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Mr. Denis Thomas  
Mr. Ferguson  
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ADVANCE COPY

Prime Minister

A disappointing &  
frankly unacceptable reply.  
Do you wish no return  
no charge? or let it  
be?  
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INFO IMMEDIATE WASHINGTON  
INFO PRIORITY PRETORIA, CANBERRA

OUR TELNO 607 : MESSAGE FROM OBASANJO TO THE PRIME MINISTER

FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF OBASANJO'S REPLY TO THE PRIME MINISTER'S  
MESSAGE IN YOUR TELNO 408

DEAR MADAM PRIME MINISTER,

I THANK YOU FOR YOUR MESSAGE OF 8TH JULY INRESPECT OF SIR  
GEOFFREY HOWE'S MISSION TO SOUTH AFRICA. THE MESSAGE WAS  
DELIVERED TO ME ON 14TH JULY. MUCH AS I WOULD WANT TO WISH  
SIR GEOFFREY SUCCESS IN HIS MISSION, THE FIRST STAGE DID NOT  
APPEAR TO BE AS SUCCESSFUL AS YOU WOULD HAVE WANTED. THAT IS  
PERFECTLY UNDERSTANDABLE.

IF MEMBERS OF THE EPG INDIVIDUALLY AND COLLECTIVELY BELIEVED  
THAT VIOLENCE WAS THE ONLY WEAPON LEFT TO DISMANTLE APARTHEID,  
THEY WOULD NOT HAVE UNDERTAKEN THE MISSION TO SOUTH AFRICA.  
THE EPG FAILED ON THE MAIN FOCUS OF THEIR MISSION TO PROMOTE  
DIALOGUE AND NEGOTIATION BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF SOUTH AFRICA  
AND THE BLACK LEADERSHIP. THE REASON IS THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF  
SOUTH AFRICA WAS NOT READY TO DISMANTLE APARTHEID AND ERECT A  
NEW GENUINELY REPRESENTATIVE AND DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURE OF  
GOVERNMENT. KNOWING THIS AND THE INITIAL RESENTMENT OF BOTH THE

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worth my pain  
by pain - but  
just worth  
remembering this  
that it should  
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~~... GENUINELY REPRESENTATIVE AND DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURE OF~~  
GOVERNMENT. KNOWING THIS AND THE INITIAL RESENTMENT OF BOTH THE GOVERNMENT AND THE BLACK LEADERSHIP TO OUR OWN GROUP AND YOUR PERSONAL EFFORT TO GET THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT TO COOPERATE WITH THE GROUP, YOUR PROMOTION OF SIR GEOFFREY'S MISSION SO CLOSE TO THE EPG'S REPORT WITHOUT FORMAL ACCEPTANCE OF THAT REPORT AND POSITIVE REACTION ALONG THE LINE OF ITS CONCLUSION CAN ONLY BE SEEN IN MANY QUARTERS AS EXERCISE IN FUTILITY, DELAYING TACTICS AND UNYIELDING SUPPORT FOR THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT AND ITS APARTHEID POLICY.

MY OWN UNDERSTANDING OF THE AFRIKANER BOTH FROM HISTORY AND FROM RECENT AND CURRENT EVENTS IS THAT HE IS TOUGH, TRIBALISTIC, STUBBORN, RUTHLESS, OPPRESSIVE AND SEEMINGLY INFLEXIBLE BUT HE HAS NEVER COMMITTED SUICIDE; HE HAS ONLY CHANGED UNDER PRESSURE AND THE MORE THE PRESSURE THE GREATER THE CHANGE. THOSE CHARACTERISTICS MAY NOT BE THE SPECIAL POSSESSION OF THE AFRIKANER ALONE. IF THERE IS NO PRESSURE THERE WILL BE NO CHANGE AND WHERE EXTERNAL PRESSURE IS LACKING OR INADEQUATE INTERNAL PRESSURE WILL EVENTUALLY ASSUME INCREASING PROPORTION. PRESSURE, ADEQUATE AND EFFECTIVE PRESSURE, WILL GET PRESIDENT BOTHA AND HIS PEOPLE OVER THE HUMP AND NOT DRIVE THEM INSIDE THE LAAGER. THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT NEEDS THE WORLD, ESPECIALLY THE INDUSTRIALISED WORLD, TO MAINTAIN THE VERY HIGH STANDARD OF LIVING OF THE MINORITY OF ITS POPULATION. THAT GOVERNMENT FEARS ECONOMIC SANCTIONS AND INTERNAL UNREST AND ONE NEEDS NO FURTHER PROOF THAT THEY CAN BE EFFECTIVE.

