

GRS 1540

CONFIDENTIAL

Subject cc Ops Master

CONFIDENTIAL
DEDIP
FM CAPE TOWN
TO DESKBY 261900Z FCO
TELNO 295
OF 261315Z MAY 86

PRIME MINISTER'S
PERSONAL MESSAGE
SERIAL No. T100/86

MPT : MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT BOTHA

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT DATED 26 MAY.

MS

BEGINS

DEAR PRIME MINISTER

THERE ARE SOME VEILED THREATS IN YOUR MESSAGE OF 22 MAY 1986, ESPECIALLY IN THE LAST PARAGRAPH.

IN YOUR MESSAGE YOU STATED AS FOLLOWS :

" I BELIEVE THAT THE GROUP MAY YET RESPOND TO A GENUINE AND UNEQUVOCAL STEP FORWARD ON YOUR PART, BUT THEY WILL NOT ALLOW THEMSELVES TO BECOME INVOLVED IN A DEBATE ON SEMANTICS, WHICH THEY WILL SEE AS JUST AN ATTEMPT TO STRING THEM ALONG. WHAT IS NEEDED IS AN EARLY AND CLEAR CUT ACCEPTANCE OF THEIR NEGOTIATING CONCEPT, TOGETHER WITH SPECIFIC INDICATIONS OF THE WAY IN WHICH THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT INTEND TO IMPLEMENT I.T."

FIRSTLY, IF YOUR OBSERVATION REGARDING "SEMANTICS" IS SUPPOSED TO BE A REFERENCE TO THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE REAL MEANING OF "SUSPENSION" ON THE ONE HAND AND "CESSATION" AND RENUNCIATION ON THE OTHER, IT IMPLIES A VERY UNREALISTIC ASSESSMENT OF MY COUNTRY'S SECURITY REQUIREMENTS INDEED.

SECONDLY, THE "NEGOTIATING CONCEPT" WHICH YOU INSIST I ACCEPT WITHOUT ANY QUALIFICATION WHATSOEVER AND, APPARENTLY, WITHOUT FURTHER NEGOTIATION, WAS PRESENTED TO MY GOVERNMENT AS A "POSSIBLE NEGOTIATING CONCEPT". I REGARD SUCH INSISTENCE AS THE HEIGHT OF INTRANSIGENCE AND, IN VIEW OF THE PRAGMATISM WHICH HAS CHARACTERISED YOUR ATTITUDE TO DATE, I WAS DISMAYED WHEN I TOOK NOTE THEREOF.

HOWEVER, SINCE YOU HAVE PREVIOUSLY INVITED ME TO TAKE YOU INTO MY CONFIDENCE SHOULD ANY DIFFICULTIES ARISE REGARDING THE EPG INITIATIVE, I NOW ASK YOU TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING.

ON 15 FEBRUARY 1985, BEFORE THERE WAS EVEN TALK OF THE COMMONWEALTH EMINENT PERSONS GROUP, I STATED PUBLICLY AS FOLLOWS :

" IF THE ANC AND OTHER ORGANISATIONS CONCERNED ALSO DECIDE TO REJECT AND RENOUCE VIOLENCE, THE GOVERNMENT IS WILLING TO TALK TO THEM, AS WITH ANY OTHER ORGANISATION THAT STRIVES FOR TRUE PEACE AND

[Nonsense]

CONFIDENTIAL

/ DEVELOPMENT

CONFIDENTIAL

DEVELOPMENT FOR THE PEOPLES OF OUR LAND. WE SHOULD HEED THE LESSONS OF HISTORY, AND BUILD A SAFE FUTURE ON THE WISDOM OF EXPERIENCE. WE MUST NOT REPEAT THE MISTAKES THAT WERE MADE ELSEWHERE IN AFRICA."

YOU WILL ALSO RECALL THAT IT WAS HE WHO TOOK THE INITIATIVE IN JANUARY 1985 BY ANNOUNCING THAT HE WOULD BE PREPARED TO CONSIDER THE RELEASE OF MR NELSON MANDELA ON HUMANITARIAN GROUNDS PROVIDED THAT HE RENOUNCES VIOLENCE. AT THE TIME IT WAS CONSIDERED TO BE A PERFECTLY REASONABLE OFFER.

