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PRIME MINISTER'S

PERSONAL MESSAGE

SERIAL No. T 1030/86

PRIME MINISTER

New Delhi
May 29, 1986

Dear Prime Minister,

I have just returned from a tour of four Frontline States - Zambia, Zimbabwe, Angola and Tanzania. The visit has left a deep impression on me. All the four countries are developing, but the conditions in Angola and Tanzania were particularly distressing. Despite their economic underdevelopment and dependence on South Africa - acute in the case of Zimbabwe and Zambia - I was touched by the determination of the leadership to preserve the independence of their countries. It is sometimes said that poor countries cannot afford to be over-sensitive about their self-respect and dignity. But no self-respecting leader anywhere can but admire the dignity of the leaders of the Frontline States.

My discussions with a wide cross-section of opinion in the four countries have reinforced my conviction that time is indeed running out on a peaceful solution to the problem in South Africa. The blacks in South Africa are getting extremely restive. There is an atmosphere of violence in the region. South Africa's raids against Botswana, Zimbabwe and Zambia should not come as a surprise to anyone. South Africa's record of contempt for international public opinion is known to all of us. Recent events in other parts of the world have only further emboldened South Africa in its aggressive designs.

...2/-

President Botha's speech of May 15 has left no doubt, at least in my mind, about his attitude to the EPG. South Africa may now try to somehow explain it away, but we should have no illusions. You know how much I believe in making every possible effort to find a peaceful solution. Our objective is clear. Apartheid must be dismantled. The other demands - release of Nelson Mandela and other freedom fighters, etc. - are also important, but they are essentially a means to the ultimate end. None of us, I am sure, would compromise on that.

We thought of EPG as a means to persuade South African authorities to see reason. EPG was to convince the South Africans that a dialogue with the genuine representatives of the African majority is in the enlightened self-interest of the White community, that the blacks will not wait indefinitely for the dialogue to be initiated and that if the dialogue failed or did not take place, there will be bloodshed. I am not pre-judging the results of EPG's endeavours.

We shall wait for their report once their mandate expires at the end of June.

The Nassau CHOGM mandated seven from among us to meet and review the situation in the light of EPG's report. We shall be meeting in London in early August. We must keep up the pressure.

...3/-



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Nobody, least of all I, wants violence but my visit to the Frontline States has made it clear to me that the patience of the Blacks in South Africa is wearing extremely thin.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'M. Thatcher', written in a cursive style.

Rt. Hon'ble Margaret Thatcher
Prime Minister of Britain
London