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24 April 1986

Dear Mr Fraser and General Obasanjo

The South African Government has been giving serious consideration to the salient features of the "possible negotiating concept" attached to your letter of 13 March 1986 which I have been asked to respond to.

You will be aware, from previous statements which the South African State President and other members of the South African Government 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.

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 suspension of violence.

The question which arises is how this can be put into effect. In your "possible negotiating concept" you suggest that, "in the context of specific and meaningful steps being taken towards ending apartheid", certain additional action by the South African Government and the ANC and others might ensure negotiations and a break in the cycle of violence. Moreover you will recall that during the Group's recent discussions with representatives of the South African Government, the influx control system and pass laws were highlighted by the Group as important issues affecting the daily lives of black people. At that stage the Group was aware of the State President's commitment, made during the opening of Parliament earlier this year, that this situation would be fundamentally altered by 1 July 1986. In line with this commitment the State President announced in Parliament on Friday 18 April 1986, that no further charges would be preferred in terms of the existing legislation; that people who have been convicted in terms of this legislation would be released forthwith, and that those who are being detained pending trial would likewise be released. The Government proposes to repeal or amend no fewer than 34 Acts

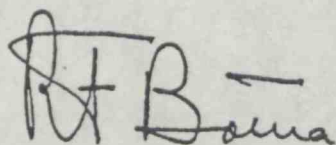
and Proclamations to ensure that the movement of people will not be subject to discrimination on the grounds of colour or race.

These additional reform measures testify to the Government's acceptance that no further forced removals in pursuit of a political ideology will take place. The Government has noted with satisfaction in this connection the Group's recognition that 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.

The Commonwealth Group of Eminent Persons will understand that if the South African Government does move along the lines suggested in its "possible negotiating concept" and violence continues or increases, the Government may have no alternative but to take appropriate measures to control the violence. The Group will recall that I raised this issue with them during their visit. It is my recollection that it responded that it recognised the responsibility of the Government to maintain order but the question arises whether such action on the part of the Government would not then result in further punitive action against South Africa. This is a most important issue which will require further discussion.

The South African Government continues to believe that the Group can serve a useful purpose and it accordingly proposes, in the light of the foregoing, that the whole Group or representative members of the Group meet with representatives of the South African Government to exchange views on how further to proceed, particularly on the modalities of achieving a suspension of violence and facilitating discussions.

Yours sincerely



R F BOTHA

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Cape Sun Hotel
Cape Town

13 March 1986

The Hon Pik Botha
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
H F Verwoerd Building
CAPE TOWN

My dear Foreign Minister

...
We are enclosing a copy of a note that the Group has left with Minister Heunis. We wish once more to thank you for the courtesy and help which you personally and your Ministry have extended to us throughout our visit and discussions in South Africa.

We would wish to emphasise once again that we are advancing a concept. We really do believe as a result of all our discussions in South Africa and outside, that there is a real chance of establishing productive negotiations about the future of South Africa. We have also indicated that if the Government believes there is some future role for this Group we stand ready to advance the cause of negotiations.

Again many thanks for your courtesy and for the time that you spent with us.

Yours sincerely

Malcolm Fraser

Olusegun Obasanjo

Members:

The Rt.Hon. MALCOLM FRASER (Co-Chairman); General OLUSEGUN OBASANJO (Co-Chairman)
The Rt.Hon. LORD BARBER; Dame NITA BARROW; Mr. JOHN MALECELA; Sardar SWARAN SINGH; The Most Rev. Archbishop EDWARD W. SCOTT DD.

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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

- (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;

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- (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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