

PRIME MINISTER'S

PERSONAL MESSAGE

SERIAL NO T116A/86

AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSION



THE HIGH COMMISSIONER

AUSTRALIA HOUSE  
STRAND  
LONDON WC2B 4LA  
01-438 8000

*cc/c*  
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SUBJECT OPS  
MASTER

*Prime Minister*  
*A letter from Mr.*  
*Hawke urging sanctions.*  
*CDP 25/6*

25 June 1986

*My dear Prime Minister,*

I have been asked to pass to you the following text of a letter from the Australian Prime Minister, The Hon. R. J. L. Hawke. I will arrange for the original of the letter to be delivered to you as soon as it is received.

Message Begins

In the light of the report of the Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group and the rapid deterioration of the situation in South Africa I know that you, like our other Commonwealth colleagues, will have been giving very serious thought to what can now be done and what appropriate response we can make when we meet in London in early August.

I am aware too that the South African issue is currently an important one for you in the context of European Community consultations.

I thought it would be useful in those circumstances to outline to you my own views and to emphasise that I believe that the situation in South Africa and the failure of the Eminent Persons Group to encourage the South African Government to negotiate impose upon us a tremendous responsibility to South Africans of all races. It will be very important, I believe, not only for South Africa but for the future of the Commonwealth that we achieve an effective response in August.

When we met in Nassau last October we placed on record that, in establishing the Eminent Persons Group, we were not unmindful of the difficulties

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which would be encountered in encouraging the South African Government to pursue the course of political dialogue. But we also recorded our belief - and I know it is a position to which you have attached great importance, as have I - that we had a duty to leave nothing undone that might contribute to peaceful change in South Africa and avoid the dreadful prospect of violent conflict.

The Group tackled its difficult task with great determination and integrity but, regrettably, it must be recognised that the initiative failed. There can, moreover, be no doubt where the blame for this must lie. The Group itself unanimously and unambiguously concluded that it was the obduracy and intransigence of the South African Government which wrecked the initiative. The Group was given no option but to conclude that South Africa's attitude offers no present prospect of a process of dialogue leading to the establishment of a non-racial and representative government in South Africa.

To say that I regard this outcome as unfortunate would be a gross understatement; in spurning the negotiating proposals of the Eminent Persons Group the South African Government has turned its back on a major opportunity to change direction and opted instead to stand against the tide of change. I am sure that you also deeply regret this. South Africa's self destructive stubbornness will, I am convinced, be tragic for all South Africans not just because it means the continuation of the oppression under which the majority has suffered for so long but because it threatens, indeed makes inevitable, increased polarisation, strife and violence.

In my view we are now left with no alternative but to exert the most effective pressure we can to bring about a change in the attitude and posture of the South African Government. The fact that we are already witnessing, as virtually each day passes, a downward spiral of South Africa into conflict reinforces the judgement that we must act and act swiftly to try to bring South Africa to its senses. Negotiation having been tried sincerely, seriously but unsuccessfully we must now look to taking effective economic measures calculated to induce the South African Government



to enter into meaningful negotiations.

I am well aware that you have been reluctant to move down the path of economic measures and I stress that I in no way question the sincerity of the emphasis you have laid on negotiation. We both hoped the Eminent Persons Group initiative would succeed. But I think it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that the failure of the initiative and events on the ground in South Africa have taken us past an important threshold which requires us all to review our policies.

I agree with the report of the Eminent Persons Group that the question before Heads of Government when we meet in August is clear: "Is the Commonwealth to stand by and allow the cycle of violence to spiral? Or will it take concerted action of an effective kind?" The Accord we agreed at Nassau defines our mandate and our responsibility, namely to review the report of the Eminent Persons Group and, if in our opinion adequate progress has not been made, to consider the adoption of further measures and, in particular, the steps defined in the Accord. This is what, in my firm view, we must now do.

I see this as being not only the correct course in terms of the wellbeing of South Africans but in terms of the interests of the West. I stress that the purpose of the measures which I believe we should now take would not be to destroy the South African economy but to encourage a political climate conducive to peaceful change and economic development. Measures against South Africa would accordingly protect, not undermine, long range Western economic and political interests. It is the continuation of present trends of increased confrontation and conflict which imperils these interests.

I would like to inform you that towards the end of this month my Government will be considering additional measures including (but not confined to) the second tranche of possible measures we identified at Nassau. I want Australia to be in a position to give effective and tangible support to the common effort which I believe it is crucial that we make.

It is important, I believe, that we keep in touch

in the lead up to the London meeting. I felt it would be useful to give you my views as described above and I would very much welcome hearing your own. I am writing in similar terms to our other colleagues who will be attending the August meeting.

Message Ends

*Yours sincerely*

*Parsons*

A. R. Parsons

The Rt Hon. Margaret Thatcher, MP  
Prime Minister and First Lord  
of the Treasury  
10 Downing Street  
LONDON, SW1





CONFIDENTIAL

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10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

*From the Private Secretary*

25 June 1986

I enclose a copy of a message to the Prime Minister from the Prime Minister of Australia.

I should be grateful for a draft reply to Mr. Hawke as soon as possible after the European Council meeting has concluded.

(Charles Powell)

Colin Budd, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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T'd above

PRIME MINISTER  
CANBERRA

Dear Margaret

24 JUN 1986  
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Yours sincerely  
Bob Mulholland

The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher, MP  
Prime Minister of Great Britain  
LONDON SW1  
UNITED KINGDOM