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PRIME MINISTER'S
PERSONAL MESSAGE
SERIAL No. T 708/86

Tuynhuys
Cape Town

10 April 1986

Dear Prime Minister

Thank you for your letter of 20 March 1986. Your obvious interest in a cessation of violence and the promotion of a process of negotiation and dialogue in South Africa is appreciated.

You will be aware from previous statements which I have made on the issue of the release of Mr Nelson Mandela that the South African Government's basic concern is that his release should not be accompanied by or result in further violence. Any escalation in violence at the time of his release would force the security authorities to take counter-action including action against those responsible for or associated with the violence. It is my view, and I have stated it publicly, that Mr Mandela is in effect being kept in prison by the South African Communist Party and its affiliate, the African National Congress as it suits them that he should remain in prison.

It must be clear that the key to the:

- release of Mr Mandela and similar prisoners,
- withdrawal of the security forces from certain urban areas and

- lifting of the ban on the ANC and PAC,

is a cessation of violence.

If the South African Government could receive a definite assurance to the effect that violence would cease, it would be prepared to consider moves along the lines suggested in the "possible negotiating concept" of the Commonwealth Group of Eminent Persons but then on the clear understanding that in the event of a continuation or escalation of violence punitive action against South Africa would not be forthcoming should appropriate measures be taken by the security forces to contain the violence.

I said in an earlier letter to you that if the Group confined itself to promoting peaceful political dialogue and discouraging violence and could be seen to be unbiased in this respect, it could serve a useful purpose. An assurance by the Commonwealth Group of Eminent Persons that the ANC and others would cease their violence, would undoubtedly facilitate a constructive response from my Government to the Group's concept and would pave the way for the continuation of their work - subject, naturally, to the condition that they would have no right to interfere in South Africa's internal affairs or prescribe how any possible future constitutional dispensation should look.

I am, however, concerned about what I perceive to be a lack of understanding on the part of some Western Governments of the policies and objectives of the African National Congress. The question which has been exercising my mind is whether Western Governments are

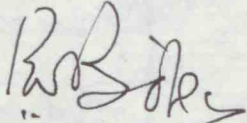
aware that the majority of the members of the executive of the ANC are also members of the South African Communist Party and that the ANC has close links with international terrorism. Indeed there are indications that some members of the ANC and PAC are being trained in and directed from Libya. I trust that whatever happens along the road ahead, the British Government would not expect me to negotiate a new constitutional order for South Africa on the basis of a one party state; nationalisation of private property; a government controlled press; a restricted judicial system; and no guarantees of fundamental human rights and civil liberties including the protection of minority rights.

I am also concerned about condemnatory statements directed at the South African Government alone by, for example, the European Community without any categorical rejection of the violence and political aims of the ANC and others. The ANC needs to be told bluntly by democratic governments that their principles and policies are unacceptable.

What is at least helpful in the approach of the Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group is its recognition that future positive actions on the part of the South African Government should be matched by corresponding responses by those now opposed to negotiation and committed to violence. I trust that you will agree that continued insistence on change without insistence on a matching performance by the ANC and others and continued invocation of the threat of further sanctions serve only to encourage further obduracy on the part of those who have thus far turned their backs on a peaceful solution.

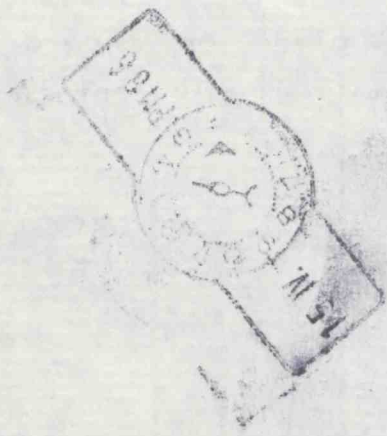
I again place on record my appreciation for your constructive involvement in this matter.

Yours sincerely



P W BOTHA
STATE PRESIDENT OF THE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

The Rt Hon Margaret Thatcher, MP
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
LONDON



S. Africa Relations PE9



10 DOWNING STREET

Prime Minister

A very important message from President Botswana.

He is prepared to contemplate moving ahead on the basis proposed by the EPK, BUT

he wants some sort of promise that if violence continues despite a promise by the ANC that it will cease, and if South Africa cracks down on it, there will be no punitive measures such as sanctions. It would be

virtually impossible
to get any
guarantee of this, since
it would amount to
a blank cheque to
the South African
Government.

