

bhid cc:
Mr Powell, no 10

Prime Minister

Ewen Ferguson's report of his
recent (re-)visit to South Africa.

(2)

From: E A J Fergusson

Date: 24 March 1986

Rather gloomy so far as the
prospects for the
persons group are concerned.

Private Secretary

CDP 24/13.

SOUTH AFRICA REVISITED (13-20 March 1986)

1. It is salutary to come to South Africa from Angola and Mozambique and to be reminded of the extraordinary difference, when white/European skills capital and energy are grafted onto essentially the same traditional African human base. There is also a reverse process, since the disaster that is Angola and Mozambique shows what happens when those same European skills (sparingly applied as they were) are precipitately taken away.
2. Superficially, very little has changed since I left South Africa 21 months ago. There are still few signs of any need for security precautions - conspicuously fewer than we here are accustomed to. Black, brown and white mingle in the thronged streets. Despite the recession, there is not much visible sign of hardship evident to the ordinary European traveller; it is concealed in the townships and rural areas. The roads are full of the usual panoply of white - (and black) owned Mercedes and BMWs, and farmers in bakkies, and Combis filled with blacks returning home for the weekend. The physical infrastructure (tarmac roads, airports, services of all kinds) remains at a high standard. Soweto is now electrified - with inevitable complaints about the high cost of electricity. In the country, as one flies across the border (I was in a slow single-engined 'plane), South Africa makes an immediate impact by the tidy and ordered way in which the hand of man has been applied to a landscape which in most other African countries seems intractable and unchanging.
3. Yet I was conscious of an immediate difference in atmosphere for white and black. The anxiety level is noticeably higher; for white the time horizon for significant change has got noticeably closer, without its nature having got much clearer; for my black contacts (since I was seeing more or less moderate people, opposed to extremism) the risk of uncontrolled violence seemed far greater than it was, and their influence in jeopardy.
4. It is important to be reminded by a personal visit of the immense complexity of the South African scene and the ferment of ideas. At all levels of society, conversation is dominated by politics - as is natural when survival is at stake. And the ideas cut across all the inherent differences within and between the groups. I attach a very schematic indication of the main elements on the political spectrum, as an illustration of what I mean.

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5. Law and order is inevitably a major preoccupation. Given the complexity of society and its historical tradition of violent interaction, it is an astonishing reflection on the inherent acquiescence of the bulk of the population in the system that a population of some 30 million has a police force of only 45,000 (just under half black); Soweto, with a population greater than that of Northern Ireland, has a police establishment of roughly 500. Although there are good police officers, white policemen have predominantly been recruited from the bottom tier of Afrikaner society - as though in Birmingham we recruited from the National Front - and they are not trained in the tradition of moderation and minimum use of force of the British policeman. They are grossly overstretched and, as violence has increased, instead of being able to respond - as, say, the UK police were able to respond during the miner's strike - by blanketing potential violence with a massive numerical show of strength, small numbers of police, often young and inexperienced, "frazzled" by overwork, frightened by the overwhelming numbers which they face, have themselves responded with unprovoked violence. There are, too, more malign elements - members of the police force who believe that the problem of controlling the black population will only be resolved when the Government has shown its strength in a massive use of force, with thousands dead on the streets. And right wing influence is growing - Eugene Terreblanche of the far-right extremist AWB, asked if his organization was infiltrating the police, replied, "How can we infiltrate ourselves?".