I THEREFORE SHARE YOUR VIEW THAT "IF MEASURES ARE TO BE EFFECTIVE IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT THEY SHOULD HAVE THE SUPPORT OF THE INDUSTRIALISED COUNTRIES AS A WHOLE". FOR ME, AND I BELIEVE FOR MOST OF US WHO HAVE FIRST-HAND PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE IN SOUTH AFRICA, THE QUESTION IS NOT MORE MISSIONS INTO SOUTH AFRICA BUT EFFECTIVE MEASURES (NOT TOKENS OR SYMBOLS) THAT WILL HURT ENOUGH TO BRING ABOUT COMPARATIVELY PEACEFUL CHANGE IN SOUTH AFRICA WITHOUT SEVERE DESTRUCTION OF ITS ECONOMY AND/OR ITS PEOPLE. THE SOUTH AFRICAN ECONOMY MUST NOT ONLY BE PRESERVED FOR SOUTH AFRICA BUT FOR AFRICA AND THE ENTIRE WORLD ON THE BASIS OF EQUITY, JUSTICE AND FAIR PLAY.

THOSE OF US WHO FROM PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE HAVE SHOWN UNDERSTANDING FOR YOUR PERSONAL AND POLITICAL CONSIDERATION, ARE HARD PUT TO EXPLAIN AWAY YOUR CONTINUED INSISTENCE ON NO SANCTIONS. MUCH HAS HAPPENED IN THE LAST TWO MONTHS, ALL OF IT - FROM THE ACTIONS THAT SIGNALLED THEIR REJECTION OF OUR EFFORTS THROUGH EVER - MORE DRACONIAN STEPS OF REPRESSION - INITIATED BY THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT. AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND, HOW CAN THE FACT THAT YOUR STANCE ON SANCTIONS REMAINS UNCHANGED BE EXPLAINED WITHOUT GIVING AMMUNITION TO THOSE WHO SEE RACISM IN YOUR PRONOUNCEMENTS?

TO THOSE WHO SEE RACISM IN YOUR PRONOUNCEMENTS?

THIS, I DARE SAY, CANNOT BE WHAT YOU WISH TO CONVEY. TO MOST BLACK AFRICANS, AS THEY REPEATEDLY MAKE CLEAR, STARVATION IS MORE TOLERABLE THAN THE BRUTILITY, OPPRESSION, VIOLENCE, AND DEATH INFLICTED ON THEM BY APARTHEID. BUT YOU DESCRIBE THE CALL BY AFRICAN LEADERS (INSIDE AND OUTSIDE SOUTH AFRICA) FOR EFFECTIVE SANCTION IRRESPECTIVE OF THE SHORT-TERM EFFECT ON THEIR PEOPLE AS COLD, CALLOUS, AND IMMORAL, WITHOUT EVER DESCRIBING APARTHEID IN THE SAME LANGUAGE. THE CONTRAST ESCAPES NO ONE AND CAN ONLY TEND TO CAST YOUR POSITION IN A RACIST MOULD.

I BELIEVE THAT SIR GEOFFREY'S CONSULTATIONS WITH THE US ADMINISTRATION AND OTHER INDUSTRIALISED COUNTRIES TO ATTAIN A CONCERTED AND EFFECTIVE EFFORT ON ECONOMIC MEASURES SUPPORTED BY THE COMITY OF NATIONS CAN BE MORE DECISIVE THAN HIS SOUTHERN AFRICAN TRAVELS IN DRIVING PRESIDENT BOTHA TOWARDS MEANINGFUL CHANGE, (UNLESS OF COURSE, YOU CAN CHARM HIM MORE THAN WE COULD AS HE EXPRESSED GREAT REGARD AND RESPECT FOR YOU AND PRESIDENT REAGAN AS TWO LEADERS WHO SHOW UNDERSTANDING OF AND SUPPORT FOR THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT).

BUT WHATEVER MAY BE THE RESULT OF SIR GEOFFREY'S MISSION IN SOUTH AFRICA, YOU HAVE GREAT AND GRAVE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE AUGUST MEETING OF THE SEVEN COMMONWEALTH LEADERS AND THE FUTURE OF THE COMMONWEALTH. MY KNOWLEDGE OF YOU HAS ALWAYS CONVINCED ME THAT WHEN THE TIME COMES, YOU WILL LIVE UP TO THAT RESPONSIBILITY.

YOURS SINCERELY,

O OBASANJO

GENERAL OLUSETGUN OBASANJO

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