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What he is asking has
some reason. He could
not stand by if no law
exists against it. If the OWE
breaks then mandating in
it is broken against their states
within) Both involve debt
responsibility to the public by withholding
order not

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

10 April 1986



Dear Charles,

Message from President Botha

/ I enclose copies of two telegrams from Sir P Moberly. We have given them a minimal distribution.

Yours ever,

Colin Budd

(C R Budd)
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq
PS/10 Downing Street

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COMMONWEALTH GROUP : MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT BOTHA

1. THE FOREIGN MINISTER ASKED ME TO CALL THIS AFTERNOON AND HANDED OVER A REPLY FROM THE STATE PRESIDENT TO MRS THATCHER'S RECENT MESSAGE. TEXT IN MIFT. ORIGINAL BY BAG.
2. PIK BOTHA SAID THAT HE HOPED WE WOULD REGARD THIS AS A POSITIVE RESPONSE TO THE COMMENTS MADE BY MRS THATCHER IN HER MESSAGE. THE PRESIDENT WAS NOW LOOKING FOR A FURTHER RESPONSE FROM THE PRIME MINISTER. PIK BOTHA HOPED THAT THIS WOULD ENDORSE THE GENERAL APPROACH SET OUT IN THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER. NO REPLY WOULD BE SENT TO THE COMMONWEALTH GROUP THEMSELVES UNTIL THE PRESIDENT HAD HEARD AGAIN FROM MRS THATCHER.
3. PIK BOTHA ADDED THAT THIS WAS THE LIMIT OF WHAT HE HAD BEEN ABLE TO PERSUADE THE PRESIDENT TO COMMIT HIMSELF TO AT THIS STAGE. THE PRESIDENT WAS PREPARED TO WRITE IN THESE TERMS TO MRS THATCHER BUT NOT YET TO THE EPG. HENCE THE IMPORTANCE OF KNOWING THAT THE PRIME MINISTER BROADLY SUPPORTED THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT'S PRESENT APPROACH. ARMED WITH THIS, PIK BOTHA WAS CONFIDENT THAT HE WOULD BE ABLE TO PERSUADE THE PRESIDENT TO AUTHORISE A LETTER IN SIMILAR TERMS TO THE EPG IN RESPONSE TO THE PAPER THEY HAD LEFT HERE.

4. I ASKED THE FOREIGN MINISTER WHETHER HE WAS HOPING THAT WE WOULD NOW BE IN TOUCH WITH THE EPG AND EITHER THROUGH THEM OR POSSIBLY DIRECT WITH THE ANC BEFORE THE PRIME MINISTER REPLIED. HE SAID IT WAS OF COURSE UP TO MRS THATCHER TO DECIDE WHAT SHE DID ON RECEIPT OF THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER. HE DID NOT WANT TO SUGGEST THAT IT WOULD BE ESSENTIAL FOR HER TO CONSULT OTHERS BEFORE REPLYING, ALTHOUGH TO DO SO COULD ADD TO THE WEIGHT OF ANYTHING FURTHER SHE WROTE TO THE PRESIDENT. BUT THE IMPORTANT THING IN P.I.K BOTHA'S VIEW WAS THAT THE PRIME MINISTER SHOULD IF POSSIBLE SHOW HERSELF IN AGREEMENT WITH THE IDEAS NOW BEING PUT TO HER. HE ACCEPTED THAT SHE COULD HARDLY BE EXPECTED TO GUARANTEE A PARTICULAR ATTITUDE BY THE ANC.

5. I POINTED OUT THAT THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER STOPPED SHORT OF PROMISING THAT THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT WOULD BE ABLE TO TAKE CERTAIN STEPS SUGGESTED BY THE EPG IF THE GOVERNMENT COULD RECEIVE A DEFINITE ASSURANCE ABOUT VIOLENCE CEASING. IT WAS MY UNDERSTANDING THAT THE EPG'S CONCEPT WAS TO SECURE PARALLEL UNDERTAKINGS FROM EACH SIDE. WAS THERE NOT A RISK OF THE ANC BEING ASKED TO GIVE A FIRM COMMITMENT AGAINST A SOUTH AFRICAN UNDERTAKING ONLY OF THE GOVERNMENT BEING PREPARED TO CONSIDER ACTION SUGGESTED BY THE EPG. I ASKED IF SUCH AN UNDERTAKING COULD BE READ AS A CLEAR HINT THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD FIND IT POSSIBLE TO GO AHEAD IN THE EVENT OF AN ASSURANCE FROM THE ANC. P.I.K BOTHA SAID YES. HE ADDED HOWEVER THAT THERE WAS NO WAY IN WHICH THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT COULD NEGOTIATE A SYNCHRONISED DEAL IN ADVANCE DIRECTLY WITH THE ANC. FOR ONE THING THIS WOULD BE RESENTED BY OTHER BLACKS WHO WOULD ALSO NEED TO BE INVOLVED IN ANY EVENTUAL DIALOGUE. IN ANY CASE, AS WE WOULD SEE FROM THE TEXT, IT WAS AN ASSURANCE FROM THE EPG RATHER THAN THE ANC WHICH THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT WOULD BE NEEDING IN REGARD TO CESSATION OF VIOLENCE (AND HE ADDED IN REGARD TO A SITUATION IN WHICH VIOLENCE NEVERTHELESS CONTINUED).