6. I found a major preoccupation among the white people whom I met, particularly though predictably among National Party MPs and Ministers, with the swing to the right - such as could lead to major defections in Parliament with the Conservative Party becoming the official opposition, by-elections which would show how far the Government had lost its traditional basis of support, and the growth of extra-parliamentary extremism and "vigilante" activity. An impression of this comes from the attached notes which Sir P Moberly made of a few of my main calls in Cape Town. In theory, of course, the Government should fear no real challenge because, in theory, it could pick up electoral support by broadening its appeal away from its Afrikaner base. This notion is based, however, on what are in practice two false assumptions; the first is that English-speakers, when put to the test, would in fact support liberal policies; the second is that it is conceivable that the present Afrikaner National Party, and PW Botha in particular, is psychologically ready to think of itself as concerned primarily with anything other than Afrikaner survival. Indeed, it is one of the tragedies of the situation today that P.W. Botha with his background in the struggles of the 1930s and 1940s as a party organizer, has failed to transcend his limitations and to present himself as a "man for all South Africa".

7. At the other end of the spectrum, I found an equal preoccupation with the extent to which the pathology of violence had taken hold, especially among the young - the students between 13 and 22 who are the motor force of township violence, and whose willingness to use violence against collaborators has effectively removed Government control of day-by-day administration from many of the townships. A respected pastor in a black township spoke to me of the loss of will to live/willingness to die of many school children; the (coloured) Rector of a Cape College of Technology spoke of the romanticization of violence. That attitude is enhanced by the isolation of black and coloured people in their townships - the slogan among schools-boycotters of "Liberation before education" is based (as indeed are many perceptions abroad) on a wholly unrealistic impression of the weakness of the South African State and a misperception of the Government's willingness to use massive force if it sees a serious risk of major breakdown. The next three months could well provide a tragic illustration - triggers could be the "schools' deadline" of 31 March, 1 May for which the Trades Union Confederation COSATU are calling for demonstrations and the 10th Anniversary of the Soweto uprising on 16 June. It is regrettably true that some in Government, in the Police and in the Army, believe that a "short, sharp shock", an Amritsar-scale affair, will do the trick. The SAG for its part does not feel that its existence is challenged by violence on the left. The Army remains strong and it and the Police have more black volunteers than they can handle.

8. This then is the "background" against which the Commonwealth Group are operating. Unfortunately, I did not see the Foreign Minister, Mr Pik Botha, who left suddenly for Frankfurt to see Mr Wisner just as I arrived in Cape Town, but I saw various of his officials, including the helpful but ineffective and about-to-be-absent Mr Carl von Hirschberg. Pik Botha clearly perceives the advantage to South Africa of reaching an agreement with the Commonwealth Group - of thereby enlisting the support of a wide and diverse range of countries who would carry other important groups such as the EC with them for the process of reform in South Africa - particularly if the price is only to do sooner what will be done before long anyway over Mandela, ANC etc. Unfortunately, I do not think that there is much chance of his carrying the bulk of his colleagues with him, nor of his convincing his President. P W Botha's meeting with the group reflected that. And I believe that Dr Gerrit Viljoen crystallized the Government's point of view when he said that they could carry almost any programme of orderly reform with less risk of alienating their constituency than would be the case if they followed the Mandela/ANC path. This is the immediate consequence of the swing to the right.

9. The Government is of course engaged in what, by its standards, is a dramatic programme of reform - black property rights; the removal of influx control (subject to "orderly urbanization, but that is not unreasonable), the introduction of a uniform identity document, modification to the Group Areas Act; the likely abolition of separate communities, educational reforms, massive provision of resources for black welfare and the urgent study of structures which could bring blacks into Parliament and could build on their role at lower levels (eg the Regional Service Councils). In order to carry the National Party forward on the major issue of black participation there will be an advisory Federal Congress in August, followed by Provincial Councils (which in the National Party Constitution have the power to decide policy) leading at a later stage to a white referendum. The Government pursues its concept of "managed change" - that is change conferred from above.

