

ADVANCE COPIES

1514

SOUTHERN AFRICA

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15.11.84



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FM CAPE TOWN

TO DESKBY 131615Z FCO

TELNO 156

OF 131430Z MARCH 86

INFO PRIORITY PRETORIA, JOHANNESBURG, LUSAKA, HARARE, DAR ES SALAAM

INFO PRIORITY LAGOS, CANBERRA, OTTAWA, NEW DELHI, NASSAU, WASHINGTON

INFO PRIORITY UKNIS NEW YORK

COMMONWEALTH EMINENT PERSONS GROUP

SUMMARY

1. THE COMMONWEALTH GROUP LEAVE SOUTH AFRICA TODAY. THEY ARE ISSUING A SHORT STATEMENT TO THE PRESS REFERRING TO A USEFUL AND CONSTRUCTIVE FIRST ROUND OF DISCUSSIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA AND NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES. LORD BARBER IS RETURNING TO LONDON OVERNIGHT AND WILL BE IN TOUCH WITH NO. 10 ON HIS RETURN.

DETAIL

2. THE THREE COMMONWEALTH AMBASSADORS (AUSTRALIA, CANADA, UK) WERE BRIEFED BY THE COMMONWEALTH GROUP THIS MORNING AT THE END OF THEIR TEN DAYS IN SOUTH AFRICA. FRASER SAID THEY HAD REACHED A SENSITIVE STAGE IN THEIR DISCUSSIONS HERE. THEY DID NOT REGARD THEIR MISSION AS OVER. THEY HAD LEFT SOME IDEAS WITH THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT WHICH THEY HOPED COULD PROVE A BASIS FOR DIALOGUE BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND BLACKS.

3. FRASER PARTICULARLY REQUESTED THAT HIS COMMENTS SHOULD BE TREATED ON A NEED TO KNOW BASIS.

4. HE SAID IT WAS CLEAR THAT THERE WAS A MAJOR DEBATE WITHIN THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT. SOME MINISTERS WERE WILLING TO GO FURTHER THAN OTHERS. THE GROUP HAD NOT PRESSED FOR AN IMMEDIATE ANSWER TO THEIR IDEAS (WHOSE DETAIL HE DID NOT DIVULGE) BUT HAD ASKED FOR A CONSIDERED REPLY IN DUE COURSE.

5. THEY HAD STRESSED THE TIME ELEMENT IN REGARD TO A SOUTH AFRICAN RESPONSE. THE GROUP WERE AIMING TO SUBMIT THEIR REPORT BY MID-JUNE. IF THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT WANTED TO PICK UP IDEAS LEFT BY THE GROUP AND EXPLORE THEM FURTHER, ANOTHER VISIT BY THE GROUP SHOULD TAKE PLACE NO LATER THAN THE LAST PART OF APRIL OR EARLY MAY.

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6. FRASER CONCLUDED THAT "THE DOOR IS OPEN". THE GROUP HAD TRIED TO BUILD ON THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT'S OWN POSITION IN DEVELOPING IDEAS WHICH THE GROUP THEMSELVES THOUGHT MIGHT POSSIBLY BE ACCEPTABLE TO BLACK ORGANISATIONS. THEY WERE NOT WEDDED TO EVERY DETAIL. THEY HAD SEEN EVERYONE THEY WANTED AND HAD BEEN GIVEN A FAIR HEARING. THEY HONESTLY FELT THAT THEY HAD PLAYED THEIR HAND AS WELL AS THEY COULD. LORD BARBER SAID HE FULLY AGREED WITH THIS. THEY HAD COINED THEIR SUGGESTIONS IN TERMS WHICH THEY BELIEVED SHOULD APPEAL TO ANY REASONABLE SOUTH AFRICAN. THE GOVERNMENT DID SEEM TO REALISE THAT THE COMMONWEALTH GROUP WAS DIFFERENT FROM ANY OTHER SET OF VISITORS WHOM THEY HAD BEEN ASKED TO RECEIVE.

7. APART FROM THE SHORT PRESS RELEASE MENTIONED ABOVE, THE GROUP WOULD STICK TO THEIR LINE OF "NO COMMENT" UNTIL THEIR REPORT CAME OUT.

8. FRASER ADDED THAT MRS THATCHER'S VIEWS CLEARLY CARRIED CONSIDERABLE WEIGHT WITH PRESIDENT BOTHA. IT WAS THEREFORE IMPORTANT THAT SHE SHOULD HAVE A FULL BRIEFING FROM LORD BARBER WHICH THE GROUP HOPED WOULD PUT HER IN A POSITION TO ENCOURAGE THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT TO BE RECEPTIVE AND FLEXIBLE OVER THE SUGGESTIONS THEY HAD LEFT HERE. HE ALSO REFERRED TO PRESIDENT REAGAN AS AN IMPORTANT INFLUENCE, AND I UNDERSTAND THAT FRASER IS SEEING MY US COLLEAGUE AND WISNER (STATE DEPARTMENT) BEFORE HE LEAVES TODAY. FRASER ALSO MENTIONED THAT HE AND OBASANJO WOULD BE IN WASHINGTON IN MID-APRIL.