6. THE FOREIGN MINISTER DREW ATTENTION TO ONE OTHER POINT IN THE TEXT WHERE THE PRESIDENT HAS SET OUT A NUMBER OF POINTS WHICH HE BELIEVED THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT EXPECT HIM TO NEGOTIATE IN ANY NEW CONSTITUTIONAL ORDER. P. K. BOTHA SAID IT WOULD BE PARTICULARLY HELPFUL IF THE PRIME MINISTER WERE ABLE TO INDICATE UNDERSTANDING FOR THE PRESIDENT'S POSITION IN THIS RESPECT.

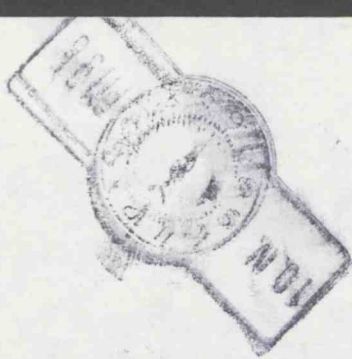
7. AS HE LEFT HE OBSERVED THAT WE WERE ON THE BRINK OF A MAJOR BREAKTHROUGH IF MATTERS NOW WENT AHEAD AS HE HOPED. HE REPEATED HIS HOPE FOR A FURTHER LETTER FROM THE PRIME MINISTER WHICH WOULD ENABLE THE PRESIDENT TO RESPOND TO THE COMMONWEALTH GROUP ON THESE LINES.

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MIPT :

1. FOLLOWING HIS TEXT OF LETTER FROM THE STATE PRESIDENT TO MRS THATCHER DATED 10 APRIL 1986 :

BEGINS

DEAR PRIME MINISTER

THANKYOU FOR YOUR LETTER OF 20 MARCH 1986. YOUR OBVIOUS INTEREST IN A CESSATION OF VIOLENCE AND THE PROMOTION OF A PROCESS OF NEGOTIATION AND DIALOGUE IN SOUTH AFRICA IS APPRECIATED.

YOU WILL BE AWARE FROM PREVIOUS STATEMENTS WHICH I HAVE MADE ON THE ISSUE OF THE RELEASE OF MR NELSON MANDELA THAT THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT'S BASIC CONCERN IS THAT HIS RELEASE SHOULD NOT BE ACCOMPANIED BY OR RESULT IN FURTHER VIOLENCE. ANY ESCALATION IN VIOLENCE AT THE TIME OF HIS RELEASE WOULD FORCE THE SECURITY AUTHORITIES TO TAKE COUNTER-ACTION INCLUDING ACTION AGAINST THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR OR ASSOCIATED WITH THE VIOLENCE. IT IS MY VIEW, AND I HAVE STATED IT PUBLICLY, THAT MR MANDELA IS IN EFFECT BEING KEPT IN PRISON BY THE SOUTH AFRICAN COMMUNIST PARTY AND ITS AFFILIATE, THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS, AS IT SUITS THEM THAT HE SHOULD REMAIN IN PRISON.

IT MUST BE CLEAR THAT THE KEY TO THE :

- RELEASE OF MR MANDELA AND SIMILAR PRISONERS,
- WITHDRAWAL OF THE SECURITY FORCES FROM CERTAIN URBAN AREAS AND
- LIFTING OF THE BAN ON THE ANC AND PAC,

IS A CESSATION OF VIOLENCE.