10. It remains to be seen how far this widespread programme of reform will satisfy black aspirations and enlist the support of credible elements in the black community. The Government talk of support from homeland leaders, and the move to give "independence" to Kwandebele has to be seen as a step to buy that support. The Government still talk of a role for tribal chiefs! It may be, as the impact of the reforms significantly meets some black concerns over the next year or so, that the moderate constituency will feel greater confidence and more black people will be prepared to come forward. The omens at present are unpropitious. In the Eastern Cape, for instance, the ethnic basis of the Regional Service Councils has led to a more or less complete absence of black support. In their place, "Civic Associations" are springing up, often dominated by the men of violence, offering a parallel administration or focus of power in the townships. There is a very deep scepticism, which the Government has yet even to start allaying, whether this Government could ever be sincere over power-sharing. The Government's vocabulary of "group rights/group protection" reinforces the view that their underlying aim is to preserve Afrikaner control, while neutralizing demands for more far-reaching transfers of power by mechanisms to permit some black participation in Government. At present it is hard to believe that the Government will be able to bring about the kind of visible dialogue with "genuinely representative" black leaders for which many blacks and the world outside are asking.

11. I met a division of opinion among those close to the black community and radical elements within it about what could bring about negotiation. Some thought that it was too late to avoid violence - that if Mandela and the ANC and other parties were to enter a dialogue in the absence of violence their inability to control violence would be made manifest. In those circumstances,

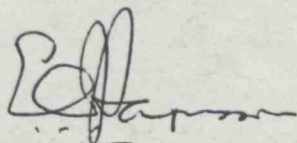
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only the tragedy of a major incident or series of incidents, would alter the situation. Others thought that Mandela's charisma, his personification of the aspirations of blacks of all ages and conditions and his inherent moderation, meant that his release could transform the situation. None, however, underestimated the immense risks - to the Government, or to Mandela himself (violence from either extreme - and the practical difficulties of releasing him).

12. The Afrikaner is obdurate - pigheaded. He does not respond to pressure (my judgment is that pressure so far has sometimes affected timing on presentation, sometimes affected "minor issues", but has not influenced basic policies). There is an important strand of Afrikaner thinking which says "let them do their worst, we are strong enough to stand on our own and to reform in our own way, on our own timescale". These are the proponents of Fortress South Africa, who believe that, on the Rhodesian analogy, a seige economy would significantly enhance South Africa's economic welfare while at the same time inflicting substantial net losses on the world outside (see for instance Dr Duplessis' remarks in the note attached). I was glad, however, to find that virtually every one of the large number of those whom I saw at the top of the financial/economic structures of Government would have none of this argument. They continue to hope for a stable, prosperous South Africa in future decades, able to feed and employ its growing black population and to be the motor force of the regional economy, but only on the basis of continuing substantial inflows of foreign funds, and the continuing major reforms which that will require.

13. There is inevitably much nervousness about the future, and about international reactions - especially the risk of sanctions. The line-up is familiar - Bishop Tutu and many articulate blacks "for", almost all whites against. I fear that, in the black township communities, whose views have the greatest reverberation abroad, the easy connection "opposition to sanctions means support for apartheid" is very regularly made. It is difficult in these circumstances to get a hearing for our views and sometimes difficult for the Embassy to make contact with those who most ought to hear our views. The task is not an easy one. As I know only too well from my own experience as Ambassador, it is not possible to satisfy all South African audiences simultaneously.

14. I have not tried to draw specific conclusions - though, if I have one it is that the task of deciding on an appropriate British policy is even more difficult than I thought it was and that the next three or four months are likely to bring into relief the problem of reconciling what makes sense in a purely South African context with what defends our interests in the world as a whole.


E A J Fergusson

cc:
PS/Mrs Chalker
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Planning Staff
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Mr Mallaby, Cabinet Office

THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM IN SOUTH AFRICA
(a very schematic selection)

Reading from left to right:

1. Student and other nihilists at present locked into violence
(co-ordinating organizations not known at present)
2. The ANC, overtly abroad and covertly in South Africa, stretching from:
 - a. the militant wing, "Umkonotho wi Sizwe";
 - b. the S.African Communist Party to
 - c. "moderate" nationalists.

[There are some in the SAG who think that the ANC could be split over the issue of "dialogue"].