9. I ASKED WHETHER THE GROUP ENVISAGED ANY EXCHANGES IN THE COMING WEEKS WITH THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS IN THE LIGHT OF ANY RESPONSE THEY RECEIVED TO THEIR SUGGESTIONS. FRASER THOUGHT THIS QUITE POSSIBLE EVEN THOUGH MEMBERS OF THE GROUP WOULD ALL BE DISPERSED. FOR INSTANCE HE IMAGINED THAT HIRSCHBERG OF THE DFA (OF WHOM THE GROUP HAVE FORMED A GOOD OPINION) COULD PERHAPS VISIT LONDON TO DISCUSS DETAILED POINTS WITH THE SECRETARIAT PRIOR TO ANOTHER ROUND OF DISCUSSIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA. BUT THEY WOULD HAVE TO WAIT AND SEE.

COMMENT

10. I THINK THIS IS AS GOOD AS WE COULD HAVE EXPECTED. THERE HAVE BEEN NO DISASTERS DURING THE VISIT. THE GROUP APPEAR WILLING TO COME BACK FOR FURTHER TALKS. MUCH DEPENDS ON HOW THE SOUTH AFRICANS REACT TO THE GROUP'S IDEAS WHICH THEY CAN NOW CONSIDER IN SLOWER TIME, ALTHOUGH THEY MAY NOT BE ABLE TO REACH AN AGREED VIEW EASILY.

11. WE HAVE ALWAYS KNOWN THAT THE GOVERNMENT WERE RESISTANT TO ANY FORM OF OUTSIDE MEDIATION. I THEREFORE ASKED FRASER WHETHER THE GROUP HAD FOUND THEM ANY MORE DISPOSED THAN PREVIOUSLY TO REGARD THE COMMONWEALTH INITIATIVE AS USEFUL IN TRYING TO PROMOTE DIALOGUE. HE SAID THAT SOME MINISTERS CERTAINLY SEEMED TO WELCOME THE COMMONWEALTH ROLE AND CONSIDERED IT THE BEST OF ITS KIND AVAILABLE.

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PRETORIA - PERSONAL FOR MINISTER

MIPT: COMMONWEALTH EMINENT PERSONS GROUP

## SUMMARY

1. AFTER THE GROUP'S COLLECTIVE BRIEFING OF AMBASSADORS, LORD BARBER GAVE ME SOME ADDITIONAL INFORMATION STRICTLY FOR OUR OWN INFORMATION, INCLUDING THE TEXT OF A PAPER LEFT BY THE GROUP WITH SOUTH AFRICAN MINISTERS (OUR KNOWLEDGE OF WHICH SHOULD BE REGARDED AS PARTICULARLY SENSITIVE).

## DETAIL

2. LORD BARBER TOLD ME THAT WHEN THEY SAW HEUNIS (MINISTER FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS) LAST NIGHT HE PUT FORWARD A COUNTER-DRAFT OF HIS OWN TO THE TEXT WHICH THEY HAD GIVEN HIM THE PREVIOUS WEEK (MY TELNO 150). AFTER THEIR MEETING WITH HIM THE GROUP PREPARED A FURTHER VERSION OF THEIR OWN WHICH THEY SENT HEUNIS TODAY WITH A COPY TO PIK BOTHA. TEXT IN MIPT.

3. LORD BARBER ADDED THAT SOME MEMBERS OF THE GROUP HAD BEEN READY TO CONCLUDE THAT THERE WAS NO PURPOSE IN CONTINUING THEIR MISSION AFTER A THOROUGHLY UNSATISFACTORY MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT YESTERDAY AFTERNOON FOLLOWED BY THE MEETING AT WHICH HEUNIS HAD PUT FORWARD HIS COUNTER-PAPER. BARBER HIMSELF HAD BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN ENCOURAGING THE GROUP TO LEAVE A REVISED PAPER BEFORE THEIR DEPARTURE WITH THE SOUTH AFRICANS, THUS KEEPING