WHEN HE WROTE TO YOU ON 4 OCTOBER 1985, HE REFERRED TO THE NEED FOR NEGOTIATION WITH THE LEADERS OF ALL SOUTH AFRICA'S COMMUNITIES AND PROCEEDED AS FOLLOWS :

"WE HAVE SAID THAT WE SHALL NOT PRESCRIBE WHO MAY REPRESENT THE OTHER COMMUNITIES. THE ONLY CONDITION WE HAVE STIPULATED IS THAT THOSE WHO PARTICIPATE IN THE NEGOTIATIONS SHOULD RENOUNCE VIOLENCE AS A MEANS OF ACHIEVING POLITICAL OBJECTIVES."

FOLLOWING THE OCTOBER COMMONWEALTH HEADS OF GOVERNMENT MEETING, YOU WROTE TO ME ON 21 OCTOBER 1985 AND INFORMED ME THAT THE OUTCOME OF YOUR DISCUSSIONS HAD BEEN A DECLARATION WHICH SETS OUT THE COMMONWEALTH'S APPROACH. THE DECLARATION INTER ALIA COMPRISED
"A CALL FOR A POLITICAL DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT

AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE BLACK COMMUNITY IN THE CONTEXT OF A SUSPENSION OF VIOLENCE ON ALL SIDES."

ON 22 OCTOBER 1985 HE RESPONDED BY SAYING THAT IT WAS NOT CLEAR TO ME WHAT WAS MEANT BY "SUSPENSION OF VIOLENCE ON ALL SIDES" AND THAT IF IT WAS INTENDED TO MEAN THAT THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT WAS PERPETRATING VIOLENCE, THE COMMONWEALTH MISSION COULD NOT PLAY A POSITIVE ROLE.

SUBSEQUENTLY ON 31 OCTOBER 1985, YOU RESPONDED BY STATING AS FOLLOWS:

"MY OTHER MAIN PURPOSE WAS TO SECURE COMMONWEALTH BACKING FOR DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE BLACK COMMUNITY IN THE CONTEXT OF A SUSPENSION OF VIOLENCE ON ALL SIDES. THE CONCEPT OF COURSE COMES FROM YOUR EARLIER LETTER TO ME; AND HE HOPE YOU WILL AGREE THAT IT IS NO SMALL ACHIEVEMENT TO HAVE PERSUADED THE COMMONWEALTH TO PUT ITS NAME TO A SUSPENSION OF VIOLENCE, THOUGH THERE ARE SEVERAL GOVERNMENTS WHO WILL NOT WISH TO SEE SUBSTANCE GIVEN TO THIS COMMITMENT IF THEY CAN AVOID IT."

NATURALLY HE ASSUMED THAT THIS WAS A REFERENCE TO MY LETTER OF 4 OCTOBER IN WHICH HE REFERRED TO THE GOVERNMENT'S WILLINGNESS TO NEGOTIATE WITH PEOPLE WHO RENOUNCE VIOLENCE AS A MEANS OF ACHIEVING POLITICAL OBJECTIVES. CONSEQUENTLY, HE HENCEFORTH CORRESPONDED WITH YOU ON THE BASIS THAT SUSPENSION EQUALS RENUNCIATION AND CESSATION OF VIOLENCE.

SINCE YOU INFORMED ME ON 14 DECEMBER 1985 THAT YOU HAVE HAD AN

CONFIDENTIAL

OPPORTUNITY FOR A LONG DISCUSSION WITH THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMONWEALTH EMINENT PERSONS GROUP, WHO ASSUMED THAT THEY TOO WERE PROCEEDING ON THE BASIS OF THIS PREMISE.

MY IMPRESSION WAS STRENGTHENED BY YOUR LETTER OF 8 JANUARY 1986 IN WHICH YOU REGRETTED THE UPSURGE OF VIOLENCE AGAINST CIVILIANS IN SOUTH AFRICA AND STATED THAT THERE 'CAN BE NO SYMPATHY OR JUSTIFICATION FOR ACTS OF UNDISCRIMINATE VIOLENCE'.