The PAC ("Black Consciousness"); less numerous than ANC.

3. "Radical" blacks and others within South Africa struggling to "ride the tiger" of violent protest (the UDF, COSATU, Boesak, Tutu, Motlana etc) who display very varying degrees of radicalism, especially on economic issues.
4. Whites opposing the SAG and "the system"(NUSAS, Black Sash, South African Council of Churches etc)
5. Blacks within the system but generally opposing the Government or setting important conditions for a relationship (Buthelezi, Mabusa).
6. Blacks within the system generally supporting the Government
 - a. Mangope, Sebe and other "independent homeland" leaders
 - b. Pathudi (Lebowa) and other "self-governing homeland" leaders
 - c. leaders of the Dutch Reformed Church in Africa and the Church of Zion
 - d. Town Councillors, blacks in the police and SADF.
7. Coloured and Indian participants in the tricameral Parliament (Hendrickse, Rajbansi) [N.B. Coloured and Indian people cover as broad a spectrum as do blacks].

/8.

8. FFP and most liberal whites working within the system who display varying degrees of opposition to specific Government measures and support for a different pace and substance of reform, with considerable financial support from the business community (especially Anglo-American, Barlow Band etc).
 9. Liberal Afrikaners (including academics and some churchmen), mostly supporting the Government but favouring faster reform (this includes a significant component of the Afrikaner business community).
 10. Middle of the road Afrikaners, hitherto solidly in the National Party and supportive of P.W. Botha but increasingly anxious about black radicalism and violence. Moving rightwards. This group includes Ministers, MPs and Churchmen, and the mainstream of the Broederbond.
 11. The Afrikaner Parliamentary Opposition - the Conservative Party and the HNP, together with their Broederbond supporters and conservative churchmen.
 12. The violent right-wing fringe - the AWB.
- N.B. The South African English-speaking population is notionally or presentationally more "Liberal" than the Afrikaner population and dominates 8. above; in practice English speakers cover the spectrum; many would equate with 9. and 10. above, and some can certainly be found at both extremes.

POINTS FROM MR FERGUSSON'S CALLS IN CAPE TOWN

Minister of Trade and Industry

1. Dr de Villiers spoke of two broad concerns:

- (a) whether any reform would make a difference to blacks in their present mood,
- (b) drift to the right. The Government would be in real trouble if there were an election tomorrow. In his own constituency for instance an entire committee of 100 NP supporters had just resigned. On the other hand he claimed there was no instance of the Government failing to take some decision because of fear of right wing reaction.

2. He accepted that the going ahead would be rough in terms of unrest and violence. "The struggle is on". This would inevitably have some impact on South Africa's external position, which would just have to be accepted.

3. He could see no single move, not even release of Mandela, which would be worth the Government making in the hope of transforming the situation. The greatest need was for a clear idea as to future structures, i.e. how to bring blacks into the system. He thought it would make sense for the Government to make its ideas public about new constitutional possibilities even before the special Party Congress.

4. Asked about the NGK Church he said that there is now a debate going on of the same kind as the National Party had experienced at the time of the Treurnicht split. A full Synod was being held later this year, the first for four years. He hoped they would reach a more forward looking position. But he claimed that the reluctance of many people in the NGK hitherto to adapt to a new way of thinking had not prevented the Government from moving forward, but had made it harder for Afrikaners as a whole to support change.

5. In general, the impression given by de Villiers was that the Government would stick broadly to their present policy of moving forward cautiously on reform, refusing to be hustled, while doing their best to maintain law and order.

Chairman of the Council, House of Representatives

6. Mr Hendrickse said he hoped the Separate Amenities Act would be abolished altogether during this session. As regards other legislation of particular interest to the Coloureds, he mentioned three items in the educational field. The first two were certification and syllabus, which he said would be made common to all schools. The third was exams, where there was greater resistance, although a compromise might be to have common exams on a regional basis, with each region being free to settle its own.