IF THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT COULD RECEIVE A DEFINITE ASSURANCE TO THE EFFECT THAT VIOLENCE WOULD CEASE, IT WOULD BE PREPARED TO CONSIDER MOVES ALONG THE LINES SUGGESTED IN THE 'POSSIBLE NEGOTIATING CONCEPT' OF THE COMMONWEALTH GROUP OF EMINENT PERSONS BUT THEN ON THE CLEAR UNDERSTANDING THAT IN THE EVENT OF A CONTINUATION OR ESCALATION OF VIOLENCE PUNITIVE ACTION AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA WOULD NOT BE FORTHCOMING SHOULD APPROPRIATE MEASURES BE TAKEN BY SECURITY FORCES TO CONTAIN THE VIOLENCE.

I SAID IN AN EARLIER LETTER TO YOU THAT IF THE GROUP CONFINED ITSELF TO PROMOTING PEACEFUL POLITICAL DIALOGUE AND DISCOURAGING VIOLENCE AND COULD BE SEEN TO BE UNBIASED IN THIS RESPECT, IT COULD SERVE A USEFUL PURPOSE. AN ASSURANCE BY THE COMMONWEALTH GROUP OF EMINENT PERSONS THAT THE ANC AND OTHERS WOULD CEASE THEIR VIOLENCE, WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY FACILITATE A CONSTRUCTIVE RESPONSE FROM MY GOVERNMENT TO THE GROUP'S CONCEPT AND WOULD PAVE THE WAY FOR THE CONTINUATION OF THEIR WORK - SUBJECT, NATURALLY, TO THE CONDITION THAT THEY WOULD HAVE NO RIGHT TO INTERFERE IN SOUTH AFRICA'S INTERNAL AFFAIRS OR PRESCRIBE HOW ANY POSSIBLE FUTURE CONSTITUTIONAL DISPENSATION SHOULD LOOK.

This is
the
string.

I AM, HOWEVER, CONCERNED ABOUT WHAT I PERCEIVE TO BE LACK OF UNDERSTANDING ON THE PART OF SOME WESTERN GOVERNMENTS OF THE POLICIES AND OBJECTIVES OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS. THE QUESTION WHICH HAS BEEN EXERCISING IN MY MIND IS WHETHER WESTERN GOVERNMENTS ARE AWARE THAT THE MAJORITY OF THE MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE OF THE ANC ARE ALSO MEMBERS OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN COMMUNIST PARTY AND THAT THE ANC HAS CLOSE LINKS WITH INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM. INDEED THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT SOME MEMBERS OF THE ANC AND PAC ARE BEING TRAINED IN AND DIRECTED FROM LIBYA. I TRUST THAT WHATEVER HAPPENS ALONG THE ROAD AHEAD, THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT EXPECT ME TO NEGOTIATE A NEW CONSTITUTIONAL ORDER FOR SOUTH AFRICA ON THE BASIS OF A ONE-PARTY STATE, NATIONALISATION OF PRIVATE PROPERTY, A GOVERNMENT CONTROLLED PRESS, A RESTRICTED JUDICIAL SYSTEM, AND NO GUARANTEES OF FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS AND CIVIL LIBERTIES INCLUDING THE PROTECTION OF MINORITY RIGHTS.

I AM ALSO CONCERNED ABOUT CONDEMNATORY STATEMENTS DIRECTED AT THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT ALONE BY, FOR EXAMPLE, THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY WITHOUT ANY CATEGORICAL REJECTION OF THE VIOLENCE AND POLITICAL AIMS OF THE ANC AND OTHERS. THE ANC NEEDS TO BE TOLD BLUNTLY BY DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENTS THAT THEIR PRINCIPLES AND POLICIES ARE UNACCEPTABLE.

WHAT IS AT LEAST HELPFUL IN THE APPROACH OF THE COMMONWEALTH EMINENT PERSONS GROUP IS ITS RECOGNITION THAT FUTURE POSITIVE ACTIONS ON THE PART OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE MATCHED BY CORRESPONDING RESPONSES BY THOSE NOW OPPOSED TO NEGOTIATION AND COMMITTED TO VIOLENCE. I TRUST THAT YOU WILL AGREE THAT CONTINUED INSISTENCE ON CHANGE WITHOUT INSISTENCE ON A MATCHING PERFORMANCE BY THE ANC AND OTHERS AND CONTINUED INVOCATION OF THE THREAT OF FURTHER SANCTIONS SERVES ONLY TO ENCOURAGE FURTHER OB DURACY ON THE PART OF THOSE WHO HAVE THUS FAR TURNED THEIR BACKS ON A PEACEFUL SOLUTION.

GAIN PLACE ON RECORD MY APPREVIATION FOR YOUR CONSTRUCTIVE
INVOLVEMENT IN THIS MATTER.

YOURS SINCERELY
P W BOTHA

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