YOU WOULD HAVE NOTED THAT IN MY LETTER OF 24 JANUARY 1986, I STATED THAT THE EMPHASIS SHOULD BE ON STRUCTURING A REALISTIC SYSTEM OF POWER SHARING IN THE CONTEXT OF A SUSPENSION OF VIOLENCE AS ACCEPTED BY THE COMMONWEALTH. I IMMEDIATELY PROCEEDED TO ASK THE FOLLOWING QUESTION:

'WHAT IS THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY DOING IN ORDER TO COMPEL THE CHIEF ARCHITECT OF VIOLENCE IN SOUTH AFRICA, THE SOUTH AFRICAN COMMUNIST PARTY AND ITS AFFILIATE, THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS, TO STOP THEIR CAMPAIGN OF TERROR?'

I PROCEEDED BY SAYING THAT IT WAS IMPERATIVE THAT ALL ORGANISATIONS, INTERNAL AS WELL AS EXTERNAL, ENGAGED IN COMMITTING ACTS OF VIOLENCE AS A MATTER OF POLICY, SHOULD BECOME THE OBJECT OF A CONCERTED INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN AIMED AT ENDING THEIR POLICY OF VIOLENCE AND TERROR.

AS YOU KNOW, I MET WITH THE EPG ON 12 MARCH 1986. ACCORDING TO THE MINUTES OF THAT MEETING, I TOOK THE POSITION THAT THERE WAS NO NEED FOR THE ANC TO PARTICIPATE IN THE POLITICAL LIFE OF SOUTH AFRICA FROM NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES SUCH AS ZAMBIA. IF THEY RENOUNCED VIOLENCE THEY COULD 'COME AND JOIN US'.

ON 10 APRIL 1986, WITH REFERENCE TO YOUR LETTER OF 20 MARCH 1986, I EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR YOUR OBVIOUS INTEREST IN A CESSATION OF VIOLENCE AND INDICATED THAT A CESSATION OF VIOLENCE WAS THE KEY TO THE MATTERS WHICH I ENUMERATED IN THAT LETTER.

FOLLOWING THIS, IN YOUR LETTER OF 18 APRIL 1986, YOU EXPRESSED AGREEMENT WITH MY POINT OF VIEW THAT A CESSATION OF VIOLENCE IS WHAT WE SHOULD BE AIMING FOR BUT YOU SUSPECTED THAT THE GROUP WOULD NOT REGARD MY FORMULATION AS A FAIR EXCHANGE, ESPECIALLY SINCE THE COMMONWEALTH ACCORD SPEAKS IN TERMS OF A SUSPENSION OF VIOLENCE. YOU ENCOURAGED ME TO EXPLORE WITH THE GROUP WHAT A SUSPENSION OF VIOLENCE WOULD ENTAIL.

THIS IS PRECISELY WHAT MEMBERS OF MY GOVERNMENT DID DURING THE GROUP'S RECENT VISIT TO SOUTH AFRICA.

NATURALLY I WAS DISMAYED TO LEARN, NOT ONLY THAT THE GROUP IS THINKING IN TERMS OF WHAT COULD BE A TEMPORARY SUSPENSION OF VIOLENCE, BUT ALSO, ACCORDING TO LORD BARBER, THAT IT WOULD BE UNFAIR AND UNREASONABLE TO EXPECT OF THE ANC TO SUSPEND VIOLENCE INDEFINITELY.

CONFIDENTIAL

YOU WILL NO DOUBT AGREE THAT THIS POSITION IS CAPABLE OF A CONSTRUCTION TO THE EFFECT THAT WHEN AND FOR AS LONG AS THE GOVERNMENT AND THE ANC ARE NOT NEGOTIATING, THE PENETRATION OF VIOLENCE BY THE ANC IS JUSTIFIED.