17.

7. He spoke of the difficulty of persuading the Minister of Law and Order to take a more imaginative view of problems. With the commitment to abolish pass books by 1 July, most Ministers had argued for a moratorium on any further arrests of pass law offenders. Only Le Grange had said that policy should go on being enforced according to the old law until a new law was passed. In the end he had been overridden, and a decision taken that nobody should now be arrested for breaking the pass laws. But Hendrickse was surprised this had not yet been announced, especially so as to forestall a wave of pass burning in the townships on the anniversary of Sharpeville in a few days time. (Later Dr Viljoen said he thought the Soweto anniversary in June was a greater worry.)

8. Asked about a possible referendum later this year, Hendrickse said he did not see a case for holding a referendum of the Coloured or Indian communities. It was only in the white community that the Government needed to test opinion about power sharing.

Chairman, President's Council

9. Dr Koornhof told us that the President's Council are at work on four related Acts: Separate Amenities, [Separate] Community Development, Slums, and Group Areas. It had been decided to report on all four as a single package. By reporting on the Separate Amenities Act alone, the President's Council would be liable to find themselves under strong conservative pressure not to fiddle with the Group Areas Act, and it was therefore better to tackle them together in one fell swoop. The earliest timing for a report would be May. He gave the impression that it was likely to be later, however, and in any case no deadline has been fixed by President Botha. Koornhof added that if the report were to slip to June, then it might as well be August because the chance of legislation during this session would anyhow have been missed.

10. The other main task in front of the President's Council is the Constitutional one. Koornhof said this was not just a matter of reporting on how the President's Council could be enlarged to include blacks. The requirement had been redefined on lines of advising on the promotion of dialogue and on structures which would open the way for bringing blacks into Parliament. Asked whether this meant the tricameral Parliament, Koornhof said yes. But he then went on to give a contrary explanation by ruling out a fourth Chamber and implying that the report could cover solutions outside the existing Parliament. His guidance to members of the President's Council working on this subject was not to worry about this complication!

11. On a referendum, he thought the Government would definitely need to have put forward a clear package of constitutional proposals on which people could vote yes or no. As regards Government policy generally, he said more than once that the secret is timing - whether this is applied to dialogue, reforms or release of Mandela.

Chairman of Sanlam

12. Dr du Plessis said he was worried above all by the danger of right wing action, by which he meant right wing vigilantes taking law and order into their own hands. In those circumstances he

/believed

believed the police and even the army might stand by.

13. In his view, only a major collision between the security forces and blacks in the townships, involving massive loss of life, might be enough to bring people to their senses and to rally moderates of all communities round a centrist grouping of forces.

14. He argued that whites could hold out indefinitely against disruption to the economy through black boycotts and stoppages. The townships were capable of being sealed off, and blacks would be forced back to work by having to keep themselves alive. Of course there would be strong reaction abroad. Some foreign banks would refuse any further dealings with South Africa, but others would go on lending. If the West tried to seize South African assets South Africa could retaliate much more effectively against Western assets here. (Moral: "better a lender than a borrower be, provided you borrow on a large enough scale".) In any case the South African economy would get by. He did not see it as being in their own interests to withhold exports of scarce materials such as ferrochrome.

Rector of the Cape Technikon

15. Dr Sonn said that violence had become romanticised for township blacks. He could see no way of avoiding a descending spiral of violence and death. It would take a massive slaughter of blacks ("a thousand bodies in the township") for the survivors to realise that the Government are not about to be tumbled and that blacks would have to compromise. [Compare du Plessis' comment above.]

16. He did not think that releasing Mandela nor even unbanning the ANC would help, because blacks were so worked up that they would not heed a call from the ANC to stop violence. In any case Mandela would probably be assassinated.

17. In Sonn's view, people like Boesak and Tutu were riding a tiger. They did not know how to dismount, but they were saying things which in their hearts they no longer believed.

