



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

27 May 1986

Dear Charles,

Review of the Commonwealth Accord on South Africa

Thank you for your letter of 19 May enclosing the Commonwealth Secretary-General's proposals for the modalities of the Commonwealth meeting.

As you know, Sir Antony Acland had already made known to Mr Ramphal our readiness to fall in with the preference of other Commonwealth leaders for a meeting in early August. The proposed package of London, 3-5 August under the Chairmanship of Sir Lynden Pindling, is earlier than the Prime Minister would have wished but otherwise suits our interests. The South African raids on alleged ANC targets in Zambia, Zimbabwe and Botswana, their implications for the prospects for COMGEP, and the subsequent UK/US vetoes in the Security Council will only have strengthened the general wish to have the review meeting sooner rather than later. Indeed, if the Commonwealth Group complete their report on time (ie mid-June) there may be some pressure to bring forward the date.

The Commonwealth Group themselves are anxious not to allow themselves to be strung along by the South Africans. As the Prime Minister knows, the prospects for their mission are not bright. Nevertheless, we believe that the reluctance of most members of the Group not to write off the initiative unless and until it becomes clear that it has reached a dead end should enable us to hold the ground against any calls for an emergency review meeting before August. But the total collapse of the Commonwealth Group, particularly if it led to public recriminations between the Group and the South African Government, would result in intense pressure on us. Australia voted for last week's draft Security Council Resolution (which would have imposed a series of mandatory sanctions under Chapter VII) and the Canadian Foreign Minister has made clear publicly that the failure of the Commonwealth Group would mean the Canadian Government adopting a harder line on sanctions. If necessary we may have to point out that the Prime Minister's diary simply does not allow an earlier meeting. Fortunately, other heads of government are likely to have similar problems.

/Irrespective



Irrespective of the conclusions and recommendations of the Commonwealth Report, the fact of the South African raids guarantees a difficult review meeting especially since President Kaunda and Mr Mugabe, whose countries were among the victims of last week's raids, will be present. We believe that the informal arrangements proposed by Mr Ramphal will suit our interests, in so far as the restricted sessions he envisages may help to keep down the temperature.

/ I enclose a draft letter of acceptance to the Commonwealth Secretary-General for the Prime Minister's signature.

Yours ever

R N Culshaw

(R N Culshaw)
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq
PS/10 Downing Street

DRAFT: ~~minute/letter/teletype/letter/despatch/note~~

TYPE: Draft/~~Final~~

FROM: Prime Minister

Reference

DEPARTMENT:

TEL. NO:

Your Reference

BUILDING:

ROOM NO:

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

- Top Secret
- Secret
- Confidential
- Restricted
- Unclassified

TO: Shridath S Ramphal
 Commonwealth Secretary-
 General
 Marlborough House
 Pall Mall
 LONDON
 SW1Y 5HX

Copies to:

CAJ

PRIVACY MARKING

..... In Confidence

CAVEAT

SUBJECT:

Thank you for your letter of 16 May with your proposals for the review of progress towards the objectives set out in the Nassau Accord and of the work of the Eminent Persons Group. I welcome the informal arrangements you propose and confirm my agreement to the dates, venue and Chairmanship.

I agree that the report by the Eminent Persons Group will be of central importance to the review. I have been impressed by their ^{*hard work*} ~~dedication~~ and tenacity. I believe that the Group ^{*was*} ~~were~~ right to take the difficult decision to carry on after last week's military incursions by South Africa into the territories of three Commonwealth countries, which as you know I have condemned vigorously. Their mission must be given every encouragement to succeed, despite this setback. ~~For~~ ^{*Through*} The alternative to a peaceful solution in South Africa ~~via~~ dialogue is increasing bitterness and violence: a prospect so ^{*unacceptable*} ~~appalling~~ that we must do everything possible to assist the Group so long as there is any prospect of a ^{*hopeful*} ~~breakthrough~~.

Enclosures flag(s)

//Whatever

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RELATIONS PT 7

Whatever the outcome, we owe the members of the Group a ~~debt~~ of gratitude for upholding the Commonwealth tradition of ^{reaching out} ~~seeking~~ for peaceful solutions. I am sure that their hard work will not have been in vain.

I am content that you should inform fellow Commonwealth Heads of Government and announce the details of the review in the manner you propose. I look forward to hearing further details nearer the time of the meeting.