IN ANY EVENT, I AM OF THE OPINION THAT ONLY A COMMITMENT TO PEACE CAN RESULT IN NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENTS AND, CONSEQUENTLY, THAT THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE NEGOTIATIONS SHOULD HAVE COMMITTED THEMSELVES TO PEACE AND SHOULD HAVE CLOSED THE DOOR ON VIOLENCE BEFORE THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE NEGOTIATIONS.

THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT HAS SUPPLIED VISIBLE PROOF OF ITS COMMITMENT TO A NEGOTIATED DEMOCRATIC SETTLEMENT WHICH SHOULD ADDRESS THE LEGITIMATE POLITICAL ASPIRATIONS OF ALL SOUTH AFRICANS. UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES I CANNOT SEE THE NEED FOR THE ANC TO PARTICIPATE IN NEGOTIATIONS WHILST RETAINING THE 'RIGHT' TO RESORT TO VIOLENCE WHENEVER, IN ITS VIEW, THE NEGOTIATIONS BREAK DOWN. PARTICULARLY SINCE THE ANC ITSELF CAN CAUSE SUCH NEGOTIATIONS TO BREAK DOWN.

LORD BARBER HAS ALSO TOLD MR MANDELA THAT OFFICIALS OF MY GOVERNMENT HAVE BEEN TALKING OF SUSPENSION OF VIOLENCE AND NOT RENUNCIATION AND THAT HE REGARDED THIS AS REASONABLY (SIC EXCLAM) POSITIVE.

EVEN IF WE ACCEPT, FOR THE SAKE OF ARGUMENT, THAT I HAVE TO NEGOTIATE ON THE BASIS OF A SUSPENSION OF VIOLENCE AS OPPOSED TO THE REJECTION THEREOF AS A MEANS TO ACHIEVE POLITICAL GOALS, IT IS NOW ALSO REQUIRED OF ME TO RELEASE MR MANDELA AND OTHERS WITHOUT THEM HAVING TO RENOUNCE VIOLENCE - A CONDITION TO WHICH I AM PUBLICLY COMMITTED.

IN ADDITION IT IS NOT ONLY REQUIRED OF ME TO NEGOTIATE WITH THE ANC BUT TO UNBAN IT, KNOWING FULL WELL THAT AT ANY GIVEN POINT IN TIME IT MAY UNILATERALLY DECIDE TO AGAIN RESORT TO VIOLENCE. CLEARLY THIS HAS INCALCULABLE POTENTIALLY PREJUDICIAL IMPLICATIONS FOR THE SECURITY SITUATION IN MY COUNTRY.

SOME MEMBERS OF THE GROUP ALSO SEEM TO HAVE TAKEN THE POSITION THAT IF WE DO NOT ACCEPT THEIR 'POSSIBLE NEGOTIATING CONCEPT' NO FURTHER PROPOSAL WILL EMANATE FROM THEM. THE MERE HEADING OF THEIR PROPOSAL WOULD MILITATE AGAINST SUCH INTRANSIGENCE - IF IT DOES EXIST. I SUPPOSE THAT IN THE LIGHT OF YOUR OWN INTRANSIGENCE, I MUST ASSUME THIS.

WITH REFERENCE TO THE LAST PARAGRAPH OF YOUR MESSAGE, I WISH TO PUT ON RECORD MY DEEP DISILLUSIONMENT WITH THE CONTENTY, AS WELL AS THE SPIRIT THEREOF.

IT IS IN SHARP CONTRAST WITH THE RELATIONSHIP OF CONFIDENCE I THOUGHT EXISTED BETWEEN US.

CONFIDENTIAL

FURTHERMORE, I MUST EXPRESS MY STRONG ABHORRENCE OF THE DOUBLE TALK IN CONNECTION WITH TERRORISM. I WAS UNDER THE IMPRESSION THAT YOU CLEARLY STATE: 'TERRORISM CANNOT BE APPEASED'.