Minister of Education and Development Aid

18. Dr Viljoen said that legislation would be tabled shortly on identity documents and on influx control. The new documents would be identical for everyone, and would no longer be used to monitor non-compliance of blacks with residential controls. There would of course be some inflow of blacks from decentralised areas into townships once the existing influx control laws were repealed, though he personally did not think it would be too large. Under new legislation there would still be controls, but these would be "colour blind" and would apply not to movement but to conditions in which people lived, e.g. slums would need to be replaced by minimum standard of housing. The Government was making additional money available. Their proposals for urbanisation would be set out in a White Paper, but there would be no legislation on this aspect in the present session.

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19. Apart from identity documents and influx control, he mentioned citizenship and property rights as subjects for imminent legislation. He ruled out changes in the Group Areas Act for the moment.

20. As regards black schools, he said that his Department were prepared to meet most if not all of the educational demands put forward by students. The security authorities could likewise go a fair way to meet student demands. Political demands were another matter. He thought the students would never be satisfied short of major political reform.

21. It was noticeable that the Soweto Parents Crisis Committee with whom the Department had had some useful meetings at first was now far less responsive and indeed ill-informed about detailed issues. The present committee seemed like puppets responsive only to some controlling hand off-stage, i.e. the ANC.

22. Viljoen said that the crucial need now was for steady constitutional reform. When the time came for a referendum he thought it would be to gain general acceptance not for constitutional proposals being put forward by the Government but for the outcome of any negotiation. He did not think the President's Council would play a role in this last process, but seemed to think that the National Statutory Council could.

23. On Mandela, he clearly did not see release as an early likelihood. He said the President would be taking a greater risk with his constituency by releasing Mandela than by pressing forward with considered measures of reform. [This struck us as an important comment.]

24. Finally, asked about the Commonwealth Group, Viljoen said he thought it had shown a potentially useful role in trying to clear the ground for dialogue. But he was careful to warn against the Group getting on to actual proposals for a future constitutional dispensation.

Minister of National Education

25. Mr F W de Klerk identified four issues on which the Government were being judged by their supporters: law and order, constitutional reform, the economy, and external reactions. On this last point, he spoke of the impression made here by reluctance of foreign governments to acknowledge changes taking place in South Africa.

26. He referred to the very real danger of right wing authoritarian control of government if the present policies failed. "I hear the AWB drum beats". He said that moderate leaders like himself could well be brushed aside.

27. As regards the special Party Congress, he said that the Government saw the need for a platform:

- (a) to launch new initiatives with backing from the Party,
- (b) to redefine their bottom line in any negotiation.

/Asked

Asked about a referendum, he said he did not envisage this happening within the next year or so. Nor was there any firm decision yet as to whether a referendum would be designed to endorse proposals for negotiation, or implementation of a package worked out in negotiation.

28. We discussed the Commonwealth Group and its role, which de Klerk said he had found not unhelpful so far. But there was no question of any dialogue being regarded as another Lancaster House i.e. between two equally exhausted parties. The Government had no intention whatever of giving up their responsibilities to govern or of simply transferring power to anyone else; the issue was one of sharing power. Nor were they about to collapse at the next puff of wind. On the contrary, the alternative to the Government was something far further to the right.

29. Moreover, de Klerk said that the Government was certainly not going to sit down and negotiate with the ANC so long as it was dominated by members of the SA Communist Party, though it might be possible to treat with individual leaders other than SACP ones. The Government's approach was to engage in dialogue with as broad a cross-section of the black community as could be persuaded to come forward. He thought the proposed National Statutory Council would be the main channel.

Director-General for Constitutional Affairs

30. Dr van Wyk confirmed that new legislation would be tabled shortly on citizenship, property rights, identity documents, and repeal of existing influx control laws. There would also be a White Paper on urbanisation, though it is not yet clear whether this will be followed by legislation during this session. He also confirmed that the main means of control over blacks coming into townships would be economic. The Government would need to provide land and facilities for self-help housing. He skirted round the question of any other forms of control.