EM

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MJ2BXP



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

A

19 May 1986

I enclose a copy of a letter to the Prime Minister from the Commonwealth Secretary-General, formally proposing dates for the Commonwealth Review Meeting of the work of the Eminent Persons' Group. I should be grateful for a draft reply.

Charles Powell

Colin Budd Esq
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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MR

OFFICE OF THE COMMONWEALTH SECRETARY-GENERAL
MARLBOROUGH HOUSE · PALL MALL · LONDON SW1Y 5HX

16 May, 1986

Dear Sir

attached @ part 8.

In my initial message of 23 November, 1985 to Commonwealth Heads of Government announcing the constitution of the Commonwealth Group of Eminent Persons I proposed that we treat 1 January, 1986 as the starting point of the Group's formal work and the commencement of the period of six months envisaged in paragraph 7 of the Nassau Accord on Southern Africa. I went on to explain that at the end of that period the Meeting of the seven Commonwealth leaders named in paragraph 5 would take place as envisaged in paragraph 7. On this basis, the essential purpose of the Meeting will be to review the situation in the light of the work of the Group of Eminent Persons, and the other measures agreed upon at Nassau, and to form a judgement as to whether, in the period ending 30 June, 1986, adequate concrete progress has been made towards the objectives stated in the Accord. Contingent on that judgement, other elements of paragraph 7 could become operable. It is in this context that I am writing to formalise arrangements for the Review Meeting.

The Group itself has been particularly mindful of its mandate under the Accord and of the importance of reporting to Commonwealth leaders in time to facilitate the Review Meeting at the end of the six month period. It is their present expectation to submit a report on their work before 30 June, 1986. That report will be of immense importance to the Review Meeting and I envisage that Commonwealth leaders will wish to have it in good time. I have tried to take account of all this in my consultations with regard to the Meeting, and to find dates that are both compatible with the expectations of Nassau and the convenience of the seven Heads of Government concerned. With the co-operation of everyone, I am now able to propose formally for your confirmation that the Review Meeting be held at Commonwealth Secretariat Headquarters in Marlborough House, London, between 3 and 5 August, 1986.

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The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher, MP,
Prime Minister of Great Britain and
Northern Ireland,
10 Downing Street,
London, S.W.1.

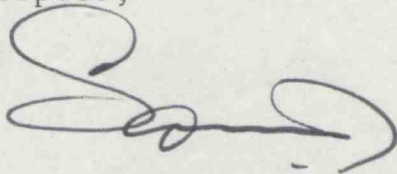
I envisage that the Meeting will commence with a dinner on the evening of 3 August in Marlborough House, which it would be my honour to host, and at which discussions can begin. Since the Meeting is in the nature of a continuation of the discussions at Nassau, it would be appropriate for the Prime Minister of the Bahamas to continue in the Chair; and I hope he will do so commencing with the discussions over dinner. Provision will then be made for the Meeting to continue throughout the following day and to conclude by lunchtime on Tuesday, 5 August. I hope I may now proceed to finalise these arrangements.

I feel sure you would wish the Review Meeting to be as informal as is consistent with its objectives, and I shall try to ensure that it is. To start with, therefore, may I propose that normal Heads of Government procedures be followed, even though it is a meeting of only seven Heads of Government. I have particularly in mind arrangements limiting the numbers of those present in the room with Heads of Government to two per delegation - while retaining, of course, the possibility of your enlarging this by mutual agreement or of closed sessions with advisers absent. I will proceed on this basis unless you wish me to do otherwise.

The work of the Commonwealth Group of Eminent Persons (COMGEP) has been one of the most important of Commonwealth undertakings. As I write, it is not possible to make a judgement on its out-turn; but, it is already clear that it is an effort that has won respect and continues to hold out hope for advancing the objectives of the Nassau Accord. The Review Meeting will be therefore, one of major significance. Your own participation in it is of the utmost importance and I look forward to being able to welcome you to Marlborough House on 3 August, 1986. Meanwhile, I shall continue to be in touch over more detailed matters through normal channels.

Assuming these arrangements to be acceptable to you and the other six participating leaders, I plan to inform other Commonwealth Heads of Government of them by 1 June, and to announce the date and venue of the Meeting on 6 June, 1986.

With deep respect,



Shridath S. Ramphal

South Africa Rels B9