IF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA HAS FORCED TO MAKE A CHOICE BETWEEN ACCEPTING THE DOMINATION BY MARXIST REVOLUTIONARY FORCES AND THREATS FROM CERTAIN WESTERN COUNTRIES AND OUR DETERMINATION TO MAINTAIN CIVILISED STANDARDS AND OUR VERY EXISTENCE - WE HAVE NO OPTION BUT TO FOLLOW THE DICTATES OF OUR OWN CONSCIENCES. HOWEVER DEEPLY WE ARE COMMITTED TO INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION, WE CAN NEVER ACCEPT THE DICTATES FROM OUTSIDE FORCES.

YOURS SINCERELY
P W BOTHA
ENDS

MOBERLY

LIMITED.

HD. SAFD.

HD. CCD.

PS.

PS | LADY YOUNG.

PS | MRS. CHALKER.

PS | AUS.

MR. DEREK THOMAS.

MR. FERGUSSON.

MR. REEVE.

COPIES TO:

PS | N° 10 DOWNING ST.



I.5

T'd alone

Tuynhuys
Cape Town

26 May 1986

Dear Prime Minister

There are some veiled threats in your message of 22 May 1986, especially in the last paragraph.

In your message you stated as follows :

"I believe that the Group may yet respond to a genuine and unequivocal step forward on your part, but they will not allow themselves to become involved in a debate on semantics, which they will see as just an attempt to string them along. What is needed is an early and clear cut acceptance of their negotiating concept, together with specific indications of the way in which the South African Government intend to implement it."

Firstly, if your observation regarding "semantics" is supposed to be a reference to the difference between the real meaning of "suspension" on the one hand and "cessation" and "renunciation" on the other, it implies a very unrealistic assessment of my country's security requirements indeed.

Secondly, the "negotiating concept" which you insist I accept without any qualification whatsoever and, apparently, without further negotiation, was presented to my Government as a "possible negotiating concept". I regard such insistence as the height of intransigence and, in view of the pragmatism which has characterised your attitude to date, I was dismayed when I took note thereof.

However, since you have previously invited me to take you into my confidence should any difficulties arise regarding the EPG initiative, I now ask you to consider the following.

On 15 February 1985, before there was even talk of the Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group, I stated publicly as follows:

"If the ANC and other organisations concerned also decide to reject and renounce violence, the Government is willing to talk to them, as with any other organisation that strives for true peace and development for the peoples of our land. We should heed the lessons of history, and build a safe future on the wisdom of experience. We must not repeat the mistakes that were made elsewhere in Africa."

You will also recall that it was I who took the initiative in January 1985 by announcing that I would be prepared to consider the release of Mr Nelson Mandela on humanitarian grounds provided that he renounces violence. At the time it was considered to be a perfectly reasonable offer.

When I wrote to you on 4 October 1985, I referred to the need for negotiation with the leaders of all South Africa's communities and proceeded as follows:

"We have said that we shall not prescribe who may represent the other communities. The only condition we have stipulated is that those who participate in the negotiations should renounce violence as a means of achieving political objectives."

Following the October Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, you wrote to me on 21 October 1985 and informed me that the outcome of your discussions had been a declaration which sets out the Commonwealth's approach. The declaration inter alia comprised "a call for a political dialogue between the South African Government and representatives of the black community in the context of a suspension of violence on all sides".

On 22 October 1985 I responded by saying that it was not clear to me what was meant by "suspension of violence on all sides" and that if it was intended to mean that the South African Government was perpetrating violence, the Commonwealth mission could not play a positive role.

Subsequently, on 31 October 1985, you responded by stating as follows:

"My other main purpose was to secure Commonwealth backing for dialogue between the South African Government and representatives of the black community in the context of a suspension of violence on all sides. The concept of course comes from your earlier letter to me: and I hope you will agree that it is no small achievement to have persuaded the Commonwealth to put its name to a suspension of violence, though there are

several Governments who will not wish to see substance given to this commitment if they can avoid it."

Naturally I assumed that this was a reference to my letter of 4 October in which I referred to the Government's willingness to negotiate with people who renounce violence as a means of achieving political objectives. Consequently, I henceforth corresponded with you on the basis that suspension equals renunciation and cessation of violence.