31. No decision yet, but repeal of Separate Amenities Act is possible later this session after the President's Council has reported. In theory, he could imagine even the Population Registration Act being repealed, although he defended its necessity on practical rather than ideological grounds.

32. On constitutional proposals, he said that the view earlier was that it would be a mistake for the Government to put forward specific ideas which might appear to foreclose genuine negotiation. They now realised that it would be helpful to indicate broadly what was on offer, not least because the white electorate could then have a chance to express support. Hence the plan for a National Party Congress in August, and a referendum at some stage.

33. He underlined the important role of the National Statutory Council. It would require legislation, which he hoped would soon be tabled. It would not be a mere talking shop but a statutory means of enabling blacks to have a say in the legislative process.

/34.

34. We raised KwaNdebele independence. He said there was no commitment from the Government to any date. Proposals would in any case require legislation in Parliament. He implied that the case is not as open and shut as Chief Minister Skosana has suggested.

Leader of the Progressive Federal Party

35. Mr Colin Eglin said that the Government had left the white electorate uncertain as to where the reform programme was taking them. When the Government, and P W Botha in particular, gave them a clear lead, then the majority of whites were prepared to follow them.

36. However, he doubted if P W Botha was the man to lead the country through the next stage of reform. After years of depending on his Afrikaner power base it was extraordinarily difficult for him to have to change to a much wider power base.

37. Asked whether the PFP were still looking for a statement of intent from the Government, Eglin said that the 31 January speech in effect served that purpose. What was needed now were specific measures to give effect to the Government's intentions, plus a real effort at establishing dialogue with black representatives. The longer this was deferred the harder it would become and the more likely it was that potential moderates would be overtaken by extremists on either side.

38. Release of Mandela was an essential ingredient in getting dialogue going. It was no good the Government continuing to limit themselves to dialogue only with people "to the right of Buthelezi".

39. Eglin agreed that in principle it would be helpful for the Government to declare their positions more openly about constitutional reform. But he admitted that a referendum would pose a dilemma for the PFP if the Government's proposals fell short of offering real power-sharing likely to be acceptable to blacks.

British Embassy
CAPE TOWN

18 March 1986

South Africa Rel's Pt A.





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331

E A J Fergusson Esq
Deputy Under-Secretary of State
F C O
London

Your reference

Our reference

Date

24 March 1986

Dear Em,

POLICE STRENGTHS

1. During your albeit brief visit to Johannesburg, you asked whether I could obtain some factual information on Police strengths in our area. I have spoken again to Brigadier Coetze in Soweto, and last weekend at a lunch in Pretoria I managed to have a few words with the Brigadier commanding the Pretoria area. The information they gave me is as follows.

2. Brigadier Coetze has revised his earlier figures to me and now says that for policing a population of almost two million he has at his disposal fourteen hundred police officers, of whom twelve hundred are black. At any one time, he can call upon five to six hundred of these to police or control a riot situation. In addition, he can call upon a further one thousand to fifteen hundred members of the South Africa Defence Force (SADF) who are within thirty minutes of his area.

3. The situation in the Pretoria police district area is different. The Brigadier there can call upon the personnel and students from two SAP police academies. This together with his own command gives him a disposable force of over two thousand policemen at any given moment. These units, in his own words, can "isolate and seal off" Mamelodi or Atteridgeville within the hour. In addition, he can call upon Army garrisons in the Pretoria area to furnish a further two thousand soldiers. Although the Brigadier claims to be on good terms with black civic leaders in his area - including Father Mkhathswa - he made it clear that this relationship was based upon the fact that he was able to "wield a very big stick in very short time".

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R S Reeve

SADF area

Industry

§ 11/4

Coetze 2/4
Mr Humphrey
Mr Fergusson ov.
\$ 2.4

