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Prime Minister

A message on South Africa from Mr. Mulrooney, written before he knew the European Council's outcome.

SUBJECT CC MASTER OPS

Filed on S.AFRICA Lelabro PT10

CONFIDENTIAL

June 27, 1986

CDP 306

PRIME MINISTER'S PERSONAL MESSAGE SERIAL No. T117C/86

The Right Honourable Margaret Thatcher, M. P. 10 Downing Street London

Dear Margaret:

This is just a short note on where I think we may be heading on South Africa in the light of developments during the past weeks. Clearly you have been very actively engaged on the issue as our reports and indeed a recent exchange in your House attests.

I recently sent a personal message to President Botha urging him to reconsider the banning order his government brought in and the subsequent state of emergency. I conveyed my concern about the course he has evidently chosen which can only lead to greater anger, repressive violence and intensified unrest in the long run.

I also left no doubt about how disappointed we were that the South African government had, by its words and actions, rejected the negotiating concept put forward by the Commonwealth Group of Eminent Persons. I urged him to look again at the merits of a suspension of violence on all sides and a dialogue leading to majority rule and non-racial, representative government. The grave risks South Africa would run failing such a dialogue also concerned me deeply. Doing away with apartheid was surely better for all South Africans than the only apparent alternative - a pattern of continuing and increasing violence.

Since it was by no means certain that President Botha would pay much heed to such a message, we also made it clear to the South African government that the measures we announced on June 12 were part and parcel of our response to the rude rebuff they had given the Commonwealth Group and to the emergency measures they had introduced. The letter was conveyed to President Botha the same day we introduced those measures. I think that was an appropriate response for the moment: the measures sent a clear signal to South Africa and involve some costs for Canadians but not in themselves bear very heavily on Canada or South Africa.

What is more important is that we have a significant and coordinated Commonwealth response to South Africa in August. Recognizing that South Africa plays a lesser part in our external trade than in yours, I can see that we may need to proceed with a broader range of measures than you might adopt. That would be consistent with the principle of equitable burden-sharing with the Commonwealth.

I know that you will be reviewing this question in the Community shortly. One point we have made with some of your Community partners is that even relatively small steps by South Africa's major trading partners would reinforce very greatly the message to President Botha and his colleagues that the time has come for them to embark on a new course.

The latest press reports suggest that you may be considering some new initiatives aimed at getting talks started between the South African government and black leaders. I would certainly wish you well if any openings appear which would enable you to pursue that daunting task.

It will be important to keep in touch during the coming weeks. I have recently spoken to Kenneth Kaunda, Robert Hawkes and Rajiv Gandhi and look forward to going over the ground with you when we meet on July 13. We shall want to see what we can do to achieve an agreed Commonwealth position at the London meeting.

Yours sincerely,

Brian



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From the Private Secretary

30 June, 1986.

I enclose a copy of a letter to the Prime Minister from the Canadian Prime Minister about South Africa. It has clearly crossed with the Prime Minister's own message to Mr. Mulroney reporting the outcome of the European Council. I doubt that any further reply is needed before the Prime Minister meets Mr. Mulroney next week.

(C.D. Powell)

C.R. Budd, Esq.,
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CONFIDENTIAL

June 30, 1986

Mr. N. L. Wicks, C.B.E.
Principal Private Secretary to the
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London

Dear Mr. Wicks:

Enclosed is a copy of a letter from Prime Minister Brian Mulroney to Prime Minister Thatcher. The original is coming by diplomatic bag and will be delivered as soon as it is received.

Yours sincerely,

D. W. Smith
Counsellor

DWS/jms
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