Since you informed me on 14 December 1985 that you have had an opportunity for a long discussion with the members of the Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group, I assumed that they too were proceeding on the basis of this premise.

My impression was strengthened by your letter of 8 January 1986 in which you regretted the upsurge of violence against civilians in South Africa and stated that there "can be no sympathy or justification for acts of indiscriminate violence".

You would have noted that in my letter of 24 January 1986, I stated that the emphasis should be on structuring a realistic system of power sharing in the context of a suspension of violence as accepted by the Commonwealth. I immediately proceeded to ask the following question:

"What is the international community doing in order to compel the chief architect of violence in South Africa, the South African Communist Party and its affiliate, the African National Congress, to stop their campaign of terror?"

I proceeded by saying that it was imperative that all organisations, internal as well as external, engaged in committing acts of violence as a matter of policy, should become the object of a concerted international campaign aimed at ending their policy of violence and terror.

As you know, I met with the EPG on 12 March 1986. According to the minutes of that meeting, I took the position that there was no need for the ANC to participate in the political life of South Africa from neighbouring countries such as Zambia. If they renounced violence they could "come and join us".

On 10 April 1986, with reference to your letter of 20 March 1986, I expressed appreciation for your obvious interest in a cessation of violence and indicated that a cessation of violence was the key to the matters which I enumerated in that letter.

Following this, in your letter of 18 April 1986, you expressed agreement with my point of view that a cessation of violence is what we should be aiming for but you suspected that the Group would not regard my formulation as a fair exchange, especially since the Commonwealth Accord speaks in terms of a suspension of violence. You encouraged me to explore with the Group what a suspension of violence would entail.

This is precisely what members of my Government did during the Group's recent visit to South Africa.

Naturally I was dismayed to learn, not only that the Group is thinking in terms of what could be a temporary suspension of violence, but also, according to Lord Barber, that it would be unfair and unreasonable to expect of the ANC to suspend violence indefinitely.

You will no doubt agree that this position is capable of a construction to the effect that when and for as long as the Government and the ANC are not negotiating, the perpetration of violence by the ANC is justified.

In any event, I am of the opinion that only a commitment to peace can result in negotiated settlements and, consequently, that the participants in the negotiations should have committed themselves to peace and should have closed the door on violence before the commencement of the negotiations.

The South African Government has supplied visible proof of its commitment to a negotiated democratic settlement which should address the legitimate political aspirations of all South Africans. Under these circumstances I cannot see the need for the ANC to participate in negotiations whilst retaining the "right" to resort to violence whenever, in its view, the negotiations break down. Particularly since the ANC itself can cause such negotiations to break down.

Lord Barber has also told Mr Mandela that officials of my Government have been talking of suspension of violence and not renunciation and that he regarded this as reasonably (sic!) positive.

Even if we accept, for the sake of argument, that I have to negotiate on the basis of a suspension of violence as opposed to the rejection thereof as a means to achieve political goals, it is now also required of me to release Mr Mandela and others without them having to renounce violence - a condition to which I am publicly committed.

In addition it is not only required of me to negotiate with the ANC but to unban it, knowing full well that at any given point in time it may unilaterally decide to again resort to violence. Clearly this has incalculable potentially prejudicial implications for the security situation in my country.

Some members of the Group also seem to have taken the position that if we do not accept their "possible negotiating concept" no further proposal will emanate from them. The mere heading of their proposal would militate against such intransigence - if it does exist. I suppose that in the light of your own intransigence, I must assume this.


With reference to the last paragraph of your message, I wish to put on record my deep disillusionment with the contents, as well as the spirit thereof.

It is in sharp contrast with the relationship of confidence I thought existed between us.

Furthermore, I must express my strong abhorrence of the double talk in connection with terrorism. I was under the impression that you clearly stated : "Terrorism cannot be appeased".

If the Republic of South Africa is forced to make a choice between accepting the domination by Marxist revolutionary forces and threats from certain Western countries and our determination to maintain civilised standards and our very existence - we have no option but to follow the dictates of our own consciences. However deeply we are committed to international co-operation, we can never accept the dictates from outside forces.

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