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4. I UNDERSTAND THAT LORD BARBER WILL SUGGEST ON HIS RETURN, WITH THE FULL AGREEMENT OF THE CO-CHAIRMEN, THAT THE PRIME MINISTER SHOULD WRITE TO PRESIDENT REAGAN TO INFORM HIM OF THE STAGE NOW REACHED BY THE COMMONWEALTH GROUP. THIS WOULD INCLUDE THE TEXT OF THE PAPER IN MIFT (WHOSE EXISTENCE HAS NOT (NOT) BEEN MENTIONED TO THE US AMBASSADOR HERE NOR, SO FAR AS I KNOW, TO MY AUSTRALIAN AND CANADIAN COLLEAGUES).
5. WHEN I PAID A ROUTINE CALL ON THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE THIS MORNING I TOLD HIM THAT I HAD BEEN WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER ON TUESDAY WHEN THE POSSIBILITY OF THE GROUP SEEING MANDELA HAD BEEN MENTIONED BY PIK BOTHA HIMSELF. COETSEE RELUCTANTLY ADMITTED TO ME THAT A VISIT HAD INDEED TAKEN PLACE. LORD BARBER CONFIRMED THIS, SAYING THAT THE GROUP HAD BEEN MUCH IMPRESSED BY MANDELA. HE SAID THAT EVERY MEMBER OF THE GROUP HAD BEEN SWORN TO SECRECY, WHICH I ASSURED HIM WE WOULD PRESERVE ALTHOUGH I ALREADY HAD PRIVATE WORD OF IT FROM THE JUSTICE MINISTER HIMSELF.
6. LORD BARBER WILL OF COURSE BE ABLE TO ELABORATE ON ALL THIS IN LONDON. BUT HE AGREED THAT I SHOULD LET YOU HAVE THIS ACCOUNT IN ADVANCE.

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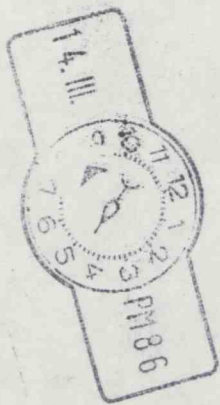
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MR JOHNSON

CABINET OFFICE

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1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF EPG PAPER (PLEASE PROTECT)  
BEGINS

A POSSIBLE NEGOTIATING CONCEPT

THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT HAS DECLARED ITS COMMITMENT TO DISMANTLING THE SYSTEM OF APARTHEID, TO ENDING RACIAL DISCRIMINATION AND TO BROAD-BASED NEGOTIATIONS LEADING TO NEW CONSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR POWER SHARING BY ALL THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH AFRICA. IN THE LIGHT OF PRELIMINARY AND AS YET INCOMPLETE DISCUSSIONS WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF VARIOUS ORGANISATIONS AND GROUPS, WITHIN AND OUTSIDE SOUTH AFRICA, WE BELIEVE THAT IN THE CONTEXT OF SPECIFIC AND MEANINGFUL STEPS BEING TAKEN TOWARDS ENDING APARTHEID, THE FOLLOWING ADDITIONAL ACTION MIGHT ENSURE NEGOTIATIONS AND A BREAK IN THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE.

ON THE PART OF THE GOVERNMENT:

- (A) REMOVAL OF THE MILITARY FROM THE TOWNSHIPS, PROVIDING FOR FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY AND DISCUSSION AND SUSPENSION OF DETENTION WITHOUT TRIAL.
- (B) THE RELEASE OF NELSON MANDELA AND OTHER POLITICAL PRISONERS AND DETAINEES.
- (C) THE UNBANNING OF THE ANC AND PAC AND THE PERMITTING OF NORMAL POLITICAL ACTIVITY.

ON THE PART OF THE ANC AND OTHERS:  
ENTERING NEGOTIATIONS AND SUSPENDING VIOLENCE.

IT IS OUR VIEW THAT SIMULTANEOUS ANNOUNCEMENTS INCORPORATING THESE IDEAS MIGHT BE NEGOTIATED IF THE GOVERNMENT WERE TO BE INTERESTED IN PURSUING THIS BROAD APPROACH.

IN THE LIGHT OF THE GOVERNMENT'S INDICATION TO US THAT IT

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- (I) IS NOT IN PRINCIPLE AGAINST THE RELEASE OF MR NELSON MANDELA AND SIMILAR PRISONERS
- (II) IS NOT OPPOSED IN PRINCIPLE TO THE UNBANNING OF ANY ORGANISATIONS
- (III) IS PREPARED TO ENTER INTO NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE ACKNOWLEDGED LEADERS OF THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH AFRICA
- (IV) IS COMMITTED TO THE REMOVAL OF DISCRIMINATION, NOT ONLY FROM THE STATUTE BOOKS BUT ALSO FROM SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIETY AS A WHOLE
- (V) IS COMMITTED TO THE ENDING OF WHITE DOMINATION
- (VI) WILL NOT PRESCRIBE WHO MAY REPRESENT BLACK COMMUNITIES IN NEGOTIATIONS ON A NEW CONSTITUTION FOR SOUTH AFRICA
- (VII) IS PREPARED TO NEGOTIATE AN OPEN AGENDA.

THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT MAY WISH TO GIVE SERIOUS CONSIDERATION TO THE APPROACH OUTLINED IN THIS NOTE.

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