

CONFIDENTIAL  
DD 161600Z FCOLN  
PP WASHDC  
RR OTTAWA  
RR NASSAU  
RR NYMIS  
FM CAPE TOWN TO FCOLN  
161350Z MAY  
GRS 400

PS  
MR TELGUSSON  
MR REEVE  
SAND  
PS/NO 10 Downing St

(6)

ADVANCE COPY

CONFIDENTIAL  
FM CAPE TOWN  
TO DESKBY 161600Z FCO  
TELNO 267  
OF 161600Z MAY 86  
INFO IMMEDIATE LUSAKA  
INFO PRIORITY HARARE, WASHINGTON  
INFO ROUTINE DAR ES SALAAM, LAGOS, CANBERRA, OTTAWA, NEW DELHI  
INFO ROUTINE NASSAU, UKMIS NEW YORK

IMMEDIATE

MY TELNO 266 (NOT TO ALL): COMMONWEALTH GROUP

SUMMARY

1. THE GROUP LEAVE THIS AFTERNOON FOR LUSAKA AFTER SEVERAL DAYS HERE WHICH WERE INITIALLY DISAPPOINTING BUT ENDED THIS MORNING ON A BRIGHTER NOTE. THEY EXPECT TO RETURN TO CAPE TOWN FOR FURTHER MEETINGS WITH MINISTERS AT THE BEGINNING OF NEXT WEEK.

DETAIL

2. UP TO LAST NIGHT THE GROUP FELT THEY WERE MAKING NO PROGRESS IN THEIR CONTACTS WITH THE GOVERNMENT OVER THE EPG'S NEGOTIATING CONCEPT. NOR HAD THEY YET BEEN ABLE TO MEET MANDELA. THIS MORNING THEY SAW MANDELA AND THEN PIK BOTHA AGAIN. AFTERWARDS LORD BARBER TOLD ME IN CONFIDENCE (PLEASE PROTECT) JUST BEFORE LEAVING FOR THE AIRPORT EN ROUTE TO LUSAKA THAT THE SITUATION HAS NOW CHANGED FOR THE BETTER.

3. ACCORDING TO LORD BARBER (AGAIN PLEASE PROTECT) THE GROUP FELT THAT THEIR MEETING WITH MANDELA HAD BEEN EXCELLENT. (THE MEETING ITSELF IS MEANT TO BE REGARDED AS CONFIDENTIAL, THOUGH THE GROUP ASSUME IT MAY SOON LEAK). THEY SHOWED HIM THE TEXT OF THEIR NEGOTIATING CONCEPT, I.E. THE PAPER ALREADY PRESENTED TO THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT. MANDELA'S REACTION WAS THAT HE PERSONALLY HAD NO PROBLEM WITH IT AND WOULD BE WILLING TO COOPERATE IN A SCENARIO OF THE KIND SUGGESTED. HE AGREED THAT THE GROUP COULD PASS THIS ON AS HIS VIEW TO THE ANC IN LUSAKA. THE SOUTH AFRICANS ALSO KNOW THE SCORE ABOUT MANDELA'S REACTION BECAUSE THE PRESIDENT'S LEGAL ADVISER WAS PRESENT DURING THE INTERVIEW (A POINT WHICH HAD BEEN THE SUBJECT OF SOME DISAGREEMENT BEFOREHAND).

4. THE GROUP SUBSEQUENTLY CALLED ON PIK BOTHA. COMPARED TO THEIR FIRST MEETING WITH HIM THREE DAYS PREVIOUSLY, LORD BARBER SAID IT HAD BEEN A GOOD-HUMOURED OCCASION ALTHOUGH NOTHING MORE OF SUBSTANCE EMERGED FROM THE SOUTH AFRICANS SIDE ABOUT THE NEGOTIATING CONCEPT. PIK BOTHA DEVOTED MUCH OF THE TIME TO ADVISING THE GROUP ON HOW TO HANDLE THEIR NEXT MAJOR CONTACT WITH MINISTERS AT WHICH THE NEGOTIATING CONCEPT WILL BE DISCUSSED. THIS IS TO BE WITH SIX SENIOR MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNMENT ON 19 MAY AFTER THE GROUP HAVE RETURNED FROM LUSAKA. IT WILL CLEARLY BE A MORE REVEALING TEST OF THE GOVERNMENT'S ATTITUDE THAN ANYTHING DURING THE PAST WEEK.

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WEEK.

5. ON PRESENT PLANS THE GROUP WILL FLY BACK FROM LUSAKA TO CAPE TOWN ON 18 MAY. LORD BARBER HAS TO RETURN TO LONDON OVERNIGHT ON TUESDAY 20 MAY ON STANDARD CHARTERED BANK BUSINESS BUT IS PREPARED TO FLY OUT TO SOUTH AFRICA AGAIN 24 HOURS LATER. IT UNDERSTAND THAT OBASANJO ALSO HAS TO LEAVE ON TUESDAY. BUT THE REST OF THE GROUP SHOULD STILL BE AVAILABLE HERE FOR WHATEVER FURTHER TALKS SEEM NECESSARY.

6. IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES WE BELIEVE ANY THOUGHT OF INTERVENING OURSELVES WITH THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT CAN WAIT AT LEAST UNTIL AFTER THE MEETING WITH SOUTH AFRICAN MINISTERS ON MONDAY.

CCN PREAMBLE

TELNO 267  
OF 161350Z MAY 86

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