS TO YOUR AUSTRALIAN AND CANADIAN COLLEAGUES.

7. THE GROUP WILL LEAVE FOR CAPE TOWN ON EITHER THE EVENING OF 11 MARCH OR EARLY MORNING OF 12 MARCH. THEIR FIRST APPOINTMENT THERE IS AT 10 AM ON 12 MARCH AND THEIR PROGRAMME IS LIKELY TO CONTINUE INTO 13 MARCH.

## COMMENT

8. ALTHOUGH LORD BABER MENTIONED VON HIRSCHBERG (PARA 6 ABOVE) I AM SURE HE WOULD ACCEPT YOUR JUDGEMENT IF YOU CONCLUDED THAT REPRESENTATIONS AT A HIGHER LEVEL WOULD BE MORE APPROPRIATE.

## SOLESBY

LIMITED  
SAFD  
PS  
PS/MRS CHALKER  
PS/PUS  
MR FERGUSSON  
MR JOHNSON

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QRS 350  
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FM PRETORIA  
TO DESKBY 071030Z CAPE TOWN EMBASSY  
TELNO 15  
OF 070910Z MARCH 1986  
AND TO DESKBY 071030Z FCO (PERSONAL FOR FERGUSSON)

PERSONAL FOR AMBASSADOR  
MIPT: COMMONWEALTH GROUP

1. WHEN I CALLED ON HIM ON THE EVEINING OF 6 MARCH LORD BARBER WAS PESSIMISTIC ABOUT THE WAY IN WHICH THE THINKING OF THE REST OF THE GROUP WAS DEVELOPING AND THE LIKELY CONTENT OF THE REPORT SHOULD THE SAG FAIL TO GIVE A CONSTRUCTIVE RESPONSE TO THE GROUP'S 'CONCEPT'.
2. GROUP MEMBERS FELT THAT WHILE THE SAG HAD BEEN SCRUPULOUSLY COURTEOUS THEY HAD NOT GIVEN AN INCH ON SUBSTANCE. THEY COULD SEE NO REALY SIGN OF LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL. THE LIFTING OF THE STATE OF EMERGENCY HAD BEEN SPOILED BY LE GRANGE'S SUBSEQUENT RESTRICTIVE INTERPRETATION. WHEN HE NEXT SAW SAG MINISTERS FRASER PLANNED TO ASK FOR AN ASSURANCE THAT THE GROUP AREAS ACT AND POPULATION REGISTRATION ACT WOULD IN DUE COURSE BE REPEALED BUT CONFIDENTLY EXPECTED A NEGATIVE ANSWER. THE RESTRICTED MEETING BETWEEN THE CO-CHAIRMAN AND LORD BARBER REFERRED TO IN YOUR TEL TO FCO NO 139 HAD IN FACT BEEN WITH HEUNIS WHO HAD PROVED UNVEARINGLY PATRONISING AND MADE QUITE THE WRONG IMPRESSION. ALL MEMBERS OF THE GROUP, INCLUDING LORD BARBER, HAD BEEN HORRIFIED BY SOME OF THE BLACK TOWNSHIPS SUCH AS LITTLE SOWETO NEAR PORT ELIZABETH. THE SECURITY FORCES HAD BEEN OVER-CONSPICIOUS AND TACTLESS DURING THE GROUP'S VISITS.
3. ALL THE BLACKS THEY HAD SEEN SO FAR HAD BEEN UNANIMOUS IN THEIR SUPPORT FOR SANCTIONS, AND THIS HAD MADE A STRONG IMPACT. DR BEYERS NAUDE HAD EVEN CALLED FOR A NAVAL BLOCKADE, AND LORD BARBER WAS CONFIDENT FRASER WOULD SHARE THIS VIEW. FRASER WAS PLAYING A GENERALLY UNHELPFUL FOLE. HE HAD COME WITH PRE-CONCEIVED PREJUDICES AGAINST THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT AND HAD NOT MODIFIED THEM. THE COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT MEMBERS WHO WOULD PRODUCE THE FIRST DRAFT OF THE REPORT THOUGHT ON SIMILAR LINES.

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4.

4. LORD BARBER SAID HE WAS KEEPING A LOW PROFILE AND HOLDING HIS MAIN FIRE FOR THE REPORT STAGE. HE HAD, WITH DIFFICULTY, PERSUADED THE GROUP TO SEE BUTHELEZI AS WELL AS REPRESENTATIVES OF SOME INDEPENDENT HOMELANDS AND OF THE HOUSE OF DELEGATES AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES (IN JOHANNESBURG ON 10 MARCH). FRASER HAD AGREED THAT LORD BARBER SHOULD SEE AN EARLY COPY OF THE DRAFT REPORT AND BE ABLE TO COMMENT TO FRASER BEFORE THE GROUP MET TO CONSIDER IT. LORD BARBER HAD NOT YET DECIDED HOW BEST TO REACT TO THE REPORT IF IT PROVES AS UNACCEPTABLE AS HE NOW FEARED. HE WOULD STICK TO HIS CONTENTION THAT DECISIONS ON THE NEED FOR FURTHER SANCTIONS WERE FOR MINISTERS AND NOT FOR THE GROUP. MEANWHILE HOWEVER HE WAS MAINTAINING GOOD PERSONAL RELATIONS WITH ALL MEMBERS OF THE GROUP.

5. I SHALL BE SENDING AN OUTLINE OF THE PROGRAMME FOR THE CURRENT VISIT TO JOHANNESBURG/PRETORIA BY TELELETTER.

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PS/HRSCHALKER

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MR FERGUSON

MR JOHNSON

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