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10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

24 June 1986

PRIME MINISTER'S  
PERSONAL MESSAGE  
SERIAL No. T115/86

Dear Prime Minister,

I was most interested to have your letter of 29 May about your recent visit to four Front-Line states. Since you wrote, the Eminent Persons Group have of course produced their report and the situation within South Africa causes even greater concern.

I am all too aware of the atmosphere of violence you mention. The prospects for bringing all concerned back from the brink, and encouraging the process of dialogue which we all agreed at Nassau was so important, have received serious setbacks in recent weeks. I was deeply disappointed that the Eminent Persons Group, having worked so hard and having achieved far more than many expected, were not able to continue with their mission. We must all now consider their report and its implications very carefully in preparation for our meeting in August.

I know we both share their conviction that the end of their mission should not lessen our commitment to the objectives which we set them - to promote genuine dialogue about the political future in South Africa and a suspension of violence.

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I am very conscious of the deep concern felt within the Commonwealth on this question. We are all aware of the complexities and the dangers. Our task is to find the most effective way to bring about the early, fundamental but peaceful change we all want to see. I hope that we can keep in close touch on this issue which concerns us both so much.

Kind regards,

Yours sincerely  
Rajiv Gandhi

Shri Rajiv Gandhi.



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10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

*From the Private Secretary*

24 June 1986

Thank you for your letter of 23 June enclosing a draft reply to Mr. Gandhi about South Africa. The Prime Minister has signed a reply which you will find enclosed. I should be grateful if it could be sent to the High Commissioner in Delhi for delivery.

C D POWELL

R N Culshaw, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office



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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

23 June 1986

Dear Charles,

South Africa: Letter from the Indian Prime Minister

Thank you for your letter of 16 June enclosing Mr Rajiv Gandhi's letter of 29 May to the Prime Minister.

Mr Gandhi's letter was written before the Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group had produced their report. He expresses concern at the prospect for dialogue and refers to the growing impatience of blacks in South Africa and the neighbouring states he recently visited. Apart from a reference to keeping up the pressure on the South African Government, he studiously avoids references to further measures.

Immediately following the publication of the COMGEP report, Mr Gandhi called for the imposition of comprehensive economic sanctions against South Africa. He also raised the possibility of a split in the Commonwealth in Britain refused to go along with the wishes of the rest of the Commonwealth at the August review meeting. Subsequently however he told Mr Kinnock that there was no question of India leaving the Commonwealth over South Africa.

The Prime Minister will presumably not wish to address these questions in her reply to Mr Gandhi. I enclose a short draft reply which concentrates on the need for continuing commitment to work for dialogue and for careful consideration of future policy following the end of the EPG mission.

Yours ever,

Colin Budd

(R N Culshaw)  
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq  
PS/10 Downing